

17 April 2025

FOI Ref 21197

Request - You asked us the following:

I would like to request information under the Freedom of Information Act concerning the issuing of firearms certificates and inspections over the past five years.

I would like to know the number of firearms certificates issued over the past five years.

The number of new certificates issued.

The number of inspections. Can I have this broken down to inspections of new firearms certificate applications and renewal applications.

Can I have figures for the number of applications and refusals.

Also, could I have information on the number of firearms offences investigated by your force where the weapon was legally held (or had a firearms certificate).

Can i also find out the number of legally held firearms reported stolen over that period.

Can you break down the number of firearms held by type?

We received your request on 07/04/2025 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 parts of this request. In relation to the number of inspections for the time period requested, there have been in excess of 14,700 certificates issued that would need to be manually checked to establish whether an inspection has taken place. Additionally, to establish where any offence had taken place where a legal firearm has been used, each firearms offence would need to be manually reviewed. There are in excess of 500 related offences that would need to be checked, therefore to extract this data would require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 8 minutes to review each of all of the records listed above, this would equate to over 2,026 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.

To assist in refining your request, data can be provided for the total number of firearms held and the total number of firearms stolen. We are also able to provide the number of firearms certificates issued including renewals, new grants and refusals in the time period requested.

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



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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