

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

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

XXXXXX – by email

Date: 19th July 2021

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2021 / 581

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 8th July 2021 concerning Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation.

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 – having liaised with our Business Performance and Intelligence Teams - I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

For the years 17/18, 18/19, 19/20 and 20/21 :-

Question 1

- a) How many instances of child criminal exploitation were recorded and detected ?
- b) Please provide the number of victims involved and the nature of the crimes as recorded by the police e.g. county lines etc
- c) Please provide the number of these victims who had been or were currently 'Looked after Children'* or on a child protection plan*.

Question 2

- a) How many instances of child sexual exploitation were recorded and detected ?
- b) Please provide the number of these victims who had been or were currently 'Looked after Children' or on a child protection plan

Question 3

- a) How many arrests/cautions of children carrying knives were made ?
- b) Please provide the number of arrests there were of children who had been or were currently 'Looked after Children' or on a child protection plan.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Question 4

- a) How many arrests/cautions have there been of children aged 10-17 which have led to a referral to the National Referral Mechanism ?
- b) Please provide the number of arrests and referrals to the NRM of children who had been or were currently 'Looked after Children' or on a child protection plan.

Our response:

The information that you are requesting for the majority of your request (namely questions 1 and 4) is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval.

In respect of Q1, Wiltshire Police do not have a flag on our system(s) to identify whether or not an individual is involved in Child Criminal Exploitation or is even suspected of it.

Whilst Child Criminal Exploitation is a recognised and important strand in our Force Control Strategy, a lot of the information around CCE is not only very subjective, but also Intelligence and it needs to be recognised that Intelligence is not fact.

The types of criminal activity that a child could potentially become involved with under CCE are widespread and certainly not confined to the more recognised areas of Drugs, Violence etc that are most closely associated with County (or Local) Lines. It also needs to be understood that not all children arrested – say – for supplying drugs are actually subject to or at risk of exploitation.

In respect of Q4, Wiltshire Police do not have a field on our systems where we specifically record whether or not a referral has been made to the National Referral Mechanism when a child has been arrested or cautioned, or during a period in Custody.

For the time periods you have requested, there have been 15,515 crimes and another 3,688 incidents where an under 18 has been identified either as an offender or a suspect.

To ascertain whether or not any of these under 18's are either associated with Child Criminal Exploitation or have been subject to a subsequent referral to the National Referral Mechanism would necessitate the crime logs (and also the Custody Logs) for each and every one of these records being accessed and analysed to determine which (if any) records / individuals matched the criteria you are looking for in respect of both of these questions.

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.

It also needs to be noted that there is no obligation on an Authority to create information – where none already exists – in order to answer questions in an FOI request.

Although excess cost removes the forces' obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request. What I am able to provide you are the answers documented below :-

Looked After Children / Child Protection Plans

Wiltshire Police do not hold any flags or markers on our system(s) to denote whether a particular child is either "looked after" or subject to a "Child Protection Plan".

Our answer therefore in respect of Questions 1c, 2b and 3b is – **No Information Held**

In this instance we would recommend that you submit a similar FOI request directly to either Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire County Council Social Services Team(s) who may be able to answer your query.

Question 2

The number of instances of Child Sexual Exploitation that have been recorded by Wiltshire Police for the time period you require have been as follows :-

Fiscal Year	Crimes	Non Crime Incidents	Detection outcome
2017-2018	174	49	90
2018-2019	150	36	22
2019-2020	114	43	18
2020-2021	139	31	10

Please Note :-

- The figures above have been provided based on the CSE Flag we have on our system(s) which is used to denote incidents of this nature. The content of this field is not mandatory and is reliant on the discretion of the individual recording the crime / incident.

Question 3

The number of Arrests of under 18's for possession of a knife blade / sharp pointed article in a public place - Criminal Justice Act 1988 (recordable) for the time periods you require have been as follows :-

Fiscal Year	Arrests
2017-2018	143
2018-2019	246
2019-2020	479
2020-2021	256

The number of Cautions of under 18's for possession of a knife blade / sharp pointed article in a public place - Criminal Justice Act 1988 (recordable) for the time periods you require have been as follows :-

Fiscal Year	Cautions
2017-2018	1
2018-2019	6
2019-2020	5
2020-2021	5

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request in respect of questions 1 and 2 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,

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