

2 July 2026

FOI Ref 23000

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

I am researching the use of roadside oral fluid drug testing devices across UK police forces, with a particular focus on THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) detection. This request relates to a public interest matter concerning the reliability of oral fluid testing technology and its ability to distinguish between illegal cannabis use and legal CBD product consumption or passive smoke exposure.

Please provide the following information for each of the financial years 2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26 (year to date):

1. The total number of roadside oral fluid drug screening tests conducted by Staffordshire Police.
2. The number of those tests that returned a positive indication for THC (cannabis).
3. The make, model, and manufacturer of the roadside oral fluid drug screening device(s) currently in use by Staffordshire Police, and the THC detection threshold (cutoff level in ng/mL) for each device.
4. The number of THC-positive roadside screening results that were subsequently confirmed by laboratory analysis (evidential testing), and the number that were not confirmed.
5. The number of THC-positive cases that resulted in: (a) charge or summons, (b) no further action (NFA), or (c) any other disposal.
6. Whether Staffordshire Police has received any complaints, representations, or correspondence from individuals who attributed a positive THC result to: (a) the use of legal, over-the-counter CBD products, or (b) passive exposure to cannabis smoke. If so, please provide the number of such complaints or representations received in each year.
7. Whether Staffordshire Police has any written guidance, policy, or standard operating procedure that addresses: (a) the possibility of legal CBD products causing a positive THC indication on roadside screening devices, or (b) the interpretation of low-level positive THC results in the context of passive smoke exposure. If such guidance exists, please provide a copy.

SP received your request on 12/06/2026 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 questions 4 and 5, for the period requested, there have been in excess of 295 THC-positive roadside tests recorded by the Road Crime Team alone. To determine the number of positive roadside screening results that were subsequently confirmed by laboratory analysis, the number that were not confirmed, and the outcomes of these cases, the record for each case 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 10-20 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to between 49 and 98 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.

If your request was refined, SP would be able to provide the following:

1. The number of roadside oral fluid drug screening tests conducted by Staffordshire Police's Road Crime Team only for the following time periods: October 2024 – March 2024, 2024/2025 and 2025/26 (to date).
2. The number of the above tests that returned a positive indication for THC.
3. The make, model and manufacturer of the roadside oral fluid drug screening device currently in use by Staffordshire Police.
4. The number of complaints from individuals who attributed a positive THC result to (a) the use of legal, over-the-counter CBD products, or (b) passive exposure to cannabis smoke for the time period 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Please be advised that SP do not record roadside drug screening tests force wide, or prior to October 2024. In addition, SP do not hold any information relating to the THC detection threshold, or a written policy, guidance or standard operating procedure that addresses (a) the possibility of legal CBD products causing a positive THC indication on roadside screening devices, or (b) the interpretation of low-level positive THC results in the context of passive smoke exposure.

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 complete the review within 20 working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.



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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