

3 December 2025

FOI Ref 22114

Request - You asked us the following:

This request concerns outstanding arrest warrants issued due to failure to appear in court, breach of bail, pre-trial absconding, or post-conviction absconding.

To minimise cost/time burden and avoid broad searches, all questions request existing, routinely held datasets or policy documents only. Please provide the following:

A. Current Outstanding Warrants (as of your latest available month) The total number of individuals with outstanding arrest warrants. A breakdown of these warrants by:

a. Offence category (e.g., murder, rape/sexual assault, child sexual offences, GBH, fraud, domestic abuse, drugs offences)

b. Warrant type (failure to appear / breach of bail / pre-trial / post-conviction)

c. Year of issue (e.g., pre-2000, 2000-2009, 2010-2019, 2020-present) The year of the oldest currently outstanding warrant and the offence category associated with it (no personal identifiers required).

B. Trends (Existing, Recorded Data Only) For each of the past five calendar years (2019-2023), please provide:

a. Number of warrants issued

b. Number of warrants executed (If exact annual figures are not held, please supply the closest equivalent routinely held statistic.)

C. Policies, Risk Assessments & Procedures Does your force have a formal policy or SOP for reviewing, prioritising or executing outstanding warrants?

If yes, please provide the document or the relevant excerpt. What risk assessment criteria are used to determine warrant priority? (e.g., offence severity, threat to life, repeat offending, safeguarding concerns) Does your force maintain a dedicated team/unit for locating individuals with outstanding warrants? If yes, please state its name and staffing level (if recorded).

D. Use of Databases and Inter-Agency Cooperation Are all outstanding warrants routinely entered onto the Police National Computer (PNC)? Does your force use external databases (e.g., NHS, DVLA, credit reference agencies, Passport Office, benefits databases) for warrant tracing where legally permitted?

Please summarise any policies or agreements concerning information-sharing with other UK forces, NCA, or Interpol, where relevant.

E. Victim Communication and Safeguarding Does your force have a policy for notifying victims when a suspect or convicted offender subject to a warrant remains unlocated? How many individuals with outstanding warrants (current total) are convicted but not yet sentenced? Format and Clarifications I am not requesting names, DOBs or any personal identifiers.

If parts of the request exceed the cost limit under s.12, please process the remainder and advise how I may refine the scope. Please provide data in spreadsheet or table format if available.

We received your request on 14/11/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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

Staffordshire Police (SP) holds some of the requested information.

- Current Outstanding Warrants (as of your latest available month)

The total number of individuals with outstanding arrest warrants. – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22114 Outstanding Arrest Warrants Data'.**

A breakdown of these warrants by:

- a. Offence category (e.g., murder, rape/sexual assault, child sexual offences, GBH, fraud, domestic abuse, drugs offences) – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22114 Outstanding Arrest Warrants Data'.**
- b. Warrant type (failure to appear / breach of bail / pre-trial / post-conviction) – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22114 Outstanding Arrest Warrants Data'.**
- c. Year of issue (e.g., pre-2000, 2000-2009, 2010-2019, 2020-present) – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22114 Outstanding Arrest Warrants Data'.**

The year of the oldest currently outstanding warrant and the offence category associated with it (no personal identifiers required). – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22114 Outstanding Arrest Warrants Data'.**

- B. Trends (Existing, Recorded Data Only)

For each of the past five calendar years (2019-2023), please provide: – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22114 Outstanding Arrest Warrants Data'.**

Please note that the FOI Act 2000 only extends to requests for recorded information. It does not require public authorities to create information to answer questions generally; only if the information is already held in recorded form. The Act does not extend to requests for information about policies or their implementation, or the merits or demerits of any proposal or action - unless, of course, the answer to any such request is already held in recorded form.

- a. Number of warrants issued – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22114 Outstanding Arrest Warrants Data'.**

Please note, we do not hold an executed date. Therefore, the data supplied relates to an 'issue date'.

- b. Number of warrants executed (If exact annual figures are not held, please supply the closest equivalent routinely held statistic.) – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22114 Outstanding Arrest Warrants Data'.**

Please be advised on the 20th May 2020, Staffordshire Police implemented a new case management system. This system brought data from a number of legacy systems into one to provide a single nominal record, including the custody system. Therefore, no reliable data is held prior to 20th May 2020.

- C. Policies, Risk Assessments & Procedures
Does your force have a formal policy or SOP for reviewing, prioritising or executing outstanding warrants? – **Disclosed, yes.**

If yes, please provide the document or the relevant excerpt. – **Disclosed, if a warrant remains unexecuted after one month, SP will carry out further checks to identify any other addresses and will task the relevant Local Police Team (LPT) to undertake a review and to ensure any actions taken are recorded on the NICHE Occurrence Enquiry Log.**

If following three months the warrant remains unexecuted, SP will task the LPT commander for a further review. After six months the task will be escalated to at least Chief Inspector level, requesting a review is undertaken.

What risk assessment criteria are used to determine warrant priority? (e.g., offence severity, threat to life, repeat offending, safeguarding concerns) – **Disclosed, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Matrix.**

Does your force maintain a dedicated team/unit for locating individuals with outstanding warrants? If yes, please state its name and staffing level (if recorded). – **Disclosed, no.**

- D. Use of Databases and Inter-Agency Cooperation
Are all outstanding warrants routinely entered onto the Police National Computer (PNC)? – **Disclosed, yes.**

Does your force use external databases (e.g., NHS, DVLA, credit reference agencies, Passport Office, benefits databases) for warrant tracing where legally permitted? – **Withheld, section 31.**

Please summarise any policies or agreements concerning information-sharing with other UK forces, NCA, or Interpol, where relevant. - **No information held.**

- E. Victim Communication and Safeguarding
Does your force have a policy for notifying victims when a suspect or convicted offender subject to a warrant remains unlocated? - **No information held.**

How many individuals with outstanding warrants (current total) are convicted but not yet sentenced? - **No information held, please see advice and assistance section.**

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 external databases could undermine existing or future investigations, operations and police tactics. It would allow those with ill intent to cause disruption to operational policing and prejudice the prevention and detection of crime. Knowing external database and associated information for specific areas would allow individuals to speak on the policing network with a level of validity that could lead to major disruption to the force communications network.

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 which would inevitably lead to an increased likelihood of criminal activity and an increased 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.

Please note that this data has been provided to the best of the ability of SP, subject to the limitation of current recording protocols and systems/software. Additional warrants may have been recorded during these timescales but are awaiting finalisation and input onto these systems and would not be present within this dataset.

Every effort is made to ensure that the data presented is accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that this has been extracted from multiple sources, developed for specific policing purposes, for which data extraction methods have not been specifically designed to directly correlate with the terminology of this request. Therefore, the data presented is subject to the inaccuracies and idiosyncrasies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

Consequently, care should be taken in the interpretation and presentation of this data, to not misrepresent the whole or any part of the data disclosed.

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.

Staffordshire Police do not hold conviction data. We would advise that you approach the Government HM Courts & Tribunals service website.

Please find below links to previously disclosed HMCTS data and details upon how to submit a further Freedom of Information request to the Government HM Courts and Tribunals Service for this information.

Make an FOI request - [how to make a request](#).

Check [our previous releases](#) to see if we've already answered your question - [our previous releases](#)

Make a new request by using the details below.

FOI requests

Disclosure Team

Postal Point 10.38, Floor 10

102 Petty France

London

SW1H 9AJ

United Kingdom

Email

data.access@justice.gov.uk

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the SP 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 SP, 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:

IAT@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Information Access Team
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 Information Access Team within two months of the SP 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 a supervisor who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Information Access Team 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 twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to forty working days.

The independent supervisor 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, considering the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the independent supervisor will reply to the appellant with the result of the review. If the appellant 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 link:
<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information
Information Access Team