



Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_25_0777

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 03/09/2025

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_25_0777

On 06/08/2025 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

Q1) For the past 10 years, please share the number of reports received by the police where a victim suspects hidden spyware, AKA stalkerware, has been installed on their device by someone else, in order to track their location or monitor their activity.

Please include search results for any of the following phrases:
'stalkerware', 'spyware', 'mSpy', and 'tracking app'.

- a) 2015
- b) 2016
- c) 2017
- d) 2018
- e) 2019
- f) 2020
- g) 2021
- h) 2022
- i) 2023
- j) 2024
- k) 2025 – latest available data

Q2) Of the reports in Q1, how many of the victims were aged under 25?

- a) 2015
- b) 2016
- c) 2017
- d) 2018
- e) 2019
- f) 2020

- g) 2021
- h) 2022
- i) 2023
- j) 2024

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

Unfortunately, there is no central register for this information and no way to retrieve the information by way of electronic searches.

When an Individual contacts the police, i.e. reports an offence, and it is deemed to be a police matter, an incident will be created on the Incident Recording System. If that incident is deemed to fall within the Home Office Crime Recording Rules, a crime will be recorded on the Crime Recording System.

Please note that the Incident Recording System is largely a free text entry system and does not record information in as much detail as the Crime Recording System and therefore its reporting function is limited. Whilst a keyword search could be carried out, this will not answer your enquiry in full as a manual review and cross reference of records is also required to determine if any relevant age information is held. This would take far longer than the 18 hours prescribed by the Freedom of Information Act.

Please see below for suggestions on how you can 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.

Section 16 – Duty to assist

By way of assistance, I confirm that the Constabulary could search its Crime database for all substantiated crimes where the terms 'stalkerware', 'spyware', 'mSpy', and 'tracking app' appear in the MO. We will then also be able to provide the answer to Q2.

If you wish to submit a request on this basis, please let us know.

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