

Our ref: 01/FOI/24/013733/P

Please quote our reference
number when responding

Friday, 20 December 2024

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/013733/P

I write in connection with your request for information dated 27/11/2024, I note you seek access to the following information:

I am writing to make a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the support that the police provide to local Pub Watch schemes. Specifically, I would like to obtain information regarding the following:

- 1. Process of Support : Could you provide a detailed outline of the processes and protocols that the police follow in providing support to local Pub Watch schemes?*
- 2. Support for Licensees : As a licensee, what forms of support can I expect from the police in relation to the decisions made by the Pub Watch committee?*
- 3. Information Sharing Policy : What is the police's policy regarding information sharing with Pub Watch schemes? Please include any relevant guidelines or procedures.*
- 4. Assistance in Serving Letters : Do the police assist Pub Watch schemes in serving letters to offenders who are to be placed on the Pub Watch list? If so, could you provide details on how this assistance is implemented??*

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request. Please see below answers:

1. GMP follow the National Pubwatch Good Practice Guide in providing support to local Pub watch schemes. We offer support and guidance where requested, attending in person and reviewing incidents, however we are mindful of the fact that Pub watches need to retain independence from public bodies such as the council and the police as outlined in the Good Practice Guide.

Due to the fact that there are no specific asks of the Police within the Good Practice Guide, we endeavour to tailor our involvement for each individual Pub watch.

2. Police Licensing Officers will always try to attend Pub watch meetings and review any incidents and address concerns raised at them by Licensees. Where we can legally offer support, taking into account legalities around information sharing and data protection we will endeavour to assist the committee. However, the expectation is that any actions will be carried out by the Pub Watch committee themselves in most circumstances.

The best way for a Pubwatch scheme to prevent its decisions being challenged in the courts is to follow the guidance given above regarding the constitution of the scheme, and the limited involvement of public bodies.

3. Data sharing between the Police and the schemes will depend on the Data sharing agreements drawn up and agreed between both parties, with due consideration given to all relevant pieces of legislation.

While assistance and encouragement from the police and local authority should be welcomed, the Watch should remain at all times an independent, voluntary organisation, run by and for the benefit of licensees.

4. The Police do not undertake delivery of letters on behalf of Pub watches as this could be construed as Police having involvement in the decision making process and could give the false impression that this is an official police document. The expectation is that letters will be given to the individuals concerned by the Pubs concerned. There is no obligation to issue a letter although it is advisable. There is nothing improper or unlawful in members of a Pubwatch scheme simply agreeing that next time a certain individual, attempts to gain access to any of the premises participating in the scheme, he will be refused entry.