| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 25-2061Responded to: 04 August 2025 |
| --- | --- |

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

**How much has the force paid to police informants in the following financial years: 2014/2015 - 2024/2025**

In response to your request, I would first of all advise you that Police Scotland have opted to publish Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) payment data in calendar year format.

To be of assistance, the table below details such payments:

| **Year** | **£ paid** |
| --- | --- |
| 2014 | 136,703.89 |
| 2015 | 230,890.27 |
| 2016 | 285,486.66 |
| 2017 | 272,698.83 |
| 2018 | 284,155.35 |
| 2019 | 277,027.30 |
| 2020 | 264,607.24 |
| 2021 | 305,588.72 |
| 2022 | 288,850.80 |
| 2023 | 321,419.41 |
| 2024 | 332,189.84 |

Financial year information 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 following exemptions apply:

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

Provision of data relating to different or shorter time periods than a calendar year will highlight patterns and spikes within the data, presenting an increased risk to those operating as CHIS and potentially compromising CHIS operations.

Disclosure would make it easier for organised crime groups seeking to identify any CHIS who may be reporting within their crime group. This increases the risk to individuals, whether there are CHIS reporting on that group or not.

Further, where significant arrests and recoveries have been made from a CHIS-led operation, it is conceivable that Organised Crime Groups could effectively ascertain that it was CHIS information that led to the police action, due to any significant spike in CHIS payments.

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.

The primary objectives of such measures are to preserve the lives of all assessed as immediately involved and ensure public safety.

The exemptions outlined above are subject to a public interest test.

It is acknowledged that matters relating to the use of CHIS are of public interest and disclosure would contribute to the public debate surrounding the issue.

However, the integrity of any protective measures is significantly undermined if we confirm the level of use of CHIS, substantially prejudicing our law enforcement capabilities and responsibility to keep people safe from harm.

Although public awareness may favour a financial year disclosure, we must not inadvertently provide potentially harmful information and place 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.

In conclusion, it simply cannot be in the public interest for Police Scotland or any police force to confirm this level of detail.

**How many CHIS (Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Handlers did you have on staff in the following financial years: 2014/2015 - 2024/2025**

**What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for CHIS Handlers in the force in the following financial years: 2014/2015 - 2024/2025**

**How many surveillance officers did you have on staff in the following financial years: 2014/2015 - 2024/2025**

**What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for surveillance officers in the force in the following financial years: 2014/2015 - 2024/2025**

**How many digital and cyber surveillance staff (for example, but not limited to: cybercrime specialists, digital media investigators) did you have on staff in the following financial years: 2014/2015 - 2024/2025**

**What were the staffing costs (total salary costs) for digital and cyber surveillance staff (for example, but not limited to: cybercrime specialists, digital media investigators) in the force in the following financial years: 2014/2015 - 2024/2025**

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, your request covers an extended time period and first and foremost, we have no means by which all roles of relevance could be easily identified in terms of their role title and relevant department at the time.

Even if such information could be collated, it would then be necessary to identify all relevant staff and cross refer data with Police Scotland’s personnel system SCOPE to carry out further analysis of their length of service and salary at the relevant time.

To provide an accurate answer to your request would clearly far exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

Notwithstanding the above, even were it possible to gather such information as per the terms of your request, it is highly likely that such information would attract exemption from disclosure, on the basis that it would provide a clear insight into the tactical capabilities of Police Scotland in these specialist areas of policing.

**What was the total annual expenditure on technical surveillance equipment (including but not limited to: listening devices, trackers, static or mobile CCTV units, night vision or thermal cameras, drones) for the following financial years: 2014/2015 - 2024/2025**

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, Police Scotland do not capture the cost of such equipment in a way we are easily able to pull this information out of our Finance Ledger. The only way to establish this, would be to individually examine all relevant invoices for the time period of your request. As such, this is an exercise which would exceed the cost limit set out in the Fees Regulations.

**What was the total annual budget of the force for the following financial years: 2014/2015 - 2024/2025**

The table below provides the total budget for financial years 2014/2015 – 2024/2025.

| **Year** | **Budget**  |
| --- | --- |
| 2014-2015 | 1,100,000,000 |
| 2015-2016 | 1,083,400,000 |
| 2016-2017 | 1,074,800,000 |
| 2017-2018 | 1,092,400,000 |
| 2018-2019 | 1,169,000,000 |
| 2019-2020 | 1,205,800,000 |
| 2020-2021 | 1,267,000,000 |
| 2021-2022 | 1,354,300,000 |
| 2022-2023 | 1,378,900,000 |
| 2023-2024 | 1,426,300,000 |
| 2024-2025 | 1,493,600,000 |

Figures include non-core costs for events such as COP26, Brexit, Operation Unicorn – bereavement of her majesty Queen Elizabeth, impact of COVID, visit of POTUS and other initiatives/ projects supported by Scottish Government.

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 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 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.