Twitter Thread by Conor Gogarty

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Got an FOI response almost three years late... a short thread

Back in December 2017, when I was a reporter for the Gloucestershire Echo, I went to a knife crime event where a police officer gave a talk mentioning he'd been running undercover stings on local shops - sending in underage teens to see whether the store would sell them knives.

That's an interesting story, I thought. So I asked the @Glos_Police press office for some details about the operation, and the shops which had fallen foul of it. They said they'd rather not give those details.

So I put in an FOI on December 5, 2017, hoping for a response within the 20 working day limit.

I got one on November 20, 2020, having forgotten all about it

It refuses to confirm or deny whether the info is held: "Whilst there is a public interest in providing reassurance that the Police Service are appropriately and effectively holding information of this nature, there is a stronger public interest in safeguarding national security"

I'm not criticising the decision per se (although if I happened to be reporting in court when a case related to the op came up, I'd know all about it anyway). But a three-year wait to hear it isn't good enough

I decided to have a look through the police force's What Do They Know page. It's littered with long overdue FOIs, some from the even more distant past. That's not acceptable https://t.co/bleH07YqEy

Gloucestershire Constabulary has long-running issues with transparency. When staff responsible for maintaining its vehicles sold tyres online for personal gain, the force didn't publish the investigation due to "no one getting around to it" https://t.co/2PnZhxKKUZ

. @LeighBoobyer revealed this last year, but only after a gargantuan effort. As he said at the time: "It took months to get the information as the Constabulary's FOI team failed to provide responses on-time and, eventually, I took matters to the Information Commissioner's Office"

Shortly after Leigh's scoop, the force erased eight years of misconduct outcomes from its website https://t.co/xHiSVHfe26

Do better, @Glos_Police - transparency is important

@WhatDoTheyKnow