



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 2024/27470

Dear requester,

Thank you for your recent request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at, **Section 1(1) (a)**, is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at, **Section 1 (1) (b)**, is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

The information that you are seeking is in relation to the following:

REQUEST

Please provide the following information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, since 01/01/2023 in Excel format:

1. vehicles/VRMs*, make and model, reported stolen with the date of loss and of these:

a. those recovered – the date of recovery associated with the vehicle b. those that were 'weeded'** - the date of the weed

2. the date the weeded VRMs/vehicles were reinstated on PNC LoS

The weeded VRMs/vehicles currently not recorded LoS on PNC will be identifiable from the above as they will have a weed date but no reinstatement date.

3. Additionally, the process (receipt of reminders*** and activity) and your policy your policy concerning weeding (as opposed to the PNC manual procedure)



RESPONSE

Please provide the following information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, since 01/01/2023 in Excel format:

Q1. vehicles/VRMs*, make and model, reported stolen with the date of loss and of these:

Unfortunately, we cannot disclose this information on stolen vehicles, by virtue of **s43(2) and s31(1) Law Enforcement:**

Overall harm:

The information withheld is liable to cause significant commercial prejudice to car manufacturers in the event of its disclosure. Confirming which brands of car are the most stolen is highly likely to discourage the public from purchasing cars from that supplier, severely impacting their ability to compete in the current market.

Additionally, relationships between policing and the suppliers would undoubtedly be damaged by the disclosure of the withheld information. It is important that information is protected which would undermine current and future engagements and proposals the police service may have with car manufacturers.

Disclosure of information about the makes and models of stolen vehicles risks identifying to criminals and those with criminal intent, a detailed picture of the types of vehicles which are most commonly stolen, and as such could be determined to have a lower level of security features. Criminals or those with criminal intent could use this information to then target these types of vehicles with more prevalence, increasing the level of vehicle theft.

Public interest considerations:

Factors favouring disclosure – s43.

Disclosing the information would raise awareness of vehicle crime within the general public, potentially promoting greater vigilance and incident reporting to police.

Factors favouring non-disclosure s43:

If information was to be disclosed, it risks compromising the commercial interests of vehicle manufacturers who work closely with police to tackle vehicle crime. A disclosure of specific manufacturer names would undermine the commercial viability of these manufacturers in a competitive market. It would also erode the trust and confidence between the police and the manufacturers they work with.

Factors favouring disclosure – s31.



Disclosure of the information would reassure the public that the police have accurate knowledge of the types of vehicles which are being stolen and as such can effectively tackle vehicle theft.

Factors favouring non-disclosure s31:

Disclosure of the information would assist offenders and leave significant volumes of vehicles more vulnerable to crime; as a result, the rate of vehicle crime would increase. Disclosure of the requested information would also risk weakening the partnership working approach between police and vehicle manufacturers which would ultimately undermining the police's ability to combat vehicle theft effectively. A reduction in partnership working and increased risk of crime as a result of disclosure cannot be in the public interest.

**Q1a. those recovered – the date of recovery associated with the vehicle.
b. those that were 'weeded'** - the date of the weed.**

Q2. the date the weeded VRMs/vehicles were reinstated on PNC LoS

The weeded VRMs/vehicles currently not recorded LoS on PNC will be identifiable from the above as they will have a weed date but no reinstatement date.

In relation to questions 1a, b and 2, we have applied the below exemption due to time limits.

Section 12 – Excess Cost

The exemption applicable to the information you have requested for this question can be found at Section 12(1) of the Act and this refusal notice is issued under Section 17.

Section 12(1) "does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit."

In the case of a police force, the appropriate limit is set at £450, which is calculated at £25 per hour (i.e. 18 hours). Gwent Police would have to conduct a manual search to find and extract the information for this question. This would take more than 18 hours of staff time therefore we are unable to answer this question and the exemption is engaged.

In this case there are 15 records over a 1-week period, with each record taking approximately 10 mins to review/extract data, totalling 2.5hrs. From 01/01/2023 to date there are 72 weeks' worth of data. $2.5 \times 72 = 180$ hours.

We appreciate that you may be disappointed on this occasion that we are unable to provide the requested information. However, under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we have a duty to assist you in relation to refining your



request, where we may be able to answer some of your questions. If you were able to reduce the time scale requested we may be able to assist.

Q3. Additionally, the process (receipt of reminders* and activity) and your policy your policy concerning weeding (as opposed to the PNC manual procedure)**

The Gwent Police PNC Bureau receive Daily Activity Files containing details of vehicles that have been circulated as lost/stolen/found on PNC. These records are reviewed, and local systems checked. Any records with a found marker that has been placed on by Gwent Police remain on PNC in order to weed with the relevant LOS marker. If a found marker has been placed on PNC by another Force, the records are paired to be removed from PNC.

There is no specific policy on weeding.

Freedom of Information Act is a public disclosure regime, not a private regime. Any information disclosed under the Act is thereafter deemed to be in the public domain, and therefore, freely available to the public and will be published on the Gwent Police website.

If, upon receiving a response to a freedom of information request, you are unhappy with the outcome, you may request an internal review. **This should be made within 40 working days of the initial response.**

Please direct any internal review requests to FOI@gwent.police.uk

You have the right to request an appeal from the Information Commissioners Office about your Freedom of Information request, if you are dissatisfied with your internal review response.

ICO Contact Details:

The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Web: www.ico.org.uk

Thank you for your interest in Gwent Police.