

**Information Governance Unit
Information Management Branch**

XXXX

2nd September 2010

Dear XXXX

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: XXXX

I write in connection with your request for information dated 05/08/2010 concerning

How many people living in Manchester have a license to have a firearm.

If you could give me the figures for 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 (if available) or as many of the years figures as your budget allows.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

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.

The exemptions applicable to the information are

**Section 21(1) – Information reasonably accessible by other means
Section 22(1)(a) – Information intended for future publication**

Section 21(1) applies to the information requested for the financial year 2007/08 and 2008/09, which can be found on the Home Office website using the following links:

<http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb0509.pdf>
<http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb0510.pdf>

The remaining part of the request is exempt from disclosure by virtue of Section 22(1)(a) exemption of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as the exemption used is a qualified exemption a public interest test needs to be applied and in this case it would outline the relevant factors:

The factor considered in favour of the disclosure of the information requested is: that the date of publication is in the future. Factors favouring non-disclosure are that there is a duty to provide this information to the Home Office first and that the publication is being prepared at an expense to the force and spending of additional public funds would be wasteful.

To disclose the information prior to the publication on the Home Office website would enable members of the public to have a greater awareness of the number of firearm certificates within the force area, furthermore this could add to a more accurate public debate in relation to this subject. The force also has to consider the non-disclosure of information and the effective and efficient conduct of the force and to duplicate the production of information is not a cost effective and efficient exercise for the force and would lead to excess spending of public funds.

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 prior to publication is that there will be a better public awareness, which needs to be weighed against the strongest reason in favour of non-disclosure, which, in this case is the obligation to provide this information to the Home Office.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this particular request.

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