

Our Ref: 008430/15



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

Tel: 101
Ext 800 2507
Fax: 0115 967 2896

10 December 2015

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 24/11/2015.

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

Please find below answers to your questions:-

Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide me with full answers to each of the following questions:

- 1. How many reports has your force received in 2015 of people suspected of travelling to Syria/Iraq/Turkey in order to fight with Islamic State? I am hoping this will be possible either by searching missing persons reports or for free search terms such as `Syria' or `Islamic State'.***
- 2. How many intelligence reports has your force received in 2015 of people who have been to Syria/Iraq/Turkey in order to fight with Islamic State and are now back in the UK?***
- 3. How many arrests on suspicion of terrorism offences has your force made in 2015 where the suspect is believed to have been to Syria/Iraq/Turkey in order to fight with Islamic State?***

RESPONSE

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 and that threat has remained at the second highest level, 'severe', except for two short periods during August 2006 and June and July 2007,



when it was raised to the highest threat, 'critical', and in July 2009, when it was reduced to 'substantial'. The current threat level to the UK is 'severe'.

The security of the country is of paramount importance and Nottinghamshire Police force will not divulge whether information is or is not held 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 and providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by a terrorist attack, or disruption due to extremism, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in the highly sensitive areas of which they work.

Modern-day policing is intelligence led, and intelligence changes on a day-by-day basis.

Confirming or denying whether any information is held relevant to the request would show where policing interest has or has not occurred in any specific area which would enable those engaged in criminal activity to identify the focus of policing targets. Any information identifying the focus of this activity could be used to the advantage of terrorists or criminal organisations to plan an attack on the more vulnerable parts of the UK. Information that undermines the operational integrity of these activities will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on both national security and law enforcement.

Nottinghamshire Police force works in partnership with other agencies in order to combat issues such as terrorism and organised crime. Confirming or denying that information exists relevant to this request would seriously undermine this partnership approach. Tensions within Syria and the surrounding countries are currently very high, and confirming or denying whether any information is held relevant to this request would exacerbate the situation and jeopardise international relations.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S24

Confirmation or denial that any other information exists relevant to the request would lead to a better informed public. The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent especially with regards to safeguarding national security

Factors against confirmation or denial for S24

Other organisations outside the Police Service may, or may not, have an active interest in the subject of the question above. By confirming or denying that any information exists relevant to the request would harm the close relationship that exists between Nottinghamshire Police and other

organisations. To confirm or deny whether the force hold any information relevant to the request would allow inferences to be made about the nature and extent of national security related activities which may or may not take place in a given area. This would enable terrorists or organized criminal groups to take steps to counter intelligence, and as such, confirmation or denial would be damaging to national security.

By confirming or denying any policing arrangements of this nature would render national security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of on-going or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S30

There is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that Nottinghamshire Police is appropriately and effectively dealing with crime. This is particularly pertinent in high profile situations where there is a high degree of media speculation. Confirming or denying whether any information is held would allow the public to make informed decisions about these matters

Factors against confirmation or denial for S30

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that Nottinghamshire Police is appropriately and effectively dealing with crime, there is a strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations and in maintaining confidence in the Police Service. Confirmation or denial that any information is held relevant to the request would undermine any investigative process and compromise the integrity of any operations

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S31

By confirming or denying whether any information is held in respect this request would allow the public to see where public funds are being spent. Better public awareness may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public as they would be more observant in reporting suspicious activity.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S31

By confirming or denying whether information is held in respect this request law enforcement tactics would be compromised which would hinder the prevention and detection of crime. This would result in more risk to the public and consequently require the use of more police resources.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S27

Confirming or denying whether any information is held on this issue would increase public knowledge about our relations with other countries, in particular Syria.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S27

Section 27 recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. Confirming or denying that any information is held relevant to the request would destroy that trust and confidence, which in turn would hamper international relations affecting the UK's ability to protect and promote the country's interests.

Balance Test

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The security of the country is of paramount importance and Nottinghamshire Police force will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so would place the safety of an individual at risk, compromise law enforcement or undermine National Security.

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that Nottinghamshire Police force is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from terrorists and criminals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in this highly sensitive area.

It is for these reasons that the Public Interest must favour neither confirming nor denying that the requested information is held. However, this should not be taken as necessarily indicating that any information that would meet your request does or does not exist.

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;

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 Office 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