



WILTSHIRE POLICE

Force Disclosure Unit

Police Headquarters
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

XXXXXX – by E mail

Date: 10th January 2024

Ref: FOI 2024/034

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 9th January 2024 concerning school pupils found in possession of 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:

1 Can you reveal the number of weapons seized in schools in the following years: 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

2 Can you also detail the incidents in 2023

3 What was the most common weapon found in each year?

Our response:

The information that you are requesting for the majority of your request is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval.

Whilst our crime recording system(s) are fairly sophisticated and we have a number of unique individual fields in which we record specific details about a crime or incident (such as the date, the location, the suspects name, etc) – which can then theoretically be searched upon, we do not have specific fields in which we record the following key information you are requiring :-

a) the type of weapon that may have featured in a crime or incident

Proud to serve and protect our communities

b) whether a weapon has been seized or not in a crime or incident

The information above (even if it is actually recorded by us) would only be held within the narrative of the OEL (Occurrence Enquiry Log) of a crime and to locate the information you require we would need to firstly locate and then read each one of these individually - and then make a new record of the specific information you require that actually met your designated criteria.

In terms of the most popular weapon seized, we do not record this information anywhere in our system(s) so our response to Q3 of your request is – **No Information Held**.

Our crime recording system does include separate fields where we can record if a weapon has been used in a crime (Flag only) and the Building Type (eg School), however it needs to be noted that neither of these fields are mandatory and their use is solely discretionary on the part of the person recording the crime. As such, their use is sporadic at best, and we cannot reliably use those fields as a basis for our investigations as we cannot guarantee the quality of the information held under those flags. We would never place information into the public domain (as this FOI response will be) if the data was knowingly inaccurate, so every crime record would need to be checked to ensure the validity of our response.

There is no specific Home Office Crime Recording Code for Weapons seized in schools. From experience, crimes of this nature are most likely to be recorded under the following specific crime categories :-

- Violence Against the Person
- Sexual Offences

In any typical year, Wiltshire Police record something in the region of 20,000 individual crimes that fall into either of the above crime categories.

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.

Please Note

It should also be noted that there is no obligation on an Authority to create information – where none currently exists – simply to answer an FOI request.

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.

Proud to serve and protect our communities

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

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

Proud to serve and protect our communities

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

Proud to serve and protect our communities

Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk