

Oliver Laurie
request-527022-f4f3de71@whatdotheyknow.com

data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

25 October 2018

Dear Mr Laurie

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 181017019

Thank you for your request dated 17th October 2018 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

Could you please send me a report on the latest recidivism rates in UK prisons, focusing particularly on prisoners that spent 5 years or less in prison for their first offence.

I have tried to find this information through other means, but the most current figures I have found were between July 2016-September 2016.

Your request is being handled under the FOIA.

I can confirm the MoJ holds all of the information you have requested. However, to provide as the request currently stands would exceed the cost limit set out in the FOIA.

Section 12(1) of the FOIA means public authorities are not obliged to comply with a request for information if it estimates the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

We believe that the cost of matching the offenders in the latest reoffending cohort with records of criminal histories to ascertain the number of prisoners that spent 5 years or less in prison for their 'first offence' would exceed the appropriate limit. Consequently, we are not obliged to comply with your request.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we may be able to answer a refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to consider, for example, restricting the scope of your request to the latest reoffending rates by the time spent in custody by offenders for their 'index offence'¹, as currently shown in the latest published proven reoffending statistics. Please also note that the latest published reoffending cohort covers October to December 2016. **Proven reoffending is measured over a a one-year follow-up period and a further six month waiting period (to allow time for cases to progress through the**

¹ Proven reoffending is measured using quarterly cohorts. The offence which got an offender into the quarterly cohort is their 'index' offence.

courts). Further time is then required for the Police National Computer to be updated and for the data to be processed. Hence why there is a time lag in measuring proven reoffending. You can find out more about proven reoffending including how this is defined and the methodology used to compile the statistics in the MoJ *Guide to proven reoffending statistics* which can be viewed here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/702795/guide-to-proven-reoffending-statistics-apr18.pdf

For guidance on how to structure successful requests please refer to the ICO website on the following link: http://ico.org.uk/for_the_public/official_information

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/3244/pdfs/uksi_20043244_en.pdf

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Disclosure Team, Ministry of Justice, 10.38, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

Gary Renshaw
Enquiries Officer, Dissemination and Enquiries Team
Prison, Probation, Reoffending and PbR Statistics