

**Information Governance Unit
Information Management Branch**

22nd December 2010

Dear XXXX

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: XXXX

I write in connection with your request for information dated 23/11/2010, which was received by Greater Manchester Police on 23/11/2010. I note you seek access to the following information:

1. Can you tell me how many people from Wigan are signing on the sex offenders register?
2. Of the people who should be signing the register in Wigan, how many have an unknown whereabouts?
3. How many men are signing on the register in Wigan?
4. How many women are signing on the register in Wigan?

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by Greater Manchester Police.

1. This information is exempt from disclosure by virtue of Section 21 – information reasonably accessible by other means – of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In order to comply with Section 16 – provide advice and assistance – of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Greater Manchester Police can advise that the information requested in question 1 is available via the following link.
<http://www.gmp.police.uk/mainsite/pages/1FEF46EC4713317380257789002B7293.htm>
2. This information is exempt from disclosure by virtue of Sections 31(1)(a)(b)(c) – Law Enforcement – and 38 (1) – Health and Safety – of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
3. 171
4. 0

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant, with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

These exemptions are subject to a public interest test and in this case I would outline the relevant factors as:

The factors considered in favouring the disclosure of the information requested are: better awareness may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public also the public will be able to take steps to protect themselves. Factors against the disclosure of information are: law enforcement tactics will be compromised, individuals are placed at risk, there is the possibility that this could hinder the prevention and detection of crime and more crime may be committed.

When considering the disclosure or non-disclosure of information Greater Manchester Police has to take into account the harm that may be caused to the public and its staff. When considering the disclosure of information into registered sex offenders whose whereabouts may be unknown, as this would show the public that the force is aware of the individuals and that they are operating to combat any potential threat that may be made to members of the public and how efficient and effective they are. This may also encourage members of the public to provide the force with any information in relation to the whereabouts of the individuals in question. The force also has to consider the non-disclosure of information and the efficient and effective conduct of the force where any current or future law enforcement role of the force may be compromised by the release of the details. To release information in relation to the number of registers sex offenders whose whereabouts may be unknown could provide information to the individuals in question as to whether the force is aware of this or not and could in turn lead to further crime being committed. The release of this information could also hinder the force in obtaining the whereabouts of any individual as they will be aware that the force is in the process of locating them, this would therefore, hinder the prevention and detection of crime and also cause harm the members of the public and members of staff. The safety of individuals is of a paramount importance to the force and a major part of the policing purpose, therefore, Greater Manchester Police will not disclose information which could risk lives or be detrimental to our policing role of enforcing the law and protecting people.

When balancing the public interest test Greater Manchester Police has to consider whether the information should be released into the public domain. Arguments need to be weighed against each other. The most persuasive reason for disclosing the information would be the fact that there will be a better awareness that may lead to reducing crime and more information being provided from the public, which needs to be weighed against the strongest reason in favour for non-disclosure, which, in this case is the fact that individuals may be placed at risk and the prevention and detection of crime.

Complaint Rights

Your attention is drawn to the attached sheet, which details your right of complaint.

Should you have any further inquiries concerning this matter, please write or contact Amanda Ratcliffe, on telephone number 0161 856 2529 quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

Information Access Officer

COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Are you unhappy with how your request has been handled or do you think the decision is incorrect?

You have the right to require Greater Manchester Police to review their decision.

Prior to lodging a formal complaint you are welcome and encouraged to discuss the decision with the case officer that dealt with your request.

Ask to have the decision looked at again –

The quickest and easiest way to have the decision looked at again is to telephone the case officer that is nominated at the end of your decision letter.

That person will be able to discuss the decision, explain any issues and assist with any problems.

Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of Greater Manchester Police made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding access to information, you can lodge a complaint with Greater Manchester Police to have the decision reviewed.

Complaints should be made in writing and addressed to:

Information Governance Manager
Greater Manchester Police
Police Headquarters
Chester House
Boyer Street
Manchester
M16 0RE

The Information Commissioner

After lodging a complaint with Greater Manchester Police if you are still dissatisfied with the decision you can make an application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make an application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk. Alternatively, phone or write to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Phone: 01625 545 700