

Date: 06/02/2025

Our ref: 01/FOI/25/013971/W

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/013971/W

I write in connection with your request for information dated 13/01/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

1. ***How many prosecutions for child sex offences have taken place after a suspect or [suspects] were first identified through sting operations from self-styled 'paedophile vigilante hunter' groups?***
2. ***Can the same information be supplied for the number of arrests?***
 - ***Can the figures please be broken down from Jan 1 2022 to the present date?***
 - ***Can the information please be broken down for each calendar year?***

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.

However, GMP does not hold the information that you have requested for question 2 in an easily retrievable format.

GMP are unable to respond to this request without carrying out a manual trawl for Q2 of all the results that fall into this FOI request. GMP do not have a search perimeter that allows for an easy extraction of the information to identify if an arrest took place after they "were first identified through sting operations from self-styled 'paedophile vigilante hunter' groups". Searches carried out reveal that there are almost 500 custody records '*Engage In Sexual Communication With A Child*'. There will be other offences with records that will require a manual review, but no searches have been carried out on this at this time. This is down to the manual review exceeding 18hrs to complete using the name named offence above. At a conservative estimate of 5 minutes per review this request will initially take in the region of 40hrs+.

Therefore, as per **Section 12(1)** of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the cost of providing you with the information is above 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. In order for the force to attempt to keep this within the fees limit, the information you are requesting will need revising with a reduced timeframe. With any request that requires a manual review there is always a chance of a request being refused under S12 due to the enormity of work that is usually needed to provide the data, therefore the resulting response cannot be guaranteed at this point as it will be dependent upon the number of records that fall within the scope of any new request, as they would still have to be manually assessed.

Although excess costs remove GMP's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as a gesture of goodwill I have supplied some information relative to your request that was retrieved before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceed (see below information). I hope that this is of use to you, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fee's regulations for the remainder of your request.

Please see the response below.

1. GMP do not hold prosecution or conviction data as this is held by His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS). Please apply directly to HMCTS for such data.