

6 January 2025

FOI Ref 17615

Request - You asked us the following:

1. How, if at all, has the process for recording stolen dogs (under the Theft Act) to abducted dogs (under the Pet Abduction Act) changed in 2024?
2. What were the total number of dog theft crimes in 2024 (monthly breakdown if possible)?
3. What was the outcome (charge/summons, community resolution, active investigation, evidential difficulties, no suspect identified) for each dog theft crime in 2024?
4. How many dogs were listed with each dog theft crime in 2024?
5. If this question doesn't take us beyond the time required for free FOI feedback, can details about stolen dog breed, gender, age, and location of theft (walk, home, garden, outside shop, from car etc) also be provided for 2024 please?
6. If this question doesn't take us beyond the time required for free FOI feedback, can postcode of recorded crime and CRN be included?

We received your request on 02/01/2025 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 easily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request. The Pet Abduction Act was brought into legislation on the 24th August 2024, prior to this the theft of a dog would have been recorded under a different theft offence. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 300 occurrences which may have involved the theft of a dog. In order to ascertain whether the theft involved a dog, 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 10-15 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to between 50 and 75 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.

If your request was refined to the time period 24/08/2024 – 31/12/2024, Staffordshire Police would be able to provide information for Pet Abduction Act offences only for questions 2-6, however, further exemptions may apply.

Please note that for question 1, the Freedom of Information Act only extends to requests for recorded information. It does not require public authorities to create information to answer questions generally; only if the information is already held in recorded form.

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.



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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