

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 6 July 2023

Public Authority: Commissioner of the City of London Police
Address: City of London Police
Bishopgate Station
182 Bishopgate
London
EC2M 4NP

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant requested information about modern slavery and human trafficking cases reported to the police in 2022. By the date of this notice, the Commissioner of the City of London Police (the public authority) had not issued a substantive response to this request.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that the public authority has breached section 10(1) of FOIA in that it failed to provide a valid response to the request within the statutory time frame of 20 working days.
3. The Commissioner requires the public authority to take the following step to ensure compliance with the legislation.
 - the public authority must provide a substantive response to the request in accordance with its obligations under FOIA.
4. The public authority must take this step within 35 calendar days of the date of this decision notice. Failure to comply may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of FOIA and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

Request and response

5. On 9 April 2023, the complainant wrote to the public authority and requested information in the following terms:

“Please provide the number of cases of modern slavery and human trafficking reported to the force between January 1st 2022 and December 31st 2022. Please disaggregate data according to the following information:

- The crime outcome of the offences (for example, this includes but is not limited to outcomes such as 'cautioned', 'charged/summonsed', Evidential difficulties (victim does not support investigation), no suspect identified, 'Not in public interest (police), Not in public interest (CPS)' and any other outcomes recorded),
- The age of victims recorded, either adult (18 years or older) or child (17 years old or younger).

Please note that for the purposes of this request, 'victim' is a person who has reported having been a victim of this crime.”

6. The public authority acknowledged the request on 11 April 2023. To date, a substantive response has not been issued.

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. On 7 June 2023, the Commissioner wrote to the public authority, reminding it of its responsibilities and asking it to provide a substantive response to the complainant’s request within 10 working days.

10. Despite this intervention, the public authority has failed to respond to the complainant.
11. 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 and it is now required to respond to the request in accordance with FOIA.

Right of appeal

12. 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

13. 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.
14. 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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