

Date: 26/06/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/014857/D

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/014857/D

I write in connection with your request for information dated 29/05/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request information relating to any interactions, communications, or involvement between [REDACTED] and Greater Manchester Police.

Specifically, I request the following:

- 1. Any records of formal or informal communications between GMP officers and [REDACTED] from January 2010 to the present day, including but not limited to emails, call logs, meeting minutes, or memos.***
- 2. Any documentation relating to arrests or police action initiated following complaints or requests made by [REDACTED], particularly where he is the complainant and appears to have influence over police response or decisions.***
- 3. Whether [REDACTED] has ever been registered, classified, or used as a police informant (CHIS - Covert Human Intelligence Source), source, or community contact, either formally or informally, by GMP or any affiliated intelligence unit.***
- 4. Whether any GMP officers are known to be on a first-name basis with [REDACTED] or have been advised to treat him with familiarity, including internal policies or communications that address this relationship.***
- 5. Any roles [REDACTED] may have held in GMP-related advisory boards, public engagement initiatives, or community liaison programs.***

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 24(2) – National security

Section 30(3) Investigations.

Section 31(3) Law Enforcement.

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

Section 30 is a class based qualified exemption and consideration of the public interest must be given as to whether neither confirming nor denying information exists is the appropriate response.

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.

Section 40 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to evidence the harm or consider the public interest.

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.

Therefore, in accordance with the Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this request in relation to questions 1-5.

Greater Manchester Police can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you requested as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply, by virtue of the following 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.

In addition, the following exemptions apply to questions 2 and 3.

Harm for Section 31

Any release under the Freedom of Information Act is a disclosure to the world, not just to the individual making the request. To confirm or deny whether information is held pertinent to this request would reveal whether Greater Manchester Police has received variations of intelligence from Covert Human Intelligence Sources.

Modern-day policing is intelligence led. The public expect police forces to use all powers and tactics available to them to prevent and detect crime or disorder and maintain public safety, regardless of who the individual may be.

Revealing whether or not a complaint resulted in an arrests or police action may enable offenders to infer policing thresholds, exploit gaps in enforcement, or manipulate systems to avoid detection.

In addition, to confirm or deny whether information is held in this case has the potential to undermine the flow of information (intelligence) received from members of the public into the Police Service relating to these types of offenders.

Harm for section 24

Confirming or denying whether a named individual is or ever was acting as under (CHIS) would cause specific and real harm to national security.

The use of CHIS is a critical tactic in policing to gather intelligence on serious criminality, disrupt organised crime, prevent terrorism and protect public safety. The entire CHIS framework is built on absolute confidentiality. A core principle underpinning the use of informant is the assurance that their identity and involvement will never be released directly or indirectly.

Additionally, any confirmation or denial would compromise source protection across all policing operations, play a major part in the future of any potential CHIS recruitment GMP may wish to enter in and cause endangerment of life and public safety.

Factors favoring confirmation or denial for Section 31_– It is in the public interest for Greater Manchester Police to demonstrate openness and transparency in how the public's money is spent.

Factors against confirmation or denial for Section 31 – Greater Manchester Police has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If an FOI disclosure revealed information to the world (by citing an exemption or stating no information held) it would assist an offender by revealing the 'intelligence' picture, thereby highlighting vulnerabilities force by force. This could alert individuals that they may or may not be a person of interest thereby facilitating avoidance of detection.

Ensuring operational tactics and thresholds remain confidential are of importance and any confirmation or denial could hinder the law enforcement of this.

Additionally, disclosure against confirmation or denial will maintain public safety by reducing manipulation of policing thresholds.

By its very nature, by confirming or denying this information is held would undermine the effective delivery of operational law enforcement. Under FOI there is a requirement to comply with s1(1)(a) and confirm what information is held. In some cases, it is that confirmation, or not, which could disclose facts harmful to members of the public and police officers or other law enforcement agencies.

Factors favouring Confirming or Denying for Section 24

Confirmation or denial that any other information exists relevant to the request would lead to a better informed public and the public are entitled to know the how public funds are spent by the police on the

utilisation of CHIS. The information simply relates to national security and disclosure would not actually harm it.

Factors against Confirming or Denying for Section 24

By confirming or denying whether any information is held would render policing and security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect national security by ensuring tactics are not exposed. Adopting this stance protects individuals who may or may not be CHIS from risk of any harm.

Factors against Confirming or Denying will prevent hostile actors from using FOI responses to compile a pattern of intelligence activity. This will maintain the operational effectiveness of GMP and prevents interference with ongoing investigations.

Factors favoring confirmation or denial for Section 30 – Confirming or denying whether information exists relevant to this request would lead to a better informed general public by identifying that Greater Manchester Police robustly investigates all individuals. This fact alone may encourage individuals to provide intelligence in order to assist with investigations and would also promote public trust in providing transparency and demonstrating openness and accountability into where the police are currently focusing their investigations.

The public are also entitled to know how public funds are spent.

Factors against confirmation or denial for Section 30 – Modern-day policing is intelligence led. To confirm or not whether Greater Manchester Police has investigated any individuals particular from youtubers and social media could hinder the prevention and detection of crime. Any ongoing investigation may be affected by making an individual aware of whether they have been, or are being investigated.

Balance Test

The points above highlight the merits of confirming, or denying, whether information pertinent to this request exists. The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The Police Service will never divulge whether or not information is held if to do so would place the safety of individual(s) at risk or undermine ongoing investigations.

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection through the prevention and detection of crime, and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with any information that is released. Confirming or denying whether information is or isn't held would definitely reveal policing activity and would assist those intent on committing criminal acts.

Therefore, taking into account the arguments above, it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test favours neither confirmation or denial that the requested information is held.

However, no inference can be taken from this refusal that information does or does not exist.