

Date: 17th September 2026
Our ref: FOI/26/017652/Z

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/26/017652/Z

I write in connection with your request for information dated 14/09/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Please can you provide the official statistics related to the following in your force area:

1 – The number of people who have been formally questioned regarding direct physical or verbal abuse aimed at referees or other match officials in amateur or semi-professional football. In seasons ‘20/’21 through to ‘24/’25.

Please break those figures down, season by season.

2 – The number of people who have been charged with an offence relating to direct physical or verbal abuse aimed at referees or other match officials in amateur or semi-professional football. In seasons ‘20/’21 through to ‘24/’25.

Please break those figures down season by season.

3 – The number of professional referees or match officials in your force area, operating in the top four men’s leagues (Premier League, Championship, Leagues 1 and 2) that have experienced threats at any level which required police action, this includes registering a complaint or concern.

Please provide figures from the ‘20/’21 season through to ‘24/’25.

4 - Where a formal complaint was registered. Has any individual been charged, or has any referee or match official been offered police protection? Please break those figures down season by season starting in ‘20/’21 and ending ‘24/’25 and differentiate between amateur and professional football.

5 – Has any of the above (1,2 or 3) resulted in a successful prosecution – including online abuse aimed at match officials. If so, what are the detailed statistics behind successful or unsuccessful prosecutions.

Also please state how many cases have been referred to a different force area or body to deal with, for example the National Police Football Unit.

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 all the information requested as an exemption applies.

There have been **2 instances** that GMP are aware of in relation to GM clubs during this time period. These instances occurred in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 season.

Due to the low numbers returned, the requested breakdown of these instances has been exempted from disclosure under Section 40(2) Personal Information – this information constitutes personal data of an identifiable living individual, and to disclose this information would breach the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and 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.

In relation to question 5, GMP do not hold prosecution data, for this information you will need to redirect your request to the relevant Courts.