

14 February 2025

FOI Ref 17769

Request - You asked us the following:

I would like to submit a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) regarding reports of drink spiking. Please provide the relevant information for the period between 1 January 2022 until this request is processed.

Please could you provide the following:

1. For each report concerning drink spiking, please could you provide the following:

- a) The date the drink spiking report was filed
- b) The specific location (for example: address of the establishment)
- c) The age of the person who filed the drink spiking report (if you are unable to provide the exact age, please could you provide me with age groups. For example: 18-24, 25-49, 50-64, 65+)
- d) Gender of the victim who filed the report
- e) Whether the drink spiking report led to an investigation and/or a charge

We received your request on 04/02/2025 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 we can readily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request as there is no specific offence for 'spiking'. This type of offence would likely be recorded as, 'administering poison', 'administering a substance with intent' or 'administering poison so as to endanger life'. For the time period requested, there have been 373 occurrences, in order to ascertain whether these offences involved 'drink spiking' the record for each offence would require a manual review. To extract this data

would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record. Additionally the log for each offence would need to be manually checked to establish the exact location of the offence as the offence could have been reported elsewhere and not at the scene of the actual crime.

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 31 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.

To assist in refining your request, data can be provided from 1st January 2022 to the date this request was received including the offence date, victim age, victim gender, location and charges for the following offences:

088/05 – Administering a substance with intent
008/02 – Administering poison with intent to injure or annoy
005/10 – Administering poison so as to endanger life

Please be advised however, that not all of these recorded crimes would necessarily be related to 'drink spiking' specifically and the location may not relate to where the offence actually took place.

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:

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