

17 March 2026

FOI Ref 22630

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

For each of the following calendar years respectively 2025, 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021

How many police cars in your fleet have been damaged by potholes, including damage to tyres, wheels, steering alignment? What has the repair cost been?

How many times has a police car been taken out of service to be checked after pot hole related damage?

Have there been any incidents where a pothole related problem has delayed the response to an emergency 999 call? Can you please supply examples

Has your force successfully claimed compensation for pothole related damaged to your vehicles – and if so how much compensation was received?

SP received your request on 09/03/2026 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. Pothole damage is not reported consistently within our vehicle maintenance and repair systems and may have been reported as another type of damage. To obtain the data required, it would entail the manual review of all repair and maintenance reports for the time period requested, which would involve a very labour-intensive manual review of all repair records, accident records, tyre records, and general jobs. Further review would also need to be undertaken to provide the costs of these repairs. To achieve this task would exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the Freedom of Information Act by a considerable margin.



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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 are able to provide the number of police cars in our fleet that have been damaged by potholes, where this has been recorded as pothole damage, for the years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. However, please be advised that this is unlikely to be a true picture due to pothole damage not being a mandatory field to complete.

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:

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