

Date: 8th October 2024
Our ref: FOI/24/013293/M

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/24/013293/M

I write in connection with your request for information dated 19/09/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Please consider a revised timeframe for this request exclusively for January 1, 2019, until December 31, 2019. If you record information in financial years, please adjust accordingly. Meanwhile, could you provide the problem profile requested?

CLARIFICATION

Q1. This exclusively relates to ambulances used as a means to commit crime.

Q2. This relates to a paramedic being part of the crime

*****ORIGINAL REQUEST*****

Please consider this as a revised request under the Freedom of Information Act: Could you provide the following with timeframe from January 1, 2019 until the day this request is fulfilled.

- 1. A list of the number of child trafficking or abduction crimes involving the use of an ambulance.***
- 2. A list of the number of crimes where such ambulance use described above has been traced to a paramedic working in an NHS Ambulance Service.***
- 3. A copy of the Police Force's Serious Sexual Offences Problem Profile as well as child trafficking problem profile.***

If the time needed to process this FOI exceeds the designated 18 hours, you're advised to consider an alternative timeline beginning from January 1, 2019, and ending at December 31, 2022.

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.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires GMP, 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 exemptions that apply to this request are:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law enforcement Section 40(2) – Personal Information

Section 40 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest test in this area.

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

S31 – Law Enforcement

Harm

Every effort should be made to release information under the Freedom of Information Act. However, given the nature of a Problem Profile, it is likely to contain a vast quantity of sensitive tactical information which may cause considerable harm to policing if disclosed, regardless of whether the Profile is for current policing needs or past. Not only could it undermine ongoing investigations, but also National Security. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing and providing assurances that the Police Service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from criminals, this should be countered against the need to protect vulnerable areas, and ongoing Policing operational activity.

Public Interest Test

Section 31 - Factors Favouring Disclosure

The disclosure details of problem profile assessments produced or commissioned by GMP would assist the populous in taking steps to better protect themselves and others. It would also show GMP's accountability in the use of public funds when policing this area.

Section 31 - Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

Conversely to the factors in favour of disclosure, to publicly release information relating to problem profiles, which includes any policing tactics utilised by the Police today, which have been in use for an undetermined length of time due to their proven ability to assist in the prevention and detection of crime, would render these methods less effective. Therefore, ultimately undermining policing and resulting in new tactics needing to be developed and employed, which may take a considerable amount of time. An increase in crime would be the definitive result and may impact on the law enforcement capabilities of GMP and our ability to prevent and detect crime and apprehend or prosecute offenders.

Balance Test

When balancing the public interest test GMP has to consider whether the information should be released into the public domain, therefore arguments need to be weighed against each other.

The most persuasive reason for disclosing the information would be the fact that disclosure would encourage transparency, which needs to be weighed against the strongest reasons for non-disclosure, which in this case is the likelihood of individuals being put at risk. The safety of the communities GMP police is of paramount importance and the Force would not detrimentally impact on that safety by disclosing harmful information in response to a FOI request.

Therefore, having considered all the factors for and against disclosure it is the decision at this time to maintain the above exemptions and withhold the information from disclosure.

Response to remaining question

Question 1 – No results returned.

Question 2 – No results returned.

Question 3 – Exempt please see above.