



15th September 2017

Freedom of Information Request Reference N^o: FOI 006143/17

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary on the 17th August 2017 in which you sought access to the following information:

Please can you provide me with the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on police overtime costs and police numbers.

I would like information on each of the following for the last three years, financial years would be preferred if possible.

- 1 What was the spend on overtime for your force in each of the past three years?
- 2 How much did the five highest overtime earners receive in each of those three years?
- 3 How many hours of police overtime were worked in each of the past three years?
- 4 How many full time police officers were employed by your force at the start of each of the last three years?

Response to your Request

When responding to a request for information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, a public authority is not obliged to provide information if the authority estimates that the cost of the retrieval of the information requested would be in excess of £450 (equivalent to 18 hours work).

The costs criteria relates to a request in its entirety, which means that if we cannot retrieve all of the information requested within the costs limit, we are not obliged to retrieve *any* of the information requested.

The Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies estimates that to retrieve all the information you have requested for both forces would exceed cost in excess of £450 (per force).

In order to establish what information is held, we have contacted our Finance Department. They have advised that information relating to the number of overtime hours for the last 2 financial years for Norfolk Constabulary can be retrieved within the cost limit. The information for prior to 2015/16 is not easily retrievable as it would require the manual review of all claim forms for the previous financial year.

This would be an enormous task which would significantly exceed the appropriate limit for dealing with a Freedom of Information request, in terms of costs, and therefore Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act applies.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 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 2004, defines the 'appropriate limit' for the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies as £450 for each Constabulary, and specifies that this sum equates to 18 hours work at a standard rate of £25 per hour.

In accordance with Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000), this serves as a Refusal Notice for your request.

Advice & Assistance

Although excess cost removes Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I have supplied information, relevant to your request, which was 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.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have located the following information as relevant to your request.

Police work by its very nature is 24/7. Whilst there are opportunities to predict expected demand at certain times based on previous experience there remains the need for a flexible approach.

Overtime is managed by the Resource Management Unit and reflects the outcomes of regular forward planning meetings reviewing forthcoming events (e.g. New Year's Eve, policing of football matches, key events in the evening economy).

Planning the use of overtime, based around evidence and analysis, helps the Constabularies predict the temporary resource increase required to police an incident or event. It is a more flexible response than simply increasing the base number of officers for an area which is ultimately more expensive. Therefore whilst every effort is made to ensure overtime is spent efficiently through our centralised team, it will always have a place in the police planning process.

In some circumstances the spend can be recovered from other Forces where we provide mutual aid.

Financial Year	Number of Hours – Suffolk	Number of Hours - Norfolk
2014/15	80,837	-
2015/16	71,214	130,769
2016/17	97,149	125,411

Financial Year	Overtime Spend – Suffolk	Overtime Spend - Norfolk
2014/15	2,104,209	2,998,904
2015/16	2,353,511	3,928,080
2016/17	2,832,770	3,676,392

It should be noted that when costs are re-charged between forces, in relation to overtime, the Constabularies do not move across the details of the corresponding number of hours. Therefore the costs will not be comparable to the number of hours for each force.

Date	Suffolk Police Officers		Norfolk Police Officers	
	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent
01/01/2015	1614	1563.29	1205	1173.62
01/01/2016	1571	1521.26	1115	1083.88
01/01/2017	1521	1470.25	1095	1065.57

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