

Police access to school biometric databases

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On May 22nd May 2013 all UK Police Forces were sent a Freedom of Information request, 'Access to school biometric databases'. Highlighted in yellow are forces that have not answered the Freedom of Information request.

- These questions apply from 2001 until present and applies to your/this police force's jurisdiction. Preferred format would be a breakdown down by school and year if possible:
- 1) Please advise how many schools had computer hardware and software stolen.
 - 2) Please advise if any of the computer hardware and software stolen had children's or teacher's biometric data on.
 - 3) In relation to question 2 please could you advise if any of the computer hardware and software that has been stolen has ever been recovered?
 - 4) Apart from theft, is this police force aware of any biometric systems in schools being compromised?
 - 5) Does your force report any biometric data stolen to any government department? If so please advise which one.
 - 6) Has this police force ever requested or had access to a school biometric database and please advise whether requests were successfully granted or not.
 - 7) With regards to question 6, from the school biometric databases accessed please advise if:
 - i) Any biometric data was added to the police database.
 - ii) Was the schools biometric data system easily inter-operable with the police database?
 - 8) Was any conviction successful as a result of data obtained from a school biometric database?

Force	Comments	Final Outcome
	NORTHERN IRELAND	
Northern Ireland	It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the appropriate cost limit under section 12 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450.	Unable to answer. Cost
	ENGLAND	
Cumbria	Cannot answer due to cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Northumbria	Cannot answer due to cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Durham	Cannot answer due to cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Cleveland	Cannot answer due to cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
North Yorkshire	Request transferred to North Yorkshire Police by Crime Comm Office 26 June 13. 16th July - cannot retrieve data as too much cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Lancashire	Too much money, unable to answer request.	Unable to answer. Cost
Humberside	It has been determined in order to retrieve all the data relevant to this request would greatly exceed the appropriate limit of 18 hours or as a cost equivalent £450. The reason for this is that it would require a manual review of hundreds and hundreds of manual and electronic files since 2001 which would massively exceed the	Unable to answer. Cost
West Yorkshire	It is estimated that the cost of providing / locating the information you seek within your request would exceed the time threshold. Where a reasonable estimate has been made that the appropriate limit would be exceeded, there is no requirement for a public authority to undertake the work up to the limit.	Unable to answer. Cost
Greater Manchester	After a series of email exchanges, they were unable to answer	Unable to answer. Cost
Merseyside	Reply back that it would exceed cost, asked if they can whittle it down to just high schools and email them the Dept Inf Com comments. Would exceed costs. 25/6	Unable to answer. Cost
South Yorkshire	There is no property class under computer that readily recorded the theft of biometric data and there is no mandatory marker with CMS to identify such detail. Since 2001 until the 10th of June 2013, 1884 offences have been recorded as meeting the above outlined criteria. In order to identify if any biometric data was contained on any stolen property it would mean manually reviewing each individual offence. At a very conservative estimate of spending 5 minutes per incident, this would amount to 157 hours of work to extract information pertinent to your request. 21/6	Unable to answer. Cost. Crime management system does not have a search criteris for biometric
Lincolnshire	It has been estimated to locate, retrieve and extract any of the information (if held) which you require, would exceed the "Appropriate Limit" set within the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 12 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act states that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the 'appropriate limit'. For police forces in the UK, the 'appropriate limit' is considered to be up to 18 hours of work, or £450 at £25 an hour, on one request.	Unable to answer. Cost

Derbyshire	Would exceed cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Cheshire	Email received 14 June. "No information held"	Could not say. No information held
West Mercia	Would exceed cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Staffordshire	Unable to answer the biometric data as they are not searchable field. After 2008 a different system was used to record crime. Unable to answer due to cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Nottinghamshire	This information is not recorded in an easily retrievable format. To locate, retrieve and extract the requested information requires a manual search of all records held. An initial search revealed a total of 813 records over a 9 and a half year period. We are unable to supply information prior to 2004 due to the age of the incidents and in line with Nottinghamshire Police's Retention and Disposal Policy. Each record would need to be searched manually in order to ascertain if there was any information contained in relation to your request.	Unable to answer. Cost
Leicestershire	Delay in replying but apologetic - can I narrow it down due to cost - 20 June. Email sent narrowing it down to Q6 - 21 June. No reply.	Not answered
West Midlands	No reply - re emailed the FOIR 7 Aug	Not answered
Warwickshire	Letter sent that answering question 1-8 would go over the cost of the act so I spoke to the Information Officer and she suggested re-submitting only Question 6 and seeing if they could answer that, probably they couldn't but they would try. FOIR due back 12 July 13 - no reply	Unable to answer. Cost
Northamptonshire	It is my assessment that the cost of providing you with the information requested would exceed the 'appropriate level' as set out in the Freedom of Information (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. My assessment is that it would cost for every 100 reports x 20 minutes each (minimum) = over 33 hours at £25 per hour to respond to your request, which exceeds the 'appropriate limit' (currently £450 for 'prescribed costs').	Unable to answer. Cost
Cambridgeshire	It is estimated that it will take a minimum of 109 hours at a cost of £25 an hour to view approximately 274 crimes a year, to provide an answer to this request which is above the 18 hour cost limit. This is due to the fact every crime for a theft or burglary from locations including the term "School" for the period requested would need to be individually reviewed to provide the information requested.	Unable to answer. Cost
Norfolk	Could not answer due to cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Suffolk	This data is owned by the respective schools. It is the responsibility of the school to have policies and procedures in place regarding the release of Biometric data to the Police. All Police Services must ensure that any access to personal data in the course of any investigation is authorised at the correct level and is done within the legal framework.	Unable to answer. Cost
Hertfordshire	Costs too much. Email sent to request what parts can they answer, specifically the biometric data 13/6. Since 2001 there have been 796 reported Computer Hardware & Software Thefts in Hertfordshire. After a telcon 14 June to the Information officer they simply cannot answer as it would involve manually searching through documents. Suggested I got in touch with Hert Grid for Learning	Unable to answer. Cost
Thames Valley	21/6 : Between 2011 and 2013 to date, 742 schools and colleges have had computer hardware and software stolen. This figure includes schools and colleges. We were unable to ascertain whether any of the computers contained Biometric information, as this is not a recordable field and a search of the Offence Notes did not bring back any information	Unable to answer. Cost & biometrics not a searchable field.
Gloucestershire	The only way to obtain this information would be to manually review each of the crime reports for schools to check the items that were stolen. This would far exceed the fees limit as for the period requested there were 574 items stolen from schools.	Unable to answer. Cost
Essex	Cannot answer due to cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Kent	Have been advised to drop question 2 & 3 and they can answer. 3/6 Answer back 20/6 "As far as we can reasonably ascertain no information is held. Any compromise of biometric data in schools not involving theft should be reported to the ICO in the first instance. 5. No information held. the loss of personal data, including biometric, is considered a security breach and reported to the ICO as the relevant regulator as opposed to a government dept. 6. Kent police does not have and involvement with biometric data held by schools. From 2001-2012 1620 computer thefts	No
London	We have been unable to identify any instance of a school biometric database being accessed by City of London Police from 2001 until present	No
Surrey	Refused due to costs.	Unable to answer. Cost
Sussex	Refused due to costs.	Unable to answer. Cost
Bedfordshire	Can only answer question 1. Asked if they could help to answer the comments D.Smith made. 386 schools was the answer to Q1 25/6	Unable to answer. Cost
Hampshire	Could not answer due to cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
Wiltshire	In summary, we are not obliged to supply the information if to collate it would cost too much, and we are not obliged to confirm we hold it, if just to establish that would cost too much.	Unable to answer. Cost
Avon and Somerset	We are unable to supply you with the information you have requested as to do so would take more than 18 hours work, which is the limit set by the Act to collate a response. We would need to firstly conduct a search to see how many schools had reported thefts to us in the requested time period. We would then need to manually review this information in order to firstly establish if the theft was of computer hardware or software. We would then need to further scrutinise this information in order to establish if it was reported that biometric data was held on any of the stolen items. In accordance with the Act, this represents a Refusal Notice for your request.	Unable to answer. Cost
Dorset	May 24th - passed to Freedom of Information Office of Dorset Police - no reply - reminder sent 7 Aug	Not answered

Devon and Cronwall	Cannot respond due to cost.	Unable to answer. Cost
WALES		
Dyfed Powys	Dyfed Powys Police are unable to confirm or deny whether it does hold the information you have requested, since we consider that the Section 12 (2) exemption the Cost of Compliance exceeds the Appropriate Limit applies to it.	Unable to answer. Cost
Gwent	Please note: Gwent Police has also made enquiries with the Head of Fingerprints and he knows of no occasions when we have used or considered using biometric information from schools, during that time.	NO
North Wales	Review	Unable to answer. Cost
South Wales	Could not retrieve due to cost	Unable to answer. Cost
SCOTLAND		
Scottish Police	Thinks it will go over the cost of the FOIA, can I give them specific schools? Asked them if they could narrow it down to high schools in the cities. 2/6 - There is no feasible way at present The Police Service of Scotland can think of to be able to carry out this enquiry within the time or cost constraints of the FOI legislation.	Unable to answer. Cost.
OTHER		
Ministry of Defence Police Committee	Does not hold the information centrally. Email sent 2/6 to ask where the information is held, it at all. They have 2900 staff in 60 locations. After speaking to them if would go over the cost of the act and think it unlikely an affirmative answer would be had. But will keep in touch if they hear.	Unable to answer. Cost.
British Transport Ploce	British Transport has not requested access to School biometric databases	No
Civil Nuclear Police Constabulary	No reply - a reminder email sent 7 Aug	Not answered
City of London Police	We have been unable to identify any instance of a school biometric database being accessed by City of London Police from 2001until present.	No

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End.