



Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_25_0712

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 01/08/2025

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request 2025.0712

On 21/07/2025 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I am writing to submit a Freedom of Information (FOI) request for the number of anti-terror arrests made during the period from June 24, 2024, to June 25, 2024.

Please provide the total number of individuals arrested under anti-terrorism legislation within this specified timeframe.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s1, I can confirm that Gloucestershire Constabulary holds some relevant information.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Gloucestershire Constabulary, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states the fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

With regard to the above requested information, the following exemptions apply:

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

With Sections 24 and 31 being prejudice based qualified exemptions there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in confirming or not whether information is held as well as considering the public interest.

Overall harm for Section 31 and Section 24

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'.

The disclosure of the requested information would undermine the individual force CT units which would consequently be detrimental to our ability to be able to deal with the on-going terrorist threat we face. By providing the number of arrests specifically conducted by Counter Terrorism Policing South West on behalf of Gloucestershire Constabulary, would allow comparison of CTU units across the country and enable terrorists to build a picture of what resources are in place and where they are deployed. It is felt that the disclosure of this information would prejudice the effectiveness of the national counter terrorism effort and would allow inferences to be drawn about our force level CT activity.

Disclosure of information below a national figure would start to indicate levels of policing activity at individual force levels and that information could allow individuals to exploit what they might consider to be "softer", or what appears to be less active or resourced areas, by analysing patterns of police activity and deployments over time, ultimately to avoid detection. This would infer CT policing resources and by analysing similar data from around the country we might allow criminals to understand national CT policing activity. For example, this would enable terrorists to make judgments concerning their preferred travel routes where they perceive there to be a greater vulnerability, lower staff levels and lesser probability of being apprehended. The release of figures that are too detailed is likely to frustrate Special Branch activity in response to changing terrorist travel patterns. Ultimately, this constant disruption would reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of Special Branch/CT units, increase the advantage to the terrorist and increase the risk and vulnerability to the security of the UK from terrorist attack.

Factors favouring disclosure for S24

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and by disclosing this information the public would be able to see where public money is being spent and know that forces are doing as much as they can to combat terrorism.

Factors The factors favouring non-disclosure for S24

By disclosing this information would render Security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the UK. The risk of harm to the public would be increased if the location of vulnerable areas of the UK were made public as this would provide opportunity for terrorist planning. Ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the UK would be compromised as terrorists could map across the country the level of counter-terrorist activity, giving them the knowledge of force's individual capabilities.

The factors favouring disclosure for S31

By disclosing the information the public would see where public funds are being spent and would be able to take steps to protect themselves and their families. Better public awareness may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public as they would be more observant in reporting suspicious activity. The Home Office regularly publish national statistical data on terrorism arrests.

Factors favouring non-disclosure for S31

By disclosing the information law enforcement tactics would be compromised which would hinder the prevention and detection of terrorist crime. More crime would be committed because terrorists would know which forces had less CT capability and capacity and individuals would therefore be placed at a greater risk. A fear of crime would be realised because if the terrorists identified more vulnerable areas, they would target and exploit these areas and the public would be in fear of more terrorist activity occurring. There would be an impact on police resources because if the number of CT Unit arrests was disclosed per force, the more vulnerable forces may need to increase their resources to reassure and protect the community.

Balance test

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. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by a terrorist attack, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in the highly sensitive area 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 only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. CTU capabilities are high-profile sensitive issues of intelligence value to the terrorist and therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for disclosing the information requested is not made out.

If you are not satisfied with this response or any actions taken in dealing with your request, you have the right to ask that we review your case under our internal procedure. Please note that a request for an internal review must be made within 20 working days of the response to your original request.

If you decide to request that such a review is undertaken and following this process you are still unsatisfied, you then have the right to direct your complaint to the Information Commissioner for consideration.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following means:

Website - <https://ico.org.uk/>

Call their helpline - 0303 123 1113

Email - casework@ico.org.uk

Post –

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure Officer
Gloucestershire Constabulary