

22 September 2025

FOI Ref 21839

Request - You asked us the following:

I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For each of the calendar years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024, please provide:

1. The total number of roadside drug tests conducted.
2. Of those roadside tests, how many returned a positive result for cannabis.
3. Of those roadside tests, how many returned a positive result for cocaine.
4. The total number of individuals screened at the police station (following arrest/attendance) for drug use.
5. Of those station-based screenings, how many tested positive for each of the following substances:
 - o Ecstasy (MDMA)
 - o Ketamine
 - o LSD
 - o Heroin

If possible, I would appreciate the data being provided in an electronic, tabular format (such as CSV or Excel) to assist with analysis. Please reply via email.

If some of the information is not held, or only held for certain years, please provide what is available and specify any limitations.

We received your request on 10/09/2025 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 this request. Between May 2020 and December 2024, there have been in excess of 64,000 custody records created. In order to determine the number of roadside and custody drug tests and the outcomes of these, each custody record would require manual review. To extract this data would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record. Further extensive searches would also need to be conducted to retrieve data relating to negative tests, if held.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 3-4 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to between 3,200 and 4,266 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.

Furthermore, data relating to arrests or custody records prior to May 2020 cannot be readily retrieved. This is 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.

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 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 Information Access Team within two months of the Force's response to the original FOI request.



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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