

**Date:** 24/08/2026  
**Our ref:** 01/FOI/26/017350/O

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017350/O**

I write in connection with your request for information dated 31/07/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

***For the period 1 January 2022 to the date this request is processed:***

***Has your force received any correspondence, legal letters, pre-action protocol letters, threatened legal claims, judicial review correspondence, complaints from solicitors, or other formal legal representations from:***

- A.** [REDACTED]
- B.** [REDACTED]
- C.** ***Lawyers, solicitors or counsel acting on behalf of either organisation***

***relating to:***

- D.** ***abortion clinic "buffer zones" or safe access zones;***
- E.** ***public spaces protection orders restricting activity around abortion facilities;***
- F.** ***alleged silent prayer incidents;***
- G.** ***offers of conversation, support or assistance near abortion facilities; or***
- H.** ***the policing of protests, vigils or other activity connected with abortion services.***

***If yes, please provide:***

- I. the date(s) of the correspondence;**
- J. the name of the organisation or legal representative sending it;**
- K. a brief description of the matter;**
- L. whether the matter related to a specific individual; and**
- M. the outcome (for example: no action taken, complaint resolved, policy review, settlement, court proceedings, judicial review, ongoing matter, etc.).**

**Please provide copies of:**

- N. correspondence received from [REDACTED], or legal representatives acting on their behalf – including any original legal letters sent to the force**
- O. correspondence sent by the force in response;**
- P. legal letters before claim;**
- Q. internal briefing notes prepared in response to such correspondence;**
- R. records of meetings or communications between the force and [REDACTED] concerning these matters; and**
- S. any final outcome letters, settlement agreements (with personal information redacted as necessary), court judgments, or formal decisions arising from such matters.**

**Please provide the number of cases, incidents, complaints, legal claims or threatened claims involving [REDACTED] concerning the subjects listed above.**

**Where any exemption is relied upon, please provide all reasonably segregable material and explain which exemption has been applied to the withheld information.**

**I am content for personal data to be redacted pursuant to section 40 FOIA.**

### **Result of Searches**

Greater Manchester Police can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you requested as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply, by virtue of the following exemptions:

**Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement.**

**Section 40(5) - Personal Information.**

**Section 40(5B)(a)(i) - Personal Information** – giving information to a member of the public of the confirmation or denial that would have to be given to comply with section 1(1)(a) would (apart from this Act) contravene any of the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

To confirm that any information is held or not, could confirm personal data. In some circumstances confirming or denying whether information is held could itself identify a living individual and would therefore breach the principles of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Personal data is defined by Article 4 of the GDPR and Part 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018, and means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identified natural person is one who can be identified directly or indirectly from that data.

**Section 31** is a prejudice-based and qualified exemption. There is a requirement to articulate the harm confirmation or denial that any other information is held as well as consider the public interest, which are explained below.

### **Harm**

There is significant sensitivity and highly emotive engagement from both pro- and anti-abortion activists around the work at these facilities, and confirming or denying information is held, provides both sides with policing procedures that can be used for criminal activity against individuals and organisations whose beliefs differ from their own. Whilst the level of criminality may be considered to be of a lesser level than say, that of organised crime, by confirming or denying the information is held, puts members of the public, be it individuals demonstrating outside the facilities, women needing the service, employees, general members of the public in the vicinity or the infrastructure itself, in direct harm of criminal behaviour.

Even where no information is held, confirmation of that fact would be informative. Responses from individual Forces could be compared and aggregated with other information already available in the public domain, allowing highly motivated interested parties, both nationally and internationally, to build a broader picture of policing capabilities, vulnerabilities and security arrangements across the United Kingdom.

This mosaic effect could enable those intent on disrupting policing activity, evading detection, gathering intelligence on law enforcement capabilities, or exploiting perceived weaknesses in safeguarding and protective measures around the facilities to make more informed decisions.

Such outcomes would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders and the maintenance of public safety.

### **Factors favouring confirmation or denial**

There is public interest in promoting openness and transparency regarding policing activities and their relationships with external organisations and individuals. Confirming or denying whether information is held would assist public understanding of how policing protects its information and operational environments and would facilitate scrutiny of decisions concerning the engagement with external organisations and individuals.

Disclosure would also contribute to public confidence by demonstrating accountability and unbiased engagement in relation to policing of the activities outside the facilities of interest.

### **Factors favouring neither confirming nor denying**

There is significant public interest in protecting the ability of the police service to prevent and detect crime and to apprehend offenders. Confirming or denying whether information is held would reveal information about policing capabilities, security arrangements and operational resilience. Confirmation or denial could assist criminal action, frustrate police activity, obtain intelligence about policing capabilities, safeguarding or protective measures, or exploit perceived gaps in security arrangements in and around the facilities.

There is a strong public interest in ensuring that policing tactics, capabilities and protective security measures remain effective and are not undermined through incremental disclosures.

### **Balance Test**

Whilst the Force recognises the public interest in openness, transparency and accountability, greater weight must be afforded to the significant public interest in protecting interested parties and the effectiveness of law enforcement.

Confirming or denying whether information is held would reveal information about policing's protective and safeguarding arrangements, operational resilience, and security capabilities. Such information, when combined with material already in the public domain or information obtained from other Forces, could assist those seeking to identify vulnerabilities, evade detection, frustrate policing activity, or undermine measures designed to protect members of the public in and around these facilities.

GMP therefore considers that the potential prejudice arising from confirmation or denial would outweigh the benefits of increased transparency and, accordingly, the balance of the public interest favours maintaining neither confirm nor deny position under Section 31(3) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This use of neither confirm nor deny should not be taken as proof that such information does or does not exist.