

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

16 November 2009

Your Ref:

Our Ref: 0815/2009

Lord McDowall

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Force Disclosure Unit
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Dear Lord McDowall

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER 0815/2009

I refer to your request for information dated 13 October 2009, which was received by Strathclyde Police on that date and which you clarified on 19 October 2009, when you advised you were seeking information in relation to Force support Officers within contact centres.

(1) Please provide copies of the training materials used to train Force Support Officers,

Having now considered your request for information, I note that you have requested copies of the training materials used to train Force Support Officers in contact centres however in light of a recent decision by the Court of Session (a link to this is provided below) where both the meaning and definition of the term “information” under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002(the Act) has been clarified.

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/opinions/2009CSIH73.html>

The Court held that while the Act provides access to information recorded in any form, their decision made it clear that there is a distinction between the information itself and the document in which it is contained, for example a memo, e-mail, minutes, etc. While the act provides a right of access to information, it does not follow that an applicant has a right of access to the documentation in which it is contained. The Court took the view that if an applicant has the right to be given information then it would be that data, rather than the document that it is contained within that is disclosed. This could be, for example the provision in a summary of what is contained within a document, rather than providing a copy of the record that contains the information. Your request does not detail fully the information that you require, instead it requests a copy of the training material, accordingly, this request is not a valid request for information within the meaning of the Act. It would therefore be helpful if you could indicate the substance or the information that you would like, rather than the documents.

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(2) Please confirm the full process if a member of the public calls to report a crime and the FSO does not feel that a crime has been committed, what stages does a call then go through and how is the issue escalated to a police officer for a decision?

Your request for information has now been considered and I can advise you that Strathclyde Police does not hold any of the information requested by you. In terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

By way of information, Force Support Officers within the force's contact centre deal with calls from the public on a variety of topics and not every call is crime related. It is not the role of such staff to decide whether or not a crime has been committed, rather it is their role to grade calls in line with the force policy. Incidents reported to Strathclyde Police are prioritised according to the elements existing in each individual call and are prioritised according to the force's victim-oriented attendance policy and all calls, whether they are 999 or made to a local number and are categorised in this manner. All calls are graded from one to five so the force is able to respond in a structured way. All calls are graded as follows:

Grade 1: IMMEDIATE. Indicates an immediate threat to life. Transferred to the area control room.

Grade 2: HIGH. Ongoing incident, but no indication of threat to life. Transferred to the area control room.

Grade 3: STANDARD. Incident not ongoing, but attendance required. Transferred to the Area Control Room.

Grade 4: DEFERRED. Response required, but suitable for deferral. Transferred to the Divisional Call Handling Unit, or outwith normal hours, to the Area Control Room.

Grade 5: NON-ATTENDANT. Matter resolved by telephone. Transferred to the Divisional Call Handling Unit, or, outwith normal hours, to the Area Control Room.

When calls are transferred to either the Divisional Call Handling Unit or the Area Control Room they can be re-prioritised if necessary.

I hope this information is helpful, however, if you are not satisfied with the way in which your request has been dealt with, you are entitled in the first instance to request a review of the decision made by the Force. Should you wish to request such a review, please write to Mrs Sheena Brennan, Disclosure Manager at the above address within 40 working days of receiving this letter.

Once informed of the Review Panel's decision, if you are still not satisfied, then you are entitled to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months for a decision. Contact details are; Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS, telephone 01334 464610.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in Strathclyde Police. Should you require any further assistance concerning this matter please contact me directly on 0141 435 1262 quoting the reference number given.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Grieve
Freedom of Information Officer