| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-1705  Responded to: 17 June 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Can you provide information on the number of Threats to Life received / assessed by Police Scotland upon receipt of information or intelligence which resulted in an assessment being made against your service policy dealing with threats to life and once completed how many were identified during each of the five years from 2020 onwards inc, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

The police have an obligation to take all reasonable steps to protect the lives of persons where information comes to the notice of Police, that there is a specific ‘Threat to Life’ (TTL), risk to personal safety or indication of the commission of a serious crime to an individual. Such incidents are dealt with by the serving of notices deemed appropriate, for example;

Threat to Life Warning Notice – Would be considered for issue to an identified “victim” where it is assessed there is a specific ‘real and immediate’ threat to their safety.

Threat to Life Disruption Notice – A notice is served to an identified individual where it has been assessed there is a ‘real and immediate’ suggestion that the individual is going to be involved in the commission of a serious crime.

Personal Safety Advice Warning Notice – Would be considered where it is assessed there is credible intelligence that a person may be at risk of personal injury.

Crime Disruption Notice – Would be considered for issue to potential perpetrators where there is credible intelligence that persons may be involved in a criminal act.

In response to your request, it is important to ensure that the terminology ‘Osman Warnings’ is interpreted accurately i.e. as a Threat to Life (TTL) warning notice when intelligence exists that there is a viable threat to life.

For absolute clarity on this matter, TTL Warning Notices and Personal Safety Advice Warning Notices are only issued to potential victims who have been fully identified.

In response to your request the tables below detail numbers of Threat to Life Warning notices issued for the period 1 January 2020 to 31st December 2024.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Threat to Life Warnings |
| 2020 | 18 |
| 2021 | 20 |
| 2022 | 6 |
| 2023 | 5 |
| 2024 | 26 |

In relation to providing figures for 2025, I am refusing to confirm or deny whether the information sought exists or is held by Police Scotland in terms of section 18 of the Act.

Section 18 applies where the following two conditions are met: -

It would be contrary to the public interest to reveal whether the information is held

- If the information was held, it would be exempt from disclosure in terms of one or more of the exemptions set out in sections 28 to 35, 38, 39(1) or 41 of the Act.

In accordance with the conditions above, Police Scotland can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you have requested.

Firstly, sections 38(1)(b) and 38(1)(2A) of the Act may apply insofar as you have requested third party personal data which is exempt from disclosure where it is assessed that disclosure would contravene the data protection principles as defined in the Act.

The following exemptions are also considered relevant:

Section 35(1)(a)&(b) - Law Enforcement

Section 39(1) - Health and Safety

Section 34 – Investigations

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 makes it a legal requirement that an authority has to not only provide information (unless it is exempt), but to also confirm whether or not that information is held, unless to do so would be contrary to the public interest and the information, if it was held, would be exempt from disclosure. The primary objectives of such measures are to preserve the lives of all assessed as immediately involved and ensure public safety. It is acknowledged that matters relating to the use of Threat to Life Disruption Notices are of public interest and such awareness may favour confirming or otherwise the existence of further information of relevance, as it would contribute to the public debate surrounding the issue. However I would argue that the integrity of any protective measures would be significantly undermined if we were to confirm the extent of information held, through FOI or otherwise, and any such disclosure would substantially prejudice the ability of Police Scotland with regards the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Section 2(1) & (2) of the Act provide that information can only be considered exempt in terms of the exemptions set out above to the extent that the public interest in disclosing the information is not outweighed by that in maintaining the exemption.

The key test when considering where the balance of public interest lies is to establish whether, in all the circumstances of the request, the public interest in confirming or denying the information is held is not outweighed by maintaining the exemption(s). 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.

Accordingly, due to the sensitive nature and provenance of the intelligence, Police Scotland is unable to provide specific data in relation to the number of Threat to life notices.

This explanation should not be taken as indicative or conclusive evidence that the information you have requested exists or does not exist.

## Can you also provide a statistical breakdown on the classification for each of these 5 years, were assessed as LOW, MEDIUM or HIGH classification.

Police Scotland do not categorise Threat to Life Warning notices by High/Medium/Low as such the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

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.