



Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_25_0908

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 05/01/2026

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_25_0908

On 11/09/2025 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request the following information for the period 1 January 2023 to the present. Please provide the data in machine-readable format (CSV or Excel) where possible. If any part of the request is refused or exempt, please state the exemption relied upon and provide the public-interest test where applicable.

1. Number of seizures of illicit or counterfeit vapes recorded, by calendar year. Please include:
 - (a) number of seizure incidents
 - (b) total number of vape units seized
 - (c) estimated total retail value
 - (d) number of premises searched during those seizures.
2. For seizures where the retail source type was recorded, please provide the number of incidents attributed to each type of outlet (e.g., convenience stores, vape specialist shops, supermarkets/large stores, market stalls, or other recorded categories).
3. Number of seizures assessed as linked to organised crime groups (or referred to a regional organised crime unit).
4. Number of prosecutions, cautions, or fixed penalty notices related to illicit/counterfeit vapes, with details of offences charged, outcomes, and sentences.
5. Total value of fines or civil penalties issued to retailers for selling illicit/counterfeit vapes (and illegal tobacco seized alongside vapes), by year.
6. Number of premises subject to closure orders, business suspensions, or similar enforcement actions for selling illicit/counterfeit vapes, including dates of orders.
7. Total recorded costs for handling, storing, and disposing of seized vapes, and the disposal methods used.
8. Number of compliance or underage sales checks involving vapes (run by or with your force), and how many resulted in penalties or referrals to Trading Standards.

9. Number of incidents recorded where counterfeit or illicit vapes were linked to a public-safety incident (e.g. fire, hospitalisation, poisoning).

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

In the majority, illicit or counterfeit vapes are seized by Trading Standards or Border Control.

Where vapes are seized by Gloucestershire Constabulary there is limited information recorded with regards to whether they are illicit or counterfeit. The only way to provide a definitive response would be manually review the entries that are recorded on the property system, contact the OIC and cross reference with pocket notebook entries. It has been estimated that this would exceed the permitted time constraints, therefore Section 12 of the Act is applicable. This section does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimated that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit of 18 hours, equating to £450.00

You should consider this to be a refusal notice under Section 17 of the Act for your request.

When applying Section 12 exemption our duty to assist under Section 16 of the Act would normally entail that we contact you to determine whether it is possible to refine the scope of your request to bring it within the cost limits. However, from the information we have outlined above I see no reasonable way in which we can do so.

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.

Section 16 – Duty to assist

Unfortunately, I am unable to provide any assistance under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act as I am unable to suggest any way to refine your request to come within the cost constraints of Section 12 of the Act.

I would also like to advise you of the following –

As mentioned above, Trading Standards are the lead prosecutor for these offences meaning that there are no specific offences outlined by the Home Office that are used by Police for recording purposes. It is therefore not possible to electronically search for information relating to charges or outcomes.

There is no central register for information held regarding Closure Orders, therefore a manual review of records held in various locations (both digital and physical) would need to be carried out to determine if there are any links to illicit or counterfeit vapes.

It is possible that information may held with regards to sales checks. If you wish for searches to be carried out for this question, you can submit a new request.

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