

24 March 2026

FOI Ref 22589

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

I am currently undertaking an MSc in Digital Forensics at the University of Staffordshire and I am conducting academic research into the forensic usability of consumer-grade smart surveillance systems, specifically Ring doorbell cameras. The project specifically compares traditional forensic image enhancement methods with AI-based enhancement approaches.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would be grateful if you could provide recorded information held by your force relating to the period 1 January 2020 to present, in response to the following:

1. Does your force use Ring doorbell or other smart doorbell footage as part of criminal investigations? (Yes / No)
2. If such footage is used, how frequently does it contribute to investigations? (Rarely / Occasionally / Frequently)
3. Is forensic image or video enhancement typically applied to Ring doorbell footage to improve its usability? (Yes / No / In some cases)
4. Has your force considered, trialled, or used AI-based image or video enhancement tools for processing Ring doorbell or other domestic CCTV footage? (Yes / No / Under consideration)
5. What are the most common technical or evidential challenges encountered when working with Ring doorbell footage? (For example: image quality, compression, lighting, motion blur, glare, distance, occlusion, or metadata issues.)
6. From your experience, what image features are most important when assessing the usefulness of Ring doorbell footage? (For example: clothing, carried objects, facial features, movement, or contextual background detail.)
7. If enhancement is applied, what factors influence whether the footage is considered suitable for evidential use rather than intelligence-only purposes?
8. Are there any concerns or limitations associated with the use of AI-based enhancement tools in forensic investigations that you consider particularly significant?
9. In your view, what safeguards or validation steps would be necessary for AI-enhanced imagery to be considered appropriate for evidential use in court?

The information provided will be used solely for academic research purposes as part of an MSc dissertation.

No personal data or identifying information relating to officers, staff, or members of the public is requested, and any responses will be reported in anonymised and aggregated form only.

SP received your request on 25/02/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP holds/does not hold the requested information.

- 1. Does your force use Ring doorbell or other smart doorbell footage as part of criminal investigations? (Yes / No) – **Disclosed, Yes.**



- 2. If such footage is used, how frequently does it contribute to investigations? (Rarely / Occasionally / Frequently) – **Neither confirm nor deny.**
- 3. Is forensic image or video enhancement typically applied to Ring doorbell footage to improve its usability? (Yes / No / In some cases) – **Neither confirm nor deny.**
- 4. Has your force considered, trialled, or used AI-based image or video enhancement tools for processing Ring doorbell or other domestic CCTV footage? (Yes / No / Under consideration) – **Neither confirm nor deny.**
- 5. What are the most common technical or evidential challenges encountered when working with Ring doorbell footage? (For example: image quality, compression, lighting, motion blur, glare, distance, occlusion, or metadata issues.) – **Neither confirm nor deny.**
- 6. From your experience, what image features are most important when assessing the usefulness of Ring doorbell footage? (For example: clothing, carried objects, facial features, movement, or contextual background detail.) – **Neither confirm nor deny.**
- 7. If enhancement is applied, what factors influence whether the footage is considered suitable for evidential use rather than intelligence-only purposes? – **Neither confirm nor deny.**
- 8. Are there any concerns or limitations associated with the use of AI-based enhancement tools in forensic investigations that you consider particularly significant? – **Neither confirm nor deny.**
- 9. In your view, what safeguards or validation steps would be necessary for AI-enhanced imagery to be considered appropriate for evidential use in court? – **Neither confirm nor deny.**

SP can neither confirm nor deny whether any other information relevant to this request is held, as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

- Section 24 (2) National Security Section 24 is a qualified exemption and as such there is a requirement to articulate the harm and conduct a test of the public interest.
- Section 31(3) Law Enforcement Section 31 is a qualified and prejudice-based exemption and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test

Harm

Having disclosed high-level information about routine, non-sensitive uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI), SP will neither confirm nor deny whether it holds any further information that would indicate whether AI is, or is not, used in connection with counter-terrorism (CT), serious and organised crime (SoC), covert intelligence activity, or specialist digital forensics supporting those functions. The duty to confirm or deny is disapplied by virtue of sections 24(2) (National Security) and 31(3) (Law Enforcement) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This response should not be taken as an indication of whether any additional information is held. Confirming or denying whether AI is used by SP in counter-terrorism, serious and organised crime, covert intelligence or specialist digital forensics would enable hostile actors to infer the presence, absence or maturity of particular policing capabilities. This type of capability insight is of practical

value to adversaries who routinely adapt their behaviour to exploit perceived weaknesses, overwhelm less technologically equipped forces, or adjust methods to avoid detection. Even a single confirmation or denial could be combined with publicly available information from other forces to build a detailed national picture of capability. This mosaic effect represents a realistic and actionable risk, providing information that could materially undermine national security and the effectiveness of law-enforcement operations.

Public Interest Test

Factors in favour of confirming or denying - Section 24(2)

There is a strong public interest in openness and transparency about the use of AI in policing. Confirming or denying the existence of information could contribute to informed public debate about how emerging technologies are deployed, the safeguards in place, and whether they align with legal and ethical standards. Disclosure can enhance accountability, promote trust, and reassure the public that AI use is subject to appropriate oversight.

Factors against confirming or denying - Section 24(2)

There is an overriding public interest in protecting national security. Confirming or denying the existence of information about AI deployment in CT, SoC, covert intelligence, or linked specialist forensics would provide adversaries with useful insights into operational capabilities and priorities. Even a simple confirmation or denial could enable hostile actors to adjust methods, exploit potential gaps, or test thresholds. The resulting risk to national security would be real and more than trivial, and is not mitigated by partial or local confirmations, because the cumulative mosaic effect across multiple forces would still disclose sensitive capability at a national level.

Factors in favour of confirming or denying - Section 31(3)

There is a general public interest in understanding how AI is used to support policing functions, including the efficiency and effectiveness of core processes, and in ensuring that novel technologies are used lawfully and proportionately. Confirmation or denial could support external scrutiny and promote confidence in policing practice.

Factors against confirming or denying - Section 31(3)

Confirming or denying the existence of information relating to AI use in CT, SoC, covert intelligence, or specialist digital forensics would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders, and the operation of law enforcement tactics and methodologies. Knowledge of whether specific capabilities exist, or do not exist, enables offenders to adapt behaviour, exploit capability gaps, frustrate investigations, and increase the cost and complexity of counter-measures. The public interest strongly favours maintaining an NCND to preserve the effectiveness of law enforcement and the safety of the public.

Balance Test

For the reasons set out above, SP will neither confirm nor deny whether it holds information indicating AI is used in CT, SoC, covert intelligence activity, or specialist digital forensics supporting those functions. The public interest in maintaining the NCND position under sections 24(2) and 31(3) outweighs the public

interest in confirmation or denial. This response should not be taken as an indication of whether any relevant information is held.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the Staffordshire Police 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 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



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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