

20 October 2026

FOI Ref 23541

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

This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. My request relates to the number of road traffic incidents where nitrous oxide was recorded.

ITV News would like to request the following information:

1. In the last 5 years, how many incidents have there been where nitrous oxide has been recorded? Please include road traffic collisions and incidents where a driver has been stopped/pulled over by police. If possible, please provide collisions and incidents data separately.

*Furthermore, please break down the data as follows:*

1st January 2022 – 31st December 2022  
1st January 2023 – 31st December 2023  
1st January 2024 – 31st December 2024  
1st January 2025 – 31st December 2025  
1st January 2026 - present day

2. For each year, how many of those incidents led to **injury**, and how many to **deaths**?

If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to cost of compliance limits, please let me know how I can refine my request.

I look forward to receiving your response within 20 working days. If you need any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

SP received your request on 16/10/2026 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 local police systems to answer this request. For the period requested, there have been more than 45,000 Road Traffic Collision incidents recorded within our Command-and-Control system. Each of these incidents would require manually reviewing and cross referencing with further police systems to determine whether 'nitrous oxide' has been inhaled, and whether this such incidents led to injury or death.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 5 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 3,700 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the FOI Act by some considerable margin.

### **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.

To assist in refining your request, data could be provided for the number of arrests where the arrest reason includes 'nitrous oxide' from 1st January 2022 to 16<sup>th</sup> October 2026 (the date we received your request). However, please note further exemptions may apply.

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](mailto: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.



STAFFORDSHIRE  
**POLICE**

#### **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

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