



# SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

**REQUEST NUMBER:** FOI Request 004187-17

**REQUEST DETAILS:**

*“Police and members of staff taking abroad trips in 2017, 2016, 2015, including how much those trips cost overall (with a breakdown of costs, for example, the airlines, the names of the hotels they stayed at, and the rank of the officers, and the reason for travel).”*

**RESPONSE:**

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

*This response is correct as of 15 March 2017*

Suffolk Constabulary has completed a search of the Constabulary’s financial statements for all records of abroad trips taken by staff and officers during the 2015-2017 calendar years.

The following table confirms by year, the rank of the officer, destination, reason, airline, hotel name and costs.

The Constabulary does not always record hotel names if, for example, the hotel was booked by the receiving country.

The information provided relates to those flights that have been funded for by the Constabulary. Therefore any international flight costs, which have been reclaimed in full, have not been included within the response.

In addition to the information provided below, Suffolk Constabulary can **neither confirm nor deny** that it holds any further information by virtue of the following exemptions:

**Section 23(5) – Information relating to Security bodies;**

**Section 24(2) – National Security**

**Section 27(4) – International Relations**

Section 23(5) is an absolute and class based exemption and I am therefore not obliged to consider the harm or public interest factors in non-disclosure.

Section 24(2) and 27(4) are qualified and prejudice based exemptions and I am therefore obliged to articulate my decision by consideration to the harm and a Public Interest Test.

Overall harm for partial NCND



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Any release under the Freedom of Information Act is a disclosure to the world, not just to the individual making the request. To confirm or not that any other information is held pertinent to this request would undermine any ongoing investigations.

To enable Constabularies to counter any national or international criminal and terrorist behaviour, it is vital that the United Kingdom Police Service has the ability to work together, where necessary covertly, with other law enforcement agencies.

In order to achieve this goal, officers and staff at times visit other countries to ensure skills, intelligence and investigative tools from the United Kingdom are shared, which may include information relating to exempt bodies as detailed within Section 23(3) of the Freedom of Information Act.

To confirm whether or not any other information pertinent to this request is held would be extremely useful to those involved in criminal/terrorist activity as it would enable them to map where exempt bodies are currently actively carrying out investigations. Such awareness would enable individuals, subject of the investigative activity, to evade detection and surveillance.

The threat from terrorism cannot be ignored. It is generally recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The current UK threat level from international terrorism, based on intelligence, is assessed as substantial, see below link:

<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/home/the-threats/terrorism/threat-levels.html>

In order to counter criminal and terrorist behaviour it is vital that the police have the ability to work together, where necessary covertly, to obtain intelligence within current legislative frameworks to assist in the investigative process to ensure the successful arrest and prosecution of offenders who commit or plan to commit acts of terrorism.

To achieve this goal, it is vitally important that information sharing takes place between police officers, members of the public, police forces as well as other law enforcement bodies within the United Kingdom. Such an action supports counter-terrorism measures in the fight to deprive terrorist networks of their ability to commit crime.

To confirm or deny whether any other information is held would be extremely useful to those involved in terrorist activity as it would enable them to identify whether specific covert investigations have taken place.

## Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S24

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and by confirming or denying countries the Constabulary has gone to for the purpose of its investigations would lead to a better-informed public that can take steps to



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protect themselves

## Factors against confirmation or denial for S24

By confirming or denying that any other information relevant to the request exists would render Security measures less effective. This could lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public.

## Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S27

Confirming or denying whether information is held relevant to your request would allow the public to be better informed and would be in the interests of open government and public accountability. Disclosure could increase understanding on international matters and participation in the public debate of the issues raised.

Disclosure of information, if held, would promote good relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, and assist in raising public awareness around partnership working between foreign agencies and the Police.

## Factors against confirmation or denial for S27

Confirming or denying that any information is held would highlight the liaisons which might have taken place between the Constabulary and another country.

This could lead to a lack of trust by the government of that country as any disclosure of potential sensitive information could undermine relations. The effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between Governments. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered.

The disclosure of information detailing our relationship with other countries could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and other states. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with those other states.

## Balance test

The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police service will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so could undermine National Security or compromise law enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by the criminal fraternity, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in this area.



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As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of national security this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for confirming or denying whether any other information relevant to your request exists is not made out.

There is also no requirement to satisfy any public concern over the legality of police operations and the tactics we may or may not use. The force is already held to account by statute, for example the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and independent bodies such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Independent Police Complaints Commission. Our accountability is therefore not enhanced by confirming or denying that any other information is held.

**None of the above can be viewed as an inference that any other information does or does not exist.**



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Year	Rank	Destination	Reason	Cost	Airline	Hotel Cost	Hotel
2015	PC	Dusseldorf - Germany	ITFC V Dusseldorf Pre Season Friendly	£489.68	Germanwings	Unknowm	
2015	PS	Dusseldorf - Germany	ITFC V Dusseldorf Pre Season Friendly	£489.68	Germanwings	Unknowm	
2015	DC	Sardinia - Italy	OP Hera	£336.17	Easyjet	Unknowm	
2015	DS	Sardinia - Italy	OP Hera	£336.17	Easyjet	Unknowm	
2015	DC	Miami - US	CSE Investigations and Meetings	£608.65	Virgin Atlantic	Unknowm	
2015	DC	Paris - France	Prisoner Deportation - G Singer	£287.21	British Airways	N/A	
2015	PC	Paris - France	Prisoner Deportation - G Singer	£287.21	British Airways	N/A	
2015	DS	Paris - France	Prisoner Deportation - G Singer	£287.21	British Airways	N/A	
2016	PC	Bucharest - Romania	Prisoner Deportation - C Nedelcu	£408.01	British Airways	Unknown	
2016	DC	Bucharest - Romania	Prisoner Deportation - C Nedelcu	£408.01	British Airways	Unknown	
2016	DC	Bucharest - Romania	Prisoner Deportation - C Nedelcu	£408.01	British Airways	Unknown	
2016	DC	Miami - US	Training – OP BANE	£659.70	Virgin Atlantic	Unknown	
2016	DS	Luxembourg	Prisoner Deportation	£974.01	British Airways	Unknown	
2016	DCI	Luxembourg	Prisoner Deportation	£974.01	British Airways	Unknown	
2016	DCI	Luxembourg	Prisoner Deportation	£974.01	British Airways	Unknown	
2016	PC	Luxembourg	Prisoner Deportation	£974.01	British Airways	Unknown	
2016	STAFF	Luxembourg	Op Seminar	£867.58	KLM	£441.50	Sofitel Luxembourg



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2016	DCI	Luxembourg	Op Seminar	£867.58	KLM	£441.50	Le Grand Ducal
2017	DS	Luxembourg	Op Seminar	£428.50	British Airways	£424.37	Novotel Luxembourg