



Information Rights
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16th January 2020

Our Ref: FOI2019/07961

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 Ref No: FOI2019/07961

I write in connection with your request for information received on 20th December. I note you seek access to the following information:

Knife crime figures

1. Please could you provide data for all incidents of knife crime that occurred in Bedfordshire over a 10-year period. I understand that there is not one dataset for knife crime, but it is instead recorded per Home Office guidelines as “homicide; attempted murder; threats to kill; assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm; robbery; rape; and sexual assault” in which a knife or sharp instrument/object was used/present. I am happy to receive data for the past 10 years in accordance with those categories. If you classify your data in a different or any additional way, then please provide in the format/categories you use.

2. Please could you ensure this data is also broken down by age. I am specifically interested in knowing which incidents involved a victim aged 1 to 24. If it reduces time and cost, please feel free to provide the data split into incidents involving victims under 24 and over 24. If you are able to provide more detailed age breakdowns within the cost allowance e.g. 1-8, 9-16, 17-24, then please do that.

3. Please can you also confirm whether motive is listed for these knife-related incidents. If the cost allowance allows, please also provide the motives with each incident. If this is too expensive, please could you only detail which incidents were between family members and/or partners and so domestic abuse.

4. Please can you also confirm whether knife-related incidents are flagged as gang-related and/or gang-motivated and, if the cost allowance allows, please indicate which incidents were considered gang-related gang-related and/or gang-motivated.

In my above query, I have indicated ways you can minimise the cost of providing the data. I would further add that if providing data for a 10-year period is too costly, then please reduce the timeframe accordingly and do not reject the FOI.

If it would further help with cost, you can omit the following categories from the data: rape and sexual assault. If it helps, my priorities are firstly receiving the data (point one of my FOI), seeing the age breakdown (point two of my FOI), and learning if Bedfordshire flag incidents of knife crime (in whatever form) as gang-related or gang-motivated (part of point four of my FOI).

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 crime recording systems within the Force for your request with regards to knife crimes gang and domestic related, not all of this information is 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 thousands of crime 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.

Please see the document attached and marked as **Annex A – FOI2019 07961**, for some data relating to 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.

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.