| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-0572  Responded to: 17 March 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## 1) The number of crimes reported - or incidents to which police were called - to your force relating to physical or verbal abuse of a person described to be refereeing or otherwise officiating a football match from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, inclusive;

Having considered this question in terms of the Act, 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, Police Scotland record crimes using the Scottish Government Justice Department crime classification codes and not by a locus or occupation. Therefore in order to establish an accurate response to your request would be to manually read every potentially relevant crime report for 2022 to establish whether the specifics matched your request. As such this is an exercise which would far exceed the cost limit set out in the Fees Regulations.

I can further advise that there is no incident code that would be specific to your request. And there as explained above each incident would have to be read to establish the circumstances and as such Section 12(1) would again apply.

You can access Police Scotland’s crime statistics via the following link: [How we are performing - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/what-we-do/how-we-are-performing/)

## 2) A keyword search of police records to show how many times the words 'referee' and ‘linesman’ appear in crime reports from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

Having considered these questions in terms of the above Act, 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, Police Scotland operates a number of crime recording systems. Whilst robust statistical analysis can be made of the data held on each of our systems, they are not, at present, designed to enable the retrieval of the highly specific information as per your request.

In this instance, it is not possible to carry out a force wide search for specific terms or keywords on our crime systems.

As such, the only way to provide an accurate response to your request would be to carry out case by case assessment of thousands of crime reports for the time period requested, to establish whether ‘referee or linesman’ was mentioned and how it related to the offence - an exercise which I estimate would far exceed the cost limit set out in the Fees Regulations.

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.