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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0088
Date: 16th 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.

Following clarification with you, you advised the following.

My request relates only to the Economic Crime teams.

- 1. The number of police officers currently assigned to your fraud squad or economic crime command/department and the number of officers assigned to that fraud squad or economic crime command/department in calendar 2015 and 2010.**

With respect to your question, in terms of Section 17 of the Act, I can confirm that some of the information you seek is not held by Police Scotland.

By way of explanation, recorded information regarding the number of officers allocated to fraud teams in 2010 is no longer held.

However, I can advise that currently within the Economic Crime and Financial Investigation Unit there are 4 Detective Inspectors, 6 Detective Sergeants and 37 Detective Constables

In 2015, there were 4 Detective Inspectors, 7 Detective Sergeants and 37 Detective Constables assigned to the same Unit.

- 2. The number of fraud complaints or referrals received in calendar 2021, 2015 and 2010.**

As you have specifically asked for information in regards to economic crime teams only, my answer is provided on that basis.

In terms of Section 17 of the Act, I can confirm that the information you seek is not held by Police Scotland.

The Economic and Financial Investigation Unit do not keep records of enquiries which have been referred to the unit but subsequently have not be investigated by the team. We therefore do not hold the number of complaints/referrals specifically received by our Economic and Financial Investigation Unit.

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We do however publish crime statistics on a quarterly basis which include statistics on fraud (they are included under the Group 3 crime section). Please find a link to our crime statistics page below:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/what-we-do/how-we-are-performing/>

3. The number of fraud investigations begun in calendar 2021, 2015 and 2010.

In response to your request for 2010 figures, 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, the information requested for 2010 is not held in any easily retrievable format. By way of explanation, Police Scotland as an organisation was created on 01 April 2013 and prior to this there were 8 legacy Policing areas. In order to determine the number of fraud cases progressed by Economic and Financial Investigation teams, thousands of fraud records from multiple recording systems would need to be manually examined to determine if they had been progressed by the team within the time period specified.

This is an exercise I believe would greatly exceed the cost limit set out within the Act.

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.

However, I can provide the following data for 2015 and 2021.

Fraud enquiries progressed in 2021 - 32
Fraud enquiries progressed in 2015 - 51

It is worthy of note that the above figures relate to cases where fraud is a feature.

4. The number of current fraud investigations.

Currently there are 62 ongoing investigations.

Again, this figure relates to inquiries where fraud is a feature and includes cases that are protracted in nature due to their complexities and have been ongoing for extended periods of time.

5. The number of current fraud prosecutions in which the force is involved and the number of such fraud prosecutions begun in 2021.

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Police Scotland does not hold prosecution information. As such, in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information you seek is not held by Police Scotland.

You may wish to contact the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscals Service (COPFS) which holds conviction information for Scotland. A request can be submitted to COPFS via email using the following address foi@copfs.gsi.gov.uk

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.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.