

FOI 2021-758

I write in connection with your request for information dated 21 September 2021 concerning PCC Staffing levels

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 requester. 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, searches were conducted within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

**You wrote:**

I wish to make FOI request to ascertain how the staffing levels have changed since the WiltshirePCC office was established ie when it was setup

The area I am interested in is Salisbury Area CPT and its lower level teams. Plus the details (Posts and FTEs) for those employed by the PCC itself eg the OPCC Executive structure, the OPCC DCEO structure and the PCC Personal Office structure.

By financial year I'd like to see the following information:

1.Organisational Structure showing organisational unit (eg teams) and associated numbers of posts (ie including vacant ones) by grade

2.For each organisational unit the numbers of police in post by grade.

**Response:**

I have considered your request and I am able to provide a partial response to your request. Some of the information relevant to this request is exempt by virtue of Section 31(1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement.

Section 31 is a qualified prejudice-based exemption and therefore requires Wiltshire Police to establish the harm in disclosure, along with the public interest favouring and against disclosure.

*Please see attached spreadsheet which details the wire diagram for the OPCC, from the end of each financial year (April to March), since the OPCC was set up in November 2012. The spreadsheet contains the budget and actual FTE for each post, shows the structure of those areas and denotes each post as vacant or filled.*

*Additionally, the following link will be of further assistance and will direct you to the OPCC staffing structure - <https://www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk/my-office/staffing/>.*

Harm test

Disclosing information into the public domain - specifically a breakdown of the composition of the Salisbury Area CPT, including whether the posts are vacant or filled - would undermine the core principles of policing; namely to prevent and detect crime. Disclosure of this information could cause substantial harm to planned policing operations, and all individuals involved i.e. police employees and the community.

If Wiltshire Police were to place this information into the public domain, this would prejudice our ability to prevent and detect crime, and to apprehend or prosecute offenders; providing offenders with the information they would need to evade detection, and therefore effecting the Force's ability to protect the community.

#### Factors favouring disclosure

Placing this information into the public domain would lead to an increased public awareness of these issues. This in turn may lead to a reduction in crime or more information being supplied by the public, and would also allow the public to better protect themselves against crime. Disclosure would also ensure that Wiltshire Police can be held accountable for the actions taken, and show the Force as being as open and transparent with the public as possible.

#### Factors against disclosure

Breaking down the composition of the Salisbury Area CPT would hinder the prevention and detection of crime. This would result in investigations being compromised, as offenders would be able to gain valuable information that would assist them in evading capture; i.e. disclosing the number of posts allocated to each area - and whether these are vacant or filled - would allow offenders to establish areas of Salisbury that may be understaffed, and use this information to their advantage. By offenders evading capture, the public will be put at a greater risk resulting in trust in the Force diminishing and increase of crime being seen. Disclosure of information sensitive to operations and tactics used would severely impact on the Force's resources, also assisting offenders to evade capture.

#### Balance test

Whilst there is a public interest in transparency and openness between the Force and the public, in addition to the public seeing how the Force are engaging with the threat from criminals, there is a stronger interest in ensuring the public are protected from the threat of criminals, and that the enforcement of the law and the prevention and detection of crime is upheld. To disclose information which is likely to assist offenders would seriously undermine the effective delivery of operational law enforcement, and is therefore exempt from disclosure.

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.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request.

Exemptions applied:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement