

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0401
Date: 08 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.

The total number of sick days taken off by police officers due to mental health reasons, e.g. anxiety, stress, depression or other psychiatric illness.

Information to be provided for each of the last five calendar years as follows: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Please could you also provide the proportion of total sick days taken off due to mental health reasons in each of those years (e.g. 40%)

Prior to responding and by way of background, Police Scotland has an ethical, moral and legal duty of care to those who are working for us. The health and wellbeing of our officers and staff is absolutely fundamental to the delivery of policing in Scotland and it is vital we continue to do as much as we can to support our people.

Working in policing is a job like no other and we recognise that our officers and staff find themselves in situations which can be stressful, traumatic and can have a lasting impact on them.

Police Scotland provides a range of support mechanisms to colleagues and we are investing significantly in these this year as we continue to explore how to provide more direct assistance while promoting a strong culture of wellbeing and mutual support.

These mechanisms include the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which offers access to counselling services and post-incident trauma support, as well as proactive screening for officers, staff and their family members.

Mental health awareness training for police officers has also been introduced. This has the benefit of assisting personal understanding, which can result in better health outcomes when people recognise symptoms and seek earlier interventions.

We have 200 Wellbeing Champions across the organisation, all of whom have completed the NHS accredited Mental Health 1st Aid Training and are trained to signpost partner services to access appropriate support.

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In addition, officers and staff are now able to download a Backup Buddy app to their personal phones and devices which has been specially developed in recognition of the need to support the mental health of those in policing.

It provides 24/7 information in an accessible yet private way, and can be used at any time. Our version has been tailored to Police Scotland to provide relevant local links to support and advice. Additionally, it gives practical advice and support on how officers and staff can maintain good mental health and spot warning signs for themselves and others, as well as providing advice on how to get help, both personally and for colleagues.

The data presented below has been extracted from Police Scotland's System to Co-ordination Personnel and Establishment (SCOPE) database.

The system records Mental Health related illnesses under the heading Psychological disorders which includes the following absence reasons; alcohol problems, anxiety, bereavement reaction, bipolar, debility, dementia, depression, insomnia, other psychological disorders, post-natal depression, post-traumatic stress, schizophrenia and stress.

Police Officer Psychological Disorder Absence		
DATES	WDL	proportion % absence
April 2016 - Mar 2017	33,796	24.68%
April 2017 - Mar 2018	37,191	25.76%
April 2018 - Mar 2019	35,283	26.12%
April 2019 - Mar 2020	43,413	25.71%
April 2020 - Mar 2021	44,312	20.72%

Should you require any further assistance please contact Information Management - Dundee 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.pnn.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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