| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0722  Responded to: 12 April 2024 |
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Please, first of all, accept my sincere apologies for the delay in providing a response to your request.

Your request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Under Freedom of Information for the period January 2005 – March 2024

## Can you please tell provide the following:

## 1. How many complaints have been received about serving police officers using sex workers?

## 2. How many serving police officers have been investigated over their use of sex workers?

## 3. How many serving police officers have been questioned/ spoken to by superiors over their use of sex workers?

To provide some context to our response, you may find the following information useful.

The Police Scotland [Complaints About the Police Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/lgyddvsi/complaints-about-the-police-sop.docx) outlines how we deal with complaints relating to officers and members of police staff.

The formal conduct process for Police Officers is governed by [The Police Service of Scotland (Conduct) Regulations 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2014/68/contents/made).

The associated [Scottish Government Guidance Document](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/factsheet/2018/04/conduct-and-performance-procedures-police-guidance/documents/police-guidance-conduct-procedures/police-guidance-conduct-procedures/govscot%3Adocument/Police%2BService%2Bof%2BScotland%2B%2528conduct%2529%2Bregulations%2B2014.pdf) further details the process and conduct cases are categorised in line with our [Standards of Professional Behaviour](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/who-we-are/our-standards-of-professional-behaviour/).

In response to questions 1, 2 and 3, I can advise you that with regards to the data requested for the period 01 January 2005 to 31 March 2014,the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act applies.

By way of explanation, this period predates the introduction of the national Police Scotland Professional Standards Department (PSD) database*.*

Please note that the term ‘*sex worker’* is not used within Scotland. The accepted wording is a person or individual who engages in sexual activity for payment and Police Scotland refer to Prostitution.

For data requested from 01 April 2014 to 28 March 2024, in terms of criminal Complaints, we've interpreted the use of prostitutes as the criminal allegation types - as per those listed below - which correspond to those detailed in the [Scottish Crime Recording Standards](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/p0nfjj2c/scottish-crime-recording-standard-crime-recording-and-counting-rules-april-2021.pdf?view=Standard) as 'crimes associated with prostitution'.

* Brothel keeping
* Immoral traffic
* Offences related to prostitution
* Procuration & other sexual offences
* Procuration (excluding homosexual acts)
* Procuration of Homosexual Acts
* Procuration of sexual services from children under 18
* Soliciting services of person engaged in prostitution

We have also searched for these specified criminal allegation categories in relation to Conduct cases.

I can confirm there were no relevant returns in relation to criminal Complaint or Conduct allegations therefore the answer to questions 1, 2 and 3 is zero officers.

I can further advise that in relation to non-criminal allegations, there are no specific categories relating to prostitution.

For Complaint cases, it is assessed that those would be recorded within the category of ‘Other - Non Criminal’.

For Conduct cases, it is assessed these would be recorded under the category of ‘Discreditable Conduct’ within the ten [Standards of Professional Behaviour](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/who-we-are/our-standards-of-professional-behaviour/).

Every file meeting these criteria would require to be manually reviewed to ascertain whether they related to prostitution.

As such, 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) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

**4. How many serving police officers have been suspended over their use of sex workers?**

I can advise you that information relating to the suspension of officers is only available from the inception of Police Scotland on 01 April 2013 therefore the information sought prior to this date is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act applies.

From 01 April 2013, I can advise you that the reason(s) for suspension are not categorised in a retrievable format on the PSD database and therefore the suspensions documentation would require manual review to ascertain the reasons for suspension. As such, it would 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.

## 5. How many serving police officers have been let go/ sacked over their use of sex workers?

I can advise you that with regards to the data requested for the period 01 January 2005 to 31 March 2014,the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act applies. This period predates the introduction of the national Police Scotland Professional Standards Department (PSD) database*.*  
For the period 01 April 2014 to 28 March 2024, I can confirm that no police officers have been dismissed over their use of prostitutes.

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](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) 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](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) 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.