



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 2024/27031

Dear Requester,

Thank you for your recent request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at, **Section 1(1) (a)**, is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at, **Section 1(1) (b)**, is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

The information that you are seeking is in relation to the following:

REQUEST

Please can you provide any information regarding Unsolved Missing Persons cases under your constabulary.

More specifically, I am interested in:

- 1) How many 'open' or 'inactive' / 'cold' missing persons cases are currently under your constabulary? (Inactive meaning at least 1 year old).
- 2) What reasons are there as to why missing persons cases are still unsolved? i.e., funding, lack of resources, no new evidence, no body etc.
- 3) Are there any policies and procedures that your constabulary uses specifically for 'inactive' missing persons cases? If yes, what are they?
- 4) Which individuals are involved in the reviews of 'inactive' missing persons cases? i.e., Review Officer, Senior Investigating Officer, Crime Scene Manager, Forensic Scientist etc.
- 5) Does your constabulary work closely with other organisations when reviewing 'inactive' missing persons cases? If so, which organisations? And what do they do to help?
- 6) What charities does your constabulary have access to for inactive missing persons cases? If so, what charities? And what do these charities do to help aid a long-term missing person's case review?



RESPONSE

1. How many 'open' or 'inactive' / 'cold' missing persons cases are currently under your constabulary? (Inactive meaning at least 1 year old).

There are currently 18 long-term missing persons held on the Gwent Police missing persons database – Missing persons are categorised as long-term in Gwent when they have been missing for 3 months. Out of the 18 on the long-term missing persons database, 17 have been missing for over a year.

2. What reasons are there as to why missing persons cases are still unsolved? i.e., funding, lack of resources, no new evidence, no body etc.

This question would need to be answered on a case-by-case basis and would be for a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) to answer for that particular case. In general, the reasons tend to be that there is no new evidence and that we have exhausted all reasonable lines of enquiry.

3. Are there any policies and procedures that your constabulary uses specifically for 'inactive' missing persons cases? If yes, what are they?

Yes, this is part of our Missing Person Policy. There is a section where we refer to *Long Term Missing Persons*. An extract of that policy is provided for your information below in dark orange:

Long Term Missing Persons

The 'whiteboard'

The Long-Term Missing Person Whiteboard is maintained for individuals who have been missing for 3 months or longer. Where there are still dynamic enquiries to progress at the 3-month stage, it may be appropriate for the individual to remain on the East / West Whiteboard. Any decision to transfer a subject to the Long-Term Missing Person Whiteboard is to be made by the East or West SMT in conjunction with the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) who reviewed the investigation.

Reviews

After 28 days, missing persons should be reviewed by a *'senior officer who has been trained as an SIO'*. If the investigation has already been reviewed by an SIO (Medium & High-risk cases), that same SIO will perform the review. If the circumstances are not suspicious and there is no suggestion of third-party involvement, the SIO can allocate the investigation to the Duty Detective Inspector who can oversee its progression up until 3 months.

After 3 months, the missing person will be classed as 'Long-term missing' and the SIO who reviewed the investigation at 28 days, will conduct a further review and take ownership. The SIO may continue to utilise the Detective Inspector to assist in managing the investigation. SIO reviews should be completed at 28



days, 3 months, 6 months, 12 months and annually thereafter. An immediate SIO review will be conducted if there is suspicion of third-party involvement or a significant development.

4. Which individuals are involved in the reviews of 'inactive' missing persons cases? I.e., Review Officer, Senior Investigating Officer, Crime Scene Manager, Forensic Scientist etc.

As per policy above. Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) refers to an experienced detective who is specially trained and is of Chief Inspector rank or above.

5. Does your constabulary work closely with other organisations when reviewing 'inactive' missing persons cases? If so, which organisations? And what do they do to help?

Gwent Police work with a number of organisations / agencies when reviewing missing persons cases, including the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

- **Social Services (Child Services, Adult Services)**
- **Education**
- **Health**
- **Mental Health Services**
- **Probation**
- **Prison**
- **Financial sector**
- **National Crime Agency Missing Persons Unit**
- **Other Police Forces**
- **Mountain rescue**
- **Coastguard**
- **Transport (Buses, Trains, Taxi companies, Airports etc)**
- **Employers**
- **Crimestoppers**
- **Interpol**
- **Charities.**

6. *What charities does your constabulary have access to for inactive missing persons cases? If so, what charities? And what do these charities do to help aid a long-term missing person's case review?*

We work with the charity Missing People although this isn't exclusively for inactive cases. We consider using the charity for all missing person cases.



Freedom of Information Act is a public disclosure regime, not a private regime. Any information disclosed under the Act is thereafter deemed to be in the public domain, and therefore freely available to the public and will be published on the Gwent Police website.

If, upon receiving a response to a freedom of information request, you are unhappy with the outcome, you may request an internal review. **This should be made within 40 working days of the initial response.**

Please direct any internal review requests to FOI@gwent.police.uk

You have the right to request an appeal from the Information Commissioners Office about your Freedom of Information request, if you are dissatisfied with your internal review response.

ICO Contact Details:

The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Web: www.ico.org.uk

Thank you for your interest in Gwent Police.