



Our Ref: 000260/21

Your Ref:

Address Correspondence to: Information Management

Date 09 February 2021

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I write further to your request for information received 22/01/2021.

I note you seek access to the following information:

My request relates to the number of police officers that have contracted COVID-19 since March 2020. Specifically, I would like the following information:

- 1. How many police officers have contracted COVID-19 since March 1st 2020? I would like this information broken down by month from March 1st 2020, up to and including today's date. If data has not been included up to and including today's date, please provide me with data starting from March 1st 2020, to the latest date where data is available.*
- 2. Of the number of police officers that have contracted COVID-19 since March 1st 2020, how many of them had to take a period of sick leave that lasted over 14 days as a result?*

Following receipt of your request, searches were conducted within Leicestershire Police to locate information relevant to your request.

Your request for information has now been considered and the information asked for is as follows: -

1. Leicestershire Police have recorded the below numbers of Officers who have had periods of sickness with confirmed COVID-19, however this does not include any asymptomatic cases which we would not have any knowledge of:

Month	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20
No	5	4	1	0	0	7	31	46

Information relating to more recent months is considered exempt by virtue of Section 31.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Leicestershire Constabulary, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption(s) applicable relate to your request are as follows:

- Section 31 – Law Enforcement

Section 31 is a prejudice based, qualified exemption and there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Public Interest Test

The public interest is not what interests the public, but what will be of greater good if released to the community as a whole. It is not in the public interest to disclose information that may compromise Leicestershire Police's ability to fulfil its core functions.

Section 31 – Evidence of Harm

Under the Act, we cannot, and do not request the motives of any application for information. We have no doubt that the vast majority of requests made under the Act are legitimate.

However, in disclosing information to one applicant, we are expressing a willingness to provide it to anyone in the world. This means that a disclosure to a genuinely interested and concerned person automatically opens it up for a similar disclosure, including those who would use the information to gain an advantage over the police.

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

Information which could disclose Officer workforce numbers may indicate any weakness or reduced resilience or numbers. Leicestershire police will not disclose information which could show any impact on workforce numbers and ultimately allow those minded to commit criminal activity a knowledge of any areas they may wish to exploit.

To release this information into the public domain would therefore clearly impact on our law enforcement capabilities with regards to future cases.

Section 31 – Considerations favouring disclosure

There is a public interest in disclosure of the requested information as it would allow the public to discuss the impact of the pandemic on law enforcement and would therefore raise the Force's accountability. It would also aid transparency and allow informed discussions in the public domain.

Section 31 – Considerations favouring non - disclosure

I am of the opinion that it is not in the public interest to disclose sensitive information that relates to workforce numbers and resilience on this occasion.

Information such as Officer sickness numbers in very recent times, if released into the public domain, would allow those like-minded to commit crime to be aware as to whether there is any weakness they could exploit.

Conclusion

I believe that on balance it is **not** in the public interest to release the recent information which you have requested on this occasion for the reasons stated above. I appreciate that this is not the decision you had hoped for but

I must consider the wider position under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which I feel necessitates the need to refuse your request under this legislation.

2. 40 Officers have contracted COVID-19 have had to take a period of sick leave lasting longer than 14 days.

Leicestershire Police provides you the right to ask for a re-examination of your request under its review procedure. Letters should be addressed to Information Manager, Corporate Services Department at the above address. If you decide to request such a review and having followed the Force'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.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Officer
Leicestershire Police

Leicestershire 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 Information Manager, Leicestershire Police Headquarters, St. Johns, Enderby, Leicester LE19 2BX.