



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

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

8th November 2019

Our Ref: FOI2019/06637

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 Ref No: FOI2019/06637

I write in connection with your request for information received on 15th October. I note you seek access to the following information:

- Please could you provide the following information;**
- 1. How many police officers are currently trained to use of a Taser.**
 - 2. Which departments/units (i.e. Roads Policing/Neighbourhood Policing) contain officers who carry Tasers.**
 - 3. Do you intend to increase the number of Taser trained officers over the next 12 months.**
 - 4. If so, by how many.**
 - 5. Are Tasers issued to any officer who wish's to undergo the training required.**

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 and their training department please see our response below:-

1. 134
2. See Section 31 exemption below.
3. Yes
4. Not known
5. All officers have to be up to date with their basic first aid training, personal safety training and have a valid eye sight test. TASER's are not personal issue devices. Officers who undergo and pass the required training are then entitled to draw a TASER each working day from an armoury. If the officer has their permit withdrawn or they lapse in a co-requisite skill that requires further training, they are no longer permitted to draw and carry a TASER.

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

Section 31(a)(b) – Law Enforcement

The Section 31 exemption is a prejudice based qualified exemption, which requires the prejudice (harm) to be evidenced and a public interest test to be carried out.

Public Interest arguments in favour of disclosure – Section 31 (1)

It is recognised that the police service have a duty to enforce the law and investigate crime and in this case the public release of information would therefore reinforce the forces commitment as an open and transparent service in respect of the information it holds.

Public Interest arguments in favour of maintaining the exemption – Section 31 (1)

Bedfordshire Police is to ensure operational policing and law enforcement is not affected by revealing tactical capability, which could assist criminals in understanding the tactical options / vulnerabilities of forces.

Disclosing which departments and units contain officers who carry Tasers would harm the force's operational ability by allowing those intent on committing crime to identify those officers and assist them in avoiding detection.

If all of Bedfordshire Police's officers, departments and teams were publically made available it would allow identification of all those used by the force and would contribute to the sum of criminal knowledge to a greater extent than that already existing from currently available sources. As a result this would put communities at a greater risk of crime if the information was disclosed than if not and therefore increasing the fear of crime within Bedfordshire.

Balance Test

The strongest reason favouring disclosure is the public interest in disclosing information that would provide the public awareness of training and action taken by Bedfordshire Police, where and how the public's money is being spent, which increases transparency and accountability.

The strongest reason favouring non-disclosure is the significance and sensitivity of the requested information as it relates tactical options / vulnerabilities of forces and the wider law enforcement. To provide information of this nature would significantly reduce the forces ability to enforce the law.

After consideration of the factors of the public interest test they are clearly weighed in favour of non-disclosure. Looking at the most important factors of the test it was clear the public interest in the force's ability to prevent crime and have effective law enforcement tactics in place, significantly outweighs the competing interests. Therefore, the public interest favours non-disclosure of the requested information.

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

Yours sincerely

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.