

15th October 2020

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20202114

REQUEST

I am writing to you under the freedom of information Act 2000 to request the following.

1) The number of calls for officers to attend where “mental health” was flagged and/or cited as a factor in the call in the last three years (2018,2019 and 2020 so far)? Please break this down by year and month. Please provide as much detail about the nature of the incident as possible. Please say how many of the incidents' involved under 18s and how many were for those aged over 18.

2) The number of recorded cases where section 136 of the Mental Health Act was used to detain a member of the public in the last three years (2018,2019 and 2020 so far)? Please break this down by year and month.

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

The Smart system records the majority of calls to South Yorkshire Police’s Communication Centre 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.

Incidents on this system have a mental health flag which is applied to an incident by the call handler and a count of these can be retrieved.

The Administrator advised, to provide further details regarding ages of the people involved, details of the incident and if the incident required attendance of officers would require us to manually check of every incident with a mental health flag.

In the last 12 months (Oct 19 to Sept 20) there are approx 12,800 incidents with a mental health flag. To access each one of these would seriously 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

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 Incident Management Administrator has however provided a count of incidents below, recorded at a Comms Centre with a Mental Health Flag, along with more recent the flag relating to S135 and S136, this may be useful for your research.

Her explanation of the data she has provided is as follows:

*I have attached the month year data from Nov 18 to now.
November 18 is only part month (moved to new system)*

Please note:- There are 3 columns on the data, the first relates to the Mental Health Qualifier, we have recently introduced 2 new qualifiers Mental Health S135 & Mental Health S136 which I have included also, I need to advise you I have seen that on occasion our operators are tagging both mental health and the s135/s136 so some may be a double count.

MTH/YR	MH	MH S135	MH S136
Nov-18	657		
Dec-18	1118		
Jan-19	1086		
Feb-19	957		
Mar-19	1025		
Apr-19	1038		
May-19	1173		
Jun-19	1092		
Jul-19	1088		
Aug-19	1051		
Sep-19	981		
Oct-19	996		
Nov-19	981		
Dec-19	1012		
Jan-20	1092		
Feb-20	1043		
Mar-20	937		

Apr-20	1012		
May-20	1302		
Jun-20	1174		
Jul-20	1185	7	57
Aug-20	1065	14	110
Sep-20	1039	15	105

Q2-

I have contacted a Mental Health Coordinator for help with Q2. She has provided the following:

	2018	2019	2020
Jan	69	89	86
Feb	87	68	92
Mar	105	73	75
Apr	79	72	84
May	111	79	142
Jun	106	91	116
Jul	98	98	43
Aug	108	107	
Sep	101	99	
Oct	101	92	
Nov	104	73	
Dec	87	89	
TOTAL	1156	1030	926
Average	96	86	103

S135/S136 would go to hospital/place of safety, the caveat to that is that in an extreme case maybe the individual being incredibly violent they may go to custody.