



NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY
Our Priority is You

November 2016

Freedom of Information Request Reference N^o: FOI 003709/16

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk Constabulary on the 10th October 2016 in which you sought access to the following information:

I am looking into this after seeing a story in the Northampton Chronicle about the work of Northants Police in this area: <http://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/investigation-team-targeting-online-paedophiles-in-northants-has-seen-a-330-per-cent-increase-in-cases-1-7597903>

It said that since setting up a specialist unit, the force has seen a large increase in the number of such reports; presumably because of the good detective work the unit is doing.

I am interested in finding out how other forces are handling what I suspect is an increasing problem. With that in mind I'd be grateful if you were able to answer the below questions.

- 1 Do you have a specialist team to investigate online sexual offences, or is it part of general police work?
- 2 If so, how many people are on that team, and when was it set up?
- 3 How many suspects have been identified with regard to online sexual offences (ie... people who download and distribute indecent images of children) in 2016, 2015 and 2014?
- 4 How many of these people have been convicted as a result?

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 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, for the full period requested, we have contacted our Joint Performance and Analysis Department (JPAD). They have advised that there have been 768 crimes recorded which relate to the possession or distribution of indecent images. To confirm whether these related to online offences, it would be necessary to review the circumstances of each crime report. Even based on just 3 minutes per report, this would exceed the 18 hour cost limit.

It would be necessary to further review these crimes to identify the number of suspects and offenders relating to these crimes.

This would exceed 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 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 the Constabulary’s 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 Constabulary has had a dedicated Safeguarding Children Online Team (SCOLT), to investigate online sexual offences against children, since July 2014.

Please see below offences broken down by calendar year. Due to a change in the crime recording system, used by the Constabulary, the offence wording changed in October 2015.

Offence Details	Number of Crimes
2014	
Possession Of An Indecent Or Pseudo Photograph Of A Child	69
Take Or To Make Indecent Photographs Or Pseudo-Photographs Of Children	75
2015	
Possessing prohibited images of children	4
Possession Of An Indecent Or Pseudo Photograph Of A Child	113
Take Or To Make Indecent Photographs Or Pseudo-Photographs Of Children	165
Take or to make or to distribute indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs, of children	52
2016	
Attempted - Take or to make or to distribute indecent photographs or pseudo- photographs, of children	3
Possessing prohibited images of children	5
Possession of an indecent or pseudo indecent photo of a child	43
Take or to make or to distribute indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs, of children	239
Total	768

Statistical information regarding convictions is held by the HM Courts & Tribunals Service.