

7 October 2024

FOI Ref 17229

Request - You asked us the following:

As far as relates to people that have eventually been found deceased, they may have been missing or I suppose just out of contact with society/no relatives to check up on them and may be among the rising number of people being found long after they've passed away, what is the longest time after their death anyone has been found/discovered* in Staffordshire Police's area as far as has been established and recorded?

*discovered: may have found their body without any active trying to find them and would have found it for the first time, we aren't including any exhumations or historical archaeological digs (except that recently deceased people are included, for whom an archaeologist may have been used to identify if there were human remains and not in a burial place such as a cemetery)

We received your request on 06/09/2024 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:

There is no method by which we can easily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request. Within our archive database and live recording system, there have been in excess of 500 occurrences. Manual research would need to be conducted on each individual record in order to determine the length of time between death and discovery of a body.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 30 to 60 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this has been estimated to equate to between 250 to 500 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.

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.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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