

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 24 October 2024

Public Authority: Chief Constable of Cleveland Police
Address: St Mark's House
St Mark's Court
Thornaby
Stockton on Tees
TS17 6QW

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant requested information relating to a named police operation.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that the above public authority ("the public authority") breached section 10(1) of FOIA by failing to provide a valid response to the request within the statutory time frame of 20 working days.
3. The Commissioner does not require further steps to be taken.

Request and response

4. On 13 April 2024, the complainant wrote to the public authority and requested information in the following terms:

"As many victims are now aware that operation magnolia has been ongoing for over ten years. Many victims have made statements, numerous over the telephone which they later sign at your convenience.

Victims have been informed by their solicitors that you are still taking statements from victims and still contacting victims to sign their statements.

Under the Freedom of Information Act please provide me the total number of victims to date.

Please provide me with the total number of victims that you have now taken statements from over the telephone and/or in person.

Please provide me with the total number of victims that still need to sign their statements.

Please provide any statistics that you hold regarding your delivery of services. For example, the average time it takes to make a statement either in person or over the telephone. How many statements could you take in one week, how many statements could you take in one month. So on and so forth".

5. The public authority responded on 18 May 2024.

Scope of the case

6. The complainant has not disputed the information they have now received, but wish to have the late response formally recorded.

Reasons for decision

7. Section 1(1) of FOIA states that:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –

(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and

(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him."

8. Section 10(1) of FOIA states that a public authority must respond to a request promptly and "not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt".
9. From the evidence provided to the Commissioner in this case, it is clear that the public authority did not deal with the request for information in accordance with FOIA. The Commissioner finds that the public authority has breached section 10(1) by failing to respond to the request within 20 working days.

Right of appeal

10. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)
GRC & GRP Tribunals,
PO Box 9300,
LEICESTER,
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0203 936 8963

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: grc@justice.gov.uk

Website: www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber

11. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
12. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

Michael Lea
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Water Lane
Wilmslow
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