

1st June 2018

Freedom of Information Request – Reference No:20180625

REQUEST

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please can you provide me with the following datasets:

1) Please provide, in .csv or .xls format, a list of the following data about firearm crime offences for the calendar years 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017.

- ***The date of the offence***
- ***The major crime category (e.g. violence against the person, possession of weapons)***
- ***The minor crime category (e.g. wounding / GBH, theft from person)***
- ***The latitude and longitude of the offence****

2) Please provide, in .csv or .xls format, a list the following details about knife crime offences for the calendar years 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017.

- ***The date of the crime***
- ***The major crime category (e.g. violence against the person, possession of weapons)***
- ***The minor crime category (e.g. wounding / GBH, theft from person)***
- ***The latitude and longitude of the offence****

CLARIFICATION

Please could you clarify the following point(s): -

Providing details of date along with latitude/longitude if available would trigger S30(1)(a) Investigations and S40(2) Personal info exemptions. Would you like us to proceed with 1a, b, c and 2a, b, c, we could also give by district location and break the date down to a month.

FROM THE REQUESTER

Yes, we are looking for Eastings and Northings.

To be clear, the British National Grid (Eastings and Northings) co-ordinates for each crime are snapped to the street centre line for each crime. Clearly this means the information is not granular enough to risk identifying individuals. Likewise, in regards to s30, i'm happy to only receive information for the major category offence, so we're further anonymising anonymised data by one level.

RESPONSE

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires South Yorkshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt), to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- a.states that fact,

- b. specifies the exemption in question and
- c. states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The following exemptions apply to the disclosure of the information:

Section 40(2) Personal Information.

Section 30(1)(a) Investigations and Proceedings conducted by the Local Authority

Section 40(2) Personal Information

This is an absolute exemption and therefore a Public Interest Test is not relevant. However, for clarity, I will explain my rationale for engaging this exemption.

Section 40(2) provides that information is exempt if it is the personal data of someone other than the applicant and disclosure would breach any of the data protection principles. The term 'personal data' means data that relates to a living individual who can be identified. Information disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act is disclosed into the public domain, effectively to the world, not just to one individual.

Although not explicitly naming individuals, the cumulative effect of a disclosure of offence types, actual date and location via latitude and longitude could help identify persons involved, both victim and suspect. This would be breaching the right to privacy afforded to persons under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Section 30(1)(a) Investigations and Proceedings conducted by the Local Authority

HARM

It is important to state that a response to a Freedom of Information request is not just published to the requestor, but also to the world as well, by its possible publication on the forces disclosure log. Therefore, any material provided within the response could be potentially viewed by anyone who wished to see it.

Any release of such sensitive information that may be involved in continuing or future investigations could compromise any further lines of enquiry and the integrity of the investigation.

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Section 30 – Favouring non- Disclosure

- Any current and/or future investigations could be compromised, by the release into the wider public domain of details concerning individuals involved.
- Individuals may be reluctant to come forward and provide information if they believe that details relating to the investigation could be released, via an FOI request, whilst an enquiry is ongoing.
- Any disclosure of information relating to an ongoing investigation would compromise the right for any individual(s) identified from such an investigation to have a fair hearing, and more importantly the rights of a complainant(s) for a resolution

Section 30 – Favouring disclosure

- The public would have a better understanding of how information is collated and used to investigate this type of offence.
- By publishing information and a better public awareness of incident types, i.e. knife or firearms, it may lead to more information from the public

Balancing Test

I have carefully considered your request for information. The key test when considering the public interest is to establish whether in all the circumstances of the request, the public interest in disclosing the information is not outweighed by that in maintaining the exemption

As we have already stated, a Freedom of Information request is not just a release to the person making the request, but also to the world. It cannot be clear at present what effect disclosures made by a Freedom of Information response may have upon investigations or enquiries either now or in the future.

With this in mind, I am prepared to disclose as much detail as possible without compromising the identity of anyone involved or police work.

With this in mind I have compiled a spreadsheet with the data supplied to me.

I approached our Data Returns Officer and Administrator for assistance with your request. The CMS system and Connect System is used to record complaints or allegations of those matters, which the Home Office specify should be recorded as 'crimes'.

Please see the below explanation of each sheet.

Regarding the requestors response - **To be clear, the British National Grid (Eastings and Northings) co-ordinates for each crime are snapped to the street centre line for each crime.** The requestor should be advised that we upload data to Police.uk and at single record level and they then 'snap' the data, therefore we cannot provide this northing and eastings at the risk of identifying victims, scene of crimes etc.

CMS Knife –

I have searched CMS for offences recorded on the Crime Register between 01-Jan-2013 and 04-Dec-2017 and have provided a count of the below Home Office offence classes, which are included within the Home Office data return for Knife crime, however in addition to these offences I have also included the Home Office Class Murder, which is not included in the Knife Crime return.

I have based the conditions of the query on the following –

Where the Home Office Class is –

HOME OFFICE OFFENCE CLASS
ASSAULT WITH INJURY
ASSAULT WITH INJURY ON A CONSTABLE
ASSAULT WITH INTENT TO CAUSE SERIOUS HARM
ATTEMPT MURDER
ENDANGERING LIFE
MURDER
RACIALLY OR RELIGIOUSLY AGGRAVATED ASSAULT WITH INJURY
RAPE
ROBBERY
SEXUAL ASSAULT
THREATS TO KILL

And the weapon type is either of the following -

Weapon Type
AXE
BASEBALL BAT ADAPTED - BLADE INSERTED
BROKEN BOTTLE
BROKEN GLASS OBJECT
CROSSBOW / BOW AND ARROW
CUTLERY - FORK
DART
FLICK / LOCK KNIFE
FLICK KNIFE
HATCHET
HYPODERMIC NEEDLE / SYRINGE
KITCHEN KNIFE
KNIFE / DAGGER
LOCK KNIFE
MACHETE
MEAT CLEAVER
NEEDLE,PIN(NOT HYPODERMIC NEEDLE)
OTHER SHARP / POINTED INSTRUMENT
PEN KNIFE
RAZOR / RAZORBLADE
SAW
SCALPEL
SCISSORS
STANLEY KNIFE / BLADE
SWORD/BAYONET

And the Weapon Usage is –

Weapon Usage
CONCEALED BUT VICTIM THREATENED
CUTTING
GLASSING
IMPLEMENT USED AS A PHYSICAL THREAT
STABBING/SLASHING/PUNCTURE/PIERCE

Please note – more than one weapon type may be recorded on some offences type, therefore we would expect a count of weapons to exceed a count of offences. For the purpose of this request, I have searched for offences where a 'KNIFE' has been recorded as above, however other weapon types may be recorded on the crime report.

CONNECT Knife -

I have provided a count of the specified offences as above, recorded on the CONNECT system between 05-Dec-2017 – 31-Dec-2017 where an offence was recorded with the MO DESC1 'Instrument used' or\and 'MO DESC3 'Knife'

By "KNIFE' I mean what is recorded as a sharp instrument in accordance with the Home Office Definition of knife and to be consistent, I have based the results on previous request 20180414, however data may have slightly changed due to be extracted from live systems.

CMS Firearm -

I have searched CMS for offences recorded on the Crime Register between 01-Jan-2013 and 04-Dec-2017, where weapon type is defined as a FIREARM has been recorded with either the USED or POSSESSED flag.

Please note – more than one weapon type may be recorded on some offences type, therefore we expect a count of weapons to exceed a count of offences. For the purpose of this request, I have searched for offences where a " has been recorded with the USED or POSSESSED flag, however other weapon types may be recorded on the same crime report in addition to the FIREARM.

CONNECT Data -

I have provided a count of offences recorded on the CONNECT system between 05-Dec-2017 – 31-Dec-2017 where the BCU Desc is Sheffield and where an offence was recorded with the MO DESC1 'Instrument used' or\and 'MO DESC3 'Firearm'. I have had to take a slightly different approach to extracting the data from CONNECT as the data is not recorded in the same format as the legacy system CMS.

Please note that the data provided is **not** in line with the ADR 131 Firearms return which is required by the Home Office every quarter. This request is for **all** offences involving a 'firearm' were included i.e. not specific circumstances of offence in line with the Home office requirement.

If the requester wants a direct comparison for Firearms data across forces then every force returns ADR 131 in accordance with the Home Office requirement.

- Please note - Offences are recorded in accordance with the Home Office Counting rules and dependant on the individual circumstances of each offence, the Principal crime rule may have been applied in some cases. The only way to establish the full circumstances of offence, would be to review the circumstances of offence text for every crime recorded.

C The Principal Crime Rule (1 of 1)

- *IF THE SEQUENCE OF CRIMES IN AN INCIDENT, OR A COMPLEX CRIME, CONTAINS MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF CRIME, THEN COUNT THE MOST SERIOUS CRIME.*
(NB: as it states in Section E, these incidents must involve the same offender and victim.)

SYP have changed their central crime management system in December 2017. Therefore data from the new system cannot be used as a direct comparison due to the different ways in which crimes are recorded. However, the data has been given to comply with original request and displayed here to show an outline trend.