

10 September 2025

FOI Ref 21744

Request - You asked us the following:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information relating to incidents involving disruptive airline passengers, recorded by your police force over the past 10 years:

1. The total number of recorded incidents involving disruptive airline passengers per year, for the past ten years (i.e., 2015–2024), broken down on a year-by-year basis to account for any variations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Of those incidents, the number in which alcohol was identified or flagged as a contributing factor, again broken down annually.
3. The number of disruptive passenger-related incidents that resulted in arrests, presented year by year.

This request specifically relates to incidents at airports or onboard aircraft within your jurisdiction, or otherwise handled by your force under aviation or public order legislation.

If any part of this request exceeds the cost threshold, please advise on how it can be refined to remain within the limits.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need clarification.

I look forward to your response within the statutory 20 working days.

We received your request on 14/08/2025 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:

For questions 1 and 2, there is no method by which we can readily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 846,000 incidents recorded which may have involved disruptive airline passengers. In order to ascertain whether the incident took place at an airport or airfield, and if the incident involved disruptive airline passengers, or if alcohol was identified as a contributing factor, the record for each incident would require manual review. To extract this data 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 answer this request, this would equate to over 42,300 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.

We cannot provide a response to question 3 because on 20th May 2020 Staffordshire Police implemented a new case management system. This system brought data from a number of legacy systems into one to provide a single nominal record, including the custody system. The old custody system has now been decommissioned and as a result there is no search facility to be able to retrieve the requested data. It would entail searching thousands of records to establish if it fitted the criteria of the request. To achieve this task would exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold stipulated by the Freedom of Information Act.

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 note that there are no major airports within Staffordshire Police's jurisdiction.

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



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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