

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ
London Road
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN
Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.uk

disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

XXXXXX – by email

Date: 25th September 2026

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2026 / 686

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 22nd July 2026 concerning Sexual Offences involving Children.

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:

For the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2024, please provide:

1. The total number of recorded crimes flagged as "child sexual exploitation", "grooming", "rape", or "sexual offence" where the victim was under 18 years old at the time of reporting.
2. Of those in point 1, the number that were closed with an outcome of:
 - a. No further action
 - b. Investigation complete, no suspect identified
 - c. Evidential difficulties, victim does not support further action
 - d. Referred to Crown Prosecution Service
 - e. Suspect charged
3. The total number of complaints received by your force alleging failure to investigate a crime involving a child, including grooming or child sexual exploitation.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

4. Copies of any force policy, guidance, or instruction issued to officers regarding prioritisation, resourcing, or thresholds for investigating crimes involving children, grooming gangs, or child sexual exploitation.

5. Any internal reviews, audits, or reports conducted by your force in the last 5 years into delays, backlogs, or failures in investigating crimes involving children, grooming gangs, or child sexual exploitation.

Our response:

The information that you are requesting for the majority of your request (namely questions 3, 4 and 5) is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval.

The majority of our complaints data is stored on a legacy database called Centurion which is quite limited in respect of its functionality and the data that is primarily held (and therefore subsequently searched for).

All complaints recorded are logged under strictly defined categories. At present there is no specific category for “alleging failure to investigate a crime involving a child”. Such instances may be recorded within Centurion (as might anything related to grooming), but they would likely be held under any number of different complaint categories such as – for instance – “Operational Policing policies”, “General Policing Standards”, “Delivery of duties and services” and so on.

Given the number of complaints cases that are recorded by Wiltshire Police in any given year – which runs in to many 100’s – I have been advised by our Professional Standards Team that to review each complaint recorded under the potential categories they could be held would far exceed the 18 hour time limit permitted to us to respond.

The issue is further complicated because some of the older information held is likely to have been affected further by changes in Legislation / Regulation.

Under the circumstances therefore, 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.

Please also note that if one part of the request engages a Section 12 response, then 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.

However, although excess cost removes the forces’ obligations under the Freedom of Information Act - and as a gesture of good will under our Section 16 duty to be as helpful as possible to an applicant - 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 am able to provide you are the answers documented below :-

Question 1

Reported Year	Crimes
2015	557
2016	551
2017	632
2018	664
2019	585
2020	543
2021	664
2022	823
2023	752
2024	759

Question 2

Reported Year	Charged	Out of Court Resolution	Investigation complete no suspect identified	Victim declines/withdraws support - named suspect identified	NFA
2015	64	6	53	116	318
2016	50	13	68	110	310
2017	73	5	86	95	343
2018	60	9	96	123	376
2019	38	6	100	101	340
2020	66	4	100	85	288
2021	73	3	129	135	324
2022	89	15	113	209	397
2023	74	5	137	183	353
2024	47	39	121	173	326

Note - All sexual offences against a victim under 18 must be referred to CPS

Question 4

This question asks about crimes involving children, grooming gangs, and child sexual exploitation and these are dealt with separately. The answer below covers the period requested - 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2024.

Copies of any force policy, guidance, or instruction issued to officers regarding prioritisation, resourcing, or thresholds for investigating crimes involving children, grooming gangs, or child sexual exploitation.

- involving children - From January 2022 investigations involving children were covered by the Child Abuse Procedure (see attached) before that we relied on College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice on Child Abuse. No copies of the APP for the requested period have been retained, our answer in respect of this is therefore – No Information Held

- grooming gangs – No Information Held
- child sexual exploitation – No Information Held

Outside of the policy provided, we are not immediately aware of any guidance or instruction issued to officers regarding prioritisation, resourcing, or thresholds for investigating crimes involving children, grooming gangs, or child sexual exploitation.

The Child Abuse procedure has been redacted – where necessary – to remove personal information which is exempt under Section 40 of The Act.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is no obligation to provide any reason or rationale for the use of that exemption.

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request in respect of questions 3,4 and 5 to a more manageable level. However, due to the difficulties outlined above, I cannot see how this can be achieved in this particular 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 exemptions 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.

Section 40 : Personal Information

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,

Nick Penny
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
Telephone 101 ext 62005

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.pnn.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