

Date: 09/04/2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/015778/J

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/015778/J

I write in connection with your request for information dated 04/11/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

- 1. The total number of cigarettes and vapes, and the amount of rolling tobacco, seized on raids carried out as part of Operation Machinize. Please include data covering the period from the launch of Operation Machinize to the present date.*
- 2. The total number of arrests carried out as part of Operation Machinize. Please include data covering the period from the launch of Operation Machinize to the present date.*
- 3. The total number of asylum seekers arrested during Operation Machinize raids. Please include data covering the period from the launch of Operation Machinize to the present date.*

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 that some of the information requested is held by GMP. However, I am not obliged to supply you with all the information held as an exemption applies.

The information you have requested in questions 1 and 2 is held by GMP, but this information can not be provided as it is exempt under **Section 23(1) – Information Supplied by Or Concerning Certain Security Bodies**. Section 23 is an absolute, class-based exemption. There is no requirement for the public body to conduct a public interest test for this exemption.

Regarding question 3 of your request, GMP can neither confirm nor deny that any information is held under Section 23(5) - **Information Supplied by Or Concerning Certain Security Bodies, Section 30(3) – Investigations and Proceedings Conducted By Public**

Authorities, and Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement. Section 23 is an absolute, class-based exemption. There is no requirement for the public body to conduct a public interest test for this exemption. Section 30 is a qualified class-based exemption. There is a requirement for public bodies to conduct a public interest test. Section 31 is a qualified prejudice-based exemption. There is a requirement to evidence the harm that would be caused by confirming or denying the existence of information, as well as conducting a public interest test.

Harm S31(3)

Confirming or denying whether the requested information is held would itself reveal whether specific investigations or law enforcement activities have taken place. This could prejudice the prevention or detection of crime and compromise the confidentiality of investigative processes. Criminal networks could use such confirmation to assess enforcement priorities, adapt their methods, and evade detection. Even acknowledging the existence or non-existence of the information could undermine operational security and future enforcement actions, weakening the ability of authorities to apprehend offenders and maintain public safety.

Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held – Section 30(3)

Confirming or denying information is held would improve the public's confidence in the work of the police to apprehend offenders and reassure them that procedures to tackle crime were robust and effective.

Factors against confirming or denying information is held – Section 30(3)

Confirming or denying whether the requested information is held could reveal whether specific investigations have taken place, which may prejudice current or future investigations. Such confirmation could provide individuals or organised groups with intelligence about enforcement priorities or investigative focus, enabling them to adapt their behaviour to avoid detection.

Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held under Section 31(3)

To confirm or deny that information is held would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, it would also lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force and the communications used with intelligence, operations and during routine policing.

Factors against confirming or denying information is held under Section 31(3)

Confirming or denying whether the requested information is held would itself reveal whether specific law enforcement activities have taken place. This could prejudice the prevention or detection of crime by providing criminals or organised networks with intelligence about enforcement priorities, operational focus, or investigative methods. Such disclosure could enable individuals to adapt their behaviour to avoid detection and compromise ongoing or future operations, weakening the ability of authorities to protect the public and uphold the law.

Balance test

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant. Having considered the public interest factors we are required to determine whether on balance the factors favouring disclosure outweigh those

which are against disclosure. It is our view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour non-disclosure.