

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

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

Date 9th July 2024

Our Ref FOI 2024-565

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 10th June 2024, concerning sex trafficking and County Lines linked to Modern Slavery. Please accept my apologies for the slight delay in responding to your request.

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 the information you have requested.

You wrote:

Sex trafficking and exploitation.

1. Please could you provide me with the number of investigations into sex trafficking recorded by your force, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).
2. Please could you provide me with the number of victims of sex trafficking identified in your force area, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).

Of these please could you break them down by their nationality (if unknown please state)

Of these please could you break them down by adult/child victims (if unknown please state)

3. Please could you provide me with the number of sex trafficking suspects identified in your force area, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).
4. Please could you provide me with the number of charges in relation to sex trafficking in your force area, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).

Of these please could you confirm the number charged under the modern day slavery act

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If any were charged under the "alternate offences rule" please could you give me the number and offence charged

5. Please could you provide me with the number of convictions for sex trafficking in your force area, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).

Of these please could you confirm the number convicted under the modern day slavery act

If any were charged under the "alternate offences rule" please could you give me the number and offence convicted

6. Please could you provide me with the number of staff solely investigating sex trafficking, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).

County lines

1. Please could you provide me with the number of investigations into county lines related modern day slavery recorded by your force, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).
2. Please could you provide me with the number of victims of county lines related modern day slavery identified in your force area, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).

Of these please could you break them down by their nationality (if unknown please state)

Of these please could you break them down by adult/child victims (if unknown please state)

3. Please could you provide me with the number of county lines related modern day slavery suspects identified in your force area, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).
4. Please could you provide me with the number of charges in relation to county lines related modern day slavery in your force area, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).

Of these please could you confirm the number charged under the modern day slavery act

If any were charged under the "alternate offences rule" please could you give me the number and offence charged

5. Please could you provide me with the number of convictions for county lines related modern day slavery in your force area, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).

Of these please could you confirm the number convicted under the modern day slavery act

If any were charged under the "alternate offences rule" please could you give me the number and offence convicted

6. Please could you provide me with the number of staff solely investigating county lines related modern day slavery, broken down annually from 2018 until 2022 (inclusive).

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 - namely in relation to County Lines - is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. There is not a filter on the system used that would identify if an occurrence is related to County Lines. To provide a response would require a manual interrogation of each occurrence to identify the relevance of it to this request. This would require manually interrogating hundreds of thousands of occurrences within the requested time period.

Additionally, as both of your requests for information are similar in nature, the decision has been made that both requests will be aggregated for the purpose of the fees regulations.

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. In respect of the other questions within your request, I cannot think of a way in which you would be able to refine these questions, as they may incite further exemptions dependent on what information we may or may not hold.

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

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(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

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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