

25 February 2025

FOI Ref 17824

Request - You asked us the following:

The Centre for Justice Innovation is a widely respected not-for-profit charity, providing expertise to Government departments, Police, and organisations within the justice system. We work towards a fairer justice system for all.

Our current focus is on child-centred policing. A specific area of focus has been identified in the practice of Child Protection (72hrs) - Sec 46 of the Children's Act 1989, 'where a Police Officer has reasonable grounds to believe a child is likely to suffer significant harm, they may remove the child to suitable accommodation'...

Our request is to understand the impact on Policing and social care, and analyse the length of time a child remains in Police protection until suitable accommodation is found.

Under the Freedom of Information Law (FOI) we respectfully request the information specified below.

- 1) From 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024 - How many instances have there been of a child being taken into Police Protection in your force?
- 2) For each instance, please provide the length of time in hours that the child remained in Police Protection.
- 3) We are also keen to understand if any children have been subject to multiple instances of Police Protection over the stated period. As such, from the 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024 how many individual children have been subject to Police Protection? For each child, please tell us the number of times they were subject to police protection in the given period
- 4) What are the current arrangements, within your force, to appropriately accommodate a child under Police Protection? For example, where do children sleep or eat when at the Police station awaiting suitable accommodation.

The purpose of this request is to highlight good practice, as well as better understand the impact on the Police and social care of caring for these vulnerable children within the confines of a Police Station, until suitable accommodation is found.

For any further information about this request and its purpose, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Thank you for your valued time.

We received your request on 12/02/2025 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 question 2 of this request. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 80 children subject to Police Protection. In order to ascertain the length of time in that the child remained in Police Protection would require manual review. To extract this data would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record. Furthermore, this data may not be recorded therefore further inquiries would be required. From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 30 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 40 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 questions 1 and 3. Furthermore, we do not have any recorded information in relation to question 4.

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:



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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