



**HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE**

Response Date:13/08/2025

2025/716 - Police staffing and expenditure

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

1. How much has the force paid to police informants in the following financial years:

2014/15	£7,776.99
2015/16	£8,777.92
2016/17	£9,845.83
2017/18	£17,420
2018/19	£10,514
2019/20	£12,398
2020/21	£10,900
2021/22	£16,142
2022/23	£16,567
2023/24	£18,132
2024/25	£20,115

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.

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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 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. How many CHIS (Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Handlers did you have on staff in the following financial years:

Concerns have been raised in disclosing the number of CHIS (Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Handlers or surveillance officers per year. 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

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.

Harm in respect of s31(1) Law Enforcement

Requests under the Freedom of Information Act are 'applicant blind', which means that the motives of anyone requesting information are not questioned, and in providing a response to one person, we are expressing a willingness to provide the same information to everyone. In view of this, we are happy to confirm we have CHIS handlers and surveillance officers, however as they are officers working in a covert capacity we do not want to disclose any covert capacity of our force. This is a valuable commodity to individuals and organisations wishing to commit crime, as it provides an insight into tactics and resources and a greater understanding of the policing methods and techniques employed by North Wales Police, enabling them to take steps to counter them. This detrimental effect is increased if the request is made to several different law enforcement bodies.

Public Interest Test

Section 31 - Factors Favouring Disclosure

Disclosure of the requested information may add value to the accuracy of public debate with regards to resources allocated for the prevention and detection of crime and show that North Wales Police is open and transparent.

Section 31 - Factors Against Disclosure

North Wales Police has a duty to ensure that the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension or prosecution of offenders, and administration of justice is carried out appropriately and effectively.

Disclosure of the requested information could provide a tactical advantage to those wishing to cause harm, which could ultimately impact upon the safety of the public and officers and undermine the policing purpose.

Balance 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 information being provided to us. 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.

3. What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for CHIS Handlers in the force in the following financial years?

The figures provided are based on the budgeted strength at the start of each Financial Year indicated (1st April). Actual numbers may have fluctuated slightly throughout the year.

2014/15	£404,971
2015/16	£394,488
2016/17	£209,803
2017/18	£210,662
2018/19	£212,736
2019/20	£213,774
2020/21	£227,657
2021/22	£233,374
2022/23	£222,209
2023/24	£230,878
2024/25	£269,583

4. How many surveillance officers did you have on staff in the following financial years:

Please see the public interest test in question 2

5. What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for surveillance officers in the force in the following financial years?

The figures provided are based on the budgeted strength at the start of each Financial Year indicated (1st April). Actual numbers may have fluctuated slightly throughout the year.

2014/15	£645,535
2015/16	£698,051
2016/17	£728,648
2017/18	£736,369
2018/19	£746,622
2019/20	£870,636
2020/21	£1,065,664
2021/22	£1,187,005
2022/23	£1,169,066
2023/24	£1,175,381
2024/25	£1,232,075

6. How many digital and cyber surveillance staff (for example, but not limited to: cybercrime specialists, digital media investigators) did you have on staff in the following financial years:

The figures provided are based on the budgeted strength at the start of each Financial Year indicated (1st April). Actual numbers may have fluctuated slightly throughout the year.

2014/15	0	During this year we had no dedicated Cybercrime Specialists or Digital Media Investigators
2015/16	0	During this year we had no dedicated Cybercrime Specialists or Digital Media Investigators
2016/17	4	
2017/18	4	
2018/19	4	
2019/20	4	
2020/21	5	
2021/22	10	
2022/23	10	
2023/24	10	
2024/25	10	

7. What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for digital and cyber surveillance staff (for example, but not limited to: cybercrime specialists, digital media investigators) in the force in the following financial years?

2014/15	£0	During this year we had no dedicated Cybercrime Specialists or Digital Media Investigators
2015/16	£0	During this year we had no dedicated Cybercrime Specialists or Digital Media Investigators
2016/17	£216,512	
2017/18	£218,501	
2018/19	£220,637	

2019/20	£235,845
2020/21	£240,015
2021/22	£481,165
2022/23	£532,008
2023/24	£554,282
2024/25	£690,223

8. What was the total annual expenditure on technical surveillance equipment (including but not limited to: listening devices, trackers, static or mobile CCTV units, night vision or thermal cameras, drones) for the following financial years:

2014/15
2015/16
2016/17
2017/18
2018/19
2019/20
2020/21
2021/22
2022/23
2023/24
2024/25

We cannot provide this detail as the budget is not devolved to a level to enable us to split out the costs of this type of equipment.

9. What was the total annual budget of the force for the following financial years:

2014/15	£141,204,244
2015/16	£139,835,893
2016/17	£141,066,922
2017/18	£143,216,633
2018/19	£146,467,010
2019/20	£154,263,799
2020/21	£163,704,835
2021/22	£173,364,416
2022/23	£182,268,351
2023/24	£188,959,206
2024/25	£200,281,134

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 21/07/2025