



Date: 19/02/2026  
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/015812/U

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/015812/U**

I write in connection with your request for information dated 10/11/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

*I am writing to ask about the fire at Armadillo Self Storage on Earl Road in Cheadle on Saturday 26 Feb 2022. Can you please send me all the information you have regarding this alleged arson attack.*

**Result of Searches**

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by GMP. However, I am not obliged to supply you with the information as exemptions apply.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide such information (because this information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant, with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies. The information you have requested is exempt from disclosure by virtue of **Section 31(1)(a) – Law Enforcement** and **Section 40(2) – Personal Information**.

Section 40(2) represents information that identifies a living individual, to disclose this information would breach the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data is defined by Section 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and means data that relates to an individual who can be identified directly or indirectly from that data.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test for such data.

Section 31 is a qualified, prejudice-based exemption. There is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused by disclosure and to conduct a public interest test.

### **Evidence of Harm**

Disclosure of the information contained within arson crime reports could be of intelligence value to persons with criminal or malicious intent. The disclosure could provide criminals with information on investigative strategies and techniques used in the investigation of arson. This could allow criminals to develop tactics to avoid detection by working against current investigative strategies and target perceived weaknesses or avoid perceived strengths in the investigation process. Providing details of investigative techniques and strategies provides opportunities for criminality to benefit, or for risks to be extended to members of the public.

### **Public Interest Test Section 31 - Factors favouring disclosure**

Providing this information would make members of the public more aware of how arson crimes are investigated and the reasons why decisions to take further action or not are made. It will also show accountability and that public funds are being spent appropriately.

### **Section 31 - Factors favouring non-disclosure**

The Police Service exists to protect and serve the public through the prevention and detection of crime. To provide such information could compromise law enforcement tactics which would hinder GMP's ability to successfully investigate crimes. The threat of crime will increase as more crimes are committed because of criminals gaining knowledge about the capabilities of the forces. Therefore, the public will be placed at a greater risk. A fear of crime will be realised as criminals identify different techniques and strategies used target and exploit this resulting in the public being in fear of more criminal activity occurring. The safety of the public is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the requested information would compromise the safety of the community that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect and place individuals at risk.

### **Balancing Test**

When balancing the public interest Greater Manchester Police must consider whether the information should be released into the public domain. Arguments need to be weighed against each other. The most persuasive reason for disclosing the information would be openness. However, this needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is the fact that individuals may be placed at risk and the effect it may have on the prevention and detection of crime and protecting the people and communities we serve. Having considered all the factors for and against disclosure, the reason against disclosure outweighs the reason for disclosure and so the decision at this time to maintain the above exemption and withhold the information from disclosure.

In accordance with the Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those pieces of information.