



March 2020

## **Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 000703/20**

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in which you sought access to the following information:

I would like to know the numbers of reported incidents of postage theft in your police force.

I would like this data for the last two calendar years – 2018 and 2019.

If possible, could this data be broken down by the postcode area in which it occurred.

Could you supply this data electronically in spreadsheet form please.

## **Response to your Request**

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

Although there is an offence category of 'Theft of Mail', there will be additional crimes recorded relevant to this request but recorded under other offence categories, for example 'Other Theft'. In order to extract all relevant offences, we would need to review all theft offences, of which there are many thousands for the two years requested and this would take well in excess of 36 hours.

A freetext search for the words 'Mail', 'Parcel', 'Package', 'Post', 'Letter' returned 373 offences, each of which would need to be reviewed to ensure they are relevant to the request. Freetext searches are also wholly unreliable and there is no guarantee that there aren't other relevant offences which have not been captured by this search.

In relation to your request for information and in accordance with Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), this response serves as a formal notification of refusal for your request. The Constabularies do not hold, for the purposes of FOIA, all of the information you require in a retrievable format.

It is estimated that to attempt to retrieve all of the information you require would take a considerable amount of retrieval time, exceeding 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 2000 applies.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 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, defines the 'appropriate limit' for the Constabularies as £450 and specifies that this sum equates to 18 hours work per force at a standard rate of £25 per hour. This equates to 36 hours of work, or £900, for joint responses. In accordance with Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter serves as a refusal notice for this part of your request.

By requesting all information your request is too broad to be complied with within the limit imposed on Freedom of Information requests.

Although excess cost removes the Force's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I have supplied information, relative to your request, 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.

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Norfolk</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>185</b>
OTHER THEFT	46	55	101
THEFT BY AN EMPLOYEE	7	2	9
THEFT IN A DWELLING OTHER AUTO MACH	3	8	11
THEFT OF MAIL	28	36	64
<b>Suffolk</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>188</b>
OTHER THEFT	63	54	117
THEFT BY AN EMPLOYEE	-	3	3
THEFT FROM THE PERSON	-	1	1
THEFT IN A DWELLING OTHER AUTO MACH	4	4	8
THEFT OF MAIL	25	34	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>373</b>