| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-1885  Responded to: 28 July 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Have you trialled or implemented any generative AI tools?

## What was your total spend on AI or automation technologies in the financial year 2023/24?

## Do you plan to increase your budget for AI and digital citizen engagement tools in the financial year 2025/26?

Having considered these questions in terms of the Act, I am refusing to confirm or deny whether the information sought exists or is held by Police Scotland in terms of section 18.

Section 18 applies where the following two conditions are met:

* It would be contrary to the public interest to reveal whether the information is held.

Whilst we accept that the use of AI is a matter of significant public interest and debate, the overwhelming public interest lies in protecting the integrity of any operational tactics and solutions utilised in policing.

* If the information was held, it would be exempt from disclosure in terms of at least one exemption set out in the Act. In this instance, the following exemptions apply:

Section 35(1)(a)&(b) – Law enforcement

Disclosure would prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders by allowing criminals to assess the capability of Police Scotland. Disclosure would better inform criminals regarding our Artificial intelligence capabilities and as such would assist them in the planning of criminal activities.

Section 39(1) - Health, Safety and the Environment

Any negative impact on the ability of Police Scotland to enforce the law has a parallel impact on the safety of police officers and the wider public.

These are non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.

Public Interest Test

I would suggest that public accountability may favour disclosure, given that the information concerns the use of resources by the Service. Likewise, disclosure of the information would also inform the public debate on the issue of policing and contribute to the accuracy of that debate.

However, any disclosure under FOI legislation is a disclosure to the world at large and any information identifying the focus of policing activity could be used to the advantage of criminals.

Consequently, in terms of the applicability of the exemptions listed above, the need to ensure the effective conduct of the service in relation to prevention and detection of crime and the public safety considerations involved in the delivery of operational policing clearly favour non-disclosure of the information requested.

Accordingly, I would argue that the need to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of the service favours non-disclosure of the information requested.

## Does Police Scotland currently use artificial intelligence (AI) in any public-facing capacity? (e.g. chatbots, virtual agents, digital assistants, facial recognition)

Police Scotland uses AI (Chatbot) to enhance efficiency and ensure equity in recruitment to assist candidates who wish to apply. AI-powered chatbots are used to assist with initial recruitment enquiries.

Have you measured any cost savings or improvements in citizen satisfaction as a result of AI or digital tools? If so, please share any available data.

Police Scotland have not measured any cost savings or improvements in citizen satisfaction as a result of AI or digital tools. As such the information regarding available data is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies

## How are you measuring the public perception of Police Scotland using AI? If you are, have the results been positive?

Through our programme of academic and social research, we conducted a series of focus groups with members of the public about police use of emerging technology in December 2021.

This was early research to understand more about the complexities and public understanding to help shape our approaches.

We learned that the public generally did not understand AI in detail. Some could see clear benefits in a policing context i.e. faster ‘number crunching’ freeing up officer time to resume frontline policing, others were less supportive due to anxiety about what it could be used for and whether it would be used to make decisions rather than humans.

This research on AI was in the context of a wider piece which explored emerging areas of technology with the public to understand, if Police Scotland were to move to adopt new technology in the future, how we work with the public to do this in a way which maintains trust and confidence in policing.

The research informed the work of the [Independent advisory group on emerging technologies in policing.](https://www.gov.scot/groups/independent-advisory-group-on-emerging-technologies-in-policing/#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20IAG%20is%20to%20ensure,group%20published%20their%20final%20report%20in%20February%202023.)

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.