| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-2772  Responded to: 22 September 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

* **Any internal policy or standard operating procedure concerning data collection and Prevent referrals.**

Although not specific to Prevent referrals, Police Scotland’s Prevent Delivery unit abide by the principles of data governance as contained within Police Scotland’s [Management of Records - Standard Operating Procedure](https://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/policies-and-procedures/standard-operating-procedures/standard-operating-procedures-j-o/).

* **Copies of relevant policies which explain under what circumstances Police Scotland will collect data on the ethnicity and religion of individuals referred to Prevent and how this data is collected. For example, should it be recorded on a referral form or in case notes. Is ethnicity recorded using the 5+1 or 18+1 category lists?**

The information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies. Police Scotland’s Prevent delivery unit do not as a matter of course record a person’s ethnicity in respect of referrals.

If the ethnicity of a referred person is disclosed to Prevent it shall be recorded. However, the information relating to ethnicity is not sought by the Prevent Delivery Unit if not disclosed by the referrer.

There is no requirement to record the ethnicity of a person referred to Prevent.

* **Any written policy regarding how long data will be held on an individual referred to Prevent in Scotland**

Police Scotland’s [Records Management policy](https://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/policies-and-procedures/policies/) is currently being updated and will outline Prevent retention, review and deletion processes. As such, the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

* **A full list of databases into which Police Scotland uploads/feeds data gathered on Prevent referrals in Scotland.**

In terms of section 18 of the Act, I am refusing to confirm or deny whether the information sought exists or is held by Police Scotland. Section 18 applies where the following two conditions are met:

* It would be contrary to the public interest to reveal whether the information is held.
* If the information was held, it would be exempt from disclosure. In this instance, the following exemptions would apply:

## Section 31(1) - National Security

## Information is exempt information if exemption from disclosure is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security.

## Section 35(1)(a) & (1)(b) - Law Enforcement

Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would or would be likely to prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Confirming or denying the specific databases used by Police Scotland would provide significant insight into operational activities. It is assessed that such information would be invaluable to those intent on committing crime and/ or threatening the security.

Whilst public awareness would favour disclosure as it would provide the pubic with better understanding of this specialist unit and increase public debate, any information identifying the focus of operational activity could be used to the advantage of criminals.

On balance therefore, the public interest lies in favour of maintaining the exemptions and ensuring that the ability of Police Scotland to prevent and detect crime and safeguard national security is not prejudiced.

To be of assistance, I can confirm Police Scotland do not upload any data gathered to any external databases. All referral data is retained on Police Scotland’s Prevent Tracker which records the progress of Prevent casework. The data from this system is used to generate the annual Prevent Data publication.

Internally, details of referrals may, in certain cases, be included in the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD). Where a referral includes intelligence, the relevant details may be recorded on an intelligence system.

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](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@foi.scot) 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.