

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0436
Date: 11 March 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.

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

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, I would be grateful if you could comply with the following request. Could you provide the following information:

Your a) average, b) longest and c) target response times for 999 calls categorised as each of the following:

- 1. Grade/tier 1 'emergency' calls (or equivalent)**
- 2. Grade/tier 2 'priority' calls (or equivalent)**
- 3. All 999 calls**

Please provide annual data for each of the last seven calendar years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Having considered your request for parts a) and b) and in terms of the above Act, 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 regardless of whether it is received via 999, 101 or any other channel.

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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 and would require a manual review of several million incidents in this case to remove erroneous results and establish the true 'response time'.

To give you an example, for December 2021 alone, Police Scotland received 55,340 999 calls. If we estimate that it would take one individual 5 minutes to review each call 55,340 x 5 minutes would total over 4,000 hours and at £15 per hour this would exceed the time and cost threshold set by ministers.

By way of assistance, please see the link below to Police Scotland's website for statistics relating to call handling.

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/m5wf0xj5/management-information-call-handling-december-2021.pdf>

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In relation to part c) of your request Response times I can advise that Police Scotland does not hold the information requested. In terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

By way of explanation, all calls are assessed using the Contact Assessment Model (CAM) and all decisions around deployment and appropriate resolution of incidents are based on assessments of Threat, Harm, Risk and Vulnerability (THRIVE).

By way of assistance information on THRIVE and the grades which can be applied to incidents under CAM are detailed in our national guidance document

(<https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/gwep0iv0/contact-command-control-c3-division-national-guidance.doc>)

CAM provides incidents graded as Immediate should be dispatched as soon as possible and generally within 15 minutes, however this is not a target as such and there are often circumstances where incidents of this grade require further checks or actions prior to dispatch to ensure the most appropriate response. This can include consultation with and briefing of specialist resources and partner agencies or work to identify the location of those requiring assistance.

Prompt incidents are dispatched as soon as practical and generally within 4 hours however, as above, this is not a target and the continuous assessment of incidents awaiting dispatch to ensure they are receiving an appropriate response is a key principle of CAM.

Should you require any further assistance concerning this matter please contact Information Management – Glasgow at foiglasgow@scotland.police.uk 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.

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