

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXX – Via email

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

Date 23rd April 2024

Our Ref FOI 2024-401

Dear XXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 11th April 2024, concerning muggings, burglaries, watch thefts and counterfeit watches.

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 Team Performance 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:

1. How many muggings have been reported in your region each month since 1st January 2019 (up to and including March 2024)
2. How many domestic burglaries (as in burglaries occurring in private homes as opposed to commercial buildings) have been reported in your region each month since 1st January 2019 (up to and including March 2024)
3. How many muggings (that involved at least one watch/timepiece) have been reported in your region each month since 1st January 2019 (up to and including March 2024)
4. How many domestic burglaries (that involved at least one watch/timepiece) have been reported in your region each month since 1st January 2019 (up to and including March 2024)
5. How many watches have been reported as stolen (via theft, robbery or burglary etc.) in your region each month since 1st January 2019 (up to and including March 2024)
6. How many watches have been reported as lost in your region each month since 1st January 2019 (up to and including March 2024)
7. What are the top five most stolen watch brands in your region (and what percentage of your total watch thefts do these brands account for). Please answer this questions for the years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and for 1st Jan- 31st March 2024.

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8. How many cases involving counterfeit goods have been reported in your region each month since 1st January 2019 (up to and including March 2024)

9. How many cases involving counterfeit watches have been reported in your region each month since 1st January 2019 (up to and including March 2024)

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, specifically with regards to questions 3 – 9 is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. There is not a specific crime code that can be easily searched in order to return data on watches and/or timepieces. The only way to establish whether this information is held would be to manually review every report of burglary and theft offences for the period requested. There is also no way of us searching specifically with regards to counterfeit goods, and to ascertain this information would require us to review each individual occurrence that may contain this information. This would require manually reviewing thousands of records.

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:

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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