

12 August 2025

FOI Ref 21675

**Request - You asked us the following:**

Please supply the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

For each calendar year (1st Jan - 31st March) between 2020 and 2025:

Q1) Please advise the number of reports your force has received that have any of the following terms in their description or classification. Please give the individual number for each term rather than grouping them together:

Ghosts  
Demons  
Monsters  
Paranormal phenomena  
Supernatural entities  
Poltergeists  
Apparitions  
UFO's  
Aliens  
Other similar terms associated with paranormal or supernatural activity.

2) For the above data, please advise which post code areas the most reports came from. Break this down by month/year, too.

3) How many reports did you receive from Police Officers for each of the terms in Q1.

**Further clarification from applicant 04/08/2025**

Regarding the below request, please note the date should be 1st January 2019 - 31st December 2024 (calendar years). Please ignore previous typo.

We received your request on 04/08/2025 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 question 3 of this request. In order to determine how many reports we received containing the words specified, specifically reported by police would mean we would need to review every occurrence in which these words appear.

For your requested time period, there have been upwards of 1,280 incidents reported containing these words and each would require manually reviewing in order to determine who reported the incident and whether any occupation had been recorded. 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 5 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 106 hours to provide the requested data. 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.

In order to assist in refining your request, a free text search for the specified words could be conducted and data provided broken down for word or phrase, broken down by month/year and Local Policing Team area. However, please note: this would be a contextless free text search of our incident recording system and would only include the words searched, plural or singular versions of the word would not be returned unless also specified within the search parameters. Furthermore, as this type of search is without context, incidents would be returned where the word searched holds a dual meaning or relates to a product or brand sharing that word i.e 'Alien' meaning unknown or unfamiliar, 'Monster' energy drink or 'Ghost' perfume etc.

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](mailto: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:

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