



Your reference: N/A
Our reference: FOI_24_0977
E-mail: FOI
@gloucestershire.police.uk
Direct dial: 01452 754304
Postal Address: As above
Date: 03/12/2024

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request 24_0977

On 29/10/2024 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information for the past three academic years (Sept 2021-Aug 2022, Sept 2022-Aug 2023 and Sept 2023 - Aug 2024):

1. The number of reported incidents of each of the following offences:
 - a. Threaten with an offensive weapon on school premises
 - b. Possession of offensive weapon on school premises without lawful authority or reasonable excuse
 - c. Having an article with a blade or point on school premises
 - d. Threaten with a blade or sharply pointed article on school premises
2. In each case, please could you give details of the type of weapon, the type of school premises involved (primary or secondary), details of who it was in possession of the weapon (for example their age, if they are a staff member or pupil), and the outcome of the offence (where known).
3. I would prefer to receive all the information electronically.
If the decision is made to withhold some of this data using exemptions in the Data Protection Act, please inform me of that fact and cite the exemptions used.
If the request goes beyond the scope of the time limits covered by FOI, please reduce the data by year starting from the oldest – ie please send the most recent data, starting with 2023/24, then 2022/23, etc.

Clarification was sent on 31/10/2024.

A response to the clarification was received on 11/11/2024.

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, initial searches were conducted of the Crime Recording System for substantiated crimes recorded between 01/09/2021 – 31/08/2022, 01/09/2022 – 31/08/2023 and 01/09/2023 – 31/08/2024, where the offences listed as one of the following:

008/28 - Possession of other offensive weapon on school/further education premises

008/63 - Threaten with an offensive weapon on school/further education premises

008/27 - Having an article with a blade or point on school/further education premises

008/62 - Threaten with a blade or sharply pointed article on school/further education premises.

A further search has been conducted for the offences of:

008/11 - Possession of offensive weapon without lawful authority or reasonable excuse

008/76 - Threaten a person with an offensive weapon/substance in a private place

008/26 - Having an article with a blade or point in a public place

008/64 - Threaten with a blade or sharply pointed article in a public place

A filter has then been applied where the MO of School was present.

Please see the following results:

Offence and Month	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Have article blade/point -public place			1		1
Mar			1		1
Have article blade/point -school premises	6	5	12	7	30
Jan		1	1		2
Feb			2		2
Mar		2		2	4
Apr				3	3
May			1	1	2
Jun		1	2	1	4

Jul			3		3
Sep		1			1
Oct	4		2		6
Dec	2		1		3
Possess offensive weapon -school premises	1	2	2		5
Feb			1		1
Mar		1			1
Oct		1	1		2
Dec	1				1
Threaten with a blade/pointed article on school premises	1	3	2	1	7
Mar		1	2		3
May		1		1	2
Nov	1	1			2
Total	8	10	17	8	43

Please see the below uncorrelated tables for the remainder of the information requested. Please note that where low numbers are present we have not provided a yearly breakdown to avoid the risk of identification of individuals.

Weapon	Total
Blade	1
Butter Knife	1
Craft Knife	1
Flick Knife	1
Flip Knife	1
Fold up Knife	2
Hockey Stick	1
Kitchen Knife	4
Knife	16
Lock Knife	3
Metal Nail File	1
Pen Knife	2
Piece of Wire	1

Pocket knife	1
Scissors	2
Screwdriver	1
Sharpened Ruler	1
Stanley knife	3
Wooden Cutlery	1
Total	44

Involvement	Total
Student	40
Unknown	3
Total	43

Location	Total
Primary	6
Secondary	37
Total	43

Outcome	Total
1 - Charged/Summons	2
11 - Prosecution prevented: suspect under age	4
15 - Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim supports action	10
16 - Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support further action	6
18 - Investigation complete: no suspect identified	1
2 - Youth Caution	1
20 - Action undertaken by another body/agency	10
21 - Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest	1
22 - Diversionary	5
8 - Community Resolution	3
Total	43

Any live or ongoing investigations have been removed from the results. This data is exempt under Section 31 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.

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.

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