

Date: 28th October 2025
Our ref: FOI/25/015653/X

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/25/015653/X

I write in connection with your request for information dated 13/10/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am writing to amend my original questions in the hope that it will be possible to provide a response to some of my questions if they are narrowed slightly.

I am willing to drop question 1. For questions 2 and 3, I wish to narrow my request to identify only the kind or kinds of guns and ammunition that were actually used by officers on the scene at Heaton Park Hebrew Synagogue.

I believe that this should not invoke an s31 exemption, as it is quite similar to a case in which the ICO decided that the Home Office could not withhold the ratio of guards to detainees on a specific deportation flight, because it could not demonstrate that the particulars of those circumstances would be likely to harm their interest in carrying out further flights in the future, since every situation is slightly different.

The ICO points out: it is not enough for the information to merely relate to an interest protected by section 31(1)(e). Its disclosure must also at least be likely to harm that interest. This is true for all the subsections of section 31. The onus is on you to explain how that harm would arise and why it is likely to occur.

**** ORIGINAL REQUEST ****

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The information I am requesting concerns the police response to the terrorist attack on Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue on 2nd October 2025.

Please provide the following information:

- 1. How many firearms officers on the scene discharged their weapons?*

- 2. What guns were the officers on the scene equipped with?**
- 3. What ammunition were the officers on the scene equipped with?**

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.

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 exemption which applies to this request is:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement

Section 31 is prejudice based and qualified exemptions; 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

Disclosure of information such as the type of 'guns and ammunition' which are carried by officer, in particular following the major incident outside the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue, would reveal tactical capabilities and vulnerabilities and would compromise the efficient and effective conduct of Greater Manchester Police during these deployments.

The safety of the public is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release details about operations would compromise the safety of the public that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect.

Furthermore, this would impact future law enforcement capabilities of Greater Manchester Police in the prevention and detection of crime as criminals' intent on committing crime would have an insight on how and when police resources are used.

Factors in Favour of Disclosure

To disclose the information request 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.

Factors in Favouring Non-Disclosure

Disclosure of the specific firearms and equipment used by armed officers would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension and prosecution of offenders. Knowledge of specific weapons and ammunition available to officers could enable individuals or groups with criminal intent to take measure to defeat or avoid police tactics. This could place officers and members of the public at risk of harm.

Disclosure would provide those individuals within the criminal fraternity who wish to attack the police or members of the public with a significant operational advantage. The information could also be used to target locations perceived as less 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.

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, including officers, at risk of harm.

Balance Test

When balancing the public interest Greater Manchester Police must 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. However, this needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is the fact that individuals may be placed at risk of harm and the effect it may have on the prevention and detection of crime and protecting the people and communities we serve.

Having considered all the factors for and against disclosure, the reason against disclosure outweighs the reason for disclosure and so the decision at this time is to maintain the above exemption and withhold the information from disclosure.