

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXX – Via email

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

Date 6th September 2024

Our Ref FOI 2024-801

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 3rd September 2024, concerning phone, laptop and watch thefts.

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:

I'm looking for information on phone, laptop and watch thefts in Wiltshire Police from the following dates:

- Between 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023
- From 1st January 2024 till now

Here are my following questions:

1. How many of the three items (phone, laptop and watches) were reported stolen during the two time frames?
2. How many items were recovered during the two time frames?
3. Which areas had the most reports of the stolen items and how many in the two time frames?

Please can the data of each stolen item be shared for each month of the years requested, in an itemised spreadsheet on two spreadsheets (Reported v. Recovered).

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 that you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval. There is no specific crime code that we can easily search on for stolen phones, laptops or watches, therefore, the only way to ascertain this information accurately would be to manually peruse each report of burglary, theft offences, thefts from a vehicle made within the requested timeframes. There were over 12,000 crimes between 1st January 2024 and 3rd September 2024 where a theft of one of these items may have occurred. It would take approximately 5 minutes to review each individual log, therefore, to review 12,000 would take approximately 60,000 minutes or 1000 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.

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.

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