

22 May 2025

FOI Ref 21332

Request - You asked us the following:

I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, in relation to your force's Digital Forensics Unit.

1. Device Submissions and Backlog

- a. The number of devices currently awaiting examination.
- b. As of the present day, the number of devices that have been awaiting examination for under 30 days, 30 days - 3 months, 3 – 6 months, 6 months – 1 year and 2 – 3 years, 3 – 4 years, 4 years +.
- c. Your force's target turnaround time for completing forensic investigations.

2. Staffing and Capacity

- a. The number of full-time equivalent staff currently working in the DFU, broken down by role if possible.
- b. Any vacancies or staffing shortfalls affecting the DFU in the last 12 months.

3. Accreditation and Quality

- a. Whether your DFU is accredited to ISO/IEC 17025, and if so, for which types of digital forensic activity.

4. Efficiency Measures

- a. Whether your DFU uses triage processes or tools to prioritise devices or speed up examination.
- b. Whether your force uses any form of AI or automation to support digital forensic work.
- c. Whether any part of your digital forensic workload is outsourced to external providers, and if so, approximately what percentage.
- d. Please disclose any regional or national forensic units you've collaborated with within the past year.

We received your request on 12/05/2025 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 the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, in relation to your force's Digital Forensics Unit.
- 1. Device Submissions and Backlog
- a. The number of devices currently awaiting examination. – **Disclosed, 1,098.**
- b. As of the present day, the number of devices that have been awaiting examination for under 30 days, 30 days - 3 months, 3 – 6 months, 6 months – 1 year and 2 – 3 years, 3 – 4 years, 4 years +. – **Disclosed, 30 days - 224**



30 days - 3 months - 195

3 – 6 months – 270

6 months – 1 year – 409

2 – 3 years – 0

- c. Your force's target turnaround time for completing forensic investigations. – **Disclosed, Critical – 72 hours
Priority – 4 months
Standard – 8 months**
- 2. Staffing and Capacity
- a. The number of full-time equivalent staff currently working in the DFU, broken down by role if possible. – **Disclosed, please see question 2b below.**
- b. Any vacancies or staffing shortfalls affecting the DFU in the last 12 months.
- **Disclosed,**

	FTE	Vacancies
Digital Forensics Manager	1	
Principle Digital Forensic Officer	1	1
Digital Forensic Coordinator	4	
Digital Forensic Specialist	12	3
Digital Forensic Investigator	20.5	
Digital Forensic Media Investigator	2.5	
Digital Forensic Technician	3	1

- 3. Accreditation and Quality
- a. Whether your DFU is accredited to ISO/IEC 17025, and if so, for which types of digital forensic activity. – **Disclosed, FSA-DIG-100 Digital Devices and Data - ISO/IEC 17025.**
- **Computers and digital storage, capture and preservation of data and analysis of data**
- **Mobile Phones, capture and preservation of data and processing of data**
- 4. Efficiency Measures
- a. Whether your DFU uses triage processes or tools to prioritise devices or speed up examination.
– **Disclosed, we provide a Triage service to support scene warrants and critical requests if feasible.**
- b. Whether your force uses any form of AI or automation to support digital forensic work.
– **Disclosed, no.**
- c. Whether any part of your digital forensic workload is outsourced to external providers, and if so, approximately what percentage. – **Disclosed, yes 20%.**
- d. Please disclose any regional or national forensic units you've collaborated with within the past year. – **Disclosed, Police Digital Services (PDS), Forensic Capability Network.**

Please note that this data has been provided to the best of our ability, subject to the limitation of current recording protocols and systems/software.

Every effort is made to ensure that the data presented is accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that this has been extracted from multiple sources, developed for specific policing purposes, for which data extraction methods have not been specifically designed to directly correlate with the

terminology of this request. Therefore, the data presented is subject to the inaccuracies and idiosyncrasies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

As a consequence, care should be taken in the interpretation and presentation of this data, so as to not misrepresent the whole or any part of the data disclosed.

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 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



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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