

9 May 2025

FOI Ref 18017

Request - You asked us the following:

1. The number of instances in which holders of a firearm or shotgun certificate have refused to surrender their firearm(s) and/or shotgun(s) when voluntarily requested to do so by your constabulary.
2. In relation to (1), the subsequent action taken by your constabulary in each instance.
3. The number of instances in which your constabulary has had to force entry (either with a warrant or under existing statutory powers) into the dwelling of a firearm or shotgun holder.
4. The number of instances in which your constabulary has had to force entry (either with a warrant or under existing statutory powers) to a dwelling where it was suspected (reasonably or otherwise) that illegal firearms were present.

We would appreciate data covering the longest period for which records are available. If the information is not available in the format requested, we would be grateful if you could provide any relevant alternative data.

Clarification received 03/04/2025:

For 3, firearms licensing offences; for 4, any offences related to illegal firearms (or the suspicion of such being at the property at which the search was executed).

We received your request on 25/03/2025 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. To obtain the information you require it would be necessary for us to undertake a manual review of the certification documentation of all individuals in our systems that are currently (or were historically) certified to carry firearms to ascertain whether any have – at any stage – refused to surrender them for whatever reason and why. In addition, there have been in excess of 44,000 incidents which may have involved Staffordshire Police having to force entry into a dwelling in relation to a firearms offence. In order to determine this, the record for each offence would require manual review. Information regarding whether

entry has had to be been forced to a given premises (and for what specific reason) would only be held – if recorded – within the narrative of the occurrence log relevant to a given police deployment. To extract this data would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 5 minutes to review each incident record to answer this request, this would equate to over 3,666 hours. Further time would be required in order to conduct a manual review of the certification documentation of individuals certified to carry firearms. 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 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

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.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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