



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 2024/27575

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

I would like to request the following information under FOI legislation.

How many police complaints of rental fraud/scam has your police force dealt with in the past ten years?

Could I have these figures broken down on the following basis:

1. Year-by-year
2. Age of alleged victim
3. Result of case (i.e case dropped/charged/conviction)
4. Origin of scam (i.e Facebook marketplace, gumtree, etc)

- The timescale requested for data: 01/01/2014 - 18/7/2024. Broken down on a year by year basis./

- Rental fraud refers to when would-be tenants are tricked into paying an upfront fee to rent a property when in reality, the property does not exist, has already been rented out, or has been rented to multiple victims at the same time. See Action Fraud definition here: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/rental-fraud>

- Complaint refers to an incident recorded.



RESPONSE

For the years 2014 – 2018 we have no way to interrogate or retrieve specific fraud category data, such as Rental Fraud from our Niche crime recording system.

A search for fraud crimes reveals there was 4,082 records created from 2014-2018. If each one of these was to be reviewed, taking 10 mins per record, it would far exceed 18 hours and I would therefore ask that the exemption be applied in relation to this aspect of the query ($4082 \times 10 = 40820$ mins / 60 = +680 hours). Therefore the following exemption has been applied:

Section 12 – Excess Cost

The exemption applicable to the information you have requested for this question can be found at Section 12(1) of the Act and this refusal notice is issued under Section 17.

Section 12(1) “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.”

In the case of a police force, the appropriate limit is set at £450, which is calculated at £25 per hour (i.e. 18 hours). Gwent Police would have to conduct a manual search to find and extract the information for this question. This would take more than 18 hours of staff time therefore we are unable to answer this question and the exemption is engaged.

We appreciate that you may be disappointed on this occasion that we are unable to provide the requested information. However under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we have a duty to assist you in relation to refining your request, where we may be able to answer some of your questions.



**HEDDLU
GWENT
POLICE**



However, in respect of years 2019 – 2024, we have gained the option to search for *Rental* fraud and a summary of the number of cases is :

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1	2	2	4	6	5

In relation to the specific request please see attached document that answers the queries raised in matrix form.

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.