

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.ukDate: 7th June 2022

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2022 / 434

Dear ***,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 17th May 2022 concerning Children under 18 strip searched.

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:

1. How many children, ie under 18 years of age, have been strip-searched by your police force between 2014 and 2021?
2. How many children ie under 18 years of age were strip searched in custody by your police force between 2014 and 2021?
3. How many children ie under 18 years of age were strip searched by your police force at the location where they were stopped between 2014 and 2012?
4. How many girls, ie under 18 years of age, have been strip-searched by your police force between 2014 and 2021?
5. How many boys, ie under 18 years of age, have been strip-searched by your police force between 2014 and 2021?
6. Were appropriate adults present if strip-searches took place by your police force between 2014 and 2021
7. What was the gender and ethnicity breakdown if strip-searches by your police force took place between 2014 and 2021?
8. How many children, ie under 18 years of age, have been strip-searched in schools by your police force between 2014 and 2021?
9. If children, ie under 18 years of age, were strip-searched in schools by your police force between 2014 and 2021, were appropriate adults present in all cases?

Our response:

Firstly, please note we do not record figures for question 1, 3, 8 and 9. With regards to question 1 data only covers strip searches conducted within custody.



The information that you are requesting namely for part of question 2, question 4, 5, 6 and 7 if broken down for children, is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval. We currently do not have the capability within our systems to flag for the information requested within these questions which can then be analysed quickly and easily.

The ascertaining of this information would only be possible by conducting a manual trawl through every single record to determine the answers to all questions listed above.

With regards to question 2, We only began extracting strip search data in 2016 and this was not completed during 2017. Whilst this may be possible to retrospectively extract data from 2014, this would take in excess of 18 hours to complete.

For questions 4 and 5, unfortunately we cannot break down the data between male and female children without manually extracting this data from every individual record.

Whilst we do not have any readily available data to hand for question 6 and to retrospectively extract this data would take over 18 hours, all searches completed in custody will have had an appropriate adult (AA) present unless deemed 'urgent' by the custody officer which is acceptable in law if it is felt it is too dangerous to delay a strip search to await an AA. These are very rare. An example of this may be concealed razor blades or anally packed heroin.

You have not specifically asked for children with regards to question 7. However, if you wanted this broken down sadly the data cannot be provided. Again, the only possible way would be to manually extract this data from individual records would take more than 18 hours.

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.

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 :-

Year	Adult	Juvenile (Under 18yrs)	White	BAME
2016	533	42	455	124
2017	No data available	No data available	No data available	No data available
2018	554	51	476	129
2019	519	82	455	156
2020	405	85	365	125
2021	360	30	320	70
2022	121	9	106	22

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,

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