

Gloucestershire Constabulary
Police Headquarters
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Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_26_0662

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Date: 21/07/2026

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_26_0662

On 13/07/2026 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

1. Does your police force work with any members of the TSCM Institute?
2. What interaction do members of the TSCM Institute have with your police force?
3. What level of security clearance do TSCM Institute members receive?
4. What security checks are carried out on TSCM Institute members before they work for your force?

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s1, Gloucestershire Constabulary can neither confirm nor deny that it holds any 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 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.

Evidence of Harm:

Any disclosure under the FOIA is considered a release of information into the public domain. Any disclosure under FOIA is a disclosure to the world at large, and confirming or denying the use of specialist techniques would prejudice the abilities of law enforcement.

If the requested information were held by the force, confirmation would reveal the use of specific surveillance technology which have the capability to be used in covert operations. Irrespective of whether they are used in such a way or not, confirming use or trial of such tools identifies a tactical policing capability of the force in an area of policing which is covert. The result would undermine operations as criminals, including terrorists, would gain a greater understanding of the police's surveillance methods and techniques, enabling them to take steps to counter them.

If the requested information were not held by the force, and a denial were issued, this would reveal the lack of a specific policing tactic to the same individuals, which would in turn indicate the potential limitations of police surveillance capabilities in this area. This may further encourage offending by confirming to those involved in criminality including terrorism tactical policing capabilities.

Additionally, if this request was to be sent nationally across different police forces, criminals and hostile actors would be able to build a geographical profile of what tactical policing capabilities each police force has or does not have. Any identification of a reduced technical capability in the field of surveillance would substantially prejudice the ability of forces to police their force areas which would lead to a greater risk to the public.

Confirming or denying would be useful information to those committing crime including terrorism, and could lead to individuals moving their operations, destroying evidence, or avoiding those areas; all of which undermine the tactic and risk the integrity and success of covert operations and future prosecutions.

Any information that identifies the focus of policing capability and activity, particularly covert activity, and could be used to the advantage of terrorists or criminal organisations to commit crime, undermines the operational integrity of these activities. This will adversely affect public safety, impact national security, and prejudice law enforcement.

Public Interest Tests:**Section 24****Factors favouring confirming or denying whether any information is held**

The public are entitled to know how where its public funds are being spent.

Factors against confirming or denying whether any information is held

Confirming or denying the use of specialist techniques could render security measures less effective by compromising ongoing or future covert operations undertaken to protect the security or the national security infrastructure of the UK. This increases the risk of harm to the public.

Section 31

Factors favouring confirming or denying whether any information is held

Disclosure reinforces the wider commitment to openness and transparency to facilitate public debate. Greater transparency inherently leads to improved public confidence, which in turn may increase the public's engagement with the police.

Factors against confirming or denying whether any other information is held

To confirm or deny information is held would compromise the police's ability to protect the public. Disclosing the Force's specific tactical policing capabilities would provide people committing crime or those with the criminal intent with information that would increase the effectiveness of their criminality and assist them in evading detection. The resultant effect of this prejudice would undermine current and future operational strategies within covert investigations and when gathering evidence. The integrity of investigations and the tactics used as part of them is of paramount importance when it comes to protecting the public from all types of crime, particularly in serious and organised crime and terrorism. Any compromise of these tactics which results in prejudice to the effectiveness of an investigations, will place the public at significant risk. To do so is clearly not in the public interest.

Balance test

Whilst there is a public interest in transparency as a route to accountability when it comes to the use of surveillance tactics in investigations, forces are already held to account by statutory means through The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner (OSC). Accountability is therefore not enhanced by confirming or denying whether any information is held in respect of a specific tactic.

The security of the country and safety of its people is of paramount importance, and the public entrust the police service to make appropriate decisions regarding their safety and protection. To do so, the police must be cautious with any information that is released. It must be considered that a release of information under FOI is a disclosure to the world at large, including to those who have cause to use it for criminal means. Confirming or denying whether information is or isn't held would reveal to the world, specific details about the force's surveillance capabilities. Any incident that results from confirmation or denial would, as a result, affect National Security and undermine operational law enforcement.

The points above highlight the merits of confirming or denying the requested information exists. The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Weakening the mechanisms used to monitor any type of criminal activity, and specifically terrorist activity would place the security of the country at an increased level of danger.

In addition, anything that places that confidence at risk, no matter how generic, would undermine any trust or confidence individuals have in the Police Service. Therefore, the balance test favours neither confirming nor denying that any information held.

None of the above can be viewed as an inference that the requested information is or is not held.

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