| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 25-1276Responded to: 01 August 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

1. **How many pro-Palestine demonstrations have Police Scotland attended/been called to since 7 October, 2023? Please break down by regional police branch.**

The table below details planned pro-Palestine demonstrations with a Police presence, recorded by each division.

*Planned pro-Palestine demonstrations with police presence – 7 October 2023 – 1 May 2025*

| **Division Description** | **Planned protest with Police attendance** |
| --- | --- |
| North East | 98 |
| Forth Valley | 4 |
| Tayside | 54 |
| Edinburgh | 75 |
| Greater Glasgow | 178 |
| The Lothians & Scottish Borders | 0 |
| Renfrewshire & Inverclyde | 5 |
| Argyll & West Dunbartonshire | 4 |
| Highlands & Islands | 0 |
| Fife | 3 |
| Lanarkshire | 2 |
| Ayrshire | 3 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 46 |

In relation to spontaneous events that required Police attendance, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request.

I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

To explain, there is no classification or searchable field on our incident recording system that would allow for pro-Palestine related incidents to be identified.

**2- How many arrests have been made at pro-Palestine demonstrations since 7 October, 2023? Please break down by regional police branch.**

The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 removed the separate concepts of arrest and detention and replaced them with a power of arrest without warrant - where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting a person has committed, or is committing, an offence.

When a person is arrested, a statement of arrest should be read over as soon as reasonably practicable, and details recorded in the arresting officer’s notebook.

A person is ‘Not Officially Accused’ (a suspect) when arrested *and* *not* cautioned and charged. They are ‘Officially Accused’ once arrested *and* cautioned and charged.

If conveyed to a police station, the arrested person will have their details recorded in our National Custody System.

There are situations however whereby a person must be released from police custody prior to their arrival at a police station - effectively they are ‘de-arrested’ - where the reasonable grounds for suspicion no longer exist. In those circumstances, the details of an arrested person are not held electronically.

As a result, we are unfortunately unable to collate comprehensivearrest data, as case by case assessment of all officer notebooks would be required - in addition to the partialarrest data held in the National Custody System.

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request and I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

For the reasons outlined above, Police Scotland do not collate data on arrests.

Instead, data is compiled and published based on recorded and detected crimes - [Crime data - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/).

Detected crimes are those where an accused has been identified and there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots Law to justify consideration of criminal proceedings.

In terms of any relevant crime reports, there is no crime classification or searchable field on our crime recording system that would allow for pro-Palestine related crimes to be identified.

**3- How many people have been charged with offences committed at pro-Palestine demonstrations since 7 October, 2023? Please break down by regional police branch.**

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

There is no crime classification or searchable field on our crime recording system that would allow for pro-Palestine related crimes to be identified.

**4- How many people have been convicted of offences committed at pro-Palestine demonstrations since 7 October, 2023? Please break down by regional police branch.**

Police Scotland does not hold criminal conviction/ prosecution data and section 17 of the Act therefore applies. You may wish to contact the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and/ or the Scottish Courts Service.

**5- How much money has Police Scotland spent on policing and administration relating to pro-Palestine demonstrations since 7 October, 2023?**

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

By way of explanation, there is no specific cost code associated with pro-Palestine demonstrations.

It should also be noted that Police Scotland does not routinely record the costs or policing hours associated with any specific operation or investigation.

The nature of policing means that officers are deployed to wherever their services are most required and the number of officers required throughout an investigation will constantly fluctuate. Officers can be involved in one or multiple investigations and can be redeployed to other duties at any given time.

Additionally, officers will be drawn from different areas, based on their skill set and expertise, with the appropriate Division meeting the cost of their core time.

**6- Any written correspondence (emails, Teams chats, WhatsApps) sent by/recieved by Jo Farrell, Alan Speirs, Jane Connors, Bex Smith on the issue of policing pro-Palestine demonstrations since 7 October 2023.**

I have interpreted “on the issue of policing pro-Palestine demonstrations” as any forward planning/ decision making made or received by either the Chief Constable or the Deputy Chief Constables noted above.

Three documents are attached which we deem relevant to the forward planning/ decision making process associated with policing pro-Palestine protests (FOI 25-1276 attachment 01, FOI 25-1276 attachment 02 and FOI 25-1276 attachment 03).

Some information has been redacted from the documents which I am refusing to provide in terms of section 16(1) of the Act, on the basis that the following exemptions apply:

## Section 30(c) - Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs.

Information is exempt if disclosure would prejudice substantially the effective conduct of public affairs.

Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses have been redacted from the documents on the basis that disclosure would negatively impact the operational effectiveness of the relevant department within Police Scotland.

The well established, publicised methods for contacting Police Scotland are essential, in order that we can protect critical services and ensure the appropriate diversion of resource.

This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.

Whilst disclosure would support transparency and better inform the public as to how the organisation conducts its business, there are already established routes for the public to contact with the police.

It cannot be in the public interest to disclose information that would make it difficult to offer an efficient and effective service.

## Section 38(1)(b) – Personal Information

Names have been redacted from the document as they are ‘personal data’ as defined in Article 4 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):

‘Information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (“data subject”); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name […]’.

Section 38(2A) of the Act provides that personal data is exempt from disclosure where disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles set out at Article 5(1) of the GDPR which states that:

‘Personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject’.

Article 6 of the GDPR goes on to state that processing shall be lawful only if certain conditions are met. The only potentially applicable condition is Article 6(1)(f) which states:

‘Processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party, except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child’.

Notwithstanding, I am further of the view that your interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subjects.

On that basis, it is considered that disclosure of the information sought would be unlawful.

In addition to the three documents provided, we have withheld some other information in its entirety.

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the following exemptions apply:

## Section 31(1) - National Security

## Section 35(1)(a)&(b) Law Enforcement

## Section 39(1) - Health and Safety

Disclosure would prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders, the ability of Police Scotland to keep people safe from harm and the ability to safeguard national security.

Disclosure would assist groups, organisations and those with hostile intent by providing them with a tactical advantage when planning or perpetrating any unlawful activities, thereby maximising the impact of destruction, harm and disruption that may be caused, whilst avoiding being brought to justice.

Public accountability may favour disclosure, given that the information concerns the efficient and effective use of resources by the Service. Likewise, disclosure of the information would also inform the public debate on the issue of policing and contribute to the accuracy of that debate.

However, any disclosure under FOI legislation is a disclosure to the world at large and any information identifying the focus of policing activity could be used to the advantage of criminals.

Consequently, in terms of the applicability of the exemptions listed above, the need to ensure the effective conduct of the service in relation to prevention and detection of crime and the public safety considerations involved in the delivery of operational policing clearly favour non-disclosure of the information requested.

It is important to note that the UK faces a serious and sustained threat from violent extremists, and this threat is greater in scale and ambition than any terrorist threats in the past.

Accordingly, I would argue that the need to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of the service favours non-disclosure of the information requested and on balance is significantly in the public interest. I cannot identify any corresponding viewpoint in disclosing the requested information and therefore the exemptions are upheld.

I must advise you that it is doubtful it could ever be in the public interest to disclose information which would jeopardise the delivery of policing and the safety of individuals and prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by email or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by email or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible.
If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.