

**OFFICIAL**

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0871  
Date: 21 April 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.

**Information that I have been made aware of identifies that Police Scotland (The Police Service of Scotland) prosecution reports to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) use the acronym “DOFO” associated with a specific date.**

**The acronym DOFO may stand for “date of first offence” yet information revealed to myself (as a citizen who takes a personal interest in these matters) is that Scottish Women’s Aid (SWA) organisations use “law enforcement” as the lawful basis for data sharing with Police Scotland (as has been documented by at least one SWA organisation) and alleged crimes that are recorded on SWA Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) spreadsheets that are received by Police Scotland are used by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) as evidence of crimes in criminal prosecutions even when recorded alleged crime predates the recorded “DOFO” date on the Police Scotland prosecution report. Given this knowledge then my speculation that “DOFO” stands for “date of first offence” cannot be correct as Police Scotland hold allegations of criminality at an earlier time point and these allegations of criminality are used by the COPFS as evidence in prosecutions.**

**As a Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 request please provide all recorded definitions of the acronym DOFO that Police Scotland holds.**

First of all, I would remind you that FOI legislation provides a right of access to recorded information only.

Searches for information must be both thorough and reasonable, taking into account the nature of the information sought.

I would start by clarifying that there is no comprehensive list at force level of all Police Scotland acronyms.

Acronyms are used extensively throughout the force and are most commonly set out along with definitions in various Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Guidance.

Again however, that is not to say that all acronyms used will necessarily be included in a SOP or Guidance.

## OFFICIAL

Some may be less formal in nature and used only by specific business areas/ departments etc at a more local level.

Clearly, within the confines of the Act, I cannot search every document held by Police Scotland to establish whether or not it contains 'DOFO' and a corresponding definition.

What I can do, and what I therefore consider to be *reasonable*, is search the force intranet system, which includes all SOPs/ Guidance etc for the term.

In that regard, I can advise that there is one instance of recorded information as follows:

*'DOFO - Ensure that this matches the date of first offence on the CF'*

The document that contains the reference above is a guide to creating entries on Crime File (CF) and SPRs and includes a screenshot of the system with a date field entitled 'DOFO'.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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.