

Subject: FW: FOI request our ref. 4987 Taser deployment on under 20s [NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

From: "Shirley Elderfield" <shirley.elderfield@essex.pnn.police.uk>

Date: 22/05/2013 11:19

To: <foi.police@openworldnews.com>

Dear James

Thank you for your enquiry which has been logged under the above reference. I apologise for the delay in replying. Having completed my enquiries I am able to respond as follows:

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at Sec1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at Sec1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held. Where exemptions are relied upon s17 of FOIA requires that we provide 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 exemption applies.

In respect of this enquiry:

I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act for information on the use of Tasers.

More specifically I am requesting the following:

1 a) On how many occasions in 2012 was a Taser deployed against a person under the age of 20. Please provide a breakdown of both the ages of the individuals as well as the method of Taser deployment (for example, but not limited to, drive-stun mode, firings and incidents where the Taser was drawn and aimed, etc.)

This is not exhaustive (eg. if there was a 9-year-old involved in an incident with a Taser please include that information, or if there is another method of deployment please include that information in the table.)

b) Please also provide a summary for each incident.

Please could you also provide:

2) The same for 2011

3) The same for 2010

Essex Police does hold the information requested. Please refer to attached spreadsheet for data held in relation to Taser deployment for the years 2011 and 2012, in relation to persons under the age of 20 years old. Within the data there are instances where the DOB of the suspect is not recorded; as I am unable to rule them out from your specification I have included these instances in the results.

In relation to question 3, Essex Police are unable to provide this information. The format in which Taser deployments were recorded in 2010 is not readily accessible; all instances of this nature were recorded on a paper version of a force form, this form went electronic in 2011. To extract the relevant information would involve a manual search of all relevant Health and Safety force forms for that year, and each reviewed to consider whether they relate to use of a Taser, then drilled down into age of suspect. I have liaised with Essex Police's Health & Safety Department and this equates to reviewing over 3500 individual forms, extracting the data then populating it into a spreadsheet/table. This process would be very time consuming and would bring the request beyond the cost and time limitation as set within Section 12 of the FOIA; I calculate that if each paper takes one minute to review and extract the relevant information, based on the 3500 papers that require review, this would take over 58 hours.

For the purposes of section 17 (5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) this response serves as a formal notification of refusal of this part of your request on the basis that Essex Police does not hold, for the purposes of FOIA, the specific data in a readily accessible format. That is to say, this data is not extractable from a

central database or held in a spreadsheet. To extract the information requested would entail a manual search of Essex Police records; a process which would be likely to exceed the appropriate limit (as mentioned at section 12 of the FOIA) in terms of cost/time (£450 or the equivalent in time of 18 hours).

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act states that a public authority is not obliged to:

"...comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit."

The Essex Police Press Office has supplied the following statement:

Police officers can only use as much force as is reasonable in the circumstances and officers deploying Taser must justify its use. Each and every use of Taser is reported to the Home Office which enables ACPO, the NPIA and the Home Office's Centre for Applied Science and Technology to monitor its appropriate use. Taser has been shown to be an effective tactical option for use against individuals who are offering such violence that force is necessary to protect the public, police officers or the individual themselves. In recent years, more officers have been trained to be able to use Taser as, in the majority of cases where it is deployed, the incident is resolved without the device being discharged. The medical implications associated with Taser are closely monitored by an independent panel of medical advisers who also look at learning from across the world. This monitoring shows that risks associated with Taser are largely secondary, as a result of falling, rather than the electricity conducted through the device. While these figures suggest an increase in the use of Taser by police officers, we await official figures from the Home Office.

The Taser will be used as a deterrent when dealing with dangerous, violent or potentially violent situations. Our experience is that deploying the Taser, which is used in only a very small number of occasions, is an effective way of resolving situations. It is a safe option to firearms and helps protect officers, the public and the suspect from serious injury.

I trust that the information provided is of assistance and apologise that I was unable to assist fully on this occasion.

Kind regards,

Shirley Elderfield

On behalf of

Laura Mills

Information Officer
Strategic Change Management Department
Essex Police HQ
Internal extension 150025
Direct Dial 01245 452647
Essex Police Non emergency Telephone Number (within Essex) 101 (Outside Essex) 0300 333 4444
Fax: Internal 150045 External 01245 452256
Website: www.essex.police.uk

Information Management, Strategic Change Management Department, Essex Police Headquarters, PO Box 2, Springfield, Chelmsford, CM2 6DA

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your FOI request, you have the right to ask for an internal review.

Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original request and should be addressed to the Senior Information Officer at the above address or by email to: datafoi@essex.pnn.police.uk

They will conduct an internal review to investigate the handling of your request and endeavour to reply within 20 working days. If your complaint refers to a decision to apply an exemption it would assist the review if you would outline the reasons why you feel the exemption does not apply.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply direct to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or via <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

From: Shirley Elderfield **On Behalf Of** data foi
Sent: 22 March 2013 08:53
To: 'OpenWorld News'
Subject: RE: FOI request our ref. 4987 Taser deployment on under 20s

Thank you for your enquiry which has been logged under the above reference.

Under the Freedom of Information Act we are required to reply within 20 working days but given the current very high number of requests being received this may not be possible.

We will reply as soon as possible and please accept our apologies for the inconvenience any delay may cause.

Shirley Elderfield

Information Officer
Strategic Change Management Department
Essex Police HQ
Internal extension 150025
Direct Dial 01245 452647
Essex Police Non emergency Telephone Number (within Essex) 101 (Outside Essex) 0300 333 4444
Fax: Internal 150045 External 01245 452256
Website: www.essex.police.uk

Information Management, Strategic Change Management Department, Essex Police Headquarters, PO Box 2, Springfield, Chelmsford, CM2 6DA

From: OpenWorld News [<mailto:foi.police@openworldnews.com>]

Sent: 21 March 2013 18:49

To: foi@cityoflondon.police.uk; FOIComplianceUnit-SCD@met.pnn.police.uk; foi@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk; foi@cambs.pnn.police.uk; FOI@herts.pnn.police.uk; freedomofinformation@norfolk.pnn.police.uk; Information@suffolk.pnn.police.uk; information@hampshire.pnn.police.uk; freedomofinformation@kent.pnn.police.uk; chief.constable@surrey.pnn.police.uk; foi@sussex.pnn.police.uk; foi@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk; foirequests@avonandsomerset.police.uk; foi@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk; foi@dorset.pnn.police.uk; FOI@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk; foi@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk; FOI@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk; data.protection@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk; foi@lincs.pnn.police.uk; freedomofinformation@northants.police.uk; freedomofinformation@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk; foi@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk; Data.protection@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk; information@westmercia.pnn.police.uk; foi@west-midlands.police.uk; publicinformationunit@cleveland.pnn.police.uk; freedomofinformation@durham.pnn.police.uk; InformationComplianceUnit@humberside.pnn.police.uk; informationlaw@northyorkshire.pnn.police.uk; freedom.info@northumbria.pnn.police.uk; FOI@southyorks.pnn.police.uk; foi@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk; foi@cheshire.pnn.police.uk; freedomofinformation@cumbria.police.uk; freedomofinformation@gmp.police.uk; foi@merseyside.police.uk; information@lancashire.pnn.police.uk; foi@psni.pnn.police.uk; foi@south-wales.pnn.police.uk; foi@gwent.pnn.police.uk; FreedomofInformation@north-wales.police.uk; foi@south-wales.pnn.police.uk; foi@dg.pnn.police.uk; foi@fife.pnn.police.uk; foienquiries@grampian.pnn.police.uk; fiu@lbp.pnn.police.uk; foi@northern.pnn.police.uk; info@strathclyde.pnn.police.uk; information@tayside.pnn.police.uk

Cc: foi.police@openworldnews.com

Subject: FOI Request - Taser deployment on people aged under 20, from OpenWorld News

Dear Freedom of Information Officer,

I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act for information on the use of Tasers.

More specifically I am requesting the following:

1 a) On how many occasions in 2012 was a Taser deployed against a person under the age of 20. Please provide a breakdown of both the ages of the individuals as well as the method of Taser deployment (for example, but not limited to, drive-stun mode, firings and incidents where the Taser was drawn and aimed, etc.)

I have provided an example of how this answer might be formatted.

Age	Drive-Stun	Firings	Draw/Aim	Total
19				
18				
17				
16				
15				
14				
13				
12				
11				
10				

This is not exhaustive (eg. if there was a 9-year-old involved in an incident with a Taser please include that information, or if there is another method of deployment please include that information in the table.)

b) Please also provide a summary for each incident.

Please could you also provide:

2) The same for 2011

3) The same for 2010

If my request is denied in whole or in part, I ask that you justify all deletions by reference to specific exemptions of the act.

Please let me know you have received this.

If there are any problems, or you need more information, please get in touch.

Many thanks,

Guy Basnett

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OpenWorld News

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