

13 April 2026

FOI Ref 22633

Request - You asked Staffordshire Police (SP) the following:

Please can I request the total number of international deployments undertaken by your force in the last 24 months, split by (where possible):

- o (a) police officers and (b) police staff; and
- o operational vs non operational (as defined below).

Please count both:

- o distinct deployments (each trip/mission) and
- o individuals deployed (headcount; where one person undertook multiple deployments, please indicate if counted once or multiple times depending on what you hold).

If within the S12 cost limit, can I please also request a breakdown of the deployments by:

- * Destination country/territory;
- * Primary purpose/theme, e.g., executive policing/public order/investigation/DVI (operational) or training/mentoring/monitoring/advising/programme management (non operational);
- * Sponsoring/commissioning body (e.g., Home Office, FCDO, UN, EU, OSCE, bilateral partner);
- * Duration (e.g., <2 weeks; 2-12 weeks; >12 weeks).
- * Where you hold it, please provide the unit or department within your force that coordinated the deployment/operation/mission name or reference.

Preferably, please provide data in an excel format - however I appreciate this may not be possible. If any part of the request is likely to exceed the Section 12 cost limit, please provide the initial set of bullets in this request first and advise how I could refine the remainder under Section 16 duty to advise and assist.

Definitions (for the purpose of this request)

- * International deployment: any period of duty performed outside the UK, including the British Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies.
- * Operational deployment: an overseas deployment in which police powers and/or operational functions are exercised (e.g., public order/public safety operations; investigations; disaster victim identification; executive policing; command roles).
- * Non operational deployment: an overseas deployment not involving the exercise of police powers, typically related to training, mentoring, monitoring, advising, capacity building, or programme/project management (consistent with NPCC IPAS for Non Operational International Policing and FCDO international secondment categories).

If your force uses different internal terminology, please apply your nearest equivalent categories and explain any differences.

SP received your request on 09/03/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP can neither confirm nor deny whether information relevant to this request is held, as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this request.

- Section 23(5) Information supplied by or concerning certain Security Bodies
- Section 24(2) National Security
- Section 27(4) International Relations
- Section 31(3) Law Enforcement

Section 23 is an absolute class-based exemption and as such does not require the application of a Public Interest Test.

Sections 24, 27 and 31 are qualified exemptions and as such there is a requirement to articulate the harm and conduct a test of the public interest in confirmation or denial.

Harm

Confirming or denying that information is held would reveal whether specific overseas states have sought or received policing assistance. This would undermine the confidence and trust essential for effective international cooperation. Foreign partners expect discretion and breaching that expectation would damage the UK's ability to maintain secure, productive relationships with states and international bodies.

Revealing—even through confirmation or denial—where UK policing expertise has been applied overseas would also provide insight into operational capability, international priorities, and levels of threat. This would be reasonably expected to prejudice national security by assisting hostile actors in identifying operational focus areas and potential vulnerabilities.

Modern policing relies on intelligence led activity and international cooperation. If it became publicly identifiable which countries had received training, or which had sought it, this would reveal patterns of threat, capability, and law enforcement gaps. That information could be exploited by those seeking to frustrate prevention or detection of crime and would directly prejudice law enforcement operations.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirmation or denial information is held - S24 National Security

SP appreciate the importance of the public being informed on how public money is being spent and how public authorities conduct their activities and generate their income. Confirming whether any information regarding policing assistance to international states is held would increase public confidence and allow for better informed public debate.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held - S24 National Security

To confirm or deny whether any information is held risks prejudicing national security. It is not in the public interest to compromise ongoing or future operations which protect the security or infrastructure of the UK by undermining the need to use the NCND approach to such requests consistently.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial information is held - S27 International Relations

There is a clear public interest in making appropriate information available to the public. Confirmation or denial information is held would act to reinforce the commitment of SP as an open and transparent organisation, serving to maintain public confidence in the force and the wider policing service as a whole. Moreover, use of public money, as well as the income generated by public bodies is also a matter of strong public interest.

Greater public awareness of whether any countries have benefited from delivery of training and expertise, would provide reassurance to the public at large and help to promote a feeling of increased safety amongst the public in both the UK and the world at large.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held - S27 International Relations

Confirming or denying information is held in this case is very likely to compromise the ability of the UK to promote and protect its interests abroad whilst also undermining the UK's ability to form new and mutually beneficial relationships with other states. The reduction in revenue is likely to result from states choosing not to approach the UK for further services in the future. The damage that confirmation or denial is likely to cause to the UK's international relations in this case cannot be said to be in the public interest.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial information is held - S31 Law Enforcement:

Confirmation or denial information is held would lead to better public awareness identifying that the force undertake work with law enforcement agencies from across the world. This would allow greater insight into when and how public money is spent.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held - S31 Law Enforcement:

Confirmation or denial information is held in this case would compromise the forces' ability to engage and assist overseas police forces in tackling international threats and share best practice within policing in the future. Confirmation or denial would confirm that countries had or had not taken a direct interest in, or been provided with assistance in a given time, which could infer the level of overseas criminal threats. The safety of the public is of paramount importance, and any increase in crime both in the UK and abroad which results in harm to the wider population cannot be considered to be in the public interest.

Balance Test

While there is a public interest in transparency and debate about how policing resources are used, this interest is outweighed in this case by the significant and predictable harm that confirmation or denial would cause. Revealing whether any information is held would damage the trust of international partners, undermine the UK's ability to conduct effective international relations, and prejudice both national security and future law-enforcement cooperation.

Given the severity of the risks, the public interest lies firmly in neither confirming nor denying whether information is held. No inference should be drawn from this response.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the SP website although personal details are not included.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from SP, 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:

IAT@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, considering 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