| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 23-0516Responded to: 14th April 2023 |
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Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Police Scotland and we are committed to working with our partners to reduce the harm it causes and ultimately eradicate it.

Domestic abuse is a despicable and debilitating crime which affects all of our communities and has no respect for ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Police Scotland will not tolerate it.

Police Scotland will proactively target perpetrators and support victims to prevent domestic abuse from damaging the lives of victims and their families.

Police Scotland defines domestic abuse as:

“Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse may be committed in the home or elsewhere including online”

This definition is included in the Joint Protocol between Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), “In partnership challenging domestic abuse” which is a public document that can be found at the Police Scotland website on [Police Scotland (scotland.police.uk)](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/ymzlwhwj/joint-protocol-between-police-scotland-and-copfs-in-partnership-challenging-domestic-abuse.pdf?view=Standard) or on the COPFS website on [Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (copfs.gov.uk)](https://www.copfs.gov.uk/)

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

**1. The number of coercive control offences recorded by your police force where the alleged victim was in the following age ranges:**

**a) 11-15**

**b) 16-24**

**Please provide breakdown by year – 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, with year starting in April, ending in March the following year. For 2023, please provide figures to date.**

Firstly, I must advise that the offence in question did not come into force until 01/04/2019. In regards to the period 01/01/2016 to 31/03/2019 I must advise that in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information requested is not held by Police Scotland.

For the rest of the period requested, please find the requested information in the attached spreadsheet under table 1. I would ask you to note the caveats provided below the data table.

**2. The number of coercive control offences recorded by your police force where the alleged suspect was in the following age ranges:**

**a) 11-15**

**b) 16-24**

**Please provide breakdown by year – 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, with year starting in April, ending in March the following year. For 2023, please provide figures to date.**

**3. Of these offences from q2, please provide a breakdown of outcomes (charged, cautioned, no further action etc) for the following years - 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, with year starting in April, ending in March the following year. For 2023, please provide figures to date.**

In regards to questions 2 and 3 of your request, I must advise that the offence in question did not come into force until 01/04/2019. In regards to the period 01/01/2016 to 31/03/2019 I must advise that in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information requested is not held by Police Scotland.

For the rest of the period requested, please find the requested information in the attached spreadsheet under table 2. I would ask you to note the caveats provided below the data table.

I would also ask you to note that police cautions are not a disposal used in Scotland for Domestic Abuse offences.

**4. The Home Office “Domestic Abuse -Statutory Guidance” July 2022 (p23), states:**

**“In responding to cases of abuse involving those under 18, child safeguarding procedures should be followed.”**

**Of cases of coercive control where both the victim and perpetrator are under 18:**

**a) how many referrals were made by the police to children’s social services or a multi-agency forum? Please provide a breakdown for the following years - 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, with year starting in April, ending in March the following year. For 2023, please provide figures to date.**

I must advise that the offence in question did not come into force until 01/04/2019. In regards to the period 01/01/2016 to 31/03/2019 I must advise that in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information requested is not held by Police Scotland.

For the rest of the period requested, I must advise that we do not record the specific information requested.

Whilst we do record the number of cases of abuse, incidents involving person’s aged 16 and above are not routinely shared with child services and it is often dependent upon local arrangements as to whether support is provided by local authority Adult or Child services for individual’s falling in to this age category. To provide some context, the definition used to define a child in Scotland differs from that used in the rest of the UK and so someone aged between 16 and 18 will only be considered to be a child if they are subject to a supervision requirement.

Whilst it may be possible to determine how many of these offences were subsequently emailed to a local authority and by the email address used, potentially determine if this was to children’s services within a local authority, there are concerns over how accurate this information would be. It could also be argued that new information would need to be created in order to fulfil the request as an analysis of email addresses and then enquiry to confirm which related to adult and children services for each authority emailed would be required. As such, in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information requested is not held by Police Scotland.

To be of some assistance however, please see tables 3 and 4 of the attached spreadsheet which provide the total numbers recorded and detected. I would ask you to carefully note the caveats provided below each table.

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](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/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.