

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ
London Road

Devizes
Wiltshire SN10 2DN

Telephone: 101

Extension: 62005

Website: www.wiltshire.police.uk

E-mail:

disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk



Date: 11th August 2021

Your ref: FOI request

Our ref: FOI 2021/659

Reply contact name is Kerry Merritt

Dear ***,

I write in connection with your request for information dated the 10th August 2021 concerning dog thefts.

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:

Please provide a breakdown for the last five calendar years, on a month by month basis, of all dog thefts across the force area.

If possible, please also detail which town or city each of the dogs were stolen from and whether the dog in each case was returned to its owner. Thank you.

Our response:

The information you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. Wiltshire Police does not have a specific crime classification for stolen pets, or specifically dogs. These offences are recorded under the code of 'theft'. To provide an accurate figure for the time period requested, a manual review of each 'theft' occurrence would need to be conducted to determine whether or not the theft related to a stolen dog. This would involve manually searching through thousands of records.

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.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Ordinarily, under our Section 16 obligation to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you of a way to refine your request to a more manageable level. Due to the difficulties in obtaining the requested information, as outlined above, I cannot think of a way in which this could be achieved.

Having said this, the following links may be of assistance. The first link is to an article on the Wiltshire Police website regarding the new Wiltshire Dog Watch Scheme, available through the Community Messaging site (second link).

1. <https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/news/wiltshire/news/2021/april-2021/wiltshire-wide-dog-watch-scheme-launched/>
2. <https://www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk/> - registration is required to receive updates

Please note: - The response provided on the news article, in relation to 2021 incidents so far, was conducted by using a 'wildcard' search. Results returned from these searches are not considered accurate, given they could leave out relevant results; as a 'wildcard' search only looks for terms mentioned within the MO field of an occurrence. Therefore, if the term is not included within the summary, has been misspelt etc. the occurrence will not be returned in the results. To accurately determine the number of dog thefts, a manual search of each occurrence (not just crimes) would need to be conducted.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires 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.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss the withheld information.

Yours sincerely

Kerry Merritt
Force 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

Please note that the ICO's offices will be closed for the foreseeable future and are therefore unable to receive correspondence via post.

If you should wish to contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>