

4 October 2024

FOI Ref 17227

Request - You asked us the following:

I have been collecting data published by the government on the number of blackmail offences (offence code: 35) recorded by police forces every financial year from 2012/13 to 2023/24. These are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

I am now looking for more information from each force about the ages recorded for the victims in these cases.

Staffordshire Police's recorded blackmail offences for each of the years is as follows:

12/13: 14
13/14: 45
14/15: 71
15/16: 112
16/17: 144
17/18: 162
18/19: 304
19/20: 135
20/21: 246
21/22: 355
22/23: 606
23/24: 662

Question:

-For each of the financial years since 2012/13, please could you break down the ages recorded for victims of all of the blackmail offences recorded by the force?

We received your request on 05/09/2024 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.

- For each of the financial years since 2012/13, please could you break down the ages recorded for victims of all of the blackmail offences recorded by the force? – **Partially disclosed, please see accompanying file titled 'FOI 17227 Age of Victims of Blackmail Data.PDF'.**

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 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.

Please note that the data presented does differ to the data provided in the request. This could be due to crimes being re-classified or cancelled in the intervening timespan between the time the data was sent to the Home Office and the date of the request being processed.

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.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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