

FOI 2026-298

I write in connection with your request dated 8th March 2026, which was received by the FDU on 16th March 2026, concerning police conduct and third-party interlopers.

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 Force Policy Officer at Wiltshire Police.

You Wrote:

I am writing to seek formal clarification on the stance of "WILTSHIRE POLICE" regarding the involvement of constables with third-party interlopers and/or private corporations. I am concerned by the increasing national trend of policing facilitating forced entry into private property for civil matters, often involving "notices" that lack judicial authority. I believe it is prudent to establish if your force's commitment to the rule of law in these matters.

Request for clarification and documentation

1. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

Please provide the specific SOP or internal guidance issued to constables regarding their role when attending a scene with debt enforcement agencies or other third-party interlopers.

2. Forced entry

What is the force's stance on constables assisting while corporate agents or third-party interlopers force entry into a private property without lawful authority?

3. Harm, loss or injury

If a constable assists a debt enforcement agent or other third-party interlopers in a manner that results in harm, loss or injury to a man or woman, does the force accept this constitutes a breach of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, if not why not?

4. Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015

- i. Can you confirm or deny, as per Section 26, a constable commits an offence if they exercise powers improperly and "know or ought to know" it is improper, if not why not?
- ii. Can you confirm or deny whether your staff receive training to distinguish between a valid judicial warrant or a corporate "notice of enforcement" to avoid such liability? If not why not?
- iii. Does Wiltshire Police acknowledge this carries a penalty of up to 14 years' imprisonment? If not why not?

5. Consent of the people

"A cornerstone of British policing is the ethos of 'policing by consent'. In order to maintain legitimacy and an ability to police by consent, it is vital that the public support policing at every level. To achieve this there must be underlying trust and confidence in policing and this can only be built and maintained through engaging with the public."

- i. Do you affirm that police powers are derived solely by the consent of the people, if not why not?
- ii. Can you confirm or deny that a constable's primary oath is to the public and the preservation of the peace, rather than the enforcement of civil contracts, if not why not?

Our Response:

Regarding question 1, Wiltshire Police do not have any standard operating procedures, policy or internal guidance regarding the role of an officer when attending a scene with debt enforcement agencies.

As a general principal, Officers may be directed to attend private premises with a bailiff, or other official, to prevent a breach of the peace from occurring whilst a Court Order of some type is being enforced, or to attend an incident when a specific criminal offence has occurred or is likely to occur. Note - breach of the peace is governed by the Common Law.

A previous FOI response for FOI 2025-763 may also be of assistance. You can access this on the Wiltshire Police website at the following link searching 'FOI 2025-763' - <https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/foi-ai/af/accessing-information/>

Questions 2 to 5 engage section 8(1)(c) of the Act as the questions do not ask for information held by the Force, and therefore they are not considered valid. Under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you to re-word questions 2 to 5 so they ask for information that is held by the Force and then we can reassess your request for information.