

4 December 2025

FOI Ref 22199

Request - You asked us the following:

To assist in resolving this complaint, please provide the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (if applicable) or as part of your response:

1. The date when Police first became aware of potential issues with the misleading wording on the DOB field, including any internal reviews, audits, or prior complaints on this topic.
2. The total number of submissions to the online complaint form where DOB was provided, aggregated by year (to protect privacy), since the form's launch.
3. The date when the current version of the online complaint form (including the DOB field and its stated rationale) was first made available to the public.

Staffordshire Police (SP) received your request on 02/12/2025 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 SP can readily retrieve information from systems to answer question 2 of this request. To determine the total number of SOH complaint forms submitted where a date of birth was provided, SP would need to review every complaint record since the form was introduced. The exact launch date of the SOH complaint form is unknown; SP know it was in use by 2020, but SP are not able to locate any record of its precise start date. Each complaint record would need to be checked to confirm whether a SOH form was submitted and how many forms were associated with that complaint, as some complainants submit multiple forms relating to the same matter. Each form would then need to be reviewed to identify whether a date of birth was provided. For the last 3 years alone there has been over 5,340 complaints which would need to be reviewed.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 1 minute to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 89 hours. 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, data could be provided for Question 1. Likewise, in relation to Question 3, the SOH Form is a national form owned by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC). Therefore, you may wish to contact the NPCC who may hold this information, they have a website; [FOI and Subject Access Request](#) and email address; npcc.foi.request@npfdu.police.uk

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:

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 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 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 20 working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 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



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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 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