



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

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Freedom of Information request reference number: 7196.2

Date of response: 29 March 2023

Request:

You have provided details of eleven cases of what you refer to as "inappropriate language" including on social media– and stated that providing a further breakdown would lead to individuals being identified from the small numbers involved, citing section 40 of the act:

https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/7405/71961_response.pdf

Unfortunately, this is an overuse of this act for the following reasons:

1. *I have not sought names of officers, or identifying details, and any such details could be easily redacted, notwithstanding the fact that information about the offence would not be readily known within your own organisation and therefore could not easily lead to any jigsaw identification if basic details were provided*
2. *The details (i.e., more specific information such as 'racism' 'sexism' - and the arena in which the offence was committed (e.g., what's app) could easily be revealed along with more specific information about the messages, without revealing names of staff*
3. *Use of the above act exemptions should be balanced by the public's right to know details. Offensive communication, from LFB officers, and the type of offences being investigated (i.e., the nature of them, not just a number) is firmly in the public interest to know, along with understanding how LFB is tackling such instances, without compromising the personal information of those accused*

As such I would ask you to kindly provide the above information clearly and transparently without need for me to escalate this. If you are unable to do this, this e mail should be taken as an appeal against the decision and should be escalated to the relevant department.

Response:

I have considered your arguments for the disclosure of a more detailed breakdown of the number of employees who were subject to a complaint relating to 'inappropriate language' by year (2020, 2021 and 2022). I am of the view that it is highly unlikely that the disclosure of the numbers would lead to an individual(s) being identified either from the data supplied to you or by other data that could be linked to it. I hope you will appreciate that staff who deal with FOIA requests need to exercise caution when disclosing information to be sure that we are not putting personal information in the public domain.

Having reviewed the numbers for each of year, I do not believe a more detailed breakdown will lead to the identification of an individual(s) and have decided to disclose the table below. I hope you find the information useful:

Issue	Reason for Decision
Inappropriate email	Appeared to be dismissive & rude
Inappropriate email	Appeared to be dismissive & rude
Inappropriate comment/swearing on WhatsApp.	Breach of social media policy, posting comments about another individual.
Inappropriate comment/swearing	Made highly offensive & inappropriate comment

Inappropriate Comment	Made inappropriate & unprofessional comment
Making sexist & homophobic comments	Homophobic comments were unsubstantiated.
Inappropriate comments on social media	Agreed comments posted, could be managed locally by informal action
Inappropriate comments	Manner in which comments made disputed, referred for local action.
Complaint re offensive text messages	Sent inappropriate text messages to a member of their staff.
Issue whilst driving	Inappropriate language & of explicit sexual nature

We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For more information about this process please see the guidance we publish about making a request [on our website](#).