



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

REQUEST NUMBER: FOI Request 004392-17

REQUEST DETAILS:

1. *"Has your force implemented the new definition of missing that is contained in the new Approved Professional Practice on missing persons published end of 2016? (yes/ no)*
2. *If the new definition has not yet been implemented, please, state when the new APP will be implemented in your police force area?*
3. *If the new definition has been implemented please provide the following information for the period of time between 1 January and 31 March 2017*
4. *In the period of time from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 did your police force use separate definitions of 'missing' and 'absent' children? (Yes/No)*

Questions on children categorised as missing

5. *In the period of time from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 what was the total number of a) children under the age of 18 b) episodes related to children under the age of 18 reported as missing to your police?*
6. *Please provide information in the table below for the period of time from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 related to children reported as missing to your police and categorised as 'missing'*
7. *Please provide information in the table below for the period of time from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 related to children reported as missing to your police and categorised as 'absent'*
8. *Does your risk assessment at the time the child is reported as missing includes a question on whether a child is*
9. *Is there a defined maximum period of time that a case can be classified as 'absent' or 'no apparent risk' before being upgraded to 'missing'? If yes, what is the maximum period?*
10. *What was the longest period of time that an individual a) male child and b) female child was classified as 'absent' in the period of time from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 in your police force?*
11. *What is the average length of time cases remain classified as 'absent' in your police force area?*



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

12. *What was the highest number of times an individual a) male child and b) female child was classified as 'absent' in the period of time from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017?*
13. *For children who have been recorded as absent what is the average number of times they have been classified as absent for in the period of time from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017?*
14. *Do children classified as 'absent' or 'no apparent risk' receive a safe and well check on return in your police area?"*

RESPONSE:

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

This response is correct as of 3 April 2017

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.

Suffolk Constabulary is unable to confirm the longest period of time that a child was classified as 'absent' due to the limitations of our missing persons database, COMPACT. The only means to extract the data would be to conduct a review of a large number of manual records. Considering the number of missing person records we would need to review, the Constabulary estimates it would take well in excess of 18 hours to extract the information requested.

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.



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

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.

1. Suffolk Constabulary has implemented the new definition of missing, in accordance with the Approved Professional Practice on missing persons.
2. N/A
3. The Constabulary does not categorise the information by apparent risk and therefore does not hold this information. The total numbers are provided in the table below:

Gender	Children under the age of 18 reported to the police as missing	Episodes related to children under the age of 18 reported as missing
Girls	126	290
Boys	140	293

4. The Constabulary used missing and absent until 04/07/2016, absent for children has not been used since this date.
5. During the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 the total number of children under the age of 18 and episodes related to children under the age of 18, reported as missing was as follows:

Gender	Children under the age of 18 categorised as 'missing' 2016	'Missing' episodes related to children under the age of 18
Girls	358	1128
Boys	424	1259

6. For the period of time from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 the number of children reported as missing to your police and categorised as 'missing', is provided in the table below by location.

	Children under the age of 18 categorised as 'missing' 2016	'Missing' episodes related to children under the age of 18
Total girls 'missing' from family home	306	798
Total girls 'missing' from care settings	65	596
Total boys 'missing' from family home	374	882
Total boys 'missing'	94	671



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

from care settings

7. The total number of children reported as missing categorised as 'absent' during 2016, is as follows. Please note that the information relates to the time frame 01/01/2016 – 04/07/2016, after which time the Constabulary no longer uses the absent category.

	Children under the age of 18 categorised as 'missing' from 1 January to 4 July 2016	'Missing' episodes related to children under the age of 18
Total number	52	64
Total girls	19	21
Total boys	33	43
Total girls 'absent' from family home	12	15
Total girls 'absent' from care settings	7	11
Total boys 'absent' from family home	18	21
Total boys 'absent' from care settings	15	22

8. The risk assessment includes the following:

	Yes	No
a) at risk of sexual exploitation	X	
b) at risk of being groomed on line or off line		X
c) at risk of criminal exploitation	X	
d) at risk of gang involvement		X
e) at risk due to mental health issues	X	

9. There is no defined maximum period of time a case can be classified as absent – this is under constant review by Ops room Inspector
10. Information is not retrievable.
11. The Constabulary no longer use absent for children. We are unable to provide this information for the period when absent was used as the Constabulary does not hold average figures.
12. The highest number of times an individual was classified as 'absent' in the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 was as follows:

Male child – 2
Female child - 2



SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

13. No child has been classified as absent on more than one occasion during the time frame 1 April – 4 July 2016.
14. Children are no longer recorded as absent, however when used previously, a safe and well check was used dependant on the individual case circumstances.