

31 January 2025

FOI Ref 17679

Request - You asked us the following:

I would like to request for an updated fleet listing [and callsigns if possible]. For the following:

Central Firearms Unit

Dog Unit

Traffic Unit

Criminal Investigation Department

Public Order Unit

We received your request on 16/01/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Staffordshire Police's response to your enquiry is as follows:

Staffordshire Police holds some of the requested information.

- I would like to request for an updated fleet listing [and callsigns if possible]. For the following: -
Disclosed.
- Central Firearms Unit – 7
- Dog Unit – 13
- Traffic Unit – 16
- Criminal Investigation Department – 30
- Public Order Unit – **Staffordshire Police do not have a Public Order Unit however we do have 1 fleet vehicle for protest removal.**

Please note that all details of callsigns, along with the number of covert and armed response vehicles have been excluded, please see the below exemption.

Please note that this data has been provided to the best of our ability, subject to the limitation of current recording protocols and systems/software.

Every effort is made to ensure that the data presented is accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that this has been extracted from multiple sources, developed for specific policing purposes, for which data extraction methods have not been specifically designed to directly correlate with the terminology of this request. Therefore, the data presented is subject to the inaccuracies and idiosyncrasies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

As a consequence, care should be taken in the interpretation and presentation of this data, so as to not misrepresent the whole or any part of the data disclosed.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included.

The following exemption has been applied:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this particular request.

- Section 31 (1) (a) (b) - Law Enforcement.

Information is exempt from disclosure under S31 (1) (a) (b) where the release of Information would, or would likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/ or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

Harm

Any information disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act is not just released to the individual applicant but to the world at large.

Staffordshire Police have a duty to prevent crime, apprehend and prosecute offenders whilst carrying out the administration of justice. Disclosure of the number of unmarked vehicles used for covert purposes and armed response vehicles (ARVs) could pose a significant risk to present and future law enforcement capability, potentially placing both members of the public and the occupants of the vehicles at risk. Policing would be undermined as offenders would gain knowledge about these specialist vehicles and therefore could use this knowledge to avoid detection. This would have a detrimental impact of efficient policing service and a failure in providing care to both members of staff and the public at large.

To provide the individual call signs for specific departments could undermine existing or future investigations, operations and police tactics. It would allow those with ill intent to cause disruption to operational policing and prejudice the prevention and detection of crime. Knowing call signs and associated information for specific areas would allow individuals to speak on the policing network with a level of validity that could lead to major disruption to the force communications network. It would also aide criminals in disrupting events involving these areas.

Disclosing this information would lead to policing being undermined as it could be used by those wishing to cause disruption or harm to the communities we serve.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)

To disclose the callsigns and also the number of covert and ARVs used by Staffordshire Police would provide reassurance to the public that a capability exists to respond to/deal with certain types of incidents/crimes where these kinds of specialist vehicles are required.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)

Disclosure of this information would undermine policing and have a negative effect on the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension and prosecution of offenders.

It is widely known that police forces use callsigns, ARVs and unmarked covert vehicles as part of their delivery of effective operational law enforcement, however disclosure of the exact numbers and details of these specialist vehicles and callsigns would reveal tactical resources available to the force and would undermine ongoing investigations. If this request was submitted nationally and the information disclosed, this awareness would provide a geographical picture of the tactical covert vehicle strength of each individual force from a covert perspective.

Balance test

The police service is tasked with protecting the community and solving crime and should not disclose information that would jeopardize this. Disclosure of the requested information would mean that criminal investigations would be less effective and the small increase in public awareness would not be adequate compensation for such an impact. It is therefore decided that this information will not be provided.

Having taken the above into account, I am satisfied that in respect of this request, the public interest lies in non-disclosure of the information requested.

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