

Gloucestershire Constabulary
Police Headquarters
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Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_26_0691

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 17/09/2026

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_26_0691

On 20/07/2026 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please provide copies of any current policies, procedures, guidance, standard operating procedures, checklists, training materials, decision-making frameworks or internal guidance used by your force in relation to sudden or unexpected death, apparent suicide and domestic abuse-context deaths.

For clarity, this request concerns policies and procedures, not personal data about any individual case.

Please provide information relating to the following areas:

1. Sudden death / apparent suicide policies

Please provide any current policy, procedure, standard operating procedure or guidance concerning sudden unexpected death, unexplained death, apparent suicide, suspected suicide, or death where no crime is initially apparent.

2. Domestic abuse and coercive-control trigger screening

Please provide any policy or guidance requiring officers or staff to consider domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking, harassment, recent separation, recent relationship conflict, family/friend concern, prior domestic abuse call-outs, partner/ex-partner involvement, or partner/ex-partner as finder in a sudden death or apparent suicide investigation.

3. Provisional classification where domestic abuse may be relevant

Please provide any policy or guidance stating whether an apparent suicide or non-suspicious death classification should remain provisional where domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking, harassment, digital abuse, family concern or prior police contact may be relevant.

4. First response, scene preservation and contemporaneous accounts

Please provide any policy or guidance concerning first response, golden-hour investigation, scene preservation, witness separation, decision logs, body-worn video, supervisory review, and taking contemporaneous accounts at the scene and at the time, including from the person who found the deceased, attending officers and relevant witnesses.

5. Digital evidence

Please provide any policy or guidance concerning the seizure, preservation, download, retention, examination or release of digital devices and digital data in sudden death or apparent suicide cases, including phones, secondary phones, laptops, tablets, cloud accounts, social media, messages, call logs, search history and other digital material where domestic abuse or coercive control may be relevant.

6. Family liaison, bereavement communication and death notification

Please provide any policy or guidance on family liaison, family contact, bereavement communication or death notification in sudden death, apparent suicide or domestic abuse-context deaths.

In particular, please confirm whether force policy allows, requires, restricts or prevents allocation of a Family Liaison Officer, specialist family contact officer, or bereavement-trained officer/practitioner where a death is classified as apparent suicide but domestic abuse, coercive control or family concern may be relevant.

Please also provide any guidance on who should deliver a death notification to family members, including whether this should be undertaken by someone with specialist training or competence in bereavement-sensitive communication.

7. Next of kin, family contact and coronial status

Please provide any policy or guidance distinguishing between next of kin, family contact, informant, suspect/person of interest, and Interested Person status in sudden death, apparent suicide or coronial processes.

8. Domestic Homicide Review / Domestic Abuse Related Death Review / suspected victim suicide following domestic abuse

Please provide any policy, guidance or referral criteria concerning Domestic Homicide Reviews, Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews, suspected victim suicide following domestic abuse, or deaths where domestic abuse may have contributed to apparent suicide.

9. Audit, review and learning

Please confirm whether your force has conducted any audit, thematic review, learning exercise or internal review in the last five years concerning sudden deaths or apparent suicides later identified as involving domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking, harassment or suspected victim suicide following domestic abuse.

If such an audit or review exists, please provide the report, findings, learning summary or recommendations, with redactions where necessary.

Format requested

Please provide documents electronically by email. If documents are already publicly available, please provide the URL. If any information is withheld, please identify the exemption relied upon and confirm whether a redacted version can be provided.

If this request would exceed the appropriate cost limit, please treat each numbered section as severable and respond to as many sections as possible within the limit. Please also advise how the request could be refined.

On 23/07/2026 you wrote to us again to clarify your request:

I am writing to make a refined request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This request is limited to current policy documents only. I am not asking for case material, audits, training records, historic versions, internal reviews or correspondence. Please provide copies of the current policy, procedure, standard operating procedure or formal guidance used by your force that governs:

1. Sudden unexpected death / unexplained death / apparent suicide
The current force policy or procedure for sudden unexpected death, unexplained death, apparent suicide, suspected suicide, or death where no crime is initially apparent.
2. Domestic abuse or coercive-control context in apparent suicide or sudden death
Any current policy or policy section that requires officers or staff to consider domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking, harassment, recent separation, recent relationship conflict, family/friend concern, prior domestic abuse call-outs, or partner/ex-partner involvement when attending or investigating a sudden death or apparent suicide.
3. Classification and provisional decision-making
Any current policy or policy section stating whether a death initially considered apparent suicide or non-suspicious should remain provisional where domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking, harassment, digital abuse, prior police contact or family concern may be relevant.
4. Evidence preservation and contemporaneous accounts
Any current policy or policy section on scene preservation, evidence preservation, decision logs, supervisory review, or taking contemporaneous accounts at the scene and at the time in sudden death or apparent suicide cases.
5. Digital evidence
Any current policy or policy section on seizure, preservation, download, retention, examination or release of digital devices or digital data in sudden death, apparent suicide or domestic abuse-context deaths, including phones, laptops, tablets, cloud accounts, messages, call logs, social media or search history.
6. Family liaison and death notification
Any current policy or policy section on family liaison, family contact, bereavement communication or death notification in sudden death or apparent suicide cases.

Please include any policy section that explains whether classification as apparent suicide affects whether a Family Liaison Officer, specialist family contact officer, or bereavement-trained officer/practitioner can be allocated.

7. DHR / DARDR / suspected victim suicide following domestic abuse
Any current policy or policy section on referral to Domestic Homicide Review, Domestic Abuse Related Death Review, or suspected victim suicide following domestic abuse processes where a death is initially recorded as apparent suicide.

If no standalone policy exists for any of the above, please confirm whether the relevant guidance is contained within another document and provide that document or the relevant extract.

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

As per your request & clarification for current policy documents only, I can confirm that the Gloucestershire Constabulary Sudden Death Policy V5 2024 is attached to this letter.

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.

With regard to the names and personal details the following exemption applies:

Section 40(2) Personal Information

Section 40(2) applies to third party personal data. This would not be released under the Freedom of Information Act unless there is a strong public interest. The disclosure of any information which could lead to the identification of an individual would breach the Data Protection Principles contained within the Data Protection Act 2018, namely the first principle which states that personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals

This exemption is absolute and class based therefore I am not required to apply either the public interest test or harm test in disclosure.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this part of your 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