

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-1180  
Date: 21 June 2022



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002

I refer to your recent request for information which has been handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

For ease of reference, your request is replicated below together with the response.

**Please could you tell me how many times the word "clown" appeared in a police report over the past three years?**

**For this data, could I please have it broken down from Jan 2021 to Dec 2021; Jan 2020 to Dec 2020; and Jan 2019 to Dec 2019.**

We have researched your request based on incident reports held within our STORM incident recording system that contain the word 'clown'.

To explain, when a matter is reported to the police - usually by 101 or 999 call - or otherwise comes to police attention, an incident will be logged on this system.

I must stress however that Police Scotland do not consider key word searches for specific words/ phrases to be an accurate means of analysis.

First of all, the search results will include the word where it is part of a longer word - ie clowning.

Misspellings can be common given the fact that incident updates are being added in real time, usually whilst a caller is on the phone.

Words can be used in any context - someone being referred to as a clown, a description of property saying it had a clown logo etc.

Furthermore, there may well be incidents of relevance to your request which do not include the specific word - ie an incident might refer to someone wearing a mask etc.

Notwithstanding, in response to your request, please see the following table;

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Recorded Incidents	149	148	186	66

*All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.*

*All data have been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as at 14th June 2022.*

*1st January 2019 - 31st May 2022 (Calendar Year)*

*A keyword search of 'Clown' was carried out on the 'Incident Description' and 'Comment 180' field. Relevant records were selected and displayed within Table*

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**If possible, can you provide information for the three most recent police reports containing the word "clown"**

Having reviewed the three most recent reports, I can advise as follows as regards the context in which the word was used:

28 May 2022 - someone 'swore at her and called her a clown'

29 May 2022 - received messages saying 'she is a [...] clown'

31 May 2022 - property described as 'bike, clown horn on the handlebars'

I trust this illustrates the difficulties with any inference being drawn from keyword search data.

Should you require any further assistance please contact Information Management - Dundee at [foidundee@scotland.police.uk](mailto:foidundee@scotland.police.uk) quoting the reference number given.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which Police Scotland has dealt with your request, you are entitled, in the first instance, to request a review of our actions and decisions.

Your request must specify the matter which gives rise to your dissatisfaction and it must be submitted within 40 working days of receiving this response - either by email to [foi@scotland.police.uk](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by post to Information Management (Disclosure), Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH.

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of that review, you are thereafter entitled to apply to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months for a decision. You can apply [online](#), by email to [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by post to Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner's decision, there is an appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

As part of our commitment to demonstrate openness and transparency in respect of the information we hold, an anonymised version of this response will be posted to the Police Scotland Freedom of Information [Disclosure Log](#) in seven days' time.

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