

10 December 2024

FOI Ref 17561

Request - You asked us the following:

The total number of Offences across all affected cases, which couldn't be Prosecuted/Considered for Prosecution, as the Statute of Limitations (for affected Offences) had lapsed. Please may I clarify here, if there have been cases in which multiple Offences couldn't be Prosecuted/Considered for Prosecution (due to Statutory Time Limits lapsing), please might it be possible to get the total number of Offences which couldn't be proceeded with.

I understand Statutory Time Limits may lapse during initial investigations, or, whilst cases are being reconsidered under (Police and CPS) Victim's Right to Review schemes - Please may I request figures for the total number of cases (by year, if possible) which couldn't be Prosecuted/Considered for Prosecution, due to Statutory Time Limits lapsing (regardless of the stage at which STLs may have lapsed).

Please might it be possible to request this information for the last 20 years?

In the interests of disclosure, my interest in the requested information stems from:

New, and proposed - Baroness Owen's Private Members' Bill - Offences recently inserted into/Proposed to be inserted into the Sexual Offences Act 2003, are affected by Statutory Time Limits - That this is occurring in a time where Police are already tasked with incredibly large, challenging workloads (which I express deep admiration for), raises concerns.

We received your request on 09/12/2024 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.

- Please may I request figures for the total number of cases (by year, if possible) which couldn't be Prosecuted/Considered for Prosecution, due to Statutory Time Limits lapsing (regardless of the stage at which STLs may have lapsed). Please might it be possible to request this information for the last 20 years? – **Partially disclosed, please see accompanying file titled 'FOI 17561 Offences Not Prosecuted Due to Statutory Time Limit Data.PDF'.**

Please be advised that we have provided the total number of notifiable offences, finalised as Outcome 17: Suspect identified but prosecution time limit expired, where an offence subject to Limitation of Proceedings was the principal crime that would have been charged, between 01/04/2014 and 09/12/2024. Please also note that Staffordshire Police only holds this data back to April 2014 as that was when the outcomes framework was introduced. It only covers notifiable offences, not all offences.

Please note that this data has been provided to the best of our ability, subject to the limitation of current recording protocols and systems/software. Additional offences/incidents may have been recorded during these timescales but are awaiting finalisation and input onto these systems and would not be present within this dataset.

Every effort is made to ensure that the data presented is accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that this has been extracted from multiple sources, developed for specific policing purposes, for which data extraction methods have not been specifically designed to directly correlate with the terminology of this request. Therefore, the data presented is subject to the inaccuracies and idiosyncrasies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

As a consequence, care should be taken in the interpretation and presentation of this data, so as to not misrepresent the whole or any part of the data disclosed.

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.



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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
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