| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-2232  Responded to: xx October 2023 |
| --- | --- |

Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Have there been any reported and documented incidents of harassment, intimidation or public disorder, associated with either pro-life prayer vigil groups or pro-choice groups, in and around the Glasgow locations below between 1 January 2022 and 30 June 2023? (18 months).

## If so, please provide full details of every incident; including the date, time and specific location in which any such incident occurred; the name of the individual/group reporting an incident; details of any group or organisation the reporting individual belonged to; full details of any incident including any action required following the incident and the final outcome at locations:

In researching your request, our main source of data would be the Police Scotland incident recording system - STORM.

To explain, when a matter is reported to the police - usually by 101 or 999 call - or otherwise comes to police attention, an incident will be logged on this system.

Incidents are categorised to an extent but I would stress first of all that there is no incident classification which would directly relate to the type of incident described in your request.

On the contrary, it is considered likely that such incidents could be recorded under a number of different categories depending on the circumstances - for example noise, disturbance, assault, crime in progress, concern for person etc.

As such, there is no meaningful way the incident classifications could be used to narrow down the information held in relation to each location in terms of your request.

Furthermore, it is recognised that such groups can tend to congregate around the outskirts of the hospital/ clinic - the junction/ road leading up to etc.

For that reason, it was considered more likely that any incidents of relevance to your request might actually be recorded not at the exact address of the hospital/ clinic but at a location in the near vicinity.

We initially carried out general incident searches for each location and I’m sure you can appreciate that even for a period of a just a year, a busy hospital can be recorded as the locus for a great many incidents, each of which would have to be individually assessed for potential relevance to your request.

Taking all of the above into account, and in terms of our section 15 duty to advise and assist applicants, we have opted on this occasion to take a different approach which I trust you will find acceptable.

For each location, we have carried out a search of the incident log for the words/ phrases - 'pro-life', 'pro-choice', 'abortion', 'vigil' or 'prayer'.

We have also extended the location search to between a 125m radius of Glasgow Royal Infirmary, a 350m radius of Queen Elizabeth University Hospital and a 350m radius of Sandyford Clinic

I must stress that Police Scotland do not consider key word searches for specific words/ phrases to be an accurate means of analysis in most circumstances and there may well be incidents of relevance to your request which do not include the specific phrases we have included.

Whilst it would be nigh on impossible to come up with a list of comprehensive search terms, it is however considered likely that the phrases used ought to have captured any incidents of relevance.

All incidents reporting protests/ demonstrations etc. have been included.

Whether these could be classed as harassment/ intimidation would be entirely subjective.

A small number of incidents have not been included where it was clear from the incident description that it was not directly relevant to your request - for example where the keyword hit has been a mere coincidence rather than directly relevant.

The results of the exercise are set out below:

## 1. On Castle Street, between the junctions with Springburn Road and St James' Road, opposite Glasgow Royal Infirmary, G4 0SF

The search returned zero incidents of relevance around this location.

## 2. On Hardgate Road in the area of the junction with Langlands Drive, opposite the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, G51 4TF

Following a keyword search the following incidents met this criteria described above:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Summary** |
| 03/03/2022 | 13:12 hours | Vigil held between 0800 hours and 2000 hours noted by police to be very peaceful. Member of the public objecting to the prayer vigil and is parked with his engine running. This male has also been spoken to by police for his behaviour at similar previous incidents. |
| 15/03/2022 | 14:51 hours | Vigil being held by prayer group. Male trying to disrupt this by filming the group without their permission and speaking to them about why he doesn’t agree with them. |
| 16/03/2022 | 08:57 hours | Vigil being held by prayer group. Male member of the public approached one of the male members of the group in an aggressive manner, swearing and shouting, grabbed a poster from round his neck and knocking his hat off. |
| 16/02/2023 | 12:34 hours | Vigil being held by prayer group. Concerns raised by member of the public regarding the ongoing protest, namely vehicles parked in such a way that they may potentially block emergency access to the hospital. Police attended and no access or other issues identified – peaceful protest at locus. |
| 01/03/2023 | 10:31 hours | Vigil being held by prayer group. Opposing group also having demo at site outside hospital. Patient transfer minibus alleged to have broken down at site is stopping the vigil group’s signs from being seen. Police attended locus and vehicle managed to restart just as they arrived. Advice given by police and this will be forwarded to the hospital management regards possible inappropriate use of the vehicle. |
| 01/03/2023 | 12:41 hours | Vigil being held by prayer group. There are two counter protestors standing close to the vigil, playing very loud music. One protestor is male and the other is female. They have been filming the vigil and standing close to them, but have not spoken to them - however the music is so loud that the prayer group cannot hear their own prayers. Officer attended and spoke to those involved. The counter protest group agreed to turn their music down – no criminality but police monitor the situation. |
| 02/04/2023 | 12:11 hours | Vigil being held by prayer group. There are two counter protesters positioned about 2m away from the vigil with a megaphone, which they are playing music through at a relatively low volume. Police attended and spoke to all parties at this time. Police attended again at 1700 hours where further protesters from both sides were present – all peaceful, no issues. |

## 3. On Sandyford Place in the area of the Sandyford Clinic, 2-6 Sandyford Pl, Glasgow, G3 7NB

Following a keyword search the following incidents met this criteria described above:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Summary** |
| 11/05/2022 | From  13:55 hours | Five separate reports to police of approx. 20 anti-abortion protesters with banners outside the Sandyford Initiative clinic who were approaching clients using the services and interfering with staff who were unable to carry out their job. Officers spoke to those involved and remained at scene to provide reassurance / prevent criminality. A police warning was issued to two protesters due to megaphone use.  Further anonymous report to police at 16:55 hours regarding the two males who are alleged to be shouting abuse at women about abortion as well as homophobic slurs to males and anti-Semitic comments. Police were at scene but unable to corroborate. |
| 25/05/2022 | 13:17 hours | Multiple reports to police that there are four males outside the clinic with an amplifier and megaphone shouting that the clinic staff are murderers.  Concerns also raised with police about hate speech, the safety of staff, building security and the effect these actions have on females attending due to being victims of sexual assault.  Police attended and found two groups protesting at the locus (two persons in anti-abortion group, six persons in pro-abortion group). Neither group affiliated themselves with any larger social movement. Following concerns about the level of noise the two males (anti-abortion protesters) were reminded to keep their noise levels to an acceptable level and to be respectful.  Follow up enquiries were undertaken with all witnesses / complainants to accurately record linked incidents. |
| 07/06/2022 | 12:20 hours | Police attended after multiple calls to police to complain about the noise levels from two male protesters outside the Sandyford clinic who have a loud speaker and a board which states ‘Abortion is murder’. A number of businesses in the local area are concerned about the effect this is having on their staff and clients. |
| 08/06/2022 | 16:10 hours | Police attended at the Sandyford Initiative following concerns that the two male protesters were alleged to be filming people attending the clinic. Appropriate advice and reassurances given. |
| 24/08/2023 | 10:14 hours | Police made aware of an anti-abortion protest scheduled at 1050 hours, with the BBC to be in attendance to film for a documentary. Police are on site monitoring noise etc.as nearby businesses provide support for vulnerable and / or suicidal individuals – no wider demonstration, just two protesters. |
| 03/03/2023 | 02:33 hours | Report to police regarding an online video posted by two members of the ‘Scottish Family Party’ discussing physically ‘bricking up’ the entrance of the Sandyford Clinic building. |
| 11/03/2023 | 08:08 hours | Officers aware of event taking place this morning. Eight persons thought to be from the Scottish Family Party having their photos taken for social media outside the Sandyford clinic with boxes of ‘brick’ wallpaper, to be followed by speeches. Approx. 100 protesters from ‘CATHS’ attending at locus around 10:35 hours sited at East side of front doors with 20 members of Scottish Family Party attending and taking up position on the West side. No attempt by either side to breach ‘sterile’ area. Drone flown (legally) by journalist reporting event. Area clear of all protesters by 12:18 hours. Approx. 300 people in attendance in total by end of event - no arrests or reports of criminality. |

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.