

21 August 2024

FOI Ref 17059

Request - You asked us the following:

- The number of reports made to the police force relating to the creation of “deepfake” pornographic imagery over the past five years, broken down by year
- The referral route of the report where applicable, including but not limited to a member of the public, a company, a social media firm, a school/teachers etc.
- The gender of the alleged victim(s) where stated
- The age of the alleged victim(s) where stated
- The number of arrests made in relation to the creation of the deepfake imagery over the past five years, broken down by year
- The number of people charged in relation to the creation of the deepfake imagery over the past five years, broken down by year
- The number of people released on bail in relation to the creation of the deepfake imagery over the past five years broken down by year, and the reasons why they were released
- The gender of those arrested, charged or released on bail over the past five years, broken down by year
- The average length for an investigation into a report of deepfake imagery over the past five years, broken down by year

We received your request on 22/07/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Please find below our response.

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this particular request.

Staffordshire Police withholds the following information.

- The number of reports made to the police force relating to the creation of “deepfake” pornographic imagery over the past five years, broken down by year
- The referral route of the report where applicable, including but not limited to a member of the public, a company, a social media firm, a school/teachers etc.
- The gender of the alleged victim(s) where stated
- The age of the alleged victim(s) where stated
- The number of arrests made in relation to the creation of the deepfake imagery over the past five years, broken down by year
- The number of people charged in relation to the creation of the deepfake imagery over the past five years, broken down by year
- The number of people released on bail in relation to the creation of the deepfake imagery over the past five years broken down by year, and the reasons why they were released



- The gender of those arrested, charged or released on bail over the past five years, broken down by year
- The average length for an investigation into a report of deepfake imagery over the past five years, broken down by year

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There is no method by which we can easily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request. As the production and distribution of 'deepfake' photos and videos is not inherently classified as a crime, offences involving the distribution of indecent images, manipulated or otherwise, would be recorded under a number of different offence types, such as:

Disclose private sexual photographs with intent to cause distress

Share photograph or film of person in intimate state without consent

Take/ make/ distribute indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of children

Therefore, a manual review of each occurrence would be required in order to determine whether the image involved had been identified as a 'deepfake' or had been digitally manipulated.

Within the timescale requested, there have been in excess of 24,000 offences recorded, in which the distribution of such an image could have occurred and, from dip sampling, it has been established that review of each log would take approximately 3 minutes. This would equate to upwards of 1,200 hours to provide the information requested. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the Freedom of Information Act by some considerable margin.

The following exemptions have been applied:

- Section 12(1) where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit.
Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the prescribed limit'.

Advice and assistance

Section 16 of the Act places an obligation upon the Authority to provide advice and assistance, in order to comply with this obligation please see below.

Unfortunately, we cannot suggest a way in which your request could be simplified or pared down in order to bring it within the confines of the time and cost threshold.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

If you would like us to carry out a review of our response, please let us know within two months of the date of receipt of this email, review requests 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