Information Management & Data Directorate (IMDD)
Information Access Unit

Date: 15th October 2026
Our ref: FOI/26/017813/Y

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/26/017813/Y

I write in connection with your request for information dated 08/10/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

On 5 October 2026, the following information was released by the Press:
**** Over 10,000 pieces of mail were found at an address in Bury in connection with a former employee of Royal Mail.***
**** The discovery was made during a search related to an arrest that happened earlier in the summer, police said.***
**** According to Royal Mail, the recovered mail will be sorted out at Royal Mail's Wellington Street Delivery Office and delivered together with an explanatory note.***
**** The ex-Royal Mail employee is no longer working for the company. Whether Royal Mail launches an investigation into this case is yet to be known.***
**** It is suspected that some of the recovered mail had been damaged or tampered with, according to Royal Mail.***

Bury (Manchester Mirror) October 05, 2026 - More than 10,000 items of mail described as "stolen" were found inside the home of a former Royal Mail worker in Bury, with police recovering the correspondence before handing it over to the postal operator for sorting and delivery.
Greater Manchester Police said the items were uncovered during a search of the property that was linked to a separate arrest made earlier this summer. The total number of pieces has been confirmed as between 10,000 and 11,000.

I request disclosure of all data that Greater Manchester Police holds about this stolen mail, including but not limited to:
**** How many of the recovered items of Mail were originally sent by the Police***
**** How many of the recovered items contained Notices of Intended Prosecutions with requirements to provide information under section 172 RTA 1988***
**** How many people have the police contacted to inform them that their stolen post has been recovered***

****** How many of the intended recipients of the post have been convicted of failing to provide information relating to the identification of the driver in accordance with s.172 RTA 1988***

****** What action do Greater Manchester police intend to take to rectify any wrongful convictions for failing to provide information relating to the identification of the driver in accordance with s.172 RTA 1988***

My details are as follows:

****** Full name:*** [redacted]

****** Current address:*** [redacted]

Please provide the information in electronic format if possible. If you require any further information to locate the records, please let me know promptly.

I understand you are required to respond within one month of receipt of this request.

Thank you for your assistance.

Result of Searches

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

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires GMP, 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.

The information requested is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 30(1)(2)(a) – Investigations and Proceedings Conducted by Public Authorities.
Section 40(2) - Personal Information.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption with no requirement to complete a public interest test.

The disclosure of this information constitutes personal data and is therefore exempt from disclosure. Personal data is defined by Article 4 of the GDPR and Part 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018, and means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identified natural person is one who can be identified directly or indirectly from that data.

Section 40(2) of the FOIA, as to disclose this information would contravene the first of the data protection principles. This states that personal data should be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner. It is the fairness aspect of this principle which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances Section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure and therefore there is no requirement for us to conduct a public interest test.

Section 30 is a class based qualified exemption; there is a requirement to carry out a public interest test, which can be seen below.

Section 30 - Public Interest Test

Factors Favouring Disclosure

To disclosure the exempt information, into the public domain, would show GMP's accountability and satisfy the public, that investigations into such incidents are being conducted correctly. It would show GMP's use of public funds investigating incidents of this nature.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

Conversely to the factors in favour of disclosure, to publicly release the data that is from an investigation that remains open may seriously undermine GMP's ability to complete the investigation to a full correct conclusion.

It would also have an impact on the future law enforcement capabilities of GMP, as it would disclose policing investigative techniques, thus hindering any future prevention or detection of crime.

Balancing Test

When balancing the public interest test GMP has to consider whether the information should be released into the public domain, therefore arguments need to be weighed against each other.

The most persuasive reason for disclosing the information would be the fact that disclosure would encourage transparency. This needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure, which in this case is the impact on GMP's ability to complete investigation to a full and correct conclusion.

Therefore, having considered all the factors for and against disclosure it is the decision at this time to maintain the above exemption and withhold the information from disclosure.