



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Our Ref: FOI 22875
Your Ref: FOI 22868
Date: 12 May 2026

Internal Review

Re: Request for internal review of response to application for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, original request first notified to Staffordshire Police on 11/05/2026

SP refer to the above request which was expressed in the following terms:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please disclose:

In your police force area, how many incidents of "Asian gold theft" have taken place in each of the calendar years, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

To clarify: "Asian gold theft" is the theft of gold from Asian families. Criminals are targeting Asian families knowing that many have gold, for cultural reasons. If you are unable to narrow the results down specifically to Asian families, I would also accept the number of thefts of gold from domestic properties.

Further to the above, SP also note the following comments made within your request for Internal Review.

While I acknowledge the force's position that compliance would exceed the cost limit under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would ask that this decision be reconsidered for the following reasons.

1. Precedent

Substantially similar requests concerning incidents of so called "Asian gold theft", or thefts of gold from domestic properties, have been disclosed by other police forces under the Freedom of Information Act. For example: Devon & Cornwall Police, Dorset Police & Northamptonshire Police. These forces are among a large number who have released similar data.

In those cases, forces have been able to identify relevant offences either through keyword searches, offence descriptions, property type filtering, or existing crime classifications, without conducting a manual review of every theft, burglary or robbery record. This suggests that comparable data is, in practice, retrievable within the statutory cost limits, or at least partially retrievable.

2. Section 16

I am concerned that the duty to provide advice and assistance under section 16 of the Act has not been fully met. The refusal notice states that Staffordshire Police is unable to suggest any way in which the request could be refined or narrowed. However, other forces have successfully responded to this type of request by:

- Limiting results to offences recorded as burglaries or dwelling related thefts
- Using keyword searches within MO, property descriptions, or free text fields
- Supplying partial data or aggregate figures where more granular analysis was not possible

I would therefore ask that, as part of the internal review, consideration be given to whether similar approaches could be applied here, or whether a revised or partial disclosure could be made that would fall within the cost threshold.

3. Public Interest

Third, I would note the strong public interest in transparency around crime trends affecting specific communities. The request relates to an emerging and widely reported pattern of offending, and disclosure of high level data would assist informed public debate and understanding, even if the information could not be provided with absolute precision.

SP Response

Upon review of your request for information under the Freedom of Information provision referenced above and all corresponding communication, we are of the opinion that the response issued, alongside all clarification provided, fully answers the terms of your request.

We also confirm that the application of the exemption cited within this response is fully justified, and that the explanation and rationale for its application conveyed clearly and unequivocally.

However, in order to address the concerns raised within your request for internal review, please find below some further expansion upon our approach and rationale for the initial response.

1. Precedent

We note your concerns regarding the precedent set by other forces; however, it is of importance to note that differing forces use different crime recording systems and extraction tools. Furthermore, configuration of these systems and tools can vary from force to force. This will mean that, whilst it may be mandatory to record certain information within one force, this may not be recordable or even mandatory to record within another. Likewise, extraction methods employed within any given force will differ to those of another. This will mean that the level and variety of data providable by one force will very often not be replicated in another.

We also note your comments regarding the employment of key word searches; however, these are inherently inaccurate as they rely on exact phrase/s being employed within a specific field of the crime report. Whilst this information would most likely be recorded within the Modus Operandi (MO) field, it is worth noting that completion of this field is not a mandatory requirement within our crime recording system and the information could therefore be recorded across any number of other similar fields. As previously outlined, manual research of all fields would be required in order to determine those occurrences falling within the scope of your request.

Additionally, there is no mandatory field within this system in which details of stolen items is routinely recorded, this may be recorded across any number of fields across the occurrence log.

Having reviewed the reports used to access the relevant data for this request, SP note that some 2000 plus MO fields remain blank.

Using the formula outlined within our initial response, namely 3 minutes to review each record, research of these occurrences alone would require upwards of 100 hours to determine whether they fall within the scope of your request.

2. Section 16

Given the limitations outlined above, SP feels that the initial advice stands, in that no advice can be offered to assist you to refine your request to allow it to fall within the time and cost threshold prescribed by the act.

3. Public Interest

Whilst SP recognise the strong public interest in transparency around trends in crime and offending, in this instance the limitations created by idiosyncrasies in our crime recording and reporting tools mean that extraction of the specific information requested has not been possible.



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Please be advised that all FOI requests and response letters are published on the Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included.

If you are not content with the outcome of the review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner to investigate. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Information Access Team Management

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