



Date: 22/04/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/014479/X

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/014479/X

I write in connection with your request for information dated 25/03/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting the following information held by Greater Manchester Police regarding an incident that occurred on December 5, 2021, at a Subway shop in Salford, Greater Manchester, involving two police officers and a member of the public who was confronted over not wearing a face mask. This incident was widely publicized, including in a Daily Mail article dated December 5, 2021 (available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10280265/amp/Two-police-officers-try-arrest-man-not-wearing-face-mask-ordering-sandwich-Subway.html>), and involved the individual asserting a medical exemption due to asthma.

I am seeking the following specific information:

- 1. The total number of complaints received by Greater Manchester Police related to this incident, including those lodged by the individual involved and any other parties (e.g., witnesses or members of the public).*
- 2. The outcome of any investigations into complaints arising from this incident, including whether the officers' actions were found to comply with The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Covering) Regulations 2021, which exempts individuals with health conditions from wearing face coverings and does not require proof of exemption.*
- 3. Any recorded instances of disciplinary action, training, or policy changes implemented by Greater Manchester Police as a result of this incident or related complaints.*
- 4. Copies of any internal reports, memos, or correspondence (redacted as necessary to comply with data protection laws) between Greater Manchester Police personnel regarding the incident, including communications about the officers' decision to follow the individual home after the encounter.*

5. *The number of fixed penalty notices issued, or arrests attempted, by Greater Manchester Police between November 30, 2021, and December 31, 2021, for breaches of face mask regulations where the individual claimed a medical exemption, and the outcomes of those cases (e.g., fines upheld, withdrawn, or cases dropped).*
6. *Any guidance or training materials provided to Greater Manchester Police officers in 2021 regarding the enforcement of face mask regulations, specifically addressing how to handle individuals claiming medical exemptions.*

For clarity, I am not requesting personal data that would identify individuals involved (beyond what is already in the public domain), but rather aggregated data, policy-related documents, and procedural outcomes relevant to this incident. If any part of this request is likely to exceed the cost limit under Section 12 of the FOI Act, please advise me on how I might refine it to bring it within scope, rather than rejecting it outright.

Result of Searches

Information relating to question 5 of your request is not held in an easily retrievable format, if it is indeed held at all. There is no centrally held record of attempted arrests and to provide such data would require each division, sub-division and possibly each individual officer to undertake necessary searches to establish any such arrest attempts were made and if so on how many occasions.

It is anticipated that to comply with the whole of your request the process would take over 18 hours' work and therefore exceeds the appropriate limit of £450.00, the amount to which we are legally required to respond i.e. the cost of locating and retrieving the information exceeds the 'appropriate level' as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice

GMP is obligated, pursuant to section 16(1) of the Act to provide you with advice and assistance on refining your request to bring compliance within the fees limit. One option is that you specify a particular district within GMP to make your request more manageable within the fees limit of the act, although this still may not be possible for even one district. Another is to request how many arrests were made, rather than attempted.