STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

28 October 2026 **FOI Ref 23586**

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

Please provide the number of serving police officers, special constables and police staff who died by known or suspected suicide in each calendar year from 2021 to 2025, and in 2026 to the date of this request.

I am not asking for names or any other information that would identify an individual.

If you consider that section 40 applies to the annual figures, please release the information at the most detailed level that is not exempt, for example a single total for the whole period.

West Yorkshire Police released annual figures with a gender and rank breakdown in response to FOI 2699555/25.

SP received your request on 26/10/2026 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.

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 request.

- Section 38 (1) (a) (b) – Health and Safety

Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would or would be likely to (a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or (b) endanger the safety of any individual. 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

Disclosure of the number of serving police officers, special constables and police staff who died by known or suspected suicide would obviously place both sensitive and potentially distressing information into the public domain. The impact upon the mental health and wellbeing of not only close family and friends but also colleagues cannot be understated or ignored. The disclosure of such sensitive and highly emotive information may resurface the anguish and pain experienced by any individual with a close link to any such staff identified and therefore have unknown ramifications to the mental health and wellbeing of close friends and loved ones.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 38(1)(a)(b)

In addition to the basic premise of being open and transparent, disclosure of the information would allow for greater public awareness around deaths by suicide among serving police officers and inform public debate upon this matter.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 38(1)(a)(b)

Non-disclosure of such information would protect the mental health of family members of any serving police officers, special constables and police staff who may have died by known or suspected suicide.

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 the mental health and wellbeing of close friends and loved ones, then non-disclosure takes precedence.

Please be advised that 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 Force's 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 20 working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 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, taking into account 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