



**HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE**

Response Date:19/05/2026

2026/493 - Payments to CHIS

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

1. What is the total amount spent by the force on Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) over the last five financial years? (Please break this down for each year from 2021/2022 up until 2025/2026)

2021/22	£16,142
2022/23	£16,567
2023/24	£18,132
2024/25	£20,115
2025/26	£16,885

North Wales Police can neither confirm nor deny whether we hold any further information in relation to your request 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 23(5) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters
- Section 24(2) - National Security
- Section 30(3) - Law Enforcement

Section 23 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest. Confirming or denying the existence of whether any information is held would contravene the constrictions laid out within Section 23 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in that this stipulates a generic bar on disclosure of any information applied by, or concerning, certain Security Bodies.

Section 24 is a prejudiced based qualified exemption and there is a requirement to evidence the prejudice (harm) in disclosure and consider the public interest to ensure neither confirming or denying that information is held is appropriate.

Section 30 is a class based qualified exemption and there is a requirement to consider the public interest to ensure neither confirming or denying information is held is appropriate.

Harm

Harm for neither confirming nor denying that any other information is held for Section 24

Disclosure of informants data could impact on the recruitment and retention of CHIS in general, due to the perception of (rather than the actual) risk of identification. The disclosure of the requested information would damage national security through discouraging current national security CHIS from

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cooperating with the police service in other geographical areas, or preventing the recruitment of national security CHIS in the future – regardless of whether the area in question actually currently runs CHIS reporting on serious crime, terrorist or other threats.

Public Interest Test.

Factors favouring confirming or denying that any other information is held for Section 24

Confirmation or denial that any other information exists relevant to the request would lead to a better informed public and the public are entitled to know how public funds are spent. The information simply relates to national security and disclosure would not actually harm it.

Factors against confirming or denying that any other information is held for Section 24

Other organisations outside the police service are also widely engaged in rewarding informants in a number of ways, and therefore by confirming or denying that any other information exists relevant to the request would harm the close relationship that exists with such organisations, where trust and confidence in this specific area has been built up in the exchange of information and financial assistance during the Criminal Justice process.

To confirm or deny whether North Wales Police hold any additional information 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 could enable terrorist groups to take steps to avoid detection, 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 ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infra-structure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public.

Factors favouring confirming or denying that any other information is held for Section 30

The confirmation or denial that information is held would provide a greater insight into policing and how resources are allocated to investigate crimes. The confirmation or denial that any other information is or is not held would identify how often North Wales Police relies on CHIS within this type of investigation.

Factors against confirming or denying that any other information is held for Section 30

To confirm or deny that any other information relevant to this request is held would provide details of any previous or on-going investigations. Informant's information assists police investigations and provides vital intelligence. To confirm that North Wales Police have used informants with previous investigations and criminal convictions in specific investigations would provide sensitive information that would undermine policing and investigations. Investigations, although complete, may have included information from an informant of the type described and serve to undermine any investigations that have taken place based on the original investigation.

Balance Test

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The security and maintenance of investigations are of paramount importance and the Police service 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 and investigations. 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 from 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. As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing

activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of national security, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances.

It is therefore our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for confirming or not that information is held, is not made out.

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

2. For each of those periods, please could you list the number of individuals who have received a payment that is categorised as one made to a CHIS?

We can confirm that information is held in relation to Q2 of your request, however concerns have been raised in relation to disclosing the requested information, therefore a Public Interest Test has been carried out;

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires North Wales Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption/s, as well as the factors considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

S30(2) Investigations and Proceedings conducted by Public Authorities
S38(1) Health and Safety
S40(2) Personal Information

Section 40 is a class based absolute exemption. When applying this exemption, it is necessary to articulate which Principle of the General Data Protection Regulation Act 2018 (GDPR). In this case, it would be the first principle that is breached in as much as personal information shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to identifiable individuals.

Section 30 is a qualified class based exemption – therefore a public interest test must be carried out.

Section 38 is a prejudice based qualified exemptions and any prejudice (harm) that is held would cause must be articulated as well as the public interest considerations.

The Public Interest Test will 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.

Harm

Releasing the number of individuals who have received a payment, even as a standalone figure, could enable individuals to draw inferences about covert activity and potentially identify or suspect someone of being a CHIS. This creates a real risk of intimidation or physical harm to those involved and undermines the safety measures designed to protect sources, staff, and the public.

Public Interest Considerations

Section 30/38 - Factors Favouring Disclosure

There is longstanding public knowledge that police forces use covert human intelligence sources to assist investigations. Disclosure of the requested information could, in principle, increase public understanding of how intelligence is gathered, how informants contribute to daily policing

operations, and how this supports the prevention and detection of crime. Transparency may also help correct misconceptions about the use and management of CHIS and allow the public to consider whether such financial or operational arrangements are appropriate.

Section 30/38 - Factors Against Disclosure

CHIS-related information is kept confidential to protect the safety of those who assist police covertly. Release of the highest payment could allow individuals to speculate about CHIS involvement, placing them at increased risk of harm.

Disclosure of the number of individuals who have received a payment could also reveal patterns of covert activity within the force area. Over time, the release of such information would allow individuals to analyse peaks or troughs in CHIS use and draw conclusions about operational priorities or investigative intensity. This would undermine intelligence gathering, hinder the prevention and detection of crime, and prejudice the force's ability to maintain confidential sources. It may also expose individuals, or those suspected of being CHIS, to the risk of harm.

Disclosure would damage the confidence of those assisting law enforcement and would impede the force's ability to recruit and retain CHIS in future. While the public has a legitimate interest in transparency around policing, the ability of the police to protect the public, gather intelligence and maintain covert capabilities is of far greater weight. Disclosure that undermines CHIS confidence or reveals operational patterns would jeopardise those essential functions. The balance therefore lies firmly in favour of non disclosure.

Balance Test

Although transparency supports accountability and public confidence, the risks associated with confirming or denying the existence of further CHIS-related information are substantial. Disclosure would undermine covert capabilities, discouraging CHIS cooperation, and enabling hostile actors to exploit operational sensitivities. The public interest in protecting covert operations, safeguarding individuals and maintaining the effectiveness of intelligence-led policing outweighs the arguments in favour of the release of the information requested. Protecting life and safety also outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

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

Therefore, 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 18/05/2026