



January 2020

## **Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 004653/19**

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 30<sup>th</sup> December 2019 in which you sought access to the following information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act please could you tell me how many children and people under the age of 18 have been arrested in Norfolk AND Suffolk during 2018 and 2019 in relation to drug offences (ie possession, supply or production under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971) or County Lines investigations.

Please could you tell me:

The person's age and gender, a brief summary of offence they were arrested for, whether or not they were charged and whether or not they were referred onto a partner agency.

## **Response to your Request**

The response provided below is correct as of 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have considered your request and our response is below.

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 and Suffolk Constabularies estimates that to retrieve all the information you have requested for both forces would exceed cost in excess of £450 (per force).

The Constabularies can provide the number of persons aged under 18 who have been arrested in relation to drug offences. There is no indicator to identify whether the arrest is linked to County Lines investigations. In 2018 and 2019, there have been a total of 439 arrests. It would exceed the cost limit to review each detention record, and any association investigation, to see whether the arrested person was referred on to a partner agency.

Based on the number of arrests, this would 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 and Suffolk Constabularies as £450 for each Constabulary, 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 Constabularies obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, we have supplied information, relative 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 see below figures.

Total arrests of under 18s

Year	Possession or Supply	Number of Arrests
<b>NORFOLK</b>		
2018	Drugs – Supply	85
	Drugs – Possession	34
2019	Drugs – Supply	82
	Drugs – Possession	40
<b>SUFFOLK</b>		
2018	Drugs – Supply	55
	Drugs – Possession	21
	Drugs – Cultivation	1
2019	Drugs – Supply	93
	Drugs – Possession	26
	Drugs - Production	2

Breakdown by Gender

Year	Female	Male	Not Recorded / Unspecified
<b>NORFOLK</b>			
2018	10	109	0
2019	13	107	2
<b>SUFFOLK</b>			
2018	7	70	0
2019	11	110	0

Age Category

Year	11 – 14 years	15 – 17 years
<b>NORFOLK</b>		
2018	8	111

2019	11	111
<b>SUFFOLK</b>		
2018	5	72
2019	14	107

The following figures reflect the number of custody records closed as 'charged'. Other custody outcomes have not been requested. Additionally, there will be cases that are still under investigation.

Year	Number Charged
<b>NORFOLK</b>	
2018	34
2019	13
<b>SUFFOLK</b>	
2018	18
2019	9