



HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE

Response Date:04/09/2025

2025/874 - Spend on external (physical) forensic services

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

for the most recent financial year for which data is available:

Please provide the total amount in £ (excluding VAT) that your force has spent on external physical (traditional) forensic science services. Do not include any spend on digital forensics. I request that this is broken down into categories based on the Lot Code and description specified in the contract(s) awarded to your private forensic science provider suppliers.

For each category, please include:

- 1. The Lot Code (as per the contract)**
- 2. The Lot description (e.g., DNA Crime Stains)**
- 3. The total spend (£, ex VAT)**
- 4. The supplier name**

For example:

Lot X | DNA Crime Stains | £1,000,000 | Eurofins Forensic Services

Lot Y | Toxicology | £500,000 | Cellmark Forensic Services

	FY 24/25 Total
*	
Lot 303 - Other DNA	£114,870.13
Lot 302 - Other Crime Stains	£77,462.12
Lot 305 - Footwear Comparison	£1,501.56
Lot 311a - Simple Toxicology/RTA	£8,114.91
Lot 312 - Casework	£34,070.05
Firearms & Ammunition	£6,751.63
Lot 313 - Marks & Traces	£3,668.50
*	
PACE DNA	£63,945.41
Tox and RTA	£15,580.84
General Case Work	£10,090.92
Question Documents	£2,293.07
*	
Lot 302 - Other Crime Stains	£7,597.22
Lot 303 - Other DNA	£165,030.55
Lot 304 - Fire Investigation	£5,448.10

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

Yn gwneud Gogledd Cymru'r lle mwyaf diogel i fyw, gweithio ac ymweld yn y DU
Making North Wales the safest place to live, work and visit in the UK

Lot 312 - Casework	£34,008.77
PACE	£87.91
Lot 311a - Simple Toxicology/RTA	£46,847.33
Environmental Testing	£7,706.80
Anthropology/Archaeology	£761.25
Specialist Support	£574.58
Scene Attendance	£500.00
*	
Toxicology	£390,938.00
Courier	£215.60
Total	£998,065.25

* Concerns have been raised in relation to providing the names of digital forensic laboratories and/or outside forensic science services used. 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 s31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement

Section 31 (1)(a)(b) 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
- The community as a whole
- North Wales Police and the wider policing service
- Other bodies

Policing is an information-led activity, and information assurance (which includes information security) is fundamental to how the Police Service manages the challenges faced. In order to comply with statutory requirements, the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice for Information Assurance has been put in place to ensure the delivery of core operational policing by providing appropriate and consistent protection for the information assets of member organisations, see below link:

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/information-management/>

Commercial Forensic Service Providers are vitally important in the Criminal Justice system - not only do they play a crucial role by supporting UK Policing with backlogs in the Digital Forensics arena, but they provide Defence teams with access to independent forensic experts to support their clients.

Whilst not in any way questioning the motives of the applicant, it must be taken into account when considering potential harm that a disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is made to the world at large, rather than a private correspondence. Specific details of any forensic service providers used by North Wales Police would be extremely useful to those involved in criminality as it would enable them to create a map of those most used by police Forces. Forensic Service Providers can be targeted by malicious actors, for example in 2019 Eurofins (one of the UK's largest FSPs) suffered a highly sophisticated ransomware attack which severely disrupted UK Policing and the Criminal Justice system.

<https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2019/06/24/eurofins-ransomware-attack/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/jul/05/eurofins-ransomware-attack-hacked-forensic-provider-pays-ransom>

By providing a list of forensic service providers, Force by Force, a malign individual could identify those most critical to the Law-and-Order sector and specifically target those providing the most assistance. This would have a huge impact on the effective delivery of operational law enforcement as it would leave companies open to further cyberattacks which could have devastating consequences for law enforcement.

Factors favouring Disclosure

Confirming the names of Forensic Service Providers would be of interest to the public, namely give insight into the forensic processes used to solve crimes.

Factors favouring Non-Disclosure

Measures are put in place to protect the community we serve and as evidenced within the harm, to provide a detailed list of Forensic Service Providers would allow individuals intent on disrupting law enforcement to target specific companies using the information obtained to maximise the impact.

Taking into account the current security climate within the United Kingdom, and the Eurofins cyber-attack, no information which may aid criminality should be disclosed. It is clear that it would have an impact on a Force's ability to carry out the core duty of enforcing the law and serving the community.

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 what is placed into the public domain.

Balance Test

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. In order to effectively and robustly carry out those duties, external services are utilised which are vital to investigating criminal activity. Weakening the mechanisms used to investigate any type of criminal activity would have a detrimental impact on law enforcement as a whole. To provide the names of the FSPs despite the known risks of cyber-attacks would undermine any trust or confidence the public have in the Police Service. Therefore, at this moment in time, it is our opinion that the balance test favours against the disclosure of the FSP used for digital forensics.

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 03/09/2025