

Date: 07/04/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/014399/Y

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/014399/Y

I write in connection with your request for information dated 12/03/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

How many referrals were made to 'Prevent' Manchester per calendar month In the following time frames:

- ***1st January 2019-31st December 2019***
- ***-1st January 2020-31st December 2020***
- ***-1st January 2021-31st December 2021***
- ***-1st January 2022-31st December 2022***
- ***-1st January 2023-31st December 2023***
- ***-1st January 2024-31st December 2024***
- ***-1st January 2025- 28th February 2025***

-please present the information in a table with one row per calendar month.

In the following column please detail:

1. ***How many of these referrals made to 'Prevent' Manchester (per calendar month from January 2019-February 2025) were repeat referrals (i.e. the person in question had previously been referred to the programme).***

2. In the following column please detail the percentage of repeat referrals (per calendar month from January 2019-February 2025) whereby the person had been referred to the scheme 3 or more times.

3. In a new table please provide details of how many of all referrals per calendar year from 2019-2024 i). required no further action for the channel programme ii). were signposted to other services

iii)- were discussed at a channel panels

4. Outside of the table please also detail:

The number of total referrals which were adopted as Channel cases.

The number of repeat referrals which were adopted as Channel cases. Please detail the number of cases per calendar month of the above timeframes,

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 this information as exemptions apply.

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 exemptions apply.

The exemptions that apply to this request are:

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

Section 24 (1) National Security

Section 24 and Section 31 are qualified prejudice-based exemptions and therefore require evidence of harm and consideration of the public interest test.

Harm

The publication of specific Prevent data would provide information to those who seek to challenge the process, which would not be in the public interest. Allegations of 'spying in the community' and 'targeting Muslims' misrepresent and undermine the intention of the Prevent programme, which seeks to support those individuals vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism. Revealing detailed site specific statistics could lead to the identification of individuals who have been referred, local organisations who are working with us to protect and safeguard those at risk and ongoing cases which could lead to the withdrawal of individuals from the process and thus threaten the successful conclusion of a case. This would bring the process into disrepute, destroy trust and damage Prevent at a National level.

Factors favouring disclosure of information for Section 31

There may be a public interest in the release of this information because it may reassure the public that there are effective processes in place to ensure that people showing signs or indicators that they are intent to use violence or other illegal means are monitored effectively and assessed for the presence of vulnerability. Disclosure of the information would provide reassurance to the public that the Police have in place protocols to deal with these types of incidents and offences. The Home Office regularly publishes national statistical data on Prevent data. It would also reassure the public that the Police have protocols in place to protect children from being drawn into violent extremism.

Factors against disclosure of information for Section 31

Disclosure of the information would mean that law enforcement tactics would be compromised which would hinder the prevention and detection of crime. More crime would be committed because criminals would know which forces are focusing on this programme. A fear of crime would be realised because if the terrorists identified more vulnerable areas, they would target and exploit these areas and the public would be in fear of more criminal/terrorist activity occurring.

There would be an impact on police resources because if the measure used by forces to detect terrorist activities and safeguard children is disclosed and some areas are deemed to be 'softer' at managing this threat, terrorist cells may move to these areas in order to continue their operations and target vulnerable individuals. There could be local implications with wrongful identification of children and families which in turn could lead to further offences being committed in the community.

Factors favouring disclosure of information for Section 24

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and by disclosing the number of "prevent referrals" and "repeat referrals" the public would be able to see where public money is being spent and know that forces are doing as much as they can to combat terrorism and radicalisation. Revealing this information would enable the public to have some reassurance that the Government's Counter Terrorism strategy is robust. This is an issue high on the public agenda and therefore the release of this information would contribute to an informed public debate.

Factors against disclosure of information for Section 24

Revealing detailed statistics may increase interest in cases which could ultimately lead to the identity of individuals and the organisations we work with, which may assist others intending to counter such work. Identification of those working locally to deliver the aims and objectives of Channel could enable those wishing to counter such work to engage in activity to disrupt and jeopardise the successful delivery of ongoing work. This could threaten the successful delivery of the government's counter terrorism strategy and lead to the public being at increased risk from terrorism. There is also a potential for such data to be used to increase community tensions in an area which would not be in the public interest.

Any information shared between agencies (intelligence) has the potential to cover all aspects of criminal activity, be it threats to National Security, future planned robberies or intelligence relating to terrorist activity. Disclosure of the information would enable those intent on engaging in terrorist activities to determine on a National level which areas within the UK may be a vulnerable area to target.

Balance test

The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police service will not divulge information if to do so would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine National Security. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations, information gathering and, in this case, providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively safeguarding those who are vulnerable to radicalisation and targeting the cells behind the radicalisation, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in the highly sensitive area of terrorism.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of national security this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Whilst there is a strong public interest in the transparency of policing programmes and in this case, providing assurance that the police service and other stakeholders are appropriately and effectively engaging with one another, combating the threat posed by individuals with the intent to use violence and other illegal means, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of the stakeholders within the programme.

GMP will not divulge information if it is likely that it will compromise the work of the Police Service or place members of the public at risk. It is known that terrorist cells will try to radicalise people and children so that they believe in their ideology in order to encourage them to commit acts of terror.

Disclosure of the requested information would highlight which forces may have individuals who are more susceptible to radicalisation and how each force tackles this within their communities. This will adversely affect GMP's ability to detect this type of crime as it may alter the behaviours of those preying on vulnerable individuals. This could put the individual's life at risk along with that of National Security.

It is therefore our belief that the balance test lies in favour of not disclosing the information.