



XXX

Sent via email: XXX



Police Headquarters

London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date: 17/03/26

Our ref: FOI 2026-236

Reply contact name: XXX

Dear XXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 26/02/26 concerning crime cases where a suspect was identified, but no prosecution or formal disposal took place because the statutory time limit for prosecution expired.

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.

Your request for information has now been considered, and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

I would like to request information held by your police force relating to recorded crime cases where a suspect was identified, but no prosecution or formal disposal took place because the statutory time limit for prosecution expired. For example, the six-month time limit for summary-only offences or other applicable prosecution or custody time limits.

Specifically, please provide the following for each of the last five full calendar years:

The number of recorded crime cases where a suspect was identified and the case was closed, finalised, or resulted in no further action because the prosecution time limit expired before charge, caution, or other disposal

A breakdown of these cases by the recorded reason for expiry or delay, for example (but not limited to):

failure to complete a suspect interview before the time limit administrative or case-handling delay staff availability or resourcing issues, including sickness or workload evidential delays other recorded reasons

If your police force does not record a single explicit category for "prosecution time limit expired", please provide the closest equivalent data held. For example, cases flagged as "time-barred", "out of time", or similar.

Response:

Whilst our Crime Recording system(s) are sophisticated and we have a number of fields in which information pertaining to a crime or incident is recorded (and can be searched), we do not have a field or flag in which we record the exact reason for when no prosecution or formal disposal took place because the statutory time limit for prosecution expired.

Ascertaining this information would only be possible by physically reviewing and/or reading each occurrence/crime record on our Niche database for the last five years, this would mean interrogating thousands of occurrences. Please note, forces may use different recording systems; therefore, it may be possible some forces can provide this information where others cannot.

Given the number of individual crime logs that have been recorded for this time frame, I am confident that locating and interrogating 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.

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request to a more manageable level. However, due to the difficulties outlined above, I cannot see how this can be achieved in this case.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the 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 request.

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 are the answers documented below:

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When a suspect for a crime has been identified but the time-limit for a prosecution has expired it is recorded as Home Office outcome code of 17.

The number of crimes (each year) that have been recorded as closed under Outcome code 17 are as shown in the table below: -

	Distinct Count of Occ No.
2020	413
2021	506
2022	459
2023	321
2024	329
2025	222
Grand Total	2250

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed on 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

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.

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

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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/>