



Date: 25/09/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/015242/I

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/015242/I

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, public authorities can amalgamate requests from the same individual that are on the same subject matter if they are received within 60 working days of each other. Therefore, the 2 requests you sent to us on 01/08/2025 and 05/08/2025 regarding policing of football matches have been merged into one request.

I write in connection with your request for information received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

REQUEST 1:

What would you like to know?: Dear Freedom of Information Team,

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information regarding Manchester United vs Manchester City (Men's Teams) for each of the last three seasons (2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25):

- A. The number of police officers deployed for each fixture in or around Old Trafford Stadium on the dates of; 14/01/2023, 29/10/2023, 06/04/2025
- B. A breakdown of which types of units were deployed (e.g., mounted units, public order teams, plainclothes officers, tactical support groups, etc.) for each of the above dates.
- C. The total number of arrests made in connection with each match - including before, during, and after the game - and the nature of the offences (e.g., disorder, alcohol, assault, pitch invasion, etc.) for each of the above dates.
- D. The overall cost (if available) to the police for providing match-day policing for each fixture.

REQUEST 2:

What would you like to know?: Dear Freedom of Information Team,

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information regarding Manchester United vs Manchester City (Men's Teams) for each of the last three seasons (2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25):

- A. The number of police officers deployed for each fixture in or around The Etihad Stadium on the dates of; 02/10/2022, 03/03/2024, 15/12/2024
- B. A breakdown of which types of units were deployed (e.g., mounted units, public order teams, plainclothes officers, tactical support groups, etc.) for each of the above dates.
- C. The total number of arrests made in connection with each match - including before, during, and after the game - and the nature of the offences (e.g., disorder, alcohol, assault, pitch invasion, etc.) for each of the above dates.
- D. The overall cost (if available) to the police for providing match-day policing for each fixture.

REQUEST 3:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information regarding Leeds United vs Manchester United (Men's Teams):

- A. The number of police officers deployed for each fixture in or around Old Trafford Stadium on the dates of; 08 Feb 2023, 14 Aug 2021, 20 Dec 2020
- B. A breakdown of which types of units were deployed (e.g., mounted units, public order teams, plainclothes officers, tactical support groups, etc.).
- C. The total number of arrests made in connection with each match - including before, during, and after the game - and the nature of the offences (e.g., disorder, alcohol, assault, pitch invasion, etc.).
- D. The overall cost (if available) to the police for providing match-day policing for each fixture.

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 that the information you have requested is held by GMP. However, I am not required to provide it all as an exemption applies.

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.

This information you have requested in parts A, B, and D of your requests is exempt from disclosure by virtue of **Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement**. The Section 31 exemption is subject to a public interest test and in this case, I would outline the relevant factors as:

Harm: A Freedom of Information Act request is not a private transaction. Both the request itself and any information disclosed, are considered suitable for open publication. This is because under the Act, any information disclosed is released into the wider public domain, effectively to the world, not just to an individual. Whilst not questioning the motives of the applicant, providing any further information relating to specific policing operations conducted by Greater Manchester Police would reveal our operational capability, which would be of intelligence value to criminals. Disclosure of resources at the police's disposal, including resources allocated for the policing of football matches will mean that those members of the public who are committing crimes and pose a risk to the public would be able to formulate ways to circumvent or overwhelm those resources.

If disclosed the tactics used by GMP will become less effective and will mean that the police are not able to detect and prevent crime, apprehend, or prosecute offenders or to administer justice for the wider community. There is always a duty of care to the public and the GMP has a clear responsibility to ensure the prevention or detection of crime, and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders is always delivered.

There are several tactics available to the GMP to ensure the effective delivery of operational law enforcement. In this case, specialist policing activity relating to football related crime and disorder is required to undertake fair investigations where it may be necessary to progress a range of reasonable lines of enquiry. As such, the disclosure of any further information which would hinder the force's law enforcement functions cannot be in the public interest.

Factors in favour of disclosure: Where public funds are being spent, there is a public interest in accountability and justifying the use of public money. Disclosure of the requested information would enable the public to assess whether the force has appropriately taken steps to help reduce and detect crime by such means as allocating sufficient resources to the policing of football matches. Release would enhance public debate as to whether the force is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by those intent on committing crimes at football matches.

Factors against disclosure: Disclosure that reveals our operational capabilities would compromise law enforcement tactics. Criminals could use the information to target perceived areas of weakness knowing that their activities are less likely to be detected. It may be used by criminals who are intent on pursuing their criminal activity, to identify and exploit the limitations of these resources.

To release information relating to operational capacity and capability utilised for policing football matches would have a detrimental effect on our policing capabilities. Therefore, to mitigate any risks, disclosure of this information needs to be protected, to ensure that those with intent to do so cannot manipulate it or undermine its purpose in any way. Any disclosure of information which would compromise law enforcement tactics and thus lead to more crime being committed by reducing the opportunity for the prevention and detection of crime, would therefore increase the risk to public safety, which is not in the public interest.

Balancing Test: Law enforcement is of paramount importance and GMP will not disclose information if to do so would undermine its purpose and place the safety of the public 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.

Part C of each request is not exempt and can be answered as follows:

1.

- Date: 02/10/2022
- Total arrests: 5 (2 for ticket touting, 1 for pitch encroachment, 2 for kidnapping)
- Date: 03/03/2024
- Total arrests: 13 (6 Class A drugs, 1 racially aggravated common assault, 2 assaults, 1 for public order, 1 sexual assault, 1 throwing a missile, 1 assault emergency worker)
- Date: 15/12/2024
- Total arrests: 11 (5 Public order – tragedy chanting, 3 Class A drugs, 2 Drunk & disorderly, 1 theft)

2.

- Date: 14/01/2023
- Total arrests: 4 (2 for racially aggravated public order and assault police / 1 for public order / 1 for assault)
- Date: 29/10/2023
- Total arrests: 11 (2 x arrests for Fraud / 3 arrests for Class A drugs / 3 arrests drunk & disorderly / 3 arrests for throwing missiles)
- Date: 06/04/2025
- Total arrests: 10 (1 for class A drugs / 1 for D&D / 2 for Public Order / 1 for obstruct police / 4 for assault / 1 for police assault)

3.

- 08/02/2023
- Number of arrests: 2 (sexual assault / Drunk & Disorderly)
- 14/08/2021
- Number of arrests: 4 (Public order / Class A drugs / Drunk & Disorderly)
- 20/12/2020
- Number of arrests: 0 (COVID period, match played behind closed doors)