

23rd March 2021

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20210496

REQUEST

- **How many arrests have there been in South Yorkshire relating to the possession of drugs in the years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21?**
- **How many arrests have there been in South Yorkshire relating to the possession of psychoactive substances with intent to supply in the years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21?**
- **How many call outs have the Police had to attend in relation to drug related incidents within these time frames?**
- **What type of illegal substances were people arrested for within these time frames?**
- **How many arrests were made in the age ranges of : 18-24, 25-30? 31-35?**

I am aware these are similar requests to my original FOI submission. I have looked at past FOI requests on the SYP website and believe these are more tailored for the information I am looking for.

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

With regard to point 4 of your request, what type of illegal substances were people arrested for. A Sergeant in our Custody Performance and Governance Unit has advised that all we record at point of arrest is whether we believe the drug is class A or not. If we record a specific drug name then it will be buried in free text, subject to the usual spelling/abbreviation anomalies. The only way in which to establish what drug each arrest was for, would be to retrieve and manually review the free text circumstances of every arrest record between the date periods you have requested, to see if this was recorded. In essence, this would greatly exceed the 18 hours work as guided under the FOI Act.

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

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 .

I had contacted a number of colleagues for assistance with your request.

With regards to the arrest information you were requesting:-

On 5th December 2017 South Yorkshire Police implemented a new recording system called Connect which replaces our Custody Handling System (CHS) . Arrest data prior to 5th December 2017 is held on our legacy system (CHS) and latest arrest data is held on our new CONNECT system.

A Sergeant has provided the information from our new system, Connect. He has provided the following data, broken down by financial year, into the specific class of drug arrest reason, and age groups.

FOI JA 20210496 - Drug Possession and PWITS (All Arrests)

| Drug Arrest | Initial Reason For Arrest | Arrests | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | FY 2017/18 | FY 2018/19 | FY 2019/20 | FY 2020/21 |
| Possession | Drugs - Possess Class A | 79 | 409 | 505 | 346 |
| | Drugs - Possess Class B or C | 149 | 784 | 905 | 855 |
| Possession with intent to supply | Drugs - Possession With Intent to supply - Class A | 103 | 424 | 481 | 467 |
| | Drugs - Possession With Intent to supply - other than Class A | 80 | 331 | 426 | 374 |

FOI JA 20210496 - Drug Possession and PWITS (Age Groups)

| Age at Arrest | Arrests | | | |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | FY 2017/18 | FY 2018/19 | FY 2019/20 | FY 2020/21 |
| 18-24 | 152 | 588 | 784 | 663 |
| 25-30 | 97 | 478 | 476 | 411 |
| 31-35 | 50 | 284 | 349 | 280 |

Our Incident Management System records 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. Again, there are two systems, PROCAD which records incidents up until 13th November 2018, and SMART, which replaced this system.

The Service Delivery Administrator has provided the attached PROCAD incident data.

An Analyst has provided the data for the incidents logged on the SMART system, with the following explanation:-

Below is the detail per month for incidents we have gone on scene for that have any of the following closing codes – drugs, drugs – possession, litter/drugs trappings (env), litter/drugs trappings (nuis), litter/drugs trappings (pers).

| Incidents at scene | | Year | | | |
|--------------------|--|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Month | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| 1 | | | 51 | 55 | 59 |
| 2 | | | 44 | 61 | 65 |
| 3 | | | 56 | 59 | 12 |
| 4 | | | 60 | 70 | |
| 5 | | | 56 | 65 | |
| 6 | | | 62 | 67 | |
| 7 | | | 46 | 83 | |
| 8 | | | 49 | 59 | |
| 9 | | | 54 | 62 | |
| 10 | | | 47 | 81 | |
| 11 | | 20 | 49 | 97 | |
| 12 | | 44 | 50 | 83 | |
| Grand Total | | 64 | 624 | 842 | 136 |

***Please note that the figure for November 2018 is part month only due to the new system starting mid month. The figure for March 2021 is up to 9th March when the information was provided to me. ***