

WILTSHIRE POLICE



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

Date: 19th November 2024

Ref: FOI 2024/1014

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 18th November 2024 concerning reports of drug use in schools.

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:

From the 1st January 2021 to the 1st November 2024 how many reports of drug use in schools did Wiltshire Police receive. Please divide the data up into four categories - 1st January 2021 - 31st December 2021, 1st January 2022 - 31st December 2022, 1st January 2023 - 31st December 2023 and 1st January 2024 - 1st November 2024.

If possible, I would also like information on what the drug(s) involved in each incident were.

Please also include how many of these reports led to confiscation of drugs.

Our response:

The information you are requesting for the majority of your request is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. Whilst Wiltshire Police do have 'flag' on our crime recording system for schools, this is based off of the postcode of the school which means that any results that may be returned from searching on a specific postcode may bring back results that are not relevant to your request (i.e. if an incident occurred on the street outside of or near to the school). Additionally, this is not a mandatory flag we need to fill out when creating a new report which means that the quality of these results cannot be guaranteed and therefore, are not reliable. As we cannot reliably search on the flag in order to obtain solely school data accurately, the only way in which we would be obtain

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this information would be to manually interrogate all reports made between the time frames requested that fall under a drug offence crime code, in order to determine whether any of the drug-related reports relates to that of a school and then further to try and ascertain what drugs were reportedly involved and whether the drugs were confiscated or not – of which this information, would only likely be within the body of the crime report which again, would require physically trawling through. As you can imagine, this would involve manually sifting through hundreds if not thousands of occurrences and therefore, your request is exempted due to time/cost limitations.

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 and in order to do so, I would suggest providing us with a list of school names and addresses to search on, as this will assist in narrowing your request. However, please bear in mind that refining your request in this way is unlikely to yield fully accurate results still due to a number of reasons which we can later articulate, but it would still provide you with a bit more useful information regardless. Also, please be aware that refining your request does not guarantee that further exemptions will not apply.

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.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Force Disclosure Decision Maker

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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