

11 September 2025

FOI Ref 21841

**Request - You asked us the following:**

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request the following information for the period 1 January 2023 to the present. Please provide the data in machine-readable format (CSV or Excel) where possible. If any part of the request is refused or exempt, please state the exemption relied upon and provide the public-interest test where applicable.

1. Number of seizures of illicit or counterfeit vapes recorded, by calendar year. Please include:
  - (a) number of seizure incidents
  - (b) total number of vape units seized
  - (c) estimated total retail value
  - (d) number of premises searched during those seizures.
2. For seizures where the retail source type was recorded, please provide the number of incidents attributed to each type of outlet (e.g., convenience stores, vape specialist shops, supermarkets/large stores, market stalls, or other recorded categories).
3. Number of seizures assessed as linked to organised crime groups (or referred to a regional organised crime unit).
4. Number of prosecutions, cautions, or fixed penalty notices related to illicit/counterfeit vapes, with details of offences charged, outcomes, and sentences.
5. Total value of fines or civil penalties issued to retailers for selling illicit/counterfeit vapes (and illegal tobacco seized alongside vapes), by year.
6. Number of premises subject to closure orders, business suspensions, or similar enforcement actions for selling illicit/counterfeit vapes, including dates of orders.
7. Total recorded costs for handling, storing, and disposing of seized vapes, and the disposal methods used.
8. Number of compliance or underage sales checks involving vapes (run by or with your force), and how many resulted in penalties or referrals to Trading Standards.
9. Number of incidents recorded where counterfeit or illicit vapes were linked to a public-safety incident (e.g. fire, hospitalisation, poisoning).

If it would assist your team, I am happy to accept the information in parts. I confirm that this request is made for journalistic and public-interest purposes.

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'.



STAFFORDSHIRE  
**POLICE**

**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. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 32,060 items seized. In order to ascertain whether the seized item pertained to a vape and your questions posed would require manual review of each item.

From dip sampling, it has been established that to review each seized item would take approximately 10 minutes per record. This would equate to in excess of 5,343 hours to provide the information requested. 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 where the property seized has been recorded as a 'vape'. However, please note this would only be for items that have been recorded as a 'vape' and a further breakdown of any further data would trigger the section 12 exemption.

Staffordshire Police do not hold conviction data. We would advise that you approach the Government HM Courts & Tribunals service website.

Please find below links to previously disclosed HMCTS data and details upon how to submit a further Freedom of Information request to the Government HM Courts and Tribunals Service for this information. Make an FOI request - [how to make a request](#).

Check [our previous releases](#) to see if we've already answered your question - [our previous releases](#)

Make a new request by using the details below.

FOI requests

Disclosure Team

Postal Point 10.38, Floor 10

102 Petty France

London

SW1H 9AJ

United Kingdom

Email

[data.access@justice.gov.uk](mailto:data.access@justice.gov.uk)

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](mailto: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.

### **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