



Freedom of Information Response

Keywords: Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB), Gamma Butyrolactone (GBL), Modus Operandi (MO)

FOI Reference Number and Title: 14038 Reported Crimes with the Term “GHB” or “GBL” in MO Field

Date of Disclosure: 04.02.2020 **Information correct as of:** 21.01.2020

Disclosure and Exemptions: (Full/Partial/Refused): **Full**

Information Requested:

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

For each calendar year 2017, 2018 and 2019, please could you tell me:

- 1) The number of reported crimes in which the term “GHB” or “GBL” is mentioned in the MO field of a crime report
- 2) A brief description of each reported crime listed in your answer to question 1

Response:

Having completed enquiries within Essex Police in respect of Section 1(1)(a), Essex Police does hold information relating to your request, Essex Police can confirm in respect of Section 1(1)(b) the following data:

Caveat: A keyword search of the investigations has been made for patterns matching % GBL % and % GHB % in the Initial Modus Operandi (MO) Field.

However, this may not provide a true picture as the details of the drug may be captured within the investigation log or attached documentation (i.e. witness statements, etc.), which are fields/areas that we are unable search. In addition, Essex Police do not specifically mark or flag offences linked to GHB/GBL (Gamma Hydroxybutyrate/Gamma Butyrolactone).

Any keyword search may not be entirely accurate and any results would not necessarily answer your submission, and, therefore, could be highly inaccurate and misleading.

1. There were a total of three crimes recorded over the three years, two relating to GBL and one to GHB.

2.

Years	Substance	Possession of Drugs	Rape	Trafficking of Drugs	Grand Total
2017	GBL	1			1
2018	GBL			1	1
2019	GHB		1		1
Grand Total	3	1	1	1	3

Every effort is made to ensure that figures provided are accurate and complete, however, Essex Police systems are designed primarily for the management of individual cases and not primarily for the production of statistical information. Please note although data can be extracted from a number of sources via database queries the results are subject to inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system and could also be inaccurate as a result of free text entry fields. Care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when interpreting data.

Related Documents: N/A

FOI Reference Number and Title: 14059 Offences involving Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate

Date of Disclosure: 23.01.2020 **Information correct as of:** 14.01.2020

Disclosure and Exemptions: (Full/Partial/Refused): **Refused, Section 12(1) and 17(1)**

Information Requested:

Please can you tell me the number of offences reported to the force in which GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) is believed to have been a direct or indirect factor in each of the last three years for which figures are available?

Please provide as much detail as possible about the outcomes in the cases i.e. whether there was a prosecution and a conviction or acquittal.

Response:

Having completed enquiries within Essex Police in respect of Section 1(1)(a), Essex Police does hold information relating to your request, however, the obligation of Section 1(1)(b) cannot be met as Essex Police does not hold all the information requested in a format that allows it to be retrieved within the time and cost limits of FOI.

When responding to a request for information under the terms of the FOIA, a public authority is not obliged to provide information if the authority estimates that the cost of the retrieval of the information requested would be in excess of £450 (equivalent to 18 hours work). The costs criteria relates to a request in its entirety, which means that if we cannot retrieve all of the information requested within the costs limit, we are not obliged to retrieve any of the information requested.

Section 12(1) of the FOIA 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.”

The following explanation outlines the difficulty Essex Police has in answering your request:

Essex Police are unable to accurately extract data in relation to your request. This data is not available in a searchable format. Essex Police, therefore, would have to manually review each relevant record held to answer this FOI request. Essex Police systems are designed primarily for the management of individual cases and not primarily for the production of statistical information. This process would exceed the time and cost

limits under the FOIA and would also qualify as the creation of data as the results cannot be processed by means of purely sorting or filtering data sources or running a database query tool. There is no requirement under the act to create data purely to answer FOI requests.

Consequently, and to this extent, Essex Police are exempt from the duty to provide information you have requested under the provisions of Section 12(1) of the FOIA. Therefore, and in accordance with Section 17(1) of the FOIA, this communication must act as a refusal notice to provide all of the information that could be interpreted as being captured by this part of your request.

However in an effort to assist, Essex Police can advise:

We do not specifically mark or flag offences linked to GHB (gammahydroxybutrate) but we can look at investigations that contain either of the keywords "GHB" and/or "gammahydroxybutrate" in the MO field. Therefore, we can do a keyword search on "GHB" and/or "gammahydroxybutrate" however, this may not provide a true picture as to whether it was a direct or indirect factor without manually reviewing each record. Also as the details of the drug may be captured within the investigation log or attached documentations (i.e, witness statements etc.), these are fields/areas that we are unable to search without manual review of each record again and could therefore exceed the time and cost limits under the FOIA.

Related Documents: N/A