



Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_2023.0934

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 18/10/2023

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request 2023.0934

On 21/09/2023 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

Please could you provide me with details of all murders, recorded from 2000 onwards, that are currently unsolved.

Please provide the following details where possible:

- The year of the murder
- The sex of the victim
- The name of the victim
- the victim's age
- the location of the murder
- a brief description of the murder
- whether any arrests have been made

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 Constabulary systems has identified 18 “unsolved” murder records from 01/01/2000 – 20/09/2023.

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 regards to the information requested above, the following exemptions apply;

Section 30 – Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities
Section 38(1)(a) & (b) – Health & Safety

Section 30 is a qualified and class based exemption, therefore a Public Interest Test is required.

Section 38 is a qualified and prejudice based exemption, therefore both a Public Interest Test and Harm Test is required.

S.30 - Public Interest Test

Factors Favouring Disclosure

The disclosure of this information may provide the public with an awareness of any patterns in relation to this type of crime and help to inform public debate on this subject.

Factors against Disclosure

All of the information gathered forms part of an investigation which may be ongoing and any disclosure could undermine the effectiveness of the investigation. Furthermore the disclosure of a detailed breakdown in relation to this type of crime may identify to offenders whether their offending behaviour has been reported to the Police and if not, may result in a continuance of the behaviour. This will hinder the prevention and detection of crime.

S.38 - Harm Test

The Constabulary’s responsibilities do not end when an individual is deceased. The Constabulary has a duty of care to the deceased’s family and must be conscious of the harm and distress caused to them when the details of their family member’s death are released into the public domain, especially when this is not in connection to any police action.

To release the names and ages of the victims along with details of the crime could cause significant distress to a number of family members, especially when some details may have been released in the past.

S.38 - Public Interest Test

Factors Favouring Disclosure

If this information was placed into the public domain it could provide further discussion in the community about the topic which could lead to further evidence coming to light.

Factors against Disclosure

If new evidence comes to light the Constabulary will take action, however it is unlikely that the release of the name of the deceased, or the circumstances of their death would trigger new evidence being submitted and the distress that would be caused to members of the deceased's family would be significant, especially if there was no policing purpose for the release.

It could be argued that some information may have been released at the time of the crime and therefore already be in the public domain, however to re-release the names would likely cause distress with the family being reminded of the tragedy they are having to live with.

Balance Test

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The effectiveness of investigations and the intelligence they provide is of paramount importance and the Police service will not divulge details that would compromise ongoing investigations or the prevention and detection of crime.

Furthermore, although disclosure could prompt information to be reported to the police that could provide a fresh enquiry, it is deemed that this is unlikely to occur and that the harm that would be caused to the deceased's family would be far greater than the evidential benefit.

For the reasons set out above it is our opinion that the balance test is in favour of withholding the requested information

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.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following means:

Website - <https://ico.org.uk/>

Call their helpline - 0303 123 1113

Email - casework@ico.org.uk

Post –

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

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure Officer
Gloucestershire Constabulary