



March 2020

Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 000763/20

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 20th February 2020 in which you sought access to the following information:

Since 1 April 2017 to the present date:

- 1 How many reports were made in which controlling or coercive behaviour was the principal offence?
- 2 How many of those reports resulted in the arrest of the suspect?
- 3 How many of those reports resulted in charges against the suspect?
- 4 How many of those reports resulted in no further action against the suspect? If possible, please provide the reason behind each decision.
- 5 How many of those suspects went on to commit domestic homicide against their intimate partner?

Please provide a breakdown by year and gender of both the suspect and victim in response to each question - please provide the data in an Excel spreadsheet format.

I am interested in any information held regarding my request. If you anticipate any problems with providing the information requested or require clarification, please let me know at the earliest possible stage.

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 24th February 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 (2000), 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 estimate that to retrieve all of the information you have requested would exceed cost in excess of £450 per force.

Since 1st April 2017, Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have recorded 2,094 crimes in relation to controlling and coercive behaviour. In order to confirm the number of arrests which have been made in relation to these reports, it would be necessary to review each case and cross-reference with custody records. There will be occasions where individuals are arrested for other domestic related offences which result in a crime of controlling and coercive being recorded. Therefore it is not possible to obtain an extract of arrests, for this specific offence, which would produce an accurate response.

Based on the number of crimes, this research would significantly 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 Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies as £450, and specifies that this sum equates to 18 hours work at a standard rate of £25 per hour, per force.

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 and Suffolk Constabularies 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.

Please see below which detail the number of recorded crimes and the crime outcomes. Figures are to 22nd February 2020.

Please note, research for question 5, has resulted in a nil return for both Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies.

Year	Primary Offence	
	Attempted – Engage in controlling/coercive behaviour in an intimate/family relationship	Engage in controlling/coercive behaviour in an intimate/family relationship
NORFOLK		
2017/18	0	188
2018/19	0	277
2019/20	1	533
SUFFOLK		
2017/18	0	267
2018/19	0	358
2019/20	1	469

Crime Outcome	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
NORFOLK			
Type 1 - Charged/Summonsed/Postal Requisition	20	23	21
Type 1A - Charged/Summons - alternate offence. Offender has been charged under the alternate offence rule	3	6	1
Type 2 - Caution Youth	1	0	0
Type 3 - Caution Adult	3	1	1
Type 3A - Caution Adult - alternate offence. Offender has been given a simple caution under the alternate offences rule	2	0	1

Type 5 – Offender has died	1	0	0
Type 9 – Prosecution Not In the Public Interest (CPS)	0	2	0
Type 10 - Formal Action Against Offender is not in the Public Interest (Police)	5	3	7
Type 12 - Prosecution Prevented-Named Suspect Identified But Is Too Ill (Physical Or Mental Health) To Prosecute	1	0	0
Type 13 - Prosecution Prevented-Named Suspect Identified But Victim Or Key Witness Is Dead Or Too Ill To Give Evidence	0	1	2
Type 14 - Evidential Difficulties Victim Based- Suspect Not Identified: Crime Confirmed But The Victim Either Declines Or Unable To Support Further Police Investigation To Identify The Offender	0	5	12
Type 15 - Named Suspect Identified: Victim Supports Police Action But Evidential Difficulties Prevent Further Action	64	85	91
Type 16 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties Prevent Further Action: Victim Does Not Support (Or Has Withdrawn Support From) Police Action	84	142	272
Type 18 - Investigation Complete; No Suspect Identified. Crime Investigated As Far As Reasonably Possible-Case Closed Pending Further Investigative Opportunities Becoming Available	2	1	3
Type 20 - Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the act to be taken	2	3	11
Not Recorded / Under Investigation	0	5	112
TOTAL	188	277	534
SUFFOLK			
Type 1 - Charged/Summoned/Postal Requisition	21	19	13
Type 1A - Charged/Summons - alternate offence. Offender has been charged under the alternate offence rule	21	4	1
Type 3 - Caution Adult	1	0	1
Type 3A - Caution Adult - alternate offence. Offender has been given a simple caution under the alternate offences rule	2	0	0
Type 5 – Offender has died	0	0	1
Type 8 - Community resolution (Crime)	1	0	0
Type 9 – Prosecution Not In the Public Interest (CPS)	2	2	1
Type 10 - Formal Action Against Offender is not in the Public Interest (Police)	2	1	2
Type 12 - Prosecution Prevented-Named Suspect Identified But Is Too Ill (Physical Or Mental Health) To Prosecute	0	0	1
Type 13 - Prosecution Prevented-Named Suspect Identified But Victim Or Key Witness Is Dead Or Too Ill To Give Evidence	1	1	1
Type 14 - Evidential Difficulties Victim Based- Suspect Not Identified: Crime Confirmed But The Victim Either Declines Or Unable To Support Further Police Investigation To Identify The Offender	0	2	5
Type 15 - Named Suspect Identified: Victim Supports Police Action But Evidential Difficulties Prevent Further Action	62	132	84
Type 16 - Named Suspect Identified: Evidential Difficulties Prevent Further Action: Victim Does Not Support (Or Has Withdrawn Support From) Police Action	140	170	207
Type 17 - Prosecution Time Limit Expired: Suspect Identified But Prosecution Time Limit Has Expired	0	1	0
Type 18 - Investigation Complete; No Suspect Identified. Crime Investigated As Far As Reasonably Possible-Case Closed Pending Further Investigative Opportunities Becoming Available	0	4	2
Type 20 - Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the act to be taken	12	10	10
Type 21 - Further investigation resulting from crime report which could	0	0	1

provide evidence sufficient to support formal action against the suspect is not in the public interest - police decision			
Not Recorded / Under Investigation	2	12	140
TOTAL	267	358	470

Coercion and control are serious elements of domestic abuse, as offences covered by the legislation relate to persistent acts by trusted individuals, that cause significant harm to the victims of that abuse.

Whilst these are not necessarily physically violent acts, they can have long term effects on the mental health and confidence of the individuals affected.

Invariably the offences are often perpetrated 'behind closed doors' and, as with all domestic abuse crimes, the lack of witnesses and manipulation of the victim provides significant challenge when investigations are considered for prosecution within the Criminal Justice System. This is not always the outcome sought by the victim and many find that the additional strain of the court system is a challenge too far. The policing approach is to ensure the victim is at the centre of thinking, and decision making, albeit providing a consistent and robust stance of 'positive action' where perpetrators are concerned. The outcome for each reported situation needs to be focussed on the needs of that particular victim.

Our continuing investment in training staff to recognise the signs of domestic abuse, and coercive and controlling behaviour, ensures that offences are identified correctly and victims are given the appropriate support, which enables us to deal with perpetrators accordingly. The well-established Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) team cover the entire county and are key to supporting victims throughout investigations by giving advice and guidance.

All allegations of domestic abuse will be treated as a priority by agencies and fully investigated. Victims will be provided the respect they deserve and perpetrators will be pursued to conviction, wherever this is the appropriate outcome. Most importantly victims will be signposted to the help and support they need to recover from an abusive relationship and to help them and their families move on to a brighter future free from abuse.