

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXX – via E Mail



Police Headquarters

London Road

DEVIZES

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk

Date: 13th August 2025

Our ref: FOI 2025/798

Reply contact name: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX

I write in connection with your request for information dated 13th August 2025 concerning polygraph testing.

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.

The deadline for a response to your request was extended in order to allow for extra time in considering the public interest in disclosure, and confirmation or denial as to whether information is held. Your request for information has now been considered and I am able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

I am conducting research into the use of polygraph testing by UK police forces, particularly in the management and monitoring of sex offenders, and wish to better understand the scope, outcomes, and governance of such practices.

Please treat this as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Request

Please provide the following information:

1. Implementation timeline

a. The month and year in which your force first began using polygraph tests in relation to sex offenders.

b. Whether usage has expanded since initial implementation, and if so, how and when.

Proud to serve and protect our communities

2. Volume of testing

- a. Annual totals of polygraph tests conducted since implementation.
- b. Cumulative total number of tests administered to date.

3. Types of subjects

- a. The number of convicted sex offenders (e.g., under licence, probation, or other) tested each year, versus suspects not yet convicted.
- b. Annual breakdowns where possible.

4. Outcomes of testing

- a. The number of tests leading to further disclosures (e.g., admissions of reoffending, breach of licence conditions, or other risk-related information).
- b. The number of tests resulting in actual action (e.g., changes to licence conditions, recall to custody, initiation of investigations).
- c. Any data on the percentage of tests resulting in significant disclosures or actions.

5. Purpose and procedure

- a. The stated purpose of polygraph testing within your force's sex offender management or investigative processes.
- b. Who conducts the tests (e.g., trained police officers, probation staff, or external examiners).
- c. Whether the tests are voluntary or mandatory, and under what circumstances.
- d. The training, standards, or qualifications required for individuals conducting polygraph examinations.
- e. The oversight mechanisms or quality assurance processes in place to ensure polygraph use is compliant and effective.

6. Legal and oversight considerations

- a. Whether polygraph results are admissible as evidence in court within your force's jurisdiction.
- b. Any legal or practical limitations your force has encountered regarding polygraph use (e.g., accuracy concerns, legal challenges, or statutory restrictions).
- c. Details of any internal or external evaluations, audits, or research into the effectiveness or reliability of polygraph testing in relation to sex offenders, including copies or references to such reports.

7. Policy and guidance

Proud to serve and protect our communities

- a. Copies of any policies, procedures, training manuals, or internal guidance documents relating to the use of polygraph tests in relation to sex offenders.
- b. If full copies cannot be provided, the titles, authors, and dates of the documents.

Response:

The answer to your request is exempt under Section 21 of the FOIA (Information available to the applicant by other means).

The information you have requested is available via the following website/link:

www.wiltshire.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/wiltshire/2023/07-july-2023/foi-2023-580-polygraph-testing.pdf

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the 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 21 Information available to the applicant by other means

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered in the light of your request within the time constraints applicable under the legislation.

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

Yours sincerely,

Nick Penny

Force Disclosure Decision Maker