| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 25-1347Responded to: 16 May 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**Drones:**

**Does your police force operate a drone program?**

Yes.

**For each year between 2020 and 2024 how many drones has your police force operated?**

2020 – 8

2021 – 8

2022 – 8

2023 – 10

2024 – 10

**How much money has been invested in your police forces drone program, for each year between 2020 and 2024?**

2020 – Zero

2021 – £4,853.40 (excluding VAT)

2022 – £4,990.00 (excluding VAT)

2023 – £7,2129.00 (excluding VAT)

2024 - £1,853.70 (excluding VAT)

**Do you have a designated drone department or are they allocated to individual officers?**

The drones are deployed as part of the Air Support Unit, and this is a dedicated role designed to support operational policing.

**Is drone training implemented internally or externally?**

Internally.

**How much does it cost to train a drone pilot and how many hours does this take?**

It is a four-week programme and is delivered internally, therefore all costs are internal.

**What changes are planned within your police force to better integrate drones in front line policing?**

Police Scotland Air Support Unit will continue to monitor demand across Scotland and will adapt accordingly to ensure an equity of service for specialist services across the communities that we serve.

**Does your police force have future aspirations to operate drones as first a responder in line with future legislative changes?**

Not at the moment, although we continue to monitor the progress of this programme and many others, as well as looking at how the legislative changes could further enhance our operational capabilities.

**Does your police force share information with other police forces regarding their drone programs, and its future integration?**

The Air Support Unit is in regular contact with other police services both in the UK (NPCC) and beyond and where appropriate information is shared

**EMPASS / Helicopters:**

**Does your police force own its own deployable helicopter or use EMPASS / similar program?**

Police Scotland helicopter(s) are operated through a service agreement with Police Scotland partner Babcock Mission Critical Services Onshore.

**For each year between 2020 and 2024, how many times did your police force deploy the helicopter?**

Due to a change in IT Flight recording system, I must advise we are unable to provide data prior to August 2020. To recover data from January – July 2020 would require a manual review of our records.I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

2020 – 293 flights (August - December)

2021 – 963 flights

2022 – 993 flights

2023 – 640 flights

2024 – 722 flights

**How much did your police force spend on EMPASS / internal helicopter programs for each year between 2020 and 2024?**

That information is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the following exemptions apply:

## *Section 33(1)(b) - Commercial Interests*

Disclosure would prejudice substantially the commercial interests of any person.

By way of explanation, the information requested is a specific part of the contract details with Police Scotland and the service provider. Public disclosure of such information is likely to give competitive advantage to other similar companies and as a result would have a damaging impact on the company concerned.

**Vehicles – For each year between 2020 and 2024:**

**How many of your police forces vehicles have been involved in road traffic collisions**

*Table 1: Police Vehicle Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) – 2020-2024*

| **Year** | **Number of RTCs** |
| --- | --- |
| 2020 | 1,501 |
| 2021 | 1,404 |
| 2022 | 1,487 |
| 2023 | 1,245 |
| 2024 | 1,178 |

**How much has this cost your force in repairs / replacement vehicles?**

*Table 2: Police vehicle repair costs – 2020 -2024*

| **Year** | **Vehicle repair costs** |
| --- | --- |
| 2020 | £1,539,855.66 |
| 2021 | £1,375,982.54 |
| 2022 | £1,658,693.69 |
| 2023 | £1,749,301.43 |
| 2024 | £1,825,198.31 |

*Table 3: Cost of replacement vehicles – 2020 – 2024*

| **Year** | **Cost of replacement vehicles** |
| --- | --- |
| 2020 | £677,418.64 |
| 2021 | £437,073.72 |
| 2022 | £1,018,521.05 |
| 2023 | £1,010,397.44 |
| 2024 | £963,924.61 |

**What % of your front-line officers are response driver trained (Yankee or golf using Avon and Somerset terms).**

Currently 75% of front-line officers (local policing and Operational Support) are response trained.

**What is the cost of training a response driver?**

Currently the cost to deliver this training per student is £4,318.

**How many hours / days does the course take?**

The Standard Response Driving Course is 15 days long.

**Is this training delivered internally or externally?**

Internally by Police Scotland officers and staff trained as Instructors at The Scottish Police College.

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.