



Request

We are currently looking into historic mother and baby homes for unmarried mothers. Under the Freedom of Information Act please provide the following information:

Details of public health or poor law burials held by your parks/cemeteries service in relation to:

- St Margaret's Home, Goose Green
- Ladies Association, Mariebonne Home, 97 Dicconson Street; and
- Wigan Home, 17 New Market Street (please check your records for entries for both name and/or address).

Covering the years of the operation of the homes from 1948 to 1990. Including the names and ages of those deceased, and whether their graves are marked or unmarked plots.

Our understanding is that this information should be held by your parks/cemetery services as part of local authority burial registers documenting public burials.

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. 40,000 burial records to search through during the period 1948 to 1990 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 660 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.