

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXX – By email

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

Date 19th January 2026

Our Ref FOI 2026-063

Dear XXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 14th January, concerning vehicle 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 Unit 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:

Please can you provide confirmation of the number of vehicles reported as stolen for the year 2020 and the year 2025. Many thanks.

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. Whilst we are able to retrieve the amount of vehicle theft occurrences we have on our system within the time frame of your request, we are unable to determine the number of vehicles stolen within each incident. In order to retrieve this data, we would be required to manually review each occurrence. There are 1020 occurrences in total; therefore, if each review took 2 minutes, this request would take approximately 34 hours to complete.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

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.

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.

Below is the number of vehicle theft occurrences, however I cannot confirm how many vehicles were stolen per occurrence:

Distinct Count of OccNo	2020	2025	Grand Total
Aggravated veh taking where only aggravating factor is criminal damage of £5000 or under	6		6
Aggravated vehicle taking	39	19	58
Aggravated vehicle taking (driving/being carried) offences causing damage to vehicle and/or other property under £5000		13	13
Theft of a motor vehicle	1	437	438
Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle	443		443
Unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle (does not include 'driving or being carried knowing motor vehicle has been taken...')		62	62
Grand Total	489	531	1020

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