



**REQUEST** | 17107

In light of the discovery of a mass grave containing stillborn babies in Royton Cemetery, Oldham, and the discovery of mass graves containing stillborn babies in Landican, Wirral, please could you provide localised details for the following:

1. Number of mass (unmarked) graves containing still born babies
2. Number of still born babies buried in mass (unmarked) graves
3. Date of earliest mass (unmarked) grave
4. Date of last mass (unmarked) grave

In addition, please can you state whether or not burial records for these mass graves are available online.

**RESPONSE**

1 & 2. 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](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. 475,000 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 8,000 hours of work at a minimum.

3. The first communal/public grave was opened in September 1856

4. The last communal/public grave was opened in May 2023

Work is ongoing to digitise the burial records but they are not currently available online.