

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXXXX
By email

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

Date 21st March 2025

Our Ref FOI 2025-328

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 21st March 2025, concerning making off without payment and drive-offs.

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 **not** obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

1. How many reports of making off without payment (MOWP) has your force recorded between January 2020 and January 2025? Please break this information down by month and calendar year.
2. My understanding is your force may log when a MOWP offence specifically occurs at a petrol station/forecourt. Therefore, over the same period, how many reports has your force recorded relating to people driving off from petrol filling stations without attempting to pay, colloquially known as 'drive offs', or driving off without paying for fuel? Please also break this information down on a month-by-month and year-by-year basis. If the following addition would not cause this request to exceed the 18-hour time limit, please include a breakdown of how many of these instances related to the theft of petrol, and how many to diesel, each year.
3. Over the same period, please provide, if possible, the recorded value of the fuel taken in drive-offs, broken down month-by-month and year-by-year.
4. Please provide a resolution/clear-up report on drive-off offences over the same five years – EG numbers of summons, community resolutions, undetected etc, broken down month-by-month and year-by-year.
5. Please inform me, if possible, the names of the five petrol stations that reported the most drive-off offences for each of the five years in question, including details of the value of fuel taken from each station each year, broken down year by year.

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If reviewing five years' worth of data to would exceed the 18-hour time limit for completing FOI requests, please provide this information for the past three years (IE January 2022 to January 2025). If this is also too onerous, please provide this information for Jan 2023 to Jan 2025; and if this is too onerous, please data from Jan 2024 to Jan 2025, broken down month-by-month.

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.

The information you are requesting - namely in relation to questions 2 through 5 - is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. To establish whether a making off without payment offence occurred at a petrol station/forecourt would require manually interrogating each making off without payment offence for the requested period. Between January 2020 and January 2025, there were a total of 1569 'making off without payment' crimes logged. If only 1 minute was allocated to check each record, this would take in excess of 26 hours to complete.

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.

Although excess cost removes the Forces' obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request. What I can provide you with is documented below:

1. How many reports of making off without payment (MOWP) has your force recorded between January 2020 and January 2025? Please break this information down by month and calendar year.

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Please note: The below data is not exclusive to petrol stations and includes all matters regarding making off without payment. The below has been provided for crimes of 'making off without payment' under Home Office Code 53/25.

Calendar Year	Total
2020	384
2021	286
2022	382
2023	297
2024	220
Grand total	1569

Reported Month Year	Making off without payment
Jan-2020	52
Feb-2020	50
Mar-2020	39
Apr-2020	17
May-2020	16
Jun-2020	21
Jul-2020	38
Aug-2020	33
Sep-2020	40
Oct-2020	33
Nov-2020	22
Dec-2020	23
Jan-2021	19
Feb-2021	22
Mar-2021	19
Apr-2021	20
May-2021	37
Jun-2021	26
Jul-2021	23
Aug-2021	37
Sep-2021	25
Oct-2021	23
Nov-2021	18
Dec-2021	17
Jan-2022	41
Feb-2022	18
Mar-2022	24
Apr-2022	35

May-2022	35
Jun-2022	35
Jul-2022	40
Aug-2022	40
Sep-2022	27
Oct-2022	32
Nov-2022	33
Dec-2022	22
Jan-2023	25
Feb-2023	24
Mar-2023	39
Apr-2023	24
May-2023	25
Jun-2023	22
Jul-2023	21
Aug-2023	22
Sep-2023	30
Oct-2023	21
Nov-2023	21
Dec-2023	23
Jan-2024	17
Feb-2024	14
Mar-2024	14
Apr-2024	11
May-2024	16
Jun-2024	26
Jul-2024	24
Aug-2024	23
Sep-2024	20
Oct-2024	20
Nov-2024	16
Dec-2024	19

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.

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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

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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