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24/04/2019

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 078/19

Thank you for your request for information regarding controlling dangerous dogs which has now been considered.

Applicant Question:

I note that the NPCC gave evidence to Parliament House of Commons, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee on 'Controlling dangerous dogs', in September 2018.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvfru/1040/1040.pdf>

Logically the evidence of the NPCC will be based -in part - on any dog related harassment incident statistics provided by UK police forces, to inform the committee of the correct statistical situation.

One gathered statistical example might show: Whether the problem has been getting worse over the last few years, which would seem to be indicated by the evidence to the committee.

NPCC - Evidence provided to the committee by Deputy Chief Constable Gareth Pritchard, Lead for Dangerous Dogs, National Police Chiefs Council; Inspector Patrick O'Hara, Dog Training School and Status Dog Unit, Metropolitan Police Service; and Mark Berry, Chairman, National Companion Animal Forums.

Could I please read the dog related harassment incident statistics that the NPCC has on record, as they logically must be in ready form - for evidential reasons, towards giving evidence to this Parliamentary committee.

Nb. The term 'harassment' is used in colloquial form, as an ordinary member of the public would use it, not specifically in police jargon.

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The conclusion of the committee was:

23. To ensure the public receives the best possible protection, the Government should commission an independent review of the effectiveness of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and wider dog control legislation. This review should begin no later than January 2019. We expect this review to take account of the concerns and recommendations raised throughout this Report.



- Has the NPCC been involved in this independent review and gathered any evidential statistics from police forces in the meantime?

If the NPCC has, or is, gathering statistics, could you please provide the format (or questionnaire) of the questions to police forces, within the past three years.

Please state whether all UK police forces were or are involved, or list the distributed sample.

NPCC Response:

The NPCC does not hold information captured by your request.

The former national policing lead for dangerous dogs, DCC Pritchard represented the NPCC and gave evidence to the House of Commons, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee in September 2018. DCC Pritchard has since retired.

I have made enquiries with the new policing lead, who confirm that there was no handover of information prior to DCC Pritchard's retirement. I have also contacted DCC Pritchard's former PA who assisted with this portfolio when DCC Pritchard was in post and she has confirmed that no information is held. In addition she states that no statistics are recorded centrally and each force will have their own statistics recorded. She has also confirmed that the portfolio hasn't been involved with an independent review of the effectiveness of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and wider dog control legislation.

Normal standard of proof in determining whether a public authority does hold any requested information is the civil standard of the balance of probabilities. In deciding where the balance lies, the Information Commissioner considers the scope, quality, thoroughness and results of the searches carried out by the public authority as well as considering where appropriate, any other reasons offered by the public authority to explain why the information is not held.

I have undertaken all of the necessary checks in establishing whether information is held which is captured by your request and any necessary steps with regard to retrieval of such information. Searches have been conducted the NPCC portfolio that might relate to the subject matter to which your request refers and I am satisfied that the searches conducted to locate the information that you have requested have been robust. There is no information held within the current portfolio and I therefore conclude that the information that you seek is not held by the NPCC.

It may assist you to understand that the NPCC portfolios do not share one IT system or database. Officers working on behalf of the NPCC, work from their own force on their own force's computer systems.

You may be interested to understand that the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) helps the police cut crime and keep the public safe by joining up the operational response to the most serious and strategic threats. Focusing on operational delivery and developing national approaches on issues such as finance, technology and human resources, working closely with the College of Policing, which is responsible for developing professional standards.

Yours sincerely

Sherry Traquair

NPCC Freedom of Information Officer & Decision Maker

www.npcc.police.uk

COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Internal Review

If you are dissatisfied with the response you have been provided with, in compliance with the Freedom of Information legislation, you can lodge a complaint with NPCC to have the decision reviewed within 20 working days of the date of this response. The handling of your request will be looked at by someone independent of the original decision, and a fresh response provided.

It would be helpful, if requesting a review, for you to articulate in detail the reasons you are not satisfied with this reply.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to NPCC Freedom of Information, c/o PO Box 481, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 9FS.

If, after lodging a complaint with NPCC, you are still unhappy with the outcome, you may make an application to the Information Commissioner at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.