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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0063  
Date: 18<sup>th</sup> February 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.

### **Please can you provide me with data on incidents of Honour Based Abuse (HBA) from 2014 onwards?**

The term Honour Based Violence (HBV) was previously used nationally by Police Scotland however in recognition of the limitations that the term 'violence' may suggest and in alignment with the national definition of domestic abuse, Police Scotland now use the term Honour Based Abuse (HBA).

The term Honour Based Abuse (HBA) embraces a variety of incidents or crimes including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, abduction, forced marriage, imprisonment and murder (not an exhaustive list), where the individual, their family or community is punished for actually, or allegedly, undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour and which could bring shame to the family or community.

Incidents of Honour Based Abuse (HBA) where there is a 'concern' for an individual (whether protection or wellbeing concern) are recorded on Police Scotland's interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD). There is no statutory crime of HBA in Scotland, HBA is an aggravator for other crimes. The incidents recorded on our iVPD indicate a HBA 'concern' and do not necessarily mean a crime has been recorded.

The iVPD is the formal means by which Police Scotland record police contact with adults, children and young people who are, or are perceived to be, experiencing some form of adversity and / or situational vulnerability, which may impact on their current or future wellbeing; or where force policy dictates. E.g. Domestic abuse, hate crime, youth offending or to record details of victim's rights under Section 8 and 9 of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014.

The data provided has been obtained from the iVPD and provides the best indicator of incidents of HBA where it is assessed there is a protection or wellbeing concern.

Where criminality is identified, crimes are then linked to the relevant concern report. Within the iVPD database, although a victim is only counted once for each concern report that they are recorded in, they may be linked to more than one crime within that iVPD concern report.

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The iVPD is a dynamic database which is constantly being updated and changed.

As previously explained, there is no statutory crime of HBA in Scotland. HBA is an aggravator for other crimes of violence therefore there is no single searchable Scottish Government Justice Department (SGJD) crime code we can use to search the crime management system for HBA crimes.

While iVPD records incidents where there is a 'concern' for an individual (whether protection or wellbeing concern) we are unable to interrogate it further to provide the information you have requested in relation to the number of complaints raised/investigated.

The table below provides the number of incidents recorded on iVPD with an HBA marker since 1 April 2014. I would ask that you note the caveats below and would draw your particular attention to the fact that 2014 is from 1<sup>st</sup> April onwards as this is when our Vulnerable Persons Database was introduced.

**Honour Based Violence Incidents (Vulnerable Persons Database), Police Scotland <sup>1,2</sup>  
Period: 1st April 2014 - 31st December 2021 (Calendar Year)**

	2014*	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Honour Based Violence Incidents	111	112	143	143	147	156	137	118

All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information. All data have been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as at 25th January 2022.

1. The data was extracted using the incident's raised date and extracted from iVPD.

2. Please note, iVPD Incidents can have more than one marker recorded against the incident. This table is a count of distinct incidents, which include the marker for Honour Based Violence. Other markers may also be recorded on the incident along with Honour Based Violence.

Police Scotland does not retain any information for statistical purposes once a record has been weeded from iVPD. When a record is weeded, it is removed from the system, and there is no retention of data outside the weeding and retention policy. Please note, the weeding and retention policy states that if a person is recorded as "no concern / not applicable" then this will only be retained for 6 months.

Please note that these data are collated from the Police Scotland iVPD system, which has an automated weeding and retention policy built on to it. A copy of the retention policy is available on the Police Scotland internet site (<https://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log/2021/june/21-1479-sop-records-retention/>).

In relation to the requested information prior to 1st April 2014, 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, the iVPD system was implemented in April 2014. Prior to this date all records of HBA were recorded on legacy police databases. Police Scotland do not have a centralised method for recalling this data, as such each relevant legacy system would need to be interrogated and the data assessed for accuracy and whether it met the criteria for HBA. Due to the large number of records involved, this is an exercise which I anticipate would greatly exceed the cost implications set out within the act.

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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.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@scotland.pnn.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](mailto: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.