

**Date:** 14/01/2025  
**Our ref:** 01/FOI/24/013880/Z

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/013880/Z**

I write in connection with your request for information dated 30/12/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

***I would like to ask about crimes recorded by Police at churches or on church property under the Freedom of Information Act:***

***1. How many crimes have been recorded by your force involving theft from/at churches or from/at church property from January 1 2022- December 30 2024?***

***a) If possible please could you clarify how many of the thefts recorded relate to lead being taken from the church roof?***

***2. How many crimes have been recorded by your force involving assault (physical/violent) at churches or on church property from January 1 2022- December 30 2024?***

***3. How many crimes have been recorded of vandalism by your force on churches or on church property from January 1 2022- December 30 2024?***

***Note: Some forces do not log 'church' as a building type specifically and may instead log location as religious building. For the avoidance of doubt, I would like data related to religious buildings in this instance. If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to the information exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please provide advice and assistance, under the Section 16 obligations of the Act, as to how I can refine my request.***

**Result of Searches**

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information and I can confirm the information requested is held by GMP.

However, GMP does not hold some of the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format.

GMP would be unable to respond to 1a of this request without completing a manual review for all the results identified within question 1. Due to the way our systems records crimes, we are unable to retrieve the number of reports containing "thefts recorded relating to lead being taken from the church roof". A search carried out has revealed 334 results for question 1 and each one will need to be manually checked to gather the information requested. At a conservative estimate of 5 minutes per each log, it would take in the region of 27hours to provide a response.

Therefore, as per **Section 12(1)** of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the cost of providing you with the information is above the amount to which we are legally required to respond i.e. the cost of locating and retrieving the information exceeds the 'appropriate level' as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice.

GMP is obligated, pursuant to section 16(1) of the Act to provide you with advice and assistance on refining your request to bring compliance within the fees limit. In order for the force to attempt to keep this within the fees limit, the information you are requesting will need revising with the removal of question 1a. With any request that requires a manual review there is always a chance of a request being refused under S12 due to the enormity of work that is usually needed to provide the data, therefore the resulting response cannot be guaranteed at this point as it will be dependent upon the number of records that fall within the scope of any new request, as they would still have to be manually assessed.

Although excess costs remove GMP's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as a gesture of goodwill I have supplied some information relative to your request that was retrieved before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceed (see below information). I hope that this is of use to you, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fee's regulations for the remainder of your request.

#### **Caveats:**

**In July 2019, GMP implemented one of the largest IT infrastructure changes in UK policing. The systems are in continual development and the data provided for this request is what the systems currently hold.**

- This data contains crimes with an MO keyword 'church' with a created date between 1st January 2022 and 30th December 2024, excluding cancelled crimes. Further information about cancelled crimes can be obtained from the Home Office Counting Rules.
- The MO keywords are not mandatory and may not be completed.
- For part 1 we looked at crimes recorded under crime tree level 2 'theft offences'.
- For part 2 we looked at crimes recorded under crime tree level 2 'violence against the person'.
- For part 3 we looked at crimes recorded under crime tree level 2 'criminal damage and arson offences'.

Response.

- 1. 334**
- 2. 95**
- 3. 212**