



2 October 2026

FOI Ref 23346

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

I am seeking information regarding your force's approach to the assessment and support of applicants and employees with hearing impairments, particularly those who use hearing aids.

Please provide, where available, copies of policies, procedures, guidance documents, process maps, flowcharts or other documents relevant to the questions below.

A - Recruitment and Occupational Health Assessment

1. Does your force undertake hearing assessments during recruitment for:
 - a. Police Officers
 - b. Special Constables
 - c. PCSOs
 - d. Force Control Room staff / Call Handlers
 - e. Detention Officers
 - f. Other operational roles
2. What hearing assessment methods are used during recruitment?
 - a. Pure Tone Audiometry (PTA)
 - b. Speech in Noise testing
 - c. Functional Hearing Testing
 - d. Free Field Testing
 - e. Other methods (please specify)
3. Where an applicant does **not use hearing aids** and fails the initial hearing standard:
 - a. What further assessment process is followed?
 - b. Are any functional hearing assessments undertaken?
 - c. Who makes the final fitness-for-role decision?
 - d. Is there a formal panel or governance process?
4. Where an applicant **uses hearing aids** and does not meet standard audiometric thresholds:
 - a. What assessment pathway is followed?
 - b. Do you utilise the NPWS Hearing Aid Wearer Functional Hearing Test?
 - c. Is specialist audiology advice obtained?
 - d. Is Force Medical Adviser input required?
 - e. How are recruitment decisions made and governed?
5. Have you developed any local guidance, policy, standard operating procedure, decision-making framework or risk assessment process relating to hearing aid users in recruitment?

B - Reasonable Adjustments Following Appointment

1. Once an applicant joins the organisation, what process is followed to ensure hearing-related reasonable adjustments are implemented?



2. Which department(s) have responsibility for coordinating hearing-related reasonable adjustments?
 - a. Occupational Health
 - b. Recruitment
 - c. HR
 - d. ICT
 - e. Airwave/Communications Team
 - f. EDI Team
 - g. Line Management
 - h. Operational Learning/Initial training
3. Do you have a documented process to ensure reasonable adjustments identified during recruitment transfer into employment and operational deployment?
4. What governance arrangements exist for agreeing hearing-related reasonable adjustments?

C - Airwave, Radio and Control Room Solutions

1. Does your force currently support hearing aid users with:
 - Airwave handheld radios
 - Remote Speaker Microphones
 - Bluetooth solutions
 - Telecoil/T-loop systems
 - Bone conduction devices
 - ICCS/Control Room solutions
 - Other communication technologies
2. If supported, please provide:
 - The process for requesting equipment.
 - Which department authorises equipment.
 - Which department funds equipment.
 - Any approval or governance process.
3. Does your force have any local policy, SOP, decision tree or guidance relating to:
 - Airwave and hearing aids.
 - Bluetooth connectivity.
 - Hearing aid compatibility.
 - Control room headset solutions.

D - ICT, Information Security and Governance

1. What role does ICT play in implementing hearing-related reasonable adjustments?
2. Is your Information Security Team, ISAU, SIRO, Accreditor, or equivalent function involved in approving hearing aid connectivity solutions?



3. Does your force require:

- Information security assessment.
 - Risk assessment.
 - Airwave accreditation documentation.
 - Annex F submissions.
 - Other governance approval processes.
- i. Are Bluetooth-enabled hearing aid solutions currently permitted within your force?
- ii. If yes:
- Are there any restrictions?
 - Are there specific approved devices?
 - Are there any environments where Bluetooth use is not permitted?

E - Benchmarking and Good Practice

1. Please provide any:

- Process maps.
- Flowcharts.
- Policies.
- SOPs.
- Guidance documents.
- Lessons learned.
- Benchmarking reports.
- Equality impact assessments.

2. Has your force encountered any significant challenges regarding:

- Recruitment of hearing aid users?
- Airwave compatibility?
- ICCS compatibility?
- Bluetooth governance?
- Reasonable adjustment implementation?

If available, please provide electronic copies of the relevant documents.

SP received your request on 04/09/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP holds some of the requested information.



A - Recruitment and Occupational Health Assessment

1. Does your force undertake hearing assessments during recruitment?

- Disclosed: As below.

- a. Police Officers: **Yes.**
- b. Special Constables: **Yes.**
- c. PCSOs: **Yes.**
- d. Force Control Room staff / Call Handlers: **Yes.**
- e. Detention Officers: **Yes.**
- f. Other operational roles: **If appropriate.**

2. What hearing assessment methods are used during recruitment?

- Disclosed: As below.

- a. Pure Tone Audiometry (PTA): **Yes.**
- b. Speech in Noise testing: **Yes, can refer for this.**
- c. Functional Hearing Testing: **Yes.**
- d. Free Field Testing: **No.**
- e. Other methods (please specify): **Not applicable.**

3. Where an applicant does not use hearing aids and fails the initial hearing standard:

a. What further assessment process is followed?

- Disclosed: If wax in ear canal, advice given, offered retest whether wax in ear canal or not, referral to GP for further investigations if appropriate, refer for SIN hearing assessment.

b. Are any functional hearing assessments undertaken?

- Disclosed: SIN hearing assessment as recommended by College of Policing.

c. Who makes the final fitness-for-role decision?

- Disclosed: Force Medical Advisor.

d. Is there a formal panel or governance process?

- Disclosed: Yes.

4. Where an applicant uses hearing aids and does not meet standard audiometric thresholds:

a. What assessment pathway is followed?

- Disclosed: College of Policing commissioned functional hearing test for Police recruits, functional hearing test recommended for contact Centre.

b. Do you utilise the NPWS Hearing Aid Wearer Functional Hearing Test?

- Disclosed: Yes, policy is in place for utilising this test.

c. Is specialist audiology advice obtained?

- Disclosed: Referral will be made to the candidates GP for further assessment/onward referral.

d. Is Force Medical Adviser input required?

- Disclosed: Yes, final guidance obtained from FMA (the Force Medical Advisor).



e. How are recruitment decisions made and governed?

- Disclosed: Occupational Health provide advice in relation to fitness for role, advise of any adjustments, recommend referral to attendance panel, review of recommended adjustments, final decision in relation to recruitment falls with management/recruitment.

5. Have you developed any local guidance, policy, standard operating procedure, decision-making framework or risk assessment process relating to hearing aid users in recruitment?

- Disclosed: SP follows NWBS (National Police Wellbeing service) guidance.

B - Reasonable Adjustments Following Appointment

1. Once an applicant joins the organisation, what process is followed to ensure hearing-related reasonable adjustments are implemented?

- Disclosed: Once reasonable adjustments have been established, recruitment will inform relevant manager / trainer whose responsibility it then falls on to implement the adjustments.

2. Which department(s) have responsibility for coordinating hearing-related reasonable adjustments?

- Occupational Health
- Recruitment
- HR
- ICT
- Airwave/Communications Team
- EDI Team
- Line Management
- Operational Learning/Initial training

- Disclosed: Both Line Management and Occupational Health. A joint meeting may be held with all relevant parties, (as above) to ensure that they are aware of requirement for adjustments.

3. Do you have a documented process to ensure reasonable adjustments identified during recruitment transfer into employment and operational deployment?

- Disclosed: This is within the recruitment policy around reasonable adjustments being accommodated: "If successful on gaining a position after interview and prior to appointment, line managers must ensure that any adjustments required in the role can be considered prior to appointment in line with the force's reasonable adjustments guidance. Requests for Reasonable Adjustments are considered on a case-by-case basis. Where necessary, required adjustments will be reviewed by a panel chaired by the Head of Occupational Health, with representatives from HR, line management and operational policing (where applicable)."



4. What governance arrangements exist for agreeing hearing-related reasonable adjustments?

- Disclosed: No formal governance other than the appointments panel record outcome of meeting, standards for hearing reviewed if new guidance is issued by College of Policing/National Wellbeing Service. NWBS provide their own governance in relation to setting of standards.

C - Airwave, Radio and Control Room Solutions

1. Does your force currently support hearing aid users with:

- Airwave handheld radios
- Remote Speaker Microphones
- Bluetooth solutions
- Telecoil/T-loop systems
- Bone conduction devices
- ICCS/Control Room solutions
- Other communication technologies
- **No information Held.**

2. If supported, please provide:

- The process for requesting equipment.
- Which department authorises equipment.
- Which department funds equipment.
- Any approval or governance process.
- **Not applicable.**

3. Does your force have any local policy, SOP, decision tree or guidance relating to:

- Airwave and hearing aids.
- Bluetooth connectivity.
- Hearing aid compatibility.
- Control room headset solutions.
- **No information Held.**



D - ICT, Information Security and Governance

1. What role does ICT play in implementing hearing-related reasonable adjustments?
- **No information Held.**
2. Is your Information Security Team, ISAU, SIRO, Accreditor, or equivalent function involved in approving hearing aid connectivity solutions?
- **Disclosed: Yes.**
3. Does your force require:
 - Information security assessment.
- **Disclosed: Yes.**
 - Risk assessment.
- **Disclosed: Yes.**
 - Airwave accreditation documentation.
- **Disclosed: Yes.**
 - Annex F submissions.
- **Disclosed: No.**
 - Other governance approval processes.
 - i. Are Bluetooth-enabled hearing aid solutions currently permitted within your force?
- **Disclosed: No.**

E - Benchmarking and Good Practice

1. Please provide any:
 - Process maps.
 - Flowcharts.
 - Policies.
 - SOPs.
 - Guidance documents.
 - Lessons learned.
 - Benchmarking reports.
 - Equality impact assessments.

- **Partially disclosed: Please see the attached policies entitled, 'FOI 23346 Hearing Impairments - Recruitment Selection Policy June 2026.pdf' and 'FOI 23346 Hearing Impairments - Appointments panel guidance.pdf'.**

SP follows Cop/NWBS standards for police recruitment, which include, flow charts, and clinical SOPS – for access to this document, please see the below listed exemption.
2. Has your force encountered any significant challenges regarding:
 - Recruitment of hearing aid users?



- Airwave compatibility?
- ICCS compatibility?
- Bluetooth governance?
- Reasonable adjustment implementation?
- **No information Held.**

The following exemption has been applied:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a partial refusal notice for question E1 (above)

- Section 21(1) - Information reasonably accessible by other means.

Section 21 is an absolute, class-based exemption and as such there is no requirement to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure, nor is there a requirement to perform a Public Interest Test.

Advice and assistance

To comply with our obligations under Section 16 of the Act, the obligation to provide advice and assistance, please find below links to the information requested at E1.

[National recruitment standards - medical standards for police recruitment - GOV.UK](#)

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.



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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