

10 December 2025

FOI Ref 22192

Request - You asked us the following:

Can you for each of the last 10 years details the number of reports by ward or ministerial constituency the number of reports of children: Wrongfully Retained, or subject to Parental Abduction (If you cannot understand these terms then any legal authority could clarify what it means).

Do you consider "Wrongful Retention" of a child or "Parental Child Abduction" to be a Civil or Criminal offence?

How many, if any, officers are specifically trained to deal with such cases?

We received your request on 01/12/2025 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 the requested information.

- Can you for each of the last 10 years details the number of reports by ward or ministerial constituency the number of reports of children: Wrongfully Retained, or subject to Parental Abduction (If you cannot understand these terms then any legal authority could clarify what it means). – **Disclosed,**
2015* – Nil
2016 – 3
2017 – 2
2018 – 1
2019 – 3
2020 – 6
2021 – 2
2022 – 4
2023 – 2
2024 – 3
2025 – 2**

***From 2nd December 2015.**

****Up to 1st December 2025.**

- Do you consider "Wrongful Retention" of a child or "Parental Child Abduction" to be a Civil or Criminal offence? – **Disclosed, Police are governed by the points to prove in the Child Abduction Act 1984. Each individual circumstance will be reviewed as to whether it meets the criminal threshold for this legislation.**

- How many, if any, officers are specifically trained to deal with such cases? – **Disclosed, 62 Detective Constables.**

Please be advised that we have carried out a search for the offence of 'Abduction of child by parent' in the time period requested.

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 offences 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.

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.



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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