

16 September 2024

FOI Ref 17187

You requested an Internal Review of our handling of your information request, which we received on 22nd August 2024.

This internal review is specific to your request ref FOI 17011.

We have reviewed the response to see if we have met the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This is separate from any other complaints processes you might be engaged in with us.

Your concerns

Here are my grounds for an internal review and the reasons I would like to appeal.

1, As this information in relation to violence and possession in schools is not readily available it means Staffordshire Police does not know how many violent crimes happen at its schools in its police force area.

2. All other 43 forces in the UK I have contacted in relation to location the marker of 'school' in the past has made the data available within cost (including your own). In fact this data was available now nearly ten years ago albeit in relation to an FOI about 'sex crimes in schools' but it was available <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-34138287>

4, RE: Cost: I would suggest that in this 'day and age' data is recorded in an electronic format and therefore should be easily retrievable, and within cost, it is worrying you do not record this data, or have it in an affordable instantly obtainable form.

5, It is in the public interest that police forces collect this data in easily accessible formats, if the public cannot find out how many types of these crimes are taking place in schools, how do forces, the community take steps to prevent these crimes from happening?

6, Some police forces have already replied with the data from their police force area so I know this information is readily available. I can provide some examples please see at bottom of this email.

If the information after this review is not available I would need to record your force of not knowing the level of violence in its police force area.

Our decision

Please note that an Internal Review is concerned with the response that was provided to your initial request, this process does not consider any new requests. Therefore, we cannot address your additional question posed above (at 5,). If you would like to submit this question as a new FOI request you may do so but to manage your expectations please note that the FOI Act only extends to requests for recorded information; it does not require public authorities to answer questions generally, only if they are held in recorded form.

Having considered our handling of your request we find that the response issued was correct because not all recorded crimes have a 'location premises type' recorded on our crime/occurrence database meaning that to accurately establish whether or not a particular offence occurred on school premises, a manual trawl of all violence offences where a location is not recorded, would also be required.

We therefore, are satisfied that the application of Section 12(1) FOI Act 2000 (time and cost) was correctly applied.

Perhaps the response letter could have been worded clearer to clarify that we are able to supply the requested information for offences where the location premises type has been recorded as a 'school' but that there is likely to be offences that did occur on school premises where the location has not been recorded as such.

Advice and assistance

As explained above, if you would be content to be provided with the requested information for offences that have been recorded on our crime/occurrence system as occurring on a school premises only, we would be able to supply this data (questions 1-9 inclusive) but to reiterate, we would not be able to research any other offences where the location type has not been recorded.

Next steps

If you still feel that we have not responded appropriately to your information request, you can make an appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Any appeals should be made to the ICO within six weeks of receiving the outcome of an internal review. The easiest way to lodge your appeal is via their website: www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints

Alternatively, an appeal can be sent via mail to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Central Disclosure Unit Management Team
Central Disclosure Unit
Staffordshire Police