

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 21 March 2024

Public Authority: Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police
Address: Police Headquarters
Weston Road
Stafford
ST18 0YY

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant requested information from Staffordshire Police (the public authority). By the date of this notice the public authority had not issued a substantive response to this request.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that the public authority has breached section 10(1) of FOIA in that it failed to provide a valid response to the request within the statutory time frame of 20 working days.
3. The Commissioner requires the public authority to take the following step to ensure compliance with the legislation.
 - The public authority must provide a substantive response to the request in accordance with its obligations under FOIA.¹
4. The public authority must take this step within 35 calendar days of the date of this decision notice. Failure to comply may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of FOIA and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

¹ The Commissioner expects the public authority to take appropriate precautions to protect any personal data when disclosing information in a spreadsheet or similar format; [Information Commissioner's Office - Advisory note to public authorities | ICO](#)

Request and response

5. On 22 November 2023, the complainant wrote to the public authority and requested information in the following:

[a] It appears that the College of Policing, Code of Ethics must be adopted and applied by warranted Police Officers performing their 'Duties' and that the Chief Constable is; under the 1996 Police Act; responsible for ensuring the code is applied at all times?

Please provide any '**Force Standing Orders**' '**Directives**' '**Written Policy, or Guidance Documents**' issued by the Chief Constable which relate to the application of the code of ethics, by officers in the performance of their duties?

[b] Please provide any '**Force Standing Orders,**' '**Force Policy Documents**' or '**Directives,**' and or any other '**Force Guidance providing direction/instruction**' to officers on the procedures to follow in respect of the 'Data Protection Act, where a DPA breach is found and or admitted?

For example 'Force standing orders, Policies and Procedures to be followed following the data breach being established; what policies actions or procedures are in place to contact the 'Data Subjects' to notify them of the extent of the breach, and their rights? What policies or procedures are in place to support and assist the 'Data Subject' with any potential harm that has been caused or may follow as the result of the breach."

Reasons for decision

6. Section 1(1) of FOIA states that:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –

(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and

(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him."

7. Section 10(1) of FOIA states that a public authority must respond to a request promptly and "not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt".

8. On 6 March 2024 the Commissioner wrote to the public authority, reminding it of its responsibilities and asking it to provide a substantive response to the complainant's request within 10 working days.
9. Despite this intervention the public authority has failed to respond to the complainant.
10. From the evidence provided to the Commissioner in this case, it is clear that the public authority did not deal with the request for information in accordance with FOIA. The Commissioner finds that the public authority has breached section 10(1) by failing to respond to the request within 20 working days and it is now required to respond to the request in accordance with FOIA.

Right of appeal

11. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)
GRC & GRP Tribunals,
PO Box 9300,
LEICESTER,
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0203 936 8963

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: grc@justice.gov.uk

Website: www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber

12. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
13. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

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