National Police Chiefs' Council

National Police
Freedom of Information
and Data Protection Unit

c/o PO BOX 481
Fareham
Hampshire
PO14 9FS

Tel: 02380 478922
Email: npcc.foi.request@npfdu.police.uk

03/08/2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 2992/2026

Thank you for your request for information regarding the NPoCC Internet Intelligence Investigations (i3) Team, which has now been considered.

Applicant Question:

For the period from the establishment of the team to the date this request is processed, please provide:

1. Referral Volumes

a. The total number of referrals made by the NIIIT to police forces in England and Wales.
b. A breakdown of referrals by:
- Police force receiving the referral;
- Month and year;
- Platform on which the content originated (e.g. X, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube or other).

2. Referral Outcomes

For each police force, please provide the number of referrals that resulted in:
- No further action;
- Intelligence recording only;
- Safeguarding intervention;
- Voluntary interview or engagement;
- Formal investigation;
- Arrest;
- Charge;
- Any other recorded outcome category.

3. Categories of Content

Please also provide a breakdown of referrals by content category, including but not limited to categories such as:
- Public order concerns;
- Hate crime allegations;

- Hate incidents;
- Violence or threats of violence;
- Extremism;
- Terrorism-related concerns;
- Misinformation/disinformation;
- Community tension concerns;
- Immigration-related commentary;
- Protest-related commentary;
- Other categories used by the team.

4. Examples of Referred Content

Please provide anonymised copies of up to 100 referral records, reports, or intelligence submissions generated by the NIIIT.

Where disclosure of the full record would engage exemptions under the Act, I request that personal identifiers, usernames, account details, case references, operationally sensitive information, and any other exempt material be redacted, while retaining:

- The text of the social media post or relevant extract;
- The reason for referral;
- The category assigned by the NIIIT;
- The police force to which the referral was made;
- The recorded outcome, where known.

Alternatively, if providing individual referral records would exceed the cost limit, please provide anonymised summaries and representative examples of the content referred.

5. Thresholds for Referral

Please provide copies of any guidance, policies, standard operating procedures, decision trees, risk matrices, or briefing documents setting out:

- The threshold for referring social media content to a police force;
- The factors considered when assessing online posts;
- The distinction between lawful expression and content considered suitable for referral.

6. Monitoring Activity

Please provide:

- The total number of social media posts reviewed by the NIIIT;
- The total number of posts assessed but not referred;
- Any available performance metrics relating to referrals, including referral rates and outcome rates.

National Police Chiefs' Council

National Police
Freedom of Information
and Data Protection Unit

NPCC Response:

The NPCC does hold some information captured by your request. In wishing to provide additional context, the following information relating to the NIIIT has been provided to you outside of the FOIA.

The NPoCC Internet Intelligence Investigation (i3) Team is still in the early stages of being established.

The team supports policing's understanding of protest-related activity in the online environment by developing a broader picture of emerging, potential risks. Looking across force boundaries enables the identification of issues that may not be evident from information held within individual force areas alone.

Its remit is focused on providing strategic insight and improving awareness of protest-related developments that may have relevance to policing, supporting a coordinated understanding of matters at a regional and national level.

Policing continues to work with partners and the Home Office to develop its capabilities and ensure it is appropriately positioned to understand and respond to emerging issues where necessary.

In relation to your specific questions above:

1a. Between the 26th January to 16th June the i3 desk made 106 referrals to police forces in England and Wales.

b. The Breakdown by month/year is provided below:

Month/Year	***Total***
January 2026	0
February 2026	7
March 2026	11
April 2026	20
May 2026	18
June 2026	50

The force breakdown and platform on which the content originate has been withheld citing Section 31(1) Law Enforcement. For more information on the legislation and risk of harm, please see Annex A below.

2. The NPCC does not hold any information on the outcomes of referrals made to forces.

3. All of the referrals made would have been made in relation to public order concerns and protest related commentary as this is the policing purpose of NPoCC SIB.

4. NPCC does hold 100 referral records. These have been withheld citing Section 31(1) Law Enforcement. For more information on the legislation and risk of harm, please see Annex A below.

5. The NPCC does not hold any specific guidance, policies, standard operating procedures, decision trees, risk

50 Broadway
London
SW1H 0BL

info@npcc.police.uk
www.npcc.police.uk

matrices, or briefing documents captured by this question. However outside of the Freedom of Information act, I can confirm that intelligence assessment and sharing is covered by other law enforcement legislation including, but not limited to:

National Intelligence Model (NIM)
Data Protection Act UK GDPR
Crime and Disorder Act (section 115)
Management of Police Information (MoPI)

6. The NPCC does not hold any statistics of performance metrics captured by this question.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Officer & Decision Maker

www.npcc.police.uk

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.

National Police Chiefs' Council

National Police
Freedom of Information
and Data Protection Unit

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 -
(a) the prevention or detection of crime
(b) the apprehension or prosecution of offenders

Section 31(1)(a) and (b) of the Freedom of Information Act is engaged as disclosure of the requested information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

The NPoCC Internet Intelligence Investigations (i3) Team produces and disseminates intelligence reports to support policing purposes. The referral records requested, together with the platform-specific breakdown of referrals, form part of the intelligence-gathering and assessment processes used by UK policing to identify, assess and manage threats, risks and criminality occurring within online environments.

Disclosure would reveal information about the nature and extent of intelligence activity conducted in relation to specific social media platforms, the types of content assessed as requiring police attention and the circumstances in which intelligence is shared with police forces. Although the request seeks anonymised information, the cumulative effect of disclosure would enable individuals to build a detailed picture of policing methodologies, operational priorities, intelligence thresholds and areas of focus.

This knowledge would be valuable to those seeking to evade police scrutiny. By understanding which forces and receiving and which platforms generate referrals, the volume of referrals originating from particular services and the nature of the material considered worthy of referral, individuals involved in criminality, extremism or other harmful activity could adapt their behaviour, alter their online presence or migrate activity to reduce the likelihood of detection.

Furthermore, disclosure of referral records or examples of intelligence submissions would reveal the structure, content and analytical approach used within policing intelligence products. Intelligence gathering is a key tool in preventing and detecting crime, and public disclosure of such material would undermine the effectiveness of

50 Broadway
London
SW1H 0BL

info@npcc.police.uk
www.npcc.police.uk

those processes. The release of this information would therefore be likely to prejudice law enforcement capabilities and reduce the ability of the police service to prevent and detect crime effectively.

Disclosure of this information would promote openness and transparency regarding the activities of the NIIIT and would contribute to public understanding of how referrals relating to online content are managed.

There is a legitimate public interest in understanding how policing responds to online activity and how decisions are made regarding the referral of content to police forces. Disclosure could increase public confidence that referrals are being made appropriately and in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

However, there is a very strong public interest in ensuring that law enforcement agencies are able to prevent and detect crime effectively. The requested information relates directly to intelligence processes used to support policing activity and safeguard the public.

Disclosure would reveal operational information concerning policing capabilities, assessment criteria and intelligence-sharing arrangements. This would be likely to assist those who may seek to avoid detection by adapting their behaviour in light of the information disclosed.

The public interest is not served by placing information into the public domain which would undermine the effectiveness of intelligence-led policing. If individuals are able to identify the platforms, content types and circumstances most likely to generate police referrals, this would reduce the effectiveness of law enforcement activities and could increase the risk of criminal or harmful activity remaining undetected.

The release of referral records, even in anonymised form, would provide insight into intelligence products and analytical methodologies. The erosion of this capability would prejudice the wider law enforcement function and have a detrimental impact on the ability of the police service to fulfil its core duty of preventing and detecting crime.

Whilst the NPCC recognises the importance of openness and accountability and acknowledges the public interest in understanding the work of the i3 team, greater weight is attached to the significant public interest in protecting law enforcement capabilities and ensuring that intelligence-led policing remains effective. Disclosure of the withheld information would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and on balance, the public interest favours maintaining the exemption under Section 31(1)(a) and (b) of the Freedom of Information Act.