

**Information Governance Unit
Information Management Branch**

31 December 2008

Dear XXXX,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: XXXX

I write in connection with your request for information dated 03/12/2008, which was received by Greater Manchester Police on 03/12/2008, for the following information:

Question 1. How many sex offenders are currently registered with your force?

Question 2. Of those how many are currently recorded as missing or the equivalent?

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.

Result Of Searches

Question 1. Your request for this information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the requested information. Section 17 of the Freedom Of Information Act requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide 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 otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The following exemption applies: **s22 which is a qualified exemption and relates to information intended for future publication**. The requested information will be contained within the MAPPAs report for 2008/09. This is a qualified and class-based exemption and as such, the Public Interest needs to be articulated (Please see below).

Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act, places an obligation on Greater Manchester Police to provide assistance to the applicant. To comply with this requirement, you may find the following link to the current MAPPAs Report, which includes the number of Registered Sex Offenders (RSO) as at 31.03.2008.

<http://www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk/output/Page30.asp>

Question 2. In relation to the number of RSOs whose whereabouts are unknown, Greater Manchester Police have as of 3 December 2008, 5 RSOs currently recorded as whereabouts are unknown.

The total at question 2, is only valid for the date specified because the information is dynamic and will change as arrests are made or new cases come to light through proactive intelligence led policing or routine visits to registered offenders.

Public Interest Test

Considerations Favouring Disclosure

Accountability

When information disclosed relates directly to the efficiency and effectiveness of the force or its officers. The purpose of The Freedom of Information Act is to make public authorities more accountable, therefore disclosure of the requested information would provide updated statistics, demonstrating continued and ongoing awareness and monitoring of RSO activity.

Public Awareness

The disclosure of the most recently collected statistics would enhance public knowledge of the subject, by providing current information that may better inform public debate and the decisions of individuals.

Considerations Favouring Non-Disclosure

Efficient and effective conduct of the service

To respond to this request, the information would need to be retrieved and collated, as it is effectively not held at the present time. To gather the information, prior to the requirement to do so for the next scheduled MAPPA report, will involve a disproportionate use of resources at this time.

Existing Procedures

The MAPPA report is published to facilitate greater awareness of the progress being made by those authorities entrusted with a public protection remit. The range of information contained in the report, and the resources required to draw together and present this information, have increased substantially since its first publication in 2002. This is evidenced by the 2006 publication, which was the most comprehensive report produced to date. This is only made possible by the diversion of resources in to an annual effort. The Freedom of Information Act legally allows members of the public to request any information held by a public authority. In order to supply this information, resources are allocated to locate and retrieve it. The Section 21 and 22 exemptions were specifically laid down by parliament to benefit those authorities who proactively publish information. To constantly produce new and up to date elements of the currently published information, in order to satisfy an additional need outside of the annual schedule will render these exemptions less effective and remove the benefits of proactive publication.

Balancing Test

It is acknowledged that both accountability and public awareness are enhanced by the disclosure of this type of information. However, this is achieved through the publication of the MAPPA report on an annual basis, at which time MAPPA partners are held to account, and for this reason the public interest favours maintaining this schedule of publication.

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 me, on telephone number 0161 856 2528 quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

Information Access Team