

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-2025
Date: 19 October 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.

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Police Scotland and we are committed to working with our partners to reduce the harm it causes and ultimately eradicate it.

Domestic abuse is a despicable and debilitating crime which affects all of our communities and has no respect for ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Police Scotland will not tolerate it.

Police Scotland will proactively target perpetrators and support victims to prevent domestic abuse from damaging the lives of victims and their families.

Police Scotland defines domestic abuse as:

“Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse may be committed in the home or elsewhere including online”

This definition is included in the Joint Protocol between Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), “*In partnership challenging domestic abuse*” which is a public document that can be found at the Police Scotland website on <https://www.scotland.police.uk/> or on the COPFS website on <http://www.copfs.gov.uk/>.

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

I would like to request information regarding police response to domestic abuse and neighbourhood crime-related 999 calls. If you believe this request could exceed the time/cost limit, please prioritise the most recent years and work backwards until the time/cost limit is reached.

Of 999 calls reporting domestic abuse:

1/ Please provide the median annual police response time (in seconds) to attend 999 calls reporting domestic abuse categorised as

- (i) grade 1 emergency,**
- (ii) grade 2,**

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(iii) grade 3, and
(iv) all grades, for each financial year from 2017-18 up to and including the current financial year until 31 Aug 2022.

Please also provide the total annual number of calls, target response time, and number of emergency incidents responded to within target time for each part of the question (i.e., by urgency grade).

Grades 1 to 3 typically refer to an emergency response, a prompt response and a routine response.

Please provide a description of the different grades (including expected response times to attend) used by the force if these differ.

An example for GMP is included here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-47582743>

In response to the questions above, 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 that where this request references 'response times' this means the time taken from an incident being created to a resource arriving at scene.

We have also interpreted 'calls' in this instance to refer to incidents. 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.

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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.

2/ Please provide the total number of occasions that police did not attend

- i) grade 1,**
- ii) grade 2 or**
- iii) grade 3 emergencies for each financial year from 2017-18 up to and including the current financial year until 31 Aug 2022.**

Similarly, to question 1 and its subsidiaries above, 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 such, 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, the priority/grade of an incident can change numerous times throughout its life time depending on the information received.

An example would be numerous calls from members of the public regarding a Road Traffic Collision on a motorway. While numerous calls were in-coming, many incidents may be

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raised as an immediate response, however only one of these incidents would be attended and the others would be changed to a Duplicate Incident and would appear unattended.

The Contact Assessment Model (CAM) was implemented by Police Scotland in a phased approach beginning in June 2019 and completing in June 2020. Under CAM, all decisions around deployment and appropriate resolution of incidents are based on the assessment of threat, risk, harm, investigative opportunity, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE). Incidents are subject to continuous review throughout their lifecycle to ensure that the principles of CAM and THRIVE are properly applied and that callers receive the most appropriate response at the most appropriate time.

Following the introduction of CAM, there are a selection of routes that an incident can take in terms of being managed without a response policing unit attending.

Details of CAM incident grades and their definitions are already published as part of the C3 National Guidance document below.

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/policies-and-procedures/guidance-documents/guidance-documents-c/>

3/ Please provide the longest individual time taken to attend a grade 1 and 2 'priority' emergency calls or equivalent for each financial year from 2017-18 up to and including the current financial year until 31 Aug 2022.

In response to this question please refer to the response to question 1 and its subsidiaries.

4/ If possible within the cost/time limits, I would also like to know: How many domestic abuse incidents were subsequently recorded as domestic abuse crimes? Please do not include this question in the request if you think it would hit the cost limits, or engage any other exemption.

In response to your question please see the table below, please be mindful of the attached caveats. The data has been extracted from Police Scotland's interim Vulnerable Person Database (iVPD), not the command and control system STORM.

Domestic Incidents, Police Scotland ^{1,2}						
Period: 1st April 2017 - 31st August 2022 (Financial Years)						
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23*
Domestic Incidents	59 154	60 251	62 134	64 191	63 083	26 338
Domestic Incidents - Crime Occurred	27 717	26 506	27 394	28 038	27 058	11 013

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 11th October 2022.

1. The data was extracted using the incident's raised date and extracted from iVPD.
2. Domestic Incidents with the Incident Type 'Domestic' or 'Adult Concern\Domestic Abuse' have been selected. Domestic Incidents where at least one crime was recorded are also displayed within Table 1.

Police Scotland does not retain any information for statistical purposes once a record has been weeded from iVPD. When a record is weeded, it is removed from the system, and there is no retention of data outside the weeding and retention policy. Please note, the weeding and retention policy states that if a person is recorded as "no concern / not applicable" then this will only be retained for 6 months.

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Please note that these data are collated from the Police Scotland iVPD system, which has an automated weeding and retention policy built on to it. A copy of the retention policy is available on the Police Scotland internet site (<https://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log/2021/june/21-1479-sop-records-retention/>).

Of 999 calls reporting domestic burglary, vehicle-related crime, theft from the person and robbery:

5/ Please group these crime types together and provide the same information requested in questions 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Please provide annual data for each of the last financial years, from 2017-18 up to the current financial year until 31 Aug 2022.

In response to this question, please see the responses to questions 1, 2 and 3.

Additionally, with respect to the portion of this question which relates to question 4, please be advised that Police Scotland does not record STORM incidents using the categories requested. As such, in terms of Section 17 of the Act, I can confirm that the information you seek is not held by Police Scotland.

Should you require any further assistance please contact Information Management 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 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 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.