

4 April 2025

FOI Ref 21163

Request - You asked us the following:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding offences related to driving without a valid licence within your jurisdiction. Specifically, I would like to request the following data for the period between 1st January 2020 and 31st December 2024:

1. The total number of recorded offences where individuals were found to be driving without a valid licence
2. The number of arrests made for driving without a valid licence
3. The number of individuals who were caught driving with an expired licence
4. The number of fines issued for driving without a licence, an expired licence or a valid licence, along with the total value of fines imposed
5. The number of individuals who received a driving ban due to driving without a licence
6. The number of cases involving breaches of provisional licence terms

If this request exceeds the cost limit under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act, please advise on how I might refine it to fall within the limits.

Thank you for your time and assistance. I look forward to your response within the statutory 20 working days.

We received your request on 01/04/2025 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 1,500 offences of 'Drive a motor vehicle otherwise than in accordance with a licence'. In order to determine the number of individuals caught driving with an expired licence, the number of fines and the value of fines issues, the number of individuals who received a driving ban due to driving without a licence and the number of cases involving breaches of provisional licence terms, the record for each offence would require manual review. 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 10 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 250 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the FOI Act by some considerable margin.

Furthermore, on 20th May 2020 Staffordshire Police implemented a new case management system. This system brought data from a number of legacy systems into one to provide a single nominal record, including the custody system. The old custody system has now been decommissioned and as a result there is no search facility to be able to retrieve the requested data. It would entail searching thousands of records to establish if it fitted the criteria of the request. To achieve this task would exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold stipulated by the Freedom of Information Act.

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.

If your request was amended, Staffordshire Police would be able to provide the number of arrests from 20/05/2020 to 31/12/2024 for the offence of 'Drive a motor vehicle otherwise than in accordance with a licence', and the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for the offence of 'Drive a motor vehicle otherwise than in accordance with a licence', broken down by disposal method.

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



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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.

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