

OFFICIAL

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-2040
Date: 17th October 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.

1. Were Police Scotland involved in the decision of the Renfield Centre on Bath Street, Glasgow, to cancel a booking by SPSC where a named individual was due to speak on 'Free Speech on Palestine - Stop the Witch-hunt' in 2022?

2. Did Police Scotland advise the organiser or representative for the organisers etc that the named individual represents an organisation which supports the BDS movement against Israel?

3. Did Police Scotland suggest to the venue management or to anyone that they reconsider the booking on the basis that if it went ahead, there could be public protests?

Please note that as you have not specifically defined the terms, I have assumed that SPSC refers to the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign and that BDS refers to the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement due to the context of the wider request.

In relation to these three questions, Police Scotland is a rights-based organisation that puts our values of integrity, fairness, respect and a commitment to upholding human rights at the heart of everything we do.

As part of our duty to keep people safe, we try to understand events and carry out an assessment so we can, if necessary, put in place a proportionate policing response to ensure we facilitate those in our communities who wish to exercise their rights. Police Scotland considers each and every event on its own merits and on occasion, when we are made aware of an event involving some aspect which may potentially attract differing viewpoints, it is entirely appropriate for us to speak with a venue to ascertain additional information to allow us to confirm the security of the event and monitor for any potential counter protest.

In relation to your query, Police Scotland officers did not request that the Renfield Centre on Bath Street cancel an event organised by the SPSC for 26th September 2022, nor did they disclose any information regarding the event that was not already known by venue management.

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Police Scotland would only request a venue to cancel a booking if there was specific information which would lead us to consider that public safety and security was compromised and there was the risk of serious disruption in the community. It should be noted that this is rare and the vast majority of events we are aware of do not require any policing footprint.

It is important that Police Scotland understands the communities we serve and to do this we engage widely with a variety of individuals, community groups, partners and stakeholders. This engagement allows us to gauge the concerns and needs of different communities and informs our policing model across the country, ensuring it is fit for purpose.

4. Is freedom of speech and education on issues Palestine not Freedom of Speech in Scotland according to Police Scotland?

I must conclude that as it does not seek a copy of recorded information, this question is not a valid request in terms of Section 8 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

By way of explanation, your question is seeking an opinion which is not considered recorded information as per the Act.

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.