

Email

FOI position

Regarding

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Email

From

[Redacted]

To

ICO Casework; [Redacted]

Cc

[Redacted]

Subject

FOI position

Display Name

Date Received

01/11/2023 12:13

Email Address

[Redacted]@staffordshire.police.uk

External: This email originated outside the ICO.

Hello all,

Please find attached a report about the current and impending FOI requests position within SP. I would be grateful of any other suggestions or advice that you could give to assist the recruitment position we find ourselves in.

Many thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]




[Redacted]

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FOI position report 30102023.pdf	No	159,450	
image002.jpg	No	4,767	
image004.png	No	10,743	
1 - 3 of 3 (0 selected)			Page 1



FOI Position Report

Summary

SP compliance with regards to FOI responses is going to fall significantly due to recruitment difficulties within the Central Disclosure Unit (CDU). The timeline of events that has caused this and the measures we have put in place are detailed below.

Recruitment is proving difficult across the organisation, there are many factors involved from negative publicity around policing through to levels of pay.

Background

The FOI team is made up of 3 full time equivalent (FTE) posts.

The table below describes the timeline of the posts. Prior to September 2022 all 3 posts were filled in a permanent way and compliance was maintained.

Dates	Post 1	Post 2	Post 3
September 2022	Person 1 successful in temporary promotion until the end of 2023 and leaves the team	Person in post	Person in post
January 2023	Temporary Person 1 replacement starts on 6-month induction plan	Person in post	Person in post
March 2023	Temporary Person 1 in post still on 6-month induction plan	Person 2 notifies intention to leave FOI team at the end of March	Person in post
April 2023	Temporary Person 1 replaces Person 2 in the permanent post	Temporary Person 1 becomes Person 2	Person in post
May 2023	Nobody in post	Person in post	Person in post
June 2023	Nobody in post	Person in post	Person 3 announces pregnancy
July 2023	Nobody in post	Person 2 notifies intention to leave at the end of August to a post within SP with more pay	Person in post
August 2023	Nobody in post	Person in post	Person in post
September 2023	Nobody in post	Nobody in post	Person in post.

			Preferred candidate to start before Person 3 leaves on maternity fails vetting
October 2023	Nobody in post	Preferred candidate fails vetting	Person in post.
November 2023	Nobody in post	13 th November Person 2 starts on 6-month induction plan	3 rd November Person 3 leaves on maternity. Nobody in post
December 2023	Nobody in post	Person 2 in post on 6-month induction plan	Nobody in post

Compliance

Despite the recruitment difficulties SP have endeavoured to comply with the 90% target since September 2022;

Sept 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	June 23	July 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23
93%	94%	97%	89%	87%	87%	68%	88%	88%	95%	93%	93%	82%	89%

Recruitment

Recruitment has been a continuous process throughout late 2022 and 2023;

Redeployees – the posts have been offered at each stage to redeployees, there has been no interest

Internal adverts – have attracted no applicants

External adverts – have attracted limited numbers of applicants, all of which have been put through for interview as only 1/3 are currently turning up to be interviewed. Interviews have taken place in October 2022, May 2023 and July 2023

In the July session 12 applicants were put through for interview, 4 turned up, 3 were offered FOI positions and 2 subsequently failed vetting. We are due to interview again on 14th November, 6 applicants and all have been put through to interview. The successful candidates will be subject to the vetting process and any estimated start date will be 3 months from offer

Actions taken

- Request has gone to CDU staff to complete overtime to maintain a basic level of service – this has been taken up by 1 part time member of staff who has agreed to do 2 days a

week extra monitoring the inbox of FOI requests. All other staff are already doing overtime to meet other statutory obligations for subject rights and court orders

- Request has gone across SP to ex CDU staff, together with analysts and researchers for overtime to assist. To date there has been no take up
- Request has gone to People Services for any restricted officers or staff that could assist, there have been no suitable resources
- Request has gone to People Services for agency cover, there have been no suitable candidates
- Vetting have agreed to expedite any CDU applicants through the process
- A response to requesters has been formulated to send in the near future;

Due to unforeseen staffing issues beyond our control, Staffordshire Police are currently unable to comply with the statutory 20 working day deadline for all Freedom of Information requests.

We apologise for the reduced level of service during this time.

In order to assist us in maintaining a level of service to all requesters if at any point you no longer require the requested information please let us know and your request can be closed.

Both the Information Commissioners Office and the National Police Chiefs Council have been made aware of this position.

- Review; the CDU review into the capability, resource and demand is already a significant way through. Part of this has been to re write the role profiles and submit them for pay re-evaluation to see if this assists in recruitment. The current salary range is £25,713 to £29,874, the outcome of the evaluation is awaited
- To assist with the cost of living, retain staff and make the department attractive to work in, over and above what SP already offer, the CDU has moved to a 50% work from home model
- The ICO FOI self-assessment toolkit for Topic 1-Timeliness has been completed based upon an assumption that we will not be able to respond to FOI requests (see attached)



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t.docx



2 November 2023

Our reference: IC-268066-Q0F9

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 1 November 2023.

I have passed the information provided onto the relevant Group Manager in our FOI and Transparency department. They are aware of the issue and thank you for being proactive in the matter.

Unfortunately we don't have any guidance or resources specifically on recruitment. However we do appreciate how difficult recruitment can be.

You might find it helpful to register on our [DPO community forum](#), which is not just for data protection officers, where other practitioners may have some useful advice.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me on my direct number 0330 414 6360. If you need advice on a new issue you can contact us via our Helpline on 0303 123 1113 or through our [live chat service](#). In addition, more information about the Information Commissioner's Office and the legislation we oversee is available on our website ico.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Boot
Lead Case Officer
Information Commissioner's Office

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

T. 0330 414 6360 ico.org.uk twitter.com/iconews

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