

# WILTSHIRE POLICE



## Police Headquarters

London Road  
DEVIZES  
Wiltshire  
SN10 2DN

Date: August 26, 2026

Our ref: FOI 2026/621

Reply contact name is:

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information, dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

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 Professional Standards Department of Wiltshire Police.

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

### **You Wrote:**

For each of the following periods:

1 January 2020–31 December 2020  
1 January 2021–31 December 2021  
1 January 2022–31 December 2022  
1 January 2023–31 December 2023  
1 January 2024–31 December 2024  
1 January 2025–31 December 2025  
1 January 2026–30 June 2026

Please provide the number of deaths in police custody.  
during arrest or restraint.

following police contact where the incident meets the IOPC definition of a death in custody.

For each death recorded in the periods above, please provide

ethnicity (IC codes, 18+1, or ONS categories – whichever your force records).  
age at death.

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## Gender

For each case, please provide:

location type (custody suite, police vehicle, public place, hospital after police contact).  
cause-of-death category as recorded by the force.  
whether force was used; if yes, the type of force e.g., taser, restraint, riot shield.  
whether mental health was recorded as a factor.

For each death, please provide:

the date the force referred the death to the coroner  
a list of categories of documents supplied to the coroner (for example, custody record, CCTV, officer statements, risk assessments)  
the inquest status (open, concluded, or pending)  
the inquest conclusion, if known to the force

For each death, please provide

the date of referral to the IOPC.  
the referral category (mandatory, independent, managed, supervised).  
the mode of investigation (independent, managed, supervised, local).  
a summary of IOPC findings held by the force (please provide the IOPC report or a verifiable and working link to that report).  
whether any officer faced misconduct or gross misconduct proceedings and the outcome.  
any learning recommendations issued.  
whether the force implemented those recommendations.

how the force records ethnicity (self-defined, officer-defined, or both).  
any changes in ethnicity recording practices between 2020 and 2026.

the force's working definition of "death in custody".  
the retention period for custody-related death records.

## **Response:**

On reviewing the original Freedom of Information request, the response provided and the request for an Internal Review, I uphold the original decision and use of the Section 12 exemption.

To clarify, on receiving this Internal Review request, I liaised with the relevant department (Professional Standards), who confirmed that it would exceed the 18 hour work limit to locate, retrieve and extract the information.

To provide some further context, the information requested is not stored in a way which allows for easy retrieval and Wiltshire Police does not have the search facility to automatically gather this data. This is as our Professional Standards Department would have to manually search and read each and every 'death or serious injury' for the requested time period to determine what the incident related to. Furthermore, there is no field on their recording system for logging against custody for a death or serious injury. Therefore, to ascertain this information would require manually searching and reviewing each and every case and the associated documents.

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Our Professional Standards Department have estimated that there have been 60 to 75 of these cases per year, therefore there would be 420 cases which would have to be reviewed for this request at approximately 20 minutes per case. This would exceed the 18 hour work limit to locate, retrieve and extract the information (not including the time already spent on the request) and therefore the Section 12 exemption is applicable.

Furthermore, I note that some information has already been disclosed in the original response as a gesture of goodwill.

Please also note that when one part of a request is exempt via Section 12, then the whole request is exempt.

Ordinarily under our Section 16 obligation to provide advice and assistance, I would advise you of a way in which to refine your request. However, due to the difficulties as outlined above, I cannot think of a way in which this could be achieved.

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  
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.

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,

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](mailto: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 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](mailto: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/>