

**Date:** 07 April 2021  
**Our Reference:** FOIA-2021-030

**RE: Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request**

I write in response to your Freedom of Information Act 2000 (or 'FoIA 2000') request dated 10 December 2020 in which you requested information regarding investigations into homicide by fire. Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in responding to your request. Given the current situation with coronavirus the letter was not received by our team until the 22 March 2021.

Your request was as follows:

1. What are the necessary protocols regarding a police investigation in which homicide by fire is suspected.
2. What are the relevant Police and Criminal Evidence Act and Codes that relate to such an investigation?
3. What are the relevant agencies which work in conjunction with the police in such an investigation and their contact details?

When a request for information is made under FoIA 2000, a public authority has a general duty under section 1(1) of the Act to inform an applicant whether the requested information is held. There is then a general obligation to communicate that information to the applicant. If a public authority decides that the information should not be disclosed because an exemption applies, it must, under section 17(1) cite the appropriate section or exemption of the Act and provide an explanation for relying upon it.

It is important to note that a freedom of information request is not a private transaction. Both the request itself and any information disclosed are considered suitable for open publication, that is, once access to information is granted to one person under the legislation, it is then considered public information and must be communicated to any individual should a request be received. In light of this, our responses and disclosures are published on our external website at a later date.

## Decision

After conducting careful searches for any information relevant to your request I can confirm that there is some information held that relates to your request, however this information is exempt from disclosure under section 21 of the FoIA as it is reasonably accessible by other means. This is because the information you have requested is readily available in the public domain. I have provided additional information in response to each question below.

1. What are the necessary protocols regarding a police investigation in which homicide by fire is suspected?

We do not hold specific guidance on investigating homicide by fire. The primary guidance document is the ACPO (2006) Murder Investigation Manual, a redacted version of which can be accessed at the following link <https://library.college.police.uk/docs/APPREF/murder-investigation-manual-redacted.pdf>.

Information relating to the fire scene and crime scene investigation that would be required to identify the source or cause of the fire can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/investigations/forensics/#fire-investigation>

2. What are the relevant Police and Criminal Evidence Act and Codes that relate to such an investigation?

PACE 1984 and the Codes of Practice issued under it would be relevant in relation to arrest, detention, investigation, identification and interviewing detainees. The Act can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/contents>. The PACE Codes can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/police-and-criminal-evidence-act-1984-pace-codes-of-practice>

3. What are the relevant agencies which work in conjunction with the police in such an investigation and their contact details?

The local fire service and potentially the Health and Safety Executive are agencies that may work with the police in such an investigation. We do not hold the information requested with respect to the contact details of the fire service. There are no central contact details and you would need to

contact your local fire service for further information if required. The contact details for the Health and Safety Executive can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/index.htm>. Their head office contact details are Health and Safety Executive, Redgrave Court, Merton Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 7HS.

If you do not have access to a computer or the internet and the above are therefore not reasonably accessible to you, may I politely advise that you submit a further request under the Act specifying the information that you require and that you require this to be provided in a hard copy format. The PACE Codes of Practice are published by the Home Office so they would be best placed to provide you with a hard copy should you require one. An FOI request to the Home Office can be made at the following address: Direct communications unit, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF. I have noted on their website that due to coronavirus, FOI requests should be sent by email to [foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk)

I trust this letter answers your questions. Your rights are provided in **Appendix A**.

Yours sincerely,

**Information Management and Legal Team**  
**College of Policing**

Email: [FOI@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:FOI@college.pnn.police.uk)

Website: [www.college.police.uk](http://www.college.police.uk)

## **Appendix A**

### **Rights**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of the College of Policing made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) regarding access to information you can request that the decision is reviewed internally.

Internal review requests should be made in writing, within **forty (40) working days** from the date of the refusal notice, and addressed to: FOI team, Central House, Beckwith Knowle, Otley Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 1UF or email: [FOI@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:FOI@college.pnn.police.uk)

In all possible circumstances the College of Policing will aim to respond to your request for internal review within **20 working days**.

### **The Information Commissioner**

If, after lodging an internal review request with the College of Policing you are still dissatisfied with the decision you may make application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/official-information/>.

Alternatively, write to:

**Information Commissioner's Office**

**Wycliffe House**

**Water Lane**

**Wilmslow**

**Cheshire**

**SK9 5AF**

**Phone: 0303 123 1113**