

Date: 8th April 2026
Our ref: FOI/26/016582/Y

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/26/016582/Y

I write in connection with your request for information dated 16/03/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Please provide the following data for each of the calendar years 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025:

The total number of arrests made under Section 4 of the Public Order Act 1986.

The total number of arrests made under Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986.

The total number of arrests made under Section 4A of the Public Order Act 1986.

The total number of arrests made under Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003.

The total number of arrests made under Section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

For each category, the number of arrests that resulted in: charge and prosecution, caution, no further action, release without charge.

Result of Searches

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

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. Any data provided for this request is subject to change as crimes are progressed and/or updated.

Management of Police Information regulations state that non-essential records should be removed from police systems six financial years after the year in which they were originally created. This means that

data that is more than six financial years old may be incomplete and should not be compared to more recent data.

For this request we have searched dates 01/01/2020 – 31/12/2025, all the below legislation, except for 'Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003' as this yielded no results.

The total number of arrests made under Section 4 of the Public Order Act 1986.

The total number of arrests made under Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986.

The total number of arrests made under Section 4A of the Public Order Act 1986.

The total number of arrests made under Section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

As the requester has asked for 'Legislation' the results returned arrests that are linked to a crime. Where possible duplicates have been removed.

GMP do not hold prosecution data. For this information you would need to redirect your request to the Courts.

Response

Legislation	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Malicious Communications Act 1988 Sec 1	522	1,074	1,965	1,700	282	9	5,552
Public Order Act 1986 Sec 4	330	546	758	735	836	655	3,860
Public Order Act 1986 Sec 4A	373	703	1,092	1,141	1,213	1,015	5,537
Public Order Act 1986 Sec 5	276	406	658	291	6	1	1,638

Please note our custody system has different outcomes than requested.

Outcomes for Malicious Communications Act 1988 Sec 1	Total
Cautioned	122
Cautioned (conditional)	55
Charged	727
Charged - Postal Requisition	47
No Further Action Complete	4,373
Penalty Issued	2
Pending	85
Police Bail for CPS Decision	1
Police Bail for Further Enquiries	2
Postal Charge	17
Pre-Caution Disposal	2
Process Complete	1
Released without Bail	100
Restorative Approach	18

Outcomes for Public Order Act 1986 Sec 4	Total
Cautioned	39
Cautioned (conditional)	83
Charged	1,165

Charged - Postal Requisition	75
No Further Action Complete	2,280
Penalty Issued	7
Pending	38
Police Bail for CPS Decision	18
Police Bailed	1
Postal Charge	14
Process Complete	6
Released without Bail	103
Restorative Approach	31

Outcomes for Public Order Act 1986 Sec 4A	Total
Cautioned	64
Cautioned (Conditional)	95
Charged	1,371
Charged - Postal Requisition	104
No Further Action Complete	3,632
Penalty Issued	5
Pending	43
Police Bail for CPS Decision	22
Postal Charge	20
Process Complete	2
Released without Bail	140
Restorative Approach	39

Outcomes for Public Order Act 1986 Sec 5	Total
Cautioned	30
Cautioned (Conditional)	24
Charged	555
Charged - Postal Requisition	47
No Further Action Complete	856
Penalty Issued	39
Pending	18
Postal Charge	6
Pre-Caution Disposal	1
Process Complete	1
Released without Bail	26
Restorative Approach	35