2nd November 2021

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20212141

REQUEST

Hope you are well. We are doing some research on vaccine protests for Tes, and have compiled a list of questions for police forces about incidents affecting schools. Can you please answer as many are you are able?

In your police force area, since 13 September 2021:

1. *How many times have schools reported Covid vaccine protests at or outside their school to the police? Please specify how many incidents were on school premises.*
2. *How many times have police attended Covid vaccine protests at our outside schools? Please specify how many incidents were on school premises.*
3. *How many times have schools contacted police over threatening communications relating to Covid vaccines being offered at their school? Please provide a breakdown of the type of communication where possible (e.g. telephone call or email).*
4. *How many people have been arrested or cautioned as a result of their actions at Covid protests at or outside schools? Please provide a breakdown of what each caution or arrest related to.*

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 the administrator for South Yorkshire Police's Incident Management System.

The Smart 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. The log runs as a running commentary of an incident as it unfolds and has limited search capability.

There is no generic incident title that meets the criteria of your request, they advise:

these types of incidents have not been tagged or named in any particular way that would make it easy to search the system.

The only way to identify these would be to have a list of schools, school road names and do a search on each one in SYP area. Each incident would then need to be read to see what the details are.

Therefore, this would require a manual check of every incident on the system to see if it fits with the criteria of your request. Which would exceed the 18hr rule. If we were provided with a list of Schools in our area (which would run to hundreds) it would still require manually checking every returned incident to see if they are appropriate as there is no tag or qualifier that could be used. Any detail if recorded would have been inputted on the free text fields on each incident and require checking to initially locate any and then extract them.

In essence without a record level manual check we cannot extract this level of data to fulfil your request without exceeding the 18hr rule.

Further, Arrests are retrievable by Arrest Title and not the reason behind an Arrest. To see if any Arrests in the SYP area were Covid related and fit this criteria again would require manual checks of the recording system.
e.g. an individual may be arrested for an Assault but without reading each Arrest record we cannot say if it fits the criteria of your request

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