

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXX – By email

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

Date 25th February 2025

Our Ref FOI 2026-209

Dear XXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 18th February, concerning coercive control.

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:

I am seeking recorded data relating to coercive control offences under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 (Coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship) for the period from 2015 to 2025.

For each calendar year listed below, please provide the following information, separated by sex (Male / Female / Unknown if applicable):

Total number of reports of coercive control (as defined under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015), by sex.

Total number of charges for coercive control, by sex.

Total number of charges where coercive control was the only charge (i.e., not accompanied by any other offence), by sex.

Please supply data for the following years:

2015

2016

2017

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2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

2025

If you are unable to provide data that exactly matches the categories above due to recording or coding practices, please:

a) Provide the closest available dataset, and explain any differences in how the figures are defined or collected; and

b) Explain any year(s) for which data is not held.

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 is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. In order to determine the number of charges where coercive control was the only charge, we would be required to manually interrogate every individual occurrence as there is no way to filter this automatically on our systems. Within the time frame requested, there are over 2,000 occurrences that we would need to review. If each review took only 1 minute, this would take in excess of 33 hours.

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.

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Forces may use different recording systems, therefore it may be possible some Forces can provide this information where others cannot.

Under our Section 16 obligation to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you to refine your request to a more manageable level. By resubmitting question 3 with a smaller time frame, we may be able to manually review the amount of individual occurrences and retrieve the information you are requesting.

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 offence of Engage in controlling/coercive behaviour in an intimate / family relationship came into effect 29/12/2015 and the earliest occurrence we have on record was during 2016.

For the first question, the response is based on the gender of the Suspect. Not all occurrences have a Suspect listed, and these are excluded from the response.

Total number of reports of coercive control (as defined under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015), by sex

Distinct Count of OccNo	Female	Male	Not Recorded	Grand Total
2016	2	28		30
2017	3	44		47
2018	7	77		81
2019	15	221		235
2020	22	320		342
2021	25	263		287
2022	31	305	1	336
2023	28	341		366
2024	49	308	2	357
2025	54	267		317
Grand Total	236	2174	3	2398

Total number of charges for coercive control, by sex.

Distinct Count of OccNo	Female	Male	Grand Total
2016		4	4
2017		7	7
2018		9	9
2019		10	10
2020		13	13
2021		14	14
2022	1	13	14
2023	2	38	40
2024		27	27
2025		19	19
Grand Total	3	154	157

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

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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 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

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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/>