

Date: 07/10/2020

Our Reference: FOIA-2020-0110

RE: Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request

I write in response to your Freedom of Information Act 2000 (or 'FoIA 2000') request dated 13/09/2020 in which you requested:

"I would like to request the unarmed skills and edged weapons manuals under the Freedom of Information Act"

When a request for information is made under FoIA 2000, a public authority has a general duty under section 1(1) of the Act to inform an applicant whether the requested information is held. There is then a general obligation to communicate that information to the applicant. If a public authority decides that the information should not be disclosed because an exemption applies, it must, under section 17(1) cite the appropriate section or exemption of the Act and provide an explanation for relying upon it.

It is important to note that a freedom of information request is not a private transaction. Both the request itself and any information disclosed are considered suitable for open publication, that is, once access to information is granted to one person under the legislation, it is then considered public information and must be communicated to any individual should a request be received. In light of this, our responses and disclosures are published on our external website at a later date. This should be borne in mind where a request is made for personal data of named individuals.

Decision

After conducting careful searches for any information relevant to your request I can confirm that there is information held. However, your request is being partially refused under the following exemption:

- Section 31 – Law Enforcement

The entire redacted version of the personal safety manual is publically available and can be found in the link below. Please note the files are large and may take a while to load.

<http://library.college.police.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/search2?searchterm=%22personal%20safety%20manual%22&Fields=%40&Media=PDF&Bool=AND>

A refusal notice is provided in **Appendix A**. I trust this letter answers your questions. Your rights are provided in **Appendix B**.

Yours sincerely,

James Rose | Legal Advisor
Information Management and Legal Team
College of Policing

Email: FOI@college.pnn.police.uk

Website: www.college.police.uk

Appendix A

Refusal Notice

Section 31(1)(a) – Law Enforcement

As a publicly funded body and from an ethical perspective, the College accepts it has a duty to make appropriate information available to the public wherever possible. We appreciate that there is a public interest in the nature of the training provided by the College, and wherever possible, in order to better inform the public about the work that we do, we aim to publish certain guidance documents. Additionally, we appreciate that spending of public money and a public authority's ability to generate income, are matters of strong public interest.

However, the College must also consider the wider impact of disclosing specific detail about police training. By the very nature of our work, the disclosure of the information requested carries the potential risk of highlighting areas of weakness within police training. The possible disclosure of law enforcement tactics may have a negative impact on law enforcement operations, both in the UK and abroad. This in turn could increase the risk to the safety of the public and indeed law enforcement. Disclosure could hinder the effective prevention and detection of crime as it has the potential to reveal specific tactics the police use. Disclosure of information that undermines the operational integrity of law enforcement capabilities is highly likely to have an adverse impact on public safety and a negative effect on law enforcement generally. This risk to public safety cannot be said to be in the public interest.

As stated above, the public interest test is a consideration of whether the community benefit of possession of the information outweighs the potential harm of releasing that information. It is not an evaluation of what interests the public. On weighing up the competing interests, I consider that the public interest test favours withholding the tactical detail from the attached disclosure documents.

Appendix B

Rights

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of the College of Policing made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) regarding access to information you can request that the decision is reviewed internally.

Internal review requests should be made in writing, within **forty (40) working days** from the date of the refusal notice, and addressed to: FOI team, Central House, Beckwith Knowle, Otley Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 1UF or email: FOI@college.pnn.police.uk

In all possible circumstances the College of Policing will aim to respond to your request for internal review within **20 working days**.

The Information Commissioner

If, after lodging an internal review request with the College of Policing you are still dissatisfied with the decision you may make application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/official-information/>.

Alternatively, write to:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Phone: 0303 123 1113