

11th September 2020

**Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20201868**

**REQUEST**

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

**1. The cause of death of fatal missing person cases from the year 2019/2020; specifically:**

- a) Please provide a count of all cases of a missing person recorded in the South Yorkshire Police area who were found deceased during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 (to include cases where the individual was initially reported missing prior to this period);
- b) With the count above (a) as the total, please provide sub-totals for the cause of death recorded in these cases (e.g. accident, suicide, homicide, natural causes, unknown); and
- c) If possible, please provide information on the age of missing people in each cause of death category (under 18 / 18 and over / not known) and their gender (male / female / other / not known).

The table below illustrates the breakdown of information that I would ideally like to obtain:

Total number of missing persons found deceased 2019/20 = xxx					
	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Natural Causes	Unknown
Total cases found 2019/20					
<b>Age</b>					
Under 18					
Over 18					
Age not recorded					
<b>Gender</b>					
Male					
Female					
Other					
Not known					

**2. In addition, please also provide the same data from 2018/2019.**

Please note: if this section (section 2) makes this whole FOI request exceed the permissible limit of cost of compliance, then please only process section 1, above.

**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 our PVP Department for assistance with your request, a review officer within the unit has advised the following:

*With regards to MISPER system – this isn't easily available - if at all.*

*We would need to go into every record on the system and look at the found report to ascertain if they were found alive or deceased. As far as I'm aware we don't record cause of death on our systems as this can be some time before known after the event, if we did record at time then this would be speculation as to cause.*

*For reference there are over 8000 records in 2019/20 on MISPER.*

*I've asked if we record anything on SmartContact and this again would be a manual search and would depend entirely on what the call handler recorded.*

In essence, we do not record this information in a retrievable format, the process would require a manual check of each record and this would seriously exceed the 18 hour FOI Act limit.

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](https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1199/costs_of_compliance_exceeds_appropriate_limit.pdf)