

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

**Force Disclosure Unit
Police Headquarters**
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date 21st February 2023

Our Ref FOI 2023-173

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 2nd February 2023, concerning homicide data (urban, peri-urban, rural / scavenging).

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 Major Crimes Investigation Team at Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

I am seeking to investigate the effects of scavenging on the process of decomposition with a view to informing more accurate estimates of time since death in forensic death investigations where scavengers may be involved. The project will consider rural, peri-urban, and urban circumstances. A principal goal of the project is to build a predictive model of the effects of scavenging on decomposition (and, therefore, estimates of time-since-death) based on scavenger population density and scavenging behaviour patterns.

To augment this model, it would be helpful to include data on homicide occurrences in rural, peri-urban, and urban circumstances in the areas in which data will be collected, namely Canterbury, Cranfield, and Shrivenham/Swindon. Moreover, it would be very helpful to know which, if any, of the bodies in these cases had definite or suspected evidence of having been scavenged (or, if they comprised skeletal remains, was full recovery not possible owing to missing elements). I have, however, been unsuccessful in obtaining homicide data from available sources as homicides are grouped together with other serious crimes and geographical data is not readily available. And case-specific data are understandably not openly available.

I would, therefore, like to ask if it is possible to obtain access to homicide data specifically, please? I would like data from the last 10 years, if possible, to mitigate against any impacts COVID might have had in terms of the patterns we seek to analyse. A 5 year period may be too affected by COVID. I do not require any personally identifying information from cases, only the approximate
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location, and month and/or year of each homicide. And then, of course, if possible, the aforementioned data on confirmed/suspected presence/absence of scavenging. This information would be used for the explicit purposes of this research and only included within the PhD thesis and resultant scientific publications. We would also submit to any other information sharing restrictions/agreements you may wish to impose.

I have summarised the data I am requesting below.

Data requested for 2012-2022:

- ❖ Location of homicide
- ❖ Urban, rural, or peri urban situation
- ❖ Date by month and year
- ❖ Evidence of scavenging *
- ❖ Suspicion of scavenging *
- ❖ Clothed or unclothed *

* not essential but greatly helpful if available

Clarification from applicant, received 03.02.2023

I would greatly appreciate the data for all of Wiltshire county.

Our response:

Data Requested For 2012-2022					
Location	Urban, Rural, Peri-urban	Month and Year	Evidence of Scavenging	Suspicion of Scavenging	Clothed / Unclothed
Swindon	Urban	June 2012	No	No	Clothed
Devizes	Urban	Jul 2012	No	No	Clothed
Trowbridge	Urban	Jul 2012	No	No	Clothed
Tidworth	Urban	Sept 2012	No	No	Clothed
Tidworth	Urban	Sept 2012	No	No	Clothed
Trowbridge	Urban	Nov 2012	No	No	Clothed
Melksham	Urban	Jan 2013	No	No	Clothed
Devizes	Urban	Mar 2013	No	No	Clothed
Amesbury	Urban	Apr 2013	No	No	Clothed
Salisbury	Urban	Apr 2014	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	June 2014	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	Sept 2014	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	May 2015	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	Jun 2015	No	No	Clothed
Chippenham	Urban	Sept 2015	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	May 2016	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	Dec 2016	No	No	Clothed
Trowbridge	Urban	Mar 2017	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	Mar 2017	No	No	Clothed
Chippenham	Urban	May 2017	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	Jul 2018	No	No	Clothed
Chippenham	Urban	May 2019	No	No	Clothed
A303 Near Salisbury	Peri-urban	Jun 2019	No	No	Clothed
Devizes	Urban	Dec 2019	No	No	Clothed

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Salisbury	Urban	Jun 2020	No	No	Clothed
Salisbury	Urban	Jun 2020	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	Oct 2021	No	No	Clothed
Dinton	Urban	Dec 2021	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	Jan 2022	No	No	Clothed
Salisbury	Urban	Feb 2022	No	No	Clothed
Devizes	Urban	Jul 2022	No	No	Clothed
Salisbury	Urban	Sept 2022	No	No	Clothed
Swindon	Urban	Dec 2022	No	No	Clothed

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,

Abigail Standidge

Phone: 01722 547081

Email: abigail.standidge@wiltshire.police.uk

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



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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 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/>

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