WILTSHIRE POLICE

Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police HQ
London Road
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN
Tel 101 ext 62005
www.wiltshire.police.uk
disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

Date: 9th August 2021 Your ref: FOI Our ref: FOI 2021 / 579

Reply contact name is: Kerry Merritt

Dear ****,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 6th July 2021 concerning 'Officer of Concern' programme.

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 consulted our Professional Standards Department and our Counter Corruption Unit I am now able to respond as follows.

You wrote/Our response:

1) Does the force have an 'Officer of Concern' programme?

No – however individuals are discussed through a People Intelligence Board when they have 3 or more complaints (mentioned down below). The People Intelligence Board is an internal process.

2) How many officers were recognised as an 'Officer of Concern' for each of the last five years, including 2020? Please provide a breakdown for the reason(s) officers were placed on the programme (e.g. use of force, sexual misconduct)

As stated above, Wiltshire Police do have an 'Officer of Concern programme'.

Although persons serving with the police in most circumstances are not able to use the police complaints system to make a complaint about their own force, this does not mean that they cannot raise concerns. However, the person serving with the police who raises the concern will not have the same statutory rights as a complainant.

Police forces and local policing bodies should ensure that there are adequate systems in place to support and protect persons serving with the police who want to raise concerns. This might include extending confidentiality to anyone who raises such a concern, as far as is possible and appropriate.

A person serving with the police should consider raising concerns within their own force in the first instance. However, as an addition to the routes offered by forces, the IOPC provides a 'report line'. This is a dedicated phone line and email address that persons serving with the police can use to report that someone serving with the police may have committed a criminal offence or behaved in a way that would justify disciplinary proceedings. People serving with the police can get contact details for the IOPC report line from the IOPC's website or their professional standards department, staff association or trade union.

Each month a Strategic Board is held where a wealth of information is provided and discussed for all staff and officers. This includes officers that have had a 3 or more complaints in a 12 month period. Due to changes in the complaints system and national legislation, which has affected the way complaints are recorded and dealt with; the reporting of 3 or more complaints has only just been able to recommence since April 2021.

Due to only being able to provide figures from April 2021 and not further back, the below figure has been supplied under a gesture of goodwill.

April to June 2021 – 5 complaints

3) How many officers were placed on an 'Officer of Concern' programme specifically over concerns about their use of force in that same period and what was the highest number of independent use of force complaints associated with an officer on the programme?

77 complaints have been raised regarding the allegation Use of Force from Jan 2016 and Dec 2020 from members of the public. One officer has received 3 x complaints regarding Use of Force.

4) What is the highest number of complaints faced by an officer recognised as an 'Officer of Concern' in the same period (from 2016 to the end of 2020)?

I can confirm the last 12 months, 5 officers have received 5 complaints

5) How many officers were subsequently dismissed after being placed on the 'Officer of Concern' programme in the same period (from 2016 to the end of 2020)? Please break this down per year.

Although we do not have a 'Officer of Concern' programme, reviewing the leaving reason of an officer, it can be confirmed no officers have been subsequently dismissed through a complaint.

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and I apolgise for the delay in answering your request.

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