



## Freedom of Information Request Reference N<sup>o</sup>: FOI 007063-17

I write in connection with your request for information received by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 31 October 2017 in which you sought access to the following information:

1. *"How many members of the Suffolk force (specifically police officers rather than police staff) have had time off work due to work related stress in the past five years? Please may I have a year by year figure?"*
2. *How many out of these were male? How many were female?*
3. *Can I please be given the ages of the aforementioned officers? How many females and how many males were 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64?*
4. *With relation to the above figures please can this also be broken down into: how many were off for more than a week, more than a fortnight, and more than one month?*
5. *Can you please outline the processes of dealing with work related stress and whether officers are referred to specialists?*
6. *What are the payments for officers who are off work due to this? Are they given full pay?*
7. *Will payments be reduced if staff members are off sick for an extended period of time? If so please can you outline this?"*

## Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 31 October 2017

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have considered your request for information and our 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.

Information pertaining to sickness absences as a result of work related stress is not captured in isolation of all other stress related absences. Stress related absence is all recorded under a single heading or 'stress related' in accordance with the 'Dorset 12 category' we use for Psychological disorders.

The provision of the full dataset will therefore include figures associated with other forms of stress related absence and will be misleading to provide under the description of 'work-related'.

There are over 120 stress related absences across the Constabularies in any one year. Each record will need to be reviewed to establish the underlying cause for the absence. This information could be contained within a number of associated records, some of which would require interpretation to decipher the cause of the stress related absence.

Considering there will be a great deal of information to review in order to extract the appropriate number of work related stress absences, the Constabularies consider it will take well in excess of 36 hours to establish an answer for the question as posed.

We base this on a calculation of 10 minutes per record, equating to 100 hours' worth of work.

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.

Officers and staff identified as suffering work related stress are able to access a number of services to support them, as follows:

- (a) Managers can refer to Workplace Health in order to receive guidance on supporting the individuals in the workplace.
- (b) Access to a Work Related Stress Assessment to allow them to reflect on what is causing the stress and for managers to help support an action plan to improve stressors.
- (c) 24/7 access to free Employee Assistance Programme offering access to speak to a counsellor on the phone, up to six sessions of structured 'brief solution focused therapy' counselling either face to face, via Skype, telephone or online chat, debt counselling, legal advice, child and elder care support and access via the vClub app/site. The EAP also offers a management advice line, and a management referral system where line managers can make a direct referral to the EAP who will then contact the individual and offer support.
- (d) Individuals are referred back to their GP if the brief solution focussed therapy is not appropriate.

Information concerning payments to officers and staff absent as a result of sickness is located within the Constabularies sickness policy, located on the website via the following link:

<http://www.suffolk.police.uk/services/freedom-information/policies-procedures-and-equality>

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](mailto: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 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](http://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