

FOI 2022-910

I write in connection with your request for information dated 14<sup>TH</sup> November 2022 concerning phone scams.

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.

**You wrote:**

I would like to make a request for information on scam crimes in the UK in the past 3 years. would like to request:

- At least 3 years of phone scam crimes reported in the UK
- Ages of victims if possible or a general demographic
- Area reported (ideally postcode)
- Different types of scams specifics e.g house insurance, pensions
- Number of phone scams reported related to BT services e.g. BT landline upgrade, Digital Voice switchover etc

**Response:**

The information that you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval.

There is no specific Crime Code (or designated Home Office crime recording category) by which it is possible to record offences specifically related to Phone Scams.

Offences of this nature would be recorded on our system(s) within a number of different Crime Categories, such as Fraud, Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society, Theft from The Person and Other Theft. In reality however, such offences could potentially be recorded in a number of other crime categories besides those mentioned.

The ascertaining of the information you require would only be possible by physically searching for and then reading every crime occurrence recorded call and attendance log made for every officer in the Force during the 3-year period you are requesting to determine whether they met your criteria or not and making a note of the specific details you require.

In the last calendar year alone, Wiltshire Police have recorded the following crime volumes for just those 4 specific categories mentioned :-

Fraud	12
Micellaneous Crimes Against Society	772
Theft from the Person	276
Other Theft	3358
TOTAL	4418

## Please note

It should be noted that the 12 cases above are the only Fraud cases currently recorded for the last 12 months by Wiltshire Police. The vast majority of Fraud cases are referred to the national body Action Fraud for investigation – we do not have access to these records and would have to seek them from Action Fraud.

Even allowing a very generous 2 minutes per record and only considering those records on our systems (NOT those held by Action Fraud), 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.

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request in respect 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 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 particular request.