| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-0587  Responded to: xx March 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Please tell me how many Public Counters a) there were in 2013 and b) there are now in 2023.

To provide some context, Scotland’s policing estate has been built up over the course of several decades and some buildings are no longer in the right place or operationally fit for purpose.

Many police station sales were as a result of properties declared surplus by Legacy Forces although the sales occurred post-formation of Police Scotland. The majority of these decisions, which took place prior to the formation of Police Scotland, were taken after lengthy and detailed consultation with our partners and local communities and this process remains the same today. In the vast majority of cases, police stations which were closed were moved to new modern co-located accommodation within the same towns or officers were moved to new police stations nearby.

The demands and risks facing policing has changed significantly over the years and will continue to do so in an ever changing Scotland and indeed world. However, Police Scotland recognises that local police stations remain important to local communities and that they help to promote and enhance local engagement between our police officers and the communities they serve. We understand how important local police presence is to communities and our Estate Strategy details our intention to enhance visibility and presence and to increase community bases for local officers, whilst identifying more opportunities to share locations with our public sector partners, enabling closer collaboration with our partners and driving quicker, better outcomes for the public and our communities.

We are also increasingly enabling officers to spend more time out in communities through projects such as the roll-out of mobile devices.

With regards to the number of front or public counters that have closed within the time frame requested I can advise you that Police Scotland does not hold information in the format requested. In terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

Information on public counters is available online with the corresponding opening times, which can be accessed at the following link:

[Police Scotland's station opening hours - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/police-station-opening-hours)

In terms of front or public counter arrangements, I can confirm that whilst the opening times of the stations which are provided on the website are not routinely changed, every effort is made to keep front counters open on the times advertised. However in the event of sickness or annual leave the front counter may not be manned and in these instances officers working within the station will attend to customers at the front counter where this can be accommodated.

On occasions where no one is available to attend at the front counter, the 101 phone outside the station should be used to contact the ACR, who will arrange for an officer to attend at the station. There are occasions where it has been necessary to close a front counter, if cover cannot be provided.

Please note that where a station is advertised as being open 24 hours this does not change and the front counter at these stations is manned 24/7.

Finally, to be of assistance we have provided a comparison between the earliest national data available (2013) and the same data at the date of request. Please see the attached spreadsheet for details.

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.