



Esther Turner [request-809708-cd7b28f7@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:cd7b28f7@whatdotheyknow.com)

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

Date: 22nd December 2021

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2021 / 973

Reply contact name is: Kerry Merritt

Dear Esther,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 22nd November 2021 concerning procedures for storing and transporting DNA.

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 having consulted our Force Policy Officer and South West Forensics I am now able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

Could you please let me know where I may find your procedures (storage, handling, timescales, transportation methods etc) both for DNA in your possession (before it goes to archive) and for DNA which Wiltshire Police has requested from archive which is to be transported to a forensics laboratory.

Clarification sought from applicant requested by the business area - Can we please ask for clarification on the type of DNA they are referring to and can we also please clarify what is meant by the term archive.

Clarification received from applicant:

Now I'm struggling to understand what you mean by "type of DNA". What 'types' are there?

I am talking of:

- a. DNA taken from suspects or someone charged with a crime, usually by means of a swab of saliva
- b. DNA lifted from clothing (for example) at a crime scene

The archive I am talking of is the Forensic Science Service archive which was originally located at Chipstow but is now somewhere in Birmingham I believe and has changed from the FSS to FAL (Forensic Archive Ltd).

Then there are the forensic laboratories where DNA samples are transported to (from the archive) for analysis by forensic scientists.



So, DNA is taken (and stored, how?) and, in some form (what form?) moved/transported to the forensic archive (how?). Then if forensic analysis is required, the DNA must be transported (by request from the police?) to a laboratory where analysis is undertaken by expert witnesses for example.

There may be national guidelines for these processes but I believe that the DNA is 'owned' (for want of a better word) by the police force involved. Wiltshire Police must therefore have procedures in order to control the steps involved.

Our response:

Please see attached the two documents that deal with taking DNA and retention of DNA in the Forces possession. Please note that Wiltshire police do not use the Archive to store DNA so the questions can't be answered in relation to this.

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered and I apologise for the delay in answering your request.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry Merritt
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