

6 August 2026

FOI Ref 23140

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

Please provide the following information for the period from 1 June 2020 to 1 June 2026, broken down into one-month intervals.

1. For each month, please provide the number of recorded offences within the Staffordshire Police force area that were tagged, flagged, or otherwise marked in Staffordshire Police systems as relating to "organised crime".
2. Please also explain how Staffordshire Police defines or applies the "organised crime" tag or marker, including the types or categories of offences that may be included.
3. If possible, please also provide the current total number of organised crime groups or organised criminal gangs identified within the Staffordshire Police force area, subject to any applicable exemptions.

If providing the information in one-month intervals would exceed the applicable Freedom of Information cost or time limit, please increase the interval length as necessary to bring the request within the limit, using the shortest intervals that can reasonably be provided.

SP received your request on 17/07/2026 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.

Please provide the following information for the period from 1 June 2020 to 1 June 2026, broken down into one-month intervals.

- 1. For each month, please provide the number of recorded offences within the Staffordshire Police force area that were tagged, flagged, or otherwise marked in Staffordshire Police systems as relating to "organised crime".
- **SP can neither confirm nor deny under section 31(3). Please see the below exemption.**
- 2. Please also explain how Staffordshire Police defines or applies the "organised crime" tag or marker, including the types or categories of offences that may be included.
- **SP can neither confirm nor deny under section 31(3). Please see the below exemption.**
- 3. If possible, please also provide the current total number of organised crime groups or organised criminal gangs identified within the Staffordshire Police force area, subject to any applicable exemptions. – **Disclosed, 25.**

SP can neither confirm nor deny whether information relevant to questions 1 and 2 of 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 31(3) – Law Enforcement**

This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, SP are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

Harm

Questions 1 and 2 seek to establish whether the force holds information capable of identifying and quantifying offending assessed as being linked to organised crime.

Whilst it is publicly known that police forces identify and manage organised crime groups, information concerning the way offending is associated with organised crime forms part of policing's wider operational and intelligence picture.

Information relating to organised crime is not routinely available across the wider force and access is often restricted to those with a legitimate operational need to know. The extent to which a force can identify, assess or quantify offending associated with organised crime is therefore not information that is routinely placed into the public domain.

Confirmation or denial of whether information is held would reveal whether the force possesses information, capabilities, arrangements, or processes which enable offending to be associated with organised crime assessments and quantified for reporting purposes. Equally, denial would reveal information about the force's ability, or inability, to identify and quantify such offending.

The request effectively seeks to establish how the force develops and maintains its understanding of organised criminality affecting its area. Revealing whether such capabilities exist would provide insight into policing's operational and intelligence arrangements and assist those seeking to understand the extent to which organised crime-related activity can be identified, assessed, and monitored by the police.

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a disclosure to the world at large. Confirmation or denial would therefore be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Accordingly, Section 31(3) is engaged.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held – Section 31(3)

There is a recognised public interest in openness and transparency regarding policing's response to organised crime. Confirming or denying whether information is held may assist public understanding of the extent to which organised crime affects local communities and how police forces respond to that threat.

There is also a legitimate public interest in ensuring accountability for the effectiveness of policing activity directed towards tackling organised crime and protecting the public from serious criminality.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held – Section 31(3)

There is a significant public interest in protecting information which would reveal how policing identifies, assesses, and monitors organised crime-related activity. Questions 1 and 2 seek to establish whether the force possesses the capability to identify and quantify offending linked to organised crime assessments and how such information is recorded, assessed, or otherwise applied. Confirming or denying whether information is held would provide insight into policing's operational and intelligence arrangements relating to organised crime and could contribute towards a wider understanding of how forces develop and maintain their organised crime picture.

There is a strong public interest in ensuring that information concerning policing capabilities is not disclosed where doing so could assist those involved in organised criminality. Confirmation or denial may provide information about the extent to which offending associated with organised crime can be identified, assessed, and monitored by the police. Considered alongside responses from other forces, this could contribute to a broader understanding of policing arrangements and capabilities in relation to organised crime. There is therefore a substantial public interest in protecting information which could undermine the effectiveness of law enforcement activity and prejudice the prevention and detection of crime.

Balance test

SP recognises the public interest in transparency and accountability regarding policing's response to organised crime. However, there is a stronger public interest in protecting information which would reveal whether SP possesses capabilities, arrangements or processes that enable offending to be identified and quantified as being linked to organised crime. On balance, SP consider that the public interest favours maintaining the Neither Confirm nor Deny position.

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:



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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 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