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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-2558  
Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 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.

Protecting the public is a top priority for Police Scotland. In Scotland Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), provides a comprehensive response to a complex issue, using professional assessment and management to properly target resources at those who pose a risk to the public. Police Scotland works in partnership with a number of agencies through MAPPA to ensure that all Registered Sex Offenders are robustly managed within the community. While we can never eliminate risk entirely, we want to reassure communities that all reasonable steps are being taken to protect them.

Any person who has received a conviction or finding in respect of a specified sexual offence is, for a specified period of time, subject to Sex Offender Notification Requirements (SONR) and referred to as a Registered Sex offender (RSO). They are required to notify certain personal details to the police and any subsequent changes to these details.

The Violent & Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) is the UK database used to record information concerning the management of Registered Sex Offenders (RSO). What is commonly referred to as the Sex Offenders Register is actually the ViSOR database.

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

**Being on the Sexual Offenders Register means that you have to notify the police of all foreign travel.**

**Please could you provide the following information regarding notifications of foreign travel.**

**1. How many notifications of foreign travel were submitted to your police force by Registered Sex Offenders in the following years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022**

Please find the requested information in the table below, I would ask you to note the 2022 figures run up to 29<sup>th</sup> November.

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<b>YEAR</b>	<b>FOREIGN TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS RECORDED</b>
<b>2018</b>	641
<b>2019</b>	683
<b>2020</b>	252
<b>2021</b>	197
<b>2022*</b>	538

**2. How many of these notifications were in regards to travel to The Gambia?**

In response to your request, 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, whilst our ViSOR system does record the destination of travel when a registered sex offender complies with their notification requirements, the field which is searchable only refers to the first country of intended travel. For example, if an offender notified of travel to Spain, and that from Spain they would travel to France, Italy and Gambia before returning to the UK, Spain would be recorded as the destination and would be identified if travel to Spain was subject of a ViSOR search.

Whilst the other destinations will be held within the comments in the ViSOR record, a manual check of each would be required to determine if the Gambia was included.

In this case 2,306 records would need to be manually checked. I have confirmed with the department holding this information that between 5 and 10 minutes per record would be required depending on the number of documents contained within an individual record. Taking 7 minutes as a conservative estimate this equates to over 269 hours of work to provide the information requested.

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.

Whilst I would normally suggest that a refined timescale is considered, looking at just the most recent year of 2022 which is not yet complete, this single year would still exceed the cost limit at over 63 hours of work and so I do not believe meaningful statistics can be provided in this regard.

To be of some assistance however, please find statistics below in regards to the number of notification received with Gambia as the initial/primary travel destination. I would ask you to note the 2022 figures run up to 29<sup>th</sup> November. As per the exemption above, I would emphasise that these figures will not include all notifications received with include Gambia within the travel itinerary.

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<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GAMBIA RECORDED AS THE PRIMARY DESTINATION</b>
<b>2018</b>	2
<b>2019</b>	2
<b>2020</b>	0
<b>2021</b>	1
<b>2022*</b>	0

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](mailto: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](mailto: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.