

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXX – By email

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

Date 21st July 2025

Our Ref FOI 2025-639

Dear XXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 3rd July 2025, concerning drug related offences.

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 kindly request the following information from your force:

1. Arrests and Stop and Search

- Annual number of arrests for cannabis and cocaine-related offences, disaggregated by:
 - Possession
 - Possession with intent to supply (PWITS)
 - Trafficking
 - Production/cultivation (for cannabis)
 - Number of stop and searches where cannabis or cocaine was the suspected substance (with outcomes, where available)

2. Drug Seizures

- Annual quantity of cannabis and cocaine seized (kg/grams)
- Street or estimated value if recorded
- Location categories (e.g. public space, home or vehicle)
- If applicable, please confirm the internal classification or coding systems your force uses to record these seizures and offences (e.g. offence codes, controlled substance tags used to record your internal categories).

Please also distinguish, where possible, between the following types of cannabis and cocaine, as follows:

For cannabis:

- Resin forms (e.g. hashish), including THC% levels if known
- Herbal forms under 10% THC (e.g. ganja or "legacy" cannabis)
- High THC herbal forms (e.g. skunk, sinsemilla), with THC levels of 10% and above

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- Synthetic cannabinoids (SSCs) such as Spice, K2, or HHC
- THC edible products containing over 1mg of tetrahydrocannabinol per product
- Known street-names of substances seized with THC and CBD levels, if recorded

For cocaine:

- Powdered cocaine
- Crack cocaine (rock form)

If your records do not routinely differentiate by these categories, please confirm this in your response.

3. Demographics and Geographic Data of Offenders

- Age breakdowns of individuals arrested or charged for the above offences (e.g. under 18, 18–24, 25–34, etc.)
- Gender and ethnicity breakdowns, where collected
- The borough names or policing districts controlled by your force
- Total number of cannabis or cocaine associated offences recorded within each borough / district

4. Outcomes and Classification Frameworks

- Annual number and description of disposal types used for the above cannabis or cocaine offences: e.g. warnings, community resolutions, cautions, charges or other outcomes
- Any associated offence codes, outcome codes, or internal classification systems used to record cannabis or cocaine-related offences.
- If these are recorded within a database or information system (e.g. crime recording systems), please include the relevant code labels or field descriptors

5. Drug-Linked Secondary Offences

Any recorded incidents where cannabis or cocaine may not have been the primary offence but is noted as a contributing factor in the following offences (but not limited to):

- Violence against the person
- Domestic abuse-related incidents
- Public order or anti-social behaviour offences
- Weapons offences
- Youth offending charges or safeguarding referrals

Please include any internal tags, flags, or annotations used to denote drug involvement in these offences.

6. Drug-Related Motoring Offences

- Annual number of arrests or charges under Section 5A of the Road Traffic Act 1988
- Annual number of positive roadside swab tests for cannabis or cocaine with relation to the above offences
- Demographic breakdowns of motoring offenders (e.g. age, gender)
- Any recorded collisions or accidents involving cannabis or cocaine use
 - Please indicate the substance detected
 - Method of detection (e.g. swab, blood test)
 - Resulting legal outcome where known

7. Online and Parcel-Based Drug Distribution

- Any measurable data showing how often social media platforms (e.g. Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram), websites or dark web marketplaces were used to facilitate cannabis or cocaine sales
- Actual or estimated number of cannabis or cocaine sales conducted via digital / online means
- Number of seizures or interceptions involving parcel-based drug distribution (e.g. Royal Mail, courier services, drop boxes, etc.)

8. Encrypted Communication Devices

Please provide the number of arrests and charges involving the use of the following encrypted communication platforms or modified devices (including discontinued services), specifically in relation to cannabis or cocaine offences:

- EncroChat
- Sky ECC

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- ANOM / ANØM
- Phantom Secure
- Ciphre or other modified encrypted handsets

Offences may include:

- Possession
- Possession with intent to supply (PWITS)
- Trafficking or importation into the UK

Also, please provide:

- Number of encrypted devices seized and linked to cannabis or cocaine-related offences
- Number of prosecutions where encrypted messages, images or drop-coordinates were used as evidence
- Whether your force uses any internal tags, codes or intelligence flags to track encrypted device use in drug-related offences - please include these, if available

9. Acquisitive Offences with Drug-Linked Motivation

- Any recorded acquisitive offences committed where cannabis or cocaine were contributing factors, including (but not limited to):
 - Theft (including shoplifting or vehicle-related theft)
 - Burglary (residential and non-residential)
 - Robbery and aggravated robbery
 - Fraud or deception offences

Where available, please indicate whether these were linked to drug-seeking behaviour or substance dependence (e.g. flagged as offences committed to fund a drug habit)

10. Harassment and Abuse Offences Involving Drug Influence

- Any recorded harassment, intimidation, or verbal abuse offences where cannabis or cocaine were noted as contributing factors, including:
 - Towards members of the public
 - Towards police officers or other emergency services personnel

Where applicable, please include any internal tags or narrative indicators used to denote behavioural intoxication or drug influence.

11. Format and Timeframe

With respect to all of the above, please provide the data on a year-by-year basis for the period 2000–2024. Where available, I would really appreciate any data tables, graphs, or charts that visually present this data in various quantitative and/or qualitative forms, in addition to raw data as requested.

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 automatically searching for the majority of the data you are looking for. For example, in order to determine whether cannabis or cocaine were contributing factors with regard to questions 5, 9 and 10, we would be required to manually review all logs of the occurrences returned for these questions, of which there are thousands and for questions 7 and 8, we would be required to manually review every occurrence over the time period in question, as this data could fall under a variety of offences.

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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.

Yours sincerely,

Force Disclosure Decision Maker