

13 November 2025

FOI Ref 21964

Request - You asked us the following:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
Please could you provide the following information for your area:

1. The number of incidents, callouts, or reports involving magnet fishing per year of 2022, 2023, and 2024 as well as 2025 so far.
2. The number of those incidents that involved the discovery of firearms, explosives, grenades, or suspected ordnance.
3. The number of occasions where the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) / bomb squad was called to attend a magnet fishing-related incident.
4. Where recorded, the location or local authority area of each incident.

Please could I have the data in the form of an Excel spreadsheet.

If it exceeds the cost limit to provide full details, please provide summary-level data or any available breakdown of incident counts per year.

If any clarification is required, please don't hesitate to contact me — I'm happy to refine the request to make it easier to fulfil.

We received your request on 14/10/2025 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(2) In order to identify whether or not information is or isn't held would exceed the cost threshold in accordance with Section 12(2) of the Freedom of Information Act as in order to satisfy S1(1)(a) of the Act would exceed the cost threshold.

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There is no method by which we can readily identify whether we hold the relevant information. There is no specific incident flag or type from which we could identify incidents relating to magnet fishing. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 1 million incidents recorded and, without independently viewing each incident, there are no further methods we could employ to determine whether any relate to magnet fishing. Therefore, in order to determine whether Staffordshire police holds any relevant information,

the record for each incident recorded within the timescale indicated would require a manual review. To determine whether any data is held would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 3 minutes to review each record to even determine whether any information is held, this would equate to over 50,000 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.

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:

IAT@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Information Access Team
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 Information Access Team within two months of the Force's response to the original FOI request.

3. Review Procedure



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing. The review will be conducted by a Supervisor who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Information Access Team 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 Supervisor 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 Supervisor will reply to the appellant with the result of the review. If the appellant 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 link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information
Information Access Team