



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

Date: 21st August 2024

Ref: FOI 2024/767

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 20th August 2024 concerning crimes involving zombie-style knives and machetes.

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:

This request concerns the number of crimes reported involving zombie-style knives in your police force.

1. Please state how many offences were reported involving:
 - a. Zombie-style knives;
 - b. Zombie knives;
 - c. Machetes

In each of the following calendar years:

2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

2. Of those offences, please state how many involved youths (under 18) and the following breakdowns:
 - The suspect;
 - The victim;
 - Calendar years of: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
3. Of those offences, please state what the ethnicity was for those under 18 with the following breakdowns:
 - The suspect;

- The victim;
 - Calendar years of: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
 - Ethnic groups are: Black, Asian, Mixed and White
4. Of those offences, please state what the ethnicity was for those over 18 with the following breakdowns:
- The suspect;
 - The victim;
 - Calendar years of: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
 - Ethnic groups are: Black, Asian, Mixed and White

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 in order to determine the type of knife that has been used, this would involve us having to manually peruse through each report of knife crime dating back to 2015, in order to accurately obtain this information. There is no specific tag that we can search on that will give us the type of weapon that has been used, therefore, this information is likely to be within the body of the crime report itself, which would need to be sifted through manually in order to obtain this detail. Whilst we can search on a tag called "weapon used", this tag is a non-mandatory field which means that officer's and staff do not need to fill out this field and as a result, it is therefore subject to human error. As a result, there could be other reports involving a knife/blade used or in possession in some way, that would not have been picked up by searching on this tag because the "weapons used" tag was not applied to the report. Not only this, but even if searches were carried out on the "weapons used" tag, we would still need to physically trawl through every report of where this tag has been utilized in order to establish the number of reports that involve the specific use of a zombie-style knife and/or machete. Once this has been achieved, we would then again need to physically go through these reports in order to determine the remaining information you require.

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 but unfortunately due to the difficulties outlined above, I cannot see how this can be achieved in this particular case. However, a previous request (reference: [FOI 2023/994](#)) may be able to assist as it will give you an idea of the number of knife/blade offences we would have to manually peruse through in order to accurately determine the information you require specifically around zombie-style knives and machetes.

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

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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.

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