

7 October 2024

FOI Ref 17244

Request - You asked us the following:

I would like to request information relating to knife crimes reported in our area.

Please could you tell me:

1. How many crimes were reported involving zombie knives/zombie-style knives/machetes in the last three years? (Since 2021 - up to and including any data held for 2024)

1a) Of those, how many involved youths (under 18)?

If providing data for the three year period or for the type of blades listed pushes my request above the cost limit, please provide information for as far back as possible and for any blade that would hold similar characteristics to those described as zombie-style.

I would be grateful for any advice and assistance under Section 16 of the FOI Act in order to keep my request within the cost limit for the provision of free information, so I can amend or resubmit the request early in the 20-day period, if this is what you advise.

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:

There is no readily retrievable way of extracting the required information from our crime/occurrence database; in May 2020 Staffordshire Police introduced a new crime occurrence recording system and although data was transferred from the previous decommissioned systems, the property field types cannot be readily searched. Therefore, the only way to obtain the level of detail requested would be to carry out a very labour intensive manual trawl through thousands of records to try to establish the type of knife or weapon used. Within the timescale requested, there have been in excess of 2,050 occurrences where a knife crime flag qualifier has been applied, each occurrence log would need to be manually reviewed to determine whether the occurrence related to a 'zombie knife', 'machete' or a similar knife. From dip sampling it has been estimated to answer this request would take approximately 3 minutes per



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record to review, equating to over 102 hours to provide the requested data. Therefore, to determine if a 'zombie knife', 'machete' or a similar knife was used would exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold stipulated by 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.

In order to assist in refining your request. Data could be provided in cases where a knife crime flag has been applied and the MO includes 'Zombie Knife' or 'Machete' and where the victim is under 18, broken down by year.

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