

5 March 2026

FOI Ref 22537

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

1. Cannabis cultivation sites attended -

For each calendar year from 2015 to the most recent complete year available, please provide the number of sites your force has dealt with that were confirmed or suspected to be used for cannabis cultivation.

For the purposes of this request, a "site" refers to any address or location attended by police officers in the course of their duties where cannabis cultivation was suspected or confirmed, regardless of whether this resulted in arrest, charge, or prosecution.

If providing data for the full period from 2015 would exceed the cost limit under Section 12 of the Act, please instead provide the figures for the most recent five calendar years.

Numeric totals only are requested; no personal or case-specific information is required.

2. Policies, procedures, or guidance -

Please confirm whether your force holds any written policies, procedures, standard operating procedures, or operational guidance relating to how officers should deal with sites that are used, or suspected to be used, for cannabis cultivation.

If so, I would be grateful if you could:

- Provide a web link to the relevant material, or
- Attach copies of the documents to your response, or
- Confirm if the material is exempt from disclosure and specify the relevant exemption(s).

SP received your request on 16/02/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP holds the requested information.

- 1. Cannabis cultivation sites attended -
- For each calendar year from 2015 to the most recent complete year available, please provide the number of sites your force has dealt with that were confirmed or suspected to be used for cannabis cultivation.



- For the purposes of this request, a "site" refers to any address or location attended by police officers in the course of their duties where cannabis cultivation was suspected or confirmed, regardless of whether this resulted in arrest, charge, or prosecution.
- If providing data for the full period from 2015 would exceed the cost limit under Section 12 of the Act, please instead provide the figures for the most recent five calendar years.
- Numeric totals only are requested; no personal or case-specific information is required.
- **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled 'FOI 22537 Cannabis Cultivation Sites Data'.**
- 2. Policies, procedures, or guidance -
 - Please confirm whether your force holds any written policies, procedures, standard operating procedures, or operational guidance relating to how officers should deal with sites that are used, or suspected to be used, for cannabis cultivation.
 - If so, I would be grateful if you could:
 - Provide a web link to the relevant material, or
 - Attach copies of the documents to your response, or
 - Confirm if the material is exempt from disclosure and specify the relevant exemption(s).
- **Partially disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled 'FOI 22537 Cannabis Farm Guidance'. Please see the below exemption.**

Please be advised that the data for question 1 relates to the number of offences of 'Production of a cannabis plant' (this is the only way of searching SP systems to locate the information you have requested within the time and cost threshold of the FOI Act). Please note that there may be more than one offence recorded at a specific location however these have been recorded as separate offences.

Please note that this data has been provided to the best of the ability of SP, subject to the limitation of current recording protocols and systems/software. Additional offences may have been recorded during these timescales but are awaiting finalisation and input onto these systems and would not be present within this dataset.

Every effort is made to ensure that the data presented is accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that this has been extracted from multiple sources, developed for specific policing purposes, for which data extraction methods have not been specifically designed to directly correlate with the terminology of this request. Therefore, the data presented is subject to the inaccuracies and idiosyncrasies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

Consequently, care should be taken in the interpretation and presentation of this data, to not misrepresent the whole or any part of the data disclosed.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the SP website although personal details are not included.

The following exemption has been applied:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for parts of this particular request.

- Section 31 (1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement

Information is exempt from disclosure under S31(1)(a)(b) where the release of Information would, or would likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

Harm:

To provide investigation plans and interview questions relating to cannabis cultivation could undermine existing or future investigations, operations and police tactics. It would allow those with ill intent to cause disruption to operational policing and prejudice the prevention and detection of crime. Knowing these specific details regarding cannabis cultivation would allow individuals to have prior knowledge of the details and information being sought by officers when carrying out investigations into these cases which would undermine their work.

Public Interest Test**Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)**

To disclose this information would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, it would also lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force and the communications used with operations and during routine policing.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)

Releasing such data would give those individuals with the intent to do so, the intelligence required to disrupt police activity. This knowledge would allow those with ill intent to target their offending more effectively which would inevitably lead to an increased likelihood of criminal activity and an increased danger to the public. Any disclosure of information which is likely to undermine the ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

Balance test

When considering whether disclosure is appropriate, we must weigh the strongest reason for disclosure against the strongest reasons for non-disclosure. In this case, whilst the factors favouring disclosure are important in that it would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, we believe when weighed against the risk of disclosure undermining our ability to prevent and detect crime and hindering our ability to protect the public, then non-disclosure takes precedence.

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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 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 twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to forty 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