



Your reference: N/A

Our reference: FOI_2024_0172

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Date: 07/03/2024

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_2024_0172

On 08/02/2024 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

Could you please provide a count for the years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 of:

1. child abductions by a parent (Home Office classification 13/13), child abductions by other persons (Home Office classification 13/2), kidnappings (Home Office classification 36/1) when the victim was aged under 18 at the time of the offence.
2. child abductions where a parent abducted children to 1980 Hague Convention States v non-Hague Convention States

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.

Following receipt of your request, I can confirm that a search of the crime recording system has been conducted for the following offences:

036/01 – Kidnapping

013/01 – Abduction of child by parent

013/02 – Abduction of child by other persons

Between the dates of 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2023, this search has been conducted for the victims who are aged 0 -17. The results are as follows:

Annual breakdown of offences

Offence	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Abduction of child by other persons	7	9	5	6	5	32
Abduction of child by parent	2	0	1	3	1	7
Kidnapping	7	6	5	16	5	39
Total	16	15	11	25	11	78

Any ongoing or live investigations have been removed and is exempt under Section 31.

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.

The following exemption applies:

Section 31(1)(a) – Law Enforcement

The exemption above is qualified and prejudice based therefore both a Public Interest Test and Harm Test are required.

Harm Test

Modern day policing is intelligence led and relies on the confidence of the public to come forward and report offences. Disclosures under the Freedom of Information Act are disclosures to the world, not just to the individual making the request, and as such, to disclose information relating to live offences would cause the victims to mistrust the Police, which would then be likely to undermine the Police service's ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime and can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

Public Interest Test

Factors in Favour of Disclosure

The disclosure of this information would lead to a better public awareness of how Gloucestershire Constabulary investigates offences and would provide reassurance to the public that the Constabulary takes all offences very seriously.

Factors against Disclosure

Disclosing the number of ongoing investigations would show whether Gloucestershire Constabulary have recorded a relatively high or low number of any particular offence, which could highlight to offenders that the Police are not, or would not have been, aware of their offending behaviour

Balance Test

The points above highlight the merits for and against disclosure. Disclosure will provide a greater openness and transparency to the communities we serve regarding the recording and investigation of offences, however, as much as there is a public interest in knowing this, disclosure of this information is overridden by the potential for personal data to be disclosed and the likelihood of other offences not being reported. The disclosure of information which is likely to undermine the Police service's ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

2. This is no information held by Gloucestershire Constabulary.

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