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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-1016  
Date: 17<sup>th</sup> June 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.

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 at the Police Scotland website on <https://www.scotland.police.uk/> or on the COPFS website on <http://www.copfs.gov.uk/>.

For ease of reference, your request is replicated below together with the response.

**1) Please can you provide data pertaining to the number of 999 calls that were made to report or in relation to domestic violence for the calendar years:**

- a. 2016**
- b. 2017**
- c. 2018**
- d. 2019**
- e. 2021/2022 (to date)**

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Following a clarification request you confirmed that using the definition of domestic abuse Police Scotland uses rather than domestic violence would be acceptable. This applies to all questions within your request.

In addition, you confirmed that providing statistics on incidents recorded where the final incident type was noted as PW-40 – Domestic Incident and where the source of the call was 999 would be acceptable. You also confirmed that providing all of these incidents was sufficient after it was explained we would be unable to break incidents down into whether violence was involved or not within the cost limits of the Act. This applies to relevant questions where 999 calls are mentioned within your request.

Finally, whilst I note you have requested information in calendar year you have also provided financial years within your question, namely 2021/22. I have elected to provide the data by financial year so that it is consistent across the full dataset. Again this applies to all the questions within your request.

In regards specifically to question 1, whilst I note you have asked for information from 2016 to 2021/22, Police Scotland only started using a single incident recording system over the whole country from 02/06/2018 onwards. In regards to the period 01/04/2016 to 02/06/2018 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, due to the variations in search capabilities and recording practices on legacy systems, we would not be able to provide consistent data for this period without a manual review of each incident recorded. Police Scotland record thousands of incidents each day and so this part of your request would take hundreds if not thousands of hours to complete.

Police Scotland have assessed that the £600 cost limit within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request would breach the cost threshold.

In regards to the rest of the period requested, please find the requested information in Table 1 of the attached spreadsheet. I would ask you to note the caveats below the table.

**2) Please can you provide data pertaining to the number of 999 calls relating to domestic violence across 2016 – 2022 respectively that were assigned:**

- a. Grade 1
- b. Grade 2
- c. Grade 3
- d. Grade 4

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In regards to the period 01/04/2016 to 02/06/2018 I would direct you to my answer to question 1 as to why this information has not been provided.

In regards to the rest of the period, please find the requested information in Table 1 of the attached spreadsheet. I would ask you to note the following as well as the caveats below the table:

Police Scotland uses different systems for call handling and incident management. All 999 calls are initially assessed by our Service Centre where, if police action is required, an incident will be created on our Command & Control system and assigned a grade.

The Contact Assessment Model was implemented by Police Scotland in a phased approach beginning in June 2019 and completing in June 2020. Under CAM, all decisions around deployment and appropriate resolution of incidents are based on the assessment of threat, risk, harm, investigative opportunity, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE). Incidents are subject to continuous review throughout their lifecycle to ensure that the principles of CAM and THRIVE are properly applied and that callers receive the most appropriate response at the most appropriate time.

Prior to CAM, incidents were graded in a similar way to what you have referenced above, using numbers 1-5. CAM saw the introduction of revised incident grades. Due to the phased nature of implementation there was a period of crossover where some areas used legacy grades and others used CAM grades. Priority 1-5 remains available for use for specific call types such as alarm activations for administrative purposes.

### **Please also provide the time taken to attend for each part of the question.**

In regards to the time taken to attend each grade/priority of call 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 we have interpreted that where this request references 'response times' this means the time taken from an incident being created to a resource arriving at scene.

It is also worth noting that an incident will have the most appropriate grade applied regardless of whether it is received via 999, 101 or any other channel.

STORM Unity is the system used by Police Scotland for the management of police incidents and resources and is the source of the data provided in this response. It is worth noting that STORM is primarily a command & control system and has limited value as a statistical tool.

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Most data obtained from the system requires further analysis to establish context. In large volumes, this can be extremely difficult to do and in some cases it is not possible to filter or structure data to adequately answer a specific request.

STORM automatically captures timing data when an incident is raised and dispatched. The arrival of a resource at the locus of an incident is recorded via a manual process and as a result is open to error.

The most common method of marking 'At Scene' is for officers to select a hotkey on their airwave device. This is often overlooked, particularly when officers arrive at the scene of a dynamic incident. Controllers are able to manually update the status of resources if required but this can naturally lead to errors in the accurate recording of the actual time of arrival. The priority of all staff is the safe and effective management of our policing response.

From previous reviews of data of this type, numerous errors in the accurate recording of this information have been identified. These include:

- Officers failing to update their handsets to mark themselves 'At Scene' when they actually arrived at locus. In some cases this was completed after a significant delay and in others the status was not updated until the incident was closed some time later.
- Incidents which were initially, appropriately, assessed at a lower response level but later reassessed and upgraded in response to new information. In these circumstances the timer does not reset, but reflects the total time from creation to dispatch/arrival.

These scenarios distort overall figures meaning that a manual review of tens of thousands of domestic incidents would be required to remove erroneous results and establish the true 'response time'. This is an exercise I believe will greatly exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

Police Scotland have determined that the £600 threshold within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request exceeds this limit.

### **3) Please can you provide a copy of your Call Grades and Deployment Policy or direct me to where I can find this.**

Please be advised that the requested information is publicly available.

As such, 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.

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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”

I can confirm that the information requested is available through our website within our C3 National Guidance document. I have attached a direct link to the relevant document below. I would in particular draw your attentions to pages 5 and 6:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/gwep0iv0/contact-command-control-c3-division-national-guidance.doc>

**4) Please can you tell me the total number of calls relating to domestic violence that were assigned grade 1, 2, 3 or 4 in comparison to or categorised by the area the incident was reported to have taken place in or the area officers were instructed to attend for the calendar years:**

- a. 2016
- b. 2017
- c. 2018
- d. 2019
- e. 2021/2022 (to date)

In regards to the period 01/04/2016 to 02/06/2018 I would direct you to my answer to question 1 as to why this information have not been provided.

Police Scotland operates 13 Local Policing divisions. Data has been provided, broken down by local policing division. It should be noted that this information is obtained from our Command & Control system which is primarily used to manage resources and incidents as opposed to a statistical tool.

Data from this system identifies the areas where officers were required to attend. Dependant on circumstances, this may not be the locus of the original incident (i.e. a person involved in a domestic incident while visiting one area may be visited by police on their return home in a different area).

Please see table 2 of the attached spreadsheet for the information requested. I would ask you to note the caveats provided below the table and in particular that these statistics relate to contacts received by any method and are not limited to 999 calls.

**Grades 1 to 3 typically refer to an emergency response, a prompt response and a routine response. Please provide a description of the different grades (including expected response times to attend) used by the force if these differ.**

Please see my response to question 3. This information is contained within the same C3 National Guidance document.

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**5) Please provide the longest individual time taken to attend a grade 1, 2, 3 or 4 emergency call in 2021 for domestic violence, including what grade the call was assigned.**

Please see my response to the second part of question 2.

**6) Please provide the total number of occasions that police did not attend:**

- a) Grade 1,**
- b) Grade 2**
- c) Grade 3**
- d) Grade 4 emergencies last year (2021) relating to domestic violence.**

In response to your request, 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, while many incidents may result in the need for the physical attendance of a police resource, there are occasions where it is recognised that another emergency service or agency may be the most appropriate to respond. In those circumstances our focus is on ensuring the fast and efficient transfer of information to the relevant agency while assessing any requirement for police to attend.

Vigorous risk assessment takes place prior to deployment which can include input from force negotiators, public order advisors, tactical firearms commanders and others. This allows control rooms to identify the most suitable resource to attend the scene, maximising public safety and minimising the risk to officers. For obvious reasons resources are not necessarily dispatched until these risk assessments have taken place.

CAM also affords the ability to resolve some incidents remotely, including the noting of crime reports. These incidents would not see any officer dispatched to a particular location, but would see appropriate action taken to resolve them in line with force guidance and SCRS.

In order to establish details of incidents where no resource was dispatched we would require to ascertain how many of the almost 30,000 domestic incidents identified for this period included no record of a mobilisation message indicating dispatch. In order to provide proper context and say with confidence how many of these incidents saw no police attend 'at any time' a manual review of the incidents noted about would need to be manually reviewed. This is an exercise I believe will greatly exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

Police Scotland have determined that the £600 threshold within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request exceeds this limit.

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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.