

11 September 2026

FOI Ref 23337

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

In FOI 23285, Staffordshire Police provided offence and outcome information for records/occurrences relating to victims carrying the "Learning Disability" Person flag, within the Sexual Offences Act 2003 offence scope and the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2025 used in my earlier request.

Using the same offence scope, date range, outcome categories and treatment of ongoing investigations as FOI 23285, please provide, if this can be produced through an existing electronic search, report or query, the equivalent offence and outcome information for victim records/occurrences that do not carry the "Learning Disability" Person flag.

If reasonably practicable, I would be grateful for the information in the same Excel format as FOI 23285. For the avoidance of doubt, I recognise that the absence of a Learning Disability flag does not establish that a victim does not have a learning disability. I am seeking a comparison between records carrying the flag and records not carrying the flag, not a definitive comparison between people with and without a learning disability.

2. Definition and application of the "Learning Disability" Person flag

Please provide any current recorded definition, data-entry guidance, operational guidance or instruction held by Staffordshire Police which explains the "Learning Disability" Person flag and records any of the following:

- the definition or criteria used for applying the flag;
- who may apply the flag;
- whether applying the flag is mandatory or discretionary;
- at what stage of recording or investigation the flag may be applied;
- whether the flag can subsequently be amended or removed; and
- any guidance or training specifically concerning when the flag should be used.

If no recorded information is held for any of these points, please state this.

3. Accuracy and completeness of the flag

Please state whether Staffordshire Police holds any existing audit, quality-assurance exercise, management information, review or other recorded assessment concerning the accuracy, completeness or consistency with which the "Learning Disability" Person flag is applied.

If so, please provide copies covering 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2025, where held and subject to any applicable exemption. If no such information is held, please confirm this.

4. Autism

In response to Question 1 of FOI 23126, Staffordshire Police stated:

"SP have the following Person flags as searchable electronic fields: 'Vulnerable Person' and 'Learning Disability'. No further information is held."

Please provide any recorded information held which establishes:

- whether Staffordshire Police has a separate searchable electronic Person flag, field, marker, code or other structured identifier specifically for autism;



- if no separate autism identifier exists, whether any recorded system guidance identifies another structured field or category in which autism should be recorded; and
- if there is no such structured field or category, whether any recorded guidance identifies where or how autism should be recorded.

I am not asking Staffordshire Police to search individual free-text crime or case records.

SP received your request on 02/09/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP holds/does not hold the requested information.

- Using the same offence scope, date range, outcome categories and treatment of ongoing investigations as FOI 23285, please provide, if this can be produced through an existing electronic search, report or query, the equivalent offence and outcome information for victim records/occurrences that do not carry the "Learning Disability" Person flag. – **Partially disclosed, please see the accompanying file titled 'FOI 23337 Refinement of FOI 23285 Electronic Recording of Victims Data.xlsx'**

2. Definition and application of the "Learning Disability" Person flag

Please provide any current recorded definition, data-entry guidance, operational guidance or instruction held by Staffordshire Police which explains the "Learning Disability" Person flag and records any of the following:

- the definition or criteria used for applying the flag; - **No information held.**
- who may apply the flag; - **Disclosed, all officers that have completed the relevant training for SP's Record Management System.**
- whether applying the flag is mandatory or discretionary; - **Disclosed, it is not mandatory. The flag is added for all persons that have been arrested and persons attending a voluntary interview if deemed to have 'Learning difficulties' or 'Learning Disabilities'. Officers/staff then have the ability to add a flag manually however this is not a mandatory field.**
- at what stage of recording or investigation the flag may be applied; - **Disclosed, the flag can be applied at any stage of the investigation.**
- whether the flag can subsequently be amended or removed; and – **Disclosed, the flag can be end dated if appropriate.**
- any guidance or training specifically concerning when the flag should be used. – **No information held.**

3. Accuracy and completeness of the flag

- Please state whether Staffordshire Police holds any existing audit, quality-assurance exercise, management information, review or other recorded assessment concerning the accuracy,



completeness or consistency with which the “Learning Disability” Person flag is applied. – **No information held.**

- If so, please provide copies covering 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2025, where held and subject to any applicable exemption. If no such information is held, please confirm this. – **No information held.**

4. Autism

Please provide any recorded information held which establishes:

- whether Staffordshire Police has a separate searchable electronic Person flag, field, marker, code or other structured identifier specifically for autism; - **No information held.**
- if no separate autism identifier exists, whether any recorded system guidance identifies another structured field or category in which autism should be recorded; and – **No information held.**
- if there is no such structured field or category, whether any recorded guidance identifies where or how autism should be recorded. – **No information held.**

Please note that there are 1,103 offences that are still being investigated so with regard to these cases we are citing Section 30(1)(a)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Investigations conducted by Public Authorities.

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 30(1)(a)(b) – Criminal Investigations

Section 30 is qualified and class based and, as such, we are required to apply the public interest test.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)

Disclosure of the information would improve the public's knowledge and understanding of the investigatory process and, as all police investigations are publicly funded, would show how public funds are being spent.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)

Disclosure of the requested information would prejudice how investigations are carried out in the future. SP is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities SP serves. Any release of information relating to ongoing investigations could prejudice and undermine those investigations. The prevention and detection of such matters could therefore be hindered and therefore risk interference with evidence, which could have detrimental impact on future investigations. In addition, the right to a fair trial could be undermined.

Balance test



Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant. Having considered the public interest factors SP 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 non-disclosure.

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

Or by Post to:

Information Access Team
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ

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



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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