| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0776  Responded to: 10 June 2024 |
| --- | --- |

Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Police Scotland has recently stated that “third party reporting centres” for hate crimes have been in operation for a number of years.

## Can you please confirm exactly when third party reporting centres were first instituted and under what auspices were they created?

In terms of Section 17 of the Act, I can confirm that the information you have requested is not held by Police Scotland.

By way of explanation, prior to the formation of Police Scotland in 2013, Third Party Reporting Centres (TPRC) were in use but there was no single governance structure due to legacy forces as such this information is not available. Third Party Reporting is the scheme developed in response to Recommendation 16 of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report which stated that:  
  
“All possible steps should be taken by Police services at local level in consultation with local government and other agencies and local communities to encourage the reporting of racist incidents and crimes, this should include: the ability to report at locations other than Police stations; the ability to report 24 hours a day.”

## How many hate crimes annually are reported to Police Scotland via third party reporting centres?

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.

By way of explanation, there is no straightforward method to extract the information you require. When a member of the public attends at a TPRC, they are supported to complete a secure online form hosted on the Police Scotland website. This form is submitted securely to Police Scotland who on receipt will assess the information received. However, no immediate information is received that records if support from a TPRC was provided. As such, to identify how many crimes are reported via TPRC, a manual assessment of each hate crime would need to take place to determine if any record was entered into the free text of the report.

## 3. Why is it necessary to single out hate crimes for special consideration in terms of reporting mechanisms – why not sexual assaults and rapes or domestic abuse?

Reporting hate crime was a specific recommendation from the Macpherson Report, however, should a person attend a TPRC for any other reason they will be supported. Police Scotland is committed to supporting victims of crime which includes those affected by sexual assaults, rapes or domestic abuse whereby we work closely with other forms of TPRC including Local Rape Crisis Centres and Sexual Assault Response Co-ordination Services (SARCS) as many people, for various reasons, are reluctant to report directly to the police. Third party reporting is an important way to overcome this. Details of support mechanisms for reporting sexual crimes can be found on our website - <https://www.scotland.police.uk/advice-and-information/rape-and-sexual-crime/help-for-victims-of-sexual-crime/>

## How exactly do third party reporting centres work – please detail the process from the beginning of them receiving a report to the matter going to Police Scotland. How do they record the crime and then communicate this to PS?

Third Party Reporting Centres are advertised on the Police Scotland Website. Anyone can attend a TPRC if they feel they require support in reporting an incident to Police Scotland. Staff within the premises will support the individual to complete a secure online form which is available on the Police Scotland Website, linked below. <https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/reporting-hate-crime/>

This form is then submitted to Police Scotland who would contact the reporter (the individual affected) to obtain further information once this online report is received. The Third-Party Reporting Centre do not store any of the data provided on the form, nor do they receive copies of the submission as this is not required.

## 5. Outsourcing hate crime reporting on extremely complex legislation – which the Police Federation has said officers have insufficient training to understand and deal with – to a civilian network of hate crime third party reporting centres is creating a legal minefield – how is Police going to navigate that and ensure that justice is equal and fair?

Police Scotland do not outsource hate crime reporting. TPRC’s are there to facilitate initial contact with police, they are not involved in the investigation or enquiry. All matters relating to whether a crime has occurred will be dealt with in its entirety by police.

## 6. With hundreds of third party reporting centres, many of which are aligned with specific communities and protected characteristics, how can Police Scotland depend on their impartiality and unbiased assessment or interpretation?

TPRC’s are there to facilitate initial contact with police, they are not involved in the investigation or enquiry. All matters relating to whether a crime has occurred will be dealt with in its entirety by police.

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.