| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-1189  Responded to: 08 May 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Please provide the following data from 2016 up until the most current date available, broken down by calendar year. If data as early as 2016 is not available, please provide it from the first available date onwards.

Firstly, tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Police Scotland and we are committed to working with our partners to reduce the harm it causes and ultimately eradicate it.

Domestic abuse is a despicable and debilitating crime which affects all of our communities and has no respect for ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Police Scotland will not tolerate it.

Police Scotland will proactively target perpetrators and support victims to prevent domestic abuse from damaging the lives of victims and their families.

Police Scotland defines domestic abuse as:

“Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse may be committed in the home or elsewhere including online”

Please note that the definition of Domestic abuse in Scotland differs from the definition of Domestic Violence in England and Wales which includes wider familial abuse e.g. from parents or children etc.

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), known as ‘Clare’s Law’ was introduced in England and Wales in March 2014. The DVDS was not introduced in Scotland.

On 1 October 2015, Police Scotland introduced the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS).

DSDAS aims to prevent domestic abuse by empowering people with the **Right to Ask** **(RTA)** about the background of their partner, or someone who is in a relationship with someone they know, when there is a concern that the individual may be abusive.

The scheme enables potential victims to make an informed choice on whether to continue their relationship and provides further help and support to assist the potential victim when making that choice.

DSDAS also provides the **Power to Tell (PTT)** where Police Scotland receives information or intelligence that domestic abuse may impact upon the safety of a victim or potential victim.

The DSDAS database is a dynamic database which is constantly being updated and changed. Every application received by Police Scotland is assessed to confirm that it meets the criteria for disclosure.

Once an application has been submitted further information may come to light meaning that the application is no longer appropriate, for example if the applicant is no longer in a relationship with that person.

In this instance the application will not be progressed further.

Additionally, in such circumstances where there is no information to disclose, the application will not progress to a disclosure. In this instance the applicant will be informed.

Each potential disclosure is subject to multi-agency discussion, with at least two partner agencies. There, those applications that are agreed to be lawful, necessary and proportionate proceed to disclosure.

More information about the scheme and its processes can be found on the Police Scotland website here - [Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/advice-and-information/domestic-abuse/disclosure-scheme-for-domestic-abuse-scotland/).

## Please provide annual totals of: All applications under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

As above, Police Scotland have DSDAS and not DVDS.

The table below details DSDAS applications made since 2016.

**Table 1.**

| **Calendar Year** | **No. Of Applications** |
| --- | --- |
| 2016 | 956 |
| 2017 | 1157 |
| 2018 | 1494 |
| 2019 | 2401 |
| 2020 | 3286 |
| 2021 | 3862 |
| 2022 | 4293 |
| 2023 | 5303 |
| 2024 | 6883 |
| 2025 (up to 28th April) | 2601 |

All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.   
Data was extracted from Police Scotland systems and is correct as of 29 April 2025.   
It should be noted that applications submitted in March 2025 will still be progressing and the figures for this year may be subject to change.

## “Right to know” applications under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme The number of disclosures made after a “right to know” application “Right to ask” applications under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme The number of disclosures made after a right to ask application

As highlighted above, Police Scotland do not have DVDS and the terminology of “Right to Know” and “Right to Ask” does not apply to DSDAS.

To assist however, we have responded based on Police Scotland’s DSDAS **RTA** and **PTT**.

With regards to providing this information prior to April 2019 I can advise the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

To explain, in line with our Record Retention Standard Operating Procedure, details of DSDAS applications (i.e. differentiating between RTA and PTT) are retained for 6 years and thereafter destroyed. As such, Police Scotland can only provide you with the data you are requesting for the previous 6 years.

**Table 2.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **RTA Applications** | **RTA Disclosures** | **No. of PTT Applications** | **No. of PTT Disclosures** |
| 2019 (from 22 April) | 514 | 160 | 1307 | 815 |
| 2020 | 891 | 301 | 2395 | 1697 |
| 2021 | 1114 | 386 | 2748 | 1919 |
| 2022 | 1314 | 445 | 2979 | 2095 |
| 2023 | 1627 | 578 | 3676 | 2469 |
| 2024 | 2414 | 818 | 4469 | 3084 |
| 2025 (to 22 April) | 1042 | 238 | 1437 | 739 |

All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.   
Data was extracted from Police Scotland systems and are correct as of 23 April 2025.   
It should be noted that applications submitted in March 2025 will still be progressing and the figures for this year may be subject to change.

## The number of disclosures made within 28 days of a “Right to ask” application The number of disclosures made after 28 days of a “Right to ask” application The longest time it took for a “right to ask” disclosure to be provided

Again, with regards to providing this information prior to 2020 I can advise the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

Regarding questions 6, 7 and 8, again this refers to the DVDS (Claire’s Law) in England and Wales.

DSDAS holds different criteria to Claire’s Law which stipulates that a disclosure be made within 28 working days. DSDAS is a ‘time bound’ staged process which should take no longer than **45 days**. To be of some assistance Table 3 below provides the average number of days per calendar year in which a disclosure was made.

**Table 3.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Calendar Year** | **Average no. of days to disclosure** |
| 2020 | 32 |
| 2021 | 21 |
| 2022 | 20 |
| 2023 | 17 |
| 2024 | 15 |
| 2025 (up until 28th April 2025) | 10 |

All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.   
Data was extracted from Police Scotland systems and are correct as of 29 April 2025.

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](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@foi.scot) 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.