Freedom of Information request ref 01/FOI/26/4366
We received your request on the 28/07/2026.

Request

You asked us:

I am requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for reporting purposes.

I am seeking information relating to recorded crimes involving the use of a kirpan (the Sikh ceremonial sword).

For each calendar year from 1 January 2021 to 27 July 2026 (or the most recent data available), please provide:

1. The number of recorded crimes in which a "kirpan", "Sikh ceremonial sword", or "Sikh dagger" is recorded as having been used, possessed, or otherwise associated with the offence.
2. A breakdown of those offences by offence type or Home Office offence category for each year.
3. A redacted copy of the crime report, incident summary, MO (modus operandi) text, occurrence log, or other free-text narrative relating to each offence, with all personal data and information identifying individuals removed as necessary.

If your force records this information through keyword searches rather than structured fields, I would be grateful if you could search for the terms "kirpan", "Sikh dagger" and "Sikh ceremonial sword" within relevant crime recording systems.

If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to the information exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please provide advice and assistance, under your Section 16 obligations, as to how I can refine my request to be included in the scope of the Act.

In any case, if you can identify ways in which my request could be refined pleased provide further advice and assistance to indicate this.

We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Our response:

Please find attached an Excel spreadsheet.

Please note:

- British Transport Police's crime recording system, Niche, is able to identify i) knife possession and ii)knife enabled offences – where a 'knife' is recognised as an article capable of piercing the skin. But it is unable to differentiate between the type of "knife" used (for example, kitchen knife, machete, razor blade etc). Therefore the

method used to answer this request has treated ‘knife possession’ and ‘knife enabled crimes’ as mutually exclusive.

- *Knife enabled crimes* cover using a knife to a) injure, b) attempt to injure, c) threaten with the blade seen, or d) threaten with the blade unseen. Therefore it is possible for a suspect to threaten a victim with a (non-existent) knife so long as the victim reasonably believes a knife is present.

- From 01/01/2021 to 27/06/2026 British Transport Police has recorded i) 3040 ‘knife possession’ offences and ii) 4081 ‘knife enabled’ offences. As explained above, as the system does not allow us to differentiate the type of knife used, identifying if any mention a "kirpan", "Sikh ceremonial sword", or "Sikh dagger" specifically would require manual review of the records. This would engage a Section 12 cost exemption as it would take in excess of the *appropriate limit* set forth in the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- British Transport Police has therefore conducted a search for ‘knife enabled’ and ‘knife possession’ offences where the ‘MO Comments field’ contains either %kirpan% or %sikh%sword% or %sikh%dagger% (% being a wildcard).

- This generated four hits - only one of which is marked as a knife possession offence.