

17 November 2025

FOI Ref 22123

Request - You asked us the following:

Happy to adjust my FOI to this, as suggested

If your request were amended, Staffordshire Police would be able to provide a response to the following:

1. How many staff in your force/contractors are currently assigned to work on digital forensics (examining digital devices seized for evidence as part of investigations).
2. What is the current average time it takes to examine a device (from seizing to completion).
3. What is the current backlog of digital devices which your force needs to examine, with a breakdown of device types.
4. What is the current waiting time for the device which has been waiting to be investigated the longest and what kind of allegation/investigation does this relate to?
5. If a contractor firm is used to carry out this work, could I please ask what it is and how much the firm is paid.
6. If the cost limit has not yet been reached, could I please ask what the answer was to question two for 2024 (please note that data prior to this year is not held).
7. If the cost limit has still not been reached, could I please ask for the answer to question three for 2024 and 2023 (please note that data prior to 2023 is not held).

We received your request on 14/11/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Staffordshire Police's response to your enquiry is as follows:

Staffordshire Police (SP) holds the requested information.

- 1. How many staff in your force/contractors are currently assigned to work on digital forensics (examining digital devices seized for evidence as part of investigations). – **Disclosed, 26.**
- 2. What is the current average time it takes to examine a device (from seizing to completion). – **Disclosed 155 days.**
- 3. What is the current backlog of digital devices which your force needs to examine, with a breakdown of device types. – **Disclosed, 851 (as at 23/10/2025). This includes 731 mobile devices and 120 computers, laptops and periphery items.**
- 4. What is the current waiting time for the device which has been waiting to be investigated the longest and what kind of allegation/investigation does this relate to? – **Disclosed, 534 days – Theft of a Motor Vehicle (as at 23/10/2025).**
- 5. If a contractor firm is used to carry out this work, could I please ask what it is and how much the

firm is paid. – **Partially disclosed, CCL is the provider.**

- 6. If the cost limit has not yet been reached, could I please ask what the answer was to question two for 2024 (please note that data prior to this year is not held). – **Disclosed, 130 days in 2024.**
- 7. If the cost limit has still not been reached, could I please ask for the answer to question three for 2024 and 2023 (please note that data prior to 2023 is not held). – **Disclosed, 621 for 2024 and 340 for 2023.**

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 43(2) Commercial Interests

This is a prejudice based qualified exemption which means there is a requirement to provide evidence of harm and a public interest test needs to be considered.

Harm:

The information relating to the value of the contract with CCL, if released into the public domain, would harm SP's negotiating position with regards to future contracts for services. There are commercially confidential clauses within the CCL contract which is not permitted to be shared to the wider public.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 43(2)

Disclosure of the requested information would allow the public to be aware of how public funds are spent or allocated and thereby would provide transparency and accountability, showing that funds from the public purse are used appropriately and proportionally.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 43(2)

Through disclosure of the requested information, SP would find that its negotiating position would be greatly impaired through the release of details that would not only likely be prejudicial to SP but also to the agencies/companies involved. Releasing this information would be expected to have a detrimental effect on their ability to be competitive in the future and would be exceedingly likely to deter further enterprises submitting offers for tender in the future. This then would impede SP obtaining the most competitive or appropriate services in the future and negatively impact upon the public purse.

Balance test

It is the responsibility of SP, when dealing with commercial businesses, to not only protect their commercial interest but also that of SP. Commercial interests must be protected so that the best possible value for money is obtained through open competition, both for businesses and SP. This would not be achieved if full details were to be made available to the market.

Although the use of public funds must be open and transparent, SP is accountable for the money that it spends and utilises and if to release the information means the force is unable to negotiate future tendering and have the ability to secure value for money due to business relationships having been impaired, then this would not be in the public interest.

Having considered the public interest test factors, we are required to determine whether, on balance, the factors favouring disclosure outweigh those which are against disclosure. It is our view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour withholding the details. Therefore, SP declines to provide the information for the reasons stated above.

Please note that this data has been provided to the best of the ability of SP, 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.

Consequently, care should be taken in the interpretation and presentation of this data, 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 SP 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 SP, 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 SP 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 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 twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to forty 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, considering 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