

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

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

Date 25th June 2024

Our Ref FOI 2024-547

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 29th May 2024, concerning child abuse imagery.

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 Child Internet Exploitation Team (CIET) at Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

I am working on a documentary about people who have been wrongly accused of uploading child abuse imagery, based on their IP address. I am trying to get a nationwide picture so I am asking every force to answer the following:

How many cases of uploading child abuse imagery have you dealt with in the last 5 years?

How many of those were dropped without charge?

What can you say about why these people (if any) were targeted if there was no evidence of the crime on their devices?

Clarification received 3rd June 2024 confirming the relevant offence as Take/make/distribute indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children.

Our response:

Please note:-

- ❖ This request is based on cases investigated as a result of IP Address. Not all Take / Make / Distribute Indecent Images of Children (IIOC) offences are recorded as a result of IP Address enquiries.

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CIET are the only unit within Wiltshire Police that receive this type of referral requiring investigation of IP Address data. There will be other Wiltshire IIOC cases outside of CIET that have an element of IP Address investigation and a No Further Action (NFA) result, however this is likely to be very few. To establish the exact figure for these would require manually interrogating each IIOC occurrence recorded on the crime recording system, and doing so would likely engage a Section 12 exemption (CIET also have their own records, which is where the below figures have been extracted from).

- ❖ CIET are the Special Point of Contact for referrals from the internet industry. Reports of IIOC content online are reported via NCMEC (in USA) and NCA CEOP (in UK). All reports from NCMEC are investigated as a result of geo-location of IP Addresses. Additionally, all UK Forces investigate Peer to Peer (P2P) file sharing online - these investigations are based on capture of an IP Address where an IIOC file is found on a device in a P2P sharing folder.
- ❖ Almost all CIET referrals start as intelligence material received. Work is then done on this information to identify the IP Address subscriber, from which a likely suspect is identified. CIET investigators will then consider what enforcement action, if any, to take.

Our CIET records have been researched to identify those cases that have had some form of enforcement action, as a result of intelligence generated from an IP Address. 'Enforcement action' includes (but is not limited to) arrest, full investigation following arrest, voluntary search / interview, youth and child safeguarding and education. The below figures do not include cases where no enforcement action was taken, or anything that ended as 'intelligence only'.

- ❖ The 5 year period used is 2019 to 2023.

The below figures have been supplied by CIET based on the following criteria : cases investigated as a result of IP Address **and** enforcement action has been taken. The Force may have received more reports of take/make/distribute indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children, however these did not match the criteria used and therefore they will not have been included within the results and/or the reports would have to be manually interrogated to establish their relevance to the criteria used.

How many cases of uploading child abuse imagery have you dealt with in the last 5 years?

Total IP Address referrals - 832 (includes both reports from CEOP and reports of P2P file sharing)

How many of those were dropped without charge?

Total NFA following enforcement - 138

What can you say about why these people (if any) were targeted if there was no evidence of the crime on their devices?

Please note - if you require an opinion based response to this question, this question would not be considered valid as this is not asking for information held by the Force. There is not a requirement for a Public Authority to create data to furnish a request for information, where this data is not already held.

Our CIET department have kindly provided a brief, non-exhaustive list of a few examples of the reasons why an NFA decision was reached.

- ❖ No evidence found following a full investigation
- ❖ Relevant device not found

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- ❖ No unlawful IIOC found on exhibit/s seized
- ❖ Unlawful material recovered but unable to attribute to offender
- ❖ Proven compromised online account

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

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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