



Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 003976-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk Constabulary on the 4 November 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

1. *"The number of shoplifting offences in Suffolk over the past three years from January 1 to December 31, 2017, January 1 to December 31, 2018 and January 1 to current date, 2019.*
2. *The offences over the above dates broken down by month and place.*
3. *The cost of items stolen in shoplifting incidents over above dates."*

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.

Information concerning property values are not accurately recorded within the crime system. In relation to the shoplifting offences recorded, excluding attempted offences, for which there are 10,806 for the time frame requested, only 7,044 of those crimes have any associated property item value.

In order to establish the items of property recorded for the other 3,000+ offences would require a manual review through the crime report and associated files, such as witness statements and officer notebooks, to extract the data to answer the request in full.

Considering a search of 2 minutes per offence, it would take in excess of 100 hours to extract the data to answer the request in full.

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.



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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 attached spreadsheet confirms all shoplifting offences recorded for the 2017 calendar year to date, broken down by month, year and policing area.

In tab two of the attached are the property values for those shoplifting offences that contain a value in the respective field. Please note that this only relates to 7,044 of the total offences and additionally, the values specified are only meant as an approximate guide as they are estimated for the purpose of the investigation and are only collated for Police purposes. We can therefore not verify how accurate the values are.

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