



Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request 2023.0499

On 04/05/2023 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I am seeking data on the number of crimes and thefts related to vaping products in convenience stores and supermarkets. I believe there is a strong public interest for this information to be published due to a potential link between the popularity of vapes and the impact on the safety and wellbeing of business owners.

Please can you supply the following information:

- 1) The number of businesses who were victims of vaping-related crimes for the periods of January 2022 – April 2022 and January 2023 and April 2023.
- 2) The key search terms I am seeking in relation to the type of business are; convenience store, corner shop, grocery store, supermarket, newsagent, symbol group, tobacconist, off licence and independent retailer.
- 3) The key terms I am seeking in relation to the crime are theft, robbery, ram raid, assault, burglary, disposable vape, vape, Elfbar, Elf Bar, Lost Mary, IVG and SKE Crystal.
- 4) Could you also provide the name the affected businesses traded under and their address.

Ideally I would like these figures broken down month-on-month.

You clarified that a search of the offences of Robbery (34/1 and 34/2), Theft (46) and Burglary (30/2 and 31) whereby MO codes of Supermarket, Tobacconist/Newsagent, Petrol Station, Shopping Centre or Off Licence were recorded would be acceptable along with a free text search for the following terms in the MOs of relevant crimes:

Vape
Elfbar
Elf Bar
Lost Mary
IVG
SKE Crystal

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s1, I can confirm that Gloucestershire Constabulary holds some relevant information.

Police Forces in the United Kingdom are routinely required to provide statistics to government bodies and the recording criteria is set nationally. However, the systems used for recording these figures are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the data. It should be noted that for these reasons the figures given relate to

information from the specific recording system of Gloucestershire Constabulary and should not be used for comparison purposes with any other response you receive.

Please note that our systems are designed to record information for policing purposes and the investigation of crime and not to extract statistical information. Accordingly whilst we endeavour to extract relevant data within the time limits of the Act, any data supplied is subject to these limitations.

A search of the Crime Recording System has been conducted using the above criteria. The results were just 6 crimes; 4 between Jan – March 2022 and 2 between Jan – March 2023. They were all shoplifting offences; 3 from Petrol Stations and 3 from Supermarkets. All 6 MOs contained the generic 'vape' term.

To provide any further information relating to these offences would likely identify individuals and is therefore exempt from disclosure under Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Gloucestershire Constabulary, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states the fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

With regard to the disclosure of any further information relating to the crimes recorded, the following exemption applies:

Section 40(2) Personal Information

Section 40(2) applies to third party personal data. This would not be released under the Freedom of Information Act unless there is a strong public interest. The disclosure of any information which could lead to the identification of an individual would breach the Data Protection Principles contained within the Data Protection Act 2018, namely the first principle which states that personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals

This exemption is absolute and class based therefore I am not required to apply either the public interest test or harm test in disclosure.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this part of your request.

If you are not satisfied with this response or any actions taken in dealing with your request, you have the right to ask that we review your case under our internal procedure. Please note that a request for an internal review must be made within 20 working days of the response to your original request.

If you decide to request that such a review is undertaken and following this process you are still unsatisfied, you then have the right to direct your complaint to the Information Commissioner for consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure Officer
Gloucestershire Constabulary