

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

XXXXXXX – by email

Date: 1st July 2021

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2021 / 478

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 28th May 2021 concerning Intelligence Reports and Problem Profiles since 2010.

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:

A copy of any intelligence reports or problem profiles on the issue of child criminal exploitation, including but not limited to county lines drug dealing, produced between January 1, 2010, and the present day.

Our response:

The information requested is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 24(1) – National Security
Section 31(1) – Law Enforcement

Section 24 and Section 31 are both prejudice-based, qualified exemptions and therefore require Wiltshire Police to establish the harm in disclosure and the public interest for and against disclosure.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Evidence of Harm

Any disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a disclosure to the world at large. To disclose detailed information pertaining to policing strategies and Wiltshire Police's approach to monitoring this type of crime would prejudice our ability to police the force area, which would lead to a greater risk to the public and officers and would undermine the core principles of policing which are to prevent and detect crime. Releasing the information into the public domain at a national level, force by force, could further assist criminals with this type of activity.

Sections 24 and 31 - Public Interest favouring disclosure

There is a legitimate public interest in knowing that Wiltshire Police's financial resources are used appropriately and that value for money is achieved.

Disclosure of the requested information would show that adequate levels of resource continue to be allocated to this type of policing activity thereby ensuring the safety of the public and the prevention and detection of crime. Furthermore Wiltshire Police acknowledges the importance of providing information that would be in the public interest as information that can give value to public debate and awareness.

Sections 24 and 31 - Public Interest favouring non-disclosure

It is not in the public interest to release information which would assist criminals and prejudice the ability of the Police Force to protect the physical health of its employees and the community, to prevent or detect crime and to apprehend offenders.

Disclosure would be detrimental to the effective operation of police activities, disrupting police time and overall hindering the prevention and detection of crime. Law enforcement tactics would be compromised, individuals would be placed at greater risk and potentially more crime would be committed.

Many of the Intelligence Reports and Problem Profiles produced in respect of Child Criminal Exploitation contain a vast quantity of sensitive tactical information which may cause considerable harm to policing if disclosed regardless of whether the information is for current policing needs or past. Many policing tactics utilised by the Police today, have been in use for an undetermined length of time due to their proven ability to assist in the prevention and detection of crime.

The disclosure of any of the following information :-

- a) Details of OCG's (Organised Crime Gangs) or DDN's (Dangerous Drug Networks) and their numbers / hierarchy / organisation and their methodology in respect of eliciting or exploiting children in criminal activity
- b) Details of known or established individuals involved in criminal activity in Wiltshire
- c) Details of vulnerable individuals or groups of individuals potentially at risk of being exploited by gangs in County Lines or other criminal activity such as Cuckooing
- d) Details of any potential gaps or opportunities for exploitation or increased criminal activity in the County
- e) Details of any specific policing tactics (or indeed limitations)

would render these methods less effective, ultimately undermining policing and resulting in new tactics being needing to be developed and employed which may take a considerable amount of time. An increase in crime would be the definitive result of any disclosure, together with an increased risk to both vulnerable children at risk of such exploitation and the general population of Wiltshire due to increases in criminal activity.

Balance Test

On review, there is very little to indicate that the public interest would be better served by disclosing the information requested. The Police service is tasked with protecting the community and solving crime and would not disclose information if it would jeopardise those important roles. Although there is considerable public interest in the transparency of policing operations, this does not outweigh the forces obligations to the public in the prevention and detection of crime. Therefore, the balance is heavily weighted in favour of withholding the information.

Please Note

Wiltshire Police can neither confirm nor deny that it holds any other information with regard to an exempt body as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 23(5) Information Supplied by, or concerning, certain Security Bodies

Section 23 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest in this 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 exemptions applicable to the information requested are :-

Exemptions applied:

Section 23(5)	- Information Supplied by, or concerning, certain Security Bodies
Section 24(1)	- National Security
Section 31(1)(a)(b)	- Law Enforcement

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,

Nick Penny

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 Fol 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