

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

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

Date 30th March 2026

Our Ref FOI 2026-187

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 12th February 2026 concerning NPCC interim transgender search guidance. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request.

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 Corporate Communications & Engagement department and Force Policy Officer at Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am able to respond as follows.

You wrote and our response:

1. Has this force implemented the NPCC draft interim search guidance (published on 22nd May 2025 Police search guidance following Supreme Court decision).

Yes

2. If so, what date was the draft interim search guidance implemented in this force.

6th June 2025

3. Provide a copy of any communication (from chief officer team, legal dept, training dept, force lead for searching, HR dept or Equalities dept) given to staff with regard to the implementation of this guidance and include date circulated/sent.

Please find a transcript of an internal Chief Constable Vlog issued on 30th May 2025 and an accompanying whole Force email at the end of this response letter.

Redactions have been made in line with Section 40(2) Personal Data of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

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Information which constitutes personal data is exempt under Section 40(2) of the FOIA if it relates to a third party, and the disclosure to the public would contravene the data protection principles set out in Section 34 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 5 of the GDPR.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption and therefore there is no requirement to articulate the harm or conduct a Public Interest test.

Note - Redactions have also been made where the information was not relevant to the request / guidance.

4. If not, what policy/guidance is being followed by this force in relation to searches exceeding those of the most basic type*? Please provide a copy of the policy/guidance with regard to such searches. Stipulate whether these are only being undertaken by an officer of the same sex** as the person being searched. If not, please provide details of the circumstances in which a search of this nature may be undertaken by an officer not of the same sex.

N/A - NPCC draft interim search guidance has been implemented.

*Searches involving the removal of jacket, outer clothing and gloves, more normally termed as 'more thorough searches' **Same sex meaning the same biological sex as determined and observed at conception/birth.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Constabulary, 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.

Exemptions applied:

Section 40(2) - Personal Information

In accordance with Section 17 of the Act, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for this particular request.

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,

FDU 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



Keeping Wiltshire Safe

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/>

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

Chief's Vlog 30 May 2025

Chief:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] today we are having a subject focused vlog and we're going to be talking about the NPCC Interim Transgender Search Guidance, which is a really significant piece of guidance that has recently been issued by the NPCC.

It will have an impact on our policy within Wiltshire Police and myself and my colleagues on the call thought it'd be really helpful just to discuss it and, and try and explain to all of your good selves sort of where we are with the guidance that's come out and how we are going to make it into policy.

So I'm just going to invite my colleagues to introduce themselves [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

ACC [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

So this really important discussion today clearly has a big impact upon lots of members of the police force in Wiltshire. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Chief:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] can I invite you in?
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I have assisted Scott McPherson [REDACTED] in relation to putting together our policy in relation to transgender searching.

Hence why I'm here to offer my views and also just to have a conversation with yourselves about this and how this is going to affect our colleagues going forward.
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Chief:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Mr McPherson, may I invite you in?

Scott McPherson:

Thank you, chief. Yeah, hi everyone. I'm Scott McPherson. I'm head of corporate communications and public engagement. I'm also the co-chair of the Wiltshire Police LGBTQ+ staff support network. So clearly a vested interest in the subject matter today. Thank you.

Chief:

[REDACTED] I'm going to return to you, Mr. McPherson actually, first of all, because I think you've been here quite a long time, and you have seen the history of this particular piece of policy develop over time, haven't you?

So I was just wondering if you give us a, a potted history of Wiltshire Police in this area.

Scott McPherson:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] So several years ago, the previous national guidance around transgender searching in custody was paused. That was due to a legal debate that was ongoing at the time. Whilst that was paused, forces had an option to take really to either create their own policy or wait with no policy until the national guidance was reissued. We in Wiltshire Police and under your guidance Chief, created our own policy and that was based on inputs from our operational and our trans colleagues and at the heart of that was treating people with dignity and kindness. So we created our own policy in this space.

And then last month, many will remember there was a Supreme Court ruling which was on the legal definition of a woman, that being on biological sex. So that has had a significant impact on the direction of travel around the national guidance.

And then last week, the NPCC issued their interim transgender search guidance, which brings us to the discussion today.

Chief:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

So [REDACTED], I think you're going to talk to us a little bit about, well, where do we find ourselves?

ACC [REDACTED]:

[REDACTED]
So as Scott describes, we in place now a current force policy which we need to adjust now to reflect the ruling of Supreme Court and also the NPCC interim guidance. So such as the, I think the need to approach this really sensitively and carefully. We've decided to

Commission a gold group under DCC Cooper's leadership next week with intention of producing an updated policy to be written by next Friday. And this new policy needs to clearly reflect the direction of the Supreme Court and the NPCC guidance. And for that reason and such is the importance of really taking this very carefully, we've decided to have in place and keep in place the current policy until the new policy is written now.

Now during DCC Cooper's gold group discussions, we are going to involve a range of stakeholders involving our staff support networks and obviously force legal too. So it's really important that colleagues in the call today recognise the importance we place behind this new policy being written. It's so important that the policy is written in a way that carries on respecting, in a the dignity of our colleagues and also treats them with fairness and kindness too. That's so important, but equally it's important to the fact that we as a force have to reflect the law as it stands now.

So, so colleagues, be assured that we as a force recognise the importance of doing this in the right way, but clearly we have to respond to the change to the law.

So that being said, if I can just briefly, Chief, just summarise some of the key headlines of the new guidance.

Obviously colleagues on the recording today on the call listening in the new policy will give more detail around this, but there are some clear, clear priority areas to I guess brief on today so you understand what it is the new policy will talk about.

So, so firstly, the key, the key headline of this, if you like, change is that from the time the policy starts, any thorough police searches, such as those that involve exposure of intimate body parts should be carried out by police officers and staff of the same biological sex as a detained person. So that's really, really important, of course, point to make now again, driven by the Supreme Court judgement.

Secondly, the guidance also makes clear, as our policy will too, the fact that if an officer or staff member in Wiltshire Police declines to search a a community member who is from the transgender community, they will face no career detriment whatsoever. That's a really important point to make. We understand this is a very, very emotive issue for for many colleagues in the force and the community and the guidance and our policy will be quite clear. If you decide not to search a person, you have every right to do so. And in fact that's in place now. So say for various reasons, colleagues, under PACE laws, various search powers. If you choose not to search somebody, you can choose not to search somebody. That hasn't changed. But please be advised that the new guidance will talk about this and the policy will do so.

The third key point to make is this, the fact that there are occasions when a member of the transgender community can can elect to be searched by, you know somebody else of their own lived gender. So, so the police force within Wiltshire and National NPPC guidance recognises that important requirement. So if a transgender detainee requests to be searched by a person of their lived gender, we as a police force will respond to that and do the best that we can to meet that requirement. Now the guidance says, and our policy will say this, the fact that we will then take all the steps we can do to find an officer prepared to conduct that search. And the guidance talks about there being operationally a viable position to be in. And clearly we'll do the best we can to meet that person's requirements. But if the police force, Wiltshire Police, cannot achieve that requirement, we may then need to revert to and serve the same biological sex for that search. So that's really important, was important to make and also to the guidance and our force policy will describe very clearly the fact in those situations the detainee must record in writing their requirements. The officer conducting the search must record also their consent to carry out that search.

And thirdly, the guidance talks about it being authorised by an authorising officer. Now the guidance is silent on who that should be. DCC Cooper will deal with that within the gold group and in design of the new policy. So that colleagues are the key headlines of the new

Like I say, we'll be producing the end of next week a policy. But you can find yourselves colleagues, you know, I'm sure through NPCC on force websites, the guidance yourself to read. So that really is the position around the, the policy change. I would say to the fact that Wiltshire police, I think recognise the upsets, the distress and the uncertainty the Supreme Court guidance has created for colleagues both within the force and also too in our communities too. But we as a force welcome the guidance. It will give us some clarity, it'll place us in line with law now, which obviously very important for the police service, and it will give us too a clear and consistent, I think, position as a police force to follow. And again, please be assured that whilst we're following that guidance in terms of policy creation, there are going to be some ways we can hope and helpfully help colleagues. So, for example, in custody settings, we'll be talking about the ways in which we can design our response by officers and staff colleagues can raise concerns if required, but within privacy and not fear of being you know, identified beyond their control or wishes. And, and again, you know, I'd really implore colleagues, if you're feeling, having heard this briefing today, upset or uncertain, reach out please to support networks. It's so important you don't feel as though you're alone in this situation.

So I hope colleagues, that gives some assurance in terms of what the policy is going to say and also how we're going to take our way through this in a measured but quick way to deliver the policy change, but in a way that is caring and compassionate and seeks the views and concerns of a wide range of networks.

Chief:

[REDACTED]

Naturally there, there are some concerns and naturally there there is going to be, as [REDACTED] described, some panic and some anxiety. [REDACTED] But I think from me, the most important thing that we will do this week, and it's, it's very paramount that we do, it's just to liaise with our community, liaise with our LGBTQ+ support network to ascertain what it is from our policy that we we are looking for. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Our previous policy was, you know, it was very good in that we were keeping all of our not only just our trans detainees that came through custody, but also our trans colleagues in mind with, with with the legislation. However, that's, that's now changed and I completely understand that we will have to now take part in that. We'll have to adopt that. So we welcome it.

However, I think the most important thing for us to do now is just to reassure our colleagues that we will be doing the best that we can to ensure that we will be taking part of taking that in, in our consideration with with the safeguard to support our members and with their lived experiences and our trust trans colleagues, when we now produce this policy, when we will be adopting it later on next week.

Chief:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mr McPherson, from a national or do you have any observations from a national perspective? I mean, clearly every force is, is either has adopted or will be adopting the, the guidance into their policies because that is, that is the law now, isn't it, in terms of the of the Supreme Court judgement? But do you have any sort of reflections from a national perspective or any conversations that you're having there?

Scott McPherson:

Yeah. So as you say, Chief, all forces are in a similar position where they will be at some stage implementing the guidance. We in Wiltshire Police, and I will repeat the point, are leagues ahead because of the work that has been previously done in that we have a robust policy in place already. So that guidance can be transferred across into our policy, which is the purpose of that Gold group.

I think as others have outlined, there are challenges with this guidance. There are members of the LGBTQ+ community who feel very disheartened, threatened, upset, concerned, all of those words. And I suppose what I would say is that we have a proven track record in Wiltshire Police of working collaboratively as a staff support network with the chief officer group to ensure that those who are brave enough, frankly, to share their lived experience to help inform policy in this space. We will continue to do that.

So I'm, I feel very confident of where we are actually as a, as a force given the work that we have already done.

Chief:

Scott McPherson:

Chief:

Scott McPherson:

Chief:

Right. This has been an incredibly rich vlog full of lots of information and hopefully lots of reassurance to our colleagues through a really tricky time, a really difficult time. And I, I do understand that. I think the big message for me about this is dignity and kindness and making sure that we care for each other and making sure that we support each other and that we recognise this is going to be tricky and it's going to be challenging and we do need to support each other.

[REDACTED]

Scott McPherson:

[REDACTED]

Chief:

That's brilliant. Thank you very much indeed. So I'm going to wrap up this vlog. To all of our colleagues out there watching this, thank you so much indeed. I hope this has been really helpful, really useful.

[REDACTED]

From: [Internal Communications](#)
To: [Whole Force](#)
Subject: End of week update from CC Roper (30 May 2025)
Date: 30 May 2025 18:00:32

End of week update from CC Roper (30 May 2025)

The latest edition of the Chief's weekly vlog is now available, and you can watch [here](#) or read a transcript [here](#).

This week the Chief is joined by ACC [REDACTED], Head of Corporate Communications and Public Engagement Scott McPherson, and [REDACTED] to discuss the NPCC Interim Transgender Search Guidance.

Useful links to items discussed in the vlog:

- The Interim Guidance from the NPCC can be found [here](#).
- Our [current policy](#) around Transgender Equality Guidance for Custody and Searches will continue to be used until Friday 6 June, when the updated policy will be put in place to reflect the new guidance

- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for everything you are doing to support our communities and for keeping Wiltshire safe.

Whole Force email authorised by Corporate Communications and Engagement

<PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE>