

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXX - By email

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

Date 7th June 2024

Our Ref FOI 2024-553

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 31st May 2024, concerning shoplifting offences.

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:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I would like to request the following information:

The number of shoplifting offences logged by the force between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023
The value of stock or money that was reported stolen in each shoplifting offence reported between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023
The neighbourhood or postcode of each business involved in a shoplifting offence logged by the force between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023
The month in which each shoplifting offence logged by the force between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 occurred

I would like you to provide the information by email in the format of a spreadsheet if possible with each offence on a row and a column for 'month' 'location' and 'value stolen' for each offence, like the below:

- Offences
- Month
- Location
- Value Stolen
- Offence No.1

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

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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 is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval.

In order to determine the value of money or stock reported stolen in each incident, we would be required to manually interrogate each individual occurrence. There are 4116 reported incidents within the time period requested, therefore if allocated approximately 5 minutes per occurrence it would take approximately 343 hours.

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.

Under our Section 16 obligation to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you to refine your request to a more manageable level. If you were to refine your request to a much smaller time frame, we may be able to review the value of the stolen money/stock. We may also be able to provide the majority of the data requested should you resubmit your request, excluding the value of the money/stock.

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.

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Yours sincerely,

Force Disclosure Decision Maker