

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



13 June 2025

Dear XXXXX

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI 569/25

I refer to your request for information received by Cumbria Constabulary on 25 May 2025. I note you seek access to the following information:

I am here to request information relating to your Tactical Support Group, my questions will be below.

Q1) How many Inspectors, Sergeants & Constables are currently trained as an Authorised Firearms Officer?

Q2) Please can you provide a list of additional firearms related qualifications available to the TSG Officers? (such as enhanced medic, rifle officer, please also include command roles such as OFC/TFC etc)

Q3) Does the TSG have their own Armed Response Vehicles attached to their fleet or do they borrow ARVs from the firearms unit?

Q3.1) If the TSG have their own ARVs please can you say how many?

I do understand this is likely going to get redacted but thought I'd try my luck:

Q4) Can you provide the callsign used by TSG when operating an ARV?

Q4.1) Can you provide the callsign used by TSG in general

Your request for information has now been considered and I can confirm that Cumbria Constabulary does hold the information you have requested, however, I am not obliged to disclose all of this information to you, for the reasons set out below.

In relation to **Questions 1, 3, 3.1, 4** the information you have requested is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following:

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

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this part of your request. Cumbria Constabulary is not obliged to provide you with the information requested as the



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duty in S1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply, by virtue of the following exemptions:

S31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement
S24(1) National Security

S31 and S24 Evidence of Harm

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. In order to achieve these objectives we are allowed to use reasonable force when necessary to do so. In the ultimate circumstance this can include the use of lethal force but the rule of thumb is to use the minimum amount necessary to achieve the objective. In reality this equates to the use of the minimum amount of force required to overcome the violence, used or threatened, by those wishing to cause harm.

As part of this equation we also have to pay heed to the Human Rights Conventions particularly Article 2 - The Right to Life.

Armed Policing is a highly specialised area of firearms deployment and weapons training. It is an emotive subject under constant scrutiny and, by default, is always in the public eye. There is a long history of excellent practice nationally and Armed Policing is regarded as being at the forefront of firearms issues.

Revealing the number of currently training officers, and what vehicles we operate along with the call signs of any such vehicles which perform the role of Armed Response Vehicles would reveal tactical capability and is likely to influence the criminals, which may include terrorists or terrorist organisations, who are prepared to resort to the use of extreme force to avoid detection and capture. By fully knowing police capabilities will ensure offenders are armed to overcome the police response. This creates if you will an 'arms race' to the detriment of the criminals themselves, as the use of lethal weapons becomes more and more the only resolution option, and endangers both the public and officers themselves. This is best evidenced by the fact that the United Kingdom, even in these violent times, has been able to maintain a basically unarmed Police Service, with the result benefits this delivers when compared with other countries, such as America, where armed conflict resolution with law enforcement agencies depends on who has the most effective weapons.

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 that threat level to the UK currently is 'substantial, meaning an attack is likely.

<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels>

Any information identifying the focus of policing capability could be used to the advantage of criminal organisations, serious and organised crime groups and terrorists to undermine the operational integrity of policing will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on, not only law enforcement at a local level, but policing and operations at a national level the impact of which risks the national security of the UK.

In order to counter criminal and terrorist behaviour it is vital that the police have the ability to work together, where necessary covertly, to assist in the investigative process to ensure the successful arrest and prosecution of offenders who commit or plan to commit acts of terrorism.



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The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built, and the police have a clear responsibility to prevent crime, arrest those responsible for committing crime or those that plan to commit crime. However, there is also a duty of care to the public at large. The UK Police Service has a positive undertaking to protect the public from harm and that duty of care to all involved must be the overriding consideration.

Section 31 - Public Interest Considerations

Factors favouring Disclosure - The information requested relates to a specialised area of Policing. There is a public interest in the community being made aware of all the facts relating to Armed Policing in order to ensure complete openness and transparency as there is often speculation and rumour with regard to the use of firearms within the Police Service. In this case providing information relating to Armed Police Officer numbers and vehicles used would provide transparency and may enhance public debate into this type of policing.

Factors favouring Non-Disclosure - The deployment of authorised firearms officers is measured and authorised by chief officers after careful consideration in order to protect the public and apprehend individuals who use lethal weapons as part of their criminality. To disclose officers numbers and vehicles used would reveal tactical capability and would place Cumbria Constabulary at a tactical disadvantage. In addition, disclosure may also 'create' a fear of crime within the general public relating to armed policing.

The risk to public safety cannot be ignored and Cumbria Constabulary has a responsibility to ensure safety of individuals is protected at all times, as detailed within the harm.

Section 24 - Public Interest Considerations

Factor favouring Disclosure - The information requested relates to Armed Officer numbers and vehicles, Disclosure would inform the public that Cumbria Constabulary resources were adequate for the needs of safety and welfare of Cumbria. This would provide transparency with regard to the use of public funds inasmuch as the funds are being used correctly and appropriately ensuring the Armed Policing Departments within individual forces are resourced adequately.

Factors favouring non-disclosure - Whilst there is a public interest in providing reassurance that Cumbria Constabulary is appropriately and effectively dealing with threats posed by terrorist organisations, there is a strong public interest in safeguarding national security and the welfare and safety of the general public.

Any disclosure has the potential to undermine ongoing and future operations to protect the Security of the United Kingdom, e.g. counter terrorism activity. The risk of significant harm or even death to the community at large would be increased.

S31 and S24 Balancing Test

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing resources for specialist departments and providing reassurance that the Police Service is appropriately and effectively placing resources into Armed Policing, there is a strong public interest in knowing that policing activity with regard to the delivery of law enforcement is appropriate and balanced, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances.

In addition, we also need to take into account the victims of terrorism. Public safety is of paramount importance and any information which would place individuals at risk and



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compromise the National Security of the United Kingdom, no matter how generic, is not in the public interest. The effective delivery of operational law enforcement and the National Security of the UK is crucial and of paramount importance to Cumbria Constabulary. Any disclosure would have a negative impact on law enforcement and national security.

As much as there is a public interest in knowing that the delivery of law enforcement is appropriate and balanced, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test for disclosure is not made out.

Question 2

All TSG firearms officers are advanced drivers, have the ARV CBRN skill, and are D13 First Aid trained. Other disciplines/skills open to them are OFC, Rifle, Shotgun, Close Protection Officer

Question 4.1

The callsign of whatever vehicle they are in generally prefixed by DT.

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

If you believe your request has not been properly handled, or you are otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of your request, you have the right to request an internal review.

In the first instance, please email freedomofinformation@cumbria.police.uk quoting the FOI reference number and explain why you are dissatisfied. Your complaint will be considered and a response will be provided to you after your complaint has been investigated.

If you remain dissatisfied following conclusion of the internal review, you have the right, under section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to complain directly to the Information Commissioner.

The address for the Information Commissioner can be found below:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Complaints to the Information Commissioner can also be made online:

[Make a complaint | ICO](#)

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



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