

**Date:** 10/01/2025  
**Our ref:** 01/FOI/25/013908/P

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/013908/P**

I write in connection with your request for information dated 06/01/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

*I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

*Specifically, I would like to request the following information regarding badge or collar numbers used as part of the Greater Manchester Police uniform:*

- 1. The meaning of the letters "XT" when they appear as part of an officer's badge or collar number.*
- 2. A complete list of all letter prefixes, suffixes, or identifiers (e.g., "XT") used in badge or collar numbers by Greater Manchester Police, along with their corresponding meanings.*
- 3. If these identifiers are associated with specific divisions, units, roles, or geographical areas, please provide a description of the respective assignment or function.*

*If you require any clarification regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to your response within the statutory 20 working days.*

**Result of Searches**

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by GMP however I am not obliged to supply 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 exemption that applies to this request is:

### **Section 31(1) – Law Enforcement**

Section 31 - Law Enforcement is a qualified, and prejudice-based exemption. Therefore, the harm should be articulated, and arguments given as to the public interest test.

Disclosure of information containing the list of all letter prefixes along with the units each one represents, could be of intelligence value to a person or persons with criminal or malicious intent. Full disclosure could provide and enable targeted malicious actions, be that some form of attack on an operational unit or avoiding that unit for example where strengths and weakness may be perceived (whether incorrectly or not).

Although prefixes are displayed markers on officer's uniforms and can be clearly seen. to disclose a ready-collated list of prefixes complete with which Specialist Department that officer is from would be substantially more harmful than the limited availability of related information via the visibility of officers whilst on duty. In practice, all of this information is not realistically accessible to a member of the public and is therefore not provided in the public domain.

Additionally, law enforcement tactics and operational capability would be compromised with the disclosure for this request, as those who wish to commit criminal acts will be more aware of what officers and vehicles may belong to the force in a covert role, that assist with preventing and detecting crime.

### **Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31**

The release of specific information which identifies which department specialist officers may be linked to would demonstrate the openness of the organisation to make such matters public. The disclosure of information relating to prefixes, would adhere to the general principle of openness and transparency and better inform the public about how public funds are spent, better awareness which may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public.

### **Factions favouring non-disclosure under Section 31**

The Police service has a duty to deliver effective law enforcement ensuring that the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension or prosecution of offenders and administration of justice is carried out appropriately.

Disclosing any information that would allow the identification of specialised officers along with units and division they may be linked to may reveal what resources are available for a given role and this information could enable police strength to be determined and circumvented by those intent on committing crime. The release of this information could therefore provide a tactical advantage to offenders which would negatively impact on public safety and undermine the policing purpose.

Any disclosure of information which is likely to undermine the Police Service's ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

### **Balance Test**

It is not in the public interest for law enforcement tactics and operational capability to be compromised with the disclosure of prefixes on officer's badges/collars, as those who wish to commit criminal acts will be more aware of the specialist officers in operation to assist with preventing and detecting crime.

Such disclosure that would allow those with criminal intent the ability to build up a mosaic picture of force capabilities and resources which could be used to undermine law enforcement. This would not be in the public interest.

Disclosure is also not in the public interest as it places the community at increased unnecessary risk of harm and impact police resources. This is especially the case if additional tactics/resources need to be put in place to counter harm caused by an adverse FOIA request.

Therefore, at this moment in time, it is our opinion that the balance test favours against the disclosure of the information requested.

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