

**Police Headquarters**

London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk

Date 18/12/2023

Our ref: FOI 2023/1193

Reply contact name is:

Dear XXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information, dated 14 December concerning witchcraft, black magic or other similar practices.

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:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request information regarding incidents reported to your police force that involve allegations of witchcraft or related practices.

Specifically, I am interested in the following:

- > The number of cases reported to your police force involving allegations of witchcraft, black magic, or similar practices from 2018 to 2023, broken down by year.
- > A brief description of each incident, including the nature of the allegation (e.g., threatening others with black magic, claims of witchcraft used against someone).
- > The outcomes of these cases, including whether they resulted in any criminal convictions or referrals to other agencies.

Please provide the information in an electronic format if possible.

Response:

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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.

The type of information you require is not stored in a way which allows for easy retrieval. When recording a crime, Wiltshire Police do not have a specific field in which to indicate that this may relate to witchcraft or black magic. In order to ascertain whether 'witchcraft' or 'black magic' were mentioned in relation to an occurrence, we would need to manually peruse all occurrences reported within the requested time period to determine whether they are relevant to your request.

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 falls 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.

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

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