

15 April 2025

FOI Ref 17950

Request - You asked us the following:

I am writing to make a freedom of information request for data held in relation to shoplifting offences recorded between January 2015 and the end of December 2024.

Question 1

Based on keyword searches, please provide me with offence and outcome data held for all shoplifting crimes involving the following items:

- A) Menstrual products (a non-exhaustive list of relevant keywords would also include: feminine hygiene products, tampons, sanitary pads, Tampax, period products, Always pads, mooncup, panty liners)
- B) Baby food or formula (a non-exhaustive list of relevant keywords would also include: baby milk, formula milk, baby milk powder, toddler milk, infant formula)

I would like the data to include a breakdown of the offences by:

- The calendar year the crime was recorded
- Either the month or the calendar quarter the crime was recorded
- The offence code
- The name of the offence
- Details recorded about the item(s) stolen
- The outcome recorded, as per Home Office outcome types category (eg outcome 1 - charge/summons, outcome 2 - caution, etc)
- The sex of the suspect
- The officer defined ethnicity of the suspect, where available
- The self reported ethnicity of the suspect, where available
- The age of the suspect if possible, or the age group if not (eg under 10, 10-17, 18-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, 71+)

The data table should follow the format of one row per offence recorded, with column headers consisting of the above bullet points (eg year, month/quarter etc). Please provide data for menstrual products and baby food separately, in separate tables.

I would like the data provided in a machine readable format, as either an XLS spreadsheet or CSV. Please do not provide a PDF.

Question 2

As per the flagging process outlined in the Home Office Annual Data Requirement, please provide me with data held on offence and outcome data held for all shoplifting crimes where it has been flagged that the offence, suspect or victim was linked to modern slavery.

I would like the data to include a breakdown of the offences by:

- The calendar year the crime was recorded



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- Either the month or the calendar quarter the crime was recorded
- The offence code
- The name of the offence
- Details recorded about the item(s) stolen
- Any details recorded about the circumstances of the slavery flag
- The outcome recorded, as per Home Office outcome types category (eg outcome 1 - charge/summons, outcome 2 - caution, etc)
- The sex of the suspect
- The officer defined ethnicity of the suspect, where available
- The self reported ethnicity of the suspect, where available
- The age of the suspect if possible, or the age group if not (eg under 10, 10-17, 18-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, 71+)

The data table should follow the format of one row per offence recorded, with column headers consisting of the above bullet points (eg year, month/quarter etc).

I would like the data provided in a machine readable format, as either an XLS spreadsheet or CSV. Please do not provide a PDF.

We received your request on 12/03/2025 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 exemption has 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 readily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 63,800 shoplifting occurrences, in order to ascertain whether the items stolen included any 'menstrual products' or 'baby formula' the record for each offence would require a manual review. There is no facility on our crime recording database to conduct a free word search for the items listed. Additionally with regards to question 2, we do not have a specific modern slavery flag therefore all 63,800 shoplifting offences would need to be manually checked to establish whether modern slavery was relevant to the offence, victim or suspect. To extract this data would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 4 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 4,253 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the FOI 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.

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.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included.

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Staffordshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing within two months of the date of receipt of this email, and should be addressed to:

foi@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

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

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Central Disclosure Unit within two months of the Force's response to the original FOI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Central Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within 20 working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.



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4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

ICO Website for complaints link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit