

Our Ref: FOI2015-125-7

Date: April 2015

**Subject: Interviews**

These enquiries asked for information about the numbers of interviews conducted in different circumstances. Specifically, they asked about “interviews under caution”, “voluntary interviews” and “interviews using compulsory powers”.

These three descriptions of interview types are not mutually exclusive. So for example, interviews ‘under caution’ are also ‘voluntary interviews’ if held on SFO premises, as suspects cannot lawfully be detained here. Similarly, witnesses (as opposed to suspects) can be interviewed on a voluntary basis, as well as under the compulsory provisions of section 2 of the Criminal Justice Act 1987.

Interviews under Caution are interviews of suspects, which can be held in police detention, or voluntarily at the police station or in SFO premises. The SFO holds this information in aggregated form only, and cannot easily disaggregate voluntary Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) interviews from interviews in detention.

The total aggregated annual figures for interviews under caution for the last three calendar years are shown below. These figures are prepared from the SFO’s local management information systems and are not in line with national statistical requirements.

Interviews under Caution

Year	Number
2014	67
2013	52
2012	44

As noted above, the SFO sometimes interviews suspects under caution when they attend our offices or the police station, as volunteers. We do not hold disaggregated information about such voluntary interviews, as they form part of the total number of PACE interviews conducted. These numbers are given in the table above.

The SFO also interviews potential witnesses on a voluntary basis. We do not hold the numbers of such interviews centrally.

Section 2 of the Criminal Justice Act 1987 provides that it is a criminal offence to fail to answer questions without reasonable excuse. This amounts to a compulsory power.

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More than 600 section 2 interviews have been held relating to cases that were open or have been opened since April 2012 (some of those interviews may have taken place before April 2012).