

Date: 20/06/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/014667/Z

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/014667/Z

I write in connection with your request for information dated 25/04/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

1. On or about 08.10.2024 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
sent a request for material relating to Operation Chrome to was sent to colleagues [the identity of whom is not known to me] ('the communication of 08.10.2024')
2. On 10.10.2024 extremely brief material relating to Operation Chrome was provided to [REDACTED] ('the response of 10.10.2024')
3. On 28.11.2024 a file relating to Operation Chrome which had each document therein printed off was complete and was also in electronic form for transmission. It is understood that there are 7 lever-arch files of papers (around 2,300 pages) of material ('the Operation Chrome file')
4. **The Chief Constable of GMP is requested to provide on a voluntary basis outside the Freedom of Information Act:**
(a) the communication of 08.10.2024;
(b) the response of 10.10.2024; and
(c) the Operation Chrome file

I am quite willing, as an initial step, to attend in person to inspect such material. Please confirm such will occur and, if not, why not?

5. *If GMP is not willing to allow what is sought in paragraph 4 (above) then I seek such material as can be provided within any time/cost limitation (if any would be sought to be applied. In order to assist the priority would be to have the recorded information contained in:*
- (i) the Operation Chrome plan*
 - (ii) the communication of 08.10.2024*

(iii) the response of 10.10.2024

Thereafter such further recorded information from the Operation Chrome file can be provided,

6. Please can you provide advice and assistance (including pursuant to the statutory duty under section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act) to enable me to obtain such recorded information referred to above and information related thereto. I am willing to meet in person to discuss matters. Please advise as to when and where such can be facilitated?

Result of Searches

Greater Manchester Police neither confirms nor denies that it holds information relevant to this request by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 31(3) Law Enforcement

Section 40(5B)(a)(i) - Personal Information

The Freedom of Information 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. In cases where the public request information relating to individuals, it would be extremely rare for a public authority to release such information to the whole world under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Question 4(a) is covered by the below exemption.

Section 40(5B)(a)(i) - Personal Information – Giving information to a member of the public of the confirmation or denial that would have to be given to comply with section 1(1)(a) would (apart from this Act) contravene any of the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

To confirm that any information is held or not, could confirm personal data. In some circumstances confirming or denying whether information is held could itself identify a living individual and would therefore breach the principles of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Personal data is defined by Article 4 of the GDPR and Part 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018, and means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identified natural person is one who can be identified directly or indirectly from that data.

This use of neither confirm nor deny should not be taken as proof that such information does or does not exist.

Question 4(b/c) are covered by the below exemption.

Section 31(3) Law Enforcement

Section 31 is prejudice based and qualified which means that there is a requirement to articulate the harm in confirming or not whether information is held as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Harm

Any release under FOIA is a disclosure to the world, not just to the individual making the request. To confirm or deny the existence of such operations could enable individuals or criminal groups to infer the nature and extent of law enforcement interests or surveillance in given area, thereby enabling

them to take steps to avoid detection or disrupt investigative tactics. Conversely, denying the existence of an operation in other instances could signal where law enforcement interest is absent, equally assisting individuals intent on criminal or harmful activity.

The fear that information could be made publicly known at any time could result in people not engaging with the police and failing to report crime to the police which ultimately undermines law enforcement. Modern-day policing is intelligence led and this is particularly pertinent with regard to law enforcement.

Factors favoring confirmation or denial for S31

There is public interest in transparency and accountability where the police service is concerned as public taxes fund the Police and this obviously favours confirmation or denial.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S31

Confirming or denying whether a particular operation exists may reveal law enforcement interest (or lack thereof) in a specific individual, organisation, or method. This could undermine investigative capabilities.

Criminals or hostile actors could exploit any confirmation or denial to adapt behaviours and avoid detection, thus prejudicing the prevention and detection of crime.

The disclosure of any operational detail, even in the form of a confirmation or denial could compromise covert methodologies, intelligence sources and the broader public interest in safeguarding national security and effective policing.

Balance Test

While there is a recognised public interest in promoting transparency and accountability in the work of public authorities, this must be balanced against the real and substantial risk that confirming or denying the existence of information could prejudice law enforcement functions. On balance, the public interest in maintaining the NCND stance outweighs the public interest in confirmation or denial.

Therefore, GMP will neither confirm nor deny whether the requested information is held.