

13 December 2024

FOI Ref 17576

Request - You asked us the following:

This is a Freedom of Information request.

Please could you provide me with the number of crimes reported that include the word "Grindr" (referring to the dating app only) AND whereby the victim of the alleged offence is under the age of 18.

Please provide this information broken down into categories - e.g., rape, sexual activity with a minor, blackmail, etc. - and for the following year only:

• 2024 (Since August 11th 2024 only)

Please confirm how Grindr was involved in each of these offences. That is, did the alleged victims use Grindr and that is how they came into contact with the offender. Any further details you can provide about these offences (i.e., whether charges followed, age of suspect/victim, etc.) would be much appreciated.

I would be grateful if you could confirm that you have received this request.

We received your request on 12/12/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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

Staffordshire Police withholds the requested information.

Please could you provide me with the number of crimes reported that include the word "Grindr" (referring to the dating app only) AND whereby the victim of the alleged offence is under the age of 18.

Please provide this information broken down into categories - e.g., rape, sexual activity with a minor, blackmail, etc. - and for the following year only:

• 2024 (Since August 11th 2024 only)

Please confirm how Grindr was involved in each of these offences. That is, did the alleged victims use Grindr and that is how they came into contact with the offender. Any further details you can provide about these offences (i.e., whether charges followed, age of suspect/victim, etc.) would be much appreciated.

I would be grateful if you could confirm that you have received this request. – **Withheld.**

Please note that there is 1 offence that is still being investigated. Therefore, we are citing Section 30(1)(a)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Investigations conducted by Public Authorities.

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 this particular request.

- Section 30(1)(a)(b) – Criminal Investigations

Section 30 is qualified and class based and, as such, we are required to apply the public interest test.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)

Disclosure of the information would improve the public's knowledge and understanding of the investigatory process and, as all police investigations are publicly funded, would show how public funds are being spent.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)

Disclosure of the requested information would prejudice how investigations are carried out in the future. Staffordshire Police is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Any release of information relating to ongoing investigations could prejudice and undermine those investigations. The prevention and detection of such matters could therefore be hindered and therefore risk interference with evidence, which could have detrimental impact on future investigations. In addition, the right to a fair trial could be undermined.

Balance test

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant. Having considered the public interest factors we are required to determine whether on balance the factors favouring disclosure outweigh those which are against disclosure. It is our view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour non-disclosure.

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
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