



Gary Maxey
Information Rights
Bedfordshire Police Headquarters,
Woburn Road, Kempston,
Bedford, MK43 9AX

Telephone: 01234 842547
Email: foi@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

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Our Ref: FOI2019/01730

Dear Requestor,

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 Ref No: FOI2019/01730

I write in connection with your request for information received on 14th March. I note you seek access to the following information:

In the 2016, 2017 and 2018 calendar years:

1.How many crime reports did your force receive?

2.How many of these crime reports were assessed to be not requiring further investigation? This is sometimes referred to as the crime report being assessed “out”, meaning it will not be investigated.

3.How many of the crime reports were assessed as “out” - or not requiring further investigation - by telephone operators at the force, with no appointment with the caller in person?

4.How many of the crime reports were assessed as “out” - or not requiring further investigation - by telephone operators at the force after just one phone call?

5.The Metropolitan Police has a dedicated telephone and digital investigation unit [TDIU]. Does your force have an equivalent telephone and digital investigation unit, what is its name and how many crime reports did this unit assess in each of the calendar years (2016, 2017 and 2018)?

6.Please can you attach the latest guide or guides given to new staff working in this unit, explaining how they should assess whether crime reports require further investigation?

7.Please can you provide a spreadsheet with categories for different crimes reported to this unit in each of the calendar years (2016, 2017 and 2018), how many reports were in each category and how many of these were assessed to be not requiring further investigation?

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (The Act) to handle all requests in a manner that is blind to the identity of the requestor. Any information released in response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore, in the public domain without caveat.

RESPONSE - Following enquiries conducted by Bedfordshire Police databases please see our response in the tables below: -

Bedfordshire Police made a significant investment in **a new ICT system, Athena, in May** of this year which, when fully implemented, will help keep Bedfordshire safe, bring more offenders to justice and improve outcomes for victims. Updating our ICT was absolutely necessary to ensure Bedfordshire Police remains as effective and efficient as possible. The public should be reassured crime continues to be reported and investigated as normal but whilst colleagues become more comfortable and familiar with how Athena works Bedfordshire Police has some concerns around data quality for which reason some of the data provided concerning events recorded after 23 May, may include some inaccuracies. We apologise for the situation and are working to resolve it as soon as possible.

January 1 st to December 31 st 2016			
Crime Type	Crimes	Screened	% Screened
Homicide	3	0	0.00%
Violence with Injury	421	87	20.70%
Violence without Injury	495	107	21.60%
Rape	45	2	4.40%
Other Sexual Offences	49	7	14.30%
Robbery	44	5	11.40%
Burglary Dwelling	289	134	46.40%
Burglary - Non Dwelling	156	104	66.70%
Vehicle Offences	507	405	79.90%
Theft from the Person	44	23	52.30%
Bicycle Theft	77	40	51.90%
Shoplifting	308	91	29.50%
Other Theft	367	189	51.50%
Arson	18	7	38.90%
Criminal Damage	466	292	62.70%
Trafficking of Drugs	20	0	0.00%
Possession of Drugs	93	0	0.00%
Possession of Weapons	25	0	0.00%
Public Order	147	38	25.90%
Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	50	4	8.00%
Total	3624	1535	42.40%

January 1st to December 31st 2017

Crime Type	Crimes	Screened	% Screened
Homicide	1	0	0.00%
Violence with Injury	4449	628	14.10%
Violence without Injury	7212	1226	17.00%
Rape	398	11	2.80%
Other Sexual Offences	682	52	7.60%
Robbery	748	84	11.20%
Burglary Dwelling	4204	2385	56.70%
Burglary - Non Dwelling	1608	965	60.00%
Vehicle Offences	5935	4490	75.70%
Theft from the Person	681	296	43.50%
Bicycle Theft	1069	544	50.90%
Shoplifting	4062	1586	39.00%
Other Theft	5101	2680	52.50%
Arson	216	101	46.80%
Criminal Damage	5546	3313	59.70%
Trafficking of Drugs	209	7	3.30%
Possession of Drugs	927	17	1.80%
Possession of Weapons	436	8	1.80%
Public Order	2433	452	18.60%
Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	534	65	12.20%

Total	46451	18910	40.70%
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January 1st to May 22nd 2018

Crime Type	Crimes	Screened	% Screened
Homicide	2	0	0.00%
Violence with Injury	1748	348	19.90%
Violence without Injury	3323	836	25.20%
Rape	143	8	5.60%
Other Sexual Offences	267	33	12.40%
Robbery	278	31	11.20%
Burglary Dwelling	1830	1054	57.60%
Burglary - Non Dwelling	590	334	56.60%
Vehicle Offences	2638	1999	75.80%
Theft from the Person	289	131	45.30%
Bicycle Theft	408	207	50.70%
Shoplifting	1530	698	45.60%
Other Theft	2034	1077	52.90%
Arson	93	42	45.20%
Criminal Damage	2277	1367	60.00%
Trafficking of Drugs	57	0	0.00%
Possession of Drugs	408	12	2.90%
Possession of Weapons	127	8	6.30%
Public Order	1123	273	24.30%
Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	260	43	16.50%
Total	19425	8501	43.80%

5) Bedfordshire Police do not have a dedicated telephone and digital investigation unit.

6) Bedfordshire police can confirm that it holds information in relation to your request however, I am not obliged to supply some of the information you have requested. Such information is exempt under the following exemption: -

Section 31 (1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement

The Section 31 exemption is a prejudice based qualified exemption.

A prejudice based / qualified exemption to which requires the prejudice (harm) to be evidenced and a public interest test to be carried out. This means it can only be used if the public interest test favours non-disclosure.

Section 31(1) of the Act provides:

Law Enforcement

(1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice: -

- (a) The prevention or detection of crime,
- (b) The apprehension or prosecution of offenders,

Application of the prejudice test

Disclosure of the 'crime evaluation and solvability assessment guidelines' would harm the force's operational ability by allowing those intent on committing crime to identify police procedures and assist them in avoiding detection, putting communities at risk of crime and therefore, increasing the fear of crime within Bedfordshire.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure - section 31

There is a public interest in the transparency of policing matters and disclosure of 'crime evaluation' would improve public confidence regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of such policing matters around crime recording and subsequent investigations.

Factors favouring non-disclosure - section 31

Disclosure of the 'crime evaluation and solvability assessment guidelines' would mean that individuals could research details about them and their capabilities. To disclose the strengths and any possible weaknesses of this process would compromise law enforcement tactics which could lead to more crime being committed and individuals being placed at risk. It may also be used by criminals in combination with other information they have gathered to try and prejudice law enforcement.

Access to this information could be used by individuals or groups, who are intent on criminal activity, to identify and exploit the limitations of these resources, thus hindering the prevention and detection of crime and increasing the risk to public safety.

Balance Test

Whilst there is a strong public interest in how public money is being spent and how the Police service engages with its law enforcement role Bedfordshire Police has a duty to deliver effective law enforcement. Criminal elements could use this information to undermine our law enforcement functions. The Police service will not divulge any information which could hinder the prevention and detection of crime and also adversely impact on the apprehension and prosecution of offenders. The Service has a duty to protect the community it serves and needs to use exemptions appropriately to protect information if the release of that information would have an adverse impact on the community. Although there is public interest in knowing how crimes are evaluated there is a greater public interest in ensuring that criminal activities are both detected and prevented so ensuring the safety and well-being of the public. I am therefore satisfied that in respect of this request the public interest lies in not disclosing the information in part concerning the crime evaluation and solvability assessment guidelines'.

7) Not applicable

Should you have any further enquiries concerning this matter please do not hesitate to contact me quoting the above reference number.

Yours sincerely

Gary Maxey
Information Rights

Bedfordshire Police provides you the right to request an independent review of this response under its review procedure. If you require such a review you must notify us within two months from the date of this letter. After lodging a complaint with Bedfordshire Police if you are still dissatisfied with the decision you may make an application to the Information Commissioner. For information on how to make a complaint please visit their website at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/> or contact them on 0303 123 1113.