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Mr Richard Czaplinski
request-1505-c4415e3b@whatdotheyknow.com

Date: 4th September 2008
Tel No.: (DDI) 01622 654413
FOI Ref.: 5980-2008

Dear Mr Czaplinski,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

I write in connection with your request for information received by Kent Police on 30/07/2008.
I note you seek access to the following information:

I would be obliged if you would please outline your policing policy around misrepresenting car number plates; that is when a driver amends their car number plate in such a way as to abuse it, say spell their name?

I would also like to know how many prosecutions have been successfully carried out against this offence in the past year.

Following receipt of your request, searches were conducted within Kent Police to locate information relevant to your request and I can respond to you as follows.

Kent Police do not have our own specific policy on this. The law quite clearly states that letters must be spaced in a required manner, must be of a particular font type, and must be a required height. It is also illegal to alter or misrepresent a number plate displayed on any vehicle **'on a public highway.'**

Therefore car dealers etc can have decorative number plates, and names/models as number plates but they cannot place that vehicle on a road displaying only that number plate.

The above would cover any alteration to a number plate such as moving the letters closer together to make a name, using tape to alter a O to a B for example, or even using fancy font type. Kent Police can issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) for such offences.

Kent Police can only provide you the results of when a Police Officer has issued a ticket for the offence of 'registration mark not in accordance with requirements'.

From 01/06/07 - 30/06/08, 1396 non-endorsable fixed penalty notices that were issued by a Kent Police Officer.

1227 of these were paid.

156 were registered as a fine at the local Magistrates' Court (after being contested by the defendant).

6 were cancelled.

A further 5 requested court hearings and the results of this we do not know as yet, while another 2 remain unpaid at this date.

Thank you for your interest in Kent Police and I hope that the information we have provided is of use to you. A sheet, which summarised your rights, was enclosed with the acknowledgement sent to you and as suggested therein, should you have any further issues concerning this matter, please contact me quoting the reference number shown above.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Hicks
Freedom of Information Administrator