| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0422  Responded to: 08 April 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Please provide the following information, from 2015 to the present day. Please provide monthly data on:

## The number of domestic abuse cases that were referred to domestic abuse support services. Please provide this as both a raw number and percentage of cases.

## Which support service the cases were referred to.

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”

Please note that the definition of Domestic abuse in Scotland differs from the definition of Domestic Violence in England and Wales which includes wider familial abuse e.g. from parents or children etc.

The information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies. To explain, Police Scotland’s interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD) records information about individuals 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. The database also records incidents where there has been a response required in respect of adult or child protection and domestic abuse. iVPD is the national database in which information is recorded, assessed, and shared with relevant statutory agencies and / or third sector organisations and advocacy services, where appropriate. 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. In order to provide you with the information you are requesting, we would need to review each individual domestic abuse incident to establish if any sharing took place with a domestic abuse support service therefore, unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

## The instructions given to officers regarding how to make referrals to domestic abuse support services.

## Please include any materials such as flyers or digital materials provided to officers as guidance on referrals.

## If you are able, please provide information on how officers access guidance and instructions on making referrals, for example whether it is provided during training or officers need to seek it out themselves.

For the information you are looking for unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance. To explain, there are hundreds of documents which would need to be manually assessed for exempt information.

Each local division within Police Scotland have a Concern Hub. The core function of the Concern Hub is to provide a holistic assessment of protection and wellbeing concerns, through accurate and proportionate research and decision-making by trained staff and the timeous sharing of relevant information to partners. The Concern Hub has a primary role in identifying and sharing information about children and adults who may have protection or wellbeing needs that requires intervention or support from statutory partners. The process does not change existing child and adult protection arrangements and is, in fact, designed to complement them, particularly in relation to repeat and escalating wellbeing concerns. Concern Hub staff consider the complexity of each Concern Report on its own merit and apply professional curiosity. As such, Hubs always consider the individual risk to and needs of each subject of concern recorded on a Concern Report, especially where multiple individuals with different types and levels of vulnerability are recorded on the same report. This equally applies to the sharing of Concern Reports and the potential for different partner agencies, both statutory and non-statutory, to support an individual with multiple needs.

Police Scotland moved to a ‘Public Task’ approach to the sharing of iVPD data with appropriate non-statutory support and advocacy service partners in June 2020. Prior to this, officers were required to ask for consent from individuals where there is a third sector organisation or advocacy service in their area that can support that individual. However, officers are still required to advise individuals on how we process their data and seek views regarding their information being shared. Officers are issued with aide memoirs detailing the requirement to inform members of the public that their personal information will be recorded and assessed on police systems as well as being able to access guidance and bespoke briefings through the intranet.

There are dedicated intranet pages for domestic abuse that all police officers have access to which provides information about the domestic abuse support services available throughout the country. In addition, police officers can and do carry literature which can include leaflets and cards for support services that they pass to individuals. Many officers have local knowledge of relevant services within their divisional areas which they verbally inform individuals about. In addition, there are posters displayed throughout all police offices to remind officers about support services. Partner agencies and domestic abuse support services as part of our national training curriculum provide input to our officers.

To be of assistance, you may find pages 4 to 8 of our Domestic Abuse Investigation Standing Operating procedure useful as it explains who should be making appropriate referrals:

[Standard Operating Procedure (scotland.police.uk)](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/fuaflohy/domestic-abuse-investigation-sop.pdf)

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.