

Request:

Freedom of Information request - Child abuse / exploitation linked to a spiritual or religious belief in Northamptonshire 2009-2019

Under the freedom of information act 2000, please provide me with the number of cases in the past ten years where there's been a report of child abuse/exploitation where:

1. It is alleged that the child abuse / exploitation was linked to a spiritual or religious belief. Please show this year on year from January 2009 - present date.
2. Please show whether or not the alleged abuser was known to the child and in what context.
3. Please show the child's ethnic background, age, sex.
4. Please detail the location of the alleged abuse. If this was inside an institution then please provide the name of the institution.
5. Please show the number of subsequent investigations, charges filed and convictions for these alleged offences.
6. Please show whether or not it was the child who reported the alleged abuse or someone else.
7. Please state how the person reporting the abuse / exploitation became aware of the abuse and who they notified initially. ??
8. How many of these children alleging abuse were subject to medical tests from paediatricians to determine if the allegations of abuse were consistent with medical evidence?

As you'll know, If the someone phoned 999/101 and reported their concerns it would be recorded on your CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system.

Any data recorded on your CRIS system (Crime Reporting Information System) should be there if someone known/unknown to the child abused/exploited is involved in the crime.

The information you receive from other sources such as concerned relatives, neighbours or community members etc would be likely to be entered on your intelligence system, CRIMINT (Criminal Intelligence).

The information I require might be reported in connection with a missing person and this would be recorded on your Merlin (Missing persons and related linked indices) system.??

In an emergency call **999**
For non emergencies call **101**



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Please search the four systems mentioned above from 1st January 2009 until present date.

Response:

Due to the different methods of recording information across 43 forces, a specific response from one constabulary should not be seen as an indication of what information could be supplied (within cost) by another. Systems used for recording these figures are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the data. For this reason responses between forces may differ, and should not be used for comparative purposes.

Your request for information has now been considered. Northamptonshire Police cannot supply the information you requested for the reasons set out below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Northamptonshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant, with 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

In relation to your particular request, the following exemption applies:

Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit; Section 12 of the FOIA provides an exemption from a public authority's obligation to comply with a request for information where the cost of compliance is estimated to exceed the appropriate limit.

The information you are requesting in relation to child abuse / exploitation linked to a spiritual or religious belief in Northamptonshire between 2009 and 2019 is not held by Northamptonshire Police in any reasonably retrievable form. The only means of establishing information of the nature you are requesting would be by way of manual examination of all reports relating to children.

It is my assessment that the cost of providing you with the information requested would exceed the 'appropriate level' as set out in the Freedom of Information (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 which is currently £450 for 'prescribed costs'. It would cost 5520 (number of records of abuse involving a person under 18 years of age in 2018) x 5 minutes each (minimum) = 460 hours at £25 per hour to respond to your request. Additionally this would increase by approx. 11x to cover each year requested.

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By way of explanation, every effort is made to ensure that responses to Freedom of Information requests provide accurate and complete data. Unfortunately, in relation to this request, our data is not organised in such a way as to allow us to provide this information.

In Northamptonshire in 2018 there were 5520 reports of child abuse, which includes any physical, sexual or psychological abuse, and you have asked for data covering 2009-2018; there are elements of this type of abuse within wider investigations, and this would only be referenced in free text. To determine if this type of abuse was linked with an offence would require a manual search of all violent or sexual offences involving child victims.

In view of the above, and in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please take this letter as a Refusal Notice.

You may wish to refine and resubmit your request so that it reduces the costs shown above and is then within the 'appropriate limit' shown above. (I cannot think of a means to refine the request in order to provide the information you are seeking) but if you would like some further information about how to proceed with your request then please contact FreedomofInformation@northants.pnn.police.uk

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