

22 January 2026

FOI Ref 22312

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

I am writing to request information about the policies and operational procedures that the Staffordshire Police Force follows when responding to street preaching of any faith in public spaces. Specifically, I would like to understand how the force handles the following situations:

Christian street preaching

Muslim street preaching

All other religious street preaching (e.g., Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, etc.)

For each of the above categories, could you please provide:

The official guidance or standard operating procedures that police officers are required to follow.

Any relevant legislation, local by-laws, or court rulings that influence the police response.

The criteria used to determine whether an intervention is necessary (e.g., public order, harassment, health & safety, noise complaints, obstruction).

Typical actions taken by officers (e.g., liaison with the preacher, issuance of a warning, dispersal orders, arrest, etc.).

Any recorded statistics for the past three calendar years on incidents/complaints/operations involving religious street preaching, broken down by faith where possible.

Whether the police adopt a consistent approach across all faiths, or if any distinctions exist in practice or policy.

If any of the above information is available in published documents (policy manuals, public statements, briefing notes, or training materials), please attach copies or provide links to where they can be accessed online.

Should any part of this request be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would appreciate a clear explanation of the exemption and a redacted version of the material, if possible.

SP received your request on 05/01/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP'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 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'.



The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There is no method by which SP can readily retrieve information from our systems to answer the statistical element of this request. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 62,000 incidents which may relate to religious street preaching. In order to determine this, the record for each incident would require a manual review. To extract this data would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 5 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 5,166 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the Freedom of Information Act by a considerable margin.

Advice and assistance

Section 16 of the Act places an obligation upon the Authority to provide advice and assistance, to comply with this obligation please see below.

Unfortunately, SP cannot suggest a way in which your request could be simplified or pared down to bring it within the confines of the time and cost threshold.

Please note that SP do not hold any further information for this request, including guidance or standard operating procedures relating to religious street preaching.

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



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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