

Date: 04/09/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/015272/O

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/015272/O

I write in connection with your request for information dated 05/08/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Please can I be provided with the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

- 1. The number of arrests at your force under the Terrorism Act 2000 so far this year (2025).***
- 2. The number of 2025 arrests under section 12, and the number under section 13.***
- 3. The number of arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000 in the annual year 2024.***
- 4. The number of 2024 arrests under section 12, and the number under section 13.***
- 5. The number of arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000 in the annual year 2023.***
- 6. The number of 2023 arrests under section 12, and the number under section 13.***

- For the arrests under section 13 in 2025, please can you provide a list of the types of items seized in any house raids conducted as a result of these arrests. E.g. laptops, literature, phones.

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 requested is held by GMP, but I am not obliged to provide all of it 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 that apply to questions 1, 3 and 5 of this request are **Section 24(1) – National security** and **Section 31(1) – Law enforcement**.

Sections 24 and 31 are prejudice based qualified exemptions and there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in disclosing the requested information as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Overall Harm

This 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.

Whilst not questioning the motives of the applicant it could be of use to those who seek to disrupt any police investigation as it would provide valuable intelligence to terrorists and/or extremists on the effectiveness of Counter Terrorism activity by an individual police force for arrests made specifically in relation to Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

Modern day policing is intelligence led and this is particularly pertinent with regard to both law enforcement and national security. 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.

The threat from terrorism cannot be ignored. It should be recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The UK faces a sustained threat from violent terrorists and extremists. Since 2006, the UK Government have published the threat level, based upon current intelligence and that threat has remained at the second highest level, 'severe', except for two short periods during August 2006 and June and July 2007, when it was raised to the highest threat, 'critical', and in July 2009, when it was reduced to 'substantial'. The current threat level to the UK is 'substantial'.

<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels>

If GMP were to disclose the number of person(s) arrested under Section 41 Terrorism Act, this would undermine an individual force's policing capabilities, which consequently would be detrimental to their ability to deal with the on-going terrorist threat we face.

The Home Office regularly publishes national data in relation to terrorism arrests, which includes those made under Section 41 of Terrorism Act 2000. Figures in the link below (see 'quarterly data tables, Tab **Q – A.02**) confirm that arrests on these grounds are generally low, therefore, to disclose of how many of these arrests were made by the GMP would allow comparison across Forces and could allow individuals to exploit what may be considered as less active or resourced areas, by assessing patterns of police activity and deployments over time, ultimately to avoid detection.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000-financial-year-ending-march-2021>

Factors favouring disclosure for S24

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and to disclose the requested information would allow the public to see where money is being spent and know that forces are doing as much as possible to combat terrorism.

Factors favouring non-disclosure for for S24

To disclose policing arrangements of this nature existed would render security measures less effective. The risk of harm to the public would be elevated if areas of the UK which appear vulnerable

were identified, which would also provide the opportunity for terrorist planning. Ongoing or future operations to protect the security and infrastructure of the UK would be compromised as terrorists could map the level of counter-terrorist activity across the country, providing them with the knowledge of individual force capability as well as valuable knowledge concerning the vulnerability of individual force areas.

Factors favouring disclosure for S31

To disclose the requested data would allow the public to understand that the police are robust in preventing and investigating terrorism-related activity. This would enable the public to have a better understanding of efficiency of the force in carrying out its law enforcement role and demonstrate our commitment to openness and transparency.

Disclosure would make members of the public more aware of the threat of terrorism and allow them to take steps to protect themselves and families. Improved public awareness may lead to more intelligence being submitted to police about possible acts of terrorism, as members of the public will be more observant to suspicious activity, which in turn may result in a reduction of crime. The Home Office regularly publish national statistical data on terrorism.

Factors favouring non-disclosure for S31

The release of this information could compromise law enforcement tactics which would hinder the GMP's ability to prevent and detect terrorist crimes. The threat of terrorism will increase as more crimes are committed because of terrorists gaining knowledge about the capabilities of individual forces and therefore the public will be placed at a greater risk. A fear of crime will be realised, as terrorists identify areas to be less police focused and therefore vulnerable and target and exploit these areas, resulting in the public being in fear of more terrorist activity occurring.

There would be an impact on police resources by disclosing the requested data, as vulnerable forces may need to increase their resources to reassure and protect the surrounding community.

Balance Test

The Home Office regularly publishes national data in relation to terrorism arrests and charges, as demonstrated in the link above.

To disclose the number of individuals who GMP have arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act would start to indicate levels of policing activity at force level, which could allow individuals to exploit what may be considered as less active or resourced areas, by assessing patterns of police activity and deployments over time, ultimately to avoid detection.

The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police service will not divulge information if to do so would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine National Security or compromise law enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and in this case providing assurance that GMP is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by terrorist activity, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and law enforcement in the highly sensitive subject of terrorism.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of national security this will be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Police force's capabilities of combating terrorism are sensitive issues of intelligence value to the terrorist and therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for disclosing the requested information would not be in the public interest.

Please see the remaining, disclosable data.

- 2. Nil
- 4. Nil
- 6. Nil