



4<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 003680/19**

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

- 1 Since 1st April 2018 to date, how many investigations have been undertaken relating to s14 and s15 of Sexual Offences Act 2003
- 2 Of these investigations, how many involved information passed to police from individuals who purport to be working as part of Paedophile Hunter / Paedophile Vigilante Groups / Internet Vigilante Groups
- 3 How many of the investigations from question 2 resulted in a charge under Sexual Offences Act 2003
- 4 Of these charges, how many resulted in conviction
- 5 Does the force have any specific policy in relation to intelligence / information passed over by those purporting to be working as part of Paedophile Hunter Groups / Paedophile Vigilante Groups – If so, can this policy please be provided.

**Response to your Request**

The response provided below is correct as of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have considered your request and our response is below:-

Q1

Year	Number of Crimes
<b>NORFOLK</b>	
2018	68
2019	66
<b>SUFFOLK</b>	
2018	69
2019	78

- Q2 Each of the above recorded crimes have been reviewed to see if any refer to Paedophile Hunters/Vigilante Groups within the report text. It is possible that there are other relevant crimes but reference to Paedophile Hunters have not been referred to within the report text field.

Year	Number of crimes which refer to Paedophile Hunter Groups
<b>NORFOLK</b>	
2018	5
2019	4
<b>SUFFOLK</b>	
2018	16
2019	12

Q3 With regard to the crimes in Q2, all crime outcomes are provided below:-

Crime Outcome	2018	2019
<b>NORFOLK</b>		
Type 1 – Charged/Summoned/Postal Requisition	3	0
Type 1A - Charged/Summons - alternate offence. Offender has been charged under the alternate offence rule.	1	0
Type 15 - Named Suspect Identified: Victim Supports Police Action But Evidential Difficulties Prevent Further Action	0	1
Not recorded / Under investigation	1	3
<b>SUFFOLK</b>		
Type 1 – Charged/Summoned/Postal Requisition	5	0
Type 15 - Named Suspect Identified: Victim Supports Police Action But Evidential Difficulties Prevent Further Action	1	0
Type 8 - Community resolution (Crime)	1	0
Type 10 - Formal Action Against Offender is not in the Public Interest (Police)	1	0
Type 12 - Prosecution Prevented-Named Suspect Identified But Is Too Ill (Physical Or Mental Health) To Prosecute	0	1
Type 14 - Evidential Difficulties Victim Based-Suspect Not Identified: Crime Confirmed But The Victim Either Declines Or Unable To Support Further Police Investigation To Identify The Offender	0	1
Type 15 - Named Suspect Identified: Victim Supports Police Action But Evidential Difficulties Prevent Further Action	1	3
Type 16 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties Prevent Further Action: Victim Does Not Support (Or Has Withdrawn Support From) Police Action	1	0
Type 20 - Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the act to be taken	2	0
Not recorded / Under investigation	4	7

Q4 The Constabularies do not hold statistical information regarding court outcomes.

Q5 Please see below guidance which has been circulated in Norfolk:-

## **Paedophile hunter quick-time guidance**

Officers and staff should be aware when attending any incidents that there is a need to quickly identify the suspect committing the online offences to prevent them destroying evidence or committing further offences.

Attending officers should be mindful that the initial call to police may be for an unrelated matter (e.g. assault or disorder) and to be aware that should the vigilante group disengage then **the focus on the grooming/online offences must continue to be a priority.**

The guidance below has been provided to assist with any incident or investigation involving paedophile hunters:

### **Quick-time guidance for vigilante/paedophile hunter investigations**

- If the vigilante group is still at the scene consideration should be given to an immediate dispatch of officers to prevent a breach of the peace, to protect those involved and to effect an arrest of the suspect.
- The SCOLT team or duty Detective Sergeant must be contacted to take ownership of the investigation.
- There is potential for the vigilante group to film any confrontation and this may result in the recording of attending officers. This should not be a barrier to officers carrying out their lawful duty. The group may be asked to stop filming by officers, however if they continue, officers should not be distracted from their core responsibilities of safeguarding and risk management. There are no police powers to prevent filming.
- An immediate request should be made from the vigilante group for a witness statement and any evidence held in relation to the communication with the individual (e.g. chat logs and any video footage). Often when requests for evidence are delayed the group may not supply the required evidence, therefore this should be a priority.
- Consider use of the following legislation under the Sexual Offences Act: **Arranging/facilitating the commission of a child sex offence. S14 Sexual activity with a child s9 Causing/inciting a child to engage in sexual activity s10 Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child s11 Causing a child to watch a sexual act s12**
- Officers making arrests should seek to evidentially secure any mobile phones / electronic devices from the suspect, to prevent loss or destruction of evidence. Further searches and scene photographs (capturing detail of the inside and outside of the property) should be completed.
- Officers should seek to establish if the subject has access to children or young people in domestic and / or professional capacity and take any necessary safeguarding steps.
- Immediate safeguarding should be considered for property/people remaining at the address who may be subject to reprisals from the community.
- Commence investigation and custody procedures in a timely manner.
- Remain on scene until you are satisfied risks no longer exist to any party.

This response will be published on the Constabularies web-site under the Freedom of Information pages:-

<https://www.norfolk.police.uk/about-us/our-data/disclosure-log>

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/services/freedom-information/disclosure-logs>

Should you have any further queries concerning this request, please contact Amanda Gibson, FOI Decision Maker, quoting the reference number shown above.

A full copy of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) can be viewed on the 'Office of Public Sector Information' web-site;

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/>

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies are not responsible for the content, or the reliability, of the website referenced. The Constabulary cannot guarantee that this link will work all of the time, and we have no control over the availability of the linked pages.

Your Right to Request a Review of Decisions Made Under the Terms of the  
Freedom of Information Act (2000).

If you are unhappy with how your request has been handled, or if you think the decision is incorrect, you have the right to ask the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary to review their decision.

Ask Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies to look at the decision again.

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies under the Freedom of Information Act (2000), regarding access to information, you must notify the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary that you are requesting a review within 40 days of the date of its response to your Freedom of Information request. Requests for a review should be made in writing and addressed to:

*Freedom of Information Decision Maker  
Information Management Department  
Norfolk Constabulary  
Operations and Communications Centre  
Jubilee House  
Falconers Chase  
Wymondham  
Norfolk NR18 0WW  
OR  
Email: [freedomofinformation@norfolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:freedomofinformation@norfolk.pnn.police.uk)*

In all possible circumstances Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary will aim to respond to your request for us to look at our decision again within 20 working days of receipt of your request for an internal review.

The Information Commissioner.

After lodging a request for a review with Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary, if you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you can apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk) or contact them at the address shown below:

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 01625 545 700