

21 May 2025

FOI Ref 21373

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

Hope you are well. I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

- The number of criminal investigations opened by your police force into women on suspicion of illegally ending a pregnancy every year from 2016 to 2024
- Please provide a single figure for each year (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024), taking the date as the year the inquiry was opened
- Please also break down these yearly figures into 'no further action' OR 'charge made' OR 'investigation ongoing'
- Please do not include more than one entry where the same individual has been investigated more than once on suspicion of illegally ending their pregnancy

Please provide the information in the form of a pdf.

We received your request on 20/05/2025 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.**

- The number of criminal investigations opened by your police force into women on suspicion of illegally ending a pregnancy every year from 2016 to 2024 – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 21373 Illegally Ending a Pregnancy Data'**.
- Please provide a single figure for each year (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024), taking the date as the year the inquiry was opened – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 21373 Illegally Ending a Pregnancy Data'**.
- Please also break down these yearly figures into 'no further action' OR 'charge made' OR 'investigation ongoing' **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 21373 Illegally Ending a Pregnancy Data'**.
- Please do not include more than one entry where the same individual has been investigated more than once on suspicion of illegally ending their pregnancy – **Not applicable.**

Please be advised this data has been extracted from our crime/occurrence recording database for the following offences:

- 014/01 - 14 - Administering drugs or using instruments to procure abortion
- 004/03 - 4/3 - Child Destruction - unborn child - Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929



- 015/00 - 15 - Concealment of birth - Offences against the Person Act 1861

**The following exemption has 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 31 (1) (a) (b) - Law Enforcement.

Information is exempt from disclosure under S31 (1) (a) (b) where the release of Information would, or would likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/ or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

**Harm:**

Within the timescale requested there have been a number of offences recorded as having occurred within Staffordshire where another agency has primacy for the investigation. Due to this fact we hold only preliminary information, recorded at the outset of this matter. Full details of the investigations will constitute the investigating agency's data, Staffordshire police will not have oversight of this material. With this in mind the impact disclosure of any information held by ourselves is unknown and therefore we believe release of the requested information would have the propensity to negatively impact upon the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of an offender.

**Public Interest Test**

**Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)**

To disclose this information would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, it would also lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force and show how funds are being spent.

**Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)**

Disclosure of the requested information has a strong likelihood of prejudicing an ongoing investigation and seriously disrupt the actions being taken by an external agency and securing the apprehension or prosecution of an offender or offenders linked to this matter. Furthermore, this could undermine public confidence in reporting such matters in the future, leading to further offences of this kind being committed and placing the wider public at an increased risk of a greater number of such crimes being committed.

Staffordshire Police is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve, and we will not disclose information where doing so would be likely to place further individuals at risk or jeopardize the administration of justice.

**Balance test**

When considering whether disclosure is appropriate, we must weigh the strongest reason for disclosure against the strongest reasons for non-disclosure. In this case, whilst the factors favouring disclosure are important in that it would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, we believe when

weighed against the risk of disclosure undermining our ability to prevent and detect crime and hindering our ability to protect the public, then non-disclosure takes precedence.

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. Additional offences may have been recorded during these timescales but are awaiting finalisation and input onto these systems and would not be present within this dataset.

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](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.



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