| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Review Response Our reference: FOI 24-3031  Responded to: 14 May 2025 |
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Following consultation with the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) as regards your appeal of our original decision and review decision, we are conducting a second review of your request in terms of section 20(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

## Your original request was:

## Please supply the Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse Review document which was partially presented to the SPA Complaints and Conduct Committee on 6th June 2024 by Chief Superintendent Helen Harrison, Head of PSD?

## You then asked for a review of the handling of that request, stating:

**I am writing to formally request an internal review of your decision to refuse my Freedom of Information request regarding the *Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse Review* document, which was presented in part to the SPA Complaints and Conduct Committee on 6 June 2024 (Item 6 of my request).  
You have cited Section 30(b) (*Prejudice to Effective Conduct of Public Affairs*) as the basis for refusal, arguing that disclosure would “significantly limit and devalue the review process.” However, I challenge this decision on the following grounds…**

Having reviewed all records associated with your request, the decision I have to make is whether or not section 16 of the Act, in conjunction with the various exemptions cited, was correctly applied to your request.

I am *generally* satisfied that your request has been handled in accordance with the Act and in terms of section 21(4)(a), I uphold the original response and our reliance on the exemptions set out at sections 30(b)(ii), 30(c) and 38(1)(b).

It is our assessment however that one section of the document is suitable for public disclosure - the ‘Organisational Learning’ section - and that extract has therefore been provided. Please see Appendix A for details.

Again, I would also refer you to the information already available in the public domain on this subject - [Background | Scottish Police Authority](https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/police-scotland-professional-boundaries-update-6-june-2024/background/).

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of this review, 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.

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.

**Appendix A - Extract from Document**

5. Organisational Learning

The review documents were compiled by personnel within the ACU/PSD arena with the primary purpose of ensuring that a robust and diligent investigation had been carried out for each report of PPDA, and confirming that there were no missed investigative opportunities. This identified 3 reports that required additional investigation.

The review also highlighted observations in relation to areas of improvement within the organisation and were subsequently assessed in order to create recommendations for Police Scotland to improve investigative practices and reduce PPDA.

Organisational Learning

The observations in respect of organisational learning can be divided into three separate areas namely, governance, communication and training.

Governance

On reviewing the reported incidents of PPDA, it was apparent that there was no commonality across the country in respect of appropriate support for the victim and for the perpetrator. There is standard victim support guidance contained within the Domestic Abuse Standard Operating Procedure, which should be followed at all times. However, there is additional support available when there are victims who are employed by the organisation. This is not consistently recorded from the review and as such this requires to be addressed to ensure that the organisation has the same procedures in place, regardless of demographic.

It was also noted during the review that the Domestic Abuse Investigation Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), Domestic Toolkit or Crime Investigation SOP does not currently have specific information in respect of the investigation of PPDA. This is recently been reviewed by the PSD Support and Service Delivery and guidance shall be published in the near future.

There is also no continuity in respect of the recording of investigation carried out for PPDA. Investigations carried out by divisional departments are likely to hold information in their own filing system, however this presented issues whilst carrying out the review in order to ensure that the relevant procedures were adhered to and investigation completed.

Reviewers also noted a lack of SID and iVPD entries in relation to PPDA. There should be no difference in recording processes, regardless of whether the perpetrators and/or victim is a Police Officer or Member of Police Staff. Improvements are required to ensure that the traditional process is followed in relation to the recording of incidents, including; reference numbers to be documented, restricting records and clear outcomes to be recorded.

Communication

On reviewing the analytical information, concerns were raised in respect of reports made from victims of PPDA, the percentage worsening when the victim was also a Police Officer/Member of Police staff. There appeared to be an increase in communicating concerns or reports of PPDA only when the relationship had ended. This may be due to an empowerment of the victim to report the abuse when the relationship ceased as they did not feel safe doing so whilst still within the relationship. This information highlights that there may be a reluctance to approach Police due to concerns the perpetrator will become aware of the report and that they may potentially not be believed.

The review also highlighted that communication between the investigating department and PSD could be improved.

Training

There appeared to be a lack of consistency across the Force in relation to investigative practices. Training surrounding the investigation of PPDA should be considered in order to ensure uniformity in enquiries across the country.

In addition to the usual investigation methods, further unique factors require to be considered by the SIO when dealing with a suspect that is a Police Officer and/or Member of Police staff. Further training in this area could be advantageous to ensure best practice.