

5 September 2025

FOI Ref 21605

Request - You asked us the following:

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I would sincerely appreciate your assistance with the following.

Please provide any guidance/orders you have issued as a force to your officers over the policing of protests or displays of support concerning Palestine Action since the group's proscription came into effect.

I request any communications to officers concerning this covering the period between the date the proscription came into effect until the present date.

Please also disclose any communication from external, non-governmental organisations/groups concerning the proscription of Palestine Action from within this same time-frame.

We received your request on 21/07/2025 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.

- Please provide any guidance/orders you have issued as a force to your officers over the policing of protests or displays of support concerning Palestine Action since the group's proscription came into effect.
I request any communications to officers concerning this covering the period between the date the proscription came into effect until the present date.
Please also disclose any communication from external, non-governmental organisations/groups concerning the proscription of Palestine Action from within this same time-frame. – **Partially disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled 'FOI 21605 Palestine Action Protests Data.PDF'.**

The following exemptions have 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 23(1) – Information supplied by, or concerning certain security bodies
Section 23 is an absolute class-based exemption and as such does not require the application of a Public Interest Test.

- Section 24(1)– National Security

Section 24 is a qualified exemption and as such there is a requirement to articulate the harm and conduct a test of the public interest.

- 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:

Disclosure of the information would reveal specific strategies, rationale, intelligence and tactics in relation to the identification and policing of proscribed terrorist groups. This could be used by criminals, those with criminal intent, members of proscribed organisations, and terrorists to undermine and obstruct operational policing, as well as amend their current practices to evade detection. This would consequently be detrimental to the police's ability to ensure the law is enforced, offenders apprehended, public safety is maintained and threats to the security of the UK are identified and prevented.

Furthermore, the disclosure of information from multiple forces would result in patterns of police activity, tactical capabilities and operational planning in respect of terrorist proscription and operational planning in relation to the policing of proscribed groups, being identified. Identification via this mapping effect of what may appear less resourced or actively policed areas risks those areas becoming targets for individuals with criminal intent, to exploit. This undermines policing, increasing the risk of crime and threatens public safety. Given the information in question is directly relevant to counter terrorism strategy and policing of proscribed terrorist groups, this in turn impacts upon the overall security of the UK.

Disclosure of information captured by this request would undermine the effectiveness of current and future police operations and proceedings. It would reveal details of police intelligence and strategy used to counter criminal activity and apprehend offenders.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure - Section 24

The public are entitled to know public money is spent in areas of operational policing. Release of the information would facilitate transparency. It would also encourage public debate about how the police prevent and detect crime and uphold the law in terms of proscription of terrorist groups in order to protect the security interests of the UK.

Factors favouring non-disclosure - Section 24

To disclose information would render security measures less effective by revealing details of individual force capabilities which could be put together to formulate a national picture of operational counter terrorism strategy. Taking into account the current security climate within the United Kingdom, no information that may aid a criminal, terrorist or proscribed organisation should be disclosed. To what extent this information may aid terrorism in the UK is not precisely known, but it is clear that a disclosure of information will have an impact on the force's ability to monitor and police proscribed terrorist groups and terrorists effectively; compromising the security of the UK.

Factors favouring disclosure - Section 31

Disclosure of information would provide the public with better understanding of operational policing, increase public debate and provide information which may allow the public to take steps to better protect themselves. This awareness may also lead to more information being passed to police by the public as they become more alert to suspicious activity.

Factors favouring non-disclosure - Section 31

By disclosing the information, law enforcement tactics would be compromised which would hinder the prevention and detection of crime specific to terrorism. More crime would be committed because members of proscribed terrorist organisations as well as terrorists more widely, would have knowledge of operational capability, tactics, strategy and intelligence which would allow them to operate more effectively as well as avoid detection. This places the public at a significant risk of harm, particularly in areas which may have been perceived to be more vulnerable than others as a result of the mapping effect explained within the harm. Any information which undermines operational law enforcement or places the public at risk is not in the public interest to disclose.

Balance Test

The security of the country is paramount, and the police service will not divulge any information if to do so would place the safety of an individual, the public at large or the national security of the UK at risk. Whilst there is a public interest in transparency of policing and promotion of public debate to improve response, there is a far stronger public interest in safeguarding national security, the integrity of operational policing and keeping the public safe. For these reasons we believe that the balancing test for disclosing the information is not made out in this case.

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:

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 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 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