

14th March 2022

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20220431

REQUEST

1. How many reports of UFO, ghosts, witches and extraterrestrial activities were recorded by your force in 2021, 2022.

2. This information should include the date, time, location, the action taken by the force and the description given by the reporting person.

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(1) – 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.

We have been asked for this data a number of times, as there is no generic incident title that meets the criteria of this type of request, our administrator would have to search initially for incidents where the keywords "UFO, Witches, ghosts & extra-terrestrial" are inputted in the free text areas of an incident log which would also return incidents with 'switches', 'twitches' 'sandwiches'.

Further key word search on our system of just "UFO" on a recent similar request caused our retrieval system to crash repeatedly after a suspended running time of several hours .

In essence, as advised there is no generic police title on our system, so to locate and extract the data would require manually reviewing all the incidents logged as this type of information could be held within any incident. We record over 1000 incidents daily this process would greatly exceed the 18hr rule.

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