

WILTSHIRE POLICE



Via email



Police Headquarters

London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk

Date 31st May 2023

Our ref **FOI 2023/561**

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 23rd May 2023 concerning Out-of-control dog offences and dogs seized.

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 Dog Unit Manager at Wiltshire Police.

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

You wrote:

As a freedom of information request, please provide monthly and annual totals from 2018 up until the most current date available at the point of production for the following:

- The number of times the offences of an out-of-control dog causing injury has been recorded
- The total number of dogs seized each year
- The number, seized each year of: a) suspected banned breeds, b) suspected American Bully or 'XL bully' breed
- The number of dogs seized, split by weight
- The number of dogs destroyed each year.
- The number of dogs destroyed each year, with a breakdown, if available of suspected banned breeds and suspected American bully breeds

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Response:

The information that you are requesting, namely for question 1 is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval. We currently do not have the capability within our systems to flag the number of times an out-of-control dog has caused an injury which can be analysed quickly and easily. A dog causing injury is generally recorded as violence against the person and does not identify them separately as dog bites. Therefore, in order to obtain the requested information, we would be required to manually read through all violence against the person offences during the period you are requesting to determine if they relate to an out-of-control dog causing injury.

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:

- The total number of dogs seized each year

2018 = 7

2019 = 7

2020 = 15

2021 = 24

2022 = 19

2023 = 7

- The number, seized each year of: a) suspected banned breeds, b) suspected American Bully or 'XL bully' breed

2018 = a)2 - b)0

2019 = a)3 - b)0

2020 = a)6 - b)0

2021 = a)9 - b)2

2022 = a)6 - b)1

2023 = a)1 - b)1

- The number of dogs seized, split by weight

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No information held - Dogs are not weighed when seized.

- The number of dogs destroyed each year.

2018 = 2

2019 = 3

2020 = 7

2021 = 5

2022 = 8

2023 = 2

- The number of dogs destroyed each year, with a breakdown, if available of suspected banned breeds and suspected American bully breeds

2018 = 1 Prohibited dogs - 0 American Bully Breeds

2019 = 1 Prohibited dogs - 0 American Bully Breeds

2020 = 4 Prohibited dogs - 0 American Bully Breeds

2021 = 0 Prohibited dogs - 0 American Bully Breeds

2022 = 3 Prohibited dogs - 1 American Bully Breeds

2023 = 0 Prohibited dogs - 0 American Bully Breeds

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request in respect of question 1 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.

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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

Force Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.

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

Proud to serve and protect our communities

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/>