

Brief / Summary

The Extent of ‘Weeding’ of Stolen Vehicle Records on the PNC and DVLA

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Purpose: Oversight, assurance, and policy review

1. Purpose and Audience

This brief summarises the findings of the accompanying report (below), *The Extent of Weeding*, which examines the potential systemic under-recording of stolen vehicles arising from police processes governing the confirmation and deletion (“weeding”) of Lost or Stolen (LoS) vehicle markers on the Police National Computer (PNC).

The document is intended for:

- Police forces and Professional Standards Departments
- Oversight bodies (HMICFRS, OPCCs, ICO)
- Policymakers (Home Office, NPCC, DVLA)

It is not an allegation of misconduct or criminal liability. It is an evidence-based request for authoritative determination and governance review.

2. Issue in Summary

When a vehicle is reported stolen, a LoS marker is placed on the PNC. If that marker is not **confirmed** within a defined period (six weeks), it is automatically deleted (**weeded**).

Only confirmed LoS markers are transmitted to the DVLA. The consequence is that from **day one**, a vehicle may:

- be reported stolen,
 - not be recovered,
 - yet cease to appear as stolen at the DVLA.
-

3. Why This Matters

Where weeding occurs at **6 weeks**:

- vehicles may appear legitimate in PNC, ANPR, DVLA and provenance checks,
- innocent purchasers and insurers may be exposed to loss,
- recovery opportunities are reduced,
- police recovery and clearance metrics may be distorted,
- national vehicle-theft statistics may be understated.

The issue is therefore one of data integrity, public protection, and governance, not administrative error.

4. Key Findings (High Level)

A. Persistent data discrepancy

Analysis of available data shows a material and persistent gap between:

- police-recorded vehicle thefts (Home Office / force data), and
- stolen-vehicle notifications received by the DVLA.

This discrepancy:

- remains after accounting for timing mismatches and edge cases,
- appears consistent with systematic deletion of unconfirmed records.

B. Identified mechanism

The six-week automatic deletion of unconfirmed PNC LoS markers provides a plausible and scalable explanation for the discrepancy.

C. Gwent Police as a case study

Gwent Police data illustrates the issue clearly:

- vehicle theft figures recorded by the force and Home Office materially exceed DVLA stolen-vehicle notifications,
- assurances that the issue had been resolved were undermined by a further confirmed weeding event in November 2025,
- internal monitoring safeguards were reduced or removed, with reliance on manual confirmation.

D. National indicators

When DVLA and Home Office data are compared across forces:

- wide variation is observed,
 - several forces show discrepancies exceeding 100%,
 - the pattern is inconsistent with benign explanations alone.
-

5. What This document Does — and Does Not — Claim

This paper does not claim:

- that all discrepancies are caused by weeding,
- that DVLA data is inherently unreliable,
- that individual officers act improperly.

It does claim:

- that automated deletion of unconfirmed LoS markers is a credible, systemic risk,
 - that the scale of the discrepancy requires formal determination,
 - that continued reliance on current processes undermines confidence and safeguards.
-

6. What Is Required Now

1. Authoritative determination of cause

A national body (most appropriately the Home Office, with NPCC and DVLA involvement) should establish whether weeding is a primary driver of the discrepancy and quantify its effects.

2. Governance and assurance review

Forces should demonstrate:

- who owns PNC LoS data integrity,
- what monitoring exists,
- how failures are detected and corrected.

3. Policy reconsideration

If confirmation at creation is feasible, the necessity of six-week automated deletion should be reconsidered at source.

7. Core Conclusion

If the discrepancy identified is substantially driven by weeding, the problem is systemic rather than exceptional.

Absent reform, stolen vehicles will continue to fall out of national records, public confidence will be eroded, and victims, insurers, and innocent purchasers will remain exposed to avoidable harm.

‘Weeding’
Vehicle
PNC LoS Markers

*Has ‘weeding’ caused 1,000’s
of stolen vehicles to
not be recorded as such
on the PNC or at the DVLA?*

5th January 2026

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Abbreviations:

DVLA	The Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
LoS	Lost or Stolen
PNC	Police National Computer
V5C	Vehicle Registration Certificate – a.k.a. ‘log book’ or registration document
VRM	Vehicle Registration Mark a.k.a. vehicle registration number

An explanation of how differences between police-recorded vehicle theft figures and DVLA stolen-vehicle notifications are calculated, including the formulas used, to avoid ambiguity or misinterpretation of percentages can be found within the text and at:

[Attachment 1. Methodology: Measuring the Extent of Weeding](#)

Summary

Overview

This report examines the systemic under-recording of stolen vehicles within the DVLA register, arising from police processes governing the confirmation and subsequent deletion (“weeding”) of unconfirmed stolen-vehicle markers on the Police National Computer (PNC).

Purpose and audience

The document is provided to police forces, oversight bodies, and policymakers to assist in understanding the potential scale and consequences of automated deletion (“weeding”) of unconfirmed PNC Lost/Stolen vehicle markers.

It is intended to inform governance review and does not allege misconduct or criminal liability.

This document does not claim:

- all discrepancies are caused by weeding
- DVLA data is inherently unreliable
- that individual officers act improperly

It does claim:

- the scale of discrepancy is inconsistent with benign explanations alone
- that automated deletion is a plausible, systemic cause requiring determination

Key findings

- A significant and persistent discrepancy exists between police-recorded vehicle theft figures and DVLA stolen-vehicle notifications.
- Analysis of available data indicates that DVLA totals are materially lower than police-recorded theft totals, even after allowing for timing and reporting differences.
- The scale of the discrepancy appears consistent with the routine deletion of unconfirmed stolen-vehicle records, rather than isolated error.

Mechanism identified

- When a vehicle is reported stolen, it is initially recorded on the PNC as **unconfirmed**.

- Only **confirmed** stolen-vehicle records are transmitted to the DVLA.
- Where confirmation does not occur within a defined period (commonly around six weeks), the record is **automatically removed (“weeded”)** from the PNC.
- Once weeded, the vehicle may appear as clear of stolen interest, **despite never having been recovered**, and without any corresponding DVLA stolen marker.

Consequences

- Vehicles reported stolen may:
 - Appear legitimate in DVLA and PNC checks.
 - Be sold on to innocent purchasers.
 - Re-enter circulation without safeguards.
- Police performance indicators, recovery statistics, and national theft data may be artificially distorted.
- Victims* may suffer secondary harm through insurance disputes, financial loss, and loss of legal protections.

*Those from whom the vehicle was taken (insureds?), insurers and those who may innocently acquire such a vehicle.

Governance and data-quality concerns

- Independent oversight bodies have previously identified weaknesses in police crime-recording accuracy and consistency.
- The findings in this report are consistent with those wider concerns, particularly regarding reliance on administrative processes rather than outcome-based verification.
- DVLA data, while operationally necessary, is not fit to be used as a sole proxy for vehicle theft prevalence where upstream police processes fail.

Conclusion

If the substantial discrepancy identified is in fact, as it appears, the result of weeding, the problem is **systemic rather than exceptional**.

Absent reform, the continued reliance on confirmation-dependent data transfer and automated weeding risks undermining public confidence, victim protection, and the integrity of national vehicle-crime statistics.

Why Formal National Determination Is Required

While this report identifies automated weeding of unconfirmed stolen-vehicle records as a plausible and significant explanatory mechanism, it does not assert causation as a matter of fact.

The scale of the observed discrepancy between police-recorded vehicle theft figures and DVLA stolen-vehicle notifications is such that it requires **formal determination by a competent national authority**, most appropriately the Home Office. That determination should establish, unequivocally, whether weeding is the primary driver of the anomaly and, if so, the true extent of its effects, including the number of vehicle registration marks that have been removed from

stolen-vehicle registers and the number of vehicles that remain stolen but are no longer recorded as such and may be in the possession of subsequent keepers or owners.

Should weeding be confirmed as a material cause, the scope of the issue would likely necessitate the involvement of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in any remedial programme, given the potential implications for register accuracy, public protection, and downstream reliance on DVLA data.

The existence of a plausible mechanism does not, in itself, constitute proof of causation. Other factors - such as reporting-period mismatches, administrative crime-cancellation rules, delayed confirmations, or edge-case vehicle categories - may contribute to some proportion of the discrepancy. Additionally, there may be, as yet unknown, factors at play.

If other mechanisms are found to contribute materially to the discrepancy, these should be clearly identified, quantified, and addressed. In either case, continued reliance on incomplete explanation risks perpetuating uncertainty, undermining confidence in official statistics, and leaving affected parties without effective safeguards.

What “Weeding” Means in Practice

Weeding, in the context of a vehicle (VRM) and the PNC, is the automatic act of removing a PNC LoS marker recorded against a VRM. This can occur at two stages after the PNC LoS entry is made:

- a) **6 weeks** - if the LoS report is not CONFIRMED (PNC status flag: Confirmed/Unconfirmed)
- b) **6 years** - the LoS marker will be removed, unless a specific instruction is given not to do so i.e. unless there is manual intervention.

20/08/2024 the weeding procedure was confirmed by the [NPCC in an FoIA response](#)

When a force puts on a Lost or Stolen (LOS) report – unless there is a Crime or other Police Reference, this will be logged as ‘unconfirmed’ where the circumstances are not yet fully known.

*With an ‘unconfirmed’ LOS report, these will as has been raised by the originator be **weeded off automatically at 6 weeks**.*

Prior to this, at the 4 week mark the force will be notified by way of a Daily Action File (DAF) which will highlight an unconfirmed LOS Marker. Should no action be made on that report it will be weeded 2 weeks later when the report has reached 6 weeks as not confirmed crime has taken place.

Should the circumstances be known and the marker is shown as ‘confirmed’ the entry will remain on the application for 6 years from the date of the original input.

At each annual anniversary of the marker, the force will be notified by way of DAF that there is a LOS confirmed marker for the force to confirm this is still correct.

This annual review was added at the last review of the process (which was undertaken more than 5 years ago), prior to this, the DAF was sent on the 6 year mark advising weeding.

The primary concern is that of 6-week weeding, at ‘a’ above. As detailed below, this is particularly problematic because until the police 'CONFIRM' a LoS report on the PNC, the LoS status of the VRM **does NOT pass to the DVLA**

If, after 6 weeks, the police have not confirmed a LoS report, the LoS marker is 'WEEDED' off the PNC. Therefore, at any one time, the DVLA data (used by many to cite vehicle taking numbers) will be lacking LoS records.

But after 6 weeks, if not confirmed, the VRM will appear clear on the PNC and at DVLA. The chances of recovering the vehicle are reduced, if not nil.

However, weeding appears to be a source of governance failure resulting in data integrity risk – see below.

We have long argued this to be the case, that weeding can and should stop. Examples of our writing can be found at:

[Attachment 2. Historical Weeding Concerns](#)

The issue appears to have been ignored by many constabularies and not to be understood by others associated with vehicle theft investigation.

Unable to bring an end to the procedure, we created a ‘safety net’ to help protect victims of vehicle theft, their insurers AND the police:

[Attachment 3. Vehicle Recovery – the CMA Safety-Net](#)

Our ‘monitoring’ protects the police from complaints and, where for example, an insured does not receive insurer settlement (possibly the loss circumstances do not provide cover), ensures they are not prejudiced by inadvertent, incorrect removal from the PNC LoS register.

Conversely, where recovery is made and the removal; from the LoS register appropriate, we can also ensure the victim is notified promptly (often before the police have done so) and potentially ensure they are reunited with their vehicle promptly, able to withdraw their claim or ensure it progresses with less likelihood of delay.

[How Six-Week Weeding Operates \(Day-by-Day\)](#)

The act and resultant effect of 6-week (42 day) weeding is as follows:

Time	Action	Notes
Day 1	A vehicle theft allegation is made	The victim is issued a crime number.
	A LoS marker is placed against the VRM on the PNC LoS register	The PNC manual and 11/2024 NPCC circular advise: <i>‘the report should be confirmed within 48 hours’</i>
		<i>If the report is confirmed, the LoS notification is sent to the DVLA who record a ‘stolen’ marker against the VRM.</i>

This LoS marker will remain in place on the PNC until the vehicle is found or it is weeded at 6 years – whichever comes first.

Day 3	The LoS report should be confirmed by now (within 48 hours) BUT if this has NOT occurred	The LoS status is recorded on the PNC, but the DVLA are unaware of the stolen status because the PNC LoS entry has NOT been ‘confirmed’
Day 14	PNC Bureau issues an ‘alert’ to the recording constabulary: ‘The LoS report has not been ‘confirmed’	The LoS status has still not reached the DVLA. Unaware of the ‘stolen’ report the DVLA will act upon the approach and not notify law enforcement of the activity. The LoS status remains recorded on PNC
Day 42	PNC Bureau issues another alert: ‘The LoS report has not been ‘confirmed, the LoS marker against the VRM will be removed	By now, the DVLA has been oblivious to the stolen status of the VRM for 6 weeks . Enquiries of the VRM requests for documentation, will have been handled in the ordinary course of business
Day 43	The LoS marker is weeded from PNC as the crime was not ‘confirmed’.	The VRM is no longer recorded LoS on the PNC The LoS marker having been removed, if checked on PNC, the VRM will appear as though the vehicle has been RECOVERED The constabulary’s recovery rate improves (inappropriately) i.e. may artificially inflate clearance/recovery indicators depending on how local MI counts weeded markers. Vehicle Provenance Companies, business providing pre-purchase vehicle checks, will return ‘Vehicle NOT recorded stolen’*

In brief:

- a) If not confirmed **within 6 weeks (first 42 days)**:

A vehicle reported stolen, yet unrecovered, will return “clear” at the DVLA

- b) If not confirmed **after 6 weeks (on day 43 forward)**:

A vehicle reported stolen, yet unrecovered, will return “clear” on PNC, ANPR, provenance checks, and DVLA systems

To my knowledge, Claims Management & Adjusting Ltd (CMA) are the only organisation in the UK that monitors the on/off LoS activity on the PNC, particularly at day 43 thereby providing a safety-net for the insured/victim, insurers & the police

UK Constabularies & The PNC

The UK has 43 police constabularies but for the purpose of recording LoS markers, this number increases. By way of examples:

- Scotland is now the subject of a single police constabulary; Police Scotland (Scottish Gaelic: Poileas Alba). Officially the Police Service of Scotland, formed in 2013, LoS markers are still presented by, or the DVLA continues to record these markers under pre-reform/merge, constabularies of Dumfries and Galloway, Fife etc.
- There are also specialist units such as NaVCIS* and the NCA that submit LoS markers to the PNC that are received by the DVLA.

*Who appear to submit ‘loss’ notifications as opposed to ‘stolen’; NaVCIS are funded by the Finance & Leasing Association (FLA) i.e. their vehicles/VRMs are more likely to be taken by FRAUD than by THEFT.

The DVLA

The DVLA records ‘stolen’ notifications from multiple sources¹.

As described above, the DVLA only receives **confirmed** records.

Assessment of Statistical Distortion Risk

A LoS marker placed to the PNC and confirmed transfers to the DVLA as a matter of routine.

- Why would there be a difference in the number of VRMs a constabulary records as LoS on the PNC and the number of ‘stolen’ records received by the DVLA?

Gwent Police

The following may apply to other constabularies. However, Gwent has been highlighted as:

- Gwent & weeding has more commonly come to our attention
- **An FoIA and Home Office figures were noted indicating the constabulary’s theft numbers were significantly higher than advised to the DVLA**
- The service claimed to have addressed the issue
- The constabulary appears to accept that weeding was an unnecessary process

Case Study: Gwent Police Data Discrepancy

Why would the number of LoS reports held by the Home Office and Gwent police differ significantly from the LoS records placed with and held by the DVLA?

The figures giving rise to our concerns are as follows and relate to VEHICLES (as opposed to just cars) in 2024:

- 375 DVLA
- 1,040 Gwent Police
- 1,032 Home Office*

¹ <https://carcrime.uk/2023-2024-constabulary-dvla-los/>

*This figure has not been used for comparison as the Home Office data is for financial, as opposed to calendar years. However, the Home Office data suggests over 1,000 vehicle thefts are recorded by Gwent each year – why are the DVLA only aware of **375**, what has become of the other **665** stolen notifications?

The source of the information can be found at:

Attachment 4. Gwent Police Comparison Statistics Source

Assessment of likely causation: is weeding the primary driver?

There are other reasons why a constabulary's LoS reports placed to the PNC may not reach the DVLA. However, for the number of vehicles involved, these appear implausible:

- **Prompt Recovery?**

The transfer of PNC LOS records is not 'live', i.e., it is not in real-time. Instead, the stolen data transfers are made at a given time(s) during a day. If, for example, the transfer occurs at 8 am each day, the following continuity would not see a LoS notification to the police pass to the DVLA:

- 6 am, a vehicle is reported stolen and added to the PNC LoS register
- 7 am, the vehicle is located and removed from the PNC LoS register
- 8 am, the LoS records transfer to the DVLA but will not include the above vehicle as, whilst it has been the subject of a theft allegation, it was added to and removed from the PNC LoS register before the upload.

If this were to explain the substantial anomaly, the constabulary would have an exceptional and astoundingly prompt recovery rate!

- **Foreign Registered?**

If a vehicle, on a non-UK VRM was stolen, the police may be able to create a record on PNC for the overseas plate – but would this transfer to the DVLA?

- **Unregistered Vehicle**

Not all vehicles are registered with the DVLA, for example, some off-road quad bikes, whilst a 'vehicle' (and likely have a VIN) are not assigned a VRM.

Gwent 2025 Data

The Gwent police FoIA disclosure, in response to [FoI request 2025/28985](#) also provided stolen vehicle information relating to the first 9 months of 2025.

A request of the DVLA for the stolen vehicle notifications they received was made by us for the first 8 months of 2025. The figures are as follows:

Source	Stolen Vehicles	Stolen Vehicle per Month
Gwent police	727 in 1st 9** months	81
The DVLA	263 in 1st 8** months	33

*'vehicle' data, not just cars, which for 2023 & 2024, [can be found here](#).

The difference in time period results from FoI 2025/28985 not being made by the author of this page, and was located when researching **vehicle 'theft' statistics.

727 theft allegations in 9 months equate to about **646** reports in the 1st 8 months - it appears the DVLA received about **383** (646 - 263) fewer 'stolen' notifications from Gwent police than were recorded by the constabulary in the first 8 months of 2025.

- Why is there such a substantial difference?
- Why does the DVLA appear unaware of 100's of vehicles reported stolen to Gwent police?
- What does this say about the true size of the UK's vehicle theft problem?

Policy Question: Is Automated Weeding Necessary?

In 2024, Gwent advised having put in place a process that would cause weeding to cease. However:

1. Gwent do **not routinely monitor** the process
2. We can evidence a **November 2025** example of weeding i.e. the process is still occurring
3. Gwent have declined to disclose the PNC 'alerts' they receive of potential weeding, this despite:
 - Having previously done so
 - **There should be no data/** alerts to disclose!

This request for further information about 'UNconfirmed PNC LoS Markers For VRMs², and the responses, can be found at:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Attachment 5. | 24/11/2025 FoIA Request of Gwent for Weeding Statistics |
| Attachment 6. | Gwent Response |
| Attachment 7. | 23/12/2025 to Gwent Police – Request Internal Review |
| Attachment 8. | 23/12/2025 to Gwent Police – the Irony of Information to Suppress |

If Gwent police can 'override' the process by immediately CONFIRMING the LoS report (albeit they do not) it follows that the process is unnecessary.

However, should Gwent have looked to their own internal, manual conduct to address the issue?

This issue appears to require attention at source; for the need to CONFIRM to be removed.

Rather than a Heath-Robinson, manual (and thereby fallible) quick fix, the issue needs to be addressed at a single point.

Assessment of Likely Causation

If the difference in LoS notifications received by Gwent police and conveyed to the DVLA results from a failure to CONFIRM PNC LoS notification at the point of report, hundreds of VRMs are not recorded as LoS on PNC or at the DVLA.

² https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/unconfirmed_pnc_los_markers_for

Regarding the 2024 data (above), this having been obtained in 2025, it appears 100's of VRMs are affected; notified to Gwent police as 'stolen', recorded as such on their constabulary crime recording database/software but no longer on PNC or at the DVLA.

It appears the recent (11/2025) weeded VRM example – above – is a VRM that was not confirmed for 6 weeks and in respect of which Gwent would not have acted unless we had alerted to the 'recovery' (removal from PNC LoS register) activity

Recommended Immediate Actions

If weeding has caused 100's of VRMs to 'fall off' the PNC LoS register and not to be recorded at the DVLA it appears:

- A. An audit needs to be undertaken to establish to which and how many vehicles this applies
- B. Enquiries to be undertaken of any activity at
 - a. the DVLA and
 - b. Vehicle Provenance companies between the date of LoS and now
- C. Post LoS date keepers to be contacted
- D. The PNC LoS markers to be reinstated where there is no post LoS date keeper change

Preliminary National Indicators of Weeding Impact

This is difficult to determine because we do not receive every theft notification and the UK's LoS data is poor. There are several caveats to consider – [read more here](#).

However, if the Home Office data is used to determine PNC notifications in a (financial) year and compared with the DVLA LoS 'receipts' for a (calendar) year, which is far from ideal, an indication can be determined. The following DVLA VEHICLE data has been reviewed:

- PSNI & Scottish constabularies have been excluded. Whilst the DVLA disclosure includes these constabularies, the Home Office (H.O.) data does not, it relates to England & Wales.
- The DVLA's 'not known' constabulary category has been removed – the DVLA hold 1,415 such records for 2024.
- The NCA (1 record) and NaVCIS (651 records) data have been removed – the H.O. Data does not include reference to these organisations.

A total of 44 constabularies data was reviewed; their Home Office records compared to the number of submissions the DVLA received from each in 2024.

The time periods used by each does not make for straightforward comparison however, the figures can be found here:

2024 LoS Submissions - Car Crime U.K.

In 2024, the DVLA received **95,589** 'stolen' vehicle notifications.

The Home Office statistics for the financial years, 2022/23, 2023/24 & 2024/25 convey an average of **126,810** vehicle theft reports.

DVLA totals are **32.66%** lower than the Home Office totals (DVLA-denominator framing) i.e., Home Office totals are ~24.6% higher than DVLA totals.

The data for each constabulary was then considered to determine whether the 1/3rd difference was common – which could suggest a shared, consistent or plausible explanation for the anomaly. However, the variation, the difference between Home Office data and that supplied to the DVLA provided widely differing figures:

- Warwickshire police was the only constabulary whose LoS notifications to the DVLA exceeded those recorded by the Home Office.

Those with a discrepancy that exceeded 100% were:

	DVLA 2024	H.O. average	difference	% difference
Merseyside Police	1,018	2,490	1,472	144.56%
Gwent Police	375	1,051	676	180.27%
Cleveland Police	365	1,074	709	194.34%
North Wales Police	141	418	277	196.69%
City of London Police	11	35	24	218.18%
British Transport Police	130	528	398	305.90%

Further reading:

The information, together with source data can also be found at:

[Vehicle Taking Statistics Variation](#)

[2024 LoS submissions – DVLA & Home Office](#)

[Gwent Police Weeding Timeline](#)

‘Weeding’
Attachments

Attachment 1. Methodology: Measuring the Extent of Weeding

Purpose

This appendix explains how differences between police-recorded vehicle theft figures and DVLA stolen-vehicle notifications are calculated, including the exact formulas used, to avoid ambiguity or misinterpretation of percentages.

Data sources

- Police / Home Office recorded vehicle theft figures
Annual totals derived from police-recorded crime data (financial-year basis).
- DVLA stolen-vehicle notifications
Annual totals of vehicles notified to DVLA as stolen (calendar-year basis).

Important note on periods:

Police/Home Office figures are typically reported on a **financial-year** basis, while DVLA figures are reported on a **calendar-year** basis. This mismatch is acknowledged and does not, by itself, explain the scale of the discrepancies observed.

Definitions

- HO = Home Office / police-recorded vehicle theft total
- DVLA = DVLA stolen-vehicle notification total
- Difference (Δ) = HO - DVLA

Formulas used

1. Absolute numerical difference

This measures the raw gap between the two datasets:

$$\Delta = \text{HO} - \text{DVLA}$$

2. Percentage difference (DVLA-denominator)

This expresses **how much lower the DVLA figure is relative to DVLA's own total:**

$$\text{Percentage difference (DVLA-based)} = (\text{HO} - \text{DVLA}) / \text{DVLA} \times 100$$

This figure answers the question:

“By what percentage is the Home Office figure higher than the DVLA figure, relative to DVLA's count?”

3. Percentage difference (HO-denominator) – provided for clarity

This expresses **the proportion of police-recorded thefts not reflected in DVLA data:**

$$\text{Percentage difference (HO-based)} = (\text{HO} - \text{DVLA}) / \text{HO} \times 100$$

This figure answers the question:

“What proportion of police-recorded thefts do not appear in DVLA stolen-vehicle notifications?”

Example (illustrative)

If:

- HO = 126,810
- DVLA = 95,589

Then:

- $\Delta = 31,221$
- DVLA-based difference = 32.66%
- HO-based difference = 24.62%

Interpretation

- DVLA-based percentages are used in this report when describing how much lower DVLA totals are compared with police totals.
- HO-based percentages are provided where clarity is required on the proportion of police-recorded thefts not reflected in DVLA records.
- Both are mathematically correct; the denominator must be stated explicitly.

Attachment 2. Contextual Evidence / Background Corroboration

03/11/2024 ~ It's been 6 weeks. I got A dress for the wedding!³

Calling on the remaining police constabularies to **ADDRESS 6 -week WEEDING** - of PNC LoS records.

If one constabulary can attend to this problematic process, so can yours. Do not delay, act now!

Gwent Police, to my knowledge, is the first police service to discontinue the automatic WEEDING of stolen markers from vehicle registration marks (VRMs) if they are not confirmed after six weeks.

This outdated process, which I have long regarded as unnecessary and unjustifiable, raised significant concerns over the past months. While some constabularies defend its value, others neglect it altogether, perhaps finding inaction more convenient.

Following my recent submission regarding a specific VRM, Gwent Police recognized the flaws in this system and took action. Going forward, they will CONFIRM a report at the point of notification. This change eliminates unconfirmed reports, ensuring Gwent Police receives no alerts requiring attention.

Given this is the second such Gwent matter I had reported within weeks, it appears my notifications have been taken seriously and promptly resolved.

However, how many stolen vehicles in Gwent were removed from the LoS (Lost or Stolen) register before this new procedure was implemented, and were these ever reinstated?

Previously, Gwent's recovery figures might have conveyed an inflated sense of success, suggesting more recoveries than actually occurred. This discrepancy is only one aspect; a stolen vehicle returning a "not stolen" status poses significant risks, including:

- **Criminals can offload vehicles** without needing to alter their identity.
- **Vehicle provenance (VP) companies** may unknowingly report a vehicle is NOT recorded stolen, potentially leading to liability claims and reputational harm.
- **Law enforcement investigations** may be compromised if the PNC search results in a "not stolen" response.
- **The likelihood of recovery** for the victim or insurer decreases drastically, is possibly nil.

While constabularies may regularly receive updates on unconfirmed records, allowing them to address these issues:

- The presence of frequent alerts underscores the recurring nature of the problem.
- There is uncertainty about how promptly each alert is addressed.
- Police personnel are burdened with an avoidable administrative task.

One constabulary reported receiving weeding notifications spanning over 100 pages amongst which were the 'about to be' or 'have been' weeded LoS markers. Presumably these oversights arise

³ [LinkedIn article](#)

due to overextended staff, limited resources, insufficient awareness or a lacklustre approach to the crime?

For Gwent, at least, this procedural change will reduce administrative tasks, potentially freeing up resources. Even if the immediate impact seems minor, the cumulative benefits could be considerable.

However, not all constabularies are as proactive in adopting such changes. One constabulary referred me to the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), apparently unaware that an inquiry had already been made to [Jennifer Sims](#). Assuming the NPCC is evaluating the matter, their response time appears unacceptably slow or maybe you can lead a horse to water but ...

Perhaps progress will come 'one constabulary at a time'.

In time, there may even be an opportunity to end the six-year weeding policy that automatically purges stolen markers, seemingly to align with the disposal timelines for constabulary crime records. Given the value of vehicles and the existence of 'classics', possibly this too needs to be revisited?

30/11/2024 ~ PNC LoS Report Weeding⁴

‘Weeding’; the archaic process of automatically removing a Police National Computer (PNC) Lost or Stolen (LoS) marker against a vehicle registration mark (VRM) because someone failed to ‘confirm’ the stolen allegation within 6 weeks.

How many stolen vehicles have fallen foul of this process; are stolen but no longer recorded as such?

Gwent Constabulary appears to be the first to have heeded our concerns and ended the process (10/2024). [Read more here](#).

Following our multiple issues with **Surrey police**, they too threw in the towel writing

‘In relation to the policy concerning the confirming of Lost/Stolen vehicle reports on PNC, effective from 13th November, Surrey Police control rooms confirm lost/stolen vehicle reports at point of entry’.

12/2024, **Merseyside police** explained:

*A LoS report will be added to the PNC after a report of theft of the vehicle has been received. There is guidance in the Manual as to when a LoS report should be added. The PNC Manual provides that a LoS report should be confirmed **within 48 hours** of the time of the theft.*

An unconfirmed LoS report will be deleted after 6 weeks if not confirmed. There is a process to ensure that an unconfirmed LoS report is brought to the attention of the inputting Force.

The above effectively confirms there is a potential problem which, to address, involves further action. But if constabulary staff acted appropriately and ‘confirmed’ reports within 48 hours, a ‘process’ would not be required to warn of imminent, or actual, automatic deletion. One constabulary described how they took a while to address the weeded items – there were so many!

How many vehicles, ‘reported’ stolen, are no longer ‘recorded’ stolen because of this archaic, unnecessary system?

How many people are driving stolen vehicles without knowing this?

ANPR and PNC searches of such VRMs will return ‘clear’ (not stolen) because the stolen marker was weeded and never reinstated?

Vehicle Provenance companies providing vehicle data/history checks will return ‘not stolen’
Police recovery rates will be skewed; convey a higher than actual recovery rate

⁴ <https://carcrime.uk/pnc-los-report-weeding/>

18/11/2025 ~ LoS Vehicles and the Day 43 Dilemma

Technical Director of Motor @ Questgates

November 18, 2025

Why a quiet, outdated process is undermining theft investigations — and why it needs fixing **nationally**, now.

Most people assume that when you report a vehicle stolen, the alert stays on police systems until the car is found. **This is not necessarily the case.** Accordingly, **Claims Management & Adjusting Ltd** (CMA), part of the **QuestGates** Group, re-check a VRM (Vehicle Registration Mark) 43 days after the PNC (Police National Computer) LoS (Lost or Stolen) marker is registered - insurers, insurers and the police benefit from **the CMA Safet Net**.

If a LoS record is not **confirmed** by the police within six weeks, it is **automatically** deleted on **Day 43**. This means:

- The vehicle no longer appears as stolen on PNC
- ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras will not alert
- Officers enquiring on the VRM will be advised 'NOT recorded LoS
- The DVLA receives **no notification**. Requests for V5Cs or other documents continue as if nothing is wrong.
- Provenance checks report “Not Stolen”
- The record may never appear within national statistics - but may improve the recovery rate!
- Constabularies claiming 'lack of resources' are required to administer lengthy notifications warning of potential deletion.

This outdated process **only benefits criminals**; victims or insurers are less likely to be reunited with their vehicle, the police lose opportunities.

Some constabularies already confirm LoS reports immediately - **proving the 43-day mechanism is unnecessary** and **the NPCC appear to agree**. If the police can 'confirm' at notification, this entire deletion process serves no purpose. It simply hides stolen vehicles!

Yet at CMA, despite tirelessly requesting the procedure be addressed, we continue to see theft markers silently fall off the system.

The question is no longer whether the system is failing. It is why it has not yet been corrected, and how many stolen vehicles are slipping through the gaps as a result.

It's time to close the Day-43 loophole.

Prompting this article ... a recidivist constabulary's Officer, responsible for their 2024 'fix', wrote in respect of another 'recovery' (11/2025) occurring at or about the 43rd day, wrote:

- *'We no longer use the unconfirmed as you are aware and LOS are placed on PNC confirmed from the offset'*

However, their head of information services subsequently advised:

- *Given the timeframe between the PNC update on [redacted], this would indicate that the report was **Unconfirmed** by the FCR Operator at the material time.*
 - *Unconfirmed LOS reports are **automatically weeded from PNC after 6 weeks***
-

Further reading:

- Vehicles – REPORTED NOT RECORDED ‘stolen’
- ‘Weeded’ Vehicle Theft Reports
- PNC LoS Report Weeding
- Scrap ‘six-week weeding’ of stolen vehicle VRMs

Attachment 3. Vehicle Recovery – the CMA Safety-Net

CMA does not simply gather information for insurers to enable them to make an informed decision about a vehicle theft claim; we actively seek out data to assist everyone – the insured, our insurer client, ourselves and even the police! For example, we regularly review the stolen status of a vehicle in the hope it will have been found, removed from the PNC (police national computer) as ‘LoS’ (lost or stolen) and can be reunited with its owner, ideally undamaged, thereby bringing an end to their inconvenience, distress and financial hardship.

This monitoring service frequently means we are the first to inform a victim their vehicle has been found; oddly, providing the update before the police do.

However, a service spin-off is the provision of a ‘safety net’ for under-resourced constabularies, many of which lack an understating of vehicle crime and processes. In some instances, LoS markers fall off PNC inappropriately, they are weeded incorrectly. We are able to alert the police to the situation promptly enabling them to act before any harm occurs.

It remains disappointing that notifying the police of a change in the LoS status must often come from the insured. Due to an archaic ‘them and us’ approach to exchanging information, we are required to notify the insured and ask them to raise the issue with the constabulary. Effectively, the police policy invites criticism of them by disclosing a failing that could otherwise be addressed promptly, and quietly thereby benefitting all.

It is also odd that, more often, we at CMA, as opposed to the police, are notifying victims of crime (insureds) that their stolen vehicles have been found; removed from the PNC LoS register.

Usually, the removal from the register means the vehicle has been located, commonly taken to a secure storage facility, a ‘pound’, incurring a fee of at least £150. An officer will update the PNC removing the ‘LoS’ marker and advises the victim of events unless there is a reason not to. Storage charges may start to arise of at least £20/day.

However, more commonly, we find the police have not notified the victim promptly, and it is we who convey the news which is often received by victims with some scepticism – why are adjusters telling us, as opposed to the constabulary?

If we have told you the VRM (vehicle registration mark) is no longer recorded as stolen, please [read more here](#). Before advising you, we will have checked a public-facing register to corroborate our understanding.

Unfortunately, despite the PNC holding a record of the keeper (likely the insured), details of the insurer concerned and there having been LoS activity associated with the VRM the police are seldom willing to provide information to insurers or their representatives. Accordingly, it is necessary for the victim to approach the constabulary and ascertain:

- where the vehicle is
- its condition
- whether it has been ‘released’ i.e. if the police are finished with it and collection can be arranged. Generally, ‘release’ follows the police having photographed, examined (for fingerprints) and searched the vehicle.

We suggest you also record details of the constabulary staff you speak with:

- their name & number

- phone number
- email address

Having established the above, you should liaise with your insurers; will they arrange recovery and removal to a less expensive storage facility? In some instances, vehicles are located without damage and the victim will look to collect them. Be mindful of the following:

- Storage charges can accrue daily
- Do you need to CAREFULLY search the vehicle – be mindful of sharp objects and contraband.
- If you have been reunited with the undamaged vehicle and received no payout, you may still need to declare the theft to an insurer; commonly you are asked whether you have been the victim of a theft and/or made a claim.

Related articles:

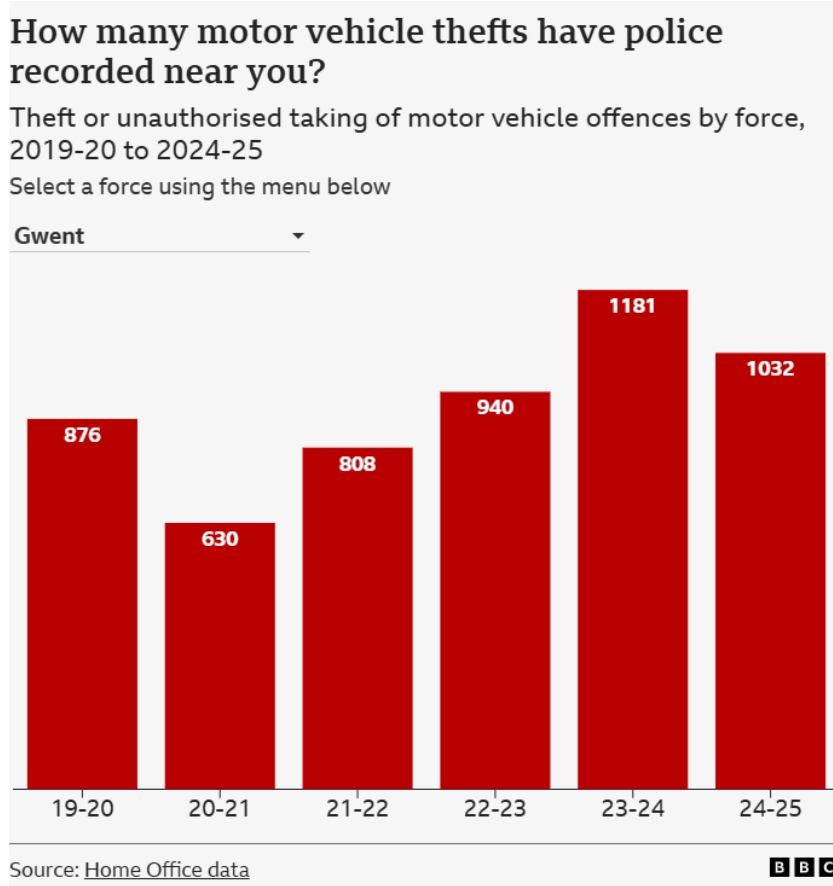
- 2/05/2024 – [3 ongoing constabulary issues ... no change!](#)
- 25/08/2023 – [The problem continues.](#)
- My Vehicle is NOT recorded Stolen – according to CMA – [read more here](#)
- The police say CMA are wrong, the vehicle is recorded stolen – [read more here](#)
- Wrongly ‘Weeded’ Vehicle Theft Reports – [read more here](#)
- Removed from the PNC LoS register in error – [read more here](#)
- 27/11/2023 Surrey Police reminder to staff re ‘weeding’ / responsibilities – [read more here](#)

Attachment 4. Gwent Police Comparison Statistics Source

Gwent Police⁵:

Recorded Date	Number of Theft of a Motor Vehicle Offences
2022	867
2023	1007
2024	1040
01/01/2025 - 30/09/2025	727
Total	3641

BBC / Home Office⁶



DVLA data is available for download @ <https://carcrime.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/DVLA-FoIA12030-2024-GWENT.xlsx>

⁵ https://www.gwent.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/gwent/disclosure-2025/10---october/foi_request_2025-28985.pdf

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce3x3kzk5y3o>

Attachment 5. 24/11/2025 FoIA Request of Gwent for Weeding Statistics

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/unconfirmed_pnc_los_markers_for

24 November 2025

Dear Gwent Police,

I ask to be provided

1. The Daily Activity Files (automatically generated by PNC) for Lost/Stolen reports since 01/09/2025 to the present date.

I am seeking the notifications of 'unconfirmed markers' insofar as they apply to Vehicle Registration Marks (VRMs).

I wish to be able to understand which records relate to a notification of a potential deletion, the periods/intervals at which notifications are received and to receive copies of the records which advise of a pending deletion at 6 weeks.

2. Additionally, with regard to the above records, where they indicate a deletion or pending deletion due to 6-week weeding, please advise the date the record(s) were confirmed.

3. Regarding the creation of a PNC LoS record by an FCR operator, what checks are in place to ensure these are CONFIRMED at creation and what log is maintained to identify the FCR operator creating the record and confirming (or not) the record i.e. what annotations/event log is held – an anonymised example would be helpful.

4. Lastly, where a VRM is not confirmed immediately, please advise the enquiries undertaken of a LoS VRM for the period between the date of theft allegation to the date of confirmation on PNC.

I am seeking no personal information

Attachment 6. 17/12/2025 Gwent Response

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 2025/29098

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

1. The Daily Activity Files (automatically generated by PNC) for Lost/Stolen reports since 01/09/2025 to the present date.

I am seeking the notifications of 'unconfirmed markers' insofar as they apply to Vehicle Registration Marks (VRMs).

I wish to be able to understand which records relate to a notification of a potential deletion, the periods/intervals at which notifications are received and to receive copies of the records which advise of a pending deletion at 6 weeks.

2. Additionally, with regard to the above records, where they indicate a deletion or pending deletion due to 6-week weeding, please advise the date the record(s) were confirmed.

3. Regarding the creation of a PNC LoS record by an FCR operator, what checks are in place to ensure these are CONFIRMED at creation and what log is maintained to identify the FCR operator creating the record and confirming (or not) the record i.e. what annotations/event log is held – an anonymised example would be helpful.

4. Lastly, where a VRM is not confirmed immediately, please advise the enquiries undertaken of a LoS VRM for the period between the date of theft allegation to the date of confirmation on PNC.

RESPONSE

The exemption applicable to the information you have requested for this question can be found at Section 31(1)(a)(b) - 'Law Enforcement', of the Freedom of information Act 2000, and this refusal notice is issued under Section 17(5).

S31 Law Enforcement is a qualified, and prejudice-based exemption. Therefore, the harm should be articulated, and arguments given as to the public interest test.

Harm

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Modern-day policing is intelligence led and in this particular subject area the intelligence changes on a day-by-day basis.

Disclosure of the requested information would reveal current intelligence which has the potential to seriously undermine effective law enforcement. This information is provided to Police Forces only and is for a Policing purpose only. Disclosure of Police tactics and capabilities would assist offenders when planning criminal activity.

Disclosure of this information which also includes VRMs (Vehicle Registration Marks) could be of intelligence value to a person or persons with criminal or malicious intent. Full disclosure could provide and enable targeted malicious actions, be that some form of attack on an operational unit or avoiding that unit for example where strengths and weakness may be perceived (whether incorrectly or not).

In practice, all of this information is not realistically accessible to a member of the public and is therefore not in the public domain. Also included in the document is third party data, e.g. names of subjects of intelligence and investigations and/or addresses of victims of crime.

Providing the requested information provides opportunities for criminality to benefit, or for risks to be extended to members of the public.

Additionally, law enforcement tactics and operational capability would be compromised with the disclosure of the details requested, as those who wish to commit criminal acts will be more aware of information that assist with preventing and detecting crime.

Such a disclosure would allow those with criminal intent the ability to build up a mosaic picture of force capabilities and resources and use this information to undermine law enforcement. This places the community at increased unnecessary risk of harm and impacts on police resources if additional resources and tactics need to be put in place to counter any harm caused by an adverse FOIA disclosure.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure – s31 – There is a legitimate public interest in the public being satisfied that the police force has up to date records regarding stolen vehicles.

Factors favouring non-disclosure – s31 – The Police Service has a duty to deliver effective law enforcement ensuring that the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension or prosecution of offenders and administration of justice is carried out appropriately.

Disclosing information that would allow the identifications, may reveal what resources are available and this information could enable police strength to be determined and circumvented by those intent on committing crime. The release of this information could therefore provide a tactical advantage to offenders which would negatively impact on public safety and undermine the policing purpose.

Disclosing the details and record information regarding Police intelligence and VRMs would provide sufficient information to those involved in criminal activity. This could result in them taking steps to evade detection and to destroy evidence if they believe that their movements are being monitored.

Balance Test

It is not in the public interest for law enforcement tactics and operational capability to be compromised with the disclosure of Police intelligence and VRMs of stolen vehicles, as those who wish to commit criminal acts will be more aware of data and records in operation to assist with preventing and detecting crime.

Such a disclosure that would allow those with criminal intent the ability to build up a mosaic picture of force capabilities which could be used to undermine law enforcement. This would not be in the public interest.

Disclosure is also not in the public interest as it places the community at increased unnecessary risk of harm and impacts on police resources. This is especially the case if additional tactics/resources need to be put in place to counter harm caused by an adverse FOIA request regarding Police intelligence and VRMs.

Section 40(2) Personal Information

The exemption applicable to the information you have requested for this question can be found at Section 40(2) Personal Information, of the Act and this refusal notice is issued under Section 17.

Gwent Police is withholding the information you have requested on the basis that the exemption contained in s 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act applies in that the information you have requested is personal data of third parties and the disclosure of the data would breach one of the principles contained in the Data Protection Act. The relevant principle is the first principle which states that:

Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and in particular shall not be processed unless –

(a) at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is met and

(b) in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 is met

It is only necessary to consider (a) in respect of the information requested. The relevant condition in Schedule 2 is condition 6 which states that:

"The processing is necessary for the purposes of legitimate interests pursued by the data controller or by the third party or parties to whom the data are disclosed, except where the processing is unwarranted in any particular case by reason of prejudice to the rights and freedoms or legitimate interests of the data subject"

Please note, every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete.

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

Attachment 7. 23/12/2025 to Gwent Police – Request Internal Review.

Request for Internal Review – FOIA 2025/29098

I write to request an internal review of Gwent Police’s refusal of my Freedom of Information Act request (reference 2025/29098) concerning PNC Daily Activity Files and notifications relating to unconfirmed Lost or Stolen (LoS) vehicle markers.

1. Failure to Properly Engage Section 31 FOIA

Gwent Police relies upon section 31(1)(a)(b) (Law Enforcement) to refuse disclosure. While this is a qualified exemption, the refusal fails to demonstrate specific, real and significant prejudice as required by settled ICO and Tribunal authority.

The response relies on generic and speculative assertions about policing tactics, intelligence and offender awareness. No explanation is given as to how disclosure of historical administrative alerts regarding unconfirmed PNC LoS records would realistically prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

The information sought concerns:

- Automated PNC notifications of pending deletion due to non-confirmation
- Confirmation timestamps
- Process controls applied by FCR operators
- Administrative actions taken after a theft allegation has already been recorded

This is process and governance information, not operational intelligence. It does not disclose live investigations, surveillance techniques, covert capabilities, or tactical deployment.

The ICO has consistently held that “prejudice must be more than trivial or hypothetical” and that authorities must demonstrate a causal link between disclosure and the alleged harm. That threshold has not been met here.

2. Prior Disclosure and Inconsistent Application of Exemptions

In 2024, Gwent Police disclosed materially similar information in tabular form relating to unconfirmed LoS markers without citing section 31 or section 40, and without any identifiable harm arising from that disclosure. That disclosure is publicly available:
<https://carcrime.uk/wp-content/uploads/2...>

The refusal notice does not explain:

- What has changed since that disclosure
- What specific harm arose from it
- Why information previously deemed suitable for release is now said to endanger law enforcement

The ICO places significant weight on consistency and precedent. Where information has previously been disclosed, public authorities are expected to clearly justify any departure from earlier decisions. No such justification is provided.

For the sake of clarity, the disclosure I am seeking is in the format previously supplied, though I ask that the columns/entries be clearly explained.

3. Misapplication of the “Mosaic Effect” Argument

The refusal repeatedly invokes the “mosaic” argument, suggesting disclosure could be combined with other information to infer police capabilities.

This argument is:

- Asserted in the abstract
- Unsupported by evidence
- Not tailored to the specific information requested

The ICO has repeatedly cautioned against over-reliance on the mosaic theory where it is used to defeat transparency by default, particularly where the information concerns administrative compliance rather than operational deployment.

No explanation is provided as to how anonymised, redacted, or aggregated data concerning confirmation delays and automated deletion alerts would meaningfully enable offenders to circumvent policing.

4. Section 40 Personal Data – Failure to Consider Redaction

Section 40(2) is cited despite the fact that:

- I have not requested personal data
- VRMs are not personal data per se
- The previous disclosure was made using redaction without difficulty

The ICO's guidance is clear that section 40 does not justify withholding entire datasets where redaction or anonymisation would address privacy concerns.

The refusal does not demonstrate that:

- Redaction was considered
- Partial disclosure was assessed
- Aggregated or example records were explored

This represents a failure to comply with section 1(1)(b) FOIA and the duty to provide advice and assistance under section 16.

What personal data is it believed I am requesting?

5. Public Interest Test – Inadequate and Unbalanced

While the response acknowledges a public interest in accurate stolen-vehicle records, this is not meaningfully weighed.

There is a strong and compelling public interest in:

- Ensuring stolen vehicle records are not prematurely deleted
- Understanding whether previously identified “weeding” failures persist
- Accountability in the operation of the PNC
- Confidence in police handling of vehicle crime reports
- Preventing harm to innocent purchasers and insurers arising from erroneous record deletion

The suggestion that disclosure would increase crime or endanger the public is unsupported and disproportionate when weighed against the systemic risks posed by undisclosed failures in national vehicle crime recording.

6. Context of Previous ICO Findings on Vexatiousness

I also note that Gwent Police previously characterised related requests as vexatious, a position rejected by the ICO.

While vexatiousness is not cited in this refusal, the pattern of resistance to disclosure on this subject is relevant context when assessing whether exemptions are being applied defensively rather than lawfully.

Furthermore, the vexatious argument was supported by exaggeration, misrepresentation, identified by the ICO with whom Gwent police failed to engage:

<https://carcrime.uk/wp-content/uploads/2...>

7. Remedy Sought

I request that the internal review:

- Reconsiders the engagement and application of section 31
- Properly reassesses section 40 with a view to redaction or anonymisation
- Takes into account prior disclosure and absence of harm
- Considers partial or staged disclosure where appropriate
- Provides a reasoned, evidence-based public interest assessment

Should the refusal be upheld, I request a clear and specific explanation addressing each of the points above, suitable for onward consideration by the Information Commissioner.

I look forward to receiving the outcome of the internal review.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Swift

Attachment 8. 23/12/2025 to Gwent Police – the Irony of Information to Suppress

Implication of the Refusal: Continued Existence of Unconfirmed Records

A further and important issue arises from the very fact that exemptions have been applied at all.

Gwent Police previously stated that the issue of PNC “weeding” of LoS records had been addressed, and that as of 14/10/2024, following advice to staff 09/10/2024, the force’s process was that every LoS report would be confirmed immediately upon creation.

If that process were operating as described, there would be no unconfirmed records, no pending six-week deletion alerts, and therefore no responsive information to disclose. In those circumstances, the correct response to my request would have been that the information is 'not held'.

The refusal to disclose, instead of confirming non-existence, strongly suggests that unconfirmed records and weeding alerts continue to exist. The application of exemptions therefore, appears to amount to an implicit acknowledgement that the previously asserted “fix” has not been fully effective.

There is an irony here which is difficult to ignore: the refusal appears to be driven not by the sensitivity of the information, but by the fact that its disclosure would demonstrate that the underlying problem persists. This goes directly to the public interest. If the remedial process had succeeded, there would be nothing to withhold.

The ICO has repeatedly held that exemptions must not be used to shield public authorities from embarrassment or to obscure evidence of administrative failure. Where the existence of information itself contradicts earlier assurances, transparency is essential to maintain public confidence.

This consideration has not been addressed at all in the refusal notice and should form part of the internal review.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Swift