| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-1638  Responded to: 12th July 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## I am looking for information about money paid to police informants. Please could you provide me with the following:

## How much money, in pounds sterling, has the force paid police informants – known as Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) – in the past three financial years? (Please could the figures be broken down year-by-year and be provided for 2022/23, 2021/22, 2020/21).

## For each financial year please could the total amount paid to Covert Human Intelligence Sources be stated, as well as the number of Covert Human Intelligence Sources who received payment.

## What was the largest amount paid to an informant/ Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) by the force in each year? Please provide the amount of the largest payment to an informant each financial year.

## Please note, the amount should include the total of all payments to the informant in one financial year – for example, if the same informant received several payments in the financial year, please could the total amount for those payments be provided.

I am refusing to provide you with the information sought and section 16 of the Act therefore requires Police Scotland to provide you with a notice which:

1. states that it holds the information,
2. states that it is claiming an exemption,
3. specifies the exemption in question and
4. states, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies.

I can confirm that Police Scotland holds the information you have requested and the exemptions applicable are as follows:

* Section 35(1)(a)&(b) - Law Enforcement
* Section 39(1) - Health and Safety
* Section 34(1)(b) - Investigations
* Section 38(1)(b) - Personal information

Disclosure of data on the number of CHIS builds a picture of policing activity that would be invaluable to offenders.

Disclosure would present an increased risk to those operating as CHIS as it would lead to members of organised crime groups seeking to identify any CHIS who may be reporting their activities.

This increases the risk to individuals, whether there are CHIS reporting on that group or not. Disclosure would allow apparent spikes to be identified that could in turn be associated to a particular serious crime and compromise a CHIS operation.

Further, where significant arrests and recoveries have been made from a CHIS-lead operation then it would be conceivable that Organised Crime Groups could effectively ascertain that it was CHIS information that lead to the police action, due to any significant spike in CHIS numbers. From there they might assume, rightly or wrongly, that a particular individual was providing information to the police, putting this person at risk of harm.

Although I consider that public awareness would favour a disclosure as it would contribute to the public debate surrounding the application of these measures, we must ensure that the release of this level of detail is not inadvertently providing potentially harmful information and placing an individual at risk. This is a matter of principle which applies equally to any member of the public who could find themselves subject to this or other protective measures in a variety of circumstances.

The public interest in terms of accountability is provided for via disclosure of the associated financial information which is provided below.

The table below provides the rewards paid to CHIS for calendar years 2020 to 2022:  
2020 - £264,607.24   
2021 - £305,588.72   
2022 - £288,850.80

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.