

23rd January 2019

**Freedom of Information Request – Reference No:20190059**

**REQUEST**

***The number of 'big cat' sightings reported to South Yorkshire Police in each calendar year from 2016 to 2018.***

***If possible, I'd be grateful if you could also provide any available details of these sightings, such as date, location and any comments recorded in the incident log.***

***To assist with any keyword searches you might need to carry out, please include references to "Big Cat", "Puma", "Panther", "Lion", "Tiger", "Beast", "Black Cat", "Large Cat", "Wild Cat" or "Cheetah".***

**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 exemption applies to the disclosure of the information:

**Section 12 – Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit**

The Administrator for our Incident Management System advised:

*The details of the request ask for details which would require a review of the incidents - for 2018 alone would require over 40 hours.*

To retrieve all the details for this request would involve a manual search of each incident where the reference to "Big Cat", "Puma", "Panther", "Lion", "Tiger", "Beast", "Black Cat", "Large Cat", "Wild Cat" or "Cheetah" are mentioned.

In essence, we would have to review and manually check each incident (which for the whole period counts at over 1500) to extract the level of detail that meet the criteria of your request. This process would take much longer than 18 hours work.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 provide that the cost limit for non-central government public authorities is £450. This must be calculated at the rate of £25 per hour, providing an effective time limit of 18 hours.

Guidance from the Information Commissioner to public authorities is that where one part of a request is reasonably estimated to exceed the appropriate limit then the authority is not obliged to consider or comply with the remainder of the request up to the point at which the appropriate limit has been reached. Please note point 30 of the below link:-

[https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1199/costs\\_of\\_compliance\\_exceeds\\_appropriate\\_limit.pdf](https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1199/costs_of_compliance_exceeds_appropriate_limit.pdf)

**Although excess cost removes the force's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request neither does it bind South Yorkshire Police to any commitment that it will release information in such a manner in the future .**

From the Incident Management System we record the majority of calls to South Yorkshire Police requiring the specific deployment of police resources, whether reported by members of the public via 999 or 101 or 'happened upon' by officers and staff in the course of their duties.

Each record is a log of events as the incident progresses or unfolds, with very few search fields to extract any meaningful data.

As there is no generic incident title that meets the criteria of your request, our Administrator has searched for incidents where the keywords "Big Cat", "Puma", "Panther", "Lion", "Tiger", "Beast", "Black Cat", "Large Cat", "Wild Cat" or "Cheetah" are mentioned within the free text boxes of the incident log.

Below his explanation:

*Having searched using the below criteria over the period 01/01/2016 to 01/12/2018 - the number of incidents per year is*

2016 532

2017 571

2018 510

*Criteria*

*% Big Cat %*

*% Puma %*

*% Panther %*

*% Lion %*

*% Tiger %*

*% Beast %*

*% Black Cat %*

*% Large Cat %*

*% Wild Cat %*

*% Cheetah %*