National Police Chiefs' Council

National Police
Freedom of Information
and Data Protection Unit

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16/07/2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 2996/2026

Thank you for your request for information regarding metadata for an Internal Review, which has now been considered.

Applicant Question:

Please treat the following as a meta-request for recorded information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This request concerns only the handling, review and reconsideration of Freedom of Information request 2320/2025 ("Six Myths About Police Media Briefings Busted") and the associated Internal Reviews 2415/2025.

For the avoidance of doubt, it does not seek reconsideration of the substantive exemptions applied in the either the request finalisation or the revised internal review, nor does it seek legal advice protected by legal professional privilege.

Timeframe

Please provide recorded information created, received or held between 21 July 2025 (the date on which Internal Review 2415/2025 was requested) and 10 June 2026.

Reconsideration of Internal Review 2415/2025

1. Please disclose copies of any internal correspondence, emails, memoranda, meeting notes, Teams messages, recorded discussions, submissions or other communications concerning:

   (a) whether Internal Review 2415/2025 should be revisited, reconsidered, amended, withdrawn, rescinded or replaced;
   (b) any concerns raised regarding the adequacy of the original Internal Review outcome;
   (c) any consideration of alternative exemptions, including but not limited to sections 31, 36 and 40 FOIA;
   (d) any discussion concerning the adequacy of the original public interest test.

Communications concerning ICO complaint IC-418161-H2S8

2. Please disclose copies of any correspondence, communications, meeting notes, memoranda or recorded discussions between the NPCC and the Information Commissioner's Office concerning:

   (a) complaint IC-418161-H2S8;
   (b) the original Internal Review outcome dated 15 August 2025;
   (c) the decision to issue a revised Internal Review outcome;
   (d) the application of exemptions under sections 31, 36 and/or 40 FOIA.

   Where correspondence contains personal data, I am, of course, content for such data to be redacted where appropriate.

Decision-making records

3. Please disclose any recorded information setting out:

   (a) the rationale for introducing reliance upon section 36 FOIA within the revised Internal Review outcome;
   (b) any harm or prejudice assessments prepared in relation to section 36;
   (c) any public interest balancing exercise undertaken concerning section 36;
   (d) any internal guidance, recommendations or advice relied upon when deciding to reformulate the exemption position.

Consultation and approval

4. Please disclose copies of any recorded information identifying:
   (a) the role or job title of those involved in reviewing, drafting, approving or authorising the revised Internal Review outcome;
   (b) any consultation undertaken with NPCC communications personnel, the College of Policing, the Crown Prosecution Service, Cheshire Constabulary or any other external body in relation to the revised Internal Review.

Recorded chronology

5. Please disclose any case-management notes, audit logs, chronology records or equivalent documents recording significant actions taken in relation to:

   (a) ICO complaint IC-418161-H2S8; and/or
   (b) the reconsideration and reissue of Internal Review 2415/2025.

Where any information is considered exempt, please provide any non-exempt information capable of disclosure by way of severance and identify the exemptions relied upon.

In the event that retrieval and consideration of the requested material approaches the s12 FOIA limit, I am more than content to work with the NPCC team to suitably refine the request.

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NPCC Response:

The NPCC does hold some information captured by your request. I have responded to each question in turn.

1. The NPCC does not hold any information captured by points a-d.

2. The NPCC does hold information captured by this question. The captured correspondence between the ICO and NPCC has been withheld citing Section 31(1)(g)(2)(a)(c) Law Enforcement. For more details on the legislation and the risk of harm, please see Annex A below.

3. The NPCC does hold some information captured by this question. One document has been attached to the response letter. It has been released in full.

- S36 Form NPCC Qualified Officer 28.05.26.

Additionally, information contained within the revised internal response letter which is captured by this question has been extracted and provided below:

'The NPCC is committed to demonstrating proportionality and accountability and understands that the public are entitled to know where their public funds are being spent. Information contained within the withheld correspondence and in some parts 2, would provide reassurance to the wider public that the police service is appropriately and effectively managing and responding to media issues.

The NPCC works with other external partner agencies in order to combat a variety of threats and issues. Release of the redacted information relevant to this request would seriously undermine this partnership approach in respect of measures concerning combating inaccurate information in the media. Disclosure would inhibit the ability of partner agencies to express themselves openly, honestly, and completely, or to explore options when providing advice or giving their views as part of the process of deliberation leading to media handling issues.

Those involved in the free and frank provision of advice and provision of views for deliberation should be afforded the space to think freely and express views without worrying about the consequences. Additionally, disclosure of this information would lead to colleagues and partners becoming more circumspect in providing free and frank advice and views in the future. Individuals should feel confident that there is a safe space to air their professional views, debate live issues and give advice.

This process would be inhibited if it became known that all email discussions could be released into the public domain later under a Freedom of Information request. Releasing the information in scope of this request would have a detrimental, chilling effect on the future ability of officials to discuss the handling of media matters and subsequently the quality of any future advice may deteriorate. Consequently, the effectiveness of deliberations and decision making would be harmed generally. It is vital that colleagues and partner agencies can provide free and frank exchange of views to others regarding changes to the media handling plan and be able to adapt their views and advice without fear that those outcomes or conversations will be released later into the public domain.'

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4.a. Head of National Police Freedom of Information and Data Protection Unit
b. No information held.

5. No information held.

In wishing to provide some further context to the response. We have undertaken reasonable searches for recorded information relating to the handling and decision-making process for your previous request. Those searches identified only a limited amount of recorded information.

The majority of discussions concerning the consideration of requests are conducted verbally, either during routine team meetings or through informal discussions between colleagues. As these discussions were not routinely documented, no further recorded information is held.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, public authorities are required to provide access to information that is recorded and held at the time of the request. The Act does not require authorities to create information where no record exists. Consequently, beyond the information provided, no additional recorded information is held within the scope of your request.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Officer & Decision Maker

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COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Internal Review

Any request for an internal review will be acknowledged and responded to, based on the specific wording of your initial request only.

We ask that any rationale to request an internal review, does not include any requests for new information and ask that these be submitted by separate email. We will acknowledge as a new request and may aggregate to your initial request in compliance with the legislation.

If you are dissatisfied with the response you have been provided with in compliance with the Freedom of Information legislation, you can lodge a complaint with NPCC to have the decision reviewed within 40 working days of the date of this response.

The handling of your request will be looked at by someone independent of the original decision and a fresh response provided.

It would be helpful, if requesting a review, for you to articulate in detail the reasons you are not satisfied with this reply.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to NPCC Freedom of Information, c/o PO Box 481, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 9FS.

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Annex A

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the NPCC, when refusing to provide information by way of exemption in question and (c) states why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a refusal notice to those aspects of your request.

Legislation – Section 16

(1) It shall be the duty of a public authority to provide advice and assistance, so far as it would be reasonable to expect the authority to do so, to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information to it.

Legislation - Section 31 Law Enforcement

(1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice -
(g) the exercise by any public authority of its functions for any of the purposes specified in subsection (2)

Disclosure of correspondence between the ICO and the NPCC FOI team relating to an ongoing ICO case would be likely to prejudice the effective exercise of the ICO's regulatory functions. The information forms part of active engagement between the regulator and the public authority while the ICO is considering and investigating matters that have not yet been concluded.

Disclosure of information concerning an ongoing case could undermine the ICO's ability to carry out its statutory functions effectively by revealing details of regulatory discussions, lines of enquiry, provisional views, and matters under active consideration before a final determination has been reached. Premature disclosure of such information may inhibit the free and frank exchange of information between the regulator and the authority, potentially affecting the quality and candour of future submissions and engagement during ongoing investigations.

Furthermore, releasing information while the case remains live could give rise to the inaccurate interpretation of matters that remain under consideration, create external pressure upon the regulatory process, and undermine the ICO's ability to reach decisions based solely upon a full and impartial assessment of the evidence. The prejudice is real, actual and of substance given that no Decision Notice has yet been issued and the regulatory process remains ongoing.

There is a recognised public interest in promoting openness and transparency regarding communications between public authorities and regulators. Disclosure would assist public understanding of how the ICO and the NPCC engage during the handling of complaints and investigations and would contribute to accountability regarding the consideration of matters under the Freedom of Information Act.

There is a strong public interest in ensuring that the ICO can carry out its statutory regulatory and investigatory functions effectively and without undue interference. The regulatory process depends upon the ability of the

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ICO and public authorities to exchange information candidly whilst matters remain under active consideration. Disclosure of information relating to an ongoing investigation risk undermining that process and could prejudice the regulator's ability to conduct inquiries and reach well-informed decisions.

There is also a significant public interest in protecting the integrity of live regulatory proceedings and ensuring that decisions are reached through the proper statutory process. Premature disclosure of information before the ICO has completed its investigation and issued a final decision could undermine confidence in that process and discourage the frank exchange of information necessary for effective regulatory oversight.

While there is a public interest in transparency, greater weight has been given to the public interest in protecting the effectiveness and integrity of the ICO's ongoing regulatory functions. As the case remains live and no Decision Notice has been issued, disclosure at this time would be likely to prejudice the ICO's ability to fulfil its statutory role. The public interest therefore favours maintaining the exemption under section 31(1)(g).

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