



Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 003842-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies on 24 October 2019 which you sought access to the following information:

"I would like to receive information regarding the number of people smuggling or human trafficking offences investigated by your force between 2016 and 2019 (so far).

Specifically can you tell me:

- 1. How many cases of people smuggling or human trafficking has your force investigated in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 (so far)?*
- 2. For each case, please give the number of victims involved, and their country of origin, if known.*
- 3. For each case please give the outcome - i.e. prosecution, conviction, not enough evidence to proceed etc."*

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 1 November 2019

Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies have considered your request for information and the response is below.

A search has been completed of the Constabularies crime system for all modern day slavery offences for the 2016 – 2019 calendar years.

The tables provided on the attached spreadsheet confirm the total number of offences recorded by year and includes the outcome and victims nationality for each Constabulary. Where a '0' appears, this relates to offences where no victim data is recorded.

Police forces in the United Kingdom are routinely required to provide crime statistics to government bodies and the recording criteria is set nationally. However, the systems used for recording these figures are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the crime data. It should be noted that for these reasons this force's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other response you may receive.

In addition to the above, the Constabularies can **neither confirm nor deny** that any other information is held as a result of exemptions within the Act.

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at s1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at s1 (1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires that Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) are to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) States that fact
- (b) Specifies the exemption(s) in question and
- (c) States (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption(s) applies.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies can **neither confirm nor deny** that it holds any other information relevant to your request as the duty in s1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply, by virtue of the following exemptions.

Section 30(3) – Investigations

Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

Section 30 is a class based qualified exemption and consideration of the public interest must be given.

Section 31 is a prejudice based qualified exemption and there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused by confirmation or denial of whether any other information is held, as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Overall Evidence of Harm

Every effort should be made to release information under Freedom of Information. However, to confirm or deny whether any other information is or isn't held could undermine any ongoing or covert investigations.

Modern-day policing is intelligence led, and intelligence changes on a day-by-day basis.

Confirming or denying whether any other information is held relevant to the request would show where policing interest has or has not occurred in any specific area which would enable those engaged in criminal activity to identify the focus of policing targets. Any information identifying the focus of this activity could be used to the advantage of criminal organisations. Information that undermines the operational integrity of these activities will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on law enforcement capabilities.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S30

There is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that the Constabularies are appropriately and effectively dealing with crime. This is particularly pertinent in high profile situations where there is a high degree of media speculation. Confirming or denying whether any information is held would allow the public to make informed decisions about these matters.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S30

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies are appropriately and effectively dealing with crime, there is a strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations and in maintaining confidence in the Police Service. Confirmation or denial that any information is held relevant to the request would undermine any investigative process and compromise the integrity of any operations.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S31

By confirming or denying whether any information is held in respect of this request would allow the public to see where public funds are being spent. Better public awareness may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public as they would be more observant in reporting suspicious activity.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S31

By confirming or denying whether information is held in respect of this request, law enforcement tactics would be compromised which would hinder the prevention and detection of crime. This would result in more risk to vulnerable individuals and consequently require the use of more police resources.

Balance Test

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve.

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that the Constabularies are appropriately and effectively dealing with cases of human trafficking, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations in this highly sensitive area.

It is for these reasons that the Public Interest must favour neither confirming nor denying whether any other information is held.

This should not be taken as necessarily indicating that any information that would meet your request does or does not exist.

Should you have any further queries concerning this request, please contact Clair Pack, 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 20 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
Suffolk Constabulary
Police Headquarters
Martlesham Heath
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP5 3QS
OR
Email: information@suffolk.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 40 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 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