

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0832
Date: 25th April 2022



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002

I refer to your recent request for information which has been handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

For ease of reference, your request is replicated below together with the response.

1. How many school-based police officers (including Safer Schools Officers or personnel bearing other titles that may cover police staff who spend some of their time on a school site) are there currently in your police force?

If possible, please can this be broken down by:

(i) The name of the school

(ii) The number of officers based at the school currently

I can advise you that Police Scotland does not hold the information in the requested format. In terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

By way of explanation, although a school may not have a designated Safer Schools Officer or school-based officer it will have a designated Schools Liaison Officer. These can be full-time or part-time posts, where officers spend a proportion of their time working in schools and other education settings but also perform other policing functions. The nature of policing means that officers and staff are deployed to wherever their services are most required.

By way of assistance, please see the table below which provides the total number of our Constable Campus and School/Youth engagement officers within each division as of December 2021. The actual total of officers who work within schools may be higher.

Division	December 2021
A Division	3
C Division	15
E Division	12
J Division	9
G Division	6
Q Division	12
U Division	25
V Division	9
Total	91

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2. Are there plans to introduce or add more in the 2022/2023 academic year, if so, how many?

In regards to plans to introduce or add officers in the 2022/2023 academic year, the overall answer is as per the above answer still an exemption under Section 17.

To be of some assistance however, I can confirm that at present the provision of officers to schools is determined on a divisional basis by the local command team. We are aware of some divisions increasing or adding provision as local authorities look to part fund officers where they had previously withdrawn this funding. Some are decreasing officers based specifically within schools and focusing them on broader community safety with schools being a part of the role rather than their main role.

3. Has there been any consultation with any of the listed school-stakeholders (below) in decisions to introduce or add school-based police officers (including Safer Schools Officers or personnel bearing other titles that may cover police staff who spend some of their time on a school site) to any of the schools:

- **School governors**
- **Parents and carers of school children**
- **School children**
- **Local community groups**

If yes, please can you provide details of the consultation and any minutes/reports that were compiled.

In relation to any consultation with any of those listed, it is likely that any information held would be in emails, correspondence, minutes etc. If I start off by just looking at the emails I regret to inform you that I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested, as it would prove too costly to do so within the context of the fee regulations.

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.

By way of explanation, we have previously attempted to conduct similar keyword searches to the one that would be required to search for emails. In this case we would have to search for those containing the phrases "school based officers" or "safer schools officers" amongst others.

Despite extensive efforts to retrieve emails by keyword in similar requests it has become clear that whilst we do have the facility to conduct a keyword search but we do not have the facility to limit this to a particular date range.

This means that any mention of "school based officers" or "safer school officers" on any date will be returned. These are returned as individual full mailbox archive files for each mailbox that contains this keyword.

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Once these archives are retrieved, a manual process is required to confirm which emails within each file contain the keyword required, which date it was sent or received on and finally if it was between Police Scotland and the any of the organisations you have listed. This is further complicated by the fact that we will simply know there is at least one email within the mailbox archive that contains the keyword. There could be 1 or 100 and so each email would need to be manually checked.

During previous similar keyword requests we have conducted a rough estimate using one of our divisions (A Division) which accounts for a bit over 1,300 mailboxes. It is estimated that 100-200 of these may contain the keywords requested. If this is extrapolated across our other divisions this would give us a rough estimate of 2,400 to 3,600 mailbox files to review but it is expected this number may be higher due to the relative size of some of our divisions.

At an average estimate of 30 minutes to check each mailbox file concerned, this equates to around 1,200 to 1,800 hours of work to complete.

This is before we consider a review of all files/notes/minutes etc held by Police Scotland which would again require a degree of manual searching. It is likely a full check of all documents held by the force would add thousands of additional hours to the time it would take to comply with the request.

Police Scotland have assessed that the £600 cost limit within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and that your request would breach the cost threshold.

In order to be of assistance, you may wish to consider reducing the scope of your request to a group of mailboxes or staff which may allow it to be progressed.

Should you require any further assistance please contact Information Management quoting the reference number given.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which Police Scotland has dealt with your request, you are entitled, in the first instance, to request a review of our actions and decisions.

Your request must specify the matter which gives rise to your dissatisfaction and it must be submitted within 40 working days of receiving this response - either by email to foi@scotland.pnn.police.uk or by post to Information Management (Disclosure), Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH.

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of that review, you are thereafter entitled to apply to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months for a decision. You can apply [online](#), by email to enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info or by post to Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner's decision, there is an appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

As part of our commitment to demonstrate openness and transparency in respect of the information we hold, an anonymised version of this response will be posted to the Police Scotland Freedom of Information [Disclosure Log](#) in seven days' time.