

Date: 06/08/2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017364/U

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017364/U

I write in connection with your request for information dated 04/08/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

For the period 1 June 2025 to 30 June 2026 inclusive, please provide the following information from all data force wide.

Please electronically search crime-report text fields for the terms:

- ***“balaclava”***
- ***“bally”***
- ***“face covering”***

Please provide:

- 1. The number of unique crime reports containing one or more of these terms.***
- 2. A breakdown of these reports by the most commonly recorded offence type.***
- 3. The age group of suspects linked to these reports, broken down as:***
 - under 18;***
 - 18–24;***
 - 25 and over;***
 - age unknown or not recorded.***
- 4. The number of these reports that resulted in:***
 - an arrest;***
 - a charge;***
 - no further action.***

- ***The number of occasions during the same period where a balaclava, “bally” or face covering was recorded as seized or recovered by officers, with a breakdown by associated offence type.***

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 the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format.

For GMP to provide a response to this request, a substantial manual review of crime records would be required. There is no searchable field that allows for the straightforward extraction of the information requested. Instead, the keywords identified in either the crime description, or the MO (modus operandi) description would need to be manually reviewed to determine whether each record falls within the scope of the request.

Searches using the keywords provided have identified in excess of 17,000 records. Conducting a manual review of this volume of records would significantly exceed the 18-hour cost limit prescribed under the Freedom of Information Act.

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 time frame. This would be the only alternative way to attempt any results. 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.

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