

30 September 2025

FOI Ref 21776

Request - You asked us the following:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information relating to Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) provision within your force.

Where possible, please provide total counts disaggregated by gender where this information is recorded. I generally expect yes/no responses, but any additional context would be gratefully appreciated.

1. Staffing and Deployment

* The number of officers/staff currently trained in DVI within your force (please indicate gender if recorded).

* The number of DVI-trained officers/staff deployed in the last five years, and the categories of incidents they were deployed to (please group as: terrorism, transport incidents, industrial accidents, and natural disasters) - total numbers only, to preserve anonymity.

* Which department or unit within the force is responsible for DVI planning and deployment.

* The typical length of service an officer/staff member remains active on the DVI roster once trained (e.g., average number of years, or whether there is a set term).

* Whether your force applies any suitability checks or criteria prior to deployment of DVI-trained officers (e.g., health, psychological readiness, or operational availability).

We received your request on 21/08/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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

Staffordshire Police holds some of the requested information.

- Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information relating to Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) provision within your force.
- Where possible, please provide total counts disaggregated by gender where this information is recorded. I generally expect yes/no responses, but any additional context would be gratefully appreciated.
- **1. Staffing and Deployment**
 - * The number of officers/staff currently trained in DVI within your force (please indicate gender if recorded). – **Withheld, please see the below exemption.**
 - * The number of DVI-trained officers/staff deployed in the last five years, and the categories of incidents they were deployed to (please group as: terrorism, transport incidents, industrial accidents, and natural disasters) - total numbers only, to preserve anonymity. – **Partially disclosed, there has been no major incident deployments. There has been 14 Officers deployed in total. These were to 2 Road Traffic Collision Incidents. This data is only held for the previous two years.**



- * Which department or unit within the force is responsible for DVI planning and deployment.
– **Disclosed, Major and Organised Crime Department.**
- * The typical length of service an officer/staff member remains active on the DVI roster once trained (e.g., average number of years, or whether there is a set term). – **No information held, it is dependent on Officer/staff willingness to volunteer for DVI.**
- * Whether your force applies any suitability checks or criteria prior to deployment of DVI-trained officers (e.g., health, psychological readiness, or operational availability). – **Disclosed, yes, suitability checks in conjunction with Occupational Health and national criteria are applied;**
Prior to initial training: Immunisation, physical and psychological
During term [review period 24 months]: Immunisation & psychological
Pre deployment: Immunisation check & psychological
Post deployment: Immunisation check & psychological

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

As a consequence, care should be taken in the interpretation and presentation of this data, so as 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 Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included.

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 part of this particular request.

- 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:

DVI is a specialism held by police forces across the country in numbers sufficient that in the event of a disaster on the largest scale that sufficient DVI trained personnel can respond. However, to release details of the exact number of officers trained in DVI in a force-by-force manner would not only reveal individual force capability, but it would also create a mosaic effect across the country showing areas of capability and, more pertinently, potential vulnerability. It should be remembered that a release of information under FOI is not a private transaction, it is a disclosure to the world. It is known that criminals and those with criminal intent routinely monitor information made publicly available under FOI, consequently, for those

that would seek to commit criminal acts, revealing the areas of capability and vulnerability could then be used to gain an advantage resulting in further criminal activity which places the public at increased risk.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)

Disclosure of this information would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent and would provide better awareness which may in turn reassure the public.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)

Where the current or future law enforcement role of the police may be compromised by the release of information, the effectiveness of the police service will be reduced. Providing the requested information would allow those who seek to commit criminal acts the ability to understand operational capabilities of police forces. This would undermine police resources in their primary function of law enforcement and public protection, ultimately putting the public at risk. Any disclosure of information which would undermine the Police service's ability to serve the public and protect them from harm is not in the public interest to disclose.

Balance test

When considering whether disclosure is appropriate, we must weigh the strongest reason for disclosure against the strongest reasons for non-disclosure. In this case, whilst the factors favouring disclosure are important in that it would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, we believe when weighed against the risk of disclosure undermining our ability to prevent and detect crime and hindering our ability to protect the public, then non-disclosure takes precedence.

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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

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

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