

Our ref: 01/FOI/24/012177/F

Please quote our reference
number when responding

Thursday, 14 March 2024

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/012177/F

I write in connection with your request for information dated 20/02/2024, I note you seek access to the following information:

1. *How many offences of stalking were recorded by your police force between: 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022? And 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023?*
2. *How many dedicated specialist stalking officers (i.e. where the officer's time is wholly or solely reserved for the response, investigation, or management of stalking crimes) does your force currently have?*
3. *How many stalking Single Point of Contacts (SPOC) does your force have?*
4. *How many stalking SPO SPOCs does your force have?*
5. *In how many cases did your police force apply for one or more interim SPO between 01/04/22 and 31/03/23?*
6. *In how many cases did your police force apply for one or more full SPO between 01/04/22 - 31/03/23?*
7. *How many of those SPOs that your police force applied for between 01/04/22 - 31/03/23 ended up not being authorised by the superintendent and/or or not authorised by the police force legal services?*
8. *How many of those SPOs that your police force applied for between 01/04/22 - 31/03/23 ended up being refused at court?*
9. *How many of the SPOs you applied for between 01/04/22 - 31/03/23 had positive requirements?*

10. How many breaches of SPO crimes were recorded between 01/04/22 - 31/03/23? How many resulted in a charge?

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.

Part 1

1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022 – 7,781 crimes

1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 – 8,993 crimes

Caveats:

In July 2019, GMP implemented one of the largest IT infrastructure changes in UK policing. The systems are in continual development and the data provided for this request is what the systems currently hold.

- This data contains crimes recorded under Home Office classification 8Q 'stalking', with a created date between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2023, excluding cancelled crimes. Further information about cancelled crimes can be obtained from the Home Office Counting Rules.

Part 2 - Exempt under S31(1)(a)(b). Please see exemption explanation at the end of the letter.

Part 3 - 14 – one for each district

Part 4 - 14 – one for each district

Parts 5 to 9

Due to low result returned, parts 5 to 9 information has been exempted from disclosure under **Section 40(2) Personal Information** – this information constitutes personal data of an identifiable living individual, and to disclose this information would breach the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data is defined by Section 1 of the Data Protection Act 1998 and means data that relates to an individual who can be identified directly or indirectly from that data.

Part 10

Between 01/04/2022 and 31/03/2023 inclusive, GMP recorded **2** crimes under the Home Office Crime Offence Category 'Breach of Stalking Order/Interim Stalking Order'.
0 of these crimes resulted in a charge.

Part 2 has been exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

• Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law enforcement

Section 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.

Evidence of Harm

Disclosure of the number of specialist stalking officers 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 for example where strengths and weakness may be perceived (whether incorrectly or not).

The requested information could be used to compromise law enforcement capabilities by decreasing the ability of Greater Manchester Police to fight crime, which would increase the commission of crime and subsequently have a detrimental impact on public safety as well as decrease public confidence in the police force.

Public Interest Test

Section 31 - Factors favouring disclosure

To disclose this information would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, it would also lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force.

Section 31 - Factors favouring non-disclosure

Providing the number of specialist stalking officers would reveal the operational and tactical capabilities of Greater Manchester Police. If specific numbers were given for a specialised team, this would allow the geographic mapping of resources. This would compromise law enforcement tactics and hinder the prevention and detection of crime and the successful prosecution of offenders. Disclosure would provide those individuals or groups within the criminal fraternity who wish to attack the police with a significant operational advantage and the information could also be used to target locations perceived as less well-resourced or to develop tactics to divert resources away from locations that they wish to target. This would clearly jeopardise the ability of Greater Manchester Police to respond appropriately to criminal activity and thereby protect the public.

The safety of the public is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the requested 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 for and against disclosure, 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.