

24<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**Freedom of Information Request – Reference No:20210103**

**REQUEST**

1. Please disclose how many times the dating app's Tinder, Hinge, Bumble, Grindr, Plenty of Fish, okCupid, eHarmony, and match.com were mentioned in crime reports, for each calendar month in the years:

- a. 2018
- b. 2019
- c. 2020
- d. 2021 (Jan)

2. Please can you breakdown the crimes identified in the answer to Q1a-d, per calendar month in the years identified, by the Home Office classification offence group that the reported crime belongs to.

If it isn't possible to give monthly data within the s12 cost limit then please can you give me the figure per calendar year.

**Clarification**

South Yorkshire Police has received a number of similar requests to yours in the past. All such requests and responses are published on the Force Disclosure Log, which can be found on the South Yorkshire Police website at: -

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/>

You may find that research of the Log may be worthwhile prior to submitting future requests as this may well result in the information being available immediately rather than any delay resulting from the process of responding to a request under the Act. In particular, we would draw your attention to the following entries: -

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/offences-dating-websites-ref-20200404/>

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/offences-relating-to-dating-apps-ref-20180909/>

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/sexual-assaults-linked-to-dating-app-ref-20180046/>

**Reply to Clarification**

**We would like to proceed with this request please**

**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**

I approached our Crime Management Data Returns Administrator for assistance with your request. They conducted a search of the Connect System is used to record complaints or allegations of those matters, which the Home Office specify should be recorded as 'crimes'.

They have highlighted:- Regarding the search for 'Hinge' 499 offences were returned where Hinge was recorded within the Initial MO free text field, however each offence would have to be reviewed at record level to potentially identify if Hinge has been recorded in line with the context of this request and not for example, in reference to a door hinge.

In essence, if each of the 499 offences took a conservative 3 minutes to manually review the free text, this would exceed the 18 hours' work as guided under FOI

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 .**

The Administrator did provide the following explanation and attached data.

I have provided a count of offences recorded on CONNECT Crime, where the Initial MO text mentions either of the following keywords –

Tinder - 27

Hinge – 499 all records will need to be reviewed at record level

Bumble - 1

Grindr - 7

Plenty of Fish - 7

okCupid – Null Return

eHarmony – Null Return  
match.com - 1

I've broken the data down by, HO SUB Group, calendar month and calendar year, between Incident Created date 01-JAN-2018 and 31-JAN-2021.

*The requestor should be made aware of the following regarding this data set –*

- Some offences may mention more than one of the specified Dating apps.
- There are no specific markers to identify the specified dating platforms, therefore we would search for the specified words using a free text search within the INITIAL MO free text within CONNECT. However, this may not accurately identify what is potentially recorded on the crime systems due to spelling variations\errors. As a result, the circumstances of each offence would have to be reviewed at record level in order to potentially identify if the offence is relevant to the request. However, reviewing each record may still not guarantee complete data accuracy.
- Offences are recorded in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules – General Rules - 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.