

Date: 29/08/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/015146/J

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/015146/J

I write in connection with your request for information dated 21/07/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please provide the following data held by your force for the period from 1 January 2022 to the present (or the most recent available date)

1a) The total number of stop and search incidents where the object of the search included offensive weapons

1b) The total number of stop and search incidents where the object of the search included offensive weapons and there was a suspected or alleged link to wildlife crime.

2. Of the incidents involving wildlife crime recorded on police intelligence recording systems in addition to crime recording systems, how many involved the possession, suspected possession, or use of catapults?

3. For the searches described in point 2, please provide a breakdown of:

The outcome of each search (e.g. no further action, arrest, charge, summons, caution).

The number of subjects aged: 1.) Under 11 years old 2.) Between 11-18 years old.

Whether there were any suspected links to other forms of antisocial behaviour.

The specific offences alleged or identified (e.g. poaching, hunting with dogs, criminal damage to wildlife, etc.).

4. If available, please provide any guidance, policy, or briefing documents used by your force regarding stop and search in the context of wildlife crime or catapult-related offences.

Please let me know if any part of this request requires clarification.

I look forward to your response within twenty working days, as specified by the Act.

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 the information requested is held by GMP.

However, GMP does not hold some of the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format.

GMP would be unable to respond to questions 2-4 without carrying out a manual review for question 1b of this FOI first. A review would need to be carried out because stop and search records and crime records are not linked anywhere on our systems, and this is the only route to identify if any weapons from stop and searches are linked to suspected wildlife crimes. A search concluded over 1700 records would need to be trawled through and as a result this request cannot be completed in under 18hrs.

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. However, 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.

Should you wish to refine and resubmit your request in line with the advice above please respond to freedomofinformation@gmp.police.uk.

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 exceeded (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.

Caveats:

In July 2019, GMP implemented one of the largest IT infrastructure changes in UK policing. The systems are in continual development and the data provided for this request is what the systems currently hold.

- The data supplied contains records for searches between 1st January 2022 and 21st July 2025.
- The stop and search data field for weapon found was introduced to our Record Management System in June 2024 and no attempt was made to update records prior to June 2024 with the newly introduced field.
- The field is reliant upon officers selecting the correct option at the time of recording.

The below is data with the following located.

Question 1.

It's **1,768** stop search records where the following criteria are applied:

- Stop date between 1st January 2022 and 21st July 2025.
- the object sought was 'offensive weapon'
- field to indicate the object was found
- 'offensive weapon found' field equal to 'yes.'