| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0061  Responded to: 01 February 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Does the M74 from England and the ferry port at Cairnryan mean that people are being trafficked through our area?

## Are there examples of modern slavery occuring in Dumfries and Galloway and are there any particular indicators that people should be aware of in a mostly rural are such as we live in?

In terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought. Section 16 requires Police Scotland when refusing to provide such information because it is exempt, to provide you with a notice which:

(a) states that it holds the information,

(b) states that it is claiming an exemption,

(c) specifies the exemption in question and

(d) states, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies.

I can confirm that Police Scotland holds the information that you have requested and the exemption that I consider to be applicable is set out at Section 25(1) of the Act - information otherwise accessible:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it under Section 1(1) is exempt information”

To be of assistance I can advise The Home Office Competent Authorities administer the United Kingdom’s National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which is used to notify Chief Constables of a Potential Victim of Trafficking (PVoT) in their area.  Quarterly statistics are published through the Office of National Statistics. These can be found at

[National Referral Mechanism statistics - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-referral-mechanism-statistics)

Police Scotland maintain a record of NRM which have been allocated to them by the Home Office for management purposes and recorded figures may vary from ONS published data. ONS Data should be consulted in the first instance.

With these caveats, I would provide that in 2023 Police Scotland received over 860 NRMs describing exploitation throughout Scotland with the majority of PVoT being encountered in the central belt. Of these, 9% describe the PVoT as being encountered in the Dumfries and Galloway area (Police Scotland’s V Division).  Three PVoT describe exploitation within that area. Exploitation types described by PVoT in this area include cannabis cultivation, debt repayment (not further described) and exploitation in the fishing industry.

Traffickers may use major transport routes including the M74 to move PVoT throughout the UK and Scotland or to have PVoT move commodities such as illegal drugs or proceeds of crime. As the PVoT may be transiting through a territorial policing division and the crime has been initiated in another area, the fact they are transiting through Dumfries and Galloway may not be recorded fully in the NRM.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: Indicators of Human Trafficking can be found in Appendix B of the

[Lord Advocate’s instructions: Non-prosecution of victims of human trafficking | COPFS](https://www.copfs.gov.uk/publications/lord-advocate-s-instructions-non-prosecution-of-victims-of-human-trafficking/)

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.