

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022- 2497
Date: 19 December 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.

Using data from NRM referral records, could you please inform me of the number of NRM referrals, broken down into nationalities, which concern cannabis cultivation. Could I please have the data from 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018 and 2017?

I must advise you that the level of detail you request in relation specifically to 'Cannabis cultivation' is particularly difficult to retrieve as the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) does not always accurately record the full circumstances of the exploitation.

Statistics of varying degrees of complexity are frequently requested in terms of Freedom of Information legislation and as with all information released into the public domain by Police Scotland, a corporate responsibility exists to ensure that said information is both accurate and reliable.

To clarify, the NRM is an initial document created from information that is known at the time and not necessarily a true reflection of the full picture, type of exploitation and/ or type of criminality that has been involved. It is also common that victims of human trafficking do not initially disclose their involvement with criminality and it can often take some time for them to offer their full engagement in this process.

There is no central recording system for this process, the only way to provide an accurate response would be to cross reference all NRMs with our crime recording systems to establish the facts required. 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.

To be of some assistance you may be aware that more generally the number of NRM referrals by nationality, country of responsible police force and exploitation type (all referrals) by year is published by the Home Office and is available to view via the following link: Home Office ([Data Table 4](#))

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If you require further assistance or 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, Dalrnarnock, 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.