

19 December 2024

FOI Ref 17524

Request - You asked us the following:

- 1) Which department deals with image enhancement?
- 2) Which software is used when dealing with image enhancement or photographs in general (e.g. AMPED)?
- 3) How often does your force deal with AI generated images or images that have been potentially enhanced/changed?
- 4) What training is required in order to use the software mentioned in question 2, if any?
- 5) What challenges have you faced, if any, when dealing with image enhancement and how did you overcome these?
- 6) What challenges do you believe could occur due to image enhancement?

We received your request on 27/11/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Staffordshire Police's response to your enquiry is as follows:

Staffordshire Police holds/does not hold the requested information.

1. Which department deals with image enhancement? – **Disclosed, Digital Media Unit and CCTV.**
2. Which software is used when dealing with image enhancement or photographs in general (e.g. AMPED)? – **Withheld.**
3. How often does your force deal with AI generated images or images that have been potentially enhanced/changed? – **No information held.**
4. What training is required in order to use the software mentioned in question 2, if any? – **Disclosed, there is tool specific training and internal competency training.**
5. What challenges have you faced, if any, when dealing with image enhancement and how did you overcome these? – **No information held.**
6. What challenges do you believe could occur due to image enhancement? – **Not applicable, see below.**

Please note that the FOI Act 2000 only extends to requests for recorded information. It does not require public authorities to create information to answer questions generally; only if the information is already held in recorded form.

The following exemption has been applied:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for parts of this particular request.

- Section 31 (1) (a) (b) - Law Enforcement.

Information is exempt from disclosure under S31 (1) (a) (b) 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.

Harm:

As information released under the Freedom of Information Act is a release to the world at large and not a single applicant, provision of details regarding specific software used and the training given for the detailed analysis of digital evidence would arm individuals with the intent to cause harm valuable information upon the systems and applications used, along with specific knowledge upon how individuals are taught to employ such applications. These systems and processes could then be researched for known weaknesses and open them up to attack by any individuals with such intent, or allow them to take steps to circumvent their effectiveness. This would then undermine existing or future investigations, operations and police tactics and allow those with ill intent to cause disruption to operational policing and prejudice the prevention and detection of crime. Knowing the software used and the training provided to staff would allow individuals to speak on the policing network with a level of validity that could lead to major disruption to the force communications network. It would also aide criminals in disrupting such software or employing tactics to negate its effectiveness.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)

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 ,the software used and the training provided to staff.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)

Releasing such data would give those individuals with the intent to do so, the intelligence required to disrupt police activity. This knowledge would allow those with ill intent to target their offending more effectively or employ tactics to circumvent the effectiveness of any software or training which would inevitably lead to an increased likelihood of criminal activity and an increased danger to the public. 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 to the public.

Balance 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.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Staffordshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing within two months of the date of receipt of this email, and should be addressed to:

foi@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Central Disclosure Unit
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Central Disclosure Unit within two months of the Force's response to the original FOI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Central Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within 20 working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow



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Cheshire

SK9 5AF

ICO Website for complaints link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information

Central Disclosure Unit