



Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 003348-20

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies on 5 October 2020 which you sought access to the following information:

1. *“What NPCC guidelines you are required to follow for the collection of mobile evidence. Can you please provide a copy of the guidelines for me to directly reference in my research project.*
2. *What evidence is usually sought for collection in a cyber stalking or harassment case. I am trying to understand the type of evidence collected to help evaluate the relevant NPCC guidance and support my production of a leaflet for university students.*
3. *How many cases of stalking or harassment have been recorded (with figures per year) over the past 5 years. I am specifically interested in those using digital platforms to carry out the harassment or stalking, i.e. cyber enabled crimes.”*

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 21 October 2020

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

1. There is nothing specifically called NPCC Guidelines, the document the Constabularies refer to is entitled ‘ACPO Good Practice Guide for Digital Evidence’.

This is a National document, which is available online, however a copy is attached for reference.

2. Each investigation is assessed on a case by case basis therefore there is no specific information held in regards to the request specifically. Police comply with the Code of Practice to the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) which states that Investigators should follow all reasonable lines of enquiry to gather material which points both towards and away from a suspect.

Cyber stalking covers a vast variety of offences, and harassment is separate legislation, different again.

The following links may assist further:

Code of Practice to the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-procedure-and-investigations-act-code-of-practice>

CPS guide to Reasonable lines of enquiry:

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/disclosure-guide-reasonable-lines-enquiry-and-communications-evidence>

3. A search has been completed of the Constabularies crime system for all recorded stalking offences for the 2016 – 2020 calendar years (to date), that fall under the following offence titles:

- Attempted - Harassment - Pursue course of conduct in breach of Sec 1 (1) which amounts to stalking
- Harassment - Pursue course of conduct in breach of Sec 1 (1) which amounts to stalking
- Stalking involving fear of violence
- Stalking involving serious alarm/distress

The information provided below confirms the total number of offences recorded by year, is as follows:

Offence	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Norfolk Constabulary					
Attempted - Breach of a restraining order		1	1	1	
Attempted - Harassment - Pursue course of conduct in breach of Sec 1 (1) which amounts to stalking					7
Attempted - Harassment - Putting people in fear of violence			2		
Attempted - Harassment - without violence (course of conduct)		2	6	1	
Breach of a restraining order	420	751	594	518	441
Breach of conditions of injunction against harassment	8	52	50	37	23
Harassment - Pursue course of conduct in breach of Sec 1 (1) which amounts to stalking	79	186	417	321	2127
Harassment - Putting people in fear of violence	104	206	214	220	223
Harassment - without violence (course of conduct)	1495	2615	3419	4519	4280
Harassment etc. of a person in his home	3	25	61	80	35
Stalking involving fear of violence	23	78	142	79	248
Stalking involving serious alarm/distress	60	188	207	256	365
Grand Total	2192	4104	5113	6032	7749

Suffolk Constabulary					
Attempted - Breach of a restraining order	1				
Attempted - Harassment - Pursue course of conduct in breach of Sec 1 (1) which amounts to stalking		4	5		
Attempted - Harassment - Putting people in fear of violence				2	
Attempted - Harassment - without violence (course of conduct)	2	3	3		1
Breach of a restraining order	314	615	352	418	242
Breach of conditions of injunction against harassment	16	22	36	24	7
Harassment - Pursue course of conduct in breach of Sec 1 (1) which amounts to stalking	84	649	481	265	1347
Harassment - Putting people in fear of violence	92	116	283	315	155
Harassment - without violence (course of conduct)	1932	4013	5604	5579	3717
Harassment etc. of a person in his home	1	7	53	19	25
Stalking involving fear of violence	33	71	94	76	116
Stalking involving serious alarm/distress	105	163	245	192	287
Grand Total	2580	5663	7156	6890	5897

The total number of stalking offences recorded with an online flag is provided in the table below including the offence category. The increase since 2016 is potentially as a result of better force wide awareness of the use of the online flag within the crime system. This is a non-mandatory flag and consequently may not be wholly accurate.

Offence	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Norfolk Constabulary					
Cyber-Enabled	76				
Online Crime	24	115	177	222	408
Grand Total	100	115	177	222	408
Suffolk Constabulary					
Cyber-Enabled	68				
Online Crime	67	146	200	338	414
Grand Total	135	146	200	338	414

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