

**Date:** Sun 8 October 2017 **Reference Number:** 20171595 **FOI Category:** Miscellaneous

**Title:** Osman Warnings

**Request Date:** Thursday, 7 September, 2017

**Response Date:** Sunday, 8 October, 2017

**Request Details:**

**2) Please state the total number of Osman warnings, issued to a person by the police when there has been a credible threat to that person's life, issued in each of following the calendar years.**

**a) 2014**

**b) 2015**

**c) 2016**

**d) 2017 to 30/08/17**

**Please provide a breakdown for each figure given for each year in question 2), by whether warnings were issued to**

**a) males**

**b) females**

**Please provide a breakdown for each figure given for each year for each gender in question 2), by each of the following age ranges the victim fell into.**

**a) 0-9**

**b) 10-17**

**c) 18-19**

**d) 20-29**

**e) 30-39**

**f) 40-49**

**g) 50-59**

**h) 60-69**

**i) 70-79**

*j) 80-89*

*k) 90+*

**Exemptions Applied:**

**Section 40(2) – Personal Information**

**Section 31(1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement**

**Section 38(1)(a)(b) – Health & Safety**

**SYP Response:**

I can confirm South Yorkshire Police hold the information you seek regarding Osman warnings (Threats to Life) but I am unable to provide this to you in full.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires South Yorkshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt), to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

a.states that fact,

b.specifies the exemption in question and

c.states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The following exemption applies to the disclosure of the information:

**Section 40(2) – Personal Information**

**Section 31(1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement**

**Section 38(1)(a)(b) – Health & Safety**

HARM

The Police Service has an obligation to take all reasonable steps to protect a person whose life is in real and immediate danger from the criminal acts of another. Although SYP have previously released the number of Osman warnings on an annual basis, it is believed providing further detail or part year would be of use to those persons intent on causing serious harm to those individuals.

**OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS IN FAVOUR OF DISCLOSURE**

The release of the information would allow greater public scrutiny leading to informed debate as to the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the Force's performance in the primary function of the protection of life and property.

## OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS IN FAVOUR NON-DISCLOSURE

South Yorkshire Police has previously released information in relation to the numbers of 'Osman Warnings' issued. This information is a Force level figure concerning total warnings issued per calendar year. Releasing information about the warning of a person of a certain sex, or a certain age (or within a defined age group) or a combination of both factors, in conjunction with the year in which the warning was issued would undoubtedly lead to the drawing of meaningful conclusions as to the identity of that person, if not a positive identification. This risk of identification increases dramatically where the numbers of such people matching all the criteria are low. Such 'meaningful conclusions' would lead to an increased threat to the person to whom the warning had been issued. Such realisation may serve to motivate the aggressor to return to the original intention of inflicting serious injury.

## ON BALANCE

The issue of a warning to an individual that his or her safety is under real and immediate threat is a relatively infrequent occurrence (please see the information below). The general numbers of such warnings per year within South Yorkshire Police are at such a level that individual cases can be 'cloaked' within figures at Force level, thereby ensuring that publication does not increase the already high level of risk. However, the information requested on this occasion requires a more detailed breakdown, to the point where the risk of identification of individuals reaches an unacceptable level

The process by which persons are warned exists to protect such persons from serious harm. Any release of information that would adversely impact upon this protection cannot be countenanced by South Yorkshire Police given the seriousness of the threat that necessitated the issue of the warning initially.

In all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The following information can be released without endangering the physical or mental health or safety of any individual or contravening any of the data protection principles: -

Number of Osman Warning (Threats to Life):

2014 = 34

2015 = 50

2016 = 72