



Date: 04/09/2024
Our ref: 01/FOI/24/013055/A

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/013055/A

I write in connection with your request for information dated 04/09/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Recent images have emerged on social media of police officers lacking identification numbers, see: [Netpol on X: "Legal observers in Bolton report a police unit is lashing out at anti-fascist counter-protesters with batons. None of the officers are wearing identification numbers, a persistent problem with Greater Manchester Police https://t.co/m7INlTe1yo" / X](#)

To this end: I would request:

- 1) What policies does the Greater Manchester Police have to ensure all police officers are identifiable?*
- 2) What action does Greater Manchester Police take if an officer was on shift who was unidentifiable, if any.*
- 3) Does Greater Manchester Police have a policy on the wearing of a blue lives matter / thin blue line badge (see: [London police defy ban on badges linked to far right and white supremacy | Metropolitan police | The Guardian](#))*
- 4) What action does Greater Manchester Police take if an officer is on shift wearing a blue lives matter / thin blue line badge, if any.*

Result of Searches

Information is defined in section 84 of the Act as 'information recorded in any form'. The Act therefore only extends to requests for recorded information. It does not require public authorities to answer questions generally; only if they already hold the answers in recorded

form. The Act does not extend to requests for information about policies or their implementation, or the merits or demerits of any proposal or action - unless, of course, the answer to any such request is already held in recorded form.

As such, within the spirit of the Act, only questions 1 and 3 qualify as a request for information held.

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 all the information you have requested as an exemption applies.

When refusing to provide such information because an exemption applies, Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires GMP, 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 information requested in question 3 is exempt under **Section 21 – Information accessible to applicant by other means**. The issue of Thin Blue Line patches has been addressed in previous Freedom of Information requests. Please see our [publication scheme](#) for this information.

Question 1 is not exempt and is answered as follows:

The following is an excerpt from version 5 of the Uniform and Dress Standards Policy and Procedure.

All staff should ensure:

- That they wear epaulettes clearly showing their collar number on both shoulders at all times.

5.2.2 GMP Name Badges

5.2.2.1 Rationale

Name badges have been introduced to police officers and police staff across the force for the following reasons:

- To improve our openness and accountability for our actions to the public.
- To provide a name to the public so that they get to know their local officers, PCSOs and other staff serving them.
- To assist the public in remembering who is dealing with their case should they wish to make further contact.
- To improve internal communication and relations between staff by showing the name behind the face or the e-mail address.

5.2.2.4 Wearing of Badge

- Name badges should be worn by all staff when on police premises or when working in co-located buildings at all times.
- Badges should be worn either side of the wearer's chest so that it can be clearly seen.
- Police officers and police staff in public facing roles should wear their name badge as much of the time as possible dependent on their role.

- Policing of special events across the force Operational Orders should dictate the wearing of name badges or otherwise in each specific order depending on the nature of the event.
- Badges worn on the Hi-Visibility jackets must be pinned to the pocket flap on either side of the jacket and not on the main jacket to prevent any compromising of the waterproofing of the jacket.
- On the body armour cover, the badge must be pinned above the panel areas either side of the chest where there is an area on the body armour cover that is double skinned. Extreme care must be taken to ensure that the pin is sited only through the top layer of the body armour cover to ensure that the cover remains waterproof. It is essential that the armours panels are not pierced at all by the pin, as this will over time reduce the effectiveness of the body armour.
- Neighbourhood Enquiry Counter Officers who deal with visitors to the front desk will be issued with name badges that display their first name only following a risk assessment that has been ratified by the Uniform Group.
- Where staff are working in plain clothes to conceal their identity as police officers, name badges will not be worn.

Examples when badges will not be required to be worn in the public domain are in public order incidents whereby PSU uniform and equipment are in use, times of dealing with a serious confrontational incident, and / or times when dealing with suspected terrorists or criminals who may pose a threat to that officer's personal safety.

- The force recognises that some staff have concerns about the wearing of name badges in public and therefore wishes to adopt a common sense policy that demonstrates our shared commitment to be open and approachable.
- Should staff believe they have a good reason not to wear their badge they should discuss such reasons with their line manager.