

29 October 2024

FOI Ref 17126

Request - You asked us the following:

I am a member of the public, and on this evening, a concerned citizen. I have seen this video of a Police Liaison engaging with what appears to be a group of Muslim protestors, and instead of placing the group under arrest and engaging in stop and search, the Liaison appears to politely ask the group to discard their weapons at the local mosque?

See the video here: https://x.com/Lewis_Brackpool/status/1819764968754942426

My questions are:

- Are Staffordshire police aware of weapons being stored inside of local mosques?
- Why were these men not arrested and the weapons taken from them, considering a man was injured earlier in the day with a blunt object, supposedly thrown?
- How is Staffordshire police allowing entire groups of men to carry around weapons freely? Is it legal to carry weaponry in Staffordshire?

We received your request on 06/08/2024 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.

- Are Staffordshire police aware of weapons being stored inside of local mosques? – **Neither confirm nor deny.**
- Why were these men not arrested and the weapons taken from them, considering a man was injured earlier in the day with a blunt object, supposedly thrown? – **No information held.**
- How is Staffordshire police allowing entire groups of men to carry around weapons freely? – **No information held.**
- Is it legal to carry weaponry in Staffordshire? – **Withheld, please see advice and assistance section below.**

Please note that information is defined in section 84 of the Act as 'information recorded in any form'. The Act therefore only extends to requests for recorded information. It does not require public authorities to answer questions generally; only if they already hold the answers in recorded form. The Act does not extend to requests for information about policies or their implementation, or the merits or demerits of any proposal or action - unless, of course, the answer to any such request is already held in recorded form.

Staffordshire Police can neither confirm or deny that it holds parts of the information you requested as it believes that the duty under s1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the duty to confirm whether the public authority holds information of the specified description) does not apply.

The following exemptions have 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 21(1) - Information reasonably accessible by other means.

Section 21 is an absolute, class-based exemption and as such there is no requirement to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure, nor is there a requirement to perform a Public Interest Test.

- Section 31(3) Law Enforcement

The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with Section 1 (1)(a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1).

- Section 40(5) Personal Information

Section 40(5) is an absolute exemption which means that there is no need to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure; neither is it subject to a public interest test.

To release personal or third-party information held by Staffordshire Police, would breach the data protection principles; namely –

- Data is lawfully and fairly processed.
- Processed in line with an individual's rights.
- Data is secure.

Personal and third-party information cannot be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Disclosure under Freedom of Information is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant.

Harm

The College of Policing has an Authorised Professional Practice on Intelligence Management which is a national standard adhered to by all police forces across England and Wales. These are four products which are the deliverables of intelligence led policing. Each product has a defined purpose and provides recommendations for making decisions and options for action. These four products are strategic assessment; tactical assessment; subject profile and problem profile.

This APP can be viewed at the below link:

<http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/intelligence-management/intelligence-products/#content-of-the-strategic-assessment>



It is a business process with an intention to provide focus to operational policing and to achieve a disproportionately greater impact from the resources applied to any problem. It is dependent on a clear framework of analysis of information and intelligence allowing a problem solving approach to law enforcement and crime prevention techniques. Confirmation or denial that information is held relevant to this request would undermine the APP for Intelligence Management. The impact of confirming or denying whether information is held relating to this request, i.e. whether Staffordshire Police are aware of weapons being stored inside local mosques, has potential to undermine the flow of information (intelligence) received from members of the public into the Police Service relating to allegations of crime.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held under Section 31(3)

To confirm or deny that information is held 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 and the communications used with intelligence, operations and during routine policing.

Factors against confirming or denying information is held under Section 31(3)

Confirming or denying that such information is held 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 which would inevitably lead to an increased likelihood of criminal activity and an increased danger to the public. Any confirmation or denial of information held 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

Confirming or denying whether information is held 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 neither confirming nor denying that information is held outweigh those which favour confirming or denying information is held. It is our view that the factors favouring confirming or denying information is held do not outweigh those factors against confirming or denying information is held.

Advice and assistance

In order to comply with our obligations under Section 16 of the Act, the obligation to provide advice and assistance, please find below links to the information requested.

- <https://www.gov.uk/buying-carrying-knives>

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response.

If you would like us to carry out a review of our response, please let us know within two months of the date of receipt of this email, review requests should be addressed to:



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

foi@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

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

Please remember to quote the reference number in any future communications.

Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit