

Date: 12/06/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/014885/H

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/014885/H

I write in connection with your request for information dated 04/06/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information:

- 1. Does your force have a dedicated cyber crime unit?**
- 2. If so, how many staff (FTE) are currently employed in the cyber unit?**
- 3. What is the annual budget allocated to the cyber unit, or the total cost of operating the unit for the last financial year?**
- 4. How many cyber-related incidents were handled by the unit in the last 12 months?**

If any of the above information is already publicly available, I'd be grateful if you could direct me to the appropriate resource.

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 the information requested is held by GMP.

However, I am not obliged to provide the information for questions 2 and 3 of this request as exemption applies.

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law enforcement

Section 31 is a qualified and prejudice-based exemption and as such, subject to a harm and public interest test.

Harm

Disclosure of the number of Police Officers and staff along with allocated budgets in specific areas of policing, in this case the GMP Cyber Crime Unit reveals tactical capability and vulnerabilities from force to force and would compromise the efficient and effective conduct of Greater Manchester Police. To disclose operational strength would hinder Greater Manchester Police in law enforcement capabilities.

The safety of the public is of a paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the number of specially trained police officers that are specifically dedicated to fraud would compromise the safety of the public that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect.

The disclosure could provide and enable targeted malicious actions, be that some form of attack on the operational team or avoiding that team for example where strengths and weakness may be perceived (whether incorrectly or not).

Furthermore, this would impact on the law enforcement capabilities of Greater Manchester Police in the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This would also give an advantage to that are intent on committing crimes and avoid detection.

Section 31 - Factors favouring disclosure

To disclose this information would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, it would also lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force.

Disclosure would provide an insight into how public funds are spent on tackling this area of crime.

Section 31 - Factors favouring non-disclosure

Providing the level of officers and staff on specific operation area would reveal the operational and tactical capabilities of Greater Manchester Police. If specific numbers were given for a specialised team, this would allow the geographic mapping of resources. This would compromise law enforcement tactics and hinder the prevention and detection of crime and the successful prosecution of offenders.

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Disclosure would provide those individuals or groups within the criminal fraternity who wish to attack the police with a significant operational advantage and the information could also be used to target locations perceived as less well-resourced or to develop tactics to divert resources away from locations that they wish to target. This would clearly jeopardise the ability of Greater Manchester Police to respond appropriately to criminal activity and thereby protect the public.

Disclosing the specific budgets allocated per units would reveal operational information that could lead to those wanting to commit crime being in a position to map out ways to work out the number of staffing per each unit. This could hinder the prevention of crime.

The safety of the public is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the requested information would compromise the safety of the community that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect and place individuals at risk.

Balancing Test

Law enforcement is of paramount importance and the Police service will not disclose information if to do so would undermine its purpose and place the safety of individual(s) at risk. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of using public money in policing appropriately and effectively engaging with

the threat posed by criminals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations in this area.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of law enforcement, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Any disclosure which hinders our capability and assists criminals cannot be in the public interest.

It is for these reasons that I have determined that the balance test favours non-disclosure of the requested information.

Please see the remaining responses below.

1. Yes.
2. S31 – See Above.
3. S31 – See Above.
4. 1092.