

28 April 2026

FOI Ref 22732

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

I am writing on behalf of a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) voluntary organisation whose remit includes empowering our communities and monitoring the impact of legislation and policing practices.

The pursuit of a nomadic way of life is lawful and is recognised and protected under both UK and European legislation. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are protected groups under the Equality Acts 2010. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) places a statutory obligation on police forces to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people of different racial groups. Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects private and family life, and Article 23 protects the right of communities to maintain and follow their culture.

Under Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting the following information regarding your force's approach to Section 4 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022, which introduced new criminal offences relating to Unauthorised Encampments. Please provide data from the date the legislation came into force to the present.

Question 1: Equality Impact and Compliance

Given the PSED obligations and the recognised protected status of Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, please provide:

- 1) Recorded evidence of how any Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), Equality Analyses, or internal reviews carried out in relation to the introduction or use of Section 4 powers
- 2) Recorded evidence of how any internal guidance, training materials, or briefings provided to officers regarding the cultural rights of GRT communities and the need to avoid discriminatory or disproportionate enforcement
- 3) Recorded evidence of how any monitoring data your force holds relating to the protected characteristics of individuals affected by Section 4 enforcement.

If no such recorded assessments, guidance, or monitoring exist, please confirm this explicitly.

Question 2: Policies and Strategies

In light of Section 4 of the PCSC Act, has your force drafted or adopted any new strategies, operational guidance, or policies relating specifically to Unauthorised Encampments?

If so, please confirm whether these documents are publicly accessible and provide copies or links where available.

Question 3: Implementation of Section 4

Has your force implemented Section 4 of the PCSC Act?

If yes, please provide details of how it has been used, including:

- 1) Directions to leave
- 2) Seizure or confiscation of vehicles
- 3) Arrests made under this provision

Question 4: Prosecutions

Have there been any prosecutions within your force area under Section 4 of the PCSC Act?



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If so, please provide:

- 1) The number of prosecutions - including dates, reference numbers and/or case numbers
- 2) The decision outcomes of those prosecutions (e.g., charges, convictions, discontinued cases) - including dates, reference numbers and/or case numbers

Please also include details of any current pending enforcement.

Please provide the information in electronic format where possible. Where information is not held, please confirm this.

If you consider that the cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act, I would welcome advice on how the request might be refined in order to remain within the statutory cost threshold.

I note that under Section 10, you are required to respond within 20 working days.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

SP received your request on 02/04/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP holds some of the requested information.

Question 1: Equality Impact and Compliance

Given the PSED obligations and the recognised protected status of Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, please provide:

- 1) Recorded evidence of how any Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), Equality Analyses, or internal reviews carried out in relation to the introduction or use of Section 4 powers – **Disclosed, nil.**
- 2) Recorded evidence of how any internal guidance, training materials, or briefings provided to officers regarding the cultural rights of GRT communities and the need to avoid discriminatory or disproportionate enforcement – **No information held.**
- 3) Recorded evidence of how any monitoring data your force holds relating to the protected characteristics of individuals affected by Section 4 enforcement. If no such recorded assessments, guidance, or monitoring exist, please confirm this explicitly. – **No information held.**

Question 2: Policies and Strategies

In light of Section 4 of the PCSC Act, has your force drafted or adopted any new strategies, operational guidance, or policies relating specifically to Unauthorised Encampments? – **Disclosed, yes.**

If so, please confirm whether these documents are publicly accessible and provide copies or links where available. - **Partially disclosed, Section 31 and 40. Please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22732 Code of Conduct'.**

Yes, one document is publicly accessible, Section 21.



Question 3: Implementation of Section 4

Has your force implemented Section 4 of the PCSC Act? – **Disclosed, yes.**

If yes, please provide details of how it has been used, including:

- 1) Directions to leave – **Disclosed, nil**
- 2) Seizure or confiscation of vehicles – **Disclosed, nil**
- 3) Arrests made under this provision – **Disclosed, nil**

Question 4: Prosecutions

Have there been any prosecutions within your force area under Section 4 of the PCSC Act? – **No information held because the answer to question 3 is nil, however, please see advice and assistance below.**

If so, please provide:

1. The number of prosecutions - including dates, reference numbers and/or case numbers – **Not applicable.**
2. The decision outcomes of those prosecutions (e.g., charges, convictions, discontinued cases) - including dates, reference numbers and/or case numbers. – **Not applicable.**

Please also include details of any current pending enforcement.

The following exemptions have been applied to question 2 and advice and assistance relates to question 2 and 4:

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

- Section 21(1) - Information reasonably accessible by other means.

Section 21 is an absolute, class-based exemption and as such there is no requirement to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure, nor is there a requirement to perform a Public Interest Test.

- 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 be 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.

- Section 40(2) Personal Information

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption which means that there is no need to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure; neither is it subject to a public interest test.

To release personal or third-party information held by SP, would breach the data protection principles; namely –

- Data is lawfully and fairly processed.
- Processed in line with an individual's rights.
- Data is secure.

Personal and third-party information cannot be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Disclosure under Freedom of Information is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant.

Harm:

To provide new strategies, operational guidance, or policies relating specifically to Unauthorised Encampments could undermine existing or future investigations, operations and police tactics. It would allow those with ill intent to cause disruption to operational policing and prejudice the prevention and detection of crime.

Public Interest Test

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

To disclose this information would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, it would also lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force and the communications used with operations and during routine policing.

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

Releasing such data would give those individuals with the intent to do so, the intelligence required to disrupt police activity. This knowledge would allow those with ill intent to target their offending more effectively which would inevitably lead to an increased likelihood of criminal activity and an increased danger to the public. Any disclosure of information which is likely to undermine the ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

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.

Advice and assistance

In order to comply with our obligations under Section 16 of the Act, the obligation to provide advice and assistance, please find below links to the information requested for question 2.

[Joint-Protocol-for-Managing-Unauthorised-Encampments.pdf](#)

In relation to question 4. Staffordshire Police do not hold prosecution 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

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

Consequently, care should be taken in the interpretation and presentation of this data, 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 SP 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 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:



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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 SP 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 twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to forty 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