

10 October 2025

FOI Ref 21870

Request - You asked us the following:

It has been reported that freedom of Information and Ministry of Justice data suggest that in 2023, 35 (out of 43) police forces in England and Wales made over 12,000 arrests for offences under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and Communications Act 2003, equating to over 30 arrests per day.

In respect of your police force, please can you tell me; in 2023, for each monitored thread (including age if you record that):

- 1) How many complaints were recorded?
- 2) How many investigations resulted from those complaints?
- 3) How many non-crime hate incidents were recorded as a consequence of those investigations?
- 4) How many arrests were made in respect of the complaints
- 5) How many arrests resulted in
 - a) No further action?
 - b) Formal caution?
 - c) Charge?

Please provide whatever data you have available and can provide within cost limits. Please do not just say "It would take too long and be too expensive."

The table below might be helpful for recording the data.

Monitored Thread	Complaints	Investigations	NCHIs	Arrests	Disposal
		No Further Action		Caution	Charge
Race					
Religion					
Disability					
Sexual Orientation					
Transgender identity					
Age					

We received your request on 19/09/2025 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 part of request. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 17,740 arrests. In order to identify whether these arrests were made under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or the Communications Act 2003, and to determine any associated hate crime strands and arrest outcomes, we would need to manually review each individual arrest record for your requested time period.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take at least 10 minutes to assess due to the complexity of linking offences, custody data, and outcomes, this would equate to over 2,956 hours. To extract this data would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the FOI 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.

In order to assist in refining your request, data could be provided from our Crime/occurrence recording system where the offence has been recorded as Malicious Communications Act 1988 or Communications Act 2003, broken down by the hate strand and the outcome.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included for your requested time period. However, please note further exemptions may apply.

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:

Information Access Team
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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

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