

26 June 2025

FOI Ref 21409

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

I would like to request a list of all unsolved murder and suspicious death cases recorded in the Stoke-on-Trent area from 1970 to the present day.

Specifically, I would appreciate the following details for each case, where available:

Case reference number (if applicable)  
Victim name (or unidentified status)  
Date of death or discovery  
Location (e.g. neighbourhood or postcode area)  
Brief summary or classification of the case (e.g. homicide, suspicious death, missing person later deemed suspicious)  
Current case status (e.g. open, cold, under review)  
Whether any suspects were arrested or charged (without names)

If this request exceeds the time or cost limit, I would be happy to narrow the scope by focusing on a shorter date range (e.g. 1990–present) or by excluding certain case types (e.g. unidentified remains).

We received your request on 29/05/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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

**Staffordshire Police holds the requested information.**

- I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- I would like to request a list of all unsolved murder and suspicious death cases recorded in the Stoke-on-Trent area from 1970 to the present day.
- Specifically, I would appreciate the following details for each case, where available:
  - Case reference number (if applicable) – **Withheld, please see the below exemptions.**
  - Victim name (or unidentified status) – **Partially disclosed, please see the below exemptions.**
  - Date of death or discovery – **Disclosed.**
  - Location (e.g. neighbourhood or postcode area) – **Disclosed.**
  - Brief summary or classification of the case (e.g. homicide, suspicious death, missing person later deemed suspicious) – **Partially disclosed, please see the below exemptions.**
  - Current case status (e.g. open, cold, under review) – **Disclosed.**
  - Whether any suspects were arrested or charged (without names) – **Partially disclosed, please see the below exemptions.**

**Please note that there are 3 cases that are still being investigated and are either under review or cold case review so with regard to these cases we are citing Section 30(1)(a)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Investigations conducted by Public Authorities.**

**These matters are still included within the dataset but they are marked “SECTION 30”.**

**The following exemptions have been applied:**

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

- Section 30(1)(a)(b) – Criminal Investigations

Section 30 is qualified and class based and, as such, we are required to apply the public interest test.

- Section 40(2) Personal Information

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption which means that there is no need to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure; neither is it subject to a public interest test.

To release personal or third-party information held by Staffordshire Police, would breach the data protection principles; namely –

- Data is lawfully and fairly processed.
- Processed in line with an individual's rights.
- Data is secure.

Personal and third-party information cannot be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Disclosure under Freedom of Information is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant.

**Public Interest Test**

**Factors favouring disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)**

Disclosure of the information would improve the public's knowledge and understanding of the investigatory process and, as all police investigations are publicly funded, would show how public funds are being spent.

**Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)**

Disclosure of the requested information would prejudice how investigations are carried out in the future. Staffordshire Police is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Any release of information relating to ongoing investigations could prejudice and undermine those investigations. The prevention and detection of such matters could therefore be hindered and therefore risk interference with evidence, which could have detrimental impact on future investigations. In addition, the right to a fair trial could be undermined.

**Balance test**

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant. Having considered the public interest factors we are required to determine

whether on balance the factors favouring disclosure outweigh those which are against disclosure. It is our view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour non-disclosure.

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](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



STAFFORDSHIRE  
**POLICE**

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