



Your reference: N/A
Our reference: FOI_25_0571
E-mail: FOI
@gloucestershire.police.uk
Direct dial: 01452 754304
Postal Address: As above
Date: 18/06/2025

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_25_0571

On 02/04/2025 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I would like to ask for:

1. A figure for the number of incidents of fox hunting recorded in your force area between 01/08/2024 and 31/04/2025.
2. A figure for the number of times police officers attended an incident or report of fox hunting in your force area between 01/08/2024 and 31/04/2025.
3. If possible, the dates of any incidents and attendances along with any location details (e.g. partial postcode).

To clarify what I mean by the terms used in this request:

- 'Incidents' – reports of fox hunting made by the public, other agencies or recorded by police officers, whether attended or not.
- 'Attendances' – occasions where police officers have attended a report of fox hunting whether that be in response to a call from the public or as part of a pre-planned operation / police generated activity.
- 'Fox hunting' – traditional, organised 'red coat' hunting where horses and / or hounds are used to chase a fox or follow a pre-laid scent trail.

I understand that very few police forces have a recording code or category for fox hunting and that a free text search may be the only way to extract this data from your systems. The following search terms are therefore suggested:

- 'hunt'
- 'hunting'
- 'fox hunting'

- 'red coat hunting'
- 'fox hunt'
- 'hounds'
- 'trail hunting'
- 'terrier'

I also understand that data on fox hunting may be held outside of core police systems by Rural Crime Teams or Wildlife Crime Officers and that they may have the requested information already available. I would ask that this request is also passed to them, or any other team within your force who has responsibility for hunting.

If you are able to provide some, but not all, of the data requested, I would be grateful to receive what is available.

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

Unfortunately, it's not possible to electronically retrieve the information you have requested.

When a member of the public contacts the police and it's deemed to be a police matter, an incident will be created on the Incident Recording System. If it's then deemed to fall within the Home Office Crime Recording Rules, a Crime will be recorded on the Crime Recording System.

The two systems do not correlate statistically. Reports of potential fox hunting would be recorded on the Incident Recording System, along with whether the police attended an incident. If the report is deemed to fall within the crime recording rules it will then be recorded as an offence.

In order to try to retrieve the requested information, as there is no specific tag/field relating to fox hunting, a search has been conducted on the Incident Recording System for incidents recorded from 01/08/2024 to 31/04/2025 whereby any of the terms you have specified above were present in the free text recorded.

This search has returned over 20,500 incident records. However, there is no way of electronically weeding out records that aren't relevant e.g. whereby a surname is Hunt or one of the words forms part of an address. As such, in order to ascertain if any of these incidents come within the remit of your request, we would need to manually review the records. This would clearly take far longer than the 18 hours prescribed by Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Please see below for suggestions on how you may be able to refine your request to come within the cost constraints of Section 12 of the Act.

Section 17(5) 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.

In relation to your request Section 12 applies.

Section 12(1) – Fee Regulations states:

Section 1(1) of the Act does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit. (As detailed in the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Fees Regulations of 2004)

The appropriate limit at the moment is £450 calculated at an hourly rate of £25 per hour for all staff time incurred in:

- i. Determining whether information is held
- ii. Locating it
- iii. Retrieving it
- iv. Extracting the information to be disclosed from the other information.

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

Unfortunately, I'm unable to assist in suggesting ways of refining your request to come within the confines of Section 12 of the Act. Even reducing the timescale would not reduce the number of records enough that a manual review could be conducted within the timescale but still provide meaningful 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