



Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 004203-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies on 20 November 2019 which you sought access to the following information:

- 1. "How many people, broken down by males and females in five-year age brackets from the age of 0, have been strip searched after authorisation from a senior officer such as an inspector, in each of the past five years, broken down by calendar year.*
- 2. How many of these searches took place in public, and how many in private, broken down by calendar year.*
- 3. How many times was an officer of the same sex as the person being searched present, and how many times was that not the case, broken down by calendar year.*
- 4. How many people, broken down by males and females in five-year age brackets from the age of 0, have been strip searched without authorisation from a senior officer such as an inspector, in each of the past five years, broken down by calendar year.*
- 5. How many of these searches took place in public, and how many in private, broken down by calendar year.*
- 6. How many people, broken down by males and females in five-year age brackets from the age of 0 have had face coverings such as balaclavas, niqabs and masks removed or seized by officers, in each of the past five years, broken down by calendar year.*
- 7. How many times was an officer of the same sex as the person who had their face covering removed present, and how many times was that not the case, broken down by calendar year.*

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 22 November 2019

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

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. The Constabularies do not hold, for the purposes of FOIA, all of 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, exceeding 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. It is considered that to provide an answer to your request will take in excess of 36 hours to provide the information.

Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies changed crime recording in October 2015, we are therefore unable to retrieve any information concerning Strip Searches prior to this date without manually reviewing thousands of custody related records which would way exceed any time restraint.

In addition, the below text explains why other points of your request will also exceed the time restraints to retrieve:

Question 1 and 4 refers to strip searches conducted with or without authorisation from a senior officer, to retrieve this date would require us to case read all records.

Question 3 and 7 would rely on us case reading each record to establish who conducted the strip search.

Question 6 and 7 would also require us case reading each record to establish if face coverings were removed or seized by the officers.

From October 2015 to the end of 2018, there were a total of 7101 records that would need to be manually reviewed, to retrieve all of the above information. This would way exceed the statutory time restraints of the FOI Act.

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 Constabularies as £450 and specifies that this sum equates to 18 hours work per force at a standard rate of £25 per hour. This equates to 36 hours of work, or £900, for joint responses.

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 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 below table provides the total number of people strip searched from October 2015 to the end of 2018, broken down by gender and the Police Investigation Centre (PIC) location the search was completed. Please note that although all of these custody records are recorded as either Norfolk or Suffolk Constabulary, they may have occurred in other force PICs.

Year and PIC	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Female					
Aylsham PIC		19	18	30	67
Bury St. Edmunds PIC	13	50	122	119	304
Great Yarmouth PIC	13	68	71	60	212
Kempston Custody				1	1
King's Lynn PIC	8	34	36	49	127
Martlesham PIC	11	51	105	81	248
Wymondham PIC	9	60	62	97	228
Male					
Aylsham PIC	11	65	73	87	236
Basildon				1	1
Bury St. Edmunds PIC	36	316	565	560	1477
Cambridge Custody				1	1
Chelmsford			1	1	2
Clacton			2	1	3
Colchester		1			1
Great Yarmouth PIC	75	377	387	300	1139
King's Lynn PIC	26	134	157	135	452
Martlesham PIC	66	362	515	429	1372
Southend Police Station			3		3
Stansted			1		1
Wymondham PIC	52	334	375	460	1221
Not Recorded					
Great Yarmouth PIC				1	1
King's Lynn PIC		1			1
Wymondham PIC		1		1	2
Unspecified					
Martlesham PIC			1		1
Grand Total	320	1873	2494	2414	7101

Please be advised that Strip Searches would never be conducted in public, and would always be within the PIC/Custody suites.

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