

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXX– By email

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

Date 11th June 2025

Our Ref FOI 2025-495

Dear XXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 14th May 2025, concerning tool thefts.

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 would be grateful if you could provide the following data, ideally covering the past five years. If five years of data is not available, the most recent two years will suffice:

1. The number of reported tool thefts, broken down by:
 - a. Theft from vehicles
 - b. Theft from residences
 - c. Theft from workplaces
2. Please include this data by postcode area, if possible.
3. For thefts from vehicles:
 - a. The make and model of the vehicles targeted
 - b. The number of offences associated with each make and model
2. The time of day and day of the week when these offences occurred, segmented by theft location (vehicle, residence, workplace).
3. The recorded outcomes of these offences, including:
 - c. Whether the tools were recovered
 - d. Whether an arrest was made
 - e. Whether the case resulted in no further action
4. Monthly breakdown of tool thefts over the requested time period.
5. Number of tool theft offences by postcode area.
6. A breakdown of the types or categories of tools stolen, and the number of incidents involving each type.

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Refined request received 2nd June 2025:

1. The number of reported tool thefts, broken down by year (2020–2024 inclusive), for each of the following categories:
 - Tools stolen from vehicles
 - Tools stolen from residential properties
 - Tools stolen from construction sites
2. For the most recent 12-month period available (e.g. May 2024–April 2025), a monthly breakdown of the above categories.
3. If held, the annual outcomes for reported tool thefts (for each year from 2020 to 2024), including:

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 is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. Unfortunately, our systems do not have a way of searching for and gathering this data automatically. In order to locate and retrieve the information that has been requested, we would be required to manually review every crime that may hold relevant information over the time period requested. There are over 10,000 occurrences 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.

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

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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