

28 August 2024

FOI Ref 17113

Request - You asked us the following:

Q1.I would like to know how many reports of romance fraud the force has received this year and broken down for 2023, 2022 and 2021 please.

This crime type is described as the engineering of a supposed friendship or relationship for fraudulent/financial gain.

Q2. For each case, can I see if any arrests / charges were brought please.

If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to the information exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please provide advice and assistance, under the Section 16 obligations of the Act, as to how I can refine my request.

We received your request on 31/07/2024 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.

- Q1.I would like to know how many reports of romance fraud the force has received this year and broken down for 2023, 2022 and 2021 please. – **Withheld.**
This crime type is described as the engineering of a supposed friendship or relationship for fraudulent/financial gain.
- Q2. For each case, can I see if any arrests / charges were brought please. – **Withheld.**
If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to the information exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please provide advice and assistance, under the Section 16 obligations of the Act, as to how I can refine my request.

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 3,100 relevant fraud occurrences, in order to ascertain whether these involved 'romance fraud' the record for each

offence 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 3 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 155 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.

Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit