

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

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

Date 5th February 2024

Our Ref FOI 2024-099

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 24th January 2024, concerning handbag thefts.

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 able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

- 1) Please can you state for theft offences recorded by your force, the number in which the crime report text (described as modus operandi reports by many forces) contains a mention of "handbag" in each of the following calendar years:
 - i) 2019
 - ii) 2020
 - iii) 2021
 - iv) 2022
 - v) 2023
- 2) Please can you provide a redacted copy of the free text crime reports for these offences recorded by your force between October and December 2023.

Our response:

[Please note:](#)

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- ❖ The data presented in this response is an un-audited snapshot of un-published data sourced from "live" systems and is subject to the interpretation of the original request by the individual extracting the data.
- ❖ This data was obtained by completing a summary search for the term "handbag". The results of these types of searches may be unreliable and inaccurate as only the summary field of the report is searched. If these terms are contained elsewhere (i.e. within the call log, crime report, statements etc) these will not be returned in the results. Additionally, if the term is misspelt within the summary field, this will not be returned. To provide accurate results would require a manual search of each crime within the specified timeframe to deem if they were relevant to your request.

Reported Year	Theft offences (crimes) reported containing the word 'handbag'
2019	233
2020	111
2021	94
2022	111
2023	70
Grand Total	619

Reported Month Year	Crime Sub Group	Occurrence Description	Occurrence Summary
Oct-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	Suspect female has concealed items within her handbag. Upon being confronted, she gets frustrated and walks out of the store. She then walks back in and picks up a 4 pack of alcohol by the till.
Oct-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	Unknown female has entered a shop, put a case of turkey (cooked hams) and 2 x Pilgrims cheese and put them in her handbag making no attempt to pay and walked out. Suspect wearing black hoodie and trousers recognised by staff as regular offender
Oct-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	Male and female suspect have entered the store and stolen 5 handbags
Oct-2023	All Other Theft Offences	Crime - Theft	Unknown suspect has stolen IP's mobile phone from her handbag which had been left on a wall nearby
Oct-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	Two suspects have entered the store, went to the BWS aisle. Suspects put whiskey and vodka bottles in female suspect's big open handbag.
Oct-2023	All Other Theft Offences	Crime - Theft	Carer is suspected to have been stealing money from a client over a number of months. The family of the client is reporting on her behalf believing that a total of £ has gone missing from their mother's handbag.
Oct-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	Two suspects have entered the store separately, one has picked up a basket and filled it with steaks and cider. The other has selected some chicken and concealed it in her handbag. The male suspect was stopped by staff on suspicion of shoplifting which has resulted in him shoving two members of staff, threatening to bottle one, and throwing a case of cider across the floor. The suspect continue to damage the stores property by knocking more cider off a display and kicking some flowers before threatening a member of staff as he left.

Oct-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	Unknown male entered the store forced open a display cabinet causing damage and stole Mulbury handbag from inside
Oct-2023	All Other Theft Offences	Crime - Theft	Unknown suspect has stolen the IPs mobile and ID from her handbag which she had to the side of her. ID was later located on the bench.
Nov-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	Unknown male has entered the store and stole multiple items and concealed the items in his clothing. He returned approximately 15 minutes later and stole a handbag from the window display.
Nov-2023	All Other Theft Offences	Crime - Theft	A known male suspect has stolen the IPs house keys from her handbag whilst in a pharmacy
Nov-2023	All Other Theft Offences	Crime - Theft	IP has left her grey leather handbag containing her purse with cash Unknown male suspect has entered the store, made his way to the jewellery section, then moved across to handbags and lifted one up looking at it. IP was serving and her colleague looked away from the desk for a moment and the unknown male suspect put the handbag down he'd been looking at left the store saying goodbye in a high pitch voice.
Nov-2023	Theft From The Person	Crime - Theft	Unknown female has bumped into the RP whilst she was wandering around a charity shop and stolen her purse from her open handbag. Minutes later she has tried to use her 3 bank cards at a local ATM but no money has been taken. Driving licence and cash was also in the purse.
Nov-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	Two ladies came into the shop earlier in the day. Spent around 10 minutes looking around and said they would come back later. (They looked at a blue sparkle handbag that we had in store) They came back to the shop at round 15:30 with two children and a pushchair. One of the children came straight in and picked up the blue handbag and put it on their shoulder. CCTV has been reviewed and shows one of the two young ladies take the bag and wrap in her jacket jumper and put it under the pushchair.
Nov-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	Known male suspect has entered the store, selected a black handbag and left without paying for it
Dec-2023	All Other Theft Offences	Crime - Theft	Unknown suspect has stolen handbag from housekeeping office at IPs place of work
Dec-2023	Shoplifting	Crime - Theft	An unknown female has entered the store, selected two handbags and then left without making any attempts to pay.
Dec-2023	Theft From The Person	Crime - Theft	Known male suspect has taken the IP's handbag which had keys and a purse in it when helping the IP into their home address.

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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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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