

7th May 2021

request-744095-db8ae236@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear D Moore

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20210765

REQUEST

- 1. For the years financial years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 please provide:***
 - a. The number of officers who withdrew their Tasers.***
 - b. The number of officers who discharged their Tasers.***
 - c. The highest number of times a single officer withdrew their Taser.***
 - d. The highest number of times a single officer discharged their Taser.***
 - e. The number of Tasers reported lost, stolen or missing if any.***
- 2. Please provide the number of each sort of Taser you have, including the shotgun variety.***

CLARIFICATION

SYP publish this type of data on the website and details can be found below:

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/use-of-force-in-south-yorkshire/>

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/about-us/our-standards/taser-use/>

And we submit figures on this subject to the Home Office and details can be found:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-use-of-force-statistics-england-and-wales-april-2018-to-march-2019>

South Yorkshire Police has received a number of similar requests to yours in the past.

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/taser-data-ref-20201125/>

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/taser-stats-ref-20201496/>

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/taser-stats-ref-20201405/>

REQUESTER CLARIFICATION

That you for the very valuable links. I do not consider, however, that the information they lead to answers my requests. Please provide the information I have requested.

I have a query regarding your apparently contradictory responses to two information requests.

Link 4 (Taser data ref 20201125):

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/media/5907/20201125-response.pdf>

Your response states that Tasers were fired only 5 times in 2019. I note that your response is dated 28 May 2020. This suggests to me that the figure of 5 refers to the whole financial year 2019/20.

Link 6 (annual Taser usage ref 20201405):

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/media/6297/20201405-response.pdf>

Your response states that Tasers were fired 80 times in 2019/20. Which figure is correct - 5 or 80?

RESPONSE

Firstly I need to explain the data in the above links you query in your clarification. I have checked the figures on FOI 20201125 which are for calendar year 2019 and I can confirm there was an error in the figures when I transferred them onto that response. I have now changed the original and the copy on our Disclosure Log to the correct count. It now reads 85 not 5. Please see the updated on the below link:

<https://www.southyorkshire.police.uk/find-out/accessing-information/request-information-under-the-freedom-of-information-act/taser-data-ref-20201125/>

The figures on 20201405 are correct and relate to financial year as that is the format that requester asked for.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires South Yorkshire Police when refusing such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which

- (a) states the fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption and
- (c) states (if it would not be apparent) why the exemption applies.

Section 31 (1) (a) (b) Law Enforcement states that information is exempt information if its disclosure under the Act would, or would likely to prejudice:

- a) The prevention or detection of crime;
- b) The apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

This exemption is a qualified and prejudice based exemption and therefore the legislators accept that there may be harm if released. The authority has to consider and describe the harm that would occur if a full disclosure of information were released.

HARM

It is important to stress that when a disclosure is made under the Freedom of Information Act, it is a disclosure to the world and not to a single individual. In view of this, we may publish information released under the Freedom of Information Act on our website in order that any member of the public who may wish to view the information can have access to it.

In considering whether or not this information should be disclosed, consideration has been given to the potential harm that would be caused by disclosure.

To disclose the total number of tasers each individual force has would provide sensitive tactical information. This may be used by individuals to make an informed judgement as to the likelihood of an officer carrying a taser or not, thereby highlighting vulnerabilities/tactical options of individual forces.

This could undermine policing in South Yorkshire Police in the future. It is possible that anyone wishing to commit crime can build a picture of what resources are likely to be deployed under the different circumstances and plan acts of crime accordingly. Disclosing this SYP capability may therefore prejudice the prevention and detection of crime.

PUBLIC INTEREST

Section 31 – Considerations favouring disclosure

- Disclosure would demonstrate SYPs commitment to transparency and openness
- A full release of information would show that SYP is proactive in its operational policing and capabilities.
- Disclosure would provide better awareness, which may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public.

Section 31 – Considerations favouring non-disclosure

- An impact on police resources, which would hinder the prevention or detection of crime and place individuals at risk.
- Police resources and the Force's ability to operate effectively and efficiently, would be affected as this information can be used by those with criminal intent to determine the forces capability.
- More crime would be committed by those individuals intent on committing offences which would impact of the force and the safety of members of the public.

ON BALANCE

After considering the advantages and disadvantages of full disclosure, I have come to the conclusion that whilst there is a public interest in knowing SYP resources and capabilities, the interest in safeguarding the protection of the public and the effective use of police capabilities and resources is of stronger interest to the Police Service. As such, I am not prepared to release all the information pertinent to your request. However I am happy to release the below data that does not trigger the above exemption.

For this request, I approached our Training Department and a Safety Training Officer who collates data relating to Taser deployment for assistance with your request. He has provided the following:

These figures are compiled from Use of force reports submitted by individual officers following usage.

1. For the years financial years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 please provide:

	<u>2017/2018</u>	<u>2018/2019</u>	<u>2019/2020</u>
a. The number of officers who withdrew their Tasers.	494	526	562
b. The number of officers who discharged their Tasers.	69	82	81
c. The highest number of times a single officer withdrew their Taser.	17	50	97
d. The highest number of times a single officer discharged their Taser.	4	11	16
e. The number of Tasers reported lost, stolen or missing if any.	0	0	0

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review by following the advice contained in the separate notice enclosed with this correspondence:

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire, SK9 5AF.
Telephone: 08456 306060 or 01625 545745
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Louise Holmes
Information Compliance Clerk
South Yorkshire Police
Information Compliance Unit
Performance & Governance
Unit 20 Sheffield 35A Business Park
Churchill Way
Sheffield
S35 2PY

Email - foi@southyorks.police.uk

Please note that police forces in the United Kingdom are routinely required to provide information and statistics to government bodies and the recording criteria is set nationally. However, the systems used for recording these figures are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the data. It should be noted that for these reasons this forces response to your questions should not be used for the comparison purposes with any other response you may receive.

South Yorkshire Police provides you the right to request a re-examination of your case under its review procedure (copy enclosed). If you decide to request such a review and having followed the Constabulary's full process you are still dissatisfied, then you have the right to direct your comments to the Information Commissioner who will give it consideration.

The South Yorkshire Police in complying with their statutory duty under sections 1 and 11 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to release the enclosed information will not breach the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. However, the rights of the copyright owner of the enclosed information will continue to be protected by law. Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of the attached information should be addressed to The Force Solicitor, South Yorkshire Police, Police Headquarters, 5 Carbrook Hall Road, Sheffield, S9 2EG

Appeal Process for Freedom of Information

Using this process will not affect your right to appeal directly to the Information Commissioner. However, it will usually be quicker if matters can be resolved locally using this process.

Who can appeal?

Anyone who has requested information from the Force in writing can appeal within 20 working days. If you have requested information and you are not satisfied with the way we have dealt with your request, you can use the appeal process to have it looked at again. If someone who requested information would like to appeal but cannot do so themselves you can appeal on their behalf, but it will help us if you make it clear that you are doing so.

What can I appeal about?

You can appeal about the range, amount and format of information we have sent following a request. You can also appeal about the way a request was handled – for example, the time it took to respond, or the way letters were worded.

How do I appeal?

You can appeal by writing/ emailing your appeal/complaint to the address below. To deal with your appeal as quickly as possible, it will help if you can give us as much information as you can about the request made, such as the reference number, and the reason for your appeal/ complaint.

What happens to my appeal?

Once we have enough details to identify the request you are concerned about, a qualified person, other than the initial decision maker, will deal with the internal review.

How long does it take?

Whatever their conclusion, you will be informed of the result as soon as possible, and in any case within 20 days of submitting your appeal.

If you are still not satisfied, you may then appeal to the Information Commissioner.

Appeal Address

**Information Compliance Unit South Yorkshire Police Professional Standards
Department Unit 20 Sheffield 35A Business Park Churchill Way Sheffield S35 2PY**

Email foi@southyorks.pnn.police.uk