

Date: 27th January 2025
Our ref: FOI/24/013874/B

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/24/013874/B

I write in connection with your request for information dated 26/12/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

HMICFRS report (December 2024):

'An inspection of the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024

Tranche 1: capacity and capability, co-ordination and mobilisation, and well-being'

<https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fhmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk%2Fnews%2Fnews-feed%2Fpolice-forces-must-be-better-prepared-to-tackle-future-instances-of-violent-disorder%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cfreedomofinformation%40gmp.police.uk%7C1c4c6fbbb6d7429ccce408dd25af9cda%7Cdc8a542c40d46ab8f73e6023f45c7c5%7C0%7C0%7C638708158370014262%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIlwLjAuMDAwMCIsIAlAioiJXAw4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbCIsIlldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=SmRu4RV%2BBBA9wXIB7ItEqUpUQu%2FothxOoNkKVuz6hSI%3D&reserved=0>

The above report refers to the mobilisation by police forces of Public Order Public Safety (POPS) trained police officers to deal with the public disorder in July and August 2024 (p4).

A link is provided to information identifying the three levels of public order public safety training available to officers:

<https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fhmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk%2Fglossary%2Fpublic-order-public-safety-training%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cfreedomofinformation%40gmp.police.uk%7C1c4c6fbbb6d7429ccce408dd25af9cda%7Cdc8a542c40d46ab8f73e6023f45c7c5%7C0%7C0%7C638708158370036773%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIlwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlA>

AiOiJXaW4zMilsIkFOljoITWFpbCIsIldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=elSLxxur2uZe1LeOldsW1tRh6ZY2%2F27%2BVeugUqONz%2BE%3D&reserved=0

- 1. Please provide the total number of POPS trained police officers you have.***
- 2. Please provide the number of POPS trained officers who have completed training at (i) level 1, (ii) level 2 and (iii) level 3.***
- 3. Please provide the number of POPS trained officers from other forces you used in Operation Navette.***
- 4. Please provide the total amount you spent accommodating POPS trained officers from other forces during Operation Navette.***

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 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.

Section 31(1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement

Sections 31 is a prejudice-based and qualified exemption. There is a requirement to articulate the harm in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Harm

Disclosure of the number of POPS trained Police Officers and costs of accommodating Police Officers from outside the Force reveals tactical capability and vulnerabilities from force to force and would compromise the efficient and effective conduct of Greater Manchester Police. To disclose operational strength would hinder Greater Manchester Police in law enforcement capabilities.

The safety of the public is of a paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the number of specially trained police officers would compromise the safety of the public that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect.

Furthermore, this would impact on the law enforcement capabilities of Greater Manchester Police in the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This would also give an advantage to that are intent on committing crimes and avoid detection.

Factors favouring Disclosure

To disclose how many POPS trained Police Officer there are would show accountability of Greater Manchester Police in performing a key policing function. Disclosure would encourage public awareness and debate and may reduce crime or lead to more information being provided to Greater Manchester Police from the public for the prevention and detection of crime. Disclosure could be seen how Greater Manchester Police are using its resources to police and prevent crime.

Furthermore, there is always a need to disclose information which relates to the spending of public money. It is in the public's interest to see how resources are balanced across Greater Manchester Police.

Factors favouring Non-Disclosure

To disclose details of specially trained police officers would compromise the efficient and effective conduct of the force, especially the force's future law enforcement tactics being compromised. The safety of the public is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the requested information would compromise the safety of the community that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect and place individuals at risk.

Disclosure would lead to a greater impact on police resources, in that this could hinder the prevention and detection of crime and more crime being committed. It would give advantage to those individuals intent on criminal activity as it may assist potential criminals in evading the police as more vulnerable areas of lower policing levels would become evident. A fear of crime will be realised as criminals identify vulnerable areas and target and exploit these areas resulting in the public being in fear of more criminal activity occurring.

Balancing Test

When balancing the public interest Greater Manchester Police has to 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 Greater Manchester Police's accountability. This needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is the police service is charged with enforcing the law; preventing and detecting crime and protecting the people/communities we serve.

In this case this is the fact that individuals may be placed at risk and the affect it may have on the prevention and detection of crime. In this case, I believe the case for disclosure is not made out.

The police will not divulge any information that would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine law enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing, and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by criminal activity, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the tactical resource capability which could highlight which forces are focussing more on this type of investigation than other force areas.

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