

Chief Constable
Chief Constable Robert Carden
Police Headquarters
Carleton Hall Penrith,
Cumbria
CA10 2AU



3rd December 2024

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI 1015/24 Special Constable info

I refer to your request for information received by Cumbria Constabulary on the 12th of November 2024. I note you seek access to the following information:

I am requesting the following information:

1. Special Constable Numbers by Patrol Status - October 2024 Please provide the number of Special Constables serving in your force as of the end of October 2024. Where possible, please break this down into the number of APS/DPS Special Constables, and any QSC (irrespective of how many QSC stages have been completed). If your force has not adopted IL4SC, please denote how many officers are IPS or non-IPS.

Additionally, please note how many officers are currently restricted. If this is not possible due to FOI budgetary requirements, this can be omitted.

2. Comparison to 2019

Please provide the number of Special Constables (irrespective of patrol status or suspension) serving in your force either in October 2019, or at the closest point you can capture data from (please clarify the month where possible).

3. Use of DutySheet System

Please confirm if your force uses DutySheet, and if so, how much your force is paying DutySheet (this can be an estimated annual cost) for the Special Constabulary. Note this does not include Police Cadets, PSVs or any other DutySheet database.

4. Budget for Special Constables

Please could you provide figures as to your annual budget for Special Constables forcewide for the 2024-25 financial year?

5. Estimated Cost Savings due to Special Constables If your force has them available, please provide the estimated cost savings your Special Constabulary provides to your force. Note, if the FOI request budget would not allow for this in hours taken to process this request, this question can be omitted.

6. Qualifications and specialty courses

Please provide information as to whether your force currently provides the following training courses to your Special Constables, and if so, what IL4SC (or patrol status) level is required to engage in the course:

- Standard Response



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- *Advanced Response*
- *Initial Phase Pursuit (IPP)*
- *Taser*
- *Method of Entry (forced entry, whether through lockpulling, enforcer or any other forced entry)*
- *Public Order Level 3*
- *Public Order Level 2*

Your request for information has now been considered and I can confirm Cumbria Constabulary does hold the information you request; however, I will be citing the exemption Section 31 (1) for question 3.

Section 31 (1) (a)(b), Law Enforcement.

Please Note: Previously, we would disclose this information, however, there has since been a key change in the stance taken, which is outlined in the exemption below. In this case, we consider that disclosure of the information would be likely to make the police service more open to malicious attacks on our computer systems. The risk of cyber-attacks, with the threat more likely since the war in Ukraine, therefore, posing an increased risk more recently.

Section 31(1)(a) exempts information if its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime.

As a qualified and prejudice-based exemption, I am required to evidence the harm and apply the public interest test.

Evidence of Harm

Every effort should be made to release information under Freedom of Information. However, a FOIA response is a release to the world, as once the information is published, the public authority has no control over what use is made of that information.

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing, and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. To achieve these objectives, all forces utilise Information Technology essential to front line services. Disclosure of the Constabulary's ICT infrastructure, including on-going plans for specific software applications and capabilities, or the lack thereof, would reveal intricacies of those systems, thereby highlighting vulnerabilities and compromising individual force information assurance.

Disclosure would also enable a geographical picture to be drawn up by those individuals who are intent on 'hacking' police systems; some of these individuals may include terrorists or terrorist organisations. In terms of duty of care, this would be detrimental to the public, as disclosure could assist a malicious actor by highlighting vulnerable forces and leaving those forces open to disruption of Information Technology systems; thus, compromising the effective delivery of operational law enforcement which in turn, is met by an increase of criminal offending.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure – Disclosing the specific details of certain ICT infrastructure, would allow the public to be better informed on the health state and performance of each forces Information Technology platform. In addition, forces are required to demonstrate efficient services to local taxpayers and satisfy audit requirements. This would provide transparency regarding the use of public funds in so much as highlighting that funds are being



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used correctly and appropriately, to ensure all Data Centres have adequate software, which results in the smooth running of force Technology systems.

Factors favouring non-disclosure - Whilst there is public interest in providing reassurance that police forces are appropriately and effectively dealing with any threats, posed against police force Technology capabilities, there is a strong public interest in safeguarding the welfare and safety of the public. If ICT systems were successfully attacked, it could lead to the loss of confidentiality, integrity, and availability of police information. Any disclosure has the potential to undermine current and future technological integrity, which in turn compromises Law Enforcement, and could jeopardise the daily running of policing activity. The risk of affecting the function of the police service would be much greater. In addition, by revealing ICT software, this is intelligence to those who would wish to exploit vulnerabilities in the service. This may lead to the compromise of force IT systems which ultimately affects law enforcement capabilities and hinders the prevention and detection of crime or terrorism.

Balance Test

The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police service will not divulge any information, if to do so would undermine law enforcement and therefore compromise the work of the police service. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing and force infrastructure, including the Police ICT infrastructure, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of these systems in place.

The points above highlight the merits for and against disclosure of the requested information. Disclosure would undoubtedly provide a greater openness and transparency to the community at large regarding the Information Technology resources available to the police, and whilst there is always a public interest in the transparency of how a police force delivers effective law enforcement, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the intricacies and tactical capabilities of the software used when dealing with information.

I am aware of the immense importance for Public Authorities to demonstrate a level of openness and transparency, I believe protecting the tactical capability of Cumbria Constabulary must take precedence in this case. It is my decision that the balance of the public interest lies in the non-disclosure of the exempted information.

I can provide information in relation to questions 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 which have been provided from the Constabulary's Human Resources department, Finance department and Training team.

Question 1 – There are currently 38 Special Constables recorded on our system, all are IPS and 1 is recorded as restricted.

Question 2 – In Oct 2019 there were 60 Special Constables.

Question 4 – The annual budget for Special Constables in the 2024-25 financial year is £90,017

Question 5 – No information held.

Question 6 –

Standard Response – Yes. From driver training perspective the response course pre-requisite is that the officer must have a full driving licence (Cat B) for a minimum of twelve months & a Working knowledge of Roads Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP).



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- Advanced Response – Yes. For advanced, the pre-requisite is to have passed the response course and be within their 5-year authority period.
- Initial Phase Pursuit (IPP) – Yes. For IPP, the pre-requisite is to have passed the response course and be within their 5-year authority period and they have completed the Introduction to police pursuits package on college learn.
- Taser – No training provided for special constables.
- Method of Entry – No training provided for special constables.
- Public Order Level 3 – Yes and the specials must be independently deployable.
- Public Order Level 2 – No training provided for special constables.

Whilst every care has been taken in the retrieval of the information provided, please do not hesitate to contact us for clarification, if you do have any issues or queries relating to this data.

Complaint Rights

Your attention is drawn to the attached sheet, which details your right of complaint.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in Cumbria Constabulary.



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