

20 August 2025

FOI Ref 21755

Request - You asked us the following:

Per your suggestion, I have reduced the scope of my request and listed out the consolidated set of questions in priority order. Please let me know if you can assist with the following:

A) How much has the force paid to police informants in the following financial years:

2014/15
2015/16
2016/17
2017/18
2018/19
2019/20
2020/21
2021/22
2022/23
2023/24
2024/25

B) What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for CHIS Handlers in the force in the following financial years?

2014/15
2015/16
2016/17
2017/18
2018/19
2019/20
2020/21
2021/22
2022/23
2023/24
2024/25

C) What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for surveillance officers in the force in the following financial years?

2014/15
2015/16
2016/17
2017/18
2018/19
2019/20
2020/21
2021/22



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2022/23
2023/24
2024/25

D) How many digital and cyber surveillance staff (for example, but not limited to: cybercrime specialists, digital media investigators) did you have on staff in the following financial years:

2014/15
2015/16
2016/17
2017/18
2018/19
2019/20
2020/21
2021/22
2022/23
2023/24
2024/25

E) What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for digital and cyber surveillance staff (for example, but not limited to: cybercrime specialists, digital media investigators) in the force in the following financial years?

2014/15
2015/16
2016/17
2017/18
2018/19
2019/20
2020/21
2021/22
2022/23
2023/24
2024/25

We received your request on 18/08/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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

Staffordshire Police holds/does not hold the requested information.

- A) How much has the force paid to police informants in the following financial years:
2014/15
2015/16
2016/17
2017/18
2018/19
2019/20
2020/21



2021/22

2022/23

2023/24

2024/25 – **Partially disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled 'FOI 21755 Refinement of FOI 21542 Police Staffing and Expenditure Data.xlsx'.**

- B) What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for CHIS Handlers in the force in the following financial years?

2014/15

2015/16

2016/17

2017/18

2018/19

2019/20

2020/21

2021/22

2022/23

2023/24

2024/25 – **Withheld.**

- C) What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for surveillance officers in the force in the following financial years?

2014/15

2015/16

2016/17

2017/18

2018/19

2019/20

2020/21

2021/22

2022/23

2023/24

2024/25 – **Withheld.**

- D) How many digital and cyber surveillance staff (for example, but not limited to: cybercrime specialists, digital media investigators) did you have on staff in the following financial years:

2014/15

2015/16

2016/17

2017/18

2018/19

2019/20

2020/21

2021/22

2022/23

2023/24

2024/25 – **Withheld.**



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- E) What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for digital and cyber surveillance staff (for example, but not limited to: cybercrime specialists, digital media investigators) in the force in the following financial years?
2014/15
2015/16
2016/17
2017/18
2018/19
2019/20
2020/21
2021/22
2022/23
2023/24
2024/25 – Withheld.

The following exemption has been applied:

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

- Section 31 (1) (a) (b) - Law Enforcement.
Information is exempt from disclosure under S31 (1) (a) (b) where the release of Information would, or would likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/ or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

Harm:

To provide the staffing costs of the covert officers working for Staffordshire Police could undermine existing or future investigations, operations and police tactics. It would allow for salaries to be attributed to specific job roles, and would therefore risk the number of covert officers within Staffordshire Police to be revealed into the public domain. This would allow those with ill intent to cause disruption to operational policing and prejudice the prevention and detection of crime. Provision of Officer numbers, or information from which this could be calculated, would reveal the covert capacity of Staffordshire Police; this could then be compared with other forces nationally and a mosaic picture of overall national covert capability could be gathered.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)

To disclose this information would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, it would also lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force and the communications used with operations and during routine policing.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)

Releasing such data would give those individuals with the intent to do so, the intelligence required to disrupt police activity. This knowledge would allow those with ill intent to target their offending more effectively, or move their bases of operation to avoid detection. This would inevitably lead to an increased likelihood of criminal activity being committed or going undetected; therefore posing an elevated level of danger to the public. Any disclosure of information which is likely to undermine the ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

Balance test

When considering whether disclosure is appropriate, we must weigh the strongest reason for disclosure against the strongest reasons for non-disclosure. In this case, whilst the factors favouring disclosure are important in that it would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, we believe when weighed against the risk of disclosure undermining our ability to prevent and detect crime and hindering our ability to protect the public, then non-disclosure takes precedence.

Staffordshire Police can neither confirm nor deny whether any further 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:

- Section 23(5) Information supplied by or concerning certain Security Bodies.

Section 23 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest. Confirming or denying the existence of whether any information is held would contravene the constrictions laid out within Section 23 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in that this stipulates a generic bar on disclosure of any information applied by, or concerning, certain Security Bodies.

- Section 24(2) National Security.

Section 24 is a prejudiced based qualified exemption and there is a requirement to evidence the prejudice (harm) in disclosure and consider the public interest to ensure neither confirming or denying that information is held is appropriate.

- Section 30(3) Criminal Investigations

Section 30 is a class based qualified exemption and there is a requirement to consider the public interest to ensure neither confirming or denying information is held is appropriate.

Harm

Disclosure of informants data could impact on the recruitment and retention of Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) in general, due to the perception of (rather than the actual) risk of identification. The disclosure of the requested information would damage national security through discouraging current national security CHIS from cooperating with the police service in other geographical areas, or preventing the recruitment of national security CHIS in the future – regardless of whether the area in question actually currently runs CHIS reporting on serious crime, terrorist or other threats.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirming or denying that any other information is held - Section 24

Confirmation or denial that any other information exists relevant to the request would lead to a better informed public and the public are entitled to know how public funds are spent. The information simply relates to national security and disclosure would not actually harm it.

Factors against confirming or denying that any other information is held - Section 24

Other organisations outside the police service are also widely engaged in rewarding informants in a number of ways, and therefore by confirming or denying that any other information exists relevant to the request would harm the close relationship that exists with such organisations, where trust and confidence in this specific area has been built up in the exchange of information and financial assistance during the Criminal Justice process.

To confirm or deny whether Staffordshire Police hold any additional information would allow inferences to be made about the nature and extent of national security related activities which may or may not take place in a given area. This could enable terrorist groups to take steps to avoid detection, and as such, confirmation or denial would be damaging to national security.

By confirming or denying any policing arrangements of this nature would render national security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infra-structure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public.

Factors favouring confirming or denying that any other information is held - Section 30

The confirmation or denial that information is held would provide a greater insight into policing and how resources are allocated to investigate crimes. The confirmation or denial that any other information is or is not held would identify how often Staffordshire Police relies on CHIS within this type of investigation.

Factors against confirming or denying that any other information is held - Section 30

To confirm or deny that any other information relevant to this request is held would provide details of any previous or on-going investigations. Informant's information assists police investigations and provides vital intelligence. To confirm that Staffordshire Police have used informants with previous investigations and criminal convictions in specific investigations would provide sensitive information that would undermine policing and investigations. Investigations, although complete, may have included information from an informant of the type described and serve to undermine any investigations that have taken place based on the original investigation.

Balance Test.

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The security and maintenance of investigations are of paramount importance and the Police service will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine National Security and investigations. Whilst 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 from criminals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and 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 exceptional circumstances.

It is therefore our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for confirming or not that information is held, is not made out.

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.



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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