| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-0821  Responded to: 28th April 2023 |
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Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Police Scotland and we are committed to working with our partners to reduce the harm it causes and ultimately eradicate it.

Domestic abuse is a despicable and debilitating crime which affects all of our communities and has no respect for ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Police Scotland will not tolerate it.

Police Scotland will proactively target perpetrators and support victims to prevent domestic abuse from damaging the lives of victims and their families.

Police Scotland defines domestic abuse as:

“Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse may be committed in the home or elsewhere including online”

This definition is included in the Joint Protocol between Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), “In partnership challenging domestic abuse” which is a public document that can be found at the Police Scotland website on [Police Scotland (scotland.police.uk)](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/ymzlwhwj/joint-protocol-between-police-scotland-and-copfs-in-partnership-challenging-domestic-abuse.pdf?view=Standard) or on the COPFS website on [Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (copfs.gov.uk)](https://www.copfs.gov.uk/)

Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**How many cases were there of suspected domestic abuse, in which a case was investigated with or without the cooperation of the victim(s), each year for the past ten years?**

**How many cases of suspected domestic abuse were sent to COPFS for possible charges, each year for the past ten years?**

In regards to these two questions, please find details of recorded and detected crimes of domestic abuse in the table below. I would ask that you note the caveats provided below the table.

## Recorded/Detected Domestic Crimes Period: 1st January 2014 to 31st March 2023

| **Year** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023\*** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Recorded | 28578 | 36767 | 34691 | 37016 | 35624 | 39891 | 41328 | 40800 | 39103 | 8815 |
| Detected | 22948 | 29974 | 26259 | 26452 | 24289 | 26634 | 28584 | 27619 | 25792 | 5443 |

All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information. \*All data have been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as at 11/04/2023.

The interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD) is the formal means by which Police Scotland record police contact with adults, children and young people who are, or are perceived to be, experiencing some form of adversity and / or situational vulnerability, which may impact on their current or future wellbeing; or where force policy dictates. E.g. Domestic abuse, hate crime, youth offending or to record details of victims’ rights under Section 8 and 9 of the [Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/1/contents/enacted).

Contact is recorded as a Concern Report on the iVPD and Police Scotland record a concern report in relation to all incidents of domestic abuse.  The domestic abuse statistics are obtained from the iVPD.

Where criminality is identified, crimes are then linked to the relevant concern report.  Within the iVPD database, although a victim is only counted once for each concern report that they are recorded in, they may be linked to more than one crime within that iVPD concern report.

The iVPD is a dynamic database which is constantly being updated and changed.

The data was extracted using the crime's raised date.

Police Scotland does not retain any information for statistical purposes once a record has been weeded from iVPD.  When a record is weeded, it is removed from the system, and there is no retention of data outside the weeding and retention policy.  Please note, the weeding and retention policy states that if a person is recorded as "no concern / not applicable" then this will only be retained for 6 months.

Please note that these data are collated from the Police Scotland iVPD system, which has an automated weeding and retention policy built on to it. A copy of the retention policy is available on the Police Scotland internet site ([Records Retention - Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/nhobty5i/record-retention-sop.pdf)).

**How many victims were involved in the cases outlined in the previous question, each year for the past ten years?**

**In how many cases of suspected domestic abuse did the victim(s) withdraw cooperation before the case progressed to the point where charges were made, each year for the past ten years?**

**In how many cases were police investigations unable to proceed because the victim(s) withdrew cooperation, each year for the past ten years?**

**How many victims were involved in cases of suspected domestic abuse sent to COPFS for possible charges, each year for the past ten years?**

In regards to your other 4 questions 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, there is no way in with we can automatically retrieve the information you have requested and so a manual review of each relevant crime would be required. As you can see from the figures in question 1, Police Scotland recorded over 20,000 such crimes each year and so this manual review would take a large amount of time to do.

In this case if we look at recorded crimes, 342,613 crimes would need to be manually checked. At a conservative estimate of 5 minutes per record, this equates to over 28,551 hours of work to provide the information requested.

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

Whilst I would normally suggest a reduced timescale is considered, in this case even a single year would vastly exceed the cost threshold under the Act and as such I do not believe there is a way to complete your request within cost, even if refined.

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.