

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

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

Date 2nd October 2024

Our Ref FOI 2024-799

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 3rd September 2024 concerning child trafficking. Please accept my apologies for the 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.

Following receipt of your request, research was conducted by the Business Intelligence department at Wiltshire Police.

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

You wrote:

Could you confirm the number of child trafficking incidents from January 1, 2019 until the day this request, and release all accompanying crime reports with personal information duly redacted?

Please be guided that the "less than five" absolute exception is generally considered the threshold for non-disclosure or anonymisation of data. If the number of these criminal incidents is greater than five, I believe you should be able to release the accompanying documents requested.

Our response:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), this request is exempt by virtue of Section 38(1) - Health and Safety and Section 40(2) - Personal Data.

- ❖ Section 38 is a qualified prejudice-based exemption and therefore requires Wiltshire Police to establish the harm in disclosure, along with the public interest favouring and against disclosure.
- ❖ Section 40 is an absolute exemption and therefore there is no requirement to articulate the harm or conduct a Public Interest test.

For information that can be disclosed in relation to your request, please find this below the Section 38 Harm and Public Interest tests.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

Section 38

Harm test

A disclosure under Freedom of Information is a disclosure to the world, not just the individual who has requested the information. Although every effort should be made to release information under the Freedom of Information Act, disclosing the crime reports - albeit redacted - would cause great emotional and mental distress onto the victims involved, as well as their families, friends and potentially members of the public.

Factors favouring disclosure

Placing this information into the public domain would lead to an increased public awareness regarding how Wiltshire Police are approaching reports of child trafficking. Additionally, disclosure would demonstrate Wiltshire Police as being as open and transparent with the public as possible.

Factors against disclosure

If this information were to be disclosed, this would cause substantial distress to the victims as well as their families, friends and potentially members of the public who may view the disclosure. This is particularly the case due to the sensitive nature of the offence type and the information requested. Wiltshire Police will not disclose information if it would cause harm - regardless of whether this is physical, emotional or mental - to victims of crime, their family and friends or members of the public.

Furthermore, there is a large public interest in ensuring victims of offences are safeguarded and not caused any further harm by a disclosure into the public domain by the Force.

Balance test

Wiltshire Police are charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency and openness between the Force and the public, there is a stronger public interest in ensuring that victims - along with their families, friends and members of the public - are safeguarded against further harm, anxiety and distress caused through the disclosure of information. Because of this, Wiltshire Police will not divulge any information if doing so would cause further distress to victims and/or members of the public.

For this reason, public interest lies in favour of non-disclosure of this information.

Caveats:

- ❖ The data up to the end of August 2024 is the most recent data held on our systems, at the point of receiving the response from our Business Intelligence department, due to how and when this data is input.
- ❖ This data relates to HO Code 36/08 - Arrange or facilitate travel of another person with a view to exploitation.

- ❖ The victim reported age is under 18.
- ❖ The summaries provided have been redacted where necessary.

Between the period 1st January 2019 and 31st August 2024, there were 63 reported incidents.

Summary / MO of occurrences (redacted)

Concerns raised re involvement with criminal activities / exploitation. Travel arranged to take the IP to to make £ per week looking after drugs and cash.
Youth arrested for being concerned in the supply of drugs, due to age concerns over drug running and for being subjected to trafficking for exploitation.
IP has been trafficked to in order to sell drugs on behalf of another.
Concerns raised for youth who spends alot of time with adults and may be involved in drug supply .
IP is suspected of being used as a runner, carrying and supplying drugs.
IP is suspected to have been trafficked and sexually exploited by known male.
The suspect trafficked the IP to supply Class A drugs.
Four male suspects known to the IP have collected him from and taken him to , not under threat or duress, in order to collect drugs. When they have arrived however, they have then told IP that he was staying to deal drugs. IP managed to get away and return home.
was met after school and asked to get in the car with the suspect and taken to where dealers have expected him to sell drugs.
Concerns raised that the Ip is being transported to locations for sexual exploitation.
IP has been trafficked from Wiltshire to via train concerned with drugs.
IP has been taken from her home address to an address in where she has been kept in order to supply Class A drugs.
Known male has collected 3x females from after speaking with them on snapchat, he has then driven them to a location in where officers have located them and returned all 3 females back to Wiltshire
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referral reporting concerns IP is a victim of Modern Day Slavery. IP has not disclosed any offences however she has been located with known drug users and dealers. Has possibly been known to hold drugs for one male.
referral received raising concerns for a known female believed to be a victim of Modern Day Slavery. Female has previously been missing and located in an address with known drug dealers and users.
referral whereby victim has been transported out of the county to the suspects parents address. It is believed the suspect and IP are in a sexual relationship.
Victim has disclosed 7 months of sexual and domestic abuse. Victim was years old when the sexual relationship began.
Male arrested for PWITS made disclosures that he was being forced to deal drugs on behalf of an undisclosed person.

referral reporting concerns that the IP may be a victim of modern slavery.
Concerns that IP is a victim of exploitation. Known male was reported missing and there is evidence that he was involved in gang culture / at risk of serious youth violence and crime.
referral reporting concerns for the IP being exploited.
concerns for a young person being targeted for not dealing drugs for a local line .
referral with concerns that a male is being exploited by drug users.
Referral received concerning the IP being a victim of modern slavery.
Known suspect has transported the IP to his home address where she stayed the night and then returned her to her house the next day, all for the purposes of sexual exploitation.
referral made reporting female is being exploited into criminal activiting in relation to drugs.
reporting concerns regarding male being involved in criminality
referral made reporting male is being exploited sexually and criminally.
Known male is possible victim of Modern Slavery
referral reporting concerns that a year old male is being exploited.
reporting concerns regarding male being involved in modern slavery..
referral reporting concerns that the subject may be a victim of modern slavery due to being involved in drug dealing and possible weapon distribution in the area.
Summary: An investigation has been commenced in relation to a year old who there is reasonable grounds to suspect has been forced or exploited by unknown suspect to supply controlled drugs.
raised concerns the subject is involved with money laundering, drug dealing/county lines, and recruiting other young persons.
Known male has met up with IP and her friend and has taken them for a drive and then returned them back home. He has then contacted the IP and arranged to meet up, the IP has smoked weed with the male and had consensual vaginal sex. They then fell asleep in the car before male drove IP back to friends home.
Known female has met a male online and exchanged explicit images with him. The pair have met on at least occasions whereby the suspect would take the IP to an isolated area and they would have sex.
may be a victim of modern slavery (human trafficking and / or slavery, servitude or forced or compulsory labour). The case has been assessed in detail and based on the evidence received, it has been decided they are a victim of modern slavery.
Concerns that male might be exploited for drug dealing after being found in possession of drugs and found in properties with drugs and weapons.
referral stating that young person may be being criminally exploited
Concerns have been raised for the subject due to her relationship with an older male.
RP has called to report that the misper went out at 12.30hrs and was asked to come back at 14.30hrs. When she has not responded to her calls and texts, she has gone up to her room to find a note from the misper telling her that she loves her and that she wants to be free. Her current whereabouts is unknown.
Male has been invovled in shoplifting to order and transporting drugs across counties by train.
Known suspect has taken the IP to the location, gave her alcohol and then had sexual intercourse with her.
Known suspect has collected the IP and transported her in his car to location, for the purposes of having sex with her. Investigation being carried out regarding Human Trafficking.

Female believed to be exploited as a sex worker after call received stating that there are issues at the address.
reporting concerns that IP is involved in gang activity and selling cannabis, there are concerns around potential exploitation and grooming.
- Young male who was reported missing was found by Police in Wiltshire, concerns male is at risk of criminal exploitation.
We received a referral stating may be a victim of modern slavery (human trafficking and / or slavery, servitude or forced or compulsory labour).
Young female has started talking to and meeting up with an older male who has gifted her trainers, money, and alcohol.
referral reporting concerns that known male youth is being exploited criminally
referral concerning known male possibly being involved with drug supply and gangs.
Concerns male is being exploited through working for and getting money from unknown persons. Male is stating he is working for 'company' but is apparently unable to pass any details about them.
We received a referral - may be a victim of modern slavery (human trafficking and / or slavery, servitude or forced or compulsory labour).
We received a referral from Wiltshire Police may be a victim of modern slavery (human trafficking and / or slavery, servitude or forced or compulsory labour).
Concerns that male might be a victim of Modern slavery after possibly being recruited by a gang for drug dealing and drug running.
for youth suspected of being a victim of modern slavery
referral concern female youth is being sexual exploited having sex with numerous males to pay for drugs.
Concerns raised for young person involved in drug running.
Concerns raised due to young person being involved with gangs.
Concerns for male being exploited due to his involvement in gangs.
Concerns regarding IP being recruited into a gang to deal drugs and vapes.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Constabulary, when refusing to provide 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.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request.

Exemptions applied:

Section 38(1) – Health and Safety

Section 40(2) – Personal Data

In accordance with Section 17 of the Act, this letter acts as 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.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

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 Fol 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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