



1st September 2017

Freedom of Information Request Reference N^o: FOI 006102/17 & 006116/17

I write in connection with your request for information received by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 15th August 2017 in which you sought access to the following information:

Please tell me for each of the following financial years a) 2011/12 b) 2012/13 c) 2013/14 d) 2014/15 e) 2015/16 f) 2016/17 YTD

I would like to know how many officers have been forced to take in mental health patients due to a lack of beds at a local hospital. Not detained.

I'm referring to officers bringing vulnerable people into a custody suite due for their own safety while waiting for a bed at a hospital.

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 16th August 2017.

The Constabularies do not take in mental health patients due to a lack of beds at hospital. If they were going to be admitted to hospital for assessment then we would expect the mental health teams to already be involved and they would take responsibility for managing the admission of their patient even if bed availability were a problem.

The Mental Health Act is clear, only in exceptional circumstances should the police consider bringing someone under s.136 to a police custody suite for assessment (e.g. someone extremely violent). Those detained under s.136 are taken to a health based place of safety where they can be assessed under the MHA in the most appropriate setting.

Appropriate steps would be taken to safeguard a vulnerable person encountered by the police. We have a duty of care to ensure that no harm comes to a vulnerable person. It does not mean that we would detain someone using police powers under the Mental Health Act in order to achieve this, as the use of those police powers must be justifiable, proportionate and relevant to the circumstances at the time. Other agencies exist, such as Social Services, MH crisis teams, etc, who might be engaged by the police at point of contact to help determine how best to look after someone in crisis, but it would not result in the Constabularies taking someone into a police custody suite simply because there were no beds available in hospital.

This response will be published on the Constabularies web-site under the Freedom of Information pages:-

<https://www.norfolk.police.uk/about-us/our-data/disclosure-log>

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/services/freedom-information/disclosure-logs>

Should you have any further queries concerning this request, please contact Amanda Gibson, 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
Norfolk Constabulary
Operations and Communications Centre
Jubilee House
Falconers Chase
Wymondham
Norfolk NR18 0WW
OR
Email: freedomofinformation@norfolk.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 20 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