



Date: 30/04/2024
Our ref: 01/FOI/24/012412/X

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/012412/X

I write in connection with your request for information dated 05/04/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I will like to have all the case files, images and footage for the Harold Shipman case.

I would like you to provide this information in the following format:

Police footage, images, case files, police interviews, police announcements and any CCTV.

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. However, I am not obliged to supply you with all the information held as exemptions apply.

The request has been exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemptions:

- **Section 30(1) – Investigations and Proceedings Conducted by Public Authorities**
- **Section 38(1) - Health and Safety**
- **Section 40(2) - Personal Information**

Section 30(1) is a class based qualified exemption; there is a requirement to carry out a public interest test, which can be seen below. Section 38(1) is a prejudice based qualified exemption;

there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test, which can be seen below. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption; there is no right to the information under the FOI Act. A public interest test is not relevant to absolute exemptions; therefore, no public interest test is required.

Harm as per Section 38

This Act provides the public with a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities. However, information disclosed under this Act is effectively released into the public domain, or to the 'wider world', and not only to the person making the request. To disclose the information that you have requested which may not already be in the public domain would undoubtedly have an impact on the health and safety of the family members of the victims. Such information being disclosed could resurface these traumatic experiences and cause the victim's family to again revisit this terrible period of their lives. Protecting the safety of the public is of paramount importance to GMP and information that would compromise such health and safety would not be disclosed within a response to a Freedom of Information request.

Section 30 - Factors Favouring Disclosure

To disclose the exempt information into the public domain, would show GMP's accountability, and satisfy the public that the investigations into the victim's deaths were being conducted correctly. It would also show GMP's use of public funds in continuing to investigate this crime.

Section 30 - Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

Conversely to the factors in favour of disclosure, the disclosure sets a precedent as to how GMP responds over such incidents which may inhibit the ability to prevent and detect crime in the future, as individuals may well be less inclined to co-operate with the police if they were aware that the information they provide, or is held by GMP would likely be disclosed to the world in circumstances sitting outside the criminal justice process.

Section 38 - Factors favouring disclosure

There may be occasions when it is appropriate to disclose information that would have an impact on the health and safety of an individual or the public in general. It could raise awareness in relation to this incident and encourage the public to come forward with any new information that could assist police investigations. There are, however, more general arguments that must be considered such as openness and transparency, which would lead to a more informed public.

Section 38 - Factors favouring non-disclosure

Although some information that may or may not already be in the public domain and that relates to the deceased victims. Due to the nature of the crimes committed, and that disclosure under FOI is disclosure to the world at large with no specific controls, which is likely to cause an individual mental and physical harm (for example the family of the victim, and that of the people acquitted of the crime) as disclosure could cause unwanted contact from those interested in this case at a time when they seek to progress with their lives without further unwanted attention.

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. This needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is concerns for the health and safety, both mental and physical, of families and friends of the victims. Having considered all the factors for and against disclosure it is my belief that in this case, the reason against disclosure outweighs the reason for disclosure and so the decision at this time to maintain the above exemptions and withhold the information from disclosure.

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