

Our Ref: FOI 22422
Your Ref: FOI 22251
Date: 20 January 2026

Internal Review

Re: Request for internal review of response to application for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, original request (22251) first notified to Staffordshire Police on 16/12/2025 which was expressed in the following terms:

Many thanks for the information sent on 9th December which has been very helpful. I would now like to request the following information relating to the forensic DNA examinations conducted during the cold-case review of the unidentified male found at Newton Road, Burton-upon-Trent, discovered on 26 March 1971. According to Forensic Archive Ltd., the relevant files (originating at Chorley FSS) were returned to Staffordshire Police in 2017 (on 01/02/17) under references:

- FSS 300528141
- FSS 400710462

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please disclose:

- 1. A list or index of all documents, reports, laboratory submissions, exhibits and materials contained within the above FSS files when they were returned to Staffordshire Police. (I am requesting metadata / inventory only, not the content of forensic reports.)*
- 2. The dates on which DNA analysis or forensic examinations were carried out during the 2006–07 review.*
- 3. Whether any DNA profiles were generated, and whether these profiles were uploaded to the National DNA Database (NDNAD).*
- 4. Whether any matches, partial matches or familial search results were obtained at the time of analysis.*
- 5. Whether any biological material or DNA extract from this case is still held by Staffordshire Police, Forensic Archive Ltd., or any other laboratory, and if so, in what form (e.g., extracted DNA, retained swabs, bones, etc).*
- 6. Whether the FSS files have been digitised, and their current storage location.*

If any part of the request is exempt, please disclose the non-exempt portions and state clearly which specific exemption applies to each withheld item.

Further to the above, SP also note the following comments made within your request for Internal Review received on 20/01/2026.

Thank you for your email and for outlining the sequence of responses provided in relation to FOI 22027, the subsequent Internal Review (22101), FOI 22105, and the more recent request FOI 22251. I acknowledge and appreciate that some historical material has been disclosed, particularly in response to FOI 22105, and that my subsequent request (FOI 22251) has now received a formal response.

However, I would not say that the matters raised in FOI 22251 are resolved. That request concerns the existence, retention status, and administrative handling of forensic material generated during the 2006–07 cold-case review, rather than investigative findings or operational detail. As such, I remain concerned that a blanket application of Section 30(3) has been applied without consideration of partial or metadata-level disclosure.

For clarity, I am therefore continuing to pursue clarification of this issue through the appropriate statutory routes.

Whether the passage of more than 50 years since the original offence has been given sufficient weight

- Whether the public interest in transparency for an unidentified homicide — which remains the subject of sustained public, academic, and media attention — has been properly balanced*
- Whether confirmation of record existence alone would genuinely prejudice any ongoing investigative activity*

*For context, these enquiries are made on behalf of a volunteer research group working on the long-running podcast *The Mysterious Case of Fred the Head*, which has accrued over one million downloads since 2021, alongside a highly active public discussion community. The purpose of this work is to ensure that publicly circulating information relating to this unresolved homicide is accurate, responsibly handled, and aligned with the factual record held by the police.*

This request is made in good faith and in the context of long-standing public and academic interest in this case.

Staffordshire Police's (SP) Response

Upon review of your request for information under the Freedom of Information provision referenced above, SP are of the opinion that that the application of the exemption outlined within the response was fully justified and that the explanation and rationale for its' application was conveyed clearly and unequivocally.

Please be advised that all FOI requests and response letters are published on the Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included.

If you are not content with the outcome of the review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner to investigate. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Kind regards,

Information Access Team Management

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