



Information Rights
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8th January 2020

Our Ref: FOI2019/07856

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 Ref No: FOI2019/07856

I write in connection with your request for information received on 16th December. I note you seek access to the following information:

1. The number of referrals to children's social care that have been made as a result of the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme in the calendar years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 (up to the most recent point for which figures are available).

If providing all of the information exceeds the cost or time limits set out under the Act, I would like to receive as much information as possible, starting in 2019 and working backwards.

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 officers and staff within the Force and your request concerning the number of referrals to children's social care that have been made as a result of the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme in the calendar years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. This information is not centrally recorded and in order for us to be able to answer your questions and retrieve the information will require a manual search and review of hundreds of incident reports to establish its relevance to your request. As a result of this and subsequent processes it will take in excess of the 18 hour time limit to secure the data and therefore make this request over cost.

Unfortunately this means it is not possible to suggest a way to refine this request, as even if the date range were reduced it would still require hundreds of records to be manually checked.

We therefore, consider that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the appropriate limit of £450 as has been stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees & Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides that –
"Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit."

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Bedfordshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act.

However, I am able to provide the following information relative to your request, retrieved before the fees limit was exceeded. I hope this is helpful however; it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request.

Bedfordshire Police made a significant investment in a new ICT system, Athena, in May 2018, 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 2018, may include some inaccuracies. We apologise for the situation and are working to resolve it as soon as possible.

In 2018, there were 25 reports with a correct classification of CSODS. 15 of these refer to children's social care.

In 2019, there were 23 reports with a correct classification of CSODS. 7 of these refer to children's social care.

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.