| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-3256  Responded to: 03 June 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

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.

## Please supply the numbers of women who were killed by a partner/relative/friend who had previous contact with your police force in the 12 months prior to their death. Please give an annual breakdown from 2018 to 2023 or the last available data.

Police Scotland categorises domestic homicides as any homicide or culpable homicide resulting from intimate partner violence. A partner is defined by the COPFS / Police Scotland Joint Protocol as a spouse or civil partner, those living together as spouses or those in intimate personal relationship, current or ex.

To ensure the utmost respect and privacy and to protect the identities of the individuals involved, we are unable to provide specific details. By way of explanation as noted above, Scotland has a very specific definition of domestic abuse which relates to partners and ex-partners only, and as such the number of domestic homicides is smaller than that of overall homicide and by providing the information asked for poses a risk of identifying individuals involved.

To be of assistance, we have provided the number of domestic homicides recorded by Police Scotland in the timeframe asked for.

Table 1 provides the number of domestic homicides recorded by Police Scotland per calendar year.

Table 1.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Calendar Year** | **Number of Domestic Homicides recorded** |
| 2018/19 | 12 |
| 2019/20 | 9 |
| 2020/21 | 6 |
| 2021/22 | 11 |
| 2022/23 | 7 |

Due to the definition of domestic abuse in Scotland, as above, with respect to the relative/friend element of the question, please be advised that to determine the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, each case of all homicides would need to be manually examined, as such I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance. I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request.

## Please provide the number of people who died from suspected victim homicides and who had contact with your police forces in the 12 months before thier death. Please give an annual breakdown from 2018 to 2023 or the latest available data.

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.

By way of explanation, for the time period you require there are 2922 records of Sudden Death, to identify if the any of the deceased persons had contact with the police in the 12 months prior to their death each record would need to be manually assessed to determine if contact had occurred.

## Please provide figures of domestic violence survivors who your force ranked as high risk. Please provide the figure as an annual breakdown from 2018 to  2023 or the latest available data.

Police Scotland used the term domestic abuse rather than domestic violence to capture a broader spectrum of behaviours. This terminology reflects an understanding that abuse within a domestic context is not limited to physical violence but includes psychological, emotional, financial, and sexual abuse. The term domestic abuse acknowledges the complex and multifaceted nature of abuse in intimate relationships, emphasising the importance of recognising all forms of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour. This aligns with the Scottish Governments wider commitment to tackling domestic abuse in all its forms, as enshrined in legislation Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 which provides a comprehensive definition that encapsulates a range of abusive behaviours beyond physical violence.

In response to your question, please see the table below. Additionally, please note the caveats at the bottom of the table.

**High Risk Domestic Incident Nominal Victims, Police Scotland 1,2,3**

Period: 1st January 2018 - 30th April 2024 (Calendar Years)

| **Year** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2024\*** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Risk Domestic Incident Nominal Victims | 4089 | 4756 | 4559 | 4558 | 4367 | 4625 | 1559 |

All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.

\*All data have been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as of 8th May 2024.

1. The data was extracted using the incident's raised date and extracted from interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD).

The iVPD is the formal means by which Police Scotland record police contact with adults, children and young people 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; or where force policy dictates e.g. domestic abuse, hate crime, youth offending or to record details of victim’s rights under Section 8 and 9 of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014.

The iVPD is a dynamic database which is constantly being updated and changed in line with our weeding and retention policy.

2. Domestic Incident Nominal Victims were selected. Please note repeat victims will be captured in this data.

3. Domestic Incident Nominals Victims with a risk grading of 'High' were selected.

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.  Please note, the weeding and retention policy states that if a person is recorded as "no concern / not applicable" then this will only be retained for 6 months.

Please note that these data are collated from the Police Scotland iVPD system, which has an automated weeding and retention policy built on to it. A copy of the retention policy is available on the Police Scotland internet site.

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.