



**Telephone**  
101

Evan Eeth  
request-737054-  
f816a362@whatdotheyknow.com

public.access@hampshire.pnn.police.uk

20 April 2021

**Our ref:** CM/PA/000745/21  
**Your ref:**

Dear Evan

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

I write in response to the above referenced Freedom of Information request submitted on the 16/03/2021, Hampshire Constabulary has now considered this request, which has been repeated below and have responded accordingly.

Request	Response
<p>Please may you disclose the following:</p> <p>1. Names of the operational teams such as Neighbourhood Policing, Response, Firearms, Dog Support, Mounted, what are the names of them called and what is the role of each?</p> <p>2. Please may you also disclose the call signs for the individual departments such as:</p> <p>Neighbourhood Policing Response and Patrol Public Order Armed Response CID NPAS Mounted Policing Dog Support Roads Policing</p>	<p>1. Information relating to Hampshire Constabulary and its structure can be found at the following link:</p> <p><a href="https://www.hampshire.police.uk/police-forces/hampshire-constabulary/areas/au/about-us/who-we-are/">https://www.hampshire.police.uk/police-forces/hampshire-constabulary/areas/au/about-us/who-we-are/</a></p> <p>2. Information relating to call signs has been exempt by virtue of the following exemptions:</p> <p><b>S31: Law Enforcement</b></p> <p><b>S38: Health and Safety</b></p> <p><i>Please see below.</i></p> <p>3. Mercedes Benz Sprinter, Ford Transit Custom and Vauxhall Vivaro are used in the following roles:</p>



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And do senior commanders such as sergeant, inspector, chief inspector, superintendent, chief superintendent, assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable and the chief constable, have call signs or collar numbers, and if so can you disclose them?	Police Support Unit Cell van Medium panel van Dog vehicle Facilities
3. What are the vehicle roles called? E.g Incident Response Vehicle What vehicle role / department does the Mercedes Benz Sprinter, Ford Transit Custom and Vauxhall Vivaro vans come under?	

### **S31(1) Law Enforcement**

Information is exempt from disclosure under s31(1)(a)(b) where the release of information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, I am required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

### **S38(1) Health & Safety**

S38(1)(a)(b) applies where disclosure of information would, or would be likely to, endanger the physical or mental health of any individual or the safety of an individual. This exemption applies to 'any individual'. This may be a police officer, a witness, a member of the public, the applicant, friends and relatives etc and the harm may be actual or perceived. It refers to physical, mental, emotional, psychological etc types of harm. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, I am required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

### **Evidence of Harm**

Releasing templates of call signs used in daily policing is likely to accommodate and aid the activity of criminals who could use these call signs through potentially hacking the force's airwave systems or potentially identify and then target specific vehicles or units should they know where they are being deployed. Motivated criminals could potentially identify patterns within policing tactics, using this information to interfere with policing activities, particularly as specialist and non-marked vehicle call signs would be included in the list. Although Airwave scanners are a thing of the past due to new secure methods of radio communication within the force, technology is always evolving, and criminal and organised groups could use any opportunity to compromise the security of this system to increase the chance of committing criminal activity.

In terms of health and safety, officers could be put at risk should call sign templates be disclosed into the public domain (should airwaves be compromised or imitated). The identification of policing patterns may assist criminals in identifying patterns of individual officers meaning they may then be targeted. Given the current terror alert of the country, the release of potentially covert call signs could also increase the risk of



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the public's health and safety, as this information could be used for a number of criminal or terrorist operations as call signs could be utilised to divert policing activity and leave other areas vulnerable to attack.

### Public Interest Test

	Favouring disclosure	Favouring non-disclosure
S31	The release of information will enable the public to have a better understanding of the force's call signs and would allow the force to be transparent and open with how Airwaves functionality operates.	In this case, for the reasons outlined in the evidenced harm, law enforcement would be compromised as criminal groups could use this call sign information in a number of ways. They could be a step ahead of any police deployments (should the airwaves system be compromised) or use them to deceive, influence or imitate policing units or officers, which in turn could have serious consequences.
S38	Disclosure would show the force is accountable and adheres to a professional airwaves radio system.	Individual vehicles, units or individuals could be singled out if identified and thus their health and safety would be at risk. Additionally, the public's health and safety could be hindered should the release of call sign information be made public and should they assist in the accretion of a terror attack.

### Balancing Test

Whilst the force should be accountable for its use of public funds and how it utilised its Airwave system in terms of call signs so the public is assured that the right measures are in place, this is over-ridden by the need to ensure that law enforcement is not compromised by motivated criminals who would use these to their advantage as previously evidenced. Additionally, individual officers and the public's health and safety at large would also be put at risk should they be targeted or should a large terror attack be orchestrated with the aide of the disclosed information.

As such, it is my decision that the public interest at this stage lies in the non-disclosure of the requested information.

### COMPLAINT RIGHTS

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision made by Hampshire Constabulary, you can lodge a complaint with the force to have the decision reviewed within 2 months of the date of this response. Complaints should be made in writing to the Public Access office at the address at the top of this letter.

If, after lodging a complaint with Hampshire Constabulary, you are still unhappy with the outcome, you may make application to the Information Commissioner at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire



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SK9 5AF, via telephone on 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745 or at the website  
[www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Mark Farrow  
Public Access  
Joint Information Management Unit



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