| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0568  Responded to: xx April 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding to your request.

We have received an unprecedented volume of requests lately and that has, unfortunately, impacted on our ability to meet the statutory timescales in some cases.

## For questions 1a, 1b and 1c, please provide data for each quarter of the last 5 years, if you have this on record. If you do not, please give data for as many of the five years as you have.

## 1.a. How many police officers are in your force?

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it is exempt information”.

The information you are seeking is publicly available at [Police Scotland - Officer Numbers](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/police-scotland-officer-numbers/).

## b. How many of these officers are dedicated to dealing with domestic abuse / are domestic abuse specialists? What is the name of the role/roles if there is one?  i. (N.B., police officers dedicated to dealing with domestic abuse will be called domestic abuse specialists in the following questions - please still provide answers if they have a different official title)

## c.  What is the gender makeup of your domestic abuse specialists if you have them?

For ease, b) and c) have been answered together.

After careful consideration, unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

By way of explanation, each of Police Scotland’s 13 local policing divisions adopts a three-tiered approach to policing of domestic abuse (See question d) and there are domestic abuse specialists throughout the service, embedded within every tier.

For example, specialist domestic abuse investigators within tiers 2 and 3 and domestic abuse champions entrenched throughout all 3 tiers. Officers therefore could be domestic abuse specialists but not be based within a specific domestic abuse unit. Due to this, there is no simple way of extracting the data you require.

## d.  Do you have a specialist domestic abuse team in the force? If so, what is the name of the team? And who do they report to?

Police Scotland adopts a ‘three-tiered approach’ to the policing of domestic abuse which helps define the expected response. The [Domestic Abuse Investigation Standard Operating Procedure](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/fuaflohy/domestic-abuse-investigation-sop.pdf) provides more information.

In addition, Domestic Abuse Champions are rooted throughout the service. These champions are police officers and members of police staff who have been provided additional domestic abuse training to enable them to provide enhanced knowledge and insight when dealing with domestic abuse incidents. They are empowered to influence others, demonstrate leadership, and mentor their peers. They provide advice and direction to colleagues if needed, in addition to their day-to day role.

## e. If you have domestic abuse specialists, how does someone become a domestic abuse specialist in your force i.e. do they put themself forward, or are they selected by an individual from the force*.*Who makes the decision for this promotion?

An officer can apply to work within a domestic abuse department if a job is advertised and/or an officer or member of police staff can nominate themselves to be considered as a domestic abuse champion. Furthermore, a domestic abuse specialist is not a ‘promotion’, but a specialist role.

## 2. Please describe in detail how your force handles domestic abuse cases from the initial 999 call to the case being passed on to the CPS.

## a. What are the steps involved?

The [Domestic Abuse Investigation Standard Operating Procedure](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/fuaflohy/domestic-abuse-investigation-sop.pdf) defines the expected policing response to, and investigation of domestic abuse. It supports Police Scotland’s [Domestic Abuse Policy](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/he5ffktq/domestic-abuse-policy.pdf?view=Standard) and the Joint Protocol between Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), ["In Partnership Challenging Domestic Abuse"](https://www.copfs.gov.uk/media/xjtd4i4p/joint-domestic-abuse-protocol.pdf). Police Scotland’s ["Standards of service for victims and witnesses"](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/standards-of-service-for-victims-and-witnesses/) can be viewed on the Police Scotland website and the 2023-2024 report can be found [here](https://www.copfs.gov.uk/media/fvblc0xf/standards-of-service-for-victims-and-witnesses-2023-2024.pdf). This document seeks to explain what you can expect to happen at each stage of the criminal justice process, the standards of service you can expect, and who you can contact for help or advice.

## b. What is the average time for a victim to have their case passed on to the CPS?

In terms of section 17 of the Act, I can confirm that the information you have requested is not held by Police Scotland. By way of explanation, Police Scotland does not routinely record the policing hours associated with any specific operation or investigation.

Each domestic abuse case varies and as such we would be unable to describe in detail how each case is handled.  Each case will be fully investigated by a Police Scotland officer from within the three tiers and each case looked at on an individual basis.

Of note, cases in Scotland are reported to COPFS, and not the CPS.

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.