



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

Date: 17th October 2023

Ref: FOI 2023/994

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 13th October 2023 concerning zombie knives, machetes and prohibited offensive weapons.

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:

- The total number of knife crimes recorded each year from 2013 to date, broken down by year
- Of these, over the same time period broken down by year, how many involved the use of a prohibited offensive weapon or blade, such as a zombie knife or machete, or other specified offensive weapon as per the The Criminal Justice Act (Offensive Weapons) see Annex A <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-offensive-weapons-act-2019/statutory-guidance-offensive-weapons-act-2019-accessible-version#annex-a--list-of-offensive-weapons>
- If possible, please provide a breakdown of these by type of offensive weapon

Our response:

The information that you are requesting for the majority of your request is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval. In order to determine the type of knife that has been reportedly used, this would involve us having to manually peruse through each report of knife crime dating back to 2013, in order to accurately obtain this information. This is because there is no tag within our systems that we can reliably search on that will give us the type of weapon that has been used. This information is likely to be within the body of the crime report itself, which again, would need physically looking through in order to obtain this detail.

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.

Please note, that if one part of the request engages a Section 12 response, the whole request will engage a Section 12 response. The reason being is due to the fact that locating, retrieving and extracting any further information would only add to the already exceeded time obligations.

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 –

Weapon Used	Reported Year											Grand Total
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Knife / blade (used / threatened)	285	295	353	460	439	505	599	593	534	670	520	5253
Knife / bladed (possession)	158	151	269	304	352	320	395	353	406	542	316	3566
Grand Total	443	446	622	764	791	825	994	946	940	1212	836	8819

Please note, that the data provided in the table above has been extracted from our systems by searching on a tag called "weapon used", but please be aware that this tag is a non-mandatory field which means that officer's and staff do not need to fill out this field and as a result, it is therefore liable to human error. This is because there could have been other reports involving a knife/blade used or in possession in some way, but as the weapons used tag was not utilized then any reports of this nature would not have been picked up by this search.

The data above is also relevant to the 30th September 2023.

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

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(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,

Force 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

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.

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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