

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

XXXXXX – by E Mail

Date: 8th February 2024

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2024 / 157

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 7th February 2024 concerning Shoplifting in Supermarkets.

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 – having consulted our Business Performance Team - I am now able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request the following information:

I would like to know about the total number of shoplifting offences occurring at supermarkets/hypermarkets/grocers for the calendar years of 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Of this information, I would also like to know how many times shoplifting offences include any of these keywords in CRIS logs: nappies, baby formula, and/or butter.

Please could the information be provided in either an Excel sheet or PDF format, with information broken down by year (i.e. columns of a table) and by the presence of each keyword given above (i.e. rows of a table).

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 systems are fairly sophisticated and we have a number of designated



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

fields in which we record various specific information about a crime (such as victim name, suspect ethnicity, etc) and can theoretically then use to undertake detailed searches on, for Shoplifting Offences we do not have dedicated fields that record the following :-

- whether the premises was specifically either a supermarket / hypermarket or grocer
- the actual items reported as stolen

The ascertaining of this information would only be possible by physically reading every individual crime log (and its' associated supporting documents) to firstly determine if the location met your criteria as a Supermarket / Hypermarket or Grocer and secondly to determine what has been reported as stolen (which is often not listed anyway).

Given that – for the time period you require – Wiltshire Police have recorded in excess of 21,000 individual Shoplifting Crimes, 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 also 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 – wildcard or free-text searches

Whilst it would theoretically possible to run “keyword” or “wildcard” searches for the specific words you mention, we are only able to search the abbreviated summary description of a crime log (which is limited to a small number of characters) and not the whole occurrence log. In reality, the items stolen are not always recorded in this abbreviated offence description – it is normally recorded within the longer crime log or in other documents such as statements etc.

It needs to be remembered that the use of “wildcard” or free-text searches are limited for a number of reasons such as – but not limited to – the following :-

- a) The specific key words being sought need to physically appear in the abbreviated crime summary field (eg if nappies were stolen but not listed in this summary description, then it would be omitted from the results generated)
- b) Wildcard or free-text searches are reliant on the specific keyword being spelt grammatically correctly in that field (eg if the crime recorder mis-spelt butter as “buttter”, again it would not feature in any results generated)
- c) There are other multiple variations or derivatives that may have been used rather when recording the crime rather than the specific 3 words you mention (such as Clover, Aptamil, Pampers and so on). Any results generated using the keywords you require would only pick up those keywords and not the derivatives, although essentially they are thefts of the same thing.

As a consequence we would not ordinarily publish the results of wildcard searches in the public domain (as this response would be) if we were aware that the information being supplied was knowingly inaccurate.

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.

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
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 ext 62005

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.pnn.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