

## **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**

### **Decision notice**

**Date:** 28 January 2025

**Public Authority:** College of Policing

**Address:** Leamington Road  
Ryton-on-Dunsmore  
Coventry  
CV8 3EN

#### **1. Request:**

The complainant requested the following information from the College of Policing on 12 May 2024:

"In December 2022, you announced that you were replacing the strategic command course (SCC) with the executive leadership programme (ELP).

Your webpage, [https://www.college.police.uk/article/new-executive-leadership-programme-replace-strategic-command-course#:~:text=The%20strategic%20command%20course%20\(SCC,\(executive%20leaders\)%20in%202023](https://www.college.police.uk/article/new-executive-leadership-programme-replace-strategic-command-course#:~:text=The%20strategic%20command%20course%20(SCC,(executive%20leaders)%20in%202023)., said that you were starting the new iteration in June 2023.

I am asking for the following under the Freedom of Information Act because I cannot find the information I require on your website.

1. As of 12 May 2024, how many UK police officers are police chiefs i.e., assistant chief constable rank to chief constable rank equivalent? Please do not include police staff e.g. assistant chief officers et al. In fact, in all my questions, please do not include police staff such as assistant chief officer et al.
2. Please provide an ethnic breakdown by rank e.g., White, Black, Asian.

3. In the two final strategic command course (SCC) cohorts, how many frontline operational police officers – superintendent rank and above – applied for the course? Please do not include police staff e.g. assistant chief officers et al. They must be UK police officers [not international] who have risen from the rank of police constable to police chief.

4. Please break these into their corresponding ethnic groups e.g., White, Black, Asian.

5. Of these how many were successful in being promoted to chief officer rank?

6. Please break these into their corresponding ethnic groups e.g., White, Black, Asian.

In questions 1 and 2, you may be tempted to use section 22 of the FOIA [future publication]. I would implore you, in the spirit of openness and transparency to resist this urge. I believe you have these figures readily available because the police chiefs' council meets regularly.

In questions 3 and 4, I believe you keep records, and you monitor based on gender and ethnicity, and you will already have gone through officer by officer, rank by rank progression. This means that you should not impose section 12 of the FOIA.

In questions 2, 4 and 6 you may wish to say that under GDPR, you cannot let me have an ethnicity breakdown. I would urge you, for openness and transparency, to resist this. Note the Home Office publishes the ethnicity of chief officers.

Turning to the ELP course, in the past two cohorts.

1. How many frontline operational police officers – superintendent rank and above – applied for the course? Please do not include police staff e.g. assistant chief officers et al. They must be UK police officers [not international] who have risen from the rank of police constable to police chief.

2. Please break these into their corresponding ethnic groups e.g., White, Black, Asian.

3. Of these candidates, how many have been promoted to chief officer rank? Please do not include police staff e.g. assistant chief officers et al. They must be UK police officers [not international] who have risen from the rank of police constable to police chief.

4. Please break these into their corresponding ethnic groups e.g., White, Black, Asian.

In questions 1 and 2, you may be tempted to use section 22 of the FOIA [future publication]. I would implore you, in the spirit of openness and transparency to resist this urge. I believe you have these figures because the police college monitors these figures in minute detail.

In questions 3 and 4, I believe you keep records, and you monitor based on gender and ethnicity, and you will already have gone through officer by officer, rank by rank progression. This means that you should not impose section 12 of the FOIA.

5. From the 1 January 2024 until 12 May 2024 inclusive, has the chief executive officer, Chief Constable Andy Marsh, received any emails from anyone involved in the process [e.g., candidate, coach or senior officer in syndicates or mentoring positions] raising concerns about the diversity of ELP?

6. If he has, please supply the emails.

7. It is likely that the College of Policing will have evaluated the effectiveness of ELP, probably at the end of a particular cohort's course. If so, please supply documents related to the evaluation of the two cohorts or whichever is available.

8. In regular meetings of Mr Marsh's senior leadership team during the two cohorts, has any evaluation or discussion taken place of the effectiveness of ELP?

9. If so, please supply the minutes of these meetings and discussion.

Please note, it is against the law to destroy any evidence or correspondence to avoid answering FOI requests.

In question 5-9 inclusive, you may be tempted to use section 12 of the FOIA. Mr Marsh will know whether this has happened, and he will be in a position to advise you, rather than your having to sift through email by email. I am requesting that as a starting point that you should have a conversation with Mr Marsh."

## **2. Commissioner's Decision:**

Section 10(1) of FOIA states that a public authority must respond to a request within 20 working days. Section 17(3) of FOIA states that where a

public authority is relying on a qualified exemption, it can have a "reasonable" extension of time to consider the public interest in maintaining the exemption or disclosing the information.

The section 45 Code of Practice states that usually this should be no more than a further 20 working days.<sup>1</sup> This means that the total time spent responding to a request should not exceed 40 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Commissioner does not consider there to be any exceptional circumstances and finds that, by failing to respond to the request within a reasonable time frame, the public authority has breached section 17(3) of FOIA.

### **3. Steps:**

The public authority must provide a substantive response to the request in accordance with its obligations under FOIA.

The public authority must take this step within 30 calendar days of the date of this decision notice. Failure to comply may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of FOIA and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/744071/CoP\\_FOI\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_-\\_Minor\\_Amendments\\_20180926\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/744071/CoP_FOI_Code_of_Practice_-_Minor_Amendments_20180926_.pdf)

#### **4. Right of Appeal:**

Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)  
GRC & GRP Tribunals,  
PO Box 9300,  
LEICESTER,  
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0203 936 8963

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: [grc@justice.gov.uk](mailto:grc@justice.gov.uk)

Website: [www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber](http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber)

Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

**Information Commissioner  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF**