

WILTSHIRE POLICE



Police Headquarters

London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk

Date: June 12, 2023

Your ref:

Our ref: FOI 2023/378

Reply contact name is:

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information, dated 31st March 2023 concerning missing evidence.

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 Justice Assets Supervisor of Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You Wrote:

1. What is the name of the record-keeping system you currently operate in relation to digital and physical material and evidence gathered and stored by your force during a police investigation? If you have used a different or additional system since 2018, please provide the name also of that system.
2. For each of the years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 (and as far as you are able for 2023) how many pieces of evidence went missing from your force? Of those pieces missing, where possible, please provide a breakdown by crime type eg. homicide, burglary, drug offences etc
3. For each of the same years in question 2, how many cases could not proceed to trial due to missing or contaminated evidence? Again, please provide this answer by crime type.

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Response:

The information that you are requesting is not stored in a way which allows for easy retrieval and Wiltshire Police do not have the search facility to automatically gather this type of data. To confirm, our Justice Asset Supervisor stated that as there isn't a category record management system to record lost items, the only way to ascertain this information for the requested time periods would be to physically search and read each and every piece of property recorded as being held to determine if it still there. Furthermore, this would only be for items held by them and would not include other items held in other departments and temporary stores which haven't been passed to them. This would exceed the 18 hour work limit to locate, retrieve and extract the information, therefore Section 12 applies.

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.

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. However due to the difficulties in obtaining the requested information, as outlined above, I cannot think of a way in which this could be achieved.

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,



The 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

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 you contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>