

30th January 2017

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20170158

REQUEST

1) Did your officers have to transport/transfer mental health patients in police vehicles in 2016 because there was no alternative? Please note that I am not including cases where police have been called in to work alongside ambulance staff because a patient is violent, only cases where there has been no other option so police officers have had to step in.

2) If so do you have figures for how often this happened in 2016?

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(2) – Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

I firstly approached our Incident Management System Administrator for assistance with your request. This system records the majority of matters requiring the specific deployment of police resources, whether reported by members of the public or 'happened upon' by officers and staff in the course of their duties. Unfortunately, our Administrator has advised that there is no specific field to record the information requested. The only way to extract any relevant details would be to conduct a search on all incidents containing the phrase 'mental health'. This, however, returns over 20,000 incidents for 2016 which would certainly exceed the 18 hour cost threshold to review and extract any meaningful information.

In an attempt to secure some data elsewhere, I also contacted the Business Managers for each of our four districts (Sheffield, Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster) to see if any recorded information is held locally. One of our sergeants for Rotherham Local Policing team has provided the following comment:

'We definitely transport MH patients for a variety of reasons and particularly when they are detained S136. While we should always use an ambulance for this conveyance (and it has been agreed with YAS), their levels of demand frequently mean that they cannot respond within the agreed 30 minute timeframe. However, we can't measure this on SYP systems.'

All Business Managers have confirmed that this statement reflects the circumstances in each of their districts.

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. .
If you feel your endeavours can be achieved within the appropriate limit by refining your request, South Yorkshire Police would be more than happy to consider any further request.

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