

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.ukDate: 21st May 2021

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2021/ 433

Reply contact name is: Kerry Merritt

I write in connection with your request for information dated 11th May 2021 concerning child sexual abuse in schools.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and relates to child safeguarding. I would like to be provided with the following information.

- (1) I would like to know how many allegations of sexual abuse of students by teachers were reported to this police force by schools in the local area (including primary, secondary and sixth form colleges) within the last 3 calendar years (2018, 2019, 2020).
- (2) Of all allegations of sexual abuse of students by teachers within the last three years, how many came from independent/private schools, how many from state/comprehensive schools and how many from other types of establishments (e.g. free schools and academies).
- (3) How many claims from independent schools led to a charge and of those, how many led to a prosecution? How many claims from state/comprehensive schools led to a charge and of those, how many led to a prosecution? How many claims from other types of schools led to a charge and of those, how many led to a prosecution?

Our response:

The information that you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval. The ascertaining of this information would only be possible by manually searching through every single crime report of an allegation of sexual abuse during the years you are requesting in order to determine if the allegation did take place within a school.



Although we have a school 'flag' in our systems which we can search on, the population of this flag is not mandatory and therefore the results it is able to provide cannot be relied upon, certainly not to publish statistics of this nature, effectively in the public domain. There are likely to be occasions whereby a sexual assault has occurred in a school, however, the school flag has not been ticked when the crime occurrence has been recorded on our system, and therefore a search on this flag will leave out a number of these occurrences.

Another issue with searching on this flag is that it records incidences within the given postcode area that the school is in and therefore a search is likely to bring up incidents where a sexual abuse incident has happened near a school in addition to those actually on the school premises, which would compromise the integrity of the results even further.

In order to give you an idea as to how long this request would take to do, our Business Intelligence Team have undertaken a search of all sexual offence crimes and occurrences that have been recorded over the last 3 years:

2018 crimes – **1,720** 2018 occurrences - **1872**
2019 crimes– **1,522** 2019 occurrences - **1738**
2020 crimes – **1,443** 2020 occurrences - **1618**

Therefore, there would be 4,685 occurrences to look through in total in order to ascertain the information you requested, and this would by far take us well over the allocated time frame we have to complete your request within.

Under the circumstances I am absolutely confident that to locate, retrieve and extract the information you seek would by far exceed the time obligations upon this authority to comply, and in so doing would exceed the fees limits. This is set at £450 calculated at a flat rate of £25 per hour for those work activities comprising of confirming the information is held, locating it, retrieving it and extracting it.

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request to a more manageable level. However, due to the difficulties outlined above, I cannot see how this can be achieved in this particular case.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption applicable to the information requested is:

Section 12: Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

In accordance with section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this particular request.

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered in the light of your request within the time constraints applicable under the legislation.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry Merritt
Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



Force Disclosure Unit

Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN
Telephone 101 ext 62005

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, 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 to the:
Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,
London Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire,
SN10 2DN

Email at disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk.

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 Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original FoI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit 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 twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker 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

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant 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 details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk