



**NORFOLK**  
CONSTABULARY  
*Our Priority is You*

Norfolk Constabulary

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Dear

**Freedom of Information Request Reference N<sup>o</sup>: FOI 003002/16**

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk Constabulary on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2016 in which you sought access to the following information:

During 2014 and 2015...

- 1 How many instances of petrol theft were there from stations in Norfolk?
- 2 Can this please be broken down into month and location (if not exact petrol station, town or city is fine)?
- 3 Can you also provide the cost of these thefts, again broken down if possible.
- 4 Could you also give the number of arrests and charges related to petrol thefts please? (These do not have to correlate to incidents, as I appreciate that would be time consuming.)

If finding the arrests would make the time limit too much, then please disregard.

Norfolk Constabulary holds information relevant to your request.

**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 Constabulary estimates that to retrieve all the information you have requested would exceed cost in excess of £450.

In order to establish what relevant information is held we have contacted our Joint Performance and Analysis Department (JPAD). They have advised that with regard to part 1 of your request, there are 153 recorded crimes of making off without paying for petrol from a garage, for 2014 and up to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Additionally there are 180 crimes, for the same period, which refer to fuel only. Each of these would need to be manually reviewed to see if they refer to the theft of petrol.

A new crime recording database was introduced from 19<sup>th</sup> October and there are 106 crimes recorded that again refer to making off without payment. Each of these would need to be reviewed

to see if these relate to filling stations/garages and if they refer to the theft of fuel. If someone fails to pay for a meal at a restaurant this is also recorded as making off without payment.

In addition to the above, there are 111 arrest records which are also for the offence of making off without payment. These too could include arrests for non-payment of meals, etc.

Therefore in order to provide you with an accurate response, it would be necessary to review each of these crime and arrest records. If we base our timings on a minimum of 3 minutes per record, this would take almost 20 hours to complete. It is likely that the arrest records would take 5 minutes each. JPAD have already spent over 6.5 hours carrying out the above research.

Therefore this would considerably 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 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 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000), this serves as a Refusal Notice for your request.

#### Advice & Assistance

Although excess cost removes Norfolk Constabulary’s obligation 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.

PLEASE NOTE – the following relates to petrol theft only.

Q1 The Joint Performance and Analysis Department has researched the number of reported incidents of petrol theft (bilking) from garages and also the number of recorded crimes. The number of crimes will be much lower as many of the initial reported incidents do not result in a crime being recorded due to the individual returning to pay for the fuel.

Year	Incidents Reported	Recorded Crimes
2014	329	82
2015	261	71 (to 19 <sup>th</sup> October)
Total	590	153

As advised above, there are also 180 crimes, to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015, where the fuel type is not easily extractable.

This response will be published on the Norfolk Constabulary’s web-site [www.norfolk.police.uk](http://www.norfolk.police.uk) under the Freedom of Information pages.