

WILTSHIRE POLICE



Via Email



Police Headquarters

London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date 26/11/2025

Our ref **FOI 2025/1082**

Reply contact name is: XXXX

Dear XXXX

I write in connection with your request for information, dated 14/11/2025, concerning warrants.

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, searches were conducted with the warrants team and policy advisor of Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and it is not possible to meet your requirements in full.

You wrote with [Our response:](#)

This request concerns outstanding arrest warrants issued due to failure to appear in court, breach of bail, pre-trial absconding, or post-conviction absconding.

To minimise cost/time burden and avoid broad searches, all questions request existing, routinely held datasets or policy documents only.

Please provide the following:

A. Current Outstanding Warrants (as of your latest available month) The total number of individuals with outstanding arrest warrants. [Warrants 14 Nov 2025 = 386. Suspects = 269](#)

A breakdown of these warrants by:

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a. Offence category (e.g., murder, rape/sexual assault, child sexual offences, GBH, fraud, domestic abuse, drugs offences) b. Warrant type (failure to appear / breach of bail / pre-trial / post-conviction) c. Year of issue (e.g., pre-2000, 2000-2009, 2010-2019, 2020-present).

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. Due to the figures provided above, we would need to manually peruse all relevant warrants within the timeframe given.

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.

The year of the oldest currently outstanding warrant and the offence category associated with it (no personal identifiers required). 2009 -GBH

B. Trends (Existing, Recorded Data Only) For each of the past five calendar years (2019-2023), please provide:

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a. Number of warrants issued *2019 -Dec 2022 All Live warrants were recorded: 2023 onwards only FTA Warrants recorded.

2019 = **3,051**. 2020 = **3,161**. 2021 = **4,282**. 2022 = **4,193**. 2023 = **2,808**.

b. Number of warrants executed- **Not recorded**

(If exact annual figures are not held, please supply the closest equivalent routinely held statistic.)

C. Policies, Risk Assessments & Procedures Does your force have a formal policy or SOP for reviewing, prioritising or executing outstanding warrants?

If yes, please provide the document or the relevant excerpt. [The Criminal Justice Act 2003](#) outlines how to prioritise & categorise Warrants. Relevant extract attached to this FOI response:

[Category A B and C FTA Warrants](#)

Categorisation of a warrant is the process that determines the executing agency and the timescales that it should be executed in. Generally, Category A warrants relate to the most serious offence. Some of the additional factors to be considered are the risk to the public and the intelligence value.

The following offences should be categorised as 'A':

- Treason;
- Murder;
- Manslaughter;
- Rape;
- Other serious sexual assault;
- Kidnapping;
- An offence under section 3, 50(2), 68(2) or 170 of the Customs and excise Management Act 1979;
- Cause explosion likely to endanger life or property;
- Possession of firearms with intent to injure;

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- Use of firearm / imitation firearm to resist arrest;
- Carrying firearms with criminal intent;
- Hostage taking;
- Hijacking;
- Torture;
- Cause death by dangerous driving;
- Cause death by careless driving under influence of drink/ drugs;
- Offences under the Aviation and Maritime Security Act 1990;
- Offences under the Channel Tunnel Security Order 1994;
- Protection of Children Act 1978 - indecent photographs of children;
- Publication of obscene matter;
- Offences under Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- Production, Supply and Possession for supply of controlled drugs;
- Offences under the Criminal Justice International Co-operation Act 1990;
- Terrorism offences.

Any conspiracy to commit, attempt, aid, abet, counsel or procure any of the above should be included as 'serious offences'.

Other offences may also be classed as serious if their consequences are as per the following list. Such cases will be rare and it is possible that the individual grading the warrant will not have this information. If this information is not clearly known to the person grading the warrant then the warrant would be graded B or C as appropriate.

- Serious harm to the security of the state or public order
- Serious interference with the administration of justice or investigation of an offence
- The death or serious injury of a person
- Substantial financial gain or loss to a person

As an example, a traffic offence that would otherwise have been minor and classed as a category C should be graded as an A where the consequences have led to the death or serious injury of a person.

Enforcement Officers (EOs) (Police, Police Civilian EOs, Court Civilian EOs) should execute the warrant as soon as practicable but should as an absolute minimum make every effort to execute in the timescales below:

Category A - within 14 total days. Category B -within 21 total days. Category C - within 28 total days.

What risk assessment criteria are used to determine warrant priority? (e.g., offence severity, threat to life, repeat offending, safeguarding concerns) [The criminal Justice Act 2003](#) is adhered to at all times. Any particular concerns are relayed to the arresting team either in the remarks field of the warrant Task or communicated by means of a Teams channel

Does your force maintain a dedicated team/unit for locating individuals with outstanding warrants?

If yes, please state its name and staffing level (if recorded).

[Live warrants](#) are tasked to HQ Ops Specialist teams to locate & arrest the suspect. HQ Ops consists of 5 Teams who operate over a 24 hour period. When HQ Ops have carried out all lines of enquiry the Warrant is passed back to WarrantsPOC for regular 6 monthly reviews. The Wanted Missing Marker remains Live until the Warrant is executed or Withdrawn by the Court.

D. Use of Databases and Inter-Agency Cooperation Are all outstanding warrants routinely entered onto the Police National Computer (PNC)? [Yes](#)

Does your force use external databases (e.g., NHS, DVLA, credit reference agencies, Passport Office, benefits databases) for warrant tracing where legally permitted? [Enquiries are made to external agencies via a DPA enquiry form](#)

Please summarise any policies or agreements concerning information-sharing with other UK forces, NCA, or Interpol, where relevant.

[We have regional ISAs in which other police forces are also party to alongside other organisations, but we do not have any ISAs directly between police forces specifically relevant to outstanding arrest warrants.](#)

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We do not have local ISAs with NCA or Interpol, these would be covered at a national level and would not be Wiltshire Police owned. Such enquiries are usually made by the OIC (Officer In Case) for the relevant occurrence. The Information Sharing Policy states:

Legal Basis for Information Sharing.

There are three main categories of information sharing within the Police Service:

- Required by or under statute (statutory obligation)
 - Permitted by or under statute (statutory power)
 - Common Law
-
- **Statutory Obligation:** Where a statutory obligation exists Wiltshire Police has made provision for the sharing of information through either the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) Manager or the Force Disclosure Unit Senior Decision Maker. Any request to share information via a statutory obligation must be referred to one of the above individuals, who will give the appropriate advice.
 - **Statutory Power:** Applies to the sharing of police information with another party where there is a specific legal power to do so, but not an obligation to share. This includes sharing:
 - Within the police service; and;
 - Partner agencies that have a statutory power to share or receive information.
 - **Common Law:** Applies to the sharing of police information under common law to support the policing purposes. Where the common law is used to justify information sharing, a risk assessment must be undertaken using the guide at [Appendix A](#) to this policy.

I have attached a copy of the policy.

E. Victim Communication and Safeguarding Does your force have a policy for notifying victims when a suspect or convicted offender subject to a warrant remains unlocated? [All victim related issues are dealt with by the Horizon Team, but it is imperative that the reviewing officer keeps the victim updated.](#)

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How many individuals with outstanding warrants (current total) are convicted but not yet sentenced? [Warrant team cannot determine this 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:

Section 12: Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

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.

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

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/>