

17 July 2025

FOI Ref 21360

**Request - You asked us the following:**

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 concerning your police service's participation in National Crime Agency (NCA)-led or internally driven and coordinated "Weeks of Action" over the past three years (January 2022 – present).

For each operation your service participated in, please could you provide:

1. The date(s) of the Week of Action.
2. Any associated operation name.
3. The thematic focus of the operation (e.g., county lines, cybercrime, modern slavery, firearms, etc.).
4. A list of the activity conducted by your service during the operation (e.g., warrants executed, increase patrolling, crime prevention action, public awareness).
5. A summary of outcomes achieved by your service, including (where recorded):
  - o Arrests made
  - o Charges filed or prosecutions initiated
  - o Drugs/weapons/assets seized
  - o Victims identified/safeguarded
  - o Any other performance metrics or KPIs recorded
6. Whether any internal reports or summaries were produced following participation (and if so, whether they can be shared, even in redacted form).

If available, I would be grateful if the information could be provided in tabular or spreadsheet format where possible.

We received your request on 16/05/2025 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.

**Staffordshire Police can neither confirm nor deny whether information relevant to this request is held, as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:**

- Section 23(5) Information supplied by or concerning certain Security Bodies

Section 23 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest in this case.

- Section 24(2) National Security
- Section 31(3) Law Enforcement

Sections 24 and 31 are qualified exemptions and as such there is a requirement to articulate the harm and conduct a test of the public interest in confirmation or denial.

Firstly, we are interpreting the focus of this request entirely on operations involving Staffordshire Police which are NCA led, driven and/or coordinated. Our response is based on a request for information about joint law enforcement activity with the NCA.

By neither confirming nor denying that information is held prevents disclosure of whether or not there has been any involvement of a security body in this matter, invoking Section 23(5) of the Act.

Other than where operations are formally avowed, any information identifying the focus of policing activity could be used to the advantage of terrorists, extremist or criminal organisations. Information that undermines the operational integrity of these operational activities (whether information is or is not held in this instance) will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on both national security and law enforcement.

The security of the country is of paramount importance and Staffordshire Police will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine national security. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by a serious and organised crime, including terrorism, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in the highly sensitive areas of which they work.

Modern-day policing is intelligence led, and intelligence changes on a day-by-day basis. Confirming or denying whether any information is held relevant to the request would show where policing interest has or has not occurred in any specific area which would enable those engaged in criminal activity to identify the focus of policing targets. Any information identifying the focus of this activity could be used to the advantage of terrorists or criminal organisations to plan an attack on the more vulnerable parts of the UK. Information that undermines the operational integrity of these activities will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on both national security and law enforcement.

Staffordshire Police works in partnership with other law enforcement agencies in order to combat issues such as terrorism and organised crime. Confirming or denying that information exists relevant to this request would seriously undermine this partnership approach.

### **Public Interest Test**

#### **Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held for Section 24**

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and to disclose the requested information would allow the public to see where money is being spent and know that forces are doing as much as possible to combat serious and organised crime.

#### **Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held for Section 24**

Confirmation of any policing arrangements of this nature would render security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public. To counter this, a full review of security measures would be needed and additional costs would be incurred.

### **Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held for Section 31**

To disclose the requested data would allow the public to understand that the police are robust in preventing and investigating serious and organised criminal activity. This would enable the public to have a better understanding of efficiency of the force in carrying out its law enforcement role and demonstrate our commitment to openness and transparency.

### **Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held for Section 31**

There is an inherently strong public interest in public authorities carrying out operations and investigations to prevent and detect crime. To confirm or deny that the requested information is held could compromise law enforcement tactics in the area of organised criminality, which would hinder the UK Police service's ability to prevent and detect criminality in this area. By confirming Staffordshire Polices involvement in an operation, or alternatively stating that they had no involvement in an operation, would give vital information to criminals regarding areas of more or less policing activity. Criminals could take steps to avoid detection if they are aware of force areas that do not take part in such operations. The ability of the UK police service to effectively investigate organised crime would be severely compromised.

Where current or future law enforcement capabilities of the force may be compromised by the release of information, it is unlikely to be in the interest of the public.

### **Balance Test**

After weighing up the competing interests I have determined that the Public Interest favours the application of the neither confirm nor deny stance in respect of your request. I consider that the benefit that would result from issuing a confirmation or denial does not outweigh the considerations favouring the neither confirm nor deny response.

Any release under FOI is a disclosure to the world, not just to the individual making the request. Police forces work in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies and on a daily basis information is freely shared in line with information sharing protocols. Modern day policing is intelligence led and this is particularly pertinent with regard to law enforcement.

Having considered the arguments for and against, it is my opinion that the public interest test favours maintaining the exclusion of the duty to confirm or deny whether the information exists. Staffordshire Police will not disclose information that could interfere with investigations or compromise the future law enforcement role of the force.

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.



STAFFORDSHIRE  
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## **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](mailto: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