

Our ref: FOI 1626

Your ref:

Date: 24 June 2019

Patrick J Cawkwell

By email to: [request-571640-b32a370b@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-571640-b32a370b@whatdotheyknow.com)



SOUTH YORKSHIRE  
**FIRE & RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

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Barnsley  
South Yorkshire  
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[www.southyorks.gov.uk](http://www.southyorks.gov.uk)

This matter has been reviewed by: Tom Grierson, Customer Feedback, Information & Improvement Officer

Direct Line: 01226 770770 Email: [informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk)

***RE: Internal Review into Freedom of Information request no: FOI 1626***

Dear Mr Cawkwell,

I refer to your email dated 25 May 2019 in which you request an internal review of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's (SYFR) response to your Freedom of Information request reference FOI 1626.

I can confirm that the review has been completed and the findings are below.

The initial request was submitted on 27 April 2019 and requested the following information:

*'What is the impact of those with mental and physical health problems if the cut from five to four riders goes ahead?'*

SYFR responded on 22 May 2019 advising that it did not hold the information requested. The internal review request was subsequently received on 25 May 2019 adding the following:

*'If South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service intends to reduce the number of riders on a fire pump from five to four then there has to have been some consideration given to how this would impact on the mental and physical health of people they serve.'*

*I wholly appreciate what the response says but to have such a cavalier attitude towards those with specific needs is, I'd suggest, not in keeping with the Equality Act 2010. The Act makes very clear that to directly or indirectly discriminate against*

*people with the protected characteristics is illegal - surely by making this cut in staff and not having any policy to outline how to mitigate that is not acceptable?*

The purpose of this review is to assess whether SYFR were correct to say that they did not hold the information requested.

The request is centred on SYFR potentially reducing the number of firefighters on an engine from the current number of 5, to 4. This potential change is due to a reduced budget from government, a pensions deficit and a result of SYFR no longer being able to use Close Proximity Crewing, meaning that savings are required. Proposals to address these savings are set out in the latest draft Integrated Risk Management Plan, available at the following link: [http://www.syfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SYFR\\_IRMP\\_Brochure\\_Print\\_FINAL\\_UPDATED.pdf](http://www.syfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SYFR_IRMP_Brochure_Print_FINAL_UPDATED.pdf)

It is important to consider that the proposals referred to are not confirmed as going ahead. It would be reasonable to expect SYFR to hold the requested information if they were, however, that is not the case. Should the proposal be confirmed, there will be further work undertaken to fully communicate, integrate and plan any changes to the existing service delivery. It is, therefore, accepted that the information requested does not currently exist, but may in the future, pending the outcome of the proposals.

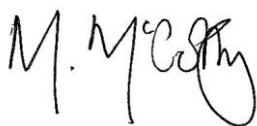
In light of the above, I consider that the response provided by SYFR to your request is the correct one. However, I would comment that, with regards to SYFR's obligations under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to provide advice and assistance to a requester, it would have been reasonable of them to have advised that the information does not yet, but may exist in the future, rather than simply say it is not held.

If you are not content with the outcome of the authority's decision, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:-

Customer Services Team  
Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Website address: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

Yours sincerely



Martin McCarthy  
Deputy Monitoring Officer