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Tim Maidstone

Via email to:  
[request-704857-4aa48431@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-704857-4aa48431@whatdotheyknow.com)

8 December 2020

Dear Tim Maidstone,

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request (Our Reference 61120)**

Thank you for your email of 10 November 2020 in which you ask for a copy of the current PNC user manual. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Please find at **Annex A**, attached separately, the most recent version of the PNC manual issued in June 2020. This version of the PNC manual has been redacted under section 23 and 31 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and no public interest test is required.

However, Section 31 allows for information to be withheld where disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice law enforcement and the public interest falls in favor of maintaining the exemption. Arguments for and against disclosure in terms of the public interest, with the reasons for our conclusion, are set out in **Annex B**.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to the address below, quoting reference **61120**. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOIA.

Yours sincerely,

Home Office Enterprise Services  
Email [foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk)

## **Annex A**

Please see the attached PDF document: 61120 Annex A - PNC Manual, v20.01 (Redacted v4).pdf.

## **Annex B**

### **Public interest test in relation to Section 31**

#### **Considerations in favour of disclosing the information**

The public have an expectation in knowing how the police operate police IT systems such as the Police National Computer. This will include having access to the manual provided to police forces to enable officers and staff to use the PNC system correctly.

#### **Considerations in favour of maintaining the exemption**

Policing involves the collection and use of information which some data subjects would not wish to be collected. The way in which data can be used within police IT systems is particularly sensitive. There is therefore a significant public interest in not providing details of all the ways in which the police might use data.

#### **Conclusion**

We conclude that the balance of the public interest lies in releasing a redacted version of the PNC Manual.