

1 October 2024

FOI Ref 17219

Request - You asked us the following:

I would be grateful if you could provide the following details for the period from 1st January 2023 to 31st July 2024:

1. The total number of reported cases involving stolen cryptocurrency during this period (including but not limited to funds lost in hacks, fraud, scams).
Please include the total number of cases and the total value of the stolen cryptocurrencies (at the time of theft).

Please also break down the cases by their current status.

For closed cases, specify how many were closed due to lack of jurisdiction/referred to another police force, closed due to solving the crime being unlikely, closed due to lack of police resources, and closed due to crime not being serious enough.

2. Of all reported cases, how many involved successfully tracing stolen funds to/through a cryptocurrency exchange or a digital wallet hosted by a cryptocurrency exchange?

(An exchange is defined as a place where users can buy, sell and trade cryptocurrency, for example Binance or Coinbase.)

3. Of these cases involving exchanges, how many resulted in an officer attempting to contact the exchange?

In cases where an exchange was contacted, did they cooperate with law enforcement?

Cooperation is here defined as:

Acknowledgment and timely response: The exchange acknowledges the request from law enforcement and responds within a reasonable time frame.

Compliance with requests: The exchange complies with lawful requests, such as providing transaction data, account information, or assisting in identifying the individual(s) behind the transactions.

Freezing or restricting funds: The exchange takes appropriate action to freeze or restrict access to stolen funds when requested, in accordance with legal requirements.

4. Please provide a list of the names of exchanges that either did not respond to requests or did not cooperate with law enforcement as per the above criteria.

We received your request on 03/09/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Please find below our response.

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

Staffordshire Police withholds the following information.

1. The total number of reported cases involving stolen cryptocurrency during this period (including but not limited to funds lost in hacks, fraud, scams).
Please include the total number of cases and the total value of the stolen cryptocurrencies (at the time of theft).
Please also break down the cases by their current status.
For closed cases, specify how many were closed due to lack of jurisdiction/referred to another police force, closed due to solving the crime being unlikely, closed due to lack of police resources, and closed due to crime not being serious enough. – **Withheld.**
2. Of all reported cases, how many involved successfully tracing stolen funds to/through a cryptocurrency exchange or a digital wallet hosted by a cryptocurrency exchange?
(An exchange is defined as a place where users can buy, sell and trade cryptocurrency, for example Binance or Coinbase.) – **Withheld.**
3. Of these cases involving exchanges, how many resulted in an officer attempting to contact the exchange?
In cases where an exchange was contacted, did they cooperate with law enforcement?
Cooperation is here defined as:
Acknowledgment and timely response: The exchange acknowledges the request from law enforcement and responds within a reasonable time frame.
Compliance with requests: The exchange complies with lawful requests, such as providing transaction data, account information, or assisting in identifying the individual(s) behind the transactions.
Freezing or restricting funds: The exchange takes appropriate action to freeze or restrict access to stolen funds when requested, in accordance with legal requirements. – **Withheld.**
4. Please provide a list of the names of exchanges that either did not respond to requests or did not cooperate with law enforcement as per the above criteria. – **Withheld.**

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There is no method by which we can readily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 13,000 occurrences of fraud, computer misuse and theft. In order to ascertain whether the occurrence involved stolen cryptocurrency, the record for each offence would require manual review. Further research would be required in order to establish the total value of stolen cryptocurrencies, the status of the occurrences, a reason why occurrences may be closed, how many involved tracing stolen funds through an exchange, how many involved an officer attempting to contact an exchange, whether or not the exchange cooperated with law enforcement and a list of names of exchanges involved.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 10 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 2,166 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the Freedom of Information Act by some considerable margin.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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'.

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.

Unfortunately, we cannot suggest a way in which your request could be simplified or pared down in order to bring it within the confines of the time and cost threshold.

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:

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