

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXX – By email

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

Date 13th February 2025

Our Ref FOI 2025-134

Dear XXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 3rd February 2025, concerning discrimination at football matches.

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:

Are you able to please provide statistics on the number of reports you received of incidents of homophobia or sexual orientation-based discrimination at football matches for the following calendar years:

1. 2023
2. 2024

If possible, for each year, please split data by whether the incidents occurred at professional or semi-professional matches, or amateur matches.

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 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.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

The information you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. Our systems do not have a classification for football matches, stadiums or grounds therefore we are not able to filter the results of discrimination based crimes to these locations. In order to retrieve the data that you have requested, we would be required to manually interrogate every report of homophobia or sexual orientation based discrimination over the time period in question, to determine those that are relevant to this request. Over 2023 and 2024, there are approximately 340 incidents that would need to be reviewed.

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.

Under our Section 16 obligation to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you to refine your request to a more manageable level. If you were able to provide addresses for the football matches you wish to be reviewed, we may be able to retrieve data for these.

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.

Yours sincerely,

Force Disclosure Decision Maker