

FOI 0861/22 - Deaths of Children

Request:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, please can you provide responses to the following questions:

1. How many reports of the deaths of children under 18 were investigated by the force between 1 Jan 2020 and 31 December 2021? Please can I have the data broken down by month and year.
 - a. Of the above, please can you also provide a breakdown of the reports by type of injury, ethnicity, and the age groups 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-17
2. Please provide us with the following details concerning any charges of causing or allowing the death of a child which you have brought since 22 March 2020, where that child died during the period March 2020-Dec 2021:
 - the relevant case number(s)
 - the court where the case is listed
 - names of defendant(s)
 - date(s) of birth of defendant(s)
 - address(es)

Response:

Searches have been conducted and I can confirm that Northamptonshire Police holds the following information as requested.

The crime recording system has been searched between 1 January 2020 & 31 December 2021 (inclusive) for all Homicide related crimes with a 'Deceased' Person Classification whereby the Victim was under the age of 18.

1. Total number of crimes - **5**.

Any further information is exempt under Section 40(2) - Personal Information - Please see the explanation below.
2. This information is exempt under Section 30(1)(a)(b) - Investigations and proceedings Conducted by Public Authorities - Please see the explanation below.

Your request for information has now been considered. Northamptonshire Police is not obliged to provide some of the information that you have requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please take this letter as a Refusal Notice to this part of your request.

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

- a) States that fact
- b) Specifies the exemption(s) in question and
- c) States (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemptions apply.

In relation to your request, the following exemptions apply:

Section 30(1)(a) - Investigations and proceedings Conducted by Public Authorities
Section 40(2) - (Third Party) Personal Information

- Section 30 is a qualified class-based exemption and a public interest test is required.
- Section 40 is an absolute exemption

Section 30(1)(a) - Public Interest Test

Section 30(1)(a) - Factors favouring disclosure

Disclosure of this information would enlighten members of the public as to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Force. This would promote awareness around the investigation of serious offences.

Section 30(1)(a) - Factors favouring non-disclosure

Information relating to an investigation, criminal or otherwise, will rarely be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act and only where there is a strong public interest considering favouring disclosure. Disclosure of the information requested would prejudice any future investigations which would therefore undermine the relationship and confidence between the Force and the public or others involved in the investigation. This may deter people from coming forward and cooperating with prosecuting authorities, particularly where criminal offences are involved.

Section 30(1)(a) - Balancing Test

The public interest test is centred on whether the information you have requested should be disclosed to the world, not just to you the applicant.

The Police service is tasked with protecting the community and solving crime and they would not disclose information if it would jeopardise those important roles. By disclosing the requested information in this case would mean that investigations would be less effective and the small benefit in increased public awareness would not be

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adequate compensation for such an impact on society. It is therefore my opinion that the balance lies in favour of non-disclosure of the data requested.

Section 40(2) – Personal Information

Northamptonshire Police believe the disclosure of the information requested would lead to identifying a living individual and place information pertaining to them into the public domain. This constitutes personal data which would, if released, be in breach of the rights provided by the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations.

To comply with DPA 2018 and GDPR, we must ensure that any disclosures of personal data, however obtained, are fair and lawful. Providing detail would be unfair as those linked to these matters would not reasonably expect the investigating force to publish this type of information. Such disclosure may lead to unwanted and unsolicited intrusion from the media or others interested in the facts of the matter and / or could lead to harm to the individuals concerned. It could also lead to an individual to be wrongfully identified as a consequence.

The Freedom of Information Act is applicant and motive blind. Any information disclosed under the Act is a disclosure to the world at large and would be disclosed to any individual upon request. For this reason a request under the Act cannot be a private transaction. Both the request itself, and any information which may be disclosed, are considered suitable for open publication. Therefore, when considering whether information is suitable for disclosure, a public authority is entitled to consider the effect of disclosure to any individual.

The numerical data presented in this response is an un-audited snapshot of unpublished data sourced from "live" systems and is subject to the interpretation of the original request by the individual extracting the data. The figures provided therefore are our best interpretation of relevance of data to your request, but you should be aware that the collation of figures for ad hoc requests may have limitations and this should be taken into account when the data is used.

If you decide to write an article / use the enclosed data, we would ask you to take into consideration the factors highlighted in this document so as to not mislead members of the public or official bodies or misrepresent the relevance of the whole or any part of this disclosed material.

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