

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



18th November 2024

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI 961/24 Female Genital Mutilation

I refer to your request for information received by Cumbria Constabulary on the 26th of October 2024. I note you seek access to the following information:

Please can you supply me data on how many cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) were reported to you between 2000 and 2024.

Your request for information has been considered and I can advise you that Cumbria Constabulary does hold information relevant to your request, however, I am not obliged to supply this to you.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Cumbria Constabulary, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption applicable to the information is the following:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement

Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 31 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice-

- a) The prevention or detection of crime.
- b) The apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Section 31 is a prejudice based, qualified exemption which means that it is necessary to describe the harm that is likely to occur if the information is released into the public domain. There is also a requirement to consider whether the public interest considerations in favour of withholding the information you have requested outweigh the considerations in favour of its release.

Harm Test



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It has been determined that such information would not be in the public interest to disclose, as it provides information that may or may not potentially be used to identify weaknesses in the forces tactical capability and highlight any potential vulnerability in our areas.

The impact of confirming or denying whether any information is held with regards to this request, has the potential to undermine the flow of information (intelligence) received from members of the public into the police service.

Section 31 - Public Interest Test

Factors favouring Disclosure

In this case disclosure of the information would provide openness and transparency relating to this type of offending.

Factors favouring non-Disclosure

When the current or future law enforcement role of the force may be compromised by the release of information, the effectiveness of the force will be reduced. The public's trust of the Police would be undermined if information that is provided in confidence is disclosed.

To disclose data which could cause community unrest would not be in the public interest and would impact on frontline policing.

Balance Test

As always, the Freedom of Information Act has a presumption of disclosure, unless when balancing the competing public interest factors the prejudice to the community outweighs the benefits. In this case, there is an argument for disclosure, in as much as the public have a right to know that this type of criminal offending is appropriately dealt with by the Police Service. However, this must be balanced against the negative impact these disclosures can make. Any form of abuse is abhorrent and if disclosing information undermines the apprehension of offender's disclosure cannot be in the public interest.

In this case considering the negatives identified above, they outweigh any tangible community benefit and therefore the balance does not favour disclosure at this time.

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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