| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-0999  Responded to: 1st May 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## To request the number of ANPR cameras in Scotland in each of the last three years and the current locations of such cameras by general postcode area (ie. the first part of the post code eg. G/EH/KA).

In response to this part of your request, the table below provides the number of ANPR cameras in Scotland in each of the last three financial years.

| **Year** | **No. of Cameras** |
| --- | --- |
| 2020/21 | 190 |
| 2021/22 | 230 |
| 2022/23 | 233 |

The information requested by you concerning the breakdown of cameras into general postcode area is considered to be exempt in terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (the Act). Section 16 of the Act requires Police Service of Scotland to provide you with a notice which:

(a) states that it holds the information,

(b) states that it is claiming an exemption,

(c) specifies the exemption in question and

(d) states, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies.

Where information is considered to be exempt, this letter serves as a Refusal Notice that information is held and an explanation of the appropriate exemption is provided.

**Section 31 (1) - National Security and Defence**

**Section 35 (1) a) & b) - Law enforcement**

The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection and the only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with what is placed into the public domain.

Police Scotland is committed to demonstrating proportionality and accountability. However, if the Service were to disclose that information, police tactics will either be compromised or significantly weakened. The impact could undermine national security, on-going investigations and potentially any future investigations, as it would enable targeted individuals/groups to become surveillance aware. This would assist those individuals and groups to avoid detection, and inhibit the prevention and detection of crime.

Disclosure of the information could confirm to those involved in criminality or terrorism that they are or have been the subject of such activity, allowing them to gauge the frequency of and capability of ANPR use and to take measures to circumvent its use. Any compromise of, or reduction in technical capability would substantially prejudice the ability of the Service to police its areas, which would lead to a greater risk to the public. This detrimental effect is further increased if the request is made to several national law enforcement bodies. In addition to the local criminal fraternity being better informed, those intent on organised crime throughout the UK will be able to ‘map’ where the use of certain tactics are deployed across the country.

It should also be recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The UK faces a serious and sustained threat from violent extremists and this threat is greater in scale and ambition than any of the terrorist threats in the past. Any disclosure under FOISA is a disclosure to the world at large and therefore any information identifying the focus of policing activity could be used to the advantage of terrorists or criminal organisations.

Information that undermines the operational integrity of our capabilities will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on both national security and law enforcement. This would limit operational capabilities as criminals/terrorists would gain a greater understanding of the Services methods and techniques, enabling them to take steps to counter them and provide an indication to any individual who may be undertaking criminal/terrorist activities that Police Scotland may be aware of their presence and taking counter terrorist measures.

**Public Interest Test**

The security of the country is of paramount importance and Police Scotland will not divulge any information which could undermine National Security or compromise Law Enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and capability, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of law enforcement generally. As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity, is appropriate and balanced in matters of national security, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances.

In this case there is also no requirement to satisfy any public interest over the capability of ANPR and the tactics we employ or the tolerances of this system.

Security measures are put in place to protect the community that we serve. To reveal the information requested would provide individuals intent on carrying out criminal behaviour, details of policing activity. This would ultimately increase the risk of harm to the general public and significantly undermine any ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the United Kingdom and increase the risk of harm to the public.

Consequently on balance, it is my view that the public interest lies in favour of non-disclosure.

## Also, to request the number of read records currently held and the number of read records retained by Police Scotland in each of the last three years.

As of the 20th April 2023, 442,416,657 reads are held.

Reads retained for the past three years are provided in the table below. Please note that anything under a year from the current date cannot be factored as it is still to be classed as retained, and so the 2022 year is provided up to 19/04/2022.

| **Year** | **Reads** |
| --- | --- |
| 2020 | 564 |
| 2021 | 440 |
| 2022\* | 289 |

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.