

12 November 2024

FOI Ref 17243

Request - You asked us the following:

As part of some research into how much social media companies are providing assistance when requested by law enforcement, please see the below request under the Freedom Of Information Act 2000.

Please provide the following information for the period 2019 to 2024 for Staffordshire Police. If possible please present the information in six month sections. So in total this would be

- Jan-Jun 2019
- Jul-Dec 2019
- Jan-Jun 2020
- Jul-Dec 2020
- Jan-Jun 2021
- Jul-Dec 2021
- Jan-Jun 2022
- Jul-Dec 2022
- Jan-Jun 2023
- Jul-Dec 2023
- Jan-Jun 2024

1. The total number of investigations began by Staffordshire Police within those periods
2. The total number of investigations by Staffordshire Police within those periods, in which information to support prosecution, other than that which is already in the public domain, was requested from the company Meta, or any of its subsidiaries or trading names.
3. The total number of investigations by Staffordshire Police within those periods, in which any of the information requested in point 3 was subsequently provided by Meta.
4. The total number of requests by Staffordshire Police, within those periods, made to Meta for any information other than that in the public domain.
5. Of the requests in point 4, how many were successful for each period?

If you are unable to provide the data for the Jan-Jun period of each year, please instead provide it for each calendar year or for quarterly or annual periods since 2019 which have already been collated by you. If the data requested in one point above is not available, please explain why but still address the remaining points. Please provide such data electronically, ideally as a spreadsheet or table.

We received your request on 10/09/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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

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

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'.

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

The information that you are requesting for the majority of your request is not stored in a way which permits readily available retrieval. This is because our crime/occurrence recording system does not directly categorise crimes according to whether they took place from the company 'Meta or any of its subsidiaries or trading names'. Therefore, the only way in which we would be able to accurately determine whether there have been any crimes recorded would be to manually review each individual crime. To determine whether this data is held relevant to your request would require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record. In the last full calendar year alone in 2023 there has been 87,860 crimes. From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 3 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 4,393 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the FOI Act by some considerable margin.

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.

In order to assist in refining your request, data can be provided for the total number of crimes that have been recorded from 2019 to 2024 (present day), broken down by year, however we are unsure whether this would be of benefit to you.

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