

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.ukDate: 23rd September 2021

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2021 / 725

Reply contact name is: Kerry Merritt

Dear ****,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 8th September 2021 concerning Covid regulations communicated to the public.

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 the written advice on Covid regulations communicated to the public via your website in March 2020 or whenever your force first issued online advice on Covid regulations; A copy of the written advice on Covid regulations communicated to the public via your website in January 2021; A copy of the written advice on changes in Covid regulations communicated to the public in July 2021.

Our response:

Some of the information that you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval. In relation to any advice which was communicated via our website in March 2020 and January 2021, please note that Wiltshire Police went onboard Single Online Home (our new website) in March 2021. Therefore, a lot of the information requested would have been held on our old website. Although we do have a huge dump of all of the old content, images and files from the old site that the suppliers provided to us when we moved, this information is in its compressed form, and is also not arranged in any easily searchable way (because there are zipped files within zipped files). Therefore, it would involve a manual trawl to find the information requested.



Even then, the Covid advice pages were updated repeatedly throughout the year, so the information requested would likely be within the version history of the articles, and we cannot be sure if the version history has been included in this vast data dump.

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 :-

I have been advised that very early on in the process we realised that providing our own bespoke advice to Wiltshire residents was largely unnecessary – much of the advice on, for example, lockdown restrictions, travel advice, exercising your dog, etc, was national advice, and came from the gov.uk website. Therefore, it made sense to simply provide the link to the many gov.uk pages that existed and leave the job of keeping the content updated and relevant to them. Where relevant we also linked off to Swindon Borough Council's and Wiltshire Council's websites as well as other local organisations and charities for local advice and guidance.

When we did update the Covid advice pages, it was mainly:

- **New links, as they became relevant**
- **Links to the latest Chief Constable's blog on YouTube that he would record every few weeks.**
- **Occasional materials, such as letters from the Chief to the people of Wiltshire.**

It's also worth noting that our new website is part of Single Online Home, which is the national website for policing. The idea behind SOH is to standardise a lot of the pages of content across forces, so that you haven't got 43 forces saying the same thing about, say, knife crime, 43 different ways. The content is written once, centrally, and then rolled out to all forces on the platform. This means that we have no ability to update the main Coronavirus page on our new site – this is national content. However, because we had such a great trove of local information for COVID, we did want to make sure we moved some of that across. The upshot is that we now have two separate pages about Coronavirus on our website:

<https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/c19/coronavirus-covid-19/>

- this is national content, which we do not control

<https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/police-forces/wiltshire-police/areas/about-us/about-us/coronavirus/>

- this is a page of local content – you can see in that we have links to the local authorities' Local Outbreak Management Plans and local charities, etc. This is largely what came over from our old site. I don't think we've updated this much since then.

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 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