

**Andrew Chambers**

request-25101-bd55fb52@whatdotheyknow.com

Our Reference: 47018

22nd February 2010

Dear Mr Chambers,

I am writing with reference to your request for information regarding the DNA Database, dated 23rd December 2009 made under section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act.

You asked for the following information:

*Could you please tell me how many familial DNA searches are carried out each year? [In absolute terms or as a percentage of all searches]*

*Are familial searches standard procedure if an original search turns up no matches?*

*What regulations govern the use of familial searches?*

In response to your request, we are able to provide you with the following information.

*Could you please tell me how many familial DNA searches are carried out each year? [In absolute terms or as a percentage of all searches]*

The following table shows the figures for each instance that a specialist familial search of a crime scene profile was carried out against the National DNA Database (NDNAD) each year since 2004. The figures cover each individual search which has been manually logged; if a crime scene profile has been repeatedly searched the figures include each repeat search carried out.

Year	Number of familial searches carried out
2004	71
2005	78
2006	62
2007	79
2008	47
2009	26

*Are familial searches standard procedure if an original search turns up no matches?*

The NDNAD does not routinely perform the familial searching procedure. If an original search of a crime scene profile against the NDNAD does not produce any matches familial searches are not a standard procedure and approval for the use of familial searching must be given by an ACPO level officer. The Information Commissioner has advised, and ACPO policy states, that in order to comply with the concept of proportionality under data protection and human rights legislation, familial searching of the National DNA database will be restricted to the most serious crime investigations only.

*What regulations govern the use of familial searches?*

As stated above, ACPO Policy regulates the use of familial searching and each familial search of the NDNAD must be first approved by an ACPO level officer. If approval has not been given by the ACPO level officer then the familial search will not be carried out. Once approved, the familial search is only carried out under the control of the NDNAD Delivery Unit.

A best practice guide "Tactical Advice - Using Familial DNA Intelligence Product in Serious Crime Investigations" was issued by the Home Office Police Standards Unit to provide police forces with guidance in the use of familial searching. The Home Office Legal Advisers and the Information Commissioner were involved in drafting this advice document.

Further statistical information relating to the NDNAD is also published in the National DNA Database Annual Reports. The most recently published NDNAD Annual reports are available for download on the NPIA website at <http://www.npia.police.uk/en/14189.htm>. Previous years reports are available for download from the Home Office web-site at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/using-science/dna-database/>.

### Your right to complain

We take our responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act seriously but, if you feel your request has not been properly handled or you are otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of your request, you have the right to complain. We will investigate the matter and endeavour to reply within 3 – 6 weeks. You should write to:

David Horne  
Director of Resources  
National Policing Improvement Agency  
10-18 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0NN

E-mail: david.horne@npia.pnn.police.uk

If you are still dissatisfied following our internal review, you have the right, under section 50 of the Act, to complain directly to the Information Commissioner. Before considering your complaint, the Information Commissioner would normally expect you to have exhausted the complaints procedures provided by the NPIA. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

FOI Compliance Team (complaints)  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Further information about the NPIA is routinely published on our website at [www.npia.police.uk](http://www.npia.police.uk) or through our publication scheme. If you require any further assistance in connection with this request please contact us at our address above.

Yours sincerely,

NDNAD Delivery Unit

NPIA.