

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



14th March 2025

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI 86/25 Child Abductions

I refer to your request for information received by Cumbria Constabulary on the 21st of January 2025. I note you seek access to the following information:

1. *How many attempted and successful child abductions occurred in your regional police force area during the years of 2018 and 2019, broken down by month.*
2. *How many attempted and successful child abductions occurred in your regional police force area during the year of 2024, broken down by month - and during the month of January 2025, to date.*
3. *With respect to the 2024 attempted and successful child abductions could you please tell me:*
 - a) *Where did these attempted/successful abductions take place?*
 - b) *When did they take place?*
 - c) *What description of the attempted/successful abductor was made available to the public?*
 - d) *What description of the attempted/successful abductor is held on record?*

Your request for information has now been considered and I can confirm that Cumbria Constabulary does hold some information relevant to your request, however, I am not obliged to disclose the requested information to you.

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act requires a public authority, when claiming information is exempt information, serve 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 exemptions which apply are: -

- **Section 40(2) – Personal Information**
- **Section 31 (1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement**
- **Section 30(1)(a)(b)- Criminal Investigations**

Section 40(2) – Personal Information



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.



This exemption states any information to which a request for information relates is also exempt information if it constitutes personal data..... and

(a) It constitutes personal data which does not fall within subsection (1), and

(b) The first, second or third condition below is satisfied.

(3A) the first condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise under this Act-

(a) Would contravene any of the data protection principles.

This exemption is a class-based, absolute exemption which means it is not necessary to evidence the harm that would arise from disclosure and nor is there a requirement to undertake a public interest test.

This exemption applies because the information held by the Constabulary includes information which relates to living individuals, who could be identified from that information. It would be unfair to release this information where any person could be identified from the data and in this case the right to privacy outweighs any public interest in release.

Therefore, I am satisfied that Section 40(2) Personal Information exemption is applicable to the release of the information.

Section 31 (1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement

Section 31 is a prejudice based, qualified exemption and there is a requirement to describe the harm that will be caused if the exempt information is disclosed and also to consider if the public interest considerations in favour of maintaining the exemption outweigh the considerations in favour of releasing the information.

Section 30 (1) (a)(b) – Criminal Investigations

Section 30 is qualified, and class based and, as such, we are required to apply the public interest test.

In addition to the above Cumbria Constabulary can neither confirm nor deny that it holds any other information you have requested as it believes the duty in s1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the duty to confirm whether the public authority holds information of the specified description), does not apply, by virtue of the following exemption:

• Section 23(5) – Information supplied by Security Bodies.

Section 23 is an absolute class-based exemption and as such does not require the application of a Public Interest Test.

Evidence of harm S31

It is important to stress that disclosures under the Freedom of Information Act are disclosures to the world, not just to the individual making the request, and such responses may be published on a public facing disclosure log.

To disclose statistics regarding child abduction offences would reveal specific details of the victims and suspects involved and the investigative activity into these offences. This would undermine the smooth delivery of operational law enforcement as there is potential for unrest and disruption to occur. Furthermore, disclosure may reveal identification or misidentification



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.



of victims which could lead to further offences occurring as well as the potential for victims to be targeted.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b) – Disclosure of the information would improve the public's knowledge and understanding of the investigatory process and, as all police investigations are publicly funded, would show how public funds are being spent.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b) – Disclosure of the information could potentially jeopardize any cases, giving offenders information which may form part of an investigation. This could have a detrimental effect on evidence gathering and any prosecution which would put the safety of members of the public at risk, and victims would be compromised.

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b) - There is a public interest in knowing that Cumbria Constabulary fulfils its policing functions effectively and efficiently. In addition, where public funds are being spent, there is a public interest in accountability and justification.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b) – The disclosure of information on any individual/s in relation to this matter has the potential to damage Cumbria Constabulary's ability to prevent and detect crime or apprehend or prosecute offenders in any associated allegations or cases, including tactics and/or reveal sources of information.

Balance test

Although there is a public interest in transparency and openness between Cumbria Constabulary and the public, in addition to the public seeing how we are engaging with the threat from criminals, there is a stronger interest in protecting any ongoing police investigations and ensuring the public are protected from this threat. We must also ensure the enforcement of the law, and the prevention and detection of crime is upheld.

For the issues outlined above the it is our view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour non-disclosure.

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



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.



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.



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.

