

28 August 2024

FOI Ref 17067

Request - You asked us the following:

1. The total number of car thefts reported within your police force area for the last five calendar years (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023). I do not require information on all vehicle thefts, just passenger cars.
2. Please could you also split this data by make and model of each stolen car, and by the colour of each stolen car, where available.

When referring to car theft, I mean offences of taking a motor vehicle without consent under Section 12 of the Theft Act 1968 (outlined here: [https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/theft-act-offences#:~:text=Section%2012\(1\)%20TA%201968,the%20taking%20of%20pedal%20cycles](https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/theft-act-offences#:~:text=Section%2012(1)%20TA%201968,the%20taking%20of%20pedal%20cycles)).

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 discloses/withholds the following information.

1. The total number of car thefts reported within your police force area for the last five calendar years (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023). I do not require information on all vehicle thefts, just passenger cars. – **Withheld.**
2. Please could you also split this data by make and model of each stolen car, and by the colour of each stolen car, where available. – **Withheld.**

When referring to car theft, I mean offences of taking a motor vehicle without consent under Section 12 of the Theft Act 1968 (outlined here: [https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/theft-act-offences#:~:text=Section%2012\(1\)%20TA%201968,the%20taking%20of%20pedal%20cycles](https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/theft-act-offences#:~:text=Section%2012(1)%20TA%201968,the%20taking%20of%20pedal%20cycles)).

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. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 1300 occurrences recorded under Section 12 of the Theft Act 1968, where the vehicle type has been recorded as 'car' or contains a blank field. Although our crime recording system has the option to record vehicle type, make, model and colour, these are not mandatory fields and are therefore not always complete. In

order to ascertain whether the blank fields were a car and to also assess further blank fields for the car make, model and colour, this would require a manual review. To extract this data would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 4 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 86 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the FOI 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.

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.



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Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit

A safe and confident Staffordshire