

Date: 02/07/2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017084/P

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017084/P

I write in connection with your request for information dated 17/06/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Oldham Council's Community Safety Service has stated that "GMP recently implemented a Dispersal Order in the locality in relation to ASB" in the Failsworth area. Please provide the following recorded information about any dispersal power authorised under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 in the Failsworth East area (covering Joseph Street and the adjacent park) during 2026:

- 1. Whether a dispersal authorisation under s.34 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 has been granted in the Failsworth East area in 2026 and, if so, the date(s) authorised, the duration, and the geographic area covered.***
- 2. The rank of the officer who authorised it.***
- 3. The number of directions to disperse issued under that authorisation, and the number of individuals subject to them (aggregate figures only).***
- 4. Any recorded figures for ASB / public-order incidents reported in the Joseph Street area or adjacent park over the last 24 months, broken down by month if held.***
- 5. Details of any joint evening patrols GMP has conducted with Oldham Council's Community Safety Team in Failsworth in 2026 (dates and frequency).***

Aggregate or anonymised figures are sufficient throughout; I am not requesting personal data about any identifiable individual. If any part is exempt, please apply the exemption narrowly and release the remainder with reasons.

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 the information requested is held by GMP.

However, I am not obliged to supply you with all of the information held as exemptions apply.

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.

**Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement.
(question 5)**

**Section 40(2) Personal Information
(question 2)**

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

Section 40 is an absolute exemption with no requirement to complete a public interest test.

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 **question 5** of this FOI would reveal our operational capability, which would be of intelligence value to criminals.

Disclosing the specific frequencies, dates, or schedules of police patrols in a given area would compromise operational security and significantly undermine public safety. Providing this granular tactical data creates a blueprint of law enforcement presence, effectively revealing predictable gaps in coverage and periods of vulnerability. Criminal elements could exploit this information to map out windows of opportunity to commit offenses, evade detection, and orchestrate illicit activities with minimal risk of apprehension.

Furthermore, exposing patrol patterns jeopardises officer safety by allowing hostile individuals to predict police movements, increasing the risk of targeted ambushes or counter-surveillance. Consequently, withholding these details is necessary to prevent the frustration of law enforcement efforts, maintain the deterrent effect of random policing, and ensure the continuous protection of the local community.

Factors favouring disclosure for S31

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 providing regular patrols. Release would enhance public debate as to whether the force is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by criminals.

Factors against disclosure for S31

Disclosure that reveals our operational capabilities would compromise law enforcement tactics. Criminals could use the information to target 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 details of any evening patrols GMP has conducted in Failsworth in 2026 (dates and frequency) 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 the Police service will not disclose information if to do so would undermine its purpose and place the safety of individual(s) 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 or those intent with causing Anti-social Behaviour, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of the frequency and location of police patrols 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.

Question 2 is exempted from disclosure under **Section 40(2) Personal Information** – this information constitutes personal data of an identifiable living individual/s, and to disclose this information would breach the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data is defined by Section 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and means data that relates to an individual who can be identified directly or indirectly from that data.

Please see the remaining responses below.

Q1 - A S.34 dispersal order was issued on the 5th of June 2026 following reports of a significant number of youths in Higher Memorial Park and a disturbance taking place at that location. The order lasted for a period of 10hrs between 1752hrs 05/06/26 & 0452hrs 06/06/26.

- The area covered is outlined below.



Q2 – See S40 exemption.

Q3 - 5 individuals were dispersed under this order using powers under S35 of ASB Crime & Policing Act 2014.

Q4 – Due to some low results, the totals number of ASB incidents have been combined for both locations as by providing all this information split by individual month and location as you have requested would significantly increase the likelihood of identifying the individual(s) concerned, and as such the exemption under S40(2) – Personal Information, would be engaged and result in information being refused. By replacing the data this way, it can be provided in its entirety.

Year	Total combined (Joseph Street, Failsworth & Higher Memorial Park)
2024	7 ASB incidents
2025	11 ASB incidents
2026	6 ASB incidents

Q5 – See S31 exemption above.