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|  | Information Rights UnitPO Box 57192LondonSW6 1SFUnited KingdomOur Ref: 01/FOI/19/002072Date: 23/05/2019 |

Dear Prichard,

**Freedom of Information Request Reference No: 01/FOI/19/002072**

I write in connection with your request for information, received by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) on 17/04/2019. I note you seek access to the following information: ***Part of our research we have been uncovering social services have been criticising parents, known as “protective parents”, for reporting child sexual abuse. These parents are having their children removed from their care and residency is being passed to the abuser, or the enabler of abuse. We have seen and heard evidence throughout the UK that social workers are using, and misleading, family courts to remove a child(ren) which we believe to be unlawfully. We believe that the family courts have not got the power or jurisdiction to deal with sensitive cases such as child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse should be heard in a criminal court. We have seen police forces pass the investigation to social services and failed to follow CPS guidelines by not taking the lead or referring to the CPS.***

***We have seen evidence of sexual discrimination by social workers therefore want to obtain data if there are any conviction differences between the father or mother reporting the abuse, (i.e. fathers are not taken seriously and any investigation is refused or ignored) and to see when police take the lead if it was only a professional or stranger as the suspect and only refer to social services if it was a mother or father report sexual abuse.***

 ***During the period of 01st January 2018 to January 2019 we would like to know the following
1. How many new child abuse cases (sexual) (aged 12 and under) have been reported collectively to your police force?  Please could you break down statistics in the following format to this and the following questions; -
2. Reported by the mother or maternal side of the family
3.Reported by the father or paternal side of the family
4. Reported by professionals (school, nursery etc.)
5. Reported by outside persons such as friends, witnesses etc.

And out of these could you subcategorise if the suspect in the child abuse case was; -
6. A family member.
7. A friend of the family (i.e. babysitter).
8. a professional (for example care home worker, foster career, teacher, police officer).
9. A stranger.***

***Please could you subcategorise: -
10. police took the lead in the investigation.
11. passed to social services to be sole investigator.
12. Joint investigation with social services.
13. Did not investigate or pass on to social services.

14. As per Q1, How many new child abuse cases (sexual) (aged 12 and under) have been reported collectively to your police force, please can you tell me how many cases were referred to the CPS where the police took lead of investigation, and***

***15. how many cases were referred to the CPS where police passed social services to solely lead the investigation.  Please also state if the police worked alongside social services.

16. Within all the cases reported to police (as per Q1), how many criminal convictions or the case has gone to trial in a criminal court when police took the lead in the child abuse allegations, and***

***17. how many criminal convictions or gone to trial in a criminal court when police passed sole lead to social services in the investigation.

18. How many cases have the police refused to investigate child abuse cases citing reasons such as to the effect “no funds due to cut backs”, or to the effect “police are not legally required to investigate child abuse”.  Please go back 5 years on the question, supplying statistics for each year.***

**SEARCHES TO LOCATE INFORMATION**

To locate the information relevant to your request searches were conducted within the MPS. The searches located information relevant to your request.

**DECISION**

This letter is to inform you that it will not be possible to respond to your request within the cost threshold. This response serves as a Refusal Notice under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). Please see the legal annex for further information on the exemptions applied in respect of your request.

**REASONS FOR DECISION**

When one part of an aggregated FOIA request exceeds the cost threshold to comply with, the MPS is required to refuse the request in full by virtue of Section 12(1) (Cost exceeds the appropriate threshold within which the MPS is required to comply with a request).

To comply with **Questions Two (2), Three (3), Five (5), Fourteen (14),** one member of staff would be required to manually review the free text fields within each relevant crime report on the Crime Reporting Information System (CRIS), which holds the information you have required.

Conservatively estimating it would take at least 10 minutes to review each report to locate the answer to those questions, means this task would exceed 25 hours.

We therefore estimate that the cost of complying with this request would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for agencies outside central Government; this is set at £450.00. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours [at a rate of £25 per hour] in determining whether the MPS holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

I would like to provide you with advice as to how you may narrow a future request so that it does not exceed the appropriate limit.

Questions **One (1), Four (4), Six (6), Seven (7), Eight (8) and Nine (9), Ten (10), Eleven (11), Twelve (12), Thirteen (13), Fifteen (15), Seventeen (17), Eighteen (18)** could be responded to without engaging section 12(1).

Additionally to assist with a future request, it is worth the MPS explaining that in respect of Question **Sixteen (16)** and **Seventeen (17)**, you will need to refer to the CPS for that data or again Section 12 is likely to apply. Please therefore reframe any future requests instead for charge numbers/ People Proceeds Against, as Section 12 is therefore less likely to be engaged. The CPS website is provided below for information;

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/>

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/performance-management-and-case-outcomes>

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

Yours sincerely

**Ms. Strong**

**LEGAL ANNEX**

**Section 17(5) of the Act provides:**

(5) A public authority which, in relation to any request for information, is relying on a claim that section 12 or 14 applies must, within the time for complying with section 1(1), give the applicant a notice stating that fact.

**Section 12(1) of the Act provides:**

(1) Section 1 does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

**Section 16 of the Act provides:**

(1) It shall be the duty of a public authority to provide advice and assistance, so far as it would be reasonable to expect the authority to do so, to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information to it.

(2) Any public authority which, in relation to the provision of advice or assistance in any case, conforms with the code of practice under section 45 is to be taken to comply with the duty imposed by subsection (1) in relation to that case.

 **COMPLAINT RIGHTS**

**Are you unhappy with how your request has been handled or do you think the decision is incorrect?**

You have the right to require the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to review their decision.

Prior to lodging a formal complaint you are welcome to discuss the response with the case officer who dealt with your request.

**Complaint**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of the MPS made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) regarding access to information you can lodge a complaint with the MPS to have the decision reviewed.

Complaints should be made in writing, within forty (40) working days from the date of the refusal notice, and addressed to:

FOI Complaint

Information Rights Unit

PO Box 57192

London

SW6 1SF

foi@met.police.uk

In all possible circumstances the MPS will aim to respond to your complaint within 20 working days.

**The Information Commissioner**

After lodging a complaint with the MPS if you are still dissatisfied with the decision you may make application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.ico.org.uk. Alternatively, write to or phone:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Phone: 0303 123 1113