



XXXXXXXXXX
By email



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

Date: 25th May 2022

Our ref: FOI 2022/359

Reply contact name is: Abigail Standidge

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 21st April 2022, concerning reports of child abuse / neglect. Please accept my apologies for the delay in providing a response to your request.

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.

Following receipt of your request, research was conducted by the Business Intelligence department at Wiltshire Police. Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

How many reports of child abuse or neglect did police attend in the following years

- a) 2018
- b) 2019
- c) 2020
- d) 2021

How many reports of child abuse or neglect involved the death of a child in the following years

- a) 2018
- b) 2019
- c) 2020
- d) 2021

How many reports of child abuse or neglect involved the serious injury of a child (as defined as a fracture, deep cut, deep laceration or injury causing damage to an internal organ or the impairment of any bodily function) in the following years:

- a) 2018
- b) 2019
- c) 2020
- d) 2021

Our response:



Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at s1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at s1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

Whilst I can confirm Wiltshire Police do hold the requested information, section 12(1) of the FOIA states:-

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.

The information you are requesting - namely in relation to the second and final questions - is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. It is possible a child reported for abuse / neglect in the time period may have died within the requested time period however, unless the death was classified as a murder, we would not have a way of linking the abuse to the death on Niche. Additionally, the definition provided regarding the 'serious injury of a child' is not one we have on our system and this may also cover sexual offences such as rape / sodomy (depending how this definition is interpreted). To determine whether a child died as a result of abuse / neglect - or to determine whether the definition provided for 'serious injury of a child' is met - would require a manual review of all child abuse / neglect occurrences in the requested time period. However, please see below for information that can be retrieved within the time obligations.

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. Therefore the whole of the request should fall under the exemption of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please also note that if one part of the request engages a Section 12 response, the whole request will engage a Section 12 response. The reason being is due to the fact that locating, retrieving and extracting any further information would only add to the already exceeded time obligations.

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.

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 can provide you with is documented below:

How many reports of child abuse or neglect did police attend in the following years

- a) 2018
- b) 2019
- c) 2020
- d) 2021

Please note:

- The Home Office Code 11/3 Cruelty & neglect of children, tag 'child abuse', and the person role 'victim' were used to gather the below data.
- The data includes crimes and non-crime incidents
- The use of tags are not mandatory, therefore they may not always be reliable and could be subject to human error (i.e. a tag may have been applied when it should not have been and vice versa).

2018	1057
2019	735
2020	794

2021	993
Total	3579

How many reports of child abuse or neglect involved the serious injury of a child (as defined as a fracture, deep cut, deep laceration or injury causing damage to an internal organ or the impairment of any bodily function) in the following years:

- a) 2018
- b) 2019
- c) 2020
- d) 2021

Please note:

- The Home Office Code 8/1 Grievous Bodily Harm, tag 'child abuse', and the person role 'victim (under 18)' were used to gather the below data.
- The data includes crimes and non-crime incidents
- The use of tags are not mandatory, therefore they may not always be reliable and could be subject to human error (i.e. a tag may have been applied when it should not have been and vice versa).

2018	2
2019	1
2020	1
2021	1
Total	5

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

Abigail Standidge
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.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

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/>