| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0559  Responded to: 06 March 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**I'm looking for information on tattoos between January 2014 and the current date.**

Our data retention policy is 2 years + current year for rejected applicant information so we do not hold the data from 2014-2021. As the information sought for 2014-2021 is not held by Police Scotland, section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

By way of explanation, as of January 2022, Recruitment switched from paper applications to online applications therefore we are only able to provide data captured on our E-recruitment system from this date. Paper application forms prior to this date did not record tattoo rejections therefore cannot be reported on.

**Firstly, Can you release any guidance on tattoos? I note that the Uniform and Appearance Standards (Police Officers) Standard Operating Procedure from 2017 is online. Is that the most up to date?**

Version 3.00 published online is the current version.

**For each year can you tell me how many applicants to the service have been refused because of their tattoos?**

As previously advised, we are only able to report on applicants who were refused because of their tattoos since January 2022:

2022 – 23 applicants

2023 - 13 applicants

2024 – 2 applicants

**I note in the SOP officers are not allowed tattoos that undermine the dignity and authority of the office of constable; cause offence to members of the public or colleagues and / or invite provocation; indicate unacceptable attitudes towards any individual or section of the community; indicate alignment with a particular group which could give offence to members of the public or colleagues; and be considered inflammatory, rude, lewd, crude, racist, sexist, sectarian, homophobic, violent or intimidating.**

**For each of those applicants refused, can you detail which of these rules the tattoo breached?**

The criteria contained in our Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) covers many aspects of the standards expected of our officers and as such, a refusal is deemed appropriate if the tattoo appearance covers one or more of the consideration points contained in the SOP. The decision is to either refuse or not, with this being the only decision recorded**.**

**For each year, can you tell me how many serving officers have fallen foul of the tattoo rules? And again, can you say which of the rules their tattoo breached?**

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.

In way of explanation, there are no specific means to identify officer tattoo related allegations on the Professional Standards database. Each record would have to be manually reviewed.

**Can you release details of the disciplinary process for any officers with a tattoo in breach of the rules?**

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 section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it […] is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available:

[The Police Service of Scotland (Conduct) Regulations 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2014/68/contents/made)

**For each year, can you tell me how many staff members have fallen foul of the tattoo rules and again share which rule was breached.**

The information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

By way of explanation Police Staff do not have a SOP/Policy regarding tattoos therefore there are no rules to fall foul of.  The existing SOP only applies to Police Officers.

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](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) 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](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) 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.