



Our reference: FOI_26_0836

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Date: 10/09/2026

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_26_0836

On 07/09/2026 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

Provide a full inventory of drones that the police force has access to, storing the data in a table disaggregated using the following fields;

For the period from 1st SEPTEMBER 2023 to 1st SEPTEMBER 2026:

1. How many drones do you have in your police force
2. What hours do your drone team work and what hours can a drone be requested
3. How many officer are trained drone operators
4. The number of operational incidents attended by police drones
5. The number of these incidents where the drone was deployed before police officers arrived at scene
6. The number of incidents where information obtained by the drone was recorded as contributing to a police decision or deployment.
7. The number of incidents where the use of a drone resulted in a person being located, identified, arrested or otherwise assisted in resolving an incident.
8. The average response/deployment time for police drone operators, where this information is recorded.
9. The number of complaints received relating to police drone use
10. The number of occasions on which a drone deployment was discontinued because of safety, technical or regulatory concerns
11. A list of AI-enabled technologies currently being used for policing purposes and any that are possible going to be implemented in the near future.

12. Number of complaints or formal concerns relating to the use of AI technologies.

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

Following receipt of your request, I can confirm that searches were undertaken within Gloucestershire Constabulary in order to identify and locate the relevant information.

Unfortunately, there is no central register for this information and no way to retrieve the information by way of direct electronic searches. Whilst the Constabulary records the number of occasions where a drone is deployed in relation to an incident any further information is contained within the incident log itself. Therefore, in order to process your request and ascertain if any relevant information is held it would require the review of each incident where a drone deployment is recorded. Between the start of 2024 and the end of July 2026, there have been in excess of 950 incidents where the drone unit have been deployed. A manual review of records would have to be undertaken, in order to ascertain if any relevant information is held in relation to your request. Just because the drone unit has been deployed to an incident does not necessarily mean that a drone deployment has taken place. This could be for a variety of reasons such as a flight risk assessment of the incident location identifying that the location is not suitable or another operational policing decision. The records would need to be reviewed to ascertain if a drone was deployed and reached the incident location prior to officers, the full incident would then require an in-depth review to understand if any information obtained via drone formed or fed into any operational decision making, and any other relevant information to your request.

This would involve the review of hundreds of records and would therefore take far longer than the 18 hours prescribed by the Freedom of Information 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 – Advice and Assistance

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.

By way of assistance and although excess cost removes the Force's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, we have supplied the information relevant to your request which has already been retrieved. We trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fee's regulations for the remainder of your request. By means of information provided outside of the act, please see the below in relation to your request.

As this information is being provided outside the formal provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we are not required to undertake a detailed exemption assessment in relation to the disclosure of information. Should you wish to refine your request or submit a new FOI request covering similar topics, then each request would be subject to a disclosure assessment.

Q4. Due to a change in data recording and processing systems relevant data is only available from the year 2024 and up to the 31st of July 2026 the Drone Unit have been deployed to 976 Operational Incidents.

Q8. The Constabulary can confirm that no information held. This is not recorded by the Constabulary.

Q9. During the requested time period, there have been two formal complaints received relating to police drone usage.

Q10. Whilst the number of abandoned drone flights are not centrally recorded, the operator will assess the incident environment, weather and other key safety factor such as airspace practicality & air traffic pre-flight to ensure that it is deemed safe to deploy and operate.

Q12. No complaints have been received in relation to Drones and AI technologies.

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