| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 23-1156Responded to: 16th May 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## The total number of arrests made for the illegal distribution and/or possession of prescription painkillers in your police force area between January 1, 2019, to present.

## The number of those arrested who were healthcare professionals or had a professional qualification related to the medical field between January 1, 2019, to present.

## The outcome of each arrest, including whether the case was referred for prosecution, and if so, the outcome of any legal proceedings between January 1, 2019, to present.

In 2018, the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 removed the separate concepts of arrest and detention and replaced them with a power of arrest without warrant - where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting a person has committed, or is committing, an offence.

When a person is arrested, a statement of arrest should be read over as soon as reasonably practical and details recorded in the arresting officer’s notebook.

A person is ‘Not Officially Accused’ (a suspect) when arrested *and* *not* cautioned and charged. They are ‘Officially Accused’ once arrested *and* cautioned and charged.

If conveyed to a police station, the arrested person (of either classification) will have their details recorded in the Police Scotland National Custody System.

The Act however also provides for certain situations whereby a person must be released from police custody prior to their arrival at a police station - effectively allowing the police to ‘de-arrest’ that person where the reasonable grounds for suspicion no longer exist.

In those circumstances, the details of an arrested person are not held electronically.

As a result, we are unfortunately unable to collate comprehensivearrest data as case by case assessment of all officer notebooks would be required - in addition to the partialarrest data held in the National Custody System**.**

As you may be aware the current cost threshold is £600 and I estimate that it would cost well in excess of this amount to process your request. As such, and in terms of Section 16(4) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where Section 12(1) of the Act (Excessive Cost of Compliance) has been applied, this represents a refusal notice for the information sought.

For the reasons outlined above, Police Scotland instead, typically produce data based on recorded and detected crimes, broken down by Scottish Government Justice Department (SGJD) classification and statistics are publicly available via the following link:

[How we are performing - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/what-we-do/how-we-are-performing/)

Please note that drug offences are not sub-categorised by drug type and the crime recording systems used by Police Scotland have no facility which allows for a search to be carried out by drug type.

As such, case by case assessment of all relevant drug offences would have to be carried out to determine what drug was involved and therefore, Section 12(1) of the Act would still apply if we were to consider your request in terms of detected crimes.

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](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/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.