

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Our ref: GSA 1848/23  
Please quote our reference  
number when responding

Thursday, 11 May 2023

[REDACTED]

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: GSA 1848/23**

I write in connection with your request for information dated 05/04/2023, I note you seek access to the following information:

*This Freedom of Information Request for Data has been placed with all constabularies as part of a wider project.*

*Using the latest available data and going back to 2015, please provide a year-by-year breakdown of the following:*

*(a) total number of registered informants for each individual year*

*Of this total number of registered informants how many were:*

*(b) Paid Informants*

*(c) Unpaid informants*

*(d) Active Participants*

*And for each year where the Data response for (b) has been given, please provide:*

*(e) the total figure for all monies paid to informants each individual year since 2015*

**Result of Searches**

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information and I can confirm the information requested is held by GMP. However, GMP is not obliged to provide the requested information, as an exemption applies.

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 information requested is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

- **Section 30(2)(b) - Investigations and proceedings**

Section 30 is a class based, qualified exemption requiring public interest test (PIT) which can be found below.

### **Factors favouring disclosure**

There is information within the public domain confirming that the Police use Covert Human Intelligence Sources to assist them with investigations and the effective delivery of law enforcement. Disclosure would enhance the public understanding of how Constabularies use information relating to informants and how the intelligence received assists in day to day investigations, such as operations to support the prevention and detection of crime.

Accurate and reliable data disclosed to the public, via official channels, will enable informed and precise public debate around the subject of informants, allowing for greater transparency and accountability. This in turn will enable a more thorough local assessment of the use of informants, including their effectiveness. Disclosure of information, relating to the way in which public funds are being spent, will enable individuals to understand what the police budget allocation is for informants.

Disclosure would also assist in stopping any incorrect rumours or falsehoods relating to how the police store and manage how informants assist the police.

### **Factors favouring non-disclosure**

The Police Service is tasked with protecting the community we serve and solving crime and there is a public interest argument in ensuring we are open and transparent with regard to policing investigations and operations. Disclosure of the information requested could identify informant activity within a force area. Over a period of time, if several disclosures were made, individuals could analyse the information and identify any sudden peaks or troughs in informant activity. This would hinder the prevention and detection of crime and also prejudice the forces ability to maintain confidential sources. Consequently the forces' future law enforcement capabilities would be affected.

It may be viewed by those not involved in the management of informants that a statistical number in itself is unlikely to cause any such adverse effects. However, the subject has to be viewed more as a whole. Those determined to identify informants will use small pieces of

information to build a more complete picture and it is the cumulative effect of information disclosures that the Police Service feel could lead to this.

### **Balancing Test**

There is information within the public domain confirming that police use covert human intelligence sources to assist them with investigations and the effective delivery of law enforcement. However, as has been mentioned informants play a vital role in assisting the police, and is based very much on relationships built on trust and the expectation of complete confidentiality that Greater Manchester Police would never disclose information which would compromise our tactics.

It is therefore our opinion that the balance lies in favour of non-disclosure of the information.

In accordance with the S17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice.

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