

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXX - By email

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

Date 7th January 2026

Our Ref FOI 2026-021

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 6th January 2026, concerning Dog and Cat 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 the Business Intelligence department 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:

1. What were the total number of dog and cat theft/abduction crimes in 2024, and in 2025 (with monthly breakdowns if possible)?
2. What was the outcome (charge/summons, community resolution, active investigation, evidential difficulties, no suspect identified) for each dog and cat theft/abduction crime in 2024, and 2025?
3. Please show how many of the recorded crime outcomes in 2024 and 2025 are under:
 - a) The Theft Act 1968
 - b) The Pet Abduction Act 2024
4. How many dogs and cats were listed with each dog and cat theft/abduction crime in 2024 and 2025?
5. Can details about stolen/abducted dog and cat breed, gender, age, and location of theft (walk, home, garden, outside shop, from car etc) also be provided for 2024 and 2025 please?

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

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.

Some of the information you are requesting - namely Thefts of Dogs and Cats prior to August 2024 - is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. Wiltshire Police do not have a way to automatically identify the type of items stolen during a particular theft. Prior to the introduction of the Pet Abduction Act 2024, which came into effect in August 2024, the theft of a dog or cat would have been recorded under the Home Office Offence of 'Other Theft'. Establishing the number of dog or cats taken during a recorded 'Other Theft' offence would require manually interrogating each and every record involved, for which there were more than 2800 offences recorded for 2024. If just one minute was spent checking each occurrence log and/or other documents held for the occurrence, it would take more than 46 hours to complete the task.

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 normally fall under the exemption of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please note:

Other Forces may use different recording systems - therefore it may be possible some Forces can provide this information where others like us 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. However, due to the difficulties in obtaining the requested information prior to the introduction of the Pet Abduction Act 2024 - as outlined above - I cannot think of a way in which this could be achieved.

Although excess cost removes the Forces' obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request. What I can provide you with is documented below:

Please note, the following information has been provided in relation to offences ONLY recorded after the introduction of the Pet Abduction Act 2024 (came into Force in August 2024).

1. What were the total number of dog and cat theft/abduction crimes in 2024, and in 2025 (with monthly breakdowns if possible)?

	Dog Thefts		Cat Thefts	
Month	Crimes	Animals Involved	Crimes	Animals Involved
Aug-24	-	-	-	-
Sep-24	-	-	3	3
Oct-24	-	-	2	2
Nov-24	-	-	-	-
Dec-24	-	-	-	-
Jan-25	1	1	-	-
Feb-25	1	1	-	-
Mar-25	-	-	-	-
Apr-25	-	-	1	1
May-25	-	-	-	-
Jun-25	1	1	-	-
Jul-25	-	-	1	1
Aug-25	1	1	2	5
Sep-25	-	-	-	-
Oct-25	-	-	1	3
Nov-25	-	-	-	-
Dec-25	-	-	-	-

2. What was the outcome (charge/summons, community resolution, active investigation, evidential difficulties, no suspect identified) for each dog and cat theft/abduction crime in 2024, and 2025?

	Dog Thefts		Cat Thefts	
Outcome	2024	2025	2024	2025
15: Police - named suspect, victim supports but evidential difficulties	-	1	1	2
16: Victim declines/withdraws support - named suspect identified	-	1	2	1
18: Investigation complete no suspect identified	-	2	2	1
21: Police - named suspect, investigation not in the public interest	-	-	-	1

3. Please show how many of the recorded crime outcomes in 2024 and 2025 are under:
 - a) The Theft Act 1968 **None**
 - b) The Pet Abduction Act 2024 **14**

4. How many dogs and cats were listed with each dog and cat theft/abduction crime in 2024 and 2025?

Please refer to the table provided for Q1

4. Can details about stolen/abducted dog and cat breed, gender, age, and location of theft (walk, home, garden, outside shop, from car etc) also be provided for 2024 and 2025 please?

Dogs Stolen by crime					
Year	Crime	Breed	Gender	Age	Location
2025	1	Lurcher	Unstated	Unstated	Garden
2025	2	Mixed Cross	Male	6	Neighbour's property
2025	3	Chow Chow	Male	3	Acquaintance
2025	4	Terrier	Female	<1	Caravan site

Cats stolen by crime					
Year	Crime	Breed	Gender	Age	Location
2024	1	Unstated	Unstated	Unstated	Garden
2024	2	Unstated	Unstated	Unstated	Neighbour's property
2024	3	Unstated	Unstated	Unstated	Neighbour's property
2024	4	Unstated	Unstated	Unstated	Acquaintance
2024	5	Unstated	Unstated	Unstated	Garden
2025	1	Unstated	Unstated	<1	Neighbour's property
2025	2	Unstated	Unstated	Unstated	Garden
2025	3	Unstated	Unstated	Unstated	Neighbour's property
2025	4	Mixed Cross	Unstated	Unstated	Neighbour's property
2025	5	Unstated	Female	Unstated	Outside shop

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.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

Yours sincerely,

Nick Penny
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



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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 Fol 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 to contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

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