

WILTSHIRE POLICE



Via email



Police Headquarters
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date 30/05/2025

Your ref:FOI

Our ref: FOI 2025/452

Reply contact name is:

Dear ,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 01/05/2025 concerning multimedia forensic processes.

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:

With respect to multimedia forensic processes, could you please provide me with a copy of the most recent Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), guidance documents, or policy documents held by your force.

For clarity, by multimedia forensics I refer specifically to the forensic analysis, enhancement, authentication, interpretation, and presentation of audio, video, and still-image material. This does not include general digital forensics (such as the extraction of data from computers, mobile devices, or other storage media). I am solely concerned with processes dealing directly with audio, video, and image evidence.

Specifically, please provide the material requested in the following four bullet points:

1. A copy of the SOPs, guidance documents, or policy documents covering the forensic processing, enhancement, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of audio, video, and image material for investigative or evidential purposes.
2. Any internal multimedia forensic workflows, protocols, or standard practices related to handling such material.

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3. The names of software, tools, or systems used for these processes, including any associated training or operational guidance.
4. The quality assurance, validation, or review procedures used to ensure the accuracy, authenticity, and admissibility of multimedia forensic evidence. If the full SOPs or documents cannot be shared, I kindly request the following information in place of the SOP as per the following seven points:
5. A summary or description of the multimedia forensic processes followed.
6. SOP titles, version numbers, and the dates of their creation, last update, and validation/approval.
7. The roles, departments, or individuals responsible for authoring, validating, or approving the SOPs.
8. The legislation, policies, standards, or external guidance referenced during the development and/or review of the SOPs.
9. Whether the SOPs have undergone any ethical review or approval, and details of any such review processes or bodies involved.
10. Whether the SOPs have been externally validated, peer-reviewed, or accredited by any agency, professional body, or external organization.
11. Whether any SOPs are currently under review, have recently been amended, or are scheduled for updates, and the relevant timelines if applicable. In addition to the previous, please provide responses to the following four points regarding the use of emerging technologies:
12. Please detail whether your multimedia forensic unit currently uses or has trialled artificial intelligence (AI) or machine learning (ML) tools for:
 - o Authentication (e.g., detecting edits, deepfakes, or tampering)
 - o Enhancement (e.g., audio/video/image quality improvement)
 - o Analysis or interpretation (e.g., transcription, object recognition, pattern matching)Note: a simple response is acceptable here such as "Authentication: Use. Enhancement: Trialled. Analysis: Not used"
13. If applicable, the names or vendors of the AI/ML tools used.
14. Whether the use of these tools is governed by any SOPs, internal policies, or ethical guidelines.
15. Whether the adoption and use of AI/ML tools have been subject to ethical review, oversight, or risk assessment, and any details of such reviews or assessments. I understand some content may be subject to exemptions, and I would appreciate any available redacted, summary, or contextual information where full disclosure is not possible.

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 type of information you require is not stored in a way which allows for easy retrieval. Much of the information you have requested is in draft format & cannot be published at this time, software is also being trialled but as there are no results as yet, we do not hold the information that you seek. South West Forensics have close working relationships with other forces nationally and the FCN which are being consulted with during this work.

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 falls 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. In respect of other questions within your request, I cannot think of a way in which you would be able to refine these questions, as they may incite further exemptions dependent on what information we may or may not hold.

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.

Exemptions applied:

Section 12: Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

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



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 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

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/>