

22 January 2025

FOI Ref 17680

Request - You asked us the following:

Please could I request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

With tradespeople across the UK affected by tool theft I am looking to find:

1. The number of tool marking events that your police force has supported in the following calendar years: 2024 and 2023?
2.
 - (a) How many suspected stolen tools has your police force seized and/or catalogued in the following calendar years: 2024 and 2023?
 - (b) How many of these tools has your police force manage to reunite with their owners in the following calendar years: 2024 and 2023
3. How many arrests has your police force made for offences relating tool theft in the following calendar years: 2024 and 2023?

NB:

The reference to "tools" above relates to those commonly used by tradespeople. This includes, but is not limited to, drills and impact drivers, saws, angle grinders, multi-tools, nail guns, generators, disc cutters, garden power tools, and similar equipment.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via email and I will be very happy to clarify what I am asking for and discuss the request further, my details are outlined below.

If it is not possible to provide all the information requested, please provide as much data as possible in the time available, prioritising the most recent year(s).

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:

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 questions 2a and 2b, for the time period requested, there have been in excess of 13,000 property items that may be a suspected stolen tool. In order to determine whether this is the case, the record for each item of property would require manual review. Further checks would be required to establish whether the tool(s) had been returned to the victim of such theft. For question 3, for the time period requested, there have been in excess of 2,000 arrests for theft related offences. In order to determine if the individual was arrested for theft of a tool(s), the custody record for each offence would also require manual review. From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 5 minutes to review each property record, and approximately 3 minutes to review each custody record to answer this request, this would equate to over 1,183 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 note that information is not held relating to question 1.

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



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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