

10 June 2025

FOI Ref 21385

Request - You asked us the following:

Please could you provide the following information and where possible, please can responses be split by gender (i.e. numbers of boys and girls).

In the past 12 months:

- How many boys have been reported missing from home?
- Of these missing from home cases, how many were missing for 3 days or longer?
- How many boys are believed to be victims of criminal exploitation?
- How many adults under the age of 25 are believed to be victims of criminal exploitation?
- How many boys are believed to be involved in gangs?
- How many adults under the age of 25 are believed to be involved in gangs?
- How many boys have been arrested for knife offences?
- How many adults under the age of 25 have been arrested for knife offences?
- How many boys have been arrested for possession of crack cocaine?
- How many boys have been arrested for possession of heroin?
- How many adults under the age of 25 have been arrested for possession of crack cocaine?
- How many adults under the age of 25 have been arrested for possession of heroin?

Clarification received 04/06/2025:

To clarify, for questions referring to adults a breakdown by gender would be great. However, if providing this would exceed the FOI Section 12 limit, then data for males only would be fine.

For those questions refer to “boys”, only data for males is required.

We received your request on 22/05/2025 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.

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’.



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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 the time period requested, there have been in excess of 400 occurrences of missing boys, and in order to determine whether the boys were missing from home for 3 days or longer, the record for each missing person would require manual review. In relation to the questions about gangs, all intelligence logs held would need to be manually reviewed in order to determine whether any such gangs included boys or adults under the age of 25. Furthermore, in order to determine how many adults were victims of exploitation for the time period requested, each occurrence with a victim aged under 25 would need to be manually reviewed. There are approximately 27,000 occurrences that would need to be manually reviewed in this instance.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 30 minutes to review each missing person record, and 3 minutes to review each occurrence log to establish whether a victim was subject to criminal exploitation and under 25 years old. This would equate to over 1,550 hours. Further time would need to be taken in order to review all intelligence logs. 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 amended, Staffordshire Police would be able to provide the following information between 23/05/2024 and 22/05/2025:

How many boys have been reported missing from home?

How many boys are believed to be victims of criminal exploitation?

How many boys have been arrested for knife offences?

How many adults under the age of 25 have been arrested for knife offences?

How many boys have been arrested for possession of crack cocaine?

How many boys have been arrested for possession of heroin?

How many adults under the age of 25 have been arrested for possession of crack cocaine?

How many adults under the age of 25 have been arrested for possession of heroin?

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:



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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