



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

FOI ref no: 15349

30 March 2023

Freedom of Information request first notified to us by email on 1st March 2023.

Thank you for your recent request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as detailed below:

I am requesting information in regards to the Armed Response Team, within Staffs Police. Firstly, without compromising the security and operational limitations of said team. Could you supply any details of the size of this team, also has it been increased over, say the last five years. Secondly, has the operational scope of the said team, being changed, again say over the last five years. To clarify this question, the original scope of the team was, I believe to counter armed persons. After talking to serving Police Officers, it appears that the team is often called on the support Officers, faced with persons armed with any manner of offensive weapons. Does this mean there has been a marked increase in such incidents. Further to the point of my questions, your Chief Constable has deemed it necessary to expend the sum of fifteen million pounds, over the coming years to create a specialized training facility, solely for the use of Staffs Police. This implies that there is a urgent need, for this facility, to justify such a large expenditure.

Staffordshire Police's response to your enquiry is as follows:

Staffordshire Police does hold the requested information.

I am requesting information in regards to the Armed Response Team, within Staffs Police. Firstly, without compromising the security and operational limitations of said team. Could you supply any details of the size of this team, also has it been increased over, say the last five years.
Staffordshire Police has an armed establishment of 92 armed officers. This is broken down into Armed Response Vehicle (ARV) teams, National Firearms Instructors (NFI) and our Tactical Support Team. We have not increased our numbers or our deployment locations and have a geographical responsibility to provide an armed response to Staffordshire.

Secondly, has the operational scope of the said team, being changed, again say over the last five years. To clarify this question, the original scope of the team was, I believe to counter armed persons. After talking to serving Police Officers, it appears that the team is often called on the support Officers, faced with persons armed with any manner of offensive weapons. Does this mean there has been a marked increase in such incidents.

We respond to threat and risk based on a threat assessment made by a Tactical Firearms Commander (TFC), this is assessed against the below criteria which is taken from Authorised Police Practice (APP) within the college of policing.

The deployment of AFOs should only be authorised in the following circumstances:

- where the officer authorising the deployment has 'reason to suppose' that officers may have to protect themselves or others from a person who:
- is in possession of, or has immediate access to, a firearm or other potentially lethal weapon,
- or
- is otherwise so dangerous that the deployment of armed officers is considered to be appropriate, or
- as an operational contingency in a specific operation (based on the threat assessment), or
- for the destruction of animals which are dangerous or are suffering unnecessarily.

Further to the point of my questions, your Chief Constable has deemed it necessary to expend the sum of fifteen million pounds , over the coming years to create a specialized training facility, solely for the use of Staffs Police. This implies that there is a urgent need, for this facility, to justify such a large expenditure. Please note that the FOI Act 2000 only extends to requests for recorded information. It does not require public authorities to answer questions generally; only if they already hold the answers in recorded form.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of this email and should be addressed to:

foi@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Central Disclosure Unit
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ

Please remember to quote the reference number in any future communications.

Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit