



Response Date:21/10/2024

2024/955 - Pet Abduction

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

1. How many complaints or reports have your force had regarding dogs being stolen in your area between the following years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, January 2024-30th September 2024?

1b. Please breakdown the figures into the respective years.

1c. Please breakdown the breed of dog in the respective years.

2. In each year, please provide the number of missing dog cases the police investigated.

3. In each year, please provide the number of missing dogs officers found because of their investigations.

4. In each year, what was the average time officers spent investigating a missing dog case? I understand that officers may not keep logs, but I would accept an estimate if at all possible.

5. In each year, how many suspects did officers arrest for stealing a dog? Please give details of the charge. I know the Pet Abduction Act became law in 2024, but what would suspects have been charged with prior to this act?

6. Have your officers discussed the possibility of organised criminal gangs stealing dogs to order? If so, please provide any internal documents or briefing notes.

Unfortunately, 'Dog Theft' is not a specific offence on our Crime recording system, therefore it would require the key word search for a term like 'dog' or any other pet. However, this does not return reliable data e.g. you could have someone reporting their 'pedigree Shih Tzu' without using the term dog, therefore the incident would not be returned. Or, there could be an incident involving the theft of 'dog' food, and an occurrence where the dog was reported stolen and was actually just temporarily missing. Therefore, we would have to carry out manual search of every theft recorded on our system to try and retrieve data that fell into the remit of your request, and to ensure we have captured everything. 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 retrieving the information exceeds the 'appropriate level' as stated in the Freedom of Information (FOI) Fees and Appropriate Limit regulations 2004.

Therefore, in accordance with the FOI Act 2000 the information you have requested is exempt under Section 12 (1), and this letter acts as a Refusal Notice under section 17 (5) of the legislation.

Pet theft is now a criminal offence. We would like your data since August 2024.

Pet Abduction Act applies to England /Northern Ireland.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 18/10/2024