



**HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE**

Response Date:02/01/2025

2025/1245 - Intimate partner sexual violence

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

- 1. Which unit or units in your force are responsible for investigating cases of intimate partner sexual violence (i.e. cases where the sexual offences occurred within a context of domestic abuse from an intimate partner and/or where a victim has reported both domestic abuse and sexual offences by the same perpetrator)?**
- 2. If the answer to question 1 is more than one unit, how are cases allocated between units?**
- 3. Please provide a copy of any internal force policy relating to the issues in questions 1 and 2.**

Cases of Domestic Abuse are primarily investigated by either Local Policing Services (CID or uniform) and Protecting Vulnerable People department. The way in which cases are allocated depends on a 'DASH' scoring matrix, or age of a child should one be involved. Cases are then either allocated to a detective or uniform officer based on either Professional Judgment or a numerical risk assessment score.

There is a policy which exists called the Crime Management Plan within North Wales Police. This is an internal crime progression and allocation document, concerns have been raised in disclosing the plan into the public domain.

A Freedom of Information Act request is not a private transaction. Both the request itself, and any information disclosed, are considered suitable for open publication. This is because, under Freedom of Information, any information disclosed is released into the wider public domain, effectively to the world and not just to one individual.

Therefore, Section 31 (1) (a) 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.

Section s31(1) Law Enforcement

Section 31 (1) 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.

The Harm Test process requires North Wales Police to consider any possible harm that might arise as a result of placing the requested information into the public domain. This process considers the potential harm to:

- Individuals

Pencadlys yr Heddlu,
Glan-y-Don, Bae Colwyn LL29 8AW
www.heddlugogleddcymru.police.uk

Police Headquarters,
Glan-y-Don, Colwyn Bay LL29 8AW
www.northwales.police.uk

- The community as a whole
- North Wales Police and the wider policing service
- Other bodies

Harm in respect of s31(1) Law Enforcement

To disclose a particular policing tool of this type used by North Wales Police as part of an investigative process could reveal operational tactics linked to policing, compromise police investigations and/or adversely affect the ability of North Wales Police and others to safeguard. If a perpetrator were to read the document, they would have knowledge of policing investigation tactics and how cases are scored, triaged and allocated.

By revealing specific tactical information such as requested within this request, it would undermine the process of preventing or detecting crime and the apprehension of prosecution of offenders.

Public Interest Test:

Factors favouring Disclosure – Providing details of procedures detailed within the Crime Management Plan would provide the public with information how sexual violence is investigated and North Wales Police capabilities. This would reinforce the wider commitment to openness and transparency with the general public and facilitate public debate. Furthermore, owing to the inherent link between transparency and public confidence, would likely to improve the general public's confidence. Over time, an increase in public confidence would be likely to improve public engagement with the police. This would, in turn, lead to an improvement in our ability to both prevent and detect crime, and apprehend and prosecute offenders.

Factors favouring Non-Disclosure – Disclosing details of procedures used within the Crime Management Plan would provide a perpetrator with knowledge of policing investigation tactics and how cases are scored, triaged and allocated. This information could be used to avoid detection or disrupt police work.

In this case, for the reasons outlined in the evidenced harm, the effectiveness of current and future strategies when carrying out investigations and gathering evidence may be compromised. The safety of the public is of paramount importance to policing purposes, and any increase in crime would place the public at risk of harm. When the current or future law enforcement role of the force may be compromised by the release of information, the effectiveness of the force will be reduced. The personal safety of individuals is of paramount importance to the Police Service and must be considered in response of every release. A disclosure under Freedom of Information is a release to the world and, in this case, disclosing tactical information relating to Domestic Abuse investigations.

Balance Test

Having considered the reasons why North Wales Police should disclose our Crime Management Plan, although openness and transparency is at the forefront when considering the public interest, in this case disclosure relating to investigating cases of sexual violence/domestic abuse used by the police would not be in the public interest.

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with any information that is released.

Disclosing policing investigation tactics, how cases are scored, triaged and allocated would reveal specific policing activity and would assist those intent on causing harm. This would directly harm the ability of the force to investigate crime. This could also reveal police capabilities, compromise police investigations and/or otherwise. I have attached considerable weight to these interests as the primary role of the Police Service is to both prevent and detect crime and apprehend those responsible for committing criminal offences.

Therefore, at this moment in time, it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test disclosing the plan is not made out.

4. Does your force currently have:

a) a dedicated RASSO unit - Yes, this sits within our Protecting Vulnerable People Unit

b) a dedicated domestic abuse unit - Yes, Protecting Vulnerable People Unit and is a safeguarding unit and not a dedicated investigation team.

5. Please could you provide answers to questions 1 to 4 above on the arrangements within your force in January 2022.

The processes above have been in place since before January 2022.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 29/12/2025