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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-2077
Date: 17 October 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.

Can you tell me the total amount of child abuse incidents recorded by Police Scotland from calls to 101/999 from the period 2015-2022 broken down by year?

Before going on to answer your request, I note that you submitted a similar request recently - our reference 22-1936:

Can you tell me the total amount of child abuse incidents attended by Police Scotland from 2015-2022 broken down by year ?

My understanding is that your question relates to offences of child abuse rather than calls to 101/999 which Police Scotland would refer to as incidents. I would advise you that, Police Scotland record crimes using the Scottish Government Justice Department crime classification codes. I can advise you that there is no specific offence of child abuse. As such, in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information you seek is not held by Police Scotland.

You may wish to consult our published crime statistics which show a variety of offences such as Cruel and unnatural treatment of children and Taking, distribution, possession of indecent photos of children. [How we are performing - Police Scotland](#)

The problem with that request - and also this one - is that you are asking about *incidents* reported to the police.

When individuals call 101/ 999 to report a matter to the police, an incident report is created on our STORM recording system. An incident may or may not result in a *crime report* being created, depending on the circumstances.

Incidents are classified according to a series of headings - but these headings do not align to crime types - which are in accordance with the Scottish Government Justice Department (SGJD) classifications.

You have asked about reported *incidents* of child abuse and I'm afraid there is no corresponding incident classification - and so again, section 17 of the Act (information not held) would apply.

OFFICIAL

To be of assistance, we could provide you with incident data based on any of our incident classifications but you should note that none align directly with what you are seeking - for example:

- Child protection
- Domestic incident
- Crime in progress
- Sexual offence etc

It might even be the case that an incident coded as perhaps '*disturbance*' could, following officer attendance, lead to a crime report being raised in relation to what you might describe as child abuse.

We could also provide you with data on any of our crime classifications but again, none align directly with what you are seeking - for example:

- Cruel and unnatural treatment of children
- Rape of an under 16
- Sexual assault of an under 16

However, there are other potentially relevant crimes which are more generic and not specific to children - for example attempted murder, assault etc.

A full list of crime classifications is available online:

[Recorded crime in Scotland: classification of crimes and offences - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

It should also be noted that as *crimes* and *incidents* are recorded in different systems, we are unable to cross refer between both sets of data.

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.

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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.