

Our ref: 01/FOI/24/011951/P

Please quote our reference
number when responding

Thursday, 15 February 2024

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/011951/P

I write in connection with your request for information dated 19/01/2024, I note you seek access to the following information:

regarding minimum staffing levels required within the FCCO?

- *I would like to know how many staff MUST be in the room for it to function.*
- *How many radio channels MUST be open during any given time period.*

Result of Searches

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.

There must be a minimum of 1 radio per district open at any time, which is 12 overall.

The fully staffed number is based on the FCCO establishment, which shows the full time equivalent for each member of the team based on the hours that they work. For example, a

radio operator who works 36.25 if a full-time member of staff and is the FTE of 1, a radio operator who works 27 hours the FTE is 0.74.

Dispatch is a combination of radio operators and constables. The current FTE for radio operators is 242*, with the 10% increase this is 266.2.

*The above establishment figures for dispatch teams excluding Team 3 or the FOC.

The minimum staffing levels differ depending on which room, the day and what time in the day.

The information on

- The current strength or headcount for radio operators,
- The minimum staffing levels by room, the day and what time in the day.

has been exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 31(1) - Law Enforcement

Sections 31 is a prejudice-based and qualified exemption. There is a requirement to articulate the harm in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Harm

Disclosure of the current strength and the staff level details of the radio operators could be of intelligence value to a person or persons with criminal or malicious intent. The disclosure could provide and enable targeted malicious actions, be that some form of attack on the operational team or avoiding that team or the specific time periods for example where strengths and weakness may be perceived (whether incorrectly or not).

Public Interest Test

Section 31 - Factors favouring disclosure

Providing this information would make members of the public more aware of the level of police resources used to protect themselves and members of the public against crimes and terrorism activities.

Section 31 - Factors favouring non-disclosure

To provide such information could compromise law enforcement tactics which would hinder the Police force's ability to protect themselves and member of the public against crimes and terrorism activities. The threat of crimes will increase as more crimes are committed as a result of criminals and terrorist gaining knowledge about the capabilities of the force. Therefore, the public will be placed at a greater risk. A fear of crime will be realised as criminals and terrorist identify different levels of police resources and exploit this resulting in the public being in fear of more criminal activity occurring.

The safety of the public is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the information would compromise the safety of the community that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect and place individuals at risk.

Balancing test

When balancing the public interest Greater Manchester Police must 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 openness. However, this needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is the fact that individuals may be placed at risk and the affect it may have on the prevention and detection of crime and protecting the people/communities we serve.

Having considered all the factors, the reason against disclosure outweighs the reason for disclosure and so the decision at this time to maintain the above exemption and withhold the information from disclosure.