

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

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

Date 13th September 2024

Our Ref FOI 2024-806

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 4th September 2024, concerning suspected suicides recorded and reviewed.

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 the Partnership Sgt for Mental Health at Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS):

"The designation 'suspected suicide' is provided by the police and the term is used because the cause of death has not yet been confirmed by coroner inquest. When 'sudden and unexpected' death occurs, the suspected cause of death is allocated by the attending police officer. There is then a review, based on guidance from the NPCC, before a death is reported as a 'suspected suicide'."

[Statistical report: near to real-time suspected suicide surveillance \(nRTSSS\) for England for the 15 months to May 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

1. For the year financial year 2023/24, please provide the number of deaths you reported as 'suspected suicide'.
2. Please provide the number of reviews you carried out during the same period of decisions taken by attending officers to designate deaths as 'suspected suicide'.

Our response:

1. For the year financial year 2023/24, please provide the number of deaths you reported as 'suspected suicide'.

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2. Please provide the number of reviews you carried out during the same period of decisions taken by attending officers to designate deaths as 'suspected suicide'.

Contrary to the quote attributed to the ONS, the suspected cause of death is not always 'allocated' by the attending officer. Whilst there is a section on the sudden death form to record this information, the officer will not always be able to identify a suspected cause of death and often this field will be completed as 'unknown'. Whether or not an officer feels able to complete this part of the form will depend on what information is available at the time.

Locally, each sudden death is reviewed daily by the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Lead and they determine, based on the information available at the time, whether or not they believe the death was a suspected suicide. Sometimes, this will involve contacting the attending officer with questions to seek clarification but often this will not be necessary; it depends on the circumstances of each individual case.

In addition to this, regular meetings with partner agencies are held to review the recorded data, partly to identify any emerging themes so partners can implement suicide prevention measures but also to check and test the accuracy of the data and ensure suspected suicides are being identified correctly.

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



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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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