



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 2024/27991

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

At, or about, the beginning of November 2024, the NPCC issued a communication to constabularies about weeding PNC LoS records.

The information I am seeking is:

1. Your contact with the NPCC about weeding, since 01/01/2024, to the date of the NPCC communication
1. A copy of the communication issued by the NPCC (at or about the beginning of 11/2024)
1. The subsequent exchanges between your constabulary and the NPCC about the communication; feedback, clarification etc.

The action your constabulary has taken regarding weeding, following the NPCC communication

INITIAL RESPONSE

At, or about, the beginning of November 2024, the NPCC issued a communication to constabularies about weeding PNC LoS records.

The information I am seeking is:

1. Your contact with the NPCC about weeding, since 01/01/2024, to the date of the NPCC communication



**Gwent Police received the NPCC communication entitled:
Vehicle Crime: Recording of All Stolen Vehicle Reports via the Police National Computer.**

The circular was dated 07/11/2024 and was forwarded to the Information Services Dept (Firearms Licensing Unit) on 11/11/2024.

There has been no further contact directly with the NPCC by the Firearms Licensing Unit in respect of this matter.

2.A copy of the communication issued by the NPCC (at or about the beginning of 11/2024)

For the attention of all Chief Constables

I am writing to request your assistance in the correct recording of all stolen vehicle reports via the Police National Computer (PNC). This request is part of an ongoing effort to ensure the accuracy and completeness of PNC records in relation to stolen vehicles.

Initially when a vehicle is reported stolen, a Lost or Stolen (LoS) marker is placed onto the PNC, and at first appears as an "unconfirmed" report.

The PNC then requires the report to be confirmed and the time taken to do this varies by force. Some forces show the vehicle as "Confirmed stolen" immediately, others do not. Once confirmed, the vehicle will be marked as "Confirmed stolen" on the PNC and the DVLA updated to reflect the vehicle status.

Until the report is confirmed the DVLA at Swansea are not notified of the theft. Any activity on the DVLA record of the vehicle in question would not be referred to Police for investigation during this time.

All confirmed reports remain on PNC for a period of 6 years, whereby any unconfirmed reports are automatically weeded out after 42 days.

An issue has been brought to my attention regarding vehicles that are remaining recorded as "unconfirmed stolen" effectively dropping off the PNC after the specified weed period causing an inaccurate record of the vehicle status.

Could I ask that you check within your force whether all stolen vehicle reports are recorded as "confirmed" as stolen within 24hrs and seek to address should this not be the case. This will ensure the PNC, third party data users and other agencies, such as DVLA, databases accurately reflect a vehicle's stolen status.

Thank you for your continued support and I appreciate your cooperation and assistance with the matter.

3.The subsequent exchanges between your constabulary and the NPCC about the communication; feedback, clarification etc.

There has not been any further communication since this communication was received.



4. The action your constabulary has taken regarding weeding, following the NPCC communication

Email sent to the Chief Officer Executive Support Team on 11/11/2024 in response to NPCC circular, acknowledging that an issue had been identified with Lost/Stolen vehicle reports. This concerned the creation of 'unconfirmed' reports within the Force Control Room out of hours, and subsequent PNCB notifications being omitted, resulting in stolen reports dropping off after 42 days. As of 14th October, FCR Operators record the vehicle on as 'confirmed' from the offset. If the vehicle has since been found, PNCB remove the stolen report. This revised process is more efficient and ensures that there are no gaps in terms of the management of Lost/Stolen markers. This went live on 14th Oct as FCR Operators required up-skilling.

INTERNAL REVIEW REQUEST

- 14/10/2024 Gwent FCR Operators record the vehicle on as 'confirmed' from the offset This went live on 14th Oct as FCR Operators required up-skilling.

A. I have yet to be provided the Gwent internal information relating to this, please supply this.

- 11/2024 (07/11/2024) NPCC issue a communication to all Chief Constables

I no longer require the actual circular which could/should have been disclosed as opposed to the text.

- 11/11/2024 Gwent send email to the Chief Officer Executive Support Team in response to NPCC circular, acknowledging that an issue had been identified with Lost/Stolen vehicle reports.

B. I have yet to be provided this email, please supply this.

C. Please clarify what is meant by 'Chief Officer Executive Support Team'; is this a Gwent team or does it relate to the NPCC?

Regarding the NPCC statements:

i. Once confirmed, the vehicle will be marked as "Confirmed stolen" on the PNC and the DVLA updated to reflect the vehicle status.

ii. Until the report is confirmed the DVLA at Swansea are not notified of the theft. Any activity on the DVLA record of the vehicle in question would not be referred to Police for investigation during this time.



C. What information do you possess about this; is this your understanding of the process? *

Yours sincerely,

*PNC User manual v 20.01 appears to support this situation however, para 9.7 could be read that only confirmed reports result in a RFA in the event of licensing or change of keeper transaction for that vehicle.

Note:

If, as is indicated by all chief constables' circular, a PNC LoS marker is not conveyed to DVLA until 'confirmed', the concerns associated with weeding appear to be greater. However, I note Gwent has (manually) prevented weeding by immediately 'confirming' all LoS reports.

As the NPCC appear to be seeking confirmation within 24 hours, I again ask that the issue is escalated; cease weeding altogether, automatically 'confirm' LoS reports (or remove the requirement to do so) at the point of adding the LoS marker to PNC

ICO DECISION NOTICE RESPONSE

- 14/10/2024 Gwent FCR Operators record the vehicle on as 'confirmed' from the offset This went live on 14th Oct as FCR Operators required up-skilling.

A. I have yet to be provided the Gwent internal information relating to this, please supply this.

Please see attached, exemption below relates to redacted data.

- 11/2024 (07/11/2024) NPCC issue a communication to all Chief Constables

I no longer require the actual circular which could/should have been disclosed as opposed to the text.

- 11/11/2024 Gwent send email to the Chief Officer Executive Support Team in response to NPCC circular, acknowledging that an issue had been identified with Lost/Stolen vehicle reports.

B. I have yet to be provided this email, please supply this.

Please see attached, exemption below relates to redacted data.



Section 31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement

Overall 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. Disclosure of Police tactics and capability would assist offenders when planning criminal activity. For example, if an offender knew that the police were aware of his activities this could encourage him to move to another location where he could commit crimes undetected. Further requests of this nature would enable offenders to map across the country where similar activities have or have not been monitored and detected by the police. This would frustrate the prevention and detection of crime.

Factors favouring Disclosure for Section 31

Disclosure of this information would provide a better awareness which may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public and it would enable them to take measures in order to protect themselves and their families. Disclosure would aid the public's understanding of how Gwent Police operates and for what direct purpose, stopping any incorrect rumours or falsehoods that may already exist.

Factors favouring Non-Disclosure for Section 31

To release this information will divulge policing tactics in as much as it will be clear to see for which offences the police use this data to aid with their investigations. This may then lead to those wishing to commit certain crimes to change their behaviours to avoid detection thus undermining the Police's capabilities of preventing and detecting crime.

The release of this information would compromise any on-going criminal investigations, or proceedings, which would make use of this data. In addition, the technology can be used in combating acts of terrorism but also in the prevention and detection of crime

Release of the information would mean that the role in the prevention and detection of crime would be compromised. The safety of the public is of paramount importance to the policing purpose, and an increase in crime would place the public at risk of harm.

Balancing Test

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. These roles are of paramount



importance, and the Police Service will not divulge information if to do so would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine the prevention or detection of crime.

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively investigating this type of offence, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the public as well as the integrity of police investigations and operations.

Disclosure of information that would have a serious negative impact on the security of the whole of the United Kingdom and would not be beneficial.

Weakening the mechanisms used to monitor any type of criminal activity, and specifically terrorist activity would place the security of the country in an increased level of danger.

Therefore, at this moment in time, it is our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for disclosure for questions is not made out.

C. Please clarify what is meant by 'Chief Officer Executive Support Team'; is this a Gwent team or does it relate to the NPCC?

COEST is the term used for the Gwent Police Team which supports the Chief Officers.

Regarding the NPCC statements:

i. Once confirmed, the vehicle will be marked as "Confirmed stolen" on the PNC and the DVLA updated to reflect the vehicle status.

ii. Until the report is confirmed the DVLA at Swansea are not notified of the theft. Any activity on the DVLA record of the vehicle in question would not be referred to Police for investigation during this time.

D. What information do you possess about this; is this your understanding of the process? *

The information provided above reflects our current understanding, as it is derived from the Police National Computer (PNC) Manual. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is updated electronically, either via file transfer or encrypted email. We do not possess detailed knowledge of the DVLA's internal procedures; therefore, we are unable to specify the timeframe within which the DVLA is able to access data on the PNC following the confirmation of a stolen report. Additionally, we do not have information regarding the DVLA's requirements for referring matters to the police for investigation.



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.