

From: <https://www.northumbria.police.uk/faq/other/answer.asp?id=73979>

Drones - 291/13

Dated: 02 May 2013

Date of request: 08/04/2013

Date of response: 01/05/2013

Provision of information held by Northumbria Police made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'Act')(FOIA)

Thank you for your email dated 8 April 2013 in which you made a request for access to certain information which may be held by Northumbria Police.

As you may be aware the purpose of the Act is to allow a general right of access to information held by a Public Authority (including the Police), subject to certain limitations and exemptions.

You asked:

I am requesting a copy of all legal opinion, memoranda, briefs, training manuals, emails and any other document including communications with third parties relating to drones, also known as unmanned aerial vehicles, in relation to Northumbria Police. In particular I would like to know:

Does your agency currently own, operate or use any drones or unmanned aerial vehicles?

A) How many such devices does your agency have at its disposal, when were they acquired and from where?

B) What are the make and model of the devices?

C) What equipment are those drones fitted with (i.e. sonar, facial recognition technology) to use?

D) How many times have such devices (drones, unmanned aerial vehicles) been used by your agency in the past year?

E) What were drones used for? (i.e. search by sonar, crowd control, facial recognition)

F) How long are the feeds from drones kept?

G) Are such feeds encrypted in transit?

H) Has any of the data or feeds gleaned from UAV/drones been shared with other agencies? If so, which agencies and how many times?

I) Has any of the data or information gleaned from UAV/drones led to any prosecutions? If so, how many? Please provide any details possible.

J) How many requests has the force made to the Civil Aviation Authority for permission to fly drones in the past year? How many such requests have been declined (and how many granted)?

K) How much money has the force spent on the acquisition, maintenance, repair, or upgrade of unmanned aerial vehicles over the past year? If possible, please provide a breakdown by financial year.

L) How much money has the force spent on training personnel to use, repair, or upgrade drones?

M) What percentage of the force's overall budget goes to use of or training for the use of drones over the year?

Has the force used or been granted the use of a drone from an outside agency, contractor or force?

Does your force have access to any drones or unmanned aerial vehicles owned by/leased from other forces or agencies?

A) How many drones has the force had access to over the year?

B) From where?

C) What are the make and model of the devices?

D) How many times were those drones deployed for your force's use in investigations or policing in the past year? And for how many separate cases?

- E) If possible, what cases were they used for? (i.e. search by sonar, crowd control, facial recognition)
- F) What technology were the drones equipped with (i.e. sonar, facial recognition, etc)
- G) What was the cost breakdown per use of drones from other agencies or forces or contractors?
- H) How long are the feeds from drones kept?
- I) Are such records encrypted in transit?
- J) Has any of the data or feeds gleaned from such UAV/drones been shared with other agencies? If so, which agencies and how many times?
- K) Has any of the data or information gleaned from such UAV/drones led to any prosecutions? If so, how many? Please provide any details possible.
- L) How many requests has the force made to the Civil Aviation Authority for permission to fly such leased or borrowed or assisting drones over the past year? How many such requests have been declined (and how many granted)?
- M) Are there any policies, guidelines, manuals and/or instructions on the use of drones by your force and/or officers? Guidelines on their deployment? Guidelines or policies on who operates drones? Please provide copies of all of the above.

If your force does not currently have, use, borrow or have access to any drones:

Does your agency have a plan to introduce such devices? Please provide a timetable if so.

Have there been any meetings to discuss whether to introduce drones? Please provide a copy of all legal opinion, memoranda, briefs, training manuals, emails, and any other documents relating to such plans or meetings.

Have there been any proposals _ successful or unsuccessful_ to acquire or use drones? If so, how many over the past year and from what companies or agencies? Please provide any proposals submitted by vendors, or considered by the force, regarding the purchase or use of drones

Has the force supported or commissioned any consultations into the use of drones or introduction of drones?

A) How much money has the force spent on researching the possibility of procuring or introducing the use of unmanned aerial vehicles?

In response:

We have now had the opportunity to fully consider your request and I provide a response for your attention.

Following receipt of your request, searches were conducted with the Operations and Crime Department of Northumbria Police. As Northumbria Police does not currently have, use, borrow or have access to any drones I can confirm that the information you have requested at the last part of your request is not held. Previous requests regarding this subject area have been submitted and responded to in the past, which also provides a response to your query. These are published via our Disclosure Log on the Northumbria Police website.

Additionally Northumbria Police can neither confirm nor deny that it holds any other information relating to this request as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply, by virtue of the following exemption:-

Section 23 (5) Information relating to the Security bodies

Section 23 is an absolute class-based exemption and therefore there is no requirement to conduct a harm or public interest test. To give a statement of the reasons why neither confirming nor denying is appropriate in this case would itself involve the disclosure of exempt information, therefore under Section 17 (4), no explanation can be given. It is therefore our opinion that the balance lies in favour of neither confirming nor denying as to whether any other information is held or not.

None of the above can be viewed as an inference that any other information does or does not exist.

The information we have supplied to you is likely to contain intellectual property rights of Northumbria Police. Your use of the information must be strictly in accordance with the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) or such other applicable legislation. In particular, you must not re-use this information for any commercial purpose.

How to complain

If you are unhappy with our decision or do not consider that we have handled your request properly and we are unable to resolve this issue informally, you are entitled to make a formal complaint to us under [our complaints procedure](#) which can be found at: <http://www.northumbria.police.uk/foi/disclosurelog/foicomprights.asp>

If you are still unhappy after we have investigated your complaint and reported to you the outcome, you may complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office and request that they investigate to ascertain whether we have dealt with your request in accordance with the Act.