

WILTSHIRE POLICE



Police Headquarters

London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date: July 31, 2026

Our ref: FOI 2026/647

Reply contact name:

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 13th 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.

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

You Wrote:

Following the recent publication of a book regarding the workings of the Technical Surveillance Counter Measures Institute (TSCM) and the police I would like to make a Freedom of Information request for the below.

1. Do you or have you ever had members of the TSCM Institute working at your police force?
2. In what capacity do members of the TSCM Institute work at your police force?
3. What access is given to members of the TSCM Institute whilst working at your police force?
4. What security checks are undertaken on members of the TSCM Institute prior to working at your police force?

It is my belief that questions regarding contractors working at your force and what security clearance and access that they are given is not National Security or Section 31(3) and it is in the public interest.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

Response:

On reviewing the original Freedom of Information request, the response provided and the request for an Internal Review, I can respond as follows:

Wiltshire Police can neither confirm nor deny that any information is held relevant to this request as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 24(2) – National Security

Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

Overall Harm

Confirming or denying whether Wiltshire Police holds information regarding any relationship with members of the Technical Surveillance Counter Measures (TSCM) Institute would, in itself, reveal information about whether the force has access to specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise and the measures used to protect sensitive policing activity.

TSCM services are intrinsically linked to the identification and mitigation of technical surveillance threats and other forms of covert intelligence gathering. Therefore, confirmation or denial of the existence of any such relationship, together with information relating to interactions, vetting requirements or security clearances, would provide insight into the extent to which such expertise may be available to Wiltshire Police and the security measures used to protect police assets, information and operations.

Even where no information is held, confirmation of that fact would be informative.

Responses from individual forces could be compared and aggregated, allowing a requester to build a broader picture of policing capabilities, protective security measures and access to specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise across the United Kingdom.

This mosaic effect could enable those intent on disrupting policing activity, evading detection, gathering intelligence on law enforcement capabilities, or exploiting perceived weaknesses in protective security measures to make more informed decisions. Such outcomes would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders and the maintenance of public safety.

Furthermore, any compromise of policing's protective security arrangements would have the potential to undermine activities undertaken to safeguard national security.

Accordingly, confirmation or denial would be likely to result in prejudice to both national security and law enforcement functions.

Factors Favoring Confirming or Denying – Section 24(2)

There is a public interest in transparency regarding the way police forces engage with external organisations and specialist service providers. Confirming or denying whether information is held would promote accountability and help the public understand how policing obtains specialist expertise to protect its people, information and assets.

There is also a public interest in providing reassurance that appropriate vetting and security arrangements are in place where external individuals or organisations may have access to police premises, systems or information. Greater openness can contribute to informed public debate about governance, oversight and the expenditure of public funds.

Factors Against Confirming or Denying – Section 24(2)

There is a compelling public interest in safeguarding national security. Confirming or denying whether information is held would reveal whether specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise may or may not be available to the Force and provide insight into the security arrangements surrounding its use.

Information relating to the availability of specialist counter-surveillance expertise could assist those seeking to identify protective security measures, vulnerabilities or perceived gaps in policing's ability to detect and mitigate technical surveillance threats. Even limited disclosures can be significant when responses from multiple police forces are compared and aggregated. Such information could be used to develop a broader understanding of policing's protective security arrangements and the extent to which specialist expertise may be available across the United Kingdom.

There is a strong and enduring public interest in ensuring that information is not released where doing so could undermine activities undertaken to protect national security and public safety.

Factors Favoring Confirming or Denying – Section 31(3)

There is a public interest in promoting openness and transparency regarding policing activities and the use of external specialists. Confirming or denying whether information is held would assist public understanding of how policing protects its people, information and assets and would facilitate scrutiny of decisions concerning the engagement of external organisations and individuals.

Disclosure would also contribute to public confidence by demonstrating accountability in relation to any vetting arrangements, security requirements or contractual relationships involving external providers.

Factors Against Favouring or Denying – Section 31(3)

There is a significant public interest in protecting the ability of the police service to prevent and detect crime and apprehend offenders. Confirming or denying whether information is held would reveal information about policing capabilities, protective security measures and the availability of specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise.

Information relating to relationships with individuals operating within the technical surveillance counter-measures field is intrinsically linked to the identification and mitigation of technical surveillance threats. Confirmation or denial could assist those seeking to evade detection, gather intelligence concerning policing capabilities or exploit perceived weaknesses in security arrangements.

Furthermore, responses from different police forces could be compared and aggregated, enabling a broader picture of policing's access to specialist expertise and associated protective security measures to be developed. This would increase the risk of prejudice to law enforcement functions.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

There is a strong public interest in ensuring that policing tactics, capabilities and protective security measures remain effective and are not undermined through incremental disclosures.

Balance Test

Whilst the Force recognises the public interest in openness, transparency and accountability regarding the engagement of external organisations and specialist service providers, greater weight must be afforded to the significant public interest in protecting national security and the effectiveness of law enforcement.

Confirming or denying whether information is held would reveal information about policing's protective security measures and the availability of specialist technical surveillance counter-measures expertise. Responses from multiple forces could also be compared and aggregated, enabling a broader understanding of policing's access to such expertise and the security arrangements surrounding its use.

Wiltshire Police considers that disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice both national security and law enforcement functions. Therefore, the potential prejudice arising from confirmation or denial outweighs the benefits of increased transparency and the balance of the public interest favours maintaining the neither confirm nor deny position under Sections 24(2) and 31(3) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

No inference can be taken from this response that any information is or is not held.

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.

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:

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

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/>