

4 April 2025

FOI Ref 21176

Request - You asked us the following:

I am requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act regarding animal thefts in your jurisdiction.

I understand that the Pet Abduction Act 2024 came into force on 24 August 2024. For data from this date onwards, please include offences recorded under the specific categories of "dog abduction" and "cat abduction." For data prior to this date, please include all relevant offences where the stolen item was recorded as one of the listed animals, regardless of the overarching crime category (e.g., theft, burglary, robbery).

1. Number of reported thefts of animals (from the list below):

Please provide the number of reported thefts involving animals for each of the following calendar years: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Please break this down, where available, by:

- Postcode district for each year (e.g., LS1, M20)
- Month (i.e., monthly totals) for each year

2. Species-specific theft data (if held):

If possible, I would also like the number of thefts involving the following species, again split by calendar year (2019–2024):

Animals:

- Bird
- Cat
- Chicken
- Cow
- Dog
- Fish
- Gecko
- Gerbil
- Goat
- Guinea Pig
- Hamster
- Horse
- Lamb
- Lizard
- Mouse
- Pig
- Pony



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- Rabbit
- Sheep
- Snake
- Spider

3. Dog and cat breed-specific theft data (if held):

If possible, I would also like the number of thefts involving the following dog and cat breeds, again split by calendar year (2019–2024):

Dog breeds:

- Akita
- Beagle
- Bichon Frise
- Border Collie
- Chihuahua
- Dachshund
- Dalmatian
- Doberman
- French Bulldog
- German Shepherd
- Great Dane
- Husky
- Jack Russell
- Labrador
- Maltese
- Mastiff
- Pitbull
- Pomeranian
- Poodle
- Pug
- Retriever
- Rottweiler
- Samoyed
- Shiba Inu
- Shih Tzu
- Spaniel
- Springer
- Staffordshire Bull Terrier
- Terrier
- Whippet

Cat breeds:

- Bengal
- British Shorthair
- Burmese
- Long Haired
- Maine Coon



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- Persian
- Ragdoll
- Russian Blue
- Scottish Fold
- Siamese
- Sphynx
- Domestic Shorthair (including Tuxedo, Ginger, Tabby, and Tortoiseshell)

Please provide the data in Excel format, with separate sheets or clearly labelled columns for each breakdown.

If this request is too broad or would exceed the cost limit, I would be grateful if you could advise me on how to refine it. I am happy to provide clarification or narrow the scope if needed.

We received your request on 02/04/2025 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 84,120 occurrences of theft that may have involved the theft of an animal. In order to ascertain whether the theft involved an animal, 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 3 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 4,206 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.

The Pet Abduction Act came into legislation on 24th August 2024. If your request was amended, Staffordshire Police would be able to provide the number of abductions of a pet dog/cat between 24/08/2024 and 31/12/2024.

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.

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:



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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