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

17/08/2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 3077/2026

Thank you for your request for information regarding domestic abuse incidents associated with the England v Argentina football match, which has now been considered.

Applicant Question:

Please provide any information held by the National Police Chiefs' Council relating to domestic abuse incidents associated with the England v Argentina football match played on Wednesday 15 July 2026.
Specifically, please provide:

1. Any national analysis, briefing, report, or assessment examining trends in domestic abuse incidents following the fixture.

2. Any aggregated national data held by the NPCC showing the number of domestic abuse related incidents or calls for service recorded by police forces in England on 15 July 2026, together with any comparable baseline data used for analysis.

3. Any correspondence, guidance, or briefing circulated to police forces regarding anticipated or observed increases in domestic abuse linked to the fixture.

If the NPCC does not hold the requested statistical information, please confirm this.

NPCC Response:

1. **Any national analysis, briefing, report, or assessment examining trends in domestic abuse incidents following the fixture.**

   Following reasonable searches, the NPCC does not hold any national analysis, briefing, report or assessment examining trends in domestic abuse incidents following the England v Argentina fixture played on 15 July 2026.

The NPCC does hold pre-event communications and operational guidance relating to domestic abuse during FIFA World Cup 2026, however, these documents do not comprise an analysis, report, or assessment of trends following the fixture and not in scope of your request

2. **Any aggregated national data held by the NPCC showing the number of domestic abuse related incident or calls for service recorded by police forces in England on 15 July 2026, together with any comparable baseline data used for analysis.**

The NPCC does not hold the requested information.

Searches identified that the UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU) holds information relating to football-related domestic abuse incidents submitted by police forces as part of Operation FLAGSHIP reporting arrangements. However, UKPFU does not hold aggregated national data showing the number of domestic abuse-related incidents or calls for service recorded by police forces in England on 15 July 2026, nor does it hold comparable baseline data used for such analysis.

UKFPU has further advised that not all incidents submitted include a time of occurrence and therefore it cannot confirm how many incidents occurred on 15 July 2026.

3. **Any correspondence, guidance, or briefing circulated to police forces regarding anticipated or observed increases in domestic abuse linked to the fixture.**

The NPCC does hold information captured and in scope of this part of your request.

The information comprises:

- A communication issued to Chief Constables in June 2026 by Chief Constable Mark Roberts, NPCC Lead for Football, and Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolfe, NPCC Lead for Domestic Abuse, regarding Operation FLAGSHIP, the national policing response to domestic abuse during the FIFA World Cup 2026.

  This letter is attached with minor S40 Personal Information and S31 Law Enforcement redaction.

  For further information relating to the legislation, please see Annex A.

- The Operation FLAGSHIP operational guidance document, which was circulated to police forces and sets out the national approach to preventing, preparing for, protecting against and pursuing domestic abuse offending during the FIFA World Cup 2026. The document also explains the data collection and reporting requirements for football-related domestic abuse incidents.

  This document is withheld in full by virtue of S31 Law Enforcement.

  The document has been reviewed in its entirety and is considered to contain detailed information relating to a policing operation designed to prevent, identify, manage and investigate domestic abuse offending linked to FIFA World Cup 2026. Whilst some individual

elements may appear commonplace in isolation, the document as a whole provides a detailed insight into operational policing methodology, intelligence development processes, offender management tactics and safeguarding activity.

For further information relating to the legislation, please see Annex A.

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.

The legislation: Section 40 Personal Information

(1) Any information to which a request for information relates is exempt information if it constitutes personal data of which the applicant is the data subject.

(2) Any information to which a request for information relates is also exempt information if
(a) it constitutes personal data which does not fall within subsection (1), and
(b) the first, second or third condition below is satisfied.

(3A) The first condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under this Act—
(a) would contravene any of the data protection principles, or
(b) would do so if the exemptions in section 24(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (manual unstructured data held by public authorities) were disregarded.

(3B) The second condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under this Act would contravene Article 21 of the GDPR (general processing: right to object to processing).

Any information to which a request for information relates is also exempt information if it constitutes personal data which do not fall within subsection (1), and either the first or the second condition is satisfied.

S40(2) applies to third party personal data. Any release would breach the data protection principles contained within the Data Protection Act 2018. S40(2) has been engaged by virtue of S40(3)(a)(i). Any disclosure of withheld information would breach the first data protection principle of fair and lawful processing.

This is an absolute exemption and there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

The 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

The document explains how police and partner agencies intend to identify and prioritise individuals considered to pose an elevated risk of domestic abuse offending. This includes the use of intelligence development processes, review of Football Banning Order subjects, Serial Domestic Abuse Perpetrators and high-risk nominals, together with the use of offender prioritisation methodologies and intelligence-led tasking arrangements. Disclosure would

50 Broadway
London
SW1H 0BL

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

reveal the approach used by policing to identify, assess and manage individuals who may present a risk during a major sporting event.

The document also contains information relating to proactive operational tactics, including targeted visits to offenders and victims, use of dedicated safeguard patrols, proactive enforcement activity, deployment strategies, intelligence briefing processes, investigative approaches and the use of prohibitive orders and other safeguarding interventions. Disclosure would provide insight into the tactics and operational responses available to policing and partner agencies when managing domestic abuse risk.

In addition, the document contains information relating to intelligence gathering and reporting mechanisms, including the categories of information sought from forces nationally and the methods by which intelligence and operational activity are collated and disseminated. Disclosure would increase public understanding of the information of policing interest, how that information is developed and how it is translated into operational activity. This includes information concerning the categories of data and operational information requested from forces for national collation and assessment.

It is acknowledged that some policing tactics and safeguarding processes may be known publicly. However, the prejudice arises from the aggregation of the information contained within this document. Disclosure would provide a comprehensive and structured overview of the operational response, enabling individuals to gain a greater understanding of policing priorities, intelligence requirements, targeting methodologies and enforcement activity associated with the operation. Information disclosed under FOIA is effectively disclosed to the world at large and can be retained, analysed and combined with information obtained from other sources.

Whilst individual elements may appear innocuous, the significance arises from the collective detail contained throughout the document, which provides a comprehensive picture of the intelligence-led approach adopted by policing and partner agencies in identifying, prioritising and managing risk.

The release of this information would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime by providing those intent on offending with a greater understanding of the methods used by police and partner agencies to identify, assess, prioritise and manage risk. It would also be likely to prejudice the apprehension and prosecution of offenders by revealing operational approaches intended to support the investigation and management of domestic abuse offenders. Accordingly, sections 31(1)(a) and 31(b) are engaged.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure

There is a public interest in promoting transparency and accountability regarding policing activity.

Disclosure would assist public understanding of how policing and partner agencies seek to address domestic abuse and safeguard victims during major sporting events. It would also contribute to public debate regarding the use of resources and the operational measures adopted to tackle violence against women and girls and domestic abuse.

Factors favouring maintaining the exemption

There is a strong public interest in ensuring that police services are able to effectively prevent and detect crime and protect vulnerable victims. Disclosure would reveal information concerning intelligence development processes, offender identification methodologies, operational tasking arrangements and proactive law enforcement tactics. This would be likely to undermine the effectiveness of those processes by increasing understanding of how individuals are identified, prioritised and managed within the operation.

There is also a substantial public interest in safeguarding the ability of police and partner agencies to develop and utilise intelligence effectively. The disclosure of information relating to intelligence gathering, intelligence assessment and operational deployment would be likely to reduce the effectiveness of policing activity designed to identify and manage high-risk offenders.

The police service has a duty to protect the public and prevent crime. Releasing information that would be likely to compromise operational effectiveness would not be in the public interest, particularly where the focus of the operation is the protection of victims of domestic abuse and the management of offenders who present an increased risk.

Balance Test

Having considered the competing public interest factors, it is accepted that there is a legitimate public interest in openness and transparency. However this is outweighed by the stronger public interest in protecting the ability of policing and partner agencies to prevent and detect crime, safeguard vulnerable individuals and bring offenders to justice. Disclosure would be likely to prejudice those functions by revealing operational tactics, intelligence development processes and offender management methodologies. Therefore, the public interest favours maintaining the exemption.

Consideration has been given to whether meaningful disclosure could be achieved through redaction.

However, the information engaging the exemption is so extensive and integral to the purpose of the document that redaction would remove the substantive content and operational context. Disclosure of the remaining information would provide limited value and would risk creating a misleading or incomplete understanding of the document. Accordingly, the document is withheld in full under Section 31(1)(a) and 31(b) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Minor Section 31 redaction of the letter provided:

A limited amount of information has been withheld from the letter issued by Chief Constable Mark Roberts and Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolfe. The withheld information comprises the name of a policing operation associated with the overall policing response to the FIFA World Cup 2026.

The operation name is not publicly acknowledged and remains operationally sensitive. Disclosure would reveal information capable of identifying and linking operational policing activity associated with the national policing response to the tournament. Whilst the withheld information is limited, disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a disclosure to the world at large and could enable information from different sources to be combined to build a more complete understanding of policing operations, their purpose and associated activities.

The NPCC considers that disclosure would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders by unnecessarily revealing information relating to a live policing operation. Accordingly, Sections 31(1)(a) and 31(1)(b) are engaged.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure

There is a public interest in openness and transparency regarding policing operations and decision-making. Disclosure would provide greater insight into the policing arrangements surrounding the FIFA World Cup 2026.

Factors favouring maintaining the exemption

There is a strong public interest in safeguarding the effectiveness of policing operations and ensuring that information capable of identifying or linking operational activity is not unnecessarily disclosed. There is also a significant public interest in protecting law enforcement activity designed to prevent crime and safeguard the public.

Balance Test

Whilst the NPCC recognise the importance of transparency, the withheld information is limited to the name of an operational policing activity. The public interest in disclosure is met through the release of the remainder of the correspondence. Greater weight has been attributed to the public interest in protecting operational policing activity and avoiding prejudice to law enforcement functions. The public interest therefore favours maintaining the exemption.