

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0039
Date: 28th February 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.

Please accept our apologies for the delay in providing a response.

Police Scotland continues to investigate reports of 'spiking' which, whether by adding drugs or alcohol to someone's drink, or by injection, without their consent, is a criminal offence and can put people at significant risk of harm.

Officers are not always able to determine the reasons why a perpetrator carries out an assault in this way, but every report is taken seriously and investigated robustly.

Police Scotland continues to work with a range of partners, locally and nationally to ensure pubs and clubs are safe spaces for all.

We are working in communities, with licensees, pubs and clubs, to provide advice and support and to offer bystander training to help spot the signs of when someone may be at risk.

We have also reached out to student communities to offer advice, support and reassurance.

We would encourage anyone who believes they have had their drink spiked or been assaulted in this way to contact Police Scotland on 101 or, in an emergency 999.

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

Nationally, there was an increase in media reports of 'spiking' via injections/needles over the latter part of 2021. I am interested in any needle stick incidents that are linked to an allegation of 'spiking'.

I am also interviewing victims of suspected spiking by injection as part of a research study, which has been given ethical approval by the Durham University Department of Sociology ethics committee.

I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled to under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I would like to request the following information:

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1. How many incidents have you had reported to you about a suspected spiking by injection per month for the following years and months?
September October November December
2017 2018 2019 2020 2021
2. Please complete as much of this table as you can, for those incidents reported to you between 1 September - 31 December 2001 (inclusive).

Victim sex

Suspect sex

Victim known to suspect?

Location of incident (street, nightclub, private residence etc)

Were any other allegations made alongside the needle spiking? (e.g. rape, sexual assault, robbery)? Please list

Which drugs have been identified as being injected? (please mark as C for confirmed or S for suspected)

Location of needle stick wound on victim's body (upper back, leg, arm etc.)

Has suspect been identified?

a) No suspect has been identified

b) Suspect has been identified but investigation has been closed with no CJS outcome

c) Suspect is under investigation but has not yet been charged

d) Suspect has been charged

e) Suspect has received a different CJS outcome (e.g. caution, community resolution) – please list

For those suspects charged, please list the offences they were charged with

For those suspects charged, please list any known outcomes

In response to your request, I must first of all clarify that crimes in Scotland are recorded in accordance with the Scottish Government Justice Department offence classifications, and there is no classification for 'spiking' specifically.

To be of assistance, I have progressed your request in terms of the two most *potentially relevant* crime classifications as follows:

Drugging - Is a Crime at Common Law, when drugs are feloniously administered with intent to produce stupefaction. There need be no further intent, and it is not necessary that injury to the person be caused.

Administering a substance for sexual purposes - Section 11 of the Sexual Offences Scotland Act 2009 refers (for further details please see www.legislation.gov.uk)

For the period between 1 September and 31 December 2021 there were 358 recorded crimes in terms of these classifications, 2 of which are detected.

The recorded crimes can be broken down as follows:

Recorded Crime Data	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Administering a substance for sexual Purposes	2	3	2	1
Drugging	8	121	153	68

Data is management information only and is correct as at 27 January 2022

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For the period between 1 September and 31 December for the years prior there were a total of 55 recorded crimes in terms of these classifications, 17 of which are detected.

The recorded crimes can be broken down as follows:

Recorded Crime Data	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2017				
Administering a substance for sexual Purposes	0	0	1	1
Drugging	4	3	1	3
2018				
Administering a substance for sexual Purposes	0	1	1	2
Drugging	2	3	2	1
2019				
Administering a substance for sexual Purposes	5	0	0	4
Drugging	2	0	0	3
2020				
Administering a substance for sexual Purposes	5	2	3	0
Drugging	2	2	1	1

Data is management information only and is correct as at 5 November 2021

Unfortunately, I am unable to provide you with a further breakdown of this data in terms of whether or not a needle was alleged to have been used as it would be necessary to individually assess each crime report for relevance in the first instance and then note the additional details for any relevant crime reports.

It is estimated that it would take in the region of 5 minutes per crime report to conduct such an exercise and, as such, it would far exceed the cost limit set out in the Fees Regulations which, as you may be aware is £600.

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.

It should also be recognised that even were it possible to conduct the assessment within cost, many of these crimes are incredibly recent and there will be continual updates to the crime report as investigations progress.

It may not always be possible so soon after reporting to determine the method used and furthermore, any initial assessment may change as investigations progress.

Should you require any further assistance please contact Information Management - Dundee on foidundee@scotland.pnn.police.uk 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

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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.

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