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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-2290  
Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 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.

**How many instances have occurred in the past 3 years where Police Scotland has asked and received assistance from police forces located in other parts of the UK (outside Scotland) to supplement their existing pool of officers. Can the data be broken down into the following?**

- **Reason for request**
- **Dates of each event**
- **Duration of provision**

In regards to the questions above, please find the requested information below. Please note that the date of event provided is the date the event officially started. I would also ask you to note that the duration of provision may cover a time period before and after the event officially took place:

Event - Remembrance Parade – Glasgow  
Reason for request – To support training  
Date of each event – 10/11/2019  
Duration of provision – 2 days

Event – Operation Urram  
Reason for request – COP26 Summit  
Date of each event – 31/10/2021  
Duration of provision – 24 days

Event – Operation Unicorn  
Reason for request – Death of HM The Queen  
Date of each event – 10/09/2022  
Duration of provision – 5 days

- **Number of personal supplied and which force they were requested from**

In terms of section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information requested.

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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.

The exemptions that I consider to be applicable to the information requested by you are:

Section 31(1) – National Security and Defence  
Section 35(1)(a)&(b) – Law Enforcement  
Section 39(1) – Health, safety and the environment

### **Section 31(1) – National Security and Defence**

Information is exempt information if it is required for purpose of safeguarding national security.

It should be recognised that the national security landscape during high profile events such as the COP26 Conference and the policing of the events surrounding the death of Her Majesty the Queen are complex and unpredictable. To disclose the information requested would reveal exactly how Police Scotland resourced the policing of such high profile events. Disclosure of this information would place the security of future events both in Scotland and the rest of the UK under threat as this would enable criminals and terrorists to geographically map force areas which are 'vulnerable', thereby rendering them easy targets. Such criminals and terrorists could then carry out their terrorist plans and activities and cause the maximum impact of destruction and disruption.

This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the Public Interest Test.

### **Section 35(1)(a)&(b) – Law Enforcement**

Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to; prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Public safety is of paramount importance and disclosure of this information would allow criminals and terrorists the ability to assess the capability of Police Scotland and other forces during high profile events. Law enforcement techniques would be exposed which would enable criminals to build a picture of where resources were deployed and as such would allow them to carry out their criminal or terrorist activities. To disclose this information into the public domain would undermine the tactical options available and compromise the effective delivery of future operational law enforcement.

This is a non-absolute exemption and the application of the public interest test applies.

### **Section 39(1) – Health, Safety and the Environment**

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Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to; endanger the physical or mental health or the safety of an individual.

The release of information requested would enable those intent on wrong doing to estimate the capability of the force and other police forces. Police Scotland has a duty of care to all individuals, including members of the public police officers and police staff members. The safety of the community at large would be compromised by disclosure of the information, enabling offenders to target their criminal activities to areas identified as vulnerable, which could lead to members of the community suffering from stress, anxiety or physical injury.

This is a non-absolute exemption and the application of the public interest test applies.

### Public Interest Test

It could be argued that the public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and resources distributed within an area of policing, particularly in relation to high profile events. However, security measures are put in place to protect the community we serve and disclosure of any policing tactics with regard to security and crime prevention techniques would assist criminals and terrorists in carrying out their criminal and terrorist activities. This would ultimately increase the risk of harm to the general public and significantly undermine any ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the United Kingdom.

The public have an expectation that the police will make the appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with what is placed into the public domain. Disclosure of this information coupled with the disclosure of similar information from other forces and law enforcement agencies would give such criminals and terrorists a more detailed account of the tactical infrastructure of not only Police Scotland but also the country as a whole. Any incident that results from such a disclosure would by default affect National Security.

Whilst there is a public interest in the policing of high profile events and the transparency of policing to providing assurance that Police Scotland is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from criminals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police operations when delivering effective operational law enforcement to ensure the prevention and detection of crime is carried out and the effective apprehension or prosecution of offenders is maintained.

It is important to note that the UK does face a serious and sustained threat from violent extremists and this threat is greater in scale and ambition than any terrorist threats in the past. The police service has a duty to promote the safety of all individuals including those wishing to attend high profile events, and will not reveal any information that might jeopardise this goal.

On balance I would contend that the public interest in disclosing the information is outweighed by that in maintaining the exemptions listed, as, it is doubtful if it can ever be in the public interest to disclose information which would jeopardise the delivery of policing and the safety of individuals and prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

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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.police.uk](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by post to Information Management (Disclosure), Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, 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.