



Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

25 July 2024

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - INTERNAL REVIEW of FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST - Our Ref: NFRS FOI 4576/24

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service provide an internal review process as per guidance provided by the Information Commissioners Office. It is advised that where an internal review process is available it is because the requestor is unhappy with how the request has been handled or they do not think the decision is correct.

I have been asked to review the previous decision regarding your Freedom of Information request dated 14/06/2024, and the reply you were sent on 02/07/2024 in order to ascertain if the response given to you was accurate and in accordance with the Act.

The original request and the response provided can be found at the end of this Internal Review at Appendix A.

BACKGROUND:

Your request - Our Reference NFRS FOI 4576/24 - asked:

This is Simon Tuhill's Twitter account. He posted:

"Loving our new @northantsfire #Pride epaulettes! #firedoesntdiscriminate"

"We have these for all my staff that want them during pride month so it's not just me. Supporting staff and communities that have been historically discriminated against and/or who are at higher risk of fire is something the fire service should always do."

Can you please confirm the money in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 you have devoted to causes for:

- girls and women
- those with gender critical views
- stressing the importance of single sex spaces, services and sports -same sex attraction and LGB people who reject any association with Stonewall

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Darby House
Darby Close
Park Farm Industrial Estate
Wellingborough
NN8 6GS
w. www.northantsfire.gov.uk
t. 01604 797000





Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

Please provide dates of any spend.

Can you please confirm the money in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 you have paid to Stonewall?

Please provide dates of any spend.

Can you please provide the number and cost of the epaulettes, who approved the spend on them, and on what date?

Can you please provide full references for the peer-reviewed research Mr. Tuhill is basing this statement on, and state clearly which groups are meant here in the statement?

"Supporting staff and communities that have been historically discriminated against and/or who are at higher risk of fire"

Can you please state exactly what the purpose of spending money on these epaulettes is, and which LGB groups (NB just those 3 letters) you consulted with to decide it was appropriate for you to undertake this political activism? Did you consult with LGB Alliance for example? Gay Men's Network?

Can you please state clearly how the public seeking assistance when there's a fire should understand your political activism here, and also who took the decision for the service to undertake political activism?

Can you please state clearly how the staff working at the service should understand your decision to undertake political activism here?

You were sent a response to this request, where we provided information that was held to you; you were additionally told that under the Freedom of Information Act, NFRS does not have to answer a question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded.

You are unhappy with this response and have asked for an Internal Review:

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Darby House
Darby Close
Park Farm Industrial Estate
Wellingborough
NN8 6GS
w. www.northantsfire.gov.uk
t. 01604 797000





Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

I am writing to request an internal review of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's handling of my FOI request 'Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) undertaking political activism, spend on epaulettes and intention'.

Not only is the response disappointing, owing to the seeming lack of effort and attention to what I asked, but the arrogance in tone is quite extraordinary. Seemingly, you resent these questions being asked, and your tone and lack of effort in responding reflects that. This is a formal request for information the public is allowed to make. Please conduct yourself with that in mind and be helpful to the public.

Kindly go question by question and answer what I have asked piece by piece. Please provide all information held in reports, emails and documents concerning discussions about sourcing and purchasing the sliders and epaulettes, and any payments of any type to Stonewall and services of any type from Stonewall.

REVIEW:

An Internal Review is based on the original request and considers if the response given to that request was correct and in accordance with the Act.

I have read the original request and response, and considered the comments you have made in relation to our response; I have come to the conclusion that our response was correct and in accordance with the Act.

In addition to the above, and in an effort to assist, I am addressing the points you raised in your request for an Internal Review; please read the below for a detailed response to these points.

Please note that the Freedom of Information Act relates to recorded information; we are required to confirm if we hold the requested information, and if we hold it to provide it, unless it is exempt. The Freedom of Information Act does not require an authority to give an opinion or judgement on the information requested or the information provided.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Darby House
Darby Close
Park Farm Industrial Estate
Wellingborough
NN8 6GS
w. www.northantsfire.gov.uk
t. 01604 797000





Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

The original response is to be read in conjunction with these comments; they do not replace them. A copy of the original request and response can be found at the end of this Internal Review at Appendix A.

I am writing to request an internal review of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's handling of my FOI request 'Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) undertaking political activism, spend on epaulettes and intention'.

Not only is the response disappointing, owing to the seeming lack of effort and attention to what I asked, but the arrogance in tone is quite extraordinary. Seemingly, you resent these questions being asked, and your tone and lack of effort in responding reflects that. This is a formal request for information the public is allowed to make. Please conduct yourself with that in mind and be helpful to the public.

This is a statement of your opinion, not a question. I have reviewed your request, and I can confirm that our response is accurate.

Please note that the Freedom of Information Act relates to recorded information; we are required to confirm if we hold the requested information, and if we hold it to provide it, unless it is exempt. The Freedom of Information Act does not require an authority to give an opinion or judgement on the information requested or the information provided.

Kindly go question by question and answer what I have asked piece by piece.

The questions in your request and the response provided were not numbered; I have numbered your questions, and provided the response to each point, please see below.

Please provide all information held in reports, emails and documents concerning discussions about sourcing and purchasing the sliders and epaulettes, and any payments of any type to Stonewall and services of any type from Stonewall.

If you would like to ask additional questions, then they will be considered as a new request. Please submit any new questions to: FreedomofInformation@northants.pnn.police.uk

1. Can you please confirm the money in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 you have devoted to causes for:

- **girls and women**

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Darby House
Darby Close
Park Farm Industrial Estate
Wellingborough
NN8 6GS
w. www.northantsfire.gov.uk
t. 01604 797000





Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

- those with gender critical views
- stressing the importance of single sex spaces, services and sports -same sex attraction and LGB people who reject any association with Stonewall

Please provide dates of any spend.

£0.00 spend 'devoted to causes'.

2. Can you please confirm the money in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 you have paid to Stonewall?

Please provide dates of any spend.

2021 - £2,500; 2022-2024 - £0.00

3. Can you please provide the number and cost of the epaulettes, who approved the spend on them, and on what date?

10 pairs of epaulettes and 127 pairs of sliders. £1388.02 plus VAT. The spend was approved by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

4. Can you please provide full references for the peer-reviewed research Mr. Tuhill is basing this statement on, and state clearly which groups are meant here in the statement?

"Supporting staff and communities that have been historically discriminated against and/or who are at higher risk of fire"

I have reviewed this question along with your comments: NFRS do not hold any information relative to your request, therefore I can confirm that our response is accurate:

Please be advised that the Freedom of Information Act relates to specific recorded information held by an authority. The tweet is on an account that clearly states 'Tweets and opinions are my own, not that of the Service.' Searches were conducted to locate the information and I can now confirm that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service does not hold any information relative to your request.

The epaulettes were purchased for use at Pride events throughout Northamptonshire and supporting this community during Pride month. Searches were conducted to locate further information and I can confirm that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service does not hold any further information relative to your request; The Freedom of Information Act relates to specific recorded information held by an authority. The service does not have to answer a question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded.





Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

- 5. Can you please state exactly what the purpose of spending money on these epaulettes is, and which LGB groups (NB just those 3 letters) you consulted with to decide it was appropriate for you to undertake this political activism? Did you consult with LGB Alliance for example? Gay Men's Network?**

I have reviewed this question along with your comments: NFRS do not hold any information relative to your request, therefore I can confirm that our response is accurate; The Freedom of Information Act relates to specific recorded information held by an authority. The service does not have to answer a question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded.

- 6. Can you please state clearly how the public seeking assistance when there's a fire should understand your political activism here, and also who took the decision for the service to undertake political activism?**

I have reviewed this question along with your comments: NFRS do not hold any information relative to your request, therefore I can confirm that our response is accurate; The Freedom of Information Act relates to specific recorded information held by an authority. The service does not have to answer a question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded.

- 7. Can you please state clearly how the staff working at the service should understand your decision to undertake political activism here?**

I have reviewed this question along with your comments: NFRS do not hold any information relative to your request, therefore I can confirm that our response is accurate; The Freedom of Information Act relates to specific recorded information held by an authority. The service does not have to answer a question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded.

CONCLUSION:

In relation to your request for an internal review I have considered the request you have made and consider that the response that you were given is accurate and in accordance with the Act.





Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

After lodging an appeal with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, if you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you may make an 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 an application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.ico.org.uk

Alternatively you can telephone or write to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Phone: 0303 123 1113

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Darby House
Darby Close
Park Farm Industrial Estate
Wellingborough
NN8 6GS
w. www.northantsfire.gov.uk
t. 01604 797000





APPENDIX A

Original Response

NFRS FOI 4576/24

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

2nd July 2024

Request:

This is Simon Tuhill's Twitter account. He posted:

"Loving our new @northantsfire #Pride epaulettes! #firedoesntdiscriminate"

"We have these for all my staff that want them during pride month so it's not just me. Supporting staff and communities that have been historically discriminated against and/or who are at higher risk of fire is something the fire service should always do."

Can you please confirm the money in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 you have devoted to causes for:

-girls and women

-those with gender critical views

-stressing the importance of single sex spaces, services and sports -same sex attraction and LGB people who reject any association with Stonewall

Please provide dates of any spend.

Can you please confirm the money in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 you have paid to Stonewall?

Please provide dates of any spend.

Can you please provide the number and cost of the epaulettes, who approved the spend on them, and on what date?

Can you please provide full references for the peer-reviewed research Mr. Tuhill is basing this statement on, and state clearly which groups are meant here in the statement?

"Supporting staff and communities that have been historically discriminated against and/or who are at higher risk of fire"

Can you please state exactly what the purpose of spending money on these epaulettes is, and which LGB groups (NB just those 3 letters) you consulted with to decide it was appropriate for you to undertake this political activism? Did you consult with LGB Alliance for example? Gay Men's Network?

Can you please state clearly how the public seeking assistance when there's a fire should understand your political activism here, and also who took the decision for the service to undertake political activism?

Can you please state clearly how the staff working at the service should understand your decision to undertake political activism here?

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Darby House
Darby Close
Park Farm Industrial Estate
Wellingborough
NN8 6GS
w. www.northantsfire.gov.uk
t. 01604 797000





Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

Response:

£0.00 spend 'devoted to causes'.

2021- £2,500, 2022-2024 £0.00

10 pairs of epaulettes and 127 pairs of sliders. £1388.02 plus VAT. The spend was approved by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

Please be advised that the Freedom Of Information Act relates to specific recorded information held by an authority. The tweet is on an account that clearly states 'Tweets and opinions are my own, not that of the Service.' Searches were conducted to locate the information and I can now confirm that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service does not hold any information relative to your request.

The epaulettes were purchased for use at Pride events throughout Northamptonshire and supporting this community during Pride month. Searches were conducted to locate further information and I can now confirm that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service does not hold any further information relative to your request.

The Freedom Of Information Act relates to specific recorded information held by an authority. The service does not have to answer a question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded.

The Freedom Of Information Act relates to specific recorded information held by an authority. The service does not have to answer a question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded.

The response is subject to the interpretation of the original request by the individual extracting the data.





Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

APPEAL RIGHTS

If you are unhappy with how your request has been handled or you do not think the decision is correct, you have the right to ask for a review of the decision.

Prior to lodging a formal appeal you are welcome and encouraged to discuss the decision with the case officer that dealt with your request.

Ask to have the decision looked at again

The quickest and easiest way to have the decision looked at again is to telephone the case officer. That person will be able to discuss the decision, explain any issues and assist with any problems.

Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision that the Service have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) regarding access to information, you can lodge an appeal to have the decision reviewed.

Appeals should be made in writing within 20 days of receipt of your reply and either emailed to freedomofinformation@northants.police.uk or addressed to:

**Freedom of Information Manager
Information Unit
Northamptonshire Police Headquarters
Wootton Hall
Northampton
NN4 0JQ**

Where possible the Service will aim to respond to your appeal within 20 working days. However meeting this time scale will depend upon the circumstances and complexity of the issue.





Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

The Information Commissioner

After lodging an appeal with the Service, if you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you may make an 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 an application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.ico.org.uk Alternatively, telephone or write to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Phone: 0303 123 1113

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
Darby House
Darby Close
Park Farm Industrial Estate
Wellingborough
NN8 6GS
w. www.northantsfire.gov.uk
t. 01604 797000

