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07/04/2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 093/2024

Thank you for your request for information regarding PNC inaccuracy in relation to stolen vehicles and the disclosure of makes and models; which has now been considered.

Applicant Question:

'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.'

1. In relation to the above quote from NPCC letter dated 07/11/2024 - please provide any other information relevant to the 'ongoing effort to ensure the accuracy and completeness of PNC records in relation to stolen vehicles' other than mentioned in the 07/11/2024 letter, including the areas to which inaccuracy & incompleteness have been identified and what action has been taken to address the issues once found.
2. A copy of correspondence sent to forces by the NPCC prior to 24th July 2024, advising them not to release the makes and models of stolen vehicles.
3. Any information that identifies the reason for this advice being issued.

NPCC Response:

In relation to question 1, the NPCC does not hold captured information. In wishing to explain further, checks were made with ACC Sims' office (who authored the original letter), who have confirmed that at this time, no other issues have been identified in relation to the accuracy of stolen vehicle recording on PNC.

In relation to question 2 of your request, I have attached a copy of the advice sent from the NPCC Central Referral Unit (CRU) to all forces in relation the release of stolen vehicle makes and models.

It has been subject to minor redaction under section 40(2) Personal Information and Section 31(1) Law Enforcement for names and direct contact details. For more information on the legislation and the risk of harm, please see Annex A below.

In relation to question 3, as stated in the advice email attached, the advice was issued following notification in to the CRU of a request asking for makes and models of stolen vehicles. The advice also confirms that this was the agreed stance of the National Policing Lead and why the exemptions were relevant.

Outside of the Freedom of Information Act, I can also confirm that this advice has since been superseded by updated advice sent to forces on the 23rd July 2024.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Greenlees
Freedom of Information Officer & Decision Maker

www.npcc.police.uk

COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Internal Review

If you are dissatisfied with the response you have been provided with, in compliance with the Freedom of Information legislation, you can lodge a complaint with NPCC to have the decision reviewed within 40 working days of the date of this response. The handling of your request will be looked at by someone independent of the original decision, and a fresh response provided.

It would be helpful, if requesting a review, for you to articulate in detail the reasons you are not satisfied with this reply.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to NPCC Freedom of Information, c/o PO Box 481, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 9FS.

Annex A

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the NPCC, when refusing to provide information by way of exemption in question and (c) states why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a refusal notice to those aspects of your request.

Legislation – Section 16

- (1) It shall be the duty of a public authority to provide advice and assistance, so far as it would be reasonable to expect the authority to do so, to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information to it.

Legislation - Section 31 Law Enforcement

- (1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice -
 - (a) the prevention or detection of crime
 - (b) the apprehension or prosecution of offenders

Some email addresses are contained within the correspondence and disclosure of direct contact details would enable an individual, intent on committing an offence to make contact with the department, pose as a police officer or member of police staff and try to glean information which would assist in their offending behaviour.

The NPCC will not disclose information which may hinder the effective management of law enforcement or place staff or officers at risk. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively managing this area of policing, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the tactical abilities.

The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built and the police service have a clear responsibility to prevent crime and arrest those responsible for committing crime or those that plan to commit crime. Disclosure of information captured by this request could directly influence the stages of that process, and jeopardise current investigations or prejudice law enforcement.

Disclosing information which may place the public at risk, or make it easier for crime to be committed cannot be in the public interest.

The police service primary performance indicator is the reduction of crime, and disclosure which has a negative impact on that agenda affects public trust in policing and in this case may make it more difficult to police.

With regard the evidence of harm itself, there is a threshold that requires the predicted issues to be 'more than likely'. In the case of an offender identifying full investigative techniques or gleaning information which would assist in offending behaviour can be difficult to establish and evidence the harm without actually disclosing

exempt information. However, the principles are well established in terms of Freedom of Information legislation that to a certain extent the professional opinion of the police must be taken into account.

The NPCC is committed to demonstrating proportionality and accountability however in this case, in this case we believe that the balance falls on the side of withholding the exempt information.

Legislation - Section 40 Personal Information

- (1) Any information to which a request for information relates is exempt information if it constitutes personal data of which the applicant is the data subject.
- (2) Any information to which a request for information relates is also exempt information if
- (a) it constitutes personal data which does not fall within subsection (1), and
 - (b) the first, second or third condition below is satisfied.
- (3A) The first condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under this Act—
- (a) would contravene any of the data protection principles, or
 - (b) would do so if the exemptions in section 24(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (manual unstructured data held by public authorities) were disregarded.
- (3B) The second condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under this Act would contravene Article 21 of the GDPR (general processing: right to object to processing).

Any information to which a request for information relates is exempt information if it constitutes personal data of which the applicant is the data subject.

This is an absolute exemption and there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.