

POLICE SERVICE REFERRAL CRITERIA

There are certain risks associated with the disclosure of the types of information held by the Police Service. These risks range in severity from the minor upset of a partner agency to the death of an individual and/or damage to the national infrastructure.

These outcomes can be caused by a wide range of scenarios from criminal, concerted campaign or media use of the legislation to poorly thought out releases or withholding of information. Actually refusing to provide information, even if appropriate, can sometimes be more damaging than releasing it, due to the adverse publicity and complaints it may attract.

In order to combat these issues, and reduce the risks, a National Police Freedom of Information & Data Protection Unit (NPFDU) was created and ratified by all Chief Constables in the UK. The NPFDU's remit is to:

- Provide advice, good practice and consistency in response with regard to FOIA requests that meet the referral criteria.
- Co-ordinate strategic development of FOIA throughout the Police Service.
- Maintain and develop relationships with partners, other agencies, regulatory bodies and requestors at a national level.
- Deliver FOIA training and promote good practice appropriate to the needs of the service.
- Proactively monitor potential criminal and misuse of the legislation in order to protect the service.
- Analyse intelligence.

Ensuring delivery of this remit is the responsibility of the respective NPCC and Association of Chief Police Officers of Scotland (ACPOS) portfolio holders. The CRU will centrally co-ordinate combined activity and its location will be determined by the NPCC portfolio holder.

THE PROCESS

Forces should analyse all FOIA requests they receive using the referral criteria in this manual. Any request that meets the referral criteria detailed in this manual should be submitted to the NPFDU.

A request being referred must be accompanied by the NPFDU template (please see next page). Please note that this template must be completed in its entirety for consideration by the NPFDU and incomplete templates will be returned. If information is not available to complete a particular box on the template, please indicate this.

In the first instance issues requiring advice or requests for referral should be sent by e-mail to npcc.advice@cru.pnn.police.uk.

The CRU may be contacted by telephone on 01489 569826.