



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Our Ref: FOI 23252
Your Ref: FOI 23156
Date: 3rd September 2026

Internal Review of FOI 23156

Original request received on 21/07/2026:

I seek statistical information on all officers and staff currently on external secondment to organisations such as other forces, international bodies, the College of Policing and HMICFRS.

1. Please provide the number of officers broken down by rank at each place of secondment.
2. Please provide the number of staff broken down by grade at each place of secondment.
3. For 1 and 2, please state the number of officers and staff, respectively, whose salaries you are responsible for paying during the course of their secondment (either directly or indirectly).

Clarification received on 24/07/2026:

I am interested only in those employees whose salaries you fund from your budget, thank you; therefore, please exclude:

- i. salary costs you reclaim from external organisations; and
- ii. salary costs covered by grant payments.

Internal review received 07/08/2026:

Dear Staffordshire Police,

Please pass this on to the person who conducts Freedom of Information reviews.

I am writing to request an internal review of Staffordshire Police's handling of my FOI request 'External secondments'.

You appear to have applied the clarification I sent you to the whole of my request, when it should have been applied to Q3 only. In doing so, you provided no information except "nil" for both Q1 and Q2:

SP Response

SP have revised the response to FOI 23156 as follows.

I seek statistical information on all officers and staff currently on external secondment to organisations such as other forces, international bodies, the College of Policing and HMICFRS.

1. Please provide the number of officers broken down by rank at each place of secondment. – **Partially disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled 'FOI 23252 internal review of FOI 23156 External Secondments'. Section 24(1) and Section 31(1) applied.**



2. Please provide the number of staff broken down by grade at each place of secondment. - **Disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled 'FOI 23252 internal review of FOI 23156 External Secondments'.**

3. For 1 and 2, please state the number of officers and staff, respectively, whose salaries you are responsible for paying during the course of their secondment (either directly or indirectly).

Clarification received on 24/07/2026:

I am interested only in those employees whose salaries you fund from your budget, thank you; therefore, please exclude:

- i. salary costs you reclaim from external organisations; and
- ii. salary costs covered by grant payments.

Disclosed; SP do not pay the salaries of the seconded officers and staff

The following exemptions have been applied:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this particular request.

- Section 24 (1) – National Security

Section 24 is a qualified exemption and as such there is a requirement to articulate the harm and conduct a test of the public interest.

- Section 31 (1) Law Enforcement

Information is exempt from disclosure under S31(1) where the release of Information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, SP are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

Harm

To provide the numbers of officers seconded to counter terrorism units (CTU) would enable a geographical picture to be drawn up about where joint operational locations are utilised and embedded by other law enforcement personnel; whether or not operating in concert with police officers of the host Constabulary. This would be vital police intelligence to an individual/individuals/group who are intent on targeting locations specifically utilised by law enforcement. Confirmation or denial that any other information is held would leave SP and other forces open to disruption, in turn this would compromise the effective delivery of operational law enforcement increasing crime. Any disclosure that undermines the generic terms of duty of care provided by police would be detrimental to the public at large.

Section 24(1)

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure - Section 24 (1)

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and resources are distributed within an area of policing. To disclose further information relating to this request would enable the public to hold SP to account with regards to the resource levels of officers/staff members attached to CTUs. In the current climate where there are calls for transparency within the counter terrorism policing arena, disclosure would



enable more informed public debate into ensuring police forces have adequate staffing to tackle counter terrorism.

Factors favouring non-disclosure - Section 24 (1)

Security measures are in place to protect the communities that police forces, including SP, serve. To disclose information relevant to this request would highlight to an individual/individuals/group, intent on carrying out criminal activity, potential vulnerabilities within the police service by revealing the number of officers within CTUs in each individual force. Considering the current security climate, with a national terrorist threat level of 'Severe', meaning an attack is 'highly likely', no information which could assist an individual/individuals/group in attempts to disrupt society should be disclosed. To what extent this information may aid an individual/individuals/group is unknown, but it would have an impact on a force's ability to monitor criminal and terrorist activity on a national basis.

This could enable terrorist groups to target sensitive police locations, and as such, would be damaging to national security. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infra-structure both within the UK and Internationally.

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions regarding their safety and protection and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with what is placed into the public domain.

Section 31(1)

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31(1)

Disclosure of this information would lead to better public awareness surrounding the deployment of counter terrorism trained resources within CTUs by providing openness, transparency, and accountability in relation to public spending. This would enable scrutiny of resourcing levels within those units.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 31(1)

Contemporary policing uses the development of intelligence, coupled with the gathering and security of evidence in order to disrupt criminal behaviour and bring offenders to justice. When the role of SP may be compromised by disclosing staffing levels within CTUs, the effectiveness of SP will be reduced. In this case, for the reasons outlined in the evidenced harm, the effectiveness of current and future strategies when investigating counter terrorism may be compromised.

The personal safety of individuals is of paramount importance to policing and must be considered in response of every release

Releasing information that enables an individual/individuals/group to adjust or increase their criminal activities and prevent law enforcement would endanger the public and cause them to lose confidence in SP. Disclosure under FOI risks facilitating evasion or crime displacement in and across force boundaries. The release of information which has the potential to risk the safety of the public, either locally or nationally, would not be in the public interest. There is a strong public interest in preserving the integrity and effectiveness of systems used to prevent and detect crime, particularly where those systems form part of a nationally coordinated capability. A disclosure under FOI is a release to the world and, in this case, disclosing the staffing levels would identify vulnerable forces leading to more terrorism acts being targeted within areas with fewer resources.

Balance test

Disclosing the information requested would allow inferences to be made about the establishment and deployment capability of counter terrorist officers deployed within counter terrorist units. This could enable an individual/individuals/group to take steps and choose to commit crime in forces that have fewer officers within their counter terrorism units to avoid detection, and as such, this would impact and be damaging to



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

the national security of the UK. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect security or infrastructure both within the UK and internationally.

The FOI Act has a presumption of disclosure, unless when balancing the competing public interest factors the prejudice to the community outweighs the benefits. In this case, there is an argument for disclosure, because the public have a right to know that every effort is made to ensure CTUs are staffed appropriately and in line with all relevant obligations. However, this must be balanced against the negative impact disclosures under the FOI Act can make.

Policing is reliant on community engagement including the submission of intelligence and gathering of evidence. When it is appropriate, information is given to the public. The disclosure of staffing levels within CTUs could have an adverse effect on the investigation process and on the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This places the victims of such offending at greater risk regarding their health and wellbeing, meaning SP would not wish to take an action that would do this.

When considering whether disclosure is appropriate, the strongest reason for disclosure must be weighed 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, when weighed against the risk of disclosure undermining the ability to prevent and detect crime and hindering the ability of SP to protect the public, then non-disclosure takes precedence. The negatives outweigh any tangible community benefit and therefore on balance the Public Interest Test lies in favour of withholding the information and engaging the S24(1) and S31(1) exemptions.

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
IAT@staffordshire.police.uk

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