

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 10 November 2022

Public Authority: The Chief Constable of Dorset Police
Address: Winfrith
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 8DZ

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant has requested information from Dorset Police ("the Police"), in relation to the reduction of casualties on the road within the area and the data used to calculate these figures. The Police originally refused the request, citing section 14(1) of FOIA – vexatious or repeated request. Following on from the Commissioner issuing a decision notice¹, the Police issued a new response, providing the complainant with information which relates to the data used. Further information was provided by the Police in the internal review response.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that on the balance of probabilities, the Police does not hold any further information relevant to the complainant's request. As such, the Police has complied with section 1(1) of FOIA.
3. The Commissioner does not require the Police to take any steps as a result of this decision notice.

¹ <https://ico.org.uk/media/action-weve-taken/decision-notices/2021/4019171/ic-67258-s4q6.pdf>

Request and response

4. On 15 August 2020, the complainant wrote to the Police and requested information in the following terms:

“Over the last ten years, we’ve worked in partnership to reduce the number of casualties by 20 per cent and while every collision can be devastating, I am pleased that we are making constant progress in making our roads safer.”

<https://www.dorset.police.uk/news-inform...>

Please could you provide the data, and the analysis, that demonstrates that the partnership have reduced casualties by 20%.”

5. The Police responded on 15 September 2020. It stated that it was refusing the request, relying on section 14 of FOIA. The Police maintained this position in their internal review response of 13 November 2020.
6. Following the Commissioner issuing a decision notice on 26 October 2021 (see reference number 1), on 24 November 2021, the Police issued a new response to the complainant. It provided the complainant with some information on where it had obtained the information from.
7. Following an internal review, the Police wrote to the complainant on 20 May 2022. It provided a more detailed response of how the data is used to work out the percentages, as well as providing a very detailed breakdown of the figures it holds, demonstrating how the reduction in casualties was originally recorded.

Scope of the case

8. The complainant contacted the Commissioner, on 11 April 2022, to complain about the way their request for information had been handled.
9. The Commissioner considers that the scope of this complaint is to determine if, on the balance of probabilities, the Police have provided the information relevant to the request and whether it has complied with section 1(1) of FOIA.
10. This decision notice is focusing only on the information provided from 24 November 2021 onwards.

Reasons for decision

11. Under section 1(1) of FOIA anyone who requests information from a public authority is entitled under subsection (a) to be told if the authority holds the information and, under subsection (b), to have the information communicated to them if it is held and is not exempt information.
12. The Commissioner has reviewed the complainant's request and the Police's response and he is satisfied that the Police has provided a sufficient response to the complainant's request. The figures and explanations clearly state how the Police reached the conclusion that there had been a 20% reduction in road accidents.
13. Whilst the Commissioner acknowledges that the complainant may not consider the Police's records to be accurate, he must stress that he cannot assess the accuracy of the information given. FOIA applies only to whatever recorded information a public authority holds within the scope of an information request.
14. Having considered all the circumstances, the Commissioner is satisfied that the Police has provided the recorded information it holds relevant to the complainant's request and, as such, has complied with section 1(1) of FOIA.

Right of appeal

15. 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

16. 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.
17. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

Signed

Michael Lea
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