



Response Date:04/09/2024

2024/794 - Stray and seized dogs

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

1)How many stray dogs entered police kennels for each year between 1st January 2019 and 31st December 2023, including by breed.

2) Broken down by year 2019,2020,2021,2022,2023 (calendar years) 2a)How many of these were reclaimed by their owners?

2b) How many were adopted from the pound?

2c)How many went to an animal rescue? Please provide a breakdown in numbers per year for each rescue used 2d)How many were euthanized?

2e)What happened to any remaining dogs that did not fall into above categories?

2f)How many dogs were chipped?

2g)How many were chipped with owners details up to date?

We don't hold records going back to 2019 for strays as they are dealt with by the local authority who are legally obliged to do so. The records we have only go back to the end of 2022 and there are no records of any strays being taken to our kennels in 2022 or 2023.

3a) For each year (2019-2023)could you please tell me the total number of w.t.e (whole time equivalent) police dog handlers you employ?

The North Wales establishment for those years has always been 8 full time handlers and one full time instructor (who is also a handler).

3b) Please detail whether the kennel services are delivered in house or via a contract with an external provider could you please confirm the provider.

4) Please provide the first part of the postcode of the holding kennels (the details are for geographical spatial mapping and so exact address is not required)

Seized dogs are retained at Contracted Kennels on behalf of North Wales Police.

Concerns have been raised in relation to disclosing the identity / location of the providers.

Therefore, a public Interest Test has been carried out to weigh up the reasons for and against disclosure; to ensure the release is in the interest of the public as a whole and not just the applicant.

Section 31 (1) Law Enforcement

Section 38 (1) Health and Safety

These exemption is a prejudice based qualified exemption, therefore there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in confirming or not that the information is held as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Overall Harm

Disclosure of kennels providers can undermine the process of preventing or detecting crime and put the facilities at risk.

Section 38 provides an exemption from disclosing information if it would endanger any individual (including the applicant, the supplier of the information or anyone else).

- The exemption does not necessarily deal with what are commonly thought of as health and safety matters such as establishing the cause of an accident.
- Section 38 focuses on two particular areas where disclosure of information would or would be likely to endanger:
 - i. the physical or mental health of any individual, or
 - ii. the safety of any individual.

Disclosure of location details not in the public domain is likely to cause issues, distress and upset to those working there.

Public Interest Test – S31(1) Law Enforcement:

Considerations favouring disclosure

The public can have informed discussions on the matter.

Disclosure could lead to better public awareness of its activities and its resources.

Considerations favouring non-disclosure

Any individuals currently under investigation could also use the information released to attempt to influence the outcome of the investigation, through intimidate or harassment of the witnesses etc.

Therefore, by applying an exemption providing further information would prevent law enforcement resources from being compromised and would retain the Police force's ability to prevent and detect crimes.

Public Interest Test - Section 38(1) Health & Safety

Considerations favouring disclosure

The public can have informed discussions on the matter.

Considerations favouring non-disclosure

It would be appear unfair to place into the public domain information which is likely to cause an individual, for example the facility, distress as disclosure could cause unwanted contact /attention from those interested in this case and possibly intimidation or harassment.

Balancing Test

The issues of accountability and transparency are noted. However, there is some information in the public domain and North Wales Police have answer Freedom of Information requests regarding this case. We cannot release further information that would compromise law enforcement role of the force or put individuals at risk.

It is recognised that transparency is the fundamental objective of the Freedom of information Act and this leads itself to a presumption of disclosure. However, this has to be balanced against the harm that would be caused to law enforcement and individuals by providing kennel names.

It this case the decision is for non-disclosure.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice under section 17 (1) of the legislation.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 03/09/2024