

Thursday, 27 August 2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017468/B

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017468/B

I write in connection with your request for information dated 16/08/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Are any of your operational police officers or backroom staff members of the Technical Surveillance Counter Measures Institute.

Result of Searches

Greater Manchester Police can neither confirm nor deny that we hold any information relevant to your request by virtue of the following exemptions:

- **Section 24(2) – National Security**
- **Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement**

Harm – Sections 24(2) and 31(3)

Confirming or denying whether the Force holds information regarding any relationship with members of the Technical Surveillance Counter Measures (TSCM) Institute would, in itself, reveal information about whether the Force has access to specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise and the measures used to protect sensitive policing activity.

TSCM services are intrinsically linked to the identification and mitigation of technical surveillance threats and other forms of covert intelligence gathering. Therefore, confirmation or denial of the existence of any such relationship, together with information relating to interactions, vetting requirements or security clearances, would provide insight into the extent to which such expertise may be available to the Force and the security measures used to protect police assets, information and operations.

Even where no information is held, confirmation of that fact would be informative. Responses from individual forces could be compared and aggregated, allowing a requester to build a

broader picture of policing capabilities, protective security measures and access to specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise 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 protective security measures 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.

Furthermore, any compromise of policing's protective security arrangements would have the potential to undermine activities undertaken to safeguard national security. Accordingly, confirmation or denial would be likely to result in prejudice to both national security and law enforcement functions.

Public Interest Test

Section 24(2) National Security

Factors favouring confirmation or denial - There is a public interest in transparency regarding the way police forces engage with external organisations and specialist service providers. Confirming or denying whether information is held would promote accountability and help the public understand how policing obtains specialist expertise to protect its people, information and assets.

There is also a public interest in providing reassurance that appropriate vetting and security arrangements are in place where external individuals or organisations may have access to police premises, systems or information. Greater openness can contribute to informed public debate about governance, oversight and the expenditure of public funds.

Factors favouring neither confirming nor denying - There is a compelling public interest in safeguarding national security. Confirming or denying whether information is held would reveal whether specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise may or may not be available to the Force and provide insight into the security arrangements surrounding its use.

Information relating to the availability of specialist counter-surveillance expertise could assist those seeking to identify protective security measures, vulnerabilities or perceived gaps in policing's ability to detect and mitigate technical surveillance threats. Even limited disclosures can be significant when responses from multiple police forces are compared and aggregated. Such information could be used to develop a broader understanding of policing's protective security arrangements and the extent to which specialist expertise may be available across the United Kingdom.

There is a strong and enduring public interest in ensuring that information is not released where doing so could undermine activities undertaken to protect national security and public safety.

Section 31(3) Law Enforcement

Factors favouring confirmation or denial - There is a public interest in promoting openness and transparency regarding policing activities and the use of external specialists. Confirming or denying whether information is held would assist public understanding of how policing protects its people, information and assets and would facilitate scrutiny of decisions concerning the engagement of external organisations and individuals.

Disclosure would also contribute to public confidence by demonstrating accountability in relation to any vetting arrangements, security requirements or contractual relationships involving external providers.

Factors favouring neither confirming nor denying - There is a significant public interest in protecting the ability of the police service to prevent and detect crime and apprehend offenders. Confirming or denying whether information is held would reveal information about policing capabilities, protective security measures and the availability of specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise.

Information relating to relationships with individuals operating within the technical surveillance counter-measures field is intrinsically linked to the identification and mitigation of technical surveillance threats. Confirmation or denial could assist those seeking to evade detection, gather intelligence concerning policing capabilities or exploit perceived weaknesses in security arrangements.

Furthermore, responses from different police forces could be compared and aggregated, enabling a broader picture of policing's access to specialist expertise and associated protective security measures to be developed. This would increase the risk of prejudice to law enforcement functions.

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 regarding the engagement of external organisations and specialist service providers, greater weight must be afforded to the significant public interest in protecting national security and the effectiveness of law enforcement.

Confirming or denying whether information is held would reveal information about policing's protective security measures and the availability of specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise. Responses from multiple forces could also be compared and aggregated, enabling a broader understanding of policing's access to such expertise and the security arrangements surrounding its use.

The Force considers that disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice both national security and law enforcement functions. Therefore, the potential prejudice arising from confirmation or denial outweighs the benefits of increased transparency and the balance of the public interest favours maintaining the neither confirm nor deny position under Sections 24(2) and 31(3) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.