

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-2727  
Date: 19 January 2023



## 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

### **Q1 How many burglaries have been reported to your force in the current year to date, and for every calendar year since 2010?**

In response to your request, I must first of all advise you that there is no offence of 'Burglary' in Scotland and, as such, I have interpreted your request to refer to the corresponding offence of 'Housebreaking'

Please be advised that recorded and detected crime statistics for Housebreaking offences are publicly available.

As such, in terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought.

Section 16 requires Police Scotland when refusing to provide such information because it is exempt, to provide you with a notice which:

- (a) states that it holds the information,
- (b) states that it is claiming an exemption,
- (c) specifies the exemption in question and
- (d) states, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies.

I can confirm that Police Scotland holds the information that you have requested and the exemption that I consider to be applicable is set out at Section 25(1) of the Act - information otherwise accessible:

*"Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it under Section 1(1) is exempt information"*

The information you are seeking is available on the Police Scotland website, broken down by Council area, via the following link:

[How we are performing - Police Scotland](#)

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You will find the information sought within the Group 3 category.

Please note that data for the earlier periods can be accessed below:

[statistics.gov.scot : Recorded Crimes and Offences](https://statistics.gov.scot/Recorded-Crimes-and-Offences)

**Q2 How many burglaries have been attended by members of your Force for the current year to date, and for every calendar year since 2010.**

**Q3 Please can you provide the waiting times for officers or staff from your Force to attend a burglary for the current year to date, and for every calendar year since 2010.**

*Q2 & Q3 have been answered to together for ease.*

In response to this question, I regret to inform you that I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested, as it would prove too costly to do so within the context of the fee regulations.

As you may be aware the current cost threshold is £600 and I estimate that it would cost well in excess of this amount to process your request.

As such, and in terms of Section 16(4) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where Section 12(1) of the Act (Excessive Cost of Compliance) has been applied, this represents a refusal notice for the information sought.

By way of explanation, we have interpreted where this request references 'waiting times' to refer to 'response times' meaning the time taken from an incident being created to a resource arriving at scene.

Incidents are raised where it is assessed that some form of police response is required. This can be in response to contact by telephone or any other means, or at the request of officers or partners.

It is also worth noting that an incident will have the most appropriate grade applied for the call type regardless of whether it is received via 999, 101 or any other channel.

STORM Unity is the system used by Police Scotland for the management of police incidents and resources and is the source of the data provided in this response. It is worth noting that STORM is primarily a command & control system and has limited value as a statistical tool.

Most data obtained from the system requires further analysis to establish context. In large volumes, this can be extremely difficult to do and in some cases it is not possible to filter or structure data to adequately answer a specific request.

STORM automatically captures timing data when an incident is raised and dispatched. The arrival of a resource at the locus of an incident is recorded via a manual process and as a result is open to error.

The most common method of marking 'At Scene' is for officers to select a hotkey on their airwave device. This is often overlooked, particularly when officers arrive at the scene of a

dynamic incident. Controllers are able to manually update the status of resources if required but this can naturally lead to errors in the accurate recording of the actual time of arrival. The priority of all staff is the safe and effective management of our policing response.

From previous reviews of data of this type, numerous errors in the accurate recording of this information have been identified. These include:

- Officers failing to update their handsets to mark themselves 'At Scene' when they actually arrived at locus. In some cases this was completed after a significant delay and in others the status was not updated until the incident was closed some time later.
- Incidents which were initially, appropriately, assessed at a lower response level but later reassessed and upgraded in response to new information. In these circumstances the timer does not reset, but reflects the total time from creation to dispatch/arrival.

These scenarios distort overall figures meaning that a manual review of several million incidents would be required to remove erroneous results and establish the true 'response time'. This is an exercise I believe will greatly exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

Police Scotland have determined that the £600 threshold within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this indeed exceeds this limit.

Ordinarily, I may suggest a way to refine your request however given the dynamic nature of policing and volume of incidents even reducing the time frame significantly would not produce accurate results.

#### **Q4 How many police stations have closed in your Force Area since 2010?**

The Police Service of Scotland came into existence on 1 April 2013. While the roles and responsibilities of the legacy forces all came under the control and responsibility of Police Scotland, the organisation itself inherited a diverse set of structures and departments, which did not conform to a single, comparable model. For this reason I must respond in terms of Section 17(1) of the Act: Information not held.

To provide some context, Scotland's policing estate has been built up over the course of several decades and some buildings are no longer in the right place or operationally fit for purpose.

Many police station sales were as a result of properties declared surplus by Legacy Forces although the sales occurred post-formation of Police Scotland. The majority of these decisions, which took place prior to the formation of Police Scotland, were taken after lengthy and detailed consultation with our partners and local communities and this process remains the same today. In the vast majority of cases, police stations which were closed were moved to new modern co-located accommodation within the same towns or officers were moved to new police stations nearby.

The demands and risks facing policing has changed significantly over the years and will continue to do so in an ever changing Scotland and indeed world. However, Police Scotland recognises that local police stations remain important to local communities and that they help to promote and enhance local engagement between our police officers and

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the communities they serve. We understand how important local police presence is to communities and our Estate Strategy details our intention to enhance visibility and presence and to increase community bases for local officers, whilst identifying more opportunities to share locations with our public sector partners, enabling closer collaboration with our partners and driving quicker, better outcomes for the public and our communities.

We are also increasingly enabling officers to spend more time out in communities through projects such as the roll-out of mobile devices.

To be of assistance we have provided a comparison between the earliest national data available (2013) and the same data for December 2022. Please see the attached spreadsheet

### **Q5 How many front counters have closed in your Force Area since 2010?**

With regards to the number of front counters that have closed within that time frame, I can advise you that Police Scotland does not hold information in the format requested. In terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

Information on public counters is available online with the corresponding opening times, which can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/police-station-opening-hours>

In terms of front counter arrangements, I can confirm that whilst the opening times of the stations which are provided on the website are not routinely changed, every effort is made to keep front counters open on the times advertised. However in the event of sickness or annual leave the front counter may not be manned and in these instances officers working within the station will attend to customers at the front counter where this can be accommodated.

On occasions where no one is available to attend at the front counter, the 101 phone outside the station should be used to contact the ACR, who will arrange for an officer to attend at the station. There are occasions where it has been necessary to close a front counter, if cover cannot be provided.

Please note that where a station is advertised as being open 24 hours this does not change and the front counter at these stations is manned 24/7.

If you require further assistance or 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.

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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.