



Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 003871-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk Constabulary on the 28 October 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

1. *“How many recorded offences of cyber-stalking have been reported by both men and women in the years between 2005 and 2019? (including a breakdown of the genders of both victim and suspect)”*
2. *“What were the outcomes of the above recorded offences? How many of these resulted in arrest?”*

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 6 November 2019

Suffolk Constabulary has considered your request for information and the response is below.

The Constabulary implemented the online flag in October 2015, as a result in a change in crime recording system. Information held prior to this time would require a manual review of all stalking and harassment offences prior to this time to establish whether they had an online element, this would involve many hundreds of offences and would be well in excess of 18 hours.

In relation to your request for information and in accordance with Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), this response serves as a formal notification of refusal for your request. Suffolk Constabulary does not hold, for the purposes of FOIA, the information you require in a retrievable format.

It is estimated that to attempt to retrieve all of the information you require would take a considerable amount of retrieval time, which would exceed 18 hours. This would exceed the appropriate limit for dealing with Freedom of Information requests, in terms of costs and therefore Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states that a Public Authority is not obliged to: *“...comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.”* The Freedom of Information (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations, defines the ‘appropriate limit’ for the Suffolk Constabulary as £450 and specifies that this sum equates to 18 hours work at a standard rate of £25 per hour.



In accordance with Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter serves as a refusal notice for this part of your request.

By requesting *all* information your request is too broad to be complied with within the £450 limit imposed on Freedom of Information requests.

Although excess cost removes the Force's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request.

The information provided below relates to the time frame 19 October 2015 – 31 March 2019.

The total number of stalking offences recorded with an online flag is provided in the table below including the offence category, there were no stalking offences recorded during 2015/16 with an online flag. The increase from 2015/16 will potentially be as a result of in better force wide awareness of the use of the online flag within the crime system.

Offence / Outcome	2016	2017	2018	2019
Harassment - Pursue course of conduct in breach of Sec 1 (1) which amounts to stalking	1	13	16	11
Under Investigation				2
Type 1 - Charged/Summoned/Postal Requisition			1	
Type 10 - Formal Action Against Offender is not in the Public Interest		1		
Type 12 - Prosecution Prevented-Named Suspect Identified But Is Too Ill (Physical Or Mental Health) To Prosecute			1	
Type 14 - Evidential Difficulties Victim Based- Suspect Not Identified			1	
Type 15 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties		6	2	2
Type 16 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties		5	5	3
Type 18 - Investigation Complete; No Suspect Identified.		1	3	2
Type 20 - Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency			1	
Type 3 - Caution Adult			2	2
Type 8 - Community resolution (Crime)	1			
Racially or religiously aggravated Harassment or stalking with fear of violence				1
Type 15 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties				1
Racially or religiously aggravated Harassment or stalking without violence	2	2	2	2
Type 14 - Evidential Difficulties Victim Based- Suspect Not Identified		1		1
Type 15 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties		1	1	
Type 16 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties			1	
Type 18 - Investigation Complete; No Suspect Identified	1			1



Type 3 - Caution Adult	1			
Stalking involving fear of violence		1	2	
Type 16 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties		1		
Type 18 - Investigation Complete; No Suspect Identified.			1	
Type 3A - Caution Adult - alternate offence.			1	
Stalking involving serious alarm/distress	3	6	4	2
Under Investigation				1
Type 15 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties	1	3	2	1
Type 16 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties	2	1	1	
Type 18 - Investigation Complete; No Suspect Identified.		2		
Type 1A - Charged/Summons - alternate offence.			1	
Grand Total	6	22	24	16

The gender for the victims and suspects is as follows:

Gender	2016	2017	2018	2019
Victims				
Female	5	19	16	14
Male	1	3	7	2
Not Recorded		2	1	
Total	6	24	24	16
Suspects				
Female		8	5	2
Male	5	11	12	12
Not Recorded			2	
Total	5	19	19	14

Arrest data is recorded within the custody data which is not recorded under a specific offence of stalking and would rather require a review of all harassment arrests to extract those that relate to stalking and those that are online.

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.



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/>

Suffolk Constabulary is 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.



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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 Suffolk Constabulary to review their decision.

Ask Suffolk Constabulary to look at the decision again.

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by Suffolk Constabulary under the Freedom of Information Act (2000), regarding access to information, you must notify Suffolk Constabulary that you are requesting a review within 40 working 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 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 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