

Date: 9th April 2026
Our ref: FOI/26/016606/P

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/26/016606/P

I write in connection with your request for information dated 23/03/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for academic research purposes as part of my MSc dissertation. My research examines the role of private security in counter-terrorism and the protection of publicly accessible locations in the United Kingdom.

To ensure this request remains proportionate and within cost limits, I am seeking only high-level or summary information. I would also like to clarify that this request does not seek any operationally sensitive, tactical, or security-critical information.

I would be grateful if you could provide:

1. Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (CTSAs) The approximate number of Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (CTSAs) operating within your force area.

2. Engagement with Publicly Accessible Locations Confirmation of whether your force engages with publicly accessible locations (e.g. retail, events, transport hubs, or entertainment venues) as part of counter-terrorism preparedness activity.

3. Engagement with Private Security

Confirmation of whether CTSAs or other officers engage directly with:

Private security providers

Venue security managers

As part of Protect and Prepare or similar workstreams.

4. Training and Awareness (High-Level)

Confirmation of whether your force:

Promotes ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) Awareness or ACT Security training Delivers or supports counter-terrorism awareness sessions for local organisations

5. Protect Duty / Martyn's Law (High-Level) Confirmation of whether your force has undertaken any preparatory activity or engagement with organisations in anticipation of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law / Protect Duty).

If any part of this request exceeds cost limits, I would be grateful if you could provide partial information or advise how the request may be refined.

I would prefer to receive the information electronically where possible.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

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 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.

Question 1 is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 31(1)(a) – Law Enforcement

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

Public Interest Test

Harm

Disclosure of information relating to the number of Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (CTSAs) operating within the force area would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime, in particular terrorism.

CTSAs are a specialist counter-terrorism resource. Revealing how many are operating within a defined geographic area would provide insight into the force's counter-terrorism capability, capacity, and coverage. Even approximate figures would allow comparisons to be drawn between force areas and over time, enabling hostile actors to identify perceived strengths, weaknesses, or gaps in protective security arrangements.

The wording of the request refers to CTSAs "operating" within the force area, which goes beyond simple staffing information and relates to current deployment and activity. Disclosure would therefore risk revealing live or near-live operational capability. This could assist those with hostile intent in planning, targeting, or adjusting their activities to avoid engagement with counter-terrorism measures, thereby undermining their effectiveness.

Once disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act, the information would be considered available to the public at large, including individuals or groups seeking to cause harm. The loss of such information could not be mitigated or controlled, and the ability of the police to prevent and detect terrorism would be prejudiced.

For these reasons, disclosure would be likely to cause real and significant harm to law enforcement functions, and the exemption under section 31(1)(a) is engaged.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

There is a public interest in openness and transparency around policing activity, particularly in relation to counter-terrorism preparedness. Disclosure of information can help promote public confidence that appropriate resources and expertise are in place to protect communities and respond to terrorist threats. Providing insight into how policing addresses terrorism can also support informed public debate and accountability for the use of public resources.

Additionally, transparency can reassure businesses, organisations, and members of the public that counter-terrorism measures exist to support protective security within force areas.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

There is a strong and pressing public interest in ensuring that the police are able to prevent and detect terrorism effectively. Releasing information about the number of Counter Terrorism Security Advisers operating within a force area would risk revealing sensitive information about counter-terrorism capability, coverage, and capacity.

Disclosure would allow comparisons to be drawn between force areas and over time, enabling hostile actors to make informed judgements about where protective security and CT engagement may be more limited. This could assist those with malicious intent in planning or adapting their activities to reduce the likelihood of detection or intervention, directly undermining counter-terrorism efforts.

The request refers specifically to CTSAs “operating” within the force area, which would require comment on current or near-current deployment. There is a strong public interest in avoiding disclosures that expose live operational CT capability or posture, particularly where the consequences of misuse could place public safety at risk.

Once information is disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act, it enters the public domain and cannot be restricted. The police would have no control over who accesses the information or how it is used, increasing the risk of harm. Preventing such harm carries significantly greater weight than the limited additional transparency that disclosure would provide.

Balance Test

While transparency in policing is important, in this case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Protecting the effectiveness of counter-terrorism measures, and safeguarding the public from the risk of terrorism, is a higher public interest than releasing information that could undermine those objectives.

Accordingly, the exemption under section 31(1)(a) is justified.

Response to Remaining Questions

Question 1 – Exempt.

Question 2 – Yes

Question 3 – Yes

Question 4 – Yes

Question 5 – For this information you would need to contact the regulator. Please redirect your request to SIA.