

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

XXXXXX – by email

Date: 22nd February 2023

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2023 / 197

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 6th February 2023 concerning the Cost of Cleaning Police Vehicles.

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:

This is an information request relating the cost of cleaning police cars due to passenger incidents.

Please include the following information for the 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 financial years:

1. How many incidents have been recorded of passengers (either those in custody, or being transported) soiling themselves or vomiting in police cars
2. How much has been spent on cleaning incidents. If an exact figure can't be provided I would also be happy with an estimate

Our response:

The information that you are requesting for Question 2 of your request is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval.

Whilst we can track within our accounts the cost of Cleaning Services, our Finance systems do not specifically record the type, nature or location of the cleaning that has been undertaken and charged for. This detail is only held on the physical invoice.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The only way of ascertaining the information you require would be to locate and physically read each and every invoice we have received from the Cleaning Company concerned to determine whether it pertained to cleaning of vehicles (or not), whether it related to the supply of generic cleaning materials for use at Force locations around the County and – particularly - whether or not it met your specific criteria in this request. We would then need to create new records of information in order to answer your request.

Under the circumstances - given that there are many 1000's of invoices involved here - 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.

It also needs to be recognised that there is no obligation on an Authority to create information – were none exists today – simply to answer an FOI request.

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 :-

Question 1

No Information Held

There is no obligation on an Authority to provide an explanation in the event of a No Information Held response being provided, but under our Section 16 duty to be as helpful as possible to an applicant I am happy in this instance to provide some clarity to you.

We have numerous sites around the County from which Police vehicles are deployed day-to-day and may ultimately carry passengers related to a Custody or other issue.

Whilst our Fleet Team are ultimately responsible for the provision, maintenance and servicing of all vehicles used by Wiltshire Police, they do not get advised by our various Community Policing Teams if there have been issues with vehicles being soiled in this manner (nor do they deal directly themselves with any cleaning of those vehicles).

None of our CPT Teams keep specific logs or records of instances of vehicle soiling as there is no obligation for them to do so within our business model.

If a vehicle is soiled, it is the responsibility of the officers from the respective CPT Team to whom the vehicle is assigned to arrange any cleaning that is required of

vehicles in which this type of soiling has occurred. They do this by contacting the designated Cleaning Company directly and arranging for the vehicle to be cleaned.

It needs to be noted that in some cases – depending on the severity of the soiling or damage – a basic clean-down may be undertaken by the officers themselves without formally engaging the professional services of the designated Cleaning Company to do it.

Please note, there is no obligation on an Authority to either make an estimate or pass an opinion under FOIA. Indeed, Wiltshire Police would never publish place any information into the public arena (as this disclosure will effectively be) if they were not certain of the information being provided.

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request in respect of questions 2 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,

Nick Penny
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