

Date: 3rd July 2025
Our ref: FOI/25/015033/B

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/25/015033/B

I write in connection with your request for information dated 30/06/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding homicides involving a sexual motive or component that occurred within your jurisdiction over the past four decades.

Specifically, I request the following information for the period 1 January 1985 to 31 December 2024:

- 1. The total number of recorded homicides involving a sexual element, defined as:**
 - Murders involving sexual assault (before, during, or after the act)
 - Homicides motivated by sexual gratification, sadism, or sexual control
 - Murders committed during rape or attempted rape
 - Homicides officially linked to a sexual motivation in court proceedings or internal classification
- 2. For each case (where available), please include the following offender-related data:**
 - Year of offence
 - Offender's gender
 - Offender's age at time of offence
 - Whether the offender had prior convictions (particularly for sexual or violent crimes)
 - Whether the offender was classified as a serial offender
 - Any indication of diagnosed mental health conditions or psychiatric involvement
 - Offender's relationship to the victim (e.g., stranger, acquaintance, partner, family member)
 - Whether the offender was known to police or social services prior to the homicide
 - If applicable, the typology assigned (e.g., sexual sadist, opportunistic, anger-retaliatory)
 - Whether the case was referred to or flagged by the Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS)

I do not request any personal identifiers. Aggregate or anonymised case-level data is sufficient. If this request exceeds cost limits, I am happy to prioritise data from more recent decades (e.g. 1995–2024) or reduce the level of detail on your advice.

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 some of the information requested is held by GMP. However, I am not obliged to provide the information requested as exemptions apply.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide such information (because this 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 exemptions which apply to this request are:

Section 40(2) – Personal Information Section 38(1)(a)(b) – Health and Safety

Section 40 is an absolute exemption with no requirement to complete a public interest test.

Section 38 is a prejudice based qualified exemption; there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test, which can be seen below.

Due to low numbers returned the information requested regarding the offenders has been exempt from disclosure under Section 40(2) Personal Information – this information constitutes personal data of an identifiable living individual, and to disclose this information would breach the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data is defined by Section 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and means data that relates to an individual who can be identified directly or indirectly from that data.

Section 38 Public Interest Test

Harm

This Act provides the public with a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities. However, information disclosed under this Act is effectively released into the public domain, or to the 'wider world', and not only to the person making the request.

The pain and suffering caused to the victims' families and friends is unquestionably as profound now as it was when the crimes took place.

To disclose the exempt information into the public domain would undoubtedly have an impact on the health and safety of the family members of the victims.

Disclosing such information could cause further distress and hurt to grieving families, many of who would no doubt still be greatly traumatised by the events. Such detailed information being disclosed about the crime and the offender could resurface these traumatic experiences and cause the victim's families to again revisit this most terrible period of their lives.

Protecting the safety of the public is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and information that would compromise such health and safety would not be disclosed within a response to a Freedom of Information request.

Factors favouring disclosure

There may be occasions when it is appropriate to disclose information that would have an impact on the health and safety of an individual or the public in general. In this particular case, I cannot identify any benefit to the wider public (in terms of health and safety) to disclose such sensitive details.

There are, however, more general arguments that must be considered such as openness and transparency, which would lead to a more informed public.

Factors favouring non-disclosure

Although some information may already be in the public domain and that information relates to deceased persons, due to the nature of the crimes committed, and that disclosure under Freedom of Information Act is disclosure to the world at large with no specific controls, disclosure carries the potential risk of causing significant mental and physical harm and distress to the family and friends of the victims.

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 openness. This needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is concerns for the health and safety, both mental and physical, of family and friends of the victims.

Having considered all the factors for and against disclosure it is my belief that in this case, the reason against disclosure outweighs the reason for disclosure and so the decision at this time to maintain the above exemption and withhold the information from disclosure