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Email: npcc.foi.request@npfdu.police.uk

09/12/2022

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 383/2022

Thank you for your request for information regarding police force FOI and SAR data, which has now been considered.

Applicant Question:

Please note that due to its length, I have attached your request letter separately to this response. I have extracted the questions from it as below:

1. Please can you confirm my understanding as above is correct?
2. In which case, please can you provide the source of the error for **each** of the months in which non-zero differences are apparent and provide the correct value such that the difference is restored to zero. If my understanding is not correct, please can you explain **how** my premise may be at fault.
3. Please can you confirm you have since put data the appropriate validation checks in place to prevent any apparent such discrepancies in the figures.
4. Please can you confirm whether you carried out any data validation checks on the data you received, or just took the data at face value and passed it straight on to the ICO?
5. If any once of the **9 forces** listed below did explain **why** their figures "didn't add up" to a zero difference, please could you provide that data so I can better understand how and why this has happened.

NPCC Response:

Thank you for request for information in relation to the ICO Timeliness report and the figures within.

We are aware that this is your second request for information and clarity around the data captured, the first request being treated as a FOI request, the response is attached. I note the very similar context of the request; clarity of the information retrieved from West Yorkshire Police (WYP) and disclosure of any data held.

A further letter was received asking for an investigation into WYP statistics and dealt with by NPCC central office, also attached.



With regards this request, you have stipulated within your correspondence this is a FOI request therefore, we must treat it as such. I draw your attention to section 84 of FOIA, responses relate to recorded information held by a public authority and do not extend to providing explanations unless the answers are already held in a recorded form.

Section 84 of the Act states: "Information is defined in section 84 of the Act as 'information recorded in any form'. The Act therefore only extends to requests for recorded information. It does not require public authorities to answer questions generally; only if they already hold the answers in recorded form. The Act does not extend to requests for information about policies or their implementation, or the merits or demerits of any proposal or action - unless, of course, the answer to any such request is already held in recorded form. "This is explained within ICO Decision Notice FS50191203, which states at paragraph 18: 'Set out at Section 84, the right of access under the Act is defined as the right to access recorded information held by a public authority.

A public authority is under no obligation to create new information, provide general explanations or opinions.

1. No information is held in relation to this question.

However, outside of the Act and as a gesture of goodwill I can confirm that the calculation of the pipeline is set out within the ICO Timeliness Report as *Pipeline: is the volume of requests awaiting completion. For example, October's pipeline is the volume of open requests at the end of the month.* Which appears to be in line with your understanding. However, what should be considered is that forces cannot always complete and submit the data on the first working day of the following month, therefore, the pipeline will likely reflect the number of open cases on the day they complete the return.

2. The NPCC does hold some information relevant to this question.

Having searched the information received from all 9 forces, I can confirm the figures within the ICO Report are as received from forces, apart from 1 error. Gwent data shows they had 36 FOI's open in December 2019, however, this figure has been recorded as 96 by us and the ICO. This appears to be through human error.

Unfortunately I am unable to quantify why there are discrepancies as this has not been recorded. I can confirm that the statistical data was taken at face value from the forces and onwards to the ICO. However, consideration could be given to inputting errors as well as each force's case management system recording information such as reopening cases and dealing with backlogs that may have received a special process. For example, as mentioned above, the pipeline figure may also include open cases from the start of the month to the day of completion rather than the pipeline that each force had at the end of the month, in addition cases received in a calendar month and recorded as "requests received" may then require clarification from the applicant before a force can proceed, meaning these cases may not be recorded by forces as within the pipeline as they are not open and being worked on until such time as clarification is received, which would also skew the figures.

3. No recorded information held. However outside of the Act, I can confirm that with regards to force data that is collated and published by the NPCC [here](#) I can confirm further measures are being put in place to ensure force understanding of the process and build in a checking process of the calculations.
4. No recorded information. Although as stated above, I can confirm that the statistical data was taken at face value from the forces and sent onwards to the ICO.
5. No information held.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Greenlees
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.

Annex A

Legislation – Section 16

- (1) It shall be the duty of a public authority to provide advice and assistance, so far as it would be reasonable to expect the authority to do so, to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information to it.