

27 September 2024

FOI Ref 17171

Request - You asked us the following:

I am contacting you to request the following information regarding stray dogs.

1) How many stray dogs entered police kennels for each year between 1st January 2019 and 31st December 2023, including by breed.

2) Broken down by year 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 (calendar years)

2a) How many of these were reclaimed by their owners?

2b) How many were adopted from the pound?

2c) How many went to an animal rescue? Please provide a breakdown in numbers per year for each rescue used 2d) How many were euthanized?

2e) What happened to any remaining dogs that did not fall into above categories?

2f) How many dogs were chipped?

2g) How many were chipped with owners details up to date?

3a) For each year (2019-2023) could you please tell me the total number of w.t.e (whole time equivalent) police dog handlers you employ?

3b) Please detail whether the kennel services are delivered in house or via a contract with an external provider could you please confirm the provider.

4) Please provide the first part of the postcode of the holding kennels (the details are for geographical spatial mapping and so exact address is not required)

We received your request on 19/08/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Please find below our response.

Staffordshire Police holds the following requested information.

- 1) How many stray dogs entered police kennels for each year between 1st January 2019 and 31st December 2023, including by breed. – **No information held.**
- 2) Broken down by year 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 (calendar years) – **No information held.**
- 2a) How many of these were reclaimed by their owners? – **No information held.**
- 2b) How many were adopted from the pound? – **No information held.**
- 2c) How many went to an animal rescue? Please provide a breakdown in numbers per year for each rescue used 2d) How many were euthanized? – **No information held.**

- 2e) What happened to any remaining dogs that did not fall into above categories? – **No information held.**
- 2f) How many dogs were chipped? – **No information held.**
- 2g) How many were chipped with owners details up to date? – **No information held.**
- 3a) For each year (2019-2023) could you please tell me the total number of w.t.e (whole time equivalent) police dog handlers you employ? – **Information held.**
- 3b) please detail whether the kennel services are delivered in house or via a contract with an external provider could you please confirm the provider. – **Information held.**
- 4) Please provide the first part of the postcode of the holding kennels (the details are for geographical spatial mapping and so exact address is not required) – **Information held.**

Staffordshire Police discloses/withholds the following information.

- 1) How many stray dogs entered police kennels for each year between 1st January 2019 and 31st December 2023, including by breed. – **No information held.**
- 2) Broken down by year 2019,2020,2021,2022,2023 (calendar years) – **No information held.**
- 2a) How many of these were reclaimed by their owners? – **No information held.**
- 2b) How many were adopted from the pound? – **No information held.**
- 2c) How many went to an animal rescue? Please provide a breakdown in numbers per year for each rescue used 2d) How many were euthanized? – **No information held.**
- 2e) What happened to any remaining dogs that did not fall into above categories? – **No information held.**
- 2f) How many dogs were chipped? – **No information held.**
- 2g) How many were chipped with owners details up to date? – **No information held.**
- 3a) For each year (2019-2023) could you please tell me the total number of w.t.e (whole time equivalent) police dog handlers you employ? – **Disclosed, please see below:**

2019 - 20
2020 - 20
2021 - 20
2022 - 20
2023 - 20
- 3b) please detail whether the kennel services are delivered in house or via a contract with an external provider could you please confirm the provider. – **Withheld, please see below.**

- 4) Please provide the first part of the postcode of the holding kennels (the details are for geographical spatial mapping and so exact address is not required) – **Withheld, please see below.**

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

To provide the capacity with regard to kennels services could undermine existing or future investigations, operations and police tactics. Disclosure of the specific capacity of each facility would enable individuals intent on disrupting police activity to conduct detailed research on the available facilities and therefore identify the locations of such kennels.

Members of the criminal fraternity, armed with such information could then take steps to disrupt operational policing; therefore, prejudicing the prevention and detection of crime, the administration of justice and placing both members of the public and police staff at a significantly increased risk of harm.

The following exemptions have been applied:

- Section 31 (1) (a)(b) - Law Enforcement.
- Section 38 (1) (a)(b) – Health & Safety

Information is exempt from disclosure under Section 31 and Section 38 where the release of Information would, or would likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/ or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure - Section 31

To disclose this information would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, it would also lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force how public funds are utilised.

Factors favouring non-disclosure - Section 31

Releasing such data would give those individuals with the intent to do so, the intelligence required to disrupt police activity. If a location was made public, or by dint of disclosure such locations could be identified, these locations could then be targeted by members of the criminal fraternity jeopardising our capacity to protect the public and bring offenders to justice. This would inevitably lead to an increased likelihood of criminal activity and unnecessarily endanger members of police staff and the public in general. Any disclosure of information which is likely to undermine the ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime can only be considered as being harmful.

Factors favouring disclosure - Section 38

In addition to the basic premise of being open and transparent, disclosure of the location of kennelling provision would allow for greater public awareness around the kennelling facilities employed by Staffordshire Police and inform public debate upon how public funds are being spent.

Factors favouring non-disclosure - Section 38

Our kennelling is kept confidential for security reasons; this is to ensure the safety and security of the staff and kennels, but also to ensure that seized dogs are cared for in a secure and safe environment. Disclosure of detailed information from which these locations could be determined would therefore be of detriment to these functions and unnecessarily place the wellbeing of staff, animals and the public at risk.

Balancing Test

When considering whether disclosure is appropriate, we must weigh the strongest reason for disclosure against the strongest reasons for non-disclosure. In this case, whilst the factors favouring disclosure are important in that it would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, we believe when weighed against the risk of disclosure undermining our ability to prevent and detect crime and hindering our ability to protect the public, then non-disclosure takes precedence.

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.

Please note, in relation to Questions 1 – 2g, since April 2008 the responsibility to seize stray dogs no longer exists with the police, unless there are exceptional circumstances where there is an immediate risk to public safety or serious animal welfare concern. As a result, Staffordshire Police do not hold any information.

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