

11 March 2026

FOI Ref 22618

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

On Saturday 28 July 2025, a man in a wheelchair was arrested for wearing a Palestine Action t-shirt outside UAV engines in Shenstone.

The fact that the man was going to do this was known to Staffordshire Police in advance as it had been published on social media channels. A fact confirmed by officers on the day.

Already by the end of July 2025, different forces around the country were approaching these incidents in varying ways to what has now been deemed an unlawful ban.

Who made the decision to carry out what was a confrontational exercise?

SP received your request on 05/03/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP can neither confirm nor deny whether 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:

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

- 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.

- Section 40(5) Personal Information

Section 40(5) is an absolute exemption which means that there is no need to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure; neither is it subject to a public interest test.

To release personal or third-party information that may or may not be held by SP, would breach the data protection principles; namely –

- Data is lawfully and fairly processed.
- Processed in line with an individual's rights.
- Data is secure.

Personal and third-party information cannot be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Disclosure under Freedom of Information is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant.

Harm

Any release under FOIA is a disclosure to the world, not just to the individual making the request. To confirm, or not, whether any information is held pertinent to this request would reveal whether or not there has been any information received on the date specified, in respect of potential terrorist related activity.

Police forces work in conjunction with other agencies and information is shared in line with information sharing protocols. Modern day policing is intelligence led and this is particularly pertinent with regard to law enforcement. The public expect police forces to use all powers and tactics available to them to prevent and detect crime or disorder and maintain public safety.

If SP were to confirm or deny whether any information was held in respect of this request, this would undermine the force's policing capabilities, which consequently would be detrimental to our ability to deal with the on-going terrorist threat we face.

The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built and the threat from terrorism cannot be ignored. It is generally recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The current UK threat level from international terrorism, based on intelligence, is assessed as of today's date, as "Substantial", which means that a terrorist attack is likely, see below link:

<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels>

In order to counter criminal and terrorist behaviour, it is vital that the police have the ability to work together to ensure the successful arrest and prosecution of offenders who encourage, support, commit or plan to commit acts of terrorism.

The impact of providing information under FOI would disclose crucial information on the police intelligence picture in respect of those who may be supportive of a proscribed organisation and to what extent they may be engaged in terrorist activity. This would provide criminals, including terrorists or those intent on committing criminal or terrorist acts, with valuable information as to where the police are targeting their investigations. Confirmation or denial would undermine the effective delivery of operational law enforcement by highlighting which areas have, or have not, received police attention from these type of reports.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirming or denying information is held – Section 31(3)

National counter terrorism data is published by the Home Office on a quarterly and annual basis, which includes those who have been charged and convicted for membership of a proscribed organisation under Sections 11-13 of TACT 2000. In addition, those who have been proceeded against and convicted by the CPS in relation to the above offences (see link below), and this in itself favours confirming information is held. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/counter-terrorism-statistics>

Therefore, to confirm information is held by SP would demonstrate openness and transparency. When a request for information is made to the force it is correct that the police make appropriate information

available to the general public. The provision of information, through confirming or denying whether information relevant to this request is held would accordingly, reinforce our commitment to be an open and transparent organisation.

Factors favouring not confirming or denying information is held – Section 31(3)

SP has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If an FOI disclosure revealed information to the world (by citing an exemption or stating no information held) that would undermine the security of the national infrastructure. Offenders, including terrorist organisations, could use this to their advantage which would compromise public safety and more worryingly encourage offenders to carry out further crimes. Therefore, confirming or denying information is held, would allow terrorists to gain an operational advantage over SP, consequently requiring an increase in resources, which cannot be in the public interest.

Balance test

The points above highlight the merits of confirming, or denying, whether any further information pertinent to this request exists. Whilst it is recognised that there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by various groups or individuals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations in this highly sensitive area.

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with any information that is released. Confirming or denying whether any information is held would reveal data around force level activity relating terrorism. This would result in an increase of harm to either current or future investigations, or the subject of the investigation. Any disclosure of information, if held, which has the potential to jeopardise an investigation, is therefore likely to prejudice law enforcement and would therefore be of assistance to those intent on causing harm.

Therefore, after weighing up the competing public interests, we have found that confirmation or denial of whether information is held is not made out. However, no inference can be taken from this refusal that further information does or does not exist.

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:



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

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.

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