

WILTSHIRE POLICE



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

Date: 3rd July 2024

Ref: FOI 2024/627

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 3rd July 2024 concerning operation names and arrests relating to large scale protests.

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:

I'm writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) to ask that you please disclose to me the operation names of any large scale protest action that you have been called out to as a force over the last two calendar years (2023 and 2024 to present).

I'd like the operation name, date, the name of the group involved (this could span anything from white nationalists to environmentalists - XR, BLM, anti-ULEZ, National Action, EDL, NBU, Covid conspiracy protests, Insulate Britain, Women's Rights marches, anti-military Marches like the anti-Elbit Systems action recently, Palestine action or other pro-Palestine marches, etc).

I'd also like to know how many people, and for what reason and from what groups, have been arrested under section 7 of the public order act, and those arrested under section 12 of the act as well.

Two areas of focus specifically however - in these instances spanning larger and smaller scale protests caught up in public order offences - would include arrests of environmental protestors specifically from the following: XR, JSO (Just Stop Oil), Greenpeace, Ocean Rebellion, Fossil Free Parliament/Fossil Free London/Fossil Free Politics, Insulate Britain, Friends of the Earth or other related groups that fall into this category.

And on the far right: the EDL (or newer associated groups), the New British Union of Fascists, Patriotic Alternative, Pie and Mash Squad, The Yorkshire (or East Yorkshire) Patriots,

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The National Support Detachment, the National Rebirth Party, National Action (now proscribed), Britain First, the English Democrats, UKIP, the National Front, the BNP, Homeland, or any other groups that fall into this category.

I'd like this information to include figures of arrests, and appreciate that in some instances there will be multiple arrests over a year for the same activists. This doesn't matter for the purposes of this request, as it's numbers of arrests specifically that I am seeking.

Our response:

The information that you are requesting for the majority of your request is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval. This is because firstly, we do not have a specific occurrence type for "protests" that we can easily and reliably search on that would bring back data to do with all protests, as carrying out a protest is not a crime in itself. Therefore, the only way in which we would be able to attempt to gather this information would be to search under offences that are likely to come under different crime sub-groups such as public order offences, vandalism, violence with or without injury and/or hate crimes, to first of all establish whether the report relates to that of a protest, and then to manually read each related crime report in order to obtain the remaining information you are after.

Therefore, 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.

Please note, that 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.

Ordinarily under our Section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request to a more manageable level. However, due to the difficulties outlined above, I cannot see how this can be achieved in this particular case.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the 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.

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.

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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

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.

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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