

FOI ref no: SCO/FOI/004/2024

Date: 23 May 2024

Dear Applicant,

Original Request

Freedom of Information request: reference SCO/FOI/004/2024 first notified to us by email on 11 January 2024.

I wish to make a F.O.I. request regarding the Staffs Police Dog Welfare Scheme. In the light that the now said scheme is now run totally by females, and I include the administrative staff as well, I wish to ask, have any males applied to join this scheme, since its inception?

If so, how many if any, and how many if any, reached the interview stage?

And will the Commissioner's Office, be considering broadening its gender base, to rectify this?

Our Response

I am citing Section 14 (2) repeat requests. Where a public authority has previously complied with a request for information which was made by any person, it is not obliged to comply with a subsequent identical or substantially similar request from that person unless a reasonable interval has elapsed between compliance with the previous request and the making of the current request.

Your original request was received on the 5 October 2023 and responded to on the 11 October 2023. You have sought an Internal Review which was received on the 16 October 2023 and responded to on the 6 November 2023. Whilst your Internal Review was being considered you submitted the same request to Staffordshire Police which was transferred with your permission to the Staffordshire Commissioners Office on the 25 October 2023 and responded on the 6 November 2023 with the above exemption. You have made the same requests to Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and have again requested information that is similar to previous requests.

You were also directed to the Information Commissioners Office should you be dissatisfied with the above response.

You did lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and confirmation of this was received by the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office on the 14 February 2024, ICO reference number IC-285653-S2R1.

Further correspondence was received from the ICO dated the 2 May 2024 where the following was advised.

Based on the information I have seen to date, it is not clear that section 14(2) applies to the requests dated 24 October 2023 and 11 January 2024. The requests are clearly not identical in wording to previous requests.

For the avoidance of doubt, you should now do the following.

- Consider whether to change your response to the information requests, and let us know the outcome.
- Send us your full and final arguments as to why you think section 14(2) applies, i.e. why you think the requests are substantially similar to previous requests. As previously advised please consult our guidance which has extremely useful information applicable to this case: [Dealing with repeat requests | ICO](#)

Please provide your response by **23 May 2024**, ensuring that you fully set out your final position in relation to this request.

Staffordshire Commissioner's Office response to your initial enquiry, Internal Review and contact from the ICO is as follows:

Upon review of the correspondence from the ICO, regarding your request for information under the Freedom of Information provision, as referenced above. We are of the opinion that the response issued on the 24 January 2024 was incorrect and the exception should not have been applied. This was confirmed to the ICO on the 22 May 2024 where we advised that we wished to withdraw the refusal notice and will respond to your request which is outlined below.

In September 2022 it was agreed that there was a requirement for additional volunteers for the Dog Welfare Scheme. At that time there was a waiting list of four people who had applied previously during 2021-22. All four applicants were female and were successfully appointed.

A further recruitment drive was held in July 2023 for the Commissioners Independent Scrutiny Panel (CISP). I can confirm that one person, who was male, expressed an interest at this point in the Dog Welfare Scheme and was successful in being offered the position however, declined in favour for a position on Independent Advisory Group (IAG). Therefore, to answer your request 2 males have applied to join the scheme. 1 male joined the scheme but has since left and 1 male was successful but declined the position.

The Staffordshire Commissioner's Office through any recruitment campaign welcomes all applications and recognises the need for diversity in the individuals recruited to ensure it is representative of its communities.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a review. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Please remember to quote the reference number in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Independent Review Manager
Staffordshire Commissioner's Office

Staffordshire Commissioners Office, Ground Floor, Block 9, Weston Road, Stafford ST18 0YY

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