| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0428  Responded to: 09 April 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

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 on the [Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/ymzlwhwj/joint-protocol-between-police-scotland-and-copfs-in-partnership-challenging-domestic-abuse.pdf?view=Standard) website or on the [COPFS](http://www.copfs.gov.uk/) website.

1. **Is your force currently delivering formal or informal training in handling domestic abuse cases?**

Police Scotland adopts a ‘three-tiered approach’ to the policing of domestic abuse which helps define the response.

• Tier 1 – Operational Policing.

This is the initial response to reports of domestic abuse and encapsulates almost every report coming into the service. The operational response in Tier 1 will likely include several policing divisions i.e. Contact, Command and Control Division, Local Policing Divisions and Criminal Justice Division.

• Tier 2 – Specialist Domestic Abuse Investigative Officers.

Each Local Policing Division must have specialist officers within the division who support the Tier 1 response. These personnel will ensure effective victim safety planning, maintain an overview of the divisional response, and undertake complex or protracted investigations. They will work cooperatively with the Tier 1 and Tier 3 response.

• Tier 3 – Domestic Abuse Task Force and Domestic Abuse Coordination Unit.

Tier 3 represents the national resource available as part of the Specialist Crime Division. The Domestic Abuse Task Forces (one based in the north, east and west) are responsible for investigations into serial perpetrators who are identified as posing the greatest threat of risk and harm. The Domestic Abuse Coordination Unit are responsible for all national policies in respect of domestic abuse. Both work cooperatively with Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the policing response.

Effective delivery of the ‘three-tiered approach’ is supported by a cadre of bespoke and embedded domestic abuse training to ensure domestic abuse victims across Scotland receive a police response tailored to the circumstances of their case. This includes but is not limited to Probationer Training, Operational Command Training for newly promoted sergeants and training for Specialist Domestic Abuse Investigators. Officers dealing with such incidents will ensure effective safety planning, maintain an overview of the divisional response, and undertake complex or protracted investigations.

1. **What does the current training consist of? Please provide details of the following.**

**• I would like to request all course material delivered in the training, such as papers, exercises and powerpoints. If any material is protected under copyright I would instead like the title, author or similar.**

In relation to the various training courses provided to officers, training documents, guidance documents and other training materials contain information such as safeguarding for victims of crime and tactical information around the process of investigations, including the apprehension of perpetrators. If this information was released into the public domain this may place victims of domestic abuse at risk, therefore, in terms of section 16 of the Act, I am refusing to provide you with the information requested.

Section 16 requires Police Scotland to:

(a) state that it holds the information,   
(b) state that it is claiming an exemption,   
(c) specify the exemption in question and   
(d) state, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies.

I can confirm that the information requested is held by Police Scotland and the exemption(s) that I consider to be applicable are set out below:

## Section 39(1) - Health, safety, and the environment

Any tactical advantage to criminals and those intent on wrongdoing would assist them in circumventing the efficient and effective provision of law enforcement by the police service, which in turn would have an adverse impact on the safety of the officers involved and the general public. The ability to interrupt key communications would increase the risk to the personal safety of individuals and also the safety of the police officers responding to incidents.

**• Does your training go through scenarios with different genders as the perpetrators/victims? Or does the training have another element of gendered focus?**

I can advise that Police Scotland does not hold information in the format requested.

As you will be aware an individual’s right in terms of the legislation is to obtain information held by a public authority at the time a request is received and there is no obligation on them to create new information specifically for such a request.

In this instance the information requested is seeking a yes/no answer, not recorded information, accordingly, in terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

**• How many hours or days will the training take?**

**• How regularly do you give this training? And how regularly are staff offered or provided with this training in their careers?**

As per the ‘three-tiered approach’, Tier 1 is provided at probationer training stage, then all other courses are on a role specific requirement.

**• Is it online or in person?**

**• Is it individual or in groups, if the latter how big are the groups then?**

**• Is it mandatory? Is it assessed? And can you fail the training? If yes, will it have any consequences if a staff member fails? And how many have failed the last year?**

Training can be carried out face to face, online via a platform such as Microsoft Teams or completed through online training modules.

In relation to group sizes these will vary and are dependent on the type of training.

The training carried out at probationer training is mandatory and there are pass and fails at this level.

Finally, in relation to the number of probationer constables who have failed this training during the last year, I can advise that as Domestic Abuse forms part of the overall course content, there are elements which are assessable only in the final exam. We would be unable to state that an officer has ‘failed’ as a direct result of providing an incorrect domestic abuse related answer, as several other aspects of the exam would also have had to be incorrect that cover other parts of the overall course content. As such, the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

1. **Who delivers the training?**

**• Is it external organisations, like SafeLives? If not, is the training done by internal staff and if that is the case, what are their qualifications? Please provide a list of organisations that have carried out training in the last 10 years.**

Unfortunately, I estimate that 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.

Police Scotland deliver training by both internal staff and alongside several partner agencies. Reviewing this information for a 10-year period is an exercise which would exceed the cost limit set out in the Fees Regulations.

1. **Are members of staff actively offered the training, or will they apply for it themselves?**

**•If it is offered, then what members of staff is it offered to?**

As noted above, effective delivery of the ‘three-tiered approach’ is supported by a cadre of bespoke and embedded domestic abuse training to ensure domestic abuse victims across Scotland receive a police response tailored to the particular circumstances of their case. This includes but is not limited to Probationer Training, Operational Command Training for newly promoted sergeants and training for Specialist Domestic Abuse Investigators. Officers dealing with such incidents will ensure effective safety planning, maintain an overview of the divisional response, and undertake complex or protracted investigations.

1. **How long have you been providing this, or similar, training? In the last 10 years, have there been any significant changes in how you provide this training, for who and by who? Please provide details of any changes.**

Unfortunately, I estimate that 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.

To explain, Training courses are updated throughout the years in accordance with guidelines and legislation. To review these changes over a 10-year period would exceed the cost limit set out in the Fees Regulations.

1. **Do you track the completion and impact of the training?**

**• If yes, how?**

The completion of training courses is recorded on each officer’s personnel record. We are unable to record the impact of the training courses, therefore, the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

1. **Please, can you tell me how many staff members have received and finished the training each year since 2015?**

Unfortunately, I estimate that 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.

To explain, this would require reviewing each staff members training record over the past 9 years, which would exceed the cost limit set out in the Fees Regulations.

1. **If your force is not offering training, do they signpost knowledge about domestic abuse in another capacity? (Online, from other organisations and so on.)**
2. **If your force is not offering training, can you please explain what the reasoning behind this is?**

As detailed above, Police Scotland provide training.

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.