



REQUEST | 17210

I am looking at the issue of stillbirth - and mass baby graves

From records dating back to 1940, how many stillborn babies are buried in mass graves across Wigan?

By 'mass graves', I refer to non-consecrated and/or unmarked ground where babies were buried en masse - as was the practice historically.

RESPONSE

We do not hold the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) relieves a public authority from the obligation to comply with a request for information where the estimated time required to locate, review and extract the information exceeds a certain threshold set out in Regulations.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3244) set out the rules in relation to the cost limit (otherwise called the "appropriate limit"). These Regulations are published by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and are viewable on their web site from this link: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20043244_en.pdf

The Regulations set out the cost limit for Government departments and for other public authorities. For local government, Regulation 3 states that the cost limit is £450 and Regulation 4(4) states that the prescribed hourly rate is £25. Regulation 4(4) further provides that where the local authority estimates the time taken to gather the information would exceed this limit (which based on the prescribed hourly rate, equates to 18 officer hours), it may refuse the request under section 12 of FoIA.

I am satisfied the cost limit applies to your request and will explain why this is the case.

We have Approx. 200,000 burial records to search through and the information you have requested is not held in an easily retrievable format I am estimating it will take 1 minute for each record to be accessed at the minimum and some may take between 5 and 10 minutes equating to 6,000 hours of work at a minimum.

Therefore, we consider that exemption under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act applies. Section 12 (1) is applicable where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit of £450 which is equivalent to 18 hours work.