

Date: 5th June 2026
Our ref: FOI/26/016960/E

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/26/016960/E

I write in connection with your request for information dated 28/05/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 concerning police investigations involving unregistered children's homes.

Between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2026:

- 1. How many investigations involving unregistered children's homes included one or more of the following recorded indicators: organised crime group involvement, county lines activity, child criminal exploitation, trafficking, or modern slavery?***
- 2. In how many investigations relating to unregistered children's homes were the provider, operator, company, director, or landlord linked to (a) organised crime investigations; or (b) other safeguarding or exploitation investigations?***
- 3. How many enforcement actions involving unregistered children's homes did the force support, and in how many of these cases was a criminal investigation pursued against the provider or operator of the accommodation?***
- 4. Has the force identified unregistered children's homes within any strategic assessments concerning organised crime, county lines, child criminal exploitation, trafficking, or modern slavery? If yes, please provide copies where disclosure is possible.***

I look forward to receiving a response within the statutory timeframe.

Result

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the 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.

Greater Manchester Police neither confirms nor denies that it holds information relevant to this request by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

Section 38(2) – Health and Safety

Section 40(5) – Personal Information

Section 23(5) – Information supplied by or relating to bodies dealing with security matters

Overall Harm

Taken as a whole, the request seeks to establish whether any investigations exist into unregistered children's homes, specifically child exploitation, county lines, trafficking, etc. Confirming or denying this information would create a detailed intelligence picture about police awareness, assessment of risk and operational focus at force level for specific locations. Disclosure would be likely to prejudice law enforcement activity, undermine safeguarding arrangements, and increase the risk of harm to children and vulnerable persons. The harm arises not from the detail of any one answer, but from the cumulative effect of confirming or denying the existence of policing or safeguarding activity at the premises.

Public Interest Test

Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement - The public interest in disclosure lies in promoting transparency and public confidence in how the police respond to risks and involvement of organised crime and exploitation of children, and in reassuring the public that safeguarding powers are used appropriately. However, the public interest in maintaining the effectiveness of law enforcement is strong. Confirming or denying whether such locations have been subject to investigations would reveal sensitive information about policing priorities, thresholds for intervention and known vulnerabilities. This could be exploited by offenders, undermine crime prevention efforts and compromise future operational activity. On balance, the public interest favours maintaining an NCND position to protect effective law enforcement.

Section 38(2) – Health and Safety - There is a public interest in openness where matters relate to child protection and safeguarding. However, disclosure in this context would carry a real risk of increasing harm.

Revealing whether a specific location has been linked to exploitation or criminality could expose children and vulnerable persons to further risk should those at risk feel they cannot report or engage with the police and partner agencies. The public interest in protecting the safety and welfare of vulnerable individuals outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Section 40(5) – Personal Information - While transparency is a general public interest consideration, there is a strong public interest in protecting the privacy rights of individuals, particularly children and those involved in safeguarding processes. Even without naming individuals, confirming or denying investigations at a specific premises could lead to indirect identification of victims, suspects or others involved. Disclosure would be unfair and contrary to data protection principles. The public interest therefore favours withholding information to protect personal data.

Balance

Having considered the competing factors, the public interest in maintaining effective policing, safeguarding children and vulnerable persons, and protecting sensitive law enforcement information

clearly outweighs the public interest in location-specific transparency. The balance therefore favours refusal to confirm or deny the information requested.