

**Police Headquarters**

London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date: March 8, 2024

Our ref: FOI 2024/114

Reply contact name:

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 26th January 2024 concerning intelligence logs.

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 Force Intelligence Bureau at Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am able to respond as follows.

You Wrote:

- 1) How many intelligence logs in total were created in 2023 by Wiltshire Police?
- 2) Of these logs, how many are linked to financial investigation or POCA enquiries in 2023 by Wiltshire Police?
- 3) How many intelligence logs were submitted by the Dedicated Source Handling Team (DSHU/CHIS tactic) in 2023 by Wiltshire Police?
- 4) Of the logs submitted by the DSHU, how many relate to financial investigation or POCA enquiries in 2023 by Wiltshire Police?

Response:**Question One**

17,851 intelligence logs / reports

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In regards to Questions, Two, Three and Four, Wiltshire Police can neither confirm nor deny that any information is held relevant to your request as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 24(2) – National Security

Section 30(3) – Investigations

Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

Overall Harm in Confirming or Denying whether Information is Held

Any release under the Freedom of Information Act is a disclosure to the world, not just to the requester. To confirm or not that information is held pertinent to these questions would reveal whether or not Wiltshire Police holds intelligence on a specific subject area.

Modern-day policing is intelligence led and this is particularly pertinent with regard to both law enforcement and national security. The public expect police forces to use all powers and tactics available to them to prevent and detect crime or disorder and maintain public safety.

The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built and in order to counter criminal behavior, it is vital that the police have the ability to work together, where necessary covertly, to obtain intelligence within current legislative frameworks to assist in the investigative process to ensure the successful arrest and prosecution of offenders who commit or plan to commit crime.

To achieve this goal, it is vitally important that information sharing takes place between police officers, members of the public, police forces as well as other law enforcement bodies within the United Kingdom.

The impact of providing information under Freedom of Information which aids in identifying whether or not Wiltshire Police holds this intelligence would provide those intent on committing criminal acts with valuable information as to where the police are targeting their investigations.

In addition, to confirm or deny whether information is held in this case has the potential to undermine the flow of information (intelligence) received from members of the public into the Police Service relating to these types of offences, thereby undermining national security and leaving the United Kingdom at risk.

Public Interest Test

Section 24(2) – National Security

Factors Favouring Confirming or Denying Information is Held

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and resources distributed within an area of policing. To confirm whether or not information exists would enable the general public to hold Wiltshire Police to account in relation to the type of intelligence held.

Furthermore, confirming or denying may improve public debate and assist the community to take steps to protect themselves.

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Factors Against Confirming or Denying Information is Held

Taking into account the current security climate within the United Kingdom, no information which may aid criminals should be disclosed. To what extent this information may aid them is unknown, but it is clear that it will have an impact on a force's ability to monitor their activity.

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regards to their safety and protection. The only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with what is placed into the public domain.

The cumulative effect of criminals gathering information from various sources would build a picture of vulnerabilities within certain scenarios, as in this case which forces do or do not hold intelligence regarding a certain topic.

Section 30(3) – Investigations

Factors Favouring Confirming or Denying Information is Held

Confirming or denying whether information exists relevant to this request would lead to a better informed general public by identifying that Wiltshire Police robustly gathers intelligence regarding a certain topic. This fact alone may encourage individuals to provide intelligence in order to assist with investigations and would also promote public trust in providing transparency and demonstrating openness and accountability into where the police are currently focusing their investigations.

The public are also entitled to know how public funds are spent.

Factors Against Confirming or Denying Information is Held

Modern-day policing is intelligence led. To confirm or not whether Wiltshire Police has this specific intelligence could hinder the prevention and detection of crime and undermine any ongoing investigations, by restricting the flow of information into the force.

Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

Factors Favouring Confirming or Denying Information is Held

The fact that the Police Service holds and uses general intelligence to assist in the delivery of effective operational law enforcement is published and that in itself favours disclosure.

Factors Against Confirming or Denying Information is Held

Wiltshire Police has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If a Freedom of Information disclosure revealed information to the world (by citing an exemption or stating no information held) that would assist an offender, such an action would undermine the security of the national infrastructure, by revealing our 'intelligence' thereby highlighting vulnerabilities force by force.

By its very nature, by confirming or denying this information is held would undermine the effective delivery of operational law enforcement. Under Freedom of Information there is a requirement to comply with Section 1(1)(a) and confirm what information is held. In some cases it is that confirmation, or not, which could disclose facts harmful to members of the public, police officers, other law enforcement agencies and their employees.

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Balance Test

The points above highlight the merits of confirming or denying whether information pertinent to this request exists. The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The Police Service will never divulge whether or not information is held if to do so would place the safety of individuals at risk or undermine national security.

Whilst there is a public interest in appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from criminals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding national security. As much as there is a public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of national security, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances.

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regards to their safety and protection and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with any information that is released. Confirming or denying whether information is or isn't held would definitely reveal policing activity and would assist those intent on causing harm. Any incident that results from confirmation or denial would, by default, affect national security.

Therefore, at this moment in time, it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test for neither confirming nor denying that information is held with regards to Questions Two, Three and Four is made out.

No inference can be taken from this refusal that information does or does not exist.

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,

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



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

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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

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/>