



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

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

23rd October 2019

Our Ref: FOI2019/06240

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 Ref No: FOI2019/06240

I write in connection with your request for information received on 27th September. I note you seek access to the following information:

The purpose of this request is to provide Mind, the mental health charity, with information on the use of spit guards by police across England and Wales, with particular regard to their impact on people with mental health problems. This will inform our policy development. Decision to introduce spit guards

- 1. If your police force has considered the use of spit guards and decided not to use them, either outside custody or at all, please provide: a. the reasons for this decision b. any risk assessment used in making this decision.**
- 2. If your police force uses spit hoods or has decided to use them (whether in custody only or in frontline activity as well), please respond to the rest of the FOI.**

Use of spit guards.

- 3. When were spit guards introduced in your force?**
- 4. Are they used in custody only or custody and frontline activity?**
- 5. Please provide: a. your policy on the use and review of spit guard's b. The reasons for introducing them and details of the assessments made to reach the decision c. The equality impact assessment on the introduction of spit guards d. The risk assessment made of their use on i. vulnerable people ii. People with mental health problems specifically e. Details of guidance and training provided to officers on the use of spit guards specifically, and on de-escalation and the use of force tactics more generally f. Details of any assessment or review of the use and impact of spit guards in your force since they were deployed.**

Data please provide the following data:

- 6. How many times spit guards were used in your police force in: a. 2017-18 b. 2018-19 (or for as much of the year as data is available, with dates)**
- 7. For the above periods, how many times police officers were spat at.**
- 8. For the above periods, how many times spit guards were used: a. on a person with a 'mental disability' b. where mental health was an impact factor c. where acute behavioural disturbance was an impact factor d. and for each of the above categories: i. how many times a spit guard was used in conjunction with ground restraint ii. The ethnicity, age and gender of the subject. If it is easier to supply a spreadsheet of incident-level data for uses of force for the above periods instead, please do so. Thank you**

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.

1. n/a
2. As below
3. Spit Guard – The low number (7) for the last three months of 2016 probably reflects that the use of Spit Protection had not yet been rolled out across the Bedfordshire Police area. Spit Protection is only issued to Officers following successful completion of relevant Personal Safety Training.
4. Custody generally
5. Bedfordshire Police does not hold a policy for use of spit hoods/guards but the National Decision Model Making Model, as per College of Policing guide is always considered and adhered to. A risk assessment form is completed when used.

See website link for NDMM: - <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/the-national-decision-model/>)

6. See attached document marked as Annex A – FOI2019 06240 and the website link published by Bedfordshire Police, which may also be useful for you.

<https://www.bedfordshire.police.uk/assets/PDFs/Use-of-force/Use-of-Force-Summary-April-to-June-2019.pdf>

7. See attached document marked as Annex A – FOI2019 06240

8. See attached document marked as Annex A – FOI2019 06240

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

Yours sincerely

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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.