

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

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

Date 6th February 2024

Our Ref FOI 2023-1201

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 18th December 2023, concerning domestic abuse related deaths and suicides. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request.

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 Business Intelligence department 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:

Wording clarified on 20.12.2023

1. Please supply the numbers of women who were killed by a partner/relative/friend who had previous contact with your police force in the 12 months prior to their death. To clarify please attempt to identify offence(s) where both the victim and the suspect had had previous contact with the police for domestic abuse in relation to each other. Please give an annual breakdown from 2018 to 2023 or the last available data.
2. Please provide the number of people who died from suspected victim homicides (by this refer to suspected suicides where there is suspicion that a partner/relative/friend was a cause in their death due to domestic abuse) and who had contact with your police forces in the 12 months before their death. Please give an annual breakdown from 2018 to 2023 or the latest available data.
3. Please provide figures of domestic violence survivors who your force ranked as high risk. Please provide the figure as an annual breakdown from 2018 to 2023 or the latest available data.

If there is an issue of exceeding the time limits, please prioritise giving an answer to question 1 and 2.

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Our response:

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at s1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at s1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

Whilst I can confirm Wiltshire Police do hold the requested information, section 12(1) of the FOIA states:-

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 information you are requesting - namely in relation to question 2 - is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. To establish whether a suicide was linked to a domestic abuse offence/s would require manually reviewing every suicide recorded on our system. Doing so would exceed the time obligations placed on us by an authority and is therefore exempt. Additionally, the link between a suicide and a domestic abuse offence/s would not be the call of Wiltshire Police, but one for the Coroner.

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 should fall under the exemption of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please note:

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.

Forces may use different recording systems, therefore it may be possible some Forces can provide this information where others cannot.

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. Due to the difficulties in obtaining the requested information, as outlined above, I cannot think of a way in which this could be achieved.

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 can provide you with is documented below:

Q1 ... Please supply the numbers of women who were killed by a partner/relative/friend who had previous contact with your police force in the 12 months prior to their death. To clarify please attempt to identify offence(s) where both the victim and the suspect had had previous contact with the police for domestic abuse in relation to each other. Please give an annual breakdown from 2018 to 2023 or the last available data.

2018 - 1 victim, 1 x previous Police contact within 12 months ... (1) Violence With Injury (GBH)

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2019 - 1 victim, 2 x previous Police contact within 12 months ... (1) Violence With Injury (ABH), (2) Stalking and Harassment

Please note: There were other murders within the time period requested, however these did not meet the requirement of having had Police contact in the 12 months prior to their death.

Q3 ... Please provide figures of domestic violence survivors who your force ranked as high risk. Please provide the figure as an annual breakdown from 2018 to 2023 or the latest available data.

Please note:

- ❖ An individual can be a high risk domestic abuse victims in more than 1 year.
- ❖ Wiltshire Police changed the process mid-2021 from PPD documents to PPN documents. There has also been significant improvements and training on the process around high risk domestic abuse victims linked to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) improvements - for all domestic abuse victims, not just high risk and not just female victims.

Reported Year	High Risk DA Victim
2018	56
2019	70
2020	82
2021	55
2022	168
2023 (to 18.12)	299

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires 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.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss the withheld information.

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



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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
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 to contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

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