

26 October 2026

FOI Ref 21733

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

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information for the most recent financial year for which data is available:

Please provide the total amount in £ (excluding VAT) that your force has spent on external physical (traditional) forensic science services. Do not include any spend on digital forensics. I request that this is broken down into categories based on the Lot Code and description specified in the contract(s) awarded to your private forensic science provider suppliers.

For each category, please include:

1. The Lot Code (as per the contract)
2. The Lot description (e.g., DNA Crime Stains)
3. The total spend (£, ex VAT)
4. The supplier name

For example:

Lot X | DNA Crime Stains | £1,000,000 | Eurofins Forensic Services

Lot Y | Toxicology | £500,000 | Cellmark Forensic Services

SP received your request on 13/08/2025 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.

- Please provide the total amount in £ (excluding VAT) that your force has spent on external physical (traditional) forensic science services. Do not include any spend on digital forensics. I request that this is broken down into categories based on the Lot Code and description specified in the contract(s) awarded to your private forensic science provider suppliers.

For each category, please include:

1. The Lot Code (as per the contract)
2. The Lot description (e.g., DNA Crime Stains)
3. The total spend (£, ex VAT)
4. The supplier name – **Partially disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled 'FOI 21733 Forensics Spending Data – Revised Response.xlsx'.**

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 parts of this particular request.

- **Section 43(2) Commercial Interests**

This is a prejudice based qualified exemption which means there is a requirement to provide evidence of harm, and a public interest test needs to be considered.

Harm

The information relating to the forensic spending of SP, if released into the public domain, would harm SP's negotiating position with regards to future contracts for equipment or services. There are commercially confidential clauses within the forensic contracts which are not permitted to be shared to the wider public.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 43(2)

Disclosure of the requested information would allow the public to be aware of how public funds are spent or allocated and thereby would provide transparency and accountability, showing that funds from the public purse are used appropriately and proportionally.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 43(2)

Through disclosure of the requested information, SP would find that its negotiating position would be greatly impaired through the release of details that would not only likely be prejudicial to SP but also to the agencies/companies involved. Releasing this information would be expected to have a detrimental effect on their ability to be competitive in the future and would be exceedingly likely to deter further enterprises submitting offers for tender in the future. This then would impede SP obtaining the most competitive or appropriate services in the future and negatively impact upon the public purse.

Balance test

It is the responsibility of SP, when dealing with commercial businesses, to not only protect their commercial interest but also that of SP. Commercial interests must be protected so that the best possible value for money is obtained through open competition, both for businesses and SP. This would not be achieved if full details were to be made available to the market.

Although the use of public funds must be open and transparent, SP is accountable for the money that it spends and utilises and if to release the information means the force is unable to negotiate future tendering and have the ability to secure value for money due to business relationships having been impaired, then this would not be in the public interest.

Having considered the public interest test factors, we are required to determine whether, on balance, the factors favouring disclosure outweigh those which are against disclosure. It is SP's view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour withholding the details. Therefore, SP declines to provide the information for the reasons stated above.

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

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