

Date: 19/12/2024
Our ref: 01/FOI/24/013752/S

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/013752/S

I write in connection with your request for information dated 29/11/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

For each calendar year 2021, 2022, 2023 and for the period 1st January 2024 to 28th November 2024, please could you tell me:

- 1. The number of crime reports where the term "witch", or "witchcraft", or "demon", or "exorcism" is mentioned in the MO field of the crime report***
- 2. A brief description of each reported crime from your answer to question 3) and the outcome if known (i.e. arrest, charge, on bail, no further action, etc)***

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 the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format

A search has been conducted on your behalf, and to respond to this request would require a manual review of the results to determine which are relevant to your request. Searches revealed over 3000 results containing the words/phrases "witch", or "witchcraft", or "demon", or "exorcism" however this also brought up incidents containing words connected such as "Switch" "Switches" and other examples. Each one would need to be checked to rule out the nonrelated crime reports and at approximately 5 minutes per each one it would take in the region of 250hrs to respond.

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 a reduce timeframe. 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.

Should you wish to refine and resubmit your request in line with the advice above please respond to freedomofinformation@gmp.police.uk.

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