

**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: 4th May 2023

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2023 / 505

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 3rd May 2023 concerning Vaping-related crimes.

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:

I am seeking data on the number of crimes and thefts related to vaping products in convenience stores and supermarkets. I believe there is a strong public interest for this information to be published due to a potential link between the popularity of vapes and the impact on the safety and wellbeing of business owners.

Please can you supply the following information:

- 1) The number of businesses who were victims of vaping-related crimes for the periods of January 2022 – April 2022 and January 2023 and April 2023.
- 2) The key search terms I am seeking in relation to the type of business are; convenience store, corner shop, grocery store, supermarket, newsagent, symbol group, tobacconist, off licence and independent retailer.
- 3) The key terms I am seeking in relation to the crime are theft, robbery, ram raid, assault, burglary, disposable vape, vape, Elfbar, Elf Bar, Lost Mary, IVG and SKE Crystal.
- 4) Could you also provide the name the affected businesses traded under and their address.

Ideally I would like these figures broken down month-on-month



Our response:

The information that you are requesting for the majority of your request

Whilst our crime recording system(s) are sophisticated and we have a number of designated fields in which we can record details about a crime (and which we can then theoretically run automated searches on to garner information), we do not have specific fields that record the item or type of item that has been stolen or involved in a crime. This type of information would only be contained within the narrative of the occurrence log of a crime.

The only way of ascertaining the information you require would be to locate and read each and every crime occurrence log related to each of the following crime groups for the time periods you require :-

- a) Theft
- b) Robbery
- c) Violence Against the Person
- d) Burglary

For the time periods you require, this would necessitate us looking at 8,616 individual crime logs in 2022 and 9,099 in 2023.

Whilst we do have fields in which we record the building or business type that is involved in a crime, this field is not a mandatory one and its' population is at the discretion of the individual recording the crime. As a consequence, the content of this field is unreliable – certainly for the use of trying to rationalise the number of occurrences down to a more realistic number to search rather than the numbers quoted above. Wiltshire Police would certainly not place any information into the public domain (as this FOI response would be) when we were not 100% sure of the quality of the information being provided.

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.

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,

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