

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXX – By email

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

Date 17th February 2025

Our Ref FOI 2025-155

Dear XXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 5th February 2025, concerning noise related disturbances.

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:

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding police responses to noise-related disturbances and out-of-control parties in residential areas.

Specifically, I would like to request the following data:

The total number of times officers were dispatched to residential properties in response to noise complaints in each of the following years: 2023, 2024 and 2025 (to date, if available).

The total number of incidents recorded under any of the following categories at residential addresses (or equivalent classification used by your force) in each of the same years:

- "Noise Nuisance" (if recorded separately)
- "Anti-Social Behaviour - Noise"
- "Breach of the Peace" (related to residential properties)
- "Public Order Offences" related to disorderly gatherings in residential properties
- Any other category used to record responses to out-of-control parties in residential settings.

If possible, a breakdown of the top 10 residential postcodes or neighbourhoods within your jurisdiction where officers were dispatched most frequently for noise complaints or disorderly gatherings in each year.

Our response:

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

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.

The information you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. In order to determine the information that you have requested, we would be required to manually review every recorded incident that may be relevant to noise-related disturbances and out-of-control parties, as there is unfortunately no way for our systems to filter for these particular incidents. Over the time period in question, there are over 10,000 occurrences that we would need to review.

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.

Ordinarily under our Section 16 obligation to provide advice and assistance we would advise you of a way to refine your request to a more manageable level. Due to the difficulties in obtaining the requested information, as outlined above, I cannot think of a way in which this could be achieved.

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.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

Yours sincerely,

Force Disclosure Decision Maker