

6 February 2025

FOI Ref 17603

Request - You asked us the following:

Please can I obtain the following information:

1. The number of reports from the past five years of suspected modern slavery within the waste sector. Please can you provide a breakdown of the number of reports per year.
2. The number of times the Environment Agency reported suspected modern slavery to the police force over the past five years. Please can you provide a breakdown of the number of reports per year.
2. Details of what these reports said. Please can this include the name of the site that was reported and details of the concerns raised.
3. Information on whether these reports were investigated by the police force. Please can you provide any relevant documentation relating to these investigations.
4. Details of what the outcome of the investigation was.
5. The number of confirmed incidents of modern slavery within the waste sector from the past five years. Please can you provide a breakdown of the number of incidents per year.
5. The number of confirmed incidents of modern slavery within the waste sector that your police force referred to the National Crime Agency and/or partners in the Joint Waste Crime Unit (JWCU) in the last five years. Please state the number referred to the NCA, and the number referred to the JWCU separately.
6. Correspondence (including letters, emails, minutes of meetings and any relevant attachments) between the Environment Agency and the police force over the past two years relating to modern slavery.

For background, this FOI has been sent to all police forces in the UK.

Refinement received 24/12/2024:

I would like to refine my initial request sent on 23 December. Please can update my request to obtain the following information:

1. The number of records of contact, reported incidents, and recorded crimes from the past five years (1 January 2019 - 24 December 2024) of suspected modern slavery within the waste sector. Please can you provide a breakdown of the number of reports per year.
2. Details of what the outcome of any completed investigation was - e.g were any arrests made.

3. The number of times the Environment Agency reported suspected modern slavery to the police force over the past five years (1 January 2019 - 24 December 2024). Please can you provide a breakdown of the number of reports per year.

4. Details of what these reports said. Please can this include the name of the site that was reported and details of the concerns raised.

5. The number of incidents or recorded crimes of modern slavery within the waste sector that your police force referred to the National Crime Agency and/or partners in the Joint Waste Crime Unit (JWCU) in the last five years (1 January 2019 - 24 December 2024). Please state the number referred to the NCA, and the number referred to the JWCU separately

6. Correspondence (including letters, emails, minutes of meetings and any relevant attachments) between the Environment Agency and constables, sergeants, and inspectors within the police force over the past year (1 January 2024 - 24 December 2024) relating to modern slavery within the waste sector.

We received your request on 24/12/2024 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 this request. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 1,200 occurrences/incidents that may be relevant to the request. In order to determine whether the occurrence/incident involved modern slavery within the waste sector, the record for each offence would require manual review. 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 100 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the Freedom of Information 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.

Unfortunately, we cannot suggest a way in which your request could be simplified or pared down in order to bring it within the confines of the time and cost threshold.

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.

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:



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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