

5 August 2025

FOI Ref 21539

Request - You asked us the following:

I would like to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Please state how many reports your police force received on the 5th and 6th of July 2025 regarding potential Terror Offences in relation to Palestine Action, which is now a proscribed terror group.

For the avoidance of doubt, this should include all reports received at any time on these two days, including reports sent electronically via email or via your website, as well as reports received via phone, in person, or any other way.

We received your request on 07/07/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Staffordshire Police's response to your enquiry is as follows:

Staffordshire Police can neither confirm nor deny whether information relevant to this request is held, as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this particular request.

- Section 23(5) – Information supplied by, or concerning certain security bodies
Section 23 is an absolute class-based exemption and as such does not require the application of a Public Interest Test.
- Section 24(2) – National Security
Section 24 is a qualified exemption and as such there is a requirement to articulate the harm and conduct a test of the public interest.
- Section 30(3) – Criminal Investigations
Section 30 is qualified and class-based and, as such, we are required to apply the public interest test.
- Section 31 (3) - Law Enforcement
Section 31 is a qualified and prejudice-based exemption and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.
- Section 40(5) Personal Information
Section 40(5) is an absolute exemption which means that there is no need to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure; neither is it subject to a public interest test.

Harm

Any release under FOIA is a disclosure to the world, not just to the individual making the request. To confirm, or not, whether any information is held pertinent to this request would reveal whether or not there has been any information received on the dates specified, in respect of potential terrorism or terrorist related activity.

Police forces work in conjunction with other agencies and information is shared in line with information sharing protocols. Modern day policing is intelligence led and this is particularly pertinent with regard to both law enforcement and national security. The public expect police forces to use all powers and tactics available to them to prevent and detect crime or disorder and maintain public safety.

To provide the requested data, if held, for an individual force, would allow comparisons to be made between forces across the country and enable terrorists to build a picture of the effectiveness of any resources that may be in place and where they are deployed. Disclosure would ultimately prejudice the effectiveness of the national counter terrorism effort and would allow inferences to be drawn about force level counter-terrorism activity and identify perceived vulnerability on a regional level.

If Staffordshire Police were to confirm or deny whether any information was held in respect of this request, this would undermine an individual force's policing capabilities, which consequently would be detrimental to our ability to deal with the on-going terrorist threat we face.

The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built and the threat from terrorism cannot be ignored. It is generally recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The current UK threat level from international terrorism, based on intelligence, is assessed as of today's date, as "Substantial", which means that a terrorist attack is likely, see below link:

<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels>

In order to counter criminal and terrorist behaviour, it is vital that the police have the ability to work together, where necessary covertly, to obtain intelligence within current legislative frameworks to assist in the investigative process to ensure the successful arrest and prosecution of offenders who encourage, support, commit or plan to commit acts of terrorism.

To achieve this goal, it is vitally important that information sharing takes place between police officers, members of the public and police forces, as well as other security law enforcement bodies within the United Kingdom. Such an action would support counter-terrorism measures in the fight to deprive terrorist networks of their ability to commit crime.

The impact of providing information under FOI would disclose crucial information on the police intelligence picture in respect of those who may be supportive of a proscribed organisation and to what extent they may be engaged in terrorist activity. This would provide criminals, including terrorists or those intent on committing criminal or terrorist acts, with valuable information as to where the police are targeting their investigations. Confirmation or denial would undermine the effective delivery of operational law enforcement by highlighting which areas have, or have not, received police attention from these type of

reports. Furthermore, intelligence would be weakened thereby undermining national security and leaving the United Kingdom at risk of more terrorist attacks.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held – Section 24(2)

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and resources distributed within an area of policing, particularly with regard to how the police investigate reports of terrorism or terrorist related activity. Furthermore, confirmation or denial may improve public debate and assist the public to take steps to protect themselves.

Factors against confirming or denying information is held – Section 24(2)

Taking into account the current security climate within the United Kingdom, no information which may aid a terrorist should be disclosed, if held. To what extent this information may aid a terrorist is unknown, but it is clear that it will have an impact on a force's ability to monitor terrorist activity.

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection. The only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with what is placed into the public domain.

The cumulative effect of terrorists gathering information from various sources would build a picture of vulnerabilities. The more information disclosed over time will provide a more detailed account of the tactical infrastructure of not only a force area but also a country as a whole. Any incident that results from such a disclosure would by default affect National Security.

Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held – Section 30(3)

There is a public interest in the transparency of policing and to provide assurance that Staffordshire Police is appropriately and effectively dealing with crime. Confirming or denying that any information exists relevant to this request would lead to a better informed public demonstrating that police resources are being utilised correctly to focus on criminal/terrorist activity and to protect the public.

This would provide an insight into the police service and enable the public to have better understanding of effectiveness of the police, particularly in relation to the spending of public funds and the decisions taken by officers. As transparency is intrinsically linked to public confidence, confirming or denying whether any information is held, would be likely to improve public confidence in the force.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held – Section 30(3)

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that Staffordshire Police is appropriately and effectively dealing with crime, there is a strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations, particularly where they relate to terrorist activity, and in maintaining confidence in the Police Service. As this is a specific area of investigation which could also relate to inviting support for a proscribed terrorist group(s), confirmation or denial would identify police focus and attention which could be used by criminals, including terrorists to disrupt investigations and evade detection. This risks the integrity of investigations and places the public at severe risk.

Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held – Section 31(3)

National counter terrorism data is published by the Home Office on a quarterly and annual basis, which includes those who have been charged and convicted for membership of a proscribed organisation under Sections 11-13 of TACT 2000. In addition, those who have been proceeded against and convicted by the CPS in relation to the above offences (see link below), and this in itself favours confirming information is held.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/counter-terrorism-statistics>

Therefore, to confirm information is held by Staffordshire Police would demonstrate openness and transparency. When a request for information is made to the force it is correct that the police make appropriate information available to the general public. The provision of information, through confirming or denying whether information relevant to this request is held would accordingly, reinforce our commitment to be an open and transparent organisation.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held – Section 31(3)

Staffordshire Police has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If an FOI disclosure revealed information to the world (by citing an exemption or stating no information held) that would undermine the security of the national infrastructure. Offenders, including terrorist organisations, could use this to their advantage which would compromise public safety and more worryingly encourage offenders to carry out further crimes.

Therefore, confirming or denying information is held, would allow terrorists to gain an operational advantage over Staffordshire Police, therefore requiring an increase in resources, which cannot be in the public interest.

Balance test

The points above highlight the merits of confirming, or denying, whether any further information pertinent to this request exists.

The security of the country is of paramount importance and Staffordshire Police will not divulge whether any information is or is not held if to do so it would undermine National Security, our law enforcement functions, the investigative process or place the safety of individual(s) at risk. Whilst it is recognised that there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by various groups or individuals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations in this highly sensitive area.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of National Security, this will only be overridden in exception circumstances. Areas of interest to the police are sensitive to the extent that they reveal local intelligence.

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with any information that is released. Confirming or denying whether any information is held would reveal data around force level

activity relating terrorism. This would result in an increase of harm to either current or future investigations, or the subject of the investigation. Any disclosure of information, if held, which has the potential to jeopardise an investigation, is therefore likely to prejudice law enforcement and would therefore be of assistance to those intent on causing harm.

By its very nature, information relating to the support or membership of a proscribed organisation investigations undoubtedly undermines National Security. Under FOI there is a requirement to comply with Section 1(1)(a) and confirm what information is held. In some cases it is that confirmation, or not, which could disclose facts harmful to members of the public, police officers, the Government and its employees.

Therefore, after weighing up the competing public interests, we have found that confirmation or denial of whether information is held is not made out.

However, no inference can be taken from this refusal that further information does or does not exist.

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



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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