

17 April 2026

FOI Ref 22757

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

I am currently developing a research proposal on synthetic cathinone use in Stoke-on-Trent and would be grateful for the following information to support the evidence base.

I am aware that a previous FOI request on this topic (Ref 17688, January 2025) was refused under Section 12(1) due to the cost of manual review. In the advice and assistance provided under Section 16, it was indicated that data could be provided where the stats classification is recorded as “possession of a controlled drug – class B – other” or “possession of a controlled drug – Mephedrone including cathinone derivatives,” combined with a free text search for “monkey dust,” broken down by year. I am therefore submitting this refined request on that basis.

Request:

For the Stoke-on-Trent local authority area, for each of the calendar years 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 (year to date):

1. The number of occurrences recorded under the stats classifications (a) “possession of a controlled drug – class B – other” and (b) “possession of a controlled drug – Mephedrone including cathinone derivatives,” where a free text search of the record includes the term “monkey dust,” broken down by year.
2. If available without exceeding the cost threshold, the total number of occurrences recorded under the same two stats classifications (regardless of free text content), broken down by year, so that the proportion identifiable as monkey dust can be contextualised.
3. If available without exceeding the cost threshold, any equivalent data for offences other than possession (e.g., supply, production) recorded under class B – other or Mephedrone including cathinone derivatives, where a free text search includes “monkey dust,” broken down by year.

SP received your request on 13/04/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP’s response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP holds the requested information.

For the Stoke-on-Trent local authority area, for each of the calendar years 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 (year to date):

1. The number of occurrences recorded under the stats classifications (a) “possession of a controlled drug – class B – other” and (b) “possession of a controlled drug – Mephedrone including cathinone derivatives,” where a free text search of the record includes the term “monkey dust,” broken down

by year. – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled ‘FOI 22757 Synthetic Cathinone Use Data.xlsx’.**

2. If available without exceeding the cost threshold, the total number of occurrences recorded under the same two stats classifications (regardless of free text content), broken down by year, so that the proportion identifiable as monkey dust can be contextualised. – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled ‘FOI 22757 Synthetic Cathinone Use Data.xlsx’.**
3. If available without exceeding the cost threshold, any equivalent data for offences other than possession (e.g., supply, production) recorded under class B – other or Mephedrone including cathinone derivatives, where a free text search includes “monkey dust,” broken down by year. – **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled ‘FOI 22757 Synthetic Cathinone Use Data.xlsx’.**

Please note that SP have provided data from 2020 – 13/04/2026.

Please be advised that SP do not record by local authority area but have provided the data where the occurrence address was recorded in Stoke-On-Trent North and Stoke-On-Trent South Local Policing Teams.

For question 3, the data provided is for the following offences:

Supplying or offering to supply or being concerned in the supply of a controlled drug - Class B - Mephedrone including cathinone derivatives, Production or being concerned in production of a controlled drug - Class B - Mephedrone including cathinone derivatives, Production or being concerned in production of a controlled drug - Class B - Other, Supplying or offering to supply or being concerned in the supply of a controlled drug - Class B - Other, Possession of a controlled drug with intent to supply - Class B - Mephedrone including cathinone derivatives, Possession of a controlled drug with intent to supply - Class B - Other, Permitting premises to be used for unlawful purposes - Class B - Mephedrone including cathinone derivatives, Permitting premises to be used for unlawful purposes - Class B - Other.

Please note that the data for questions 1 and 3 was obtained by completing a summary search for the term “monkey dust”. The reliability of these searches cannot be guaranteed as only the MO / summary field of the report is searched. If this term is mentioned elsewhere (i.e. within the call log, crime report, statements etc) these will not be returned in the results. Additionally, if the term is misspelt within the MO / summary field, this will not be returned.

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. Additional offences may have been recorded during these timescales but are awaiting finalisation and input onto these systems and would not be present within this dataset.

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:

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