



**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ  
London Road  
Devizes  
Wiltshire  
SN10 2DN  
Tel 101 ext 62005

[www.wiltshire.police.uk](http://www.wiltshire.police.uk)  
[disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk)

XXXXXX – by email

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2024 / 1063

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 concerning Firearms Licensing.

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:**

For each of the past 5 financial years (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023), could you please tell me:

1. How many people in the force area are currently firearm licence holders?

- 2019:
- 2020:
- 2021:
- 2022:
- 2023:



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

2. How many first-time firearms licence applications were made?

- 2019:
- 2020:
- 2021:
- 2022:
- 2023:

3. How many first-time firearm applications were unsuccessful?

- 2019:
- 2020:
- 2021:
- 2022:
- 2023:

4. What is the average waiting time for the successful completion of a new firearms licence application in your area, i.e., how long on average people waited between submitting their application and receiving their first licence (renewals excluded)?

- 2019:
- 2020:
- 2021:
- 2022:
- 2023:

5. What is the average waiting time for the successful completion of a renewal of a firearms licence in your area (new applications excluded)?

- 2019:
- 2020:
- 2021:
- 2022:

- 2023:

6. How many members of staff have you employed to process firearms licence applications?

- 2019:
- 2020:
- 2021:
- 2022:
- 2023:

### **Our response:**

The information that you are requesting for the majority of your request is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval.

Whilst our Firearms Licensing system(s) can provide the total number of current Firearms Licence Holders at the current time (16,094 as of today's date), it is not possible to determine from it the number of holders at a specific historical point or date in time.

Similarly, we are also not able to identify the specific number of Firearms Applications that were made in any given calendar year or the number that were specifically refused.

Our Firearms Licensing systems are also not sophisticated enough to be able to provide us with details of the average waiting times for either new or renewed licenses.

The only way to ascertain the information you require for questions 1 – 5 of your request would be to manually review the information held for the current 16,094 license holders (plus all the failed applications) to try and effectively construct a picture of their application history including a picture of the actual waiting times involved. This exercise would be further complicated by the fact that license holders surrender and then re-apply for licenses at various points as their lifestyle situation changes etc.

Under the circumstances – and given the sheer number of records involved - 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 also 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.

It should also be noted that where information does not currently exist (eg for questions 1-5) there is no obligation on an Authority to physically create new information purely to answer an FOI request.

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. However, due to the difficulties outlined above, I cannot see how this can be achieved in this particular case.

However, also under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, I can confirm that our Firearms Licensing Team have provided the following narrative regarding questions 4 and 5 of your request :-

*“Due to processes changing over the last 5 years regarding when the renewal application is received, applications are prioritised when received 8 weeks or more from expiry date. Any applications made under 8 weeks are deemed as lower priority which leads to a longer processing time”.*

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,

Nick Penny  
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  
Telephone 101 ext 62005

## **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.pnn.police.uk](mailto:disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.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](mailto:mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk)