

OFFICIAL

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0582
Date: 8th April 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.

Could confirm how many police officers and police staff you have employed dedicated to investigating fraud and other economic crime please? e.g. in a Fraud Squad and Financial Investigation Unit?

Please provide an annual breakdown going back to 2012.

With respect to your question, in terms of Section 17 of the Act, I can confirm that for the year 2012, the information that you seek is not held by Police Scotland.

By way of explanation, Police Scotland was created on 01 April 2013, recorded information regarding the number of officers allocated to fraud teams prior to this date is no longer held.

With regards to data from 2013 to 2022, 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, the Economic Crime and Financial Investigation Unit does not necessarily investigate every report of economic or financial crime. If it is deemed necessary to do so, local policing divisions can set up small teams to investigate financial crime, however these officers are not necessarily dedicated resources and may have been abstracted from regular duties to perform this function.

As these small teams are not necessarily dedicated resources there is no straightforward method to determine if these teams had been set up and for how long without searching through historic correspondence. With respect to emails alone, we have conducted a rough estimate using one of our divisions (A Division) which accounts for a bit over 1,300

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

mailboxes. I estimate that it would take approximately 30 minutes of work to check each mailbox file. With over 1,300 mailboxes in A division this provides an excess of 650 working hours to obtain the data requested. This exercise would then need to be repeated for all other divisions.

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

However, in order to be of assistance, I can advise that since the inception of Police Scotland, the officer numbers within the Economic Crime and Financial Investigation Unit across Scotland have remained static as 91 Police Officers and 37 members of Police staff.

How many officers do you have in total.

In response to this question, please be advised that information regarding officer numbers is publicly available.

As such, in terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought. Section 16 requires Police Scotland when refusing to provide such information because it is exempt, to provide you with a notice which:

- (a) states that it holds the information,
- (b) states that it is claiming an exemption,
- (c) specifies the exemption in question and
- (d) states, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies.

I can confirm that Police Scotland holds the information that you have requested and the exemption that I consider to be applicable is set out at Section 25(1) of the Act - information otherwise accessible:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it under Section 1(1) is exempt information”

The information you are seeking is available at the link below.

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/police-scotland-officer-numbers/>

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 or by post to Information Management (Disclosure), Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH.

OFFICIAL

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.