

Date: 1st October 2025
Our ref: FOI/25/015567/A

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/25/015567/A

I write in connection with your request for information dated 30/09/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the Moors Murders case. Specifically, I would like to obtain details about the geographical locations where the bodies of the victims were found and buried on Saddleworth Moor. Additionally, I am seeking information on any known geographical details related to the case of Keith Bennett.

Please note that I am not requesting any graphic or sensitive imagery, but rather factual information about the locations and circumstances.

I appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information. I can confirm 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 GMP, when refusing to provide such information (because the 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 30(1)(2)(a) – Investigations and Proceedings Conducted by Public Authorities

Section 38(1)(a)(b) – Health and Safety

Section 30 is a class based qualified exemption; there is a requirement to carry out 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.

Harm as per Section 38

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.

Ian Brady and Myra Hindley were one of Britain's most notorious child killers and despite the passing of over 50 years since they committed their crimes, the pain and suffering caused to the victims' surviving 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 surviving family members of the victims. Disclosing such information could cause further distress and hurt to grieving families, many of whom would no doubt still be greatly traumatised by these horrific events. Such information being disclosed 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 GMP and information that would compromise such health and safety would not be disclosed within a response to a Freedom of Information request.

Section 30 - Factors Favouring Disclosure

To disclose the exempt information, into the public domain, would show GMP's accountability, and satisfy the public, that the investigation is being conducted correctly. It would also show GMP's use of public funds in continuing to investigate such a high-profile crime.

Section 30 - Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

Conversely to the factors in favour of disclosure, to publicly release information from an investigation that has been ongoing for several decades and remains open may prejudice that criminal investigation and seriously undermine GMP's ability to complete it to a full and correct conclusion. Whilst the investigation is seen as high profile, to disclose any details may still hinder the process needed to be followed.

Section 38 - 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 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.

Section 38 - 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 by Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, and that disclosure under Freedom of Information 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 loved ones of their 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 exemptions and withhold the information from disclosure.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this request.