

26 September 2024

FOI Ref 17181

Request - You asked us the following:

This request concerns the number of crimes reported involving zombie-style knives in your police force.

1. Please state how many offences were reported involving:

- a. Zombie-style knives;
- b. Zombie knives;
- c. Machetes

In each of the following calendar years:

2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

2) Of those offences, please state how many involved youths (under 18) and the following breakdowns:

- The suspect;
- The victim;

Calendar years of: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

3) Of those offences, please state what the ethnicity was for those under 18 with the following breakdowns:

- The suspect;
- The victim;

Calendar years of: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

Ethnic groups are: Black, Asian, Mixed and White

4) Of those offences, please state what the ethnicity was for those over 18 with the following breakdowns:

- The suspect;
- The victim;

Calendar years of: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

Ethnic groups are: Black, Asian, Mixed and White

We received your request on 20/08/2024 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.

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2) Of those offences, please state how many involved youths (under 18) and the following breakdowns:

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The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There is no readily retrievable way of extracting the required information from our crime/occurrence database; in May 2020 Staffordshire Police introduced a new crime occurrence recording system and although data was transferred from the previous decommissioned systems, the property field types cannot be readily searched. Therefore, the only way to obtain the level of detail requested would be to carry out a very labour intensive manual trawl through thousands of records to try to establish the type of knife or weapon used. Within the timescale requested, there have been in excess of 8,300 occurrences where a knife crime flag qualifier has been applied, each occurrence log would need to be manually reviewed to determine whether the occurrence related to a 'zombie knife', 'machete' or a similar knife. From dip sampling it has been estimated to answer this request would take approximately 3 minutes per record to review, equating to approximately 415 hours to provide the requested data. Furthermore, to determine the ethnicity, there are over 6,000 occurrences of the above where a knife crime flag has been applied and where no ethnicity has been recorded. From dip sampling it has been estimated to take approximately 2 minutes per record to review, equating to approximately 200 hours to provide the requested data. Therefore, to determine if a 'zombie knife', 'machete' or a similar knife was used and the ethnicity would exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold stipulated by 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.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

In order to assist in refining your request, we may be able to provide the total number of offences recorded which have received a knife crime flag, broken down by year for your requested period. Likewise, we may be able to provide the number of victims and suspects recorded for such offences.

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