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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-1537
Date: 12th August 2022



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002

I refer to your recent request for information which has been handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

For ease of reference, your request is replicated below together with the response.

I would like to know how many online scams have been reported when purchasing goods over the last 12 months, including how much money was lost. If possible, I would also like the data to be separated into the website the scam was reported on e.g. Facebook Marketplace, eBay etc.

In response to your request, I regret to inform you that I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested, as it would prove too costly to do so within the context of the fee regulations.

As you may be aware the current cost threshold is £600 and I estimate that it would cost well in excess of this amount to process your request.

As such, and in terms of Section 16(4) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where Section 12(1) of the Act (Excessive Cost of Compliance) has been applied, this represents a refusal notice for the information sought.

By way of explanation, there is no crime type that specifically records online fraud or online scams. In order to determine which frauds took place online each recorded crime of fraud would need to be manually assessed to determine the nature of the offence, this would also be the case for identifying which online platform was used to facilitate the crime.

I can advise that between 1st January and 25th July 2022, 9,814 crimes of fraud were recorded. With a conservative estimate of 3 minutes per record this equates to an excess of 490 hours to determine and extract the information you require, this greatly exceeds the cost threshold set out within the Act.

Police Scotland has assessed that the £600 cost limit within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request would breach the cost threshold.

Whilst I would normally suggest a reduced time period is considered in order that some information can be provided, in this case, as a single year vastly exceeds the cost threshold, I do not believe it would be possible to produce meaningful statistics for your request.

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Should you require any further assistance please contact Information Management quoting the reference number given.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which Police Scotland has dealt with your request, you are entitled, in the first instance, to request a review of our actions and decisions.

Your request must specify the matter which gives rise to your dissatisfaction and it must be submitted within 40 working days of receiving this response - either by email to foi@scotland.police.uk or by post to Information Management (Disclosure), Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH.

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of that review, you are thereafter entitled to apply to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months for a decision. You can apply [online](#), by email to enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info or by post to Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner's decision, there is an appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

As part of our commitment to demonstrate openness and transparency in respect of the information we hold, an anonymised version of this response will be posted to the Police Scotland Freedom of Information [Disclosure Log](#) in seven days' time.