

Date: 31/07/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/015125/E

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/015125/E

I write in connection with your request for information dated 16/07/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The main purpose of this request is to gather data concerning illegal or black-market vape sellers within your police force's jurisdiction.

Note: An illegal or unregulated vape does not comply with UK regulations, often meaning it's not registered with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), contains nicotine levels exceeding the legal limit (20mg/ml), or has a tank capacity larger than 2ml for single-use vapes. These products can also be dangerous because they may contain harmful substances or even illegal drugs like THC or Spice. Following the ban on disposable vapes in the UK, this definition will now also include single-use vapes.

Specifically-for each of the past 5 years (2020-2024), and partial data for 2025 if available-I am seeking anonymised data from your police force on the following:

- 1. The total number of sellers found to be in possession of illegal, unregulated or "black market" vape products.*
- 2. The number of sellers who faced any form of legal action, including but not limited to warnings, fines, charges, or prosecutions.*
- 3. The number of individuals formally prosecuted (i.e. individuals who were taken to court and faced criminal proceedings resulting in a conviction or ongoing trial).*

Additional information sent

Potential search terms and relevant offences may include:

- **"Illegal vapes"**

- *“Unregulated vapes”*
- *“Black market vapes”*
- *“Illicit tobacco and vape products”*
- *“Trading Standards referrals (vape-related)”*
- *Offences under the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016*
- *Offences under the Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing)*

Regulations 2015

- *Possession with intent to supply a psychoactive substance (if applicable – e.g. THC or Spice)*
- *Product Safety and Metrology Regulations 2019 (if enforced by police)*
- *Fraud Act 2006 (if counterfeit products were involved)*
- *Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 (if seizures involved smuggled goods)*

If your system allows, any records involving:

- *Collaboration with Trading Standards or HMRC on illicit vape sales*
- *Seizures of vapes not compliant with MHRA or UK regulations*
- *Prosecutions or charges brought for supplying prohibited or unlicensed vape products*

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information and I can confirm some of the information requested is held by GMP.

As there is no single offence to search for this request, the best way to approach this was by doing a search for ‘drug offences’ and then adding a key word search for the list provided above. This has revealed some data that may have matched.

However, I am not obliged to supply all the information as an exemption applies.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide such information (because this information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant, with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

Due to low results, this request is exempted from disclosure under **Section 40(2) Personal Information** – this information constitutes personal data of an identifiable living individual/s, and to disclose this information would breach the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data is defined by Section 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and means data that relates to an individual who can be identified directly or indirectly from that data.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption with no requirement to complete a public interest test.

For any crimes relating to Fraud that is connected to your request would need to be sought via Action Fraud. [Contact us | Action Fraud](#)