



HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE

Response Date: 25/09/2024

2024/828 - Women in intelligence leadership roles

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

- 1. Please provide the current number and percentage of women in intelligence leadership roles within your police service intelligence operation units. For example, analysts, intelligence managers, senior intelligence managers and other supervisory roles.**

F	M	Grand Total
35	16	51
69%	31%	

- 2. What efforts are being made to ensure gender diversity in these positions within the services intelligence unit?**

We have a dedicated Workforce Representation Lead who is in the final stages of developing our new Workforce Representation Strategy. This will allow us to better understand areas of the force which are not yet representative of protected groups using workforce data to target support where necessary.

Intelligence sits within our operational support services (OSS) unit. The unit meets monthly to discuss Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives that are ongoing across the unit. Gold standard initiatives are replicated across the unit where possible. One of these gold standard initiatives is to have female only familiarisation days in which females from across the force and across different ranks are invited to learn more about specialist units if they are currently underrepresented in that unit. We also offer a 'day in their shoes' opportunity for people interested in specialist roles to shadow units.

Additionally, these offer opportunity to raise issues specific to the OSS unit. Updates which have been requested to promote gender diversity include functional changes such as updating facilities in specialist units to better suit the needs of female officers and staff. Additionally, the force welcomes discussion and challenge from our Gender Equality Staff Network. This network meets regularly to discuss issues our employees may face, giving opportunity to discuss and escalate throughout the force.

- 3. What specific programs/initiatives or policies does your police service have in place to promote gender diversity and support women in advancing to leadership roles, specifically within the intelligence units?**

Across the force, we offer support for women to develop their self confidence and leadership skills. We have a number of programs in place to develop leaders across the force, these include fully

funded ILM Leadership and Management Courses open to all ranks. Additionally, we offer a Senior Leadership Development programme for officers and staff at senior management levels.

Specific to development for women, we offer funded spaces on the Springboard programme. This programme is ran externally every year and supports women to explore their future in practical ways and learn how to develop their potential.

For female officers interested in promotion, we offer positive action to support their development. This includes a mock assessment/interview with an external company, in addition to internal coaching with trained coaches in force. This gives opportunity to understand interview examples and areas of concern ahead of application to allow women to feel fully prepared for the process.

4. Those in intelligence roles such as covert/overt surveillance operations, undercover operations officer, field intelligence officers etc- what is the current number and percentage of women in these roles?

We can confirm we have women in covert roles however harm has been identified in providing you with the numbers and percent. Therefore, Section 31 (1) (a) (b) Law Enforcement is to be considered as part of the Public Interest Test. A Public Interest Test has been carried out to weigh up the reasons for and against disclosure of the information requested, to ensure the release is in the interest of the public as a whole and not just the applicant.

The FOI Act is 'applicant blind'. This means that we cannot, and do not, ask about the motives of anyone who asks for information. In providing a response to one person, we are expressing a willingness to provide the same response to anyone, including those who might represent a threat to the UK.

Where disclosure will likely jeopardise the primary functions of North Wales Police, namely to prevent and detect crime as well as apprehend and prosecute offenders, information needs to be protected.

Whilst we are happy to confirm we have women in the covert roles to provide the numbers and percent would disclose our resourcing capability. To disclose numbers within North Wales Police, along with other forces, would aid criminals to identify in which force areas the level of such a resource might be deemed as weaker, and use this knowledge to their advantage in furthering criminal activity around the force area and country as a whole.

The disclosure of information which is likely to undermine the Police service's ability to serve the public by providing the primary functions stated, can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

Public Interest Test

Considerations favouring disclosure - Disclosure would allow for greater public awareness and openness over North Wales Police resource capability to deal with surveillance situations. As a result, the public would become more informed on how and where public funds are being spent in this area of policing and gain a greater knowledge of the resources available to prevent and detect crime. In itself that can lead to a reduction of crime and give the public more confidence in reporting incidents of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Considerations favouring non-disclosure - Disclosing the requested information would have a detrimental impact upon operational policing. Disclosing the number and percent of women within North Wales Police in these roles, would provide those individuals or groups within the criminal fraternity a significant operational advantage as the information could be used with a view to disrupting, or develop tactics that would divert resources away from locations that they wish to target. This would clearly jeopardise the ability of North Wales Police to respond appropriately to criminal activity and thereby protect the public.

The requested information could be used to compromise law enforcement capabilities by decreasing the ability of the police to fight crime, which would increase the commission of crime and subsequently have a detrimental impact on public safety as well as decrease public confidence in the police force.

Balancing Test

After weighing up the competing interests I have determined that the disclosure of the requested information would not be in the public interest. I consider that the benefit that would result from the information being disclosed does not outweigh the considerations favouring non-disclosure.

I find that the strongest reasons favouring disclosure are to provide greater public awareness and openness in how public funding is being spent, and whether North Wales Police is suitably resourced to deal with surveillance situations.

However, the strongest and most decisive reasons against disclosure are the impact that disclosure would have on public safety, and the prevention of the malicious redirecting of North Wales Police resources.

Clearly the release of any information that is likely to assist the criminal network and impact on our operational and tactical capabilities cannot be in the public interest and whilst wishing to embrace the ethos of information disclosure, this cannot take precedence over public safety.

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

Additionally, we can neither confirm nor deny whether we hold any information in relation to undercover operations as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 24(2) – National Security
Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

With Sections 24 and 31 being prejudice based qualified exemptions, there exists the requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in confirming or not whether information is held as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Overall harm for sections 24, 31:

Undercover police tactics are, by their very nature, sensitive. They include techniques and controls that will be of great interest to criminals who are trying to develop measures to counter them. This includes identifying and mapping the deployment of undercover officers (UCOs) with the intention of establishing how and when UCOs have been deployed and/or may be deployed in future.

To confirm or deny whether North Wales Police or other police forces utilise UCOs and how many would undermine the purpose of undercover operations. By providing the information requested (if held), it would allow comparison between forces across the country and enable the criminal fraternity to build a picture of what resources are in place. Consequently, this would prejudice the effectiveness of the police service as it would allow inferences to be drawn about force level capability and would identify vulnerability around the country.

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The confirmation or denial of the information sought would impact on the effectiveness of police procedures and investigations thereby hindering the prevention and detection of crime.

Public interest Tests 24,31

S24 - Public Interest favouring Disclosure:

The information simply relates to women in covert roles and their percentage. To confirm whether information exists would enable the general public to understand more about equality and the balance on genders within policing.

S24 - Public Interest favouring Non-Disclosure:

No information which may aid criminals or those who present any other threats to national security, such as through terrorism, should be disclosed. To what extent confirmation or denial may aid such a fraternity is unknown, but it is clear that it will have an impact on a force's ability to safeguard national security interests.

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection. The only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with what is placed into the public domain and in some circumstances such as these, confirmation or denial that information is held.

The cumulative effect of criminals gathering information from various sources would build a picture of vulnerabilities within certain scenarios, such as whether or not UCOs are located within a specific policing areas. The more information disclosed over time will provide a more detailed account of the tactical infrastructure of not only a force area but also the country as a whole.

Any incident which results from such a disclosure would by default affect National Security.

S31 - Public Interest favouring Disclosure:

Confirming or denying whether North Wales Police holds information relevant to this request the public would be able to see the proactive ways that the police are continually recruiting to equal opportunity roles within policing. North Wales Police is committed to openness and transparency with the general public. When a request for information is made to them, it is correct that the police make appropriate information available to the general public.

S31 - Public Interest favouring Non-Disclosure:

North Wales Police has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If an FOI disclosure reveals information to the world, by not adopting an NCND position, it would not only compromise and undermine the security of the national infrastructure, but the effective delivery of operational law enforcement would also be undermined as offenders could use this knowledge to their advantage which would compromise public safety and more worryingly encourage offenders to carry out further crimes.

North Wales Police has a statutory role in investigating criminal offences. North Wales Police will not disclose, through the duty to confirm or deny whether information is held under the Act, whether or not UCOs are used, and by extension, have been deployed. This information would allow criminals to map forces that might be using UCOs and assist them to predict where current UCOs are deployed and/or where UCOs may be deployed in future. This information could also, in certain circumstances, compromise police investigations, tactics and/or sources of information. Where compromise occurs, this would adversely affect North Wales Police ability to prevent and detect crime and apprehend and prosecute offenders. This would be contrary to the public interest.

Balancing Test:

After weighing up the competing interests I have determined that the disclosure of the above information would not be in the public interest. I consider that the benefit that would result from the information being disclosed does not outweigh the considerations favouring non-disclosure.

The security of the country is of paramount importance and North Wales Police will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so could undermine National Security or compromise Law Enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by the criminal fraternity through the use of UCOs, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both National Security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in this area.

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

5. Over the past 5 years how has the number and percentage of women in intelligence leadership roles within your police service changed?

	F	M	Grand Total		F	M
2020	36	12	48	2020	75%	25%
2021	36	12	48	2021	75%	25%
2022	39	13	52	2022	75%	25%
2023	37	13	50	2023	74%	26%
2024	35	16	51	2024	69%	31%

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 11/09/2024