

T/Chief Constable
T/Chief Constable Darren Martland
Police Headquarters
Carleton Hall Penrith,
Cumbria
CA10 2AU



9th October 2025

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI 1213/25 Forensics Spends

I refer to your request for information which was received by Cumbria Constabulary on 13th August 2025. I note you seek access to the following information:

Please provide the total amount in £ (excluding VAT) that your force has spent on external physical (traditional) forensic science services. Do not include any spend on digital forensics. I request that this is broken down into categories based on the Lot Code and description specified in the contract(s) awarded to your private forensic science provider suppliers.

For each category, please include:

- 1. The Lot Code (as per the contract)*
- 2. The Lot description (e.g., DNA Crime Stains)*
- 3. The total spend (£, ex VAT)*
- 4. The supplier name*

For example:

Lot X | DNA Crime Stains | £1,000,000 | Eurofins Forensic Services

Lot Y | Toxicology | £500,000 | Cellmark Forensic Services

Clarification Requested – 13/08/2025

Please can you advise on what time period you are seeking the below information for.

Clarification Received – 13/08/2025

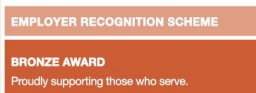
I asked for the most recent financial year for which data is available. E.g. 2024/25 or 2023/24 etc

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

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

- states the fact,
- specifies the exemption and
- states (if it would not be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption applicable in this case is:



Section 43(2) – Commercial Interests

S43(2) is a prejudice-based, qualified exemption which requires evidence of harm and also for the public interest considerations to be assessed to determine if the considerations in favour of withholding the requested information would outweigh the considerations in favour of its release. I have set out the views on these issues below.

Evidence of Harm

A disclosure of information in response to a freedom of information request is not just made available to the requestor. Without questioning the motives of the requestor, any information disclosed in response to a freedom of information request has the effect of placing that information into the wider public domain and it therefore becomes accessible to any person.

Cumbria Constabulary are about to start the tender process for new contracts related to forensic science services. Contracts are awarded following a fair procurement process in which tenders are invited from interested suppliers. Disclosing financial details relating to the current contract would, in my view, be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the existing providers as this will enable competitors in this field of business to submit future tenders with some knowledge of the pricing structure associated with a winning bid and therefore enable them to 'undercut' the fees charged the provider. Disclosure of this information would therefore be detrimental to the provider's ability to successfully negotiate other contracts for the same or similar services, including with other authorities. Disclosing information of this nature would also be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the Constabulary, as it would be likely to result in providers being less willing to submit tenders for contracts due to concern that commercially sensitive information would be disclosed by the Constabulary.

Public Interest Test

Factors in Favour of Disclosure - The requested information concerns the use of public funds for a specific service and there is a public interest in transparency and accountability relating to decisions about how public money is spent by Cumbria Constabulary.

Factors in Favour of Non-Disclosure - Disclosure of what could reasonably be considered to be sensitive information, would have the effect of making it less likely that businesses would wish to share commercially sensitive information with the Constabulary, as part of future tender exercises, which will limit competition and undermine the fairness of such exercises. This would also have the effect of hindering the Constabulary's ability to achieve best value for money and as such this would also undermine the Constabulary's commercial interests.

Balancing Test

Whilst I recognise transparency is a very important consideration, after weighing up the competing interests I have decided that the factors in favour of maintaining the exemption outweigh the factors in favour of disclosing the information you have requested. This is because the damage to the Constabulary's reputation, caused by disclosing commercially sensitive information, would be detrimental to our ability to achieve best value in relation to expenditure of public funds. At a time of strain on public sector budgets, this is a significant consideration.

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.



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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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