| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-1194  Responded to: 12 June 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## How many specialist officers do you have investigating rape and serious sexual offences? These officers may be PIP2 accredited or working towards PIP2. They may also have a more advanced qualification such as PIP3 or an older, equivalent qualification similar to PIP2 and PIP3.

In response to your question I must advise Police Scotland do not use the Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP) accreditation scheme.

Police Scotland ensure training for officers is to a national standard. Police Sergeants are required to attend a one week training course during which time they are instructed on correct procedures in relation to the initial scene protection and evidence considerations when dealing with an incident of Rape or Serious Sexual offences.

Additionally, Advanced Investigator training is available to Detective Sergeants. Senior Investigation Officers (SIO) training, which is equivalent to PIP 3 is available to more senior officers.

Police Scotland has a cadre of specifically trained officers to deal with victims of sexual crime, Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLOs). A SOLO is an experienced officer, trained to the national standard, who is appointed to a victim throughout the duration of a rape investigation. The SOLO will be an integral part of the enquiry team and will be responsible for noting the statement from the victim, facilitating the forensic medical examination and providing regular updates and support throughout the course of the investigation.

Police Scotland, supported by the Scottish Government and in conjunction with our partners in the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and Rape Crisis Scotland (RCS) seek to improve rape victims’ experiences of the criminal justice process. In that regard, a 2 year pilot project within 3 local policing Divisions commenced in November 2019, utilising specially trained SOLOs to visually record witness statements provided by adult complainers and 16-17 year old complainers of rape and attempted rape. This Officers form Police Scotland’s SOLO VRI cadre.

Police Scotland’s Public Protection Development Program is currently evaluating the effectiveness of the current SOLO cadre. This review which is currently ongoing is assessing the current organisational structure within the Public Protection departments throughout Police Scotland to ensure that Police Scotland’s response to rape and sexual crime is maximised and a high standard of service is delivered to people affect by these types of crime.

Currently there are 636 trained SOLO officers and 141 trained SOLO VRI Officers. These officers are spread amongst all of Police Scotland’s Divisions.

## How many vacancies are there for these specialist roles?

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

By way of explanation, Police Scotland do not have Operational Baseline levels (OBLs) for the number of SOLOs within the force. To manage the divisional numbers, each Division has a SOLO Co-ordinator. This officer, usually of the Rank of Detective Sergeant or above is responsible for maintaining the SOLO cadre within their respective division. This includes identifying suitable officers for future training, liaising with the National SOLO co-ordinator to ensure that training is prioritised for divisions with the greatest need for SOLO officers and monitoring the wellbeing of the officers deployed as SOLOs.

SOLO co-ordinators are also responsible for ensuring that once a SOLO is deployed, the deployment is correctly recorded and the officer is debriefed. The reason behind this is so that officer deployments can be monitored and staff wellbeing can be prioritised should the SOLO officer display any signs of vicarious trauma, which Police Scotland recognise as an issue often faced by officers dealing with rape and sexual crime.

As noted earlier, extensive work is ongoing by Police Scotland’s Public Protection Development Program, which will assist in the formulisation of specific training and role profiles for the SOLO co-ordinator post. This in turn will lead to effective management of officers forming Police Scotland’s SOLO cadre and ensure that Police Scotland are able to provide a trauma informed, victim centred response, to victims of rape and sexual crime. This will be on a national level ensuring all areas of Scotland can access high service levels.

## How many cases does each specialist have at the time of looking?

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, again there is no straightforward method to determine the number of reports each individual officer will be investigating at any specific time. Officers will often be involved in not only non-detected offences but will have further enquires to completed in respect of cases that have already been reported to COPFS. In order to determine the information you require each record would need to manually examined to identify the investigating officer.

From April 2022 to April 2023, Police Scotland received 2426 reports of rape. Taking a highly conservative estimate of 3 minutes per record, this would equate to an excess of 121 hours of work for a single year alone for a single offence type greatly exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

Police Scotland have assessed that the £600 cost limit within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request would breach the cost threshold.

Should you wish to significantly reduce the time period of your request it may be that some information could be provided to you, however it is worthy of note that the time period may have to be significantly narrow that this would mitigate any meaningful comparative data.

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.