

WILTSHIRE POLICE



- By email

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

Date 3rd April 2024

Our Ref FOI 2024-309

Dear XXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 13th March 2024, concerning weapons seized from schools.

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 team performance 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:

Please could I have, for each year, for 2023, 2022, 2021 and 2020 -

Number of weapons seized from schools

Within this -

- Breakdown of type of weapons, including blades / knives, bb guns etc.
- Breakdown of the ages of the children the weapons were seized from, if known.

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.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

The information you are requesting is not stored in a way which allows for easy retrieval. In order to ascertain the information you require, we would have to conduct a search on our systems of every school in the Wiltshire geographical area. Although Wiltshire Police do have a 'flag' for school locations on our crime recording system, this is based on the postcode of the school meaning results may be returned that are not relevant to your request (i.e. if an incident occurred on the street outside of or near to the school). Additionally, it may be the case a student was found with a blade or point at school and then sent home, where they were subsequently dealt with by officers. In this instance, the home address of the individual would be associated with the occurrence and the school may only be mentioned within the summary and/or the main body of the text. To obtain the requested information would therefore require manually reviewing each occurrence related to a seized weapon to determine whether it was relevant to this request.

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.

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

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