

1st December 2021

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20212321

REQUEST

Please could you provide the following information:

1. For each of the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and so far in 2021, how many incidents of spiking were recorded by your force?
 - Please search for this data by means of keyword searches of MO codes using the terms 'spike', 'spiking', 'drink-spike', 'drink spiked', 'spiked drink', 'needle spiking', 'spiked by needle', 'injection spiking', 'spiked by injection', 'spiking by injection', 'spiked via injection', 'spiked via needle' while checking they don't refer to some other context (e.g. 'spiked fence').
2. For each reported crime, please state the gender of the victim, and what the outcome was, i.e. was a charge brought, and if so, was there a conviction.
3. Please can you attach the MO codes for January 2021 to now (3 November) for spiking-related offences? I understand that redactions may need to be made to remove personal information.

Clarification

South Yorkshire Police has received a number of similar requests to yours in the past. In particular, we would draw your attention to the following entries: -

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/drink-spiking-ref-20211749/>

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/drink-spiking-ref-20210827/>

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/drink-spiking-ref-20200901/>

It would be helpful if you could review the above entries, which may be useful to your request. If you can then provide us with a refined request, if necessary, to help us to identify and locate any outstanding data you may still require, and not included in the above links.

Reply to Clarification

As my information request is not limited to drink spiking and does not correlate with these dates, I'd be grateful if you could continue processing it. For reference, I'm seeking information which relates to the calendar years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

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

In relation to question 3 of your request, we would need to manually review each offence, and redact the relevant text so as not to trigger S40 of the Act. If each offence took approximately 10 minutes to review, this would in essence, exceed the 18 hours work.

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 .

I had approached our Crime Management Data Returns Unit for assistance with your request. They have search our Connect System which is used to record complaints or allegations of those matters, which the Home Office specify should be recorded as 'crimes'.

An Analyst has provided the following explanation and attached spreadsheet.

Please note that this data has been extracted from a live system and as such details/volumes may be subject to change in the future.

I have provided recorded crime data from the CONNECT recording system based on creation date, and captured via our baseline 'spiking query' which is based on the following criteria:

- MO Desc 3 being equal to 'Drink Interfered With - Spiked'

OR

- Initial MO contains any "%spiking%; %drink-spike%; %drink spiked%; %spiked drink%; %needle spiking%; %spiked by needle%; %injection spiking%; %spiked by injection%; %spiking by injection%; %spiked via injection%; %spiked via needle%".

OR

- MO Desc 1 equal to "Means employed" AND MO Desc 2 equal to "Victim" AND MO Desc 3 equal to "Drugged".

Offence outcomes are based on the outcome of the overall offence and not outcomes per individual suspect and the volumes provided are based on the crimes recorded in that period, not the number of outcomes recorded in that period.

Please note, we are unable to assist with Prosecution / Conviction data as this is not recorded by South Yorkshire Police, this information may be available from the Ministry of Justice. You may want to approach the CPS directly regarding this part of your enquiry:

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/freedom-information>