

21 January 2026

FOI Ref 22349

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

I am writing to request information under the FOI Act. Please provide information for the past 2 years:

1. An Excel spreadsheet detailing all any deployments of live facial recognition technology to protests in the past 3 years. Please include the date, approximate location, what technology was used (cameras, algorithms) number of matches, number of arrests following identification, what suspected crime any arrests were for, and details of any charges/referrals to CPS following successful identification and arrest at protests.
2. An Excel spreadsheet detailing all instances where footage of protests captured by police officers has been analysed by retrospective facial recognition technology. Please include the date and approximate location the footage was taken, the brand and model of camera or device the footage was taken on, any matches, whether those matches were against a local database or the police national database, what suspected crime any arrests resulting from matches were for, and any charges/referrals to CPS
3. An Excel spreadsheet detailing any instances of arrests following identification with operator-initiated facial recognition at protests. Please include the date, approximate location, what software or algorithm was used, the suspected crimes for which people were arrested, and if those crimes were charged/referred to the CPS.

SP received your request on 09/01/2026 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 this request. For question 2, for the time period requested, there are in excess of 5,000 pieces of footage collected and over 250 arrests made. In order to supply the information requested for question 2, this would involve the review of all footage and arrest records.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 10 minutes to review each arrest record to answer this request with further significant time to review each piece of footage. For arrests alone, this would equate to over 40 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 information for questions 1 and 3.

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 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



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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