

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0600
Date: 24th 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.

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

I am looking for copies of all correspondence with 1) Scottish local authorities and 2) the Home Office and 3) the Scottish Government in relation to the arrival of asylum seekers to Scotland, both through the Afghan Resettlement Scheme and other Home Office arrangements from August 2021 until present.

Please include copies of meeting minutes, emails, whatsapp messages, reports, presentations, risk assessments and other documentation. I am particularly looking for material relating to community safety.

If I start off by just looking at the email aspect of your request, 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. In this case a search for emails containing the phrases "asylum seeker" or "Afghan Resettlement Scheme" would be required.

Despite extensive efforts in the past to retrieve emails based on keyword searches 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 any of the keywords on any date will be returned. These are returned as individual full mailbox archive files for each mailbox that contains this keyword.

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

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finally if it was between Police Scotland and any of the Scottish local authorities, the Home Office or the Scottish Government. 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/whatsapp messages 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.

You may wish to consider reducing the scope of your request to correspondence between a particular group of Police Scotland mailboxes which may allow some information to be provided.

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.