

21 May 2025

FOI Ref 21220

Request - You asked us the following:

I wish to make a freedom of information request and would be grateful if you could supply the following information within twenty working days:

- a) The number of cases with a 'CSE flag' applied for the calendar years 2020 - 2024.
- b) A breakdown by ethnicity of perpetrators for those cases applied a CSE flag.
- c) The number of "live" group-based CSE investigations led by your force for the years 2020 - 2024, including those progressing through the criminal justice system. "Group based", in this context, means those crimes involving two or more offenders. If possible, broken down by the number of individuals in each "group"/gang.
- d) The number of safeguarding referrals received 2020 - 2024 for children because of sexual exploitation concerns.
- e) The number of Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWN) issued to adults 2014 - 2025, and a breakdown by ethnicity of those presented with one.

Complying with this FOI request should not exceed the maximum statutory cost. However, should you for whatever reason deem that it could reach this cost threshold, then please proceed with parts a - d at a minimum.

We received your request on 14/04/2025 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 the time period requested, there have been in excess of 2,400 occurrences with a CSE flag applied, and in order to determine whether they were group based offences and still currently being progressed through the criminal justice system, the record for each offence would require manual review. Furthermore, there have been approximately 33,000 safeguarding referrals received in the time frame requested. In

order to determine whether the reason for these referrals was child sexual exploitation, each referral would need to be manually reviewed.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 5 minutes to review each offence with a CSE flag and approximately 3 minutes to review each safeguarding referral to answer this request, this would equate to over 1,850 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.

If your request was refined, Staffordshire Police would be able to provide the following:

- a) The number of cases with a 'CSE flag' applied for the calendar years 2020 - 2024.
- b) A breakdown by ethnicity of perpetrators for those cases applied a CSE flag.

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.

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



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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