

Date: 8th July 2024
Our ref: FOI/24/012790/U

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/24/012790/U

I write in connection with your request for information dated 12/06/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

- 1. Do you have any official policies or guidelines your constabulary follow regarding music censorship online, and could you provide these?***
- 2. Do you ever use, or have you any, set criteria to decide when to intervene in cases involving music and potential incitement to violence? and when would you action these?***
- 3. Do you work with social media platforms and music streaming services to monitor and address potentially harmful content in relation to drill music and related content online? If yes, how do you do this?***
- 4. Can you please disclose the number of drill music videos referred to 'YouTube' for removal and the number of removals that were granted broken down by year 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.***
- 5. Can you please disclose the number of drill music videos referred to other social media platforms for removal and the number of removals granted broken down by year: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.***

- ***Apple Music***
- ***Instagram***
- ***Facebook***
- ***Snapchat***

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, I am not obliged to provide all the information requested as exemption applies to question 2 and 3.

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.

Question 2 and 3 has been exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law enforcement

Section 31 is a qualified and prejudice-based exemption and as such, subject to a harm and public interest test.

Harm

To provide the criteria regarding policing music online would reveal policing tactics used by Greater Manchester Police. This would give an advantage to them who are intent on committing offences and avoiding detection. It would also increase the risk of danger towards the public GMP who sworn to protect.

Public Interest Test

Factors Favouring Disclosure

To disclose the criteria would provide the public with a slightly more in-depth knowledge into how GMP operates regarding the policing of music. This would enable the populous to take steps to protect themselves against criminal activity and may lead to further intelligence being provided to the force.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

Conversely to the factors in favour of disclosure, to release the criteria and specific details into the public domain would reveal policing tactics of GMP. This would impact on the forces ability to detect and prevent crime and apprehend and prosecute offenders.

The risk of danger to the public would be increased by revealing such policing tactics into the public domain. The safety of the public we protect is of paramount importance to GMP and we would not wish to jeopardise that safety by releasing exempt information into the public domain.

Balance Test

The arguments for and against disclosure of information need to weighed against each other. In this case the greatest argument for disclosure is the fact that the populous would be provided with information regarding how the force operate.

However, given that the disclosure would increase the risk of increased crime to and assist those intent on committing crime to avoid detection the balance of disclosure, at this time, weighs on non-disclosure for these specific questions.

This letter acts as a refusal notice for the question 2 and 3 of this request.

Response to Remaining Questions

Question 1 – No information held. GMP does not have a relevant policy.

Question 2 - Exempt – Section 31.

Question 3 – Exempt – Section 31.

Question 4 – A total of 4 in 2024.

Question 5 – None.