



April 2017

**Freedom of Information Request Reference N<sup>o</sup>: FOI 004132/17**

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk Constabulary on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017 in which you sought access to the following information:

I am seeking information about the number of children who have gone missing in recent years. Please provide the following information relating to children aged under 16 in your force area:

- I Total number of instances children were reported missing in 2014-2017.
- II Number of instances children were reported missing from a children's home in 2014 - 2017.
- III Number of children reported missing who met your criteria as being at risk of CSE in period Apr 2014 - 2017.
- IV Total number of children who have been reported missing more than once between period 2014 - 2017.
- V Number of children who have been reported missing more than once from a children's home between 2014- 2017.
- VI The amount of money spent by the force on missing children's cases between 2014- 2017?
- VII Number of outstanding missing children's cases between 2014 - 2017?

I would like this information broken down annually up to the time that this request is answered.

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 identify relevant information we have contacted our Safeguarding and Investigations Command. They have advised that research has been undertaken of missing person records for children aged under 16. For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017, there have been 2,884 instances of children reported missing. With regard to question 3, it would be necessary to manually review each of these records to see if it refers to being a CSE related investigation. Even based on just 3 minutes each, this would be a significant task and would take in excess of 144 hours.

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 and 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.

#### Q1

Financial Year	Missing Reports for Children aged Under 16
2014/15	871
2015/16	828
2016/17	1185

#### Q2

Financial Year	Number of Reports for Children Under 16 Missing from a Children’s Home
2014/15	220
2015/16	133
2016/17	166

#### Q4

Financial Year	Number of Children, Under 16, Reported Missing More Than Once
2014/15	120
2015/16	115
2016/17	176

#### Q5

Financial Year	Number of Children, Under 16, Reported Missing More Than Once From a Children’s Home
2014/15	25
2015/16	21
2016/17	30

Q6 This information is not collated and therefore not held by the Constabulary.

Q7 As at 20<sup>th</sup> March, 5 children are recorded as outstanding missing cases, during the period requested.