



# WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE

## Freedom Of Information

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## Information Management

Our ref: 20/21

Date: 20/01/2021

Dear D. Moore,

Thank you for your request for information received by West Yorkshire Police on 04/01/21.

You requested the following information:

1a. Please provide the number of arrests you made in 2019/20 regarding online sexual offences of any kind related to children.

1b. Please provide a breakdown of all the sexual offences associated with these arrests:

e.g. section 8 of SOA 2003 [insert number]; section 10 of SOA 2003 [insert number]; section 12 of SOA 2003 [insert number] section 14 of SOA 2003 [insert number]; and section 15 of SOA [insert number]; section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 [insert number].

1c. Please specify the number of these arrests that involved at least one child decoy. By 'child decoy' I am referring to an adult who pretends to be a child.

2. Please provide the number of arrests you made in 2019/20 in connection with online sexual offences against children based on evidence acquired by your own officers acting as decoys.

3. Please provide the number of arrests you made in 2019/20 in connection with online sexual offences against children based on evidence provided to you by so-called paedophile hunters.

4. Please provide the names of all so-called paedophile hunting groups who provided information to you that led to the arrest of individuals in connection with sexual offences against children in 2019/20.

Unfortunately, West Yorkshire Police are unable to provide you with the information requested.

In order to determine whether an offence record makes reference to 'child decoy' would require each record to be manually read through. During 2019/20 there are 8,292 arrests which have one or more sexual offences linked. At 2 minutes per record this would equate to 276 hours.

It is estimated that the cost of providing / locating the information you seek within your request, would exceed the time threshold. When a reasonable estimate has been made that the appropriate limit would be exceeded, there are no requirements for a public authority to undertake the work.

Please see Appendix A, for the full legislative explanation as to why West Yorkshire Police are unable to provide the information.

If you would like to refine or narrow the scope of your request, West Yorkshire Police will assist you in negotiating the possibility of the provisions, of the information requested. Please see the Advice and Assistance, under Section 16 of Appendix A.

## COMPLAINT RIGHTS

If you are not satisfied with how this request has been handled or with the information provided. Please read the advice notice attached to this letter. If you do wish to take up your right of Complaint, please remember to quote the reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Dawson  
Disclosure Officer.

## Appendix A

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 creates a statutory right of access to information held by public Authorities. A public authority in receipt of a request must, if permitted, state under Section 1(a) of the Act, whether it holds the requested information. If held then this information will be communicated to the applicant under Section 1(b) of the Act.

The right of access to information is not without exception and is subject to a number of exemptions. Which are designed to enable public authorities to withhold information that is unsuitable for release.

Importantly the Act is designed to place information into the public domain, that is, once access to information is granted to one person under the Act, it is then considered public information and must be communicated to any individual should a request be received.

### DECISION

This letter serves as a Refusal Notice under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 17 of the Act provides:

(1) A public authority which, in relation to any request for information, is to any extent relying on a claim that information is exempt information must, within the time for complying with Section 1(1), given to the applicant a notice which:-

- (a) States the fact,
- (b) Specifies the exemption in question, and
- (c) States (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

### REASONS FOR DECISION

The reason that we are unable to provide you with this information is covered by the following Exemptions:

Section 12 - Where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit

West Yorkshire Police can confirm that we hold the information you seek, however it is not held in an easily retrievable format.

In order to determine whether an offence record makes reference to 'child decoy' would require each record to be manually read through. During 2019/20 there are 8,292 arrests which have one or more sexual offences linked. At 2 minutes per record this would equate to 276 hours.

It has been estimated that the cost of providing you with this information is above the amount to which we are legally required to respond i.e. the cost of locating and retrieving the information exceeds the 'appropriate level' as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004, which currently stands at £450 worth of work.

Our ACPO guidance states that we do not issue fees notices and therefore in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice.

West Yorkshire Police have utilised Section 12, which states "A public authority does not have to comply with a request for information if the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit", this is further affirmed by the Decision Notice issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (Reference: FS50143930), and Guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office on Using the Fees Regulations.

## ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

Under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, my duty to provide advice and assistance to persons who have made request for information, please be advised that West Yorkshire Police can offer the following advice as to how to refine your request:

We can provide the number of sexual offences with a victim under 18 and an online aspect, using a keyword list provided by yourself. Note these offences would be determined using the Home Office Classification.

Please also see below some previous disclosures which may assist with your request.

[https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/sites/default/files/foi/2020-09/march\\_2020\\_foi\\_726-20\\_online\\_grooming.pdf](https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/sites/default/files/foi/2020-09/march_2020_foi_726-20_online_grooming.pdf)

[https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/sites/default/files/foi/2020-10/september\\_2020\\_foi\\_4266-20\\_child\\_sex\\_offences-female\\_perpetrators.pdf](https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/sites/default/files/foi/2020-10/september_2020_foi_4266-20_child_sex_offences-female_perpetrators.pdf)

Please note that police forces do not use generic systems or identical procedures for capturing the data. For these reasons this response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with responses you may receive from other police forces.

## COMPLAINT RIGHTS

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

You have the right to request that West Yorkshire Police review their decision. Prior to lodging a formal complaint you are welcome and encouraged to discuss the decision with the case officer that dealt with your request.

### 2. Ask to have the decision looked at again

The quickest and easiest way to have the decision looked at again is to telephone the case officer that is nominated at the end of your decision letter. That person will be able to discuss the decision, explain any issues and assist with any problems.

### 3. Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of West Yorkshire Police made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding access to information, you can lodge a written complaint to have the decision internally reviewed.

A West Yorkshire Police internal review of your decision will be carried out by a senior member of staff, who is fully trained in interpreting Freedom of Information legislation, yet is independent with regards to the original decision made, i.e. has never previously been involved with your request.

Complaints will only be treated as valid if they are received by West Yorkshire Police within a 60 day timeframe from the date of the decision letter. They must include the original FOI Reference Number and can only be submitted in writing by using the following contact details:

[foi@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk)

Or

West Yorkshire Police  
FOI Internal Reviews  
PO Box 9  
Laburnum Road  
Wakefield  
WF1 3QP

In all possible circumstances West Yorkshire Police will aim to complete and respond to your internal review within 20 working days; however this date may be extendable in exceptional circumstances by another 20 working days.

### 4. The Information Commissioner

If you are still dissatisfied with the internal review decision made by West Yorkshire Police, you may then make an 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.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Alternatively, you can phone their helpline or write to them at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
FOI Help Line: 0303 1231113