

**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 email

Date: 28th February 2024

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2024 / 177

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 16th February 2024 concerning the Vetting Process.

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 all the information you have requested.

You wrote:

1. How many total police officers do you have serving? Please provide the number and percentage of serving police officers who have failed re-vetting procedures in the last five years. How many of these officers are still serving even though they have failed re-vetting?
2. For the last three years, please provide as many examples as is financially possible of the following: The rationale provided for rejecting vetting clearance for officers in relation to adverse information recorded as Violence Against Women and Girls-related. In each example, I would like a copy of the report made in rejecting vetting clearance, or as much of it as possible.
3. Does your force conduct face-to-face interviews (not including through audio/video telecommunications) as part of the vetting process?
4. Does your force check the content on publically available social media to ensure that the applicant's online behaviour is compatible with the Code of Ethics or Standards of Professional Behaviour, as part of the vetting process?
5. Please provide the average time between a police officer's initial vetting and re-vetting in your police force.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Our response:

The information that you are requesting for Q2 of your request is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval.

The majority of our Complaints, Disciplinary and Vetting information is stored on a system called Centurion. Centurion is a legacy database which has limited functionality and is quite a cumbersome tool by which to search for information due to it having a limited number of specific fields in which it is possible to record specific information related to complaints and/or vetting issues.

All information recorded within Centurion is logged under specific Complaint and Conduct Breach Codes. There is no specific Code that is applicable for the recording of complaints or misconduct issues related to VAWG and linked to subsequent vetting matters.

In order to identify the information you require would necessitate our Professional Standards Team printing off an extensive report detailing potential complaints that might meet your criteria and then reviewing every case individually to ascertain the exact reasons why and then make a unique separate record of the information you require.

I have spoken to our PSD Department and they have assured me that to undertake this part of your request 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.

Ordinarily 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.

However, 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 am able to provide you are the answers documented below :-

Question 1

Establishment figures for officers and staff change virtually daily (with extractions, transfers, leavers and so on). However, as at 1st February 2024, our numbers were as follows :-

Officers (incl Specials)	1,239
PCSO's	88

This includes secondments, maternity leave and career breaks.

As far as we are aware, no officers have failed re-vetting at any stage in the last 5 years.

Question 3

As and when required. If more information is required and where email correspondence won't suffice.

Question 4

Our Vetting Team carries out a basic social media check at the moment as part of the normal process. They are waiting for the correct tools to enable them to carry out an even more

extensive search. Our CCU (Counter Corruption Unit) have the facility to carry out more involved social media checks currently.

Question 5

RV Vetting is every 10 years. MV Vetting is every 7 years, however anybody's vetting can be reviewed at anytime as per the vetting APP (Approved Public Practice).

Anyone that holds a MV or higher is also subject to regular security appraisals.

Job role changes will instigate further vetting checks as well as anyone with a change of circumstances throughout their vetting clearance.

Officers moving from RV to MV will require a brand new vetting clearance.

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request in respect of questions 2 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