

19 March 2026

FOI Ref 22678

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

1. Which unit or units in your force are responsible for investigating cases of intimate partner sexual violence (i.e. cases where the sexual offences occurred within a context of domestic abuse from an intimate partner and/or where a victim has reported both domestic abuse and sexual offences by the same perpetrator)?
2. If the answer to question 1 is more than one unit, how are cases allocated between units?
3. Please provide a copy of any internal force policy relating to the issues in questions 1 and 2.
4. Does your force currently have:
 - a) a dedicated RASSO unit
 - b) a dedicated domestic abuse unit

SP received your request on 17/03/2026 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. Which unit or units in your force are responsible for investigating cases of intimate partner sexual violence (i.e. cases where the sexual offences occurred within a context of domestic abuse from an intimate partner and/or where a victim has reported both domestic abuse and sexual offences by the same perpetrator)? – **Disclosed, RASSO deal with all Rape, Attempt Rape, Digital Penetration as well as Interfamilial Sexual Abuse. Some sexual offences such as Touching/Voyeurism are dealt with by LPT/ CID.**
2. If the answer to question 1 is more than one unit, how are cases allocated between units? **Disclosed, the new Crime Allocation policy reinforces that RASSO pick up most cases and all for the offence types above.**
3. Please provide a copy of any internal force policy relating to the issues in questions 1 and 2. – **Partially disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled 'FOI 22678 Crime Allocation Investigation Policy – v2 15.12.2025'. Please see the below exemption.**
4. Does your force currently have:
 - a) a dedicated RASSO unit – **Disclosed, yes.**
 - b) a dedicated domestic abuse unit – **Disclosed, no.**

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 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 the specific terms of reference of other specialist teams within SP 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 the finer details of what each team deal with and any associated information relating to how they deal with these types of crimes would allow individuals to commit these offences more easily and may also aid criminals in not being detected.

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 and investigations. 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 and victims. 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

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