

Our Ref: 003143/14



Freedom of Information Section
Nottinghamshire Police HQ
Sherwood Lodge, Arnold
Nottingham NG5 8PP

Tel: 101
Ext 800 2507
Fax: 0115 967 2896

6 June 2014

Request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

I write in connection with your request for information, which was received by Nottinghamshire Police on 13/05/2014.

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Nottinghamshire Police to locate the information you require.

RESPONSE

Under S 1 (1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), I can confirm that Nottinghamshire Police does hold the information you have requested.

Please find below answers to your questions:-

- 1) *The number of referrals your force received under the government's Channel/PREVENT anti-terrorism scheme in the full year until March 2014***
- 2) *How many people did this involve?***
- 3) *If this data is held, a breakdown of people referred by their age and/or gender and/or ethnicity and/or religion***
- 4) *The breakdown by agency (eg GP practice/school) which referred people to your force under the scheme***

5) If this data is held, what potential signs of vulnerability and indicators did agencies identify in people that they thought showed a propensity to terrorism-related activities?

Channel figures are published annually on a national level (see below link)

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/ACPOBusinessAreas/PREVENT/NationalChannelReferralFigures.aspx>

However, Force level data in relation to the requested information is exempt by virtue of Section 31(1)(a)(b): Law Enforcement and Section 24(1): National Security of the Act.

Both of these exemptions are qualified and prejudiced based and therefore I am required to demonstrate the harm which would be likely to be caused in disclosing the information and balance whether the overall public interest rests in disclosure or in maintaining the exemption.

Overall harm for Sections 31 and 24

The publication of specific Channel data would provide information to those who seek to challenge the process, which would not be in the public interest. Allegations of 'spying in the community' and 'targeting Muslims' misrepresent and undermine the intention of Channel and ultimately the Prevent programme, which seeks to support those individuals vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism. Figures on the ethnicity or age of participants, when compiled, may fuel perceived grievances such as the view that young Muslims are being targeted or that the issue of political extremists (e.g. the far-right) are not being tackled. Revealing detailed site specific statistics could lead to the identification of:

- individuals who have been referred;
- those who may have referred individuals to Channel in confidence;
- local organisations who are working with us to protect and safeguard those at risk; and
- ongoing cases which could lead to the withdrawal of individuals from the process and thus threaten the successful conclusion of a case.

This would bring the process into disrepute, destroy trust and damage Prevent at a National level

Channel is a multi-agency process, which aims to support those who may be vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism. It works by providing a mechanism for:

- Identifying individuals who may be at risk of and vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism.
- Accessing the nature and extent of the risk
- Where necessary, referring cases to a multi-agency panel which decides on the most appropriate support package to divert and support the individual at risk.

Channel aims to draw vulnerable individuals away from violent extremism before they become involved in criminal activity. Effective information sharing is crucial in ensuring that delivery partners, such as education, children's services, probation and local public health agencies and local community partners are able to build a comprehensive picture of an individual's vulnerability, and therefore provide the appropriate type and level of support to safeguard the individual at risk. This requires the local community to work in partnership with the police and other local agencies and to share information appropriately and responsibly.

The security of the country is of paramount importance and Nottinghamshire Police will not divulge any information which would undermine National Security or compromise Law Enforcement. Channel is part of the Prevent strand of CONTEST, the Governments' Counter Terrorism Strategy, and the information held by Nottinghamshire Police in regards to Channel directly relates to counter-terrorism policing. In addition, any prejudice to counter-terrorism policing directly impacts on the police support and the delivery of CONTEST.

Any detailed breakdown of the agencies, authorities or partners that made the referrals would lead to these partners disengaging from the referral process, as well as, potentially in some extreme cases, aid the identification of those involved in the referral process itself, or of those referred.

A list of local organisations and agencies who may be involved in Prevent can be found in the Prevent Strategy: An Updated Guide for Local Partners:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/publication-search/general/updated-guide-for-local-partners2835.pdf?view=Binary>

The Channel Factsheet, produced by ACPO (TAM) Prevent Delivery Unit provides additional information about the partners and stakeholders:

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/TAM/2012/201210TAMChannelFactsheet.pdf>

Factors favouring disclosure of information for Section 31

There may be a public interest in the release of this information because it may reassure the public that there are effective processes in place to ensure that people showing signs or indicators that they are intent to use violence or other illegal means are monitored effectively and assessed for the presence of vulnerability. Disclosure of the information would provide reassurance to the public that the Police have in place protocols to deal with these types of incidents and offences. The Home Office regularly publishes national statistical data on Prevent data. It would also reassure the public that the Police have protocols in place to protect children from being drawn into violent extremism.

Factors against disclosure of information for Section 31

Disclosure of the information would mean that law enforcement tactics would be compromised which would hinder the prevention and detection of crime. More crime would be committed because criminals would know which forces are focusing on the Channel program. A fear of crime would be realised because if the terrorists identified more vulnerable areas, they would target and exploit these areas and the public would be in fear of more criminal/terrorist activity occurring. There would be an impact on police resources because if the measure used by forces to detect terrorist activities and safeguard children is disclosed and some areas are deemed to be 'softer' at managing this threat, terrorist cells may move to these areas in order to continue their operations and target vulnerable individuals. There could be local implications with wrongful identification of children and families which in turn could lead to further offences being committed in the community.

Factors favouring disclosure of information for Section 24

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and by disclosing this information the public would be able to see where public money is being spent and know that forces are doing as much as they can to combat terrorism and radicalisation. Revealing this information would enable the public to have some reassurance that the Government's Counter Terrorism strategy is robust. This is an issue high on the public agenda and therefore the release of this information would contribute to an informed public debate.

Factors against disclosure of information for Section 24

Channel only operates in specific locations. Revealing detailed statistics may increase interest in cases which could ultimately lead to the identity of individuals and the organisations we work with, which may assist others intending to counter such work. Identification of those working locally to deliver the aims and objectives of Channel could enable those wishing to counter such work to engage in activity to disrupt and jeopardise the successful delivery of ongoing work. This could threaten the successful delivery of Channel and the government's counter terrorism strategy and lead to the public being at increased risk from terrorism. There is also a potential

for such data to be used to increase community tensions in an area which would not be in the public interest

Any information shared between agencies (intelligence) has the potential to cover all aspects of criminal activity, be it threats to National Security, future planned robberies or intelligence relating to terrorist activity. Disclosure of the information would enable those intent on engaging in terrorist activities to determine on a National level which areas within the UK may be a vulnerable area to target.

Balance test

The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police service will not divulge information if to do so would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine National Security. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations, information gathering and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively safeguarding those who are vulnerable to radicalisation and targeting the cells behind the radicalisation, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in the highly sensitive area of terrorism.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of national security this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Whilst there is a strong public interest in the transparency of policing programmes and in this case, providing assurance that the police service and other stakeholders are appropriately and effectively engaging with one another, combating the threat posed by individuals with the intent to use violence and other illegal means, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of the stakeholders within the programme.

Nottinghamshire Police will not divulge information if it is likely that it will compromise the work of the Police Service or place members of the public at risk. It is known that terrorist cells will try to radicalise people and children so that they believe in their ideology in order to encourage them to commit acts of terror. Disclosure of the requested information would highlight which forces may have individuals who are more susceptible to radicalisation and how each force tackles this within their communities. This will adversely affect Nottinghamshire Police's ability to detect this type of crime as it may alter the behaviours of those preying on vulnerable individuals. This in itself could put the individual's life at risk along with that of National Security. It is therefore our belief that the balance test lies in favour of not disclosing the information.

This letter constitutes a refusal notice under Section 17 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 with Section 31(1)(a)(b) and Section 24(1) of the act being applied.

24. – (1) Information which does not fall within section 23 (1) is exempt information if exemption from section 1 (1) b) is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security.

31. – (1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 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

In relation to question 5, I am able to offer the below generic advice.

There are a number of behaviours and other indicators that may indicate the presence of vulnerability.

Example indicators that an individual is engaged with an extremist group, cause or ideology include:

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists;
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group;
- Their day to day behaviour increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause;
- loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause;
- possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause (e.g. the swastika for far right groups);
- attempts to recruit others to the group/cause/ideology; or
- communications with others that suggest identification with a group/cause/ideology.

Example indicators that an individual has an intention to use violence or other illegal means include:

- Clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills;
- using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group;
- speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now;
- expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology;
- condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others;
- plotting or conspiring with others.

Example indicators that an individual is capable of contributing directly or indirectly to an act of terrorism include:

- Having a history of violence;
- Being criminally versatile and using criminal networks to support extremist goals;
- having occupational skills that can enable acts of terrorism (such as civil engineering, pharmacology or construction);
- Having technical expertise that can be deployed (e.g. IT skills, knowledge of chemicals, military training or survival skills).

The examples above are not exhaustive and vulnerability may manifest itself in other ways. There is no single route to terrorism nor is there a simple profile of those who become involved. For this reason, any attempt to derive a 'profile' can be misleading. It must not be assumed that these characteristics and experiences will necessarily lead to individuals becoming terrorists, or that these indicators are the only source of information required to make an appropriate assessment about vulnerability.

Complaints Rights

Your attention is drawn to the enclosed review procedure, which details your right of complaint.

Copyright

Nottinghamshire Police in complying with their statutory duty under Sections 1 and 11 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) to release the enclosed information will not breach the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. However, the rights of the copyright owner of the enclosed information will continue to be protected by law. Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of the attached information should be addressed to the Force Solicitor, Nottinghamshire Police, Force Headquarters, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottinghamshire, NG5 8PP.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in Nottinghamshire Police.

Should you have any further enquiries concerning this matter, please write or contact the Freedom of Information Officer on telephone number 0115 9672507 or e-mail freedomofinformation@Nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk quoting the above reference number.

Yours sincerely

Disclosure Officer

Are you dissatisfied with your response?

Nottinghamshire Police has a duty to implement a complaints process in relation to Freedom of Information Act requests. If you are not content with our response, you may appeal, this process is known as an 'Internal Review'

Internal reviews are intended to be a fair and impartial means of reviewing the original request process.

You can appeal about your request if you:-

- Disagree with the Forces interpretation of your request;
- Believe the Force hold more information than has been disclosed to you;
- Disagree with the application of exemptions;
- Are still waiting for a response and are unhappy with the delay.

How do I appeal?

All appeals should be made in writing and sent to:-

Information Management
Nottinghamshire Police
Force Headquarters
Sherwood Lodge
Arnold
Notts
NG5 8PP

or alternatively freedomofinformation@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk

To deal with your appeal as quickly as possible please provide the unique identification number provided with your response and the reasons for your appeal.

Once we have received your request for appeal, your FOI response will be reviewed in full to identify any problems in the disclosure.

The review will be undertaken by someone different from, and preferably senior to, the original decision maker and this should be completed within 20 working days from receipt, in exceptional circumstances it may be extended by a further 20 working days.

What if I'm still not satisfied?

You can appeal to the Information Commissioner. You can contact the Information Commissioner Officer at the following:-

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 (national rate)

E-mail: casework@ico.org.uk