

# WILTSHIRE POLICE



Via email



## Police Headquarters

London Road  
DEVIZES  
Wiltshire  
SN10 2DN

Date 20/05/2025

Our ref **FOI 2025/080**

Reply contact name is:

Dear \*\*\*\*\*,

I write in connection with your request for information, dated 21/01/2025, concerning child abduction.

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 it is not possible to meet your requirements in full.

### You wrote:

1. How many attempted and successful child abductions occurred in your regional police force area during the years of 2018 and 2019, broken down by month.
2. How many attempted and successful child abductions occurred in your regional police force area during the year of 2024, broken down by month - and during the month of January 2025, to date.
3. With respect to the 2024 attempted and successful child abductions could you please tell me:  
Where did these attempted/successful abductions take place?  
When did they take place?  
What description of the attempted/successful abductor was made available to the public?  
What description of the attempted/successful abductor is held on record?

### Applicant Clarification:

I am really only concerned the non-parental attempted/successful abductions'

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## **Response:**

### **Q1:**

- 2018 total of 4
- 2019 total of 7

To break this down by month could identify individuals involved either to families or the local communities. The yearly totals have been provided as a gesture of goodwill. Data breakdowns exempt under S31(1) and s40(2)

### **Q2 and all other data requested:**

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

I must inform you that the number of attempted and successful child abductions in this force has been relatively low, therefore in order to provide you with a comprehensive breakdown I would be bound to impart detail which, if it were put together with other information you may have at your disposal, would inevitably lead to not only identifying individuals but would provide you with a full summary of the allegations made against them. As such the data would be sensitive personal data under the terms of the Data Protection Act of 1998 and therefore it is arguable that the request is exempt under the provisions of section 40(2) of the freedom of Information Act.

### Evidence of harm

To disclose this information would undermine the core principles of policing which are to prevent and detect crime. By releasing the data regarding child abductions, it would alert those offenders that the police are looking for them which will then encourage them to take measures to evade capture. In addition, the knowledge could result in a loss of confidence in the police as potential threats to the public would be identified which may be seen as a failing by the police.

### For Disclosure

To disclose the information would hold the police force accountable and show the public that the police force is being open and transparent. It will give the public valuable knowledge to allow them to take precautions in protecting themselves and their families and it may also assist with the locating of offenders as public awareness could lead to intelligence being given to the police.

### Against Disclosure.

Disclosing this information could hinder the prevention and detection of crime and compromise law enforcement. Offenders would gain knowledge that the police are aware of their actions and are therefore looking for them which could lead to them going

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deeper 'underground' to evade capture. By evading capture, the unknown whereabouts of possible dangerous offenders will be prolonged which then places the public at risk and a fear of crime would be realised. Trust in the Police service would be lost which effectively would lead to vigilantism and an increase in crime, whilst victims may not be forthcoming in reporting crimes which will hinder how effectively the Police service manage their resources

### Balancing

The police service will not divulge any information that will result in the safety of an individual to be at risk, or lead to the prevention and detection of crime being undermined.

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from criminals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both the public and the integrity of police investigations and operations. Therefore the balance lies in favour of non-disclosure of the information.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide 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. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request.

Exemption applied:

S31(1) – Law Enforcement.

S40(2) - Personal information

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

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



## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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 you contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>