| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 25-1932Responded to: 2nd July 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## How many arrests/incidents have there been involving bows/crossbows injuring a person over the past five years? Could I get this into a breakdown for each year i.e. 2020 = FIGURE, 2021 =...)

## Could I also get the same information for how many involving illegally injuring animals

## If you also hold information relating to the outcome of incidents i.e. if someone has been hospitalised, died, etc involving this I would also been keen to get this.

In response to your request for arrest data specifically, the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 removed the separate concepts of arrest and detention and replaced them with a power of arrest without warrant - where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting a person has committed, or is committing, an offence.

When a person is arrested, a statement of arrest should be read over as soon as reasonably practicable, and details recorded in the arresting officer’s notebook.

A person is ‘Not Officially Accused’ (a suspect) when arrested and not cautioned and charged. They are ‘Officially Accused’ once arrested and cautioned and charged. If conveyed to a police station, the arrested person will have their details recorded in our National Custody System.

There are situations however whereby a person must be released from police custody prior to their arrival at a police station - effectively they are ‘de-arrested’ - where the reasonable grounds for suspicion no longer exist. In those circumstances, the details of an arrested person are not held electronically.

As a result, we are unfortunately unable to collate comprehensive arrest data, as case-by-case assessment of all officer notebooks would be required - in addition to the partial arrest data held in the National Custody System.

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request and I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

For the reasons outlined above, Police Scotland do not collate data on arrests. Instead, data is compiled and published based on ‘recorded’ and ‘detected’ crimes:

[Crime data - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/)

In this case, ‘detected’ crimes are those where an accused has been identified and there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots Law to justify consideration of criminal proceedings.

In response to your request for incident data specifically (both relating to humans and animals), unfortunately, I regret to inform you that I estimate it would also cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

By way of explanation, I can advise that whilst incidents are categorised, there is no specific incident classification which directly relates to the type of activity outlined in your request: “bows/ crossbows”. There are no relevant markers available on the Police Scotland incident recording systems, nor is there a search facility available, which would allow for the automatic retrieval of this level of information from any relevant reports.

As such, this specified violent type of incident against *humans* could be recorded under various incident categories depending on the circumstances – e.g. ‘robbery’, ‘theft’, ‘assault’ etc. The same violent type of incident against *animals* however can only be recorded under one general incident category– ‘animals’.

Therefore, the only way to provide an accurate response to your request would be to manually review *all* relevantly categorised reports case-by-case from January 1st, 2020, onwards to ascertain whether a bow/ crossbow was involved. Unfortunately, given the volume of reports that would be required to be read through for that five-year period, this exercise would far exceed the cost limit set out in the Fees Regulations.

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 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](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by email 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.