

Wednesday, 15 July 2026  
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017189/X

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017189/X**

I write in connection with your request for information dated 06/07/2026, I note you seek access to the following information:

*Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information held by your force.*

*For the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2025:*

- 1. The total number of recorded incidents involving damage to, or tampering with, post-boxes (Royal Mail pillar boxes, wall boxes, or lamp boxes) within your force area. This may be recorded under categories such as criminal damage, arson, theft, or attempted theft from a postal receptacle.*
- 2. For each incident, if held, please provide the following details (in spreadsheet format where possible):*
  - a) Date of incident*
  - b) Location (street name, postcode district, or ward/neighbourhood — I am not requesting exact addresses if this would breach personal data protections)*
  - c) Nature/type of damage or tampering (e.g. arson, forced opening, glue/fishing device used to steal mail, physical vandalism, graffiti)*
- 3. If incident-level data cannot be provided within the cost limit, please provide a summary breakdown by:*
  - a) Neighbourhood/ward or postcode district (to identify hotspots)*
  - b) Type/cause of damage (to identify most common causes)*

## **Result of Searches**

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by Greater Manchester Police.

However, GMP does not hold the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format. These offences would fall under 'criminal damage and arson offences' and would need a manual review to identify whether they're relevant to this request. There are no tools on the system to filter the 'postboxes' to answer this request. There are 178,548 crime under 'criminal damage and arson offences' for the request timeframe, as such it is anticipated it would take in excess of 18hours to provide the requested information.

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. We can do keyword search on 'criminal damage and arson offences' on the system, however the resulting response cannot be guaranteed at this point as it will be dependent upon the number of records return that fall within the scope of any new request, as they would still have to be manually assessed.

Lastly, Questions 2c) & 3b) are more than likely to trigger S12 as manual trawls are the only way to collect these data.

You may be interested on how we record incidents and crimes. We follow these rules:

[National standard for incident recording counting rules - GOV.UK](#)

[Home Office Crime Recording Rules for frontline officers, staff - GOV.UK](#)

We can promptly collect total statistics from the system if we have incident closing codes or Home Office crime codes. However, some breakdown details would require manual reviews to gather all information.

Should you wish to refine and resubmit your request in line with the advice above please respond to [freedomofinformation@gmp.police.uk](mailto:freedomofinformation@gmp.police.uk).