

Date: 17/02/2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/016288/V

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/016288/V

I write in connection with your request for information dated 02/02/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

By “cake fines” I mean informal workplace punishments where a member of staff is expected to bring in cakes, sweets, food, or pay into a team pot, as an apology for a mistake or minor incident (for example an admin slip, being late, minor vehicle damage, etc).

I am not asking for any names or personal details.

***1. Do you have any written rules or guidance about “cake fines”, staff collections, whip-rounds, team social funds, mess funds, or anything similar?
If yes, please provide copies.***

If you do not have anything that mentions “cake fines” specifically, please provide any written rules you do have about staff collections or team funds generally.

***2. Between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2025, have you recorded any complaints, conduct cases, grievances, or HR reports about:
- being pressured to bring cakes or food,
- being pressured to pay money into a team fund,
- bullying or coercion linked to “cake fines” or collections?***

If you keep totals, please provide the number per year.

If you do not keep totals, please just say “not recorded” (no need to do manual searching).

***3. Do you have any recorded warnings, learning notes, or internal messages to staff about the risks of “cake fines” or staff collections (for example bullying, unfair pressure, discrimination, misuse of money)?
If yes, please provide copies.***

If anything in this request would take too long to answer, please answer the parts you can and tell me how to narrow the rest.

Result of Searches

GMP cannot confirm if it holds all the information that you have requested without conducting a thorough search on your behalf.

While GMP will hold data regarding complaints and grievances on record, to fully understand what these relate to and in this particular case if any refer to pressure being applied to supply cakes, pressure to contribute to office/work related funds and the remaining breakdowns in question 2 would require a substantial review of all the grievances held within the timeframe provided. In addition, a review would also need to be conducted for question 3 of this FOI. This is because the information if held would not be stored in a central location. All GMP units/districts would have to be contacted to see if they held any literature regarding internal messages to staff about the risks of “cake fines” or staff collections. A further search would need to interrogate all officer/staff personal files to see if any recorded warnings are held that match this FOI. This would not be achieved within the 18hrs permitted.

Therefore, as per section 12(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the cost of searching for the information is above the amount to which we are legally required to respond i.e. the cost of locating 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.

In this instance, Greater Manchester Police will be unable to provide advice for you to reduce the request in order for the force to keep this within the fees limit in accordance with Section 16(1), the duty to provide advice and assistance, of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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.

Question 1.

GMP do not hold any information to match this question.