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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0915
Date: 4 May 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 request the following under the freedom of information (Scotland) act of 2002:

- I. A full count only of false cases of so called “satanic ritual abuse” or SRA.**
- II. A full count only of cases of so called “satanic ritual abuse” or SRA presently being looked at.**
- III. A full count only of true cases of so called “satanic ritual abuse” or SRA. Within Scotland, regarding any person(s) of any age(s) On 20/4/2022.**

*** False is to mean cases which have not been allocated a verdict of guilty by a court of Scottish criminal law but have been allocated a verdict of not-proven or not-guilty or have not been tried at all.**

*** True is to mean cases which have been allocated a verdict of guilty by a court of Scottish criminal law and have been tried.**

I would first of all note that this is your fourth request on this subject in the last six months.

I note that there are subtle differences between your requests but not to the extent that would illicit a different response.

For clarity, I will try to detail the numerous issues in attempting to provide a response to your request above.

First of all, Police Scotland record crime in accordance with the Scottish Government Justice Department crime classification codes - or SGJD codes as they are known.

There is *no* crime classification of ‘satanic ritual abuse’ specifically, nor is there anything that would be classed as even remotely comparable based on my lay person interpretation of the types of behaviour that such abuse may involve.

In terms of our recording systems, behaviour that *might, subjectively* be classed as ‘satanic ritual abuse’ could be recorded under any number of classifications - murder, attempted murder, serious assault, assault, cruelty to children, sexual offences etc.

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For those reasons, a section 17 (information not held) response could be considered in relation to your request however, it is not impossible that an individual crime report *could* contain a reference along the lines of 'this behaviour could be described as satanic ritual abuse' etc.

On that basis, a section 12 response is the more appropriate option for consideration as in order to research your request, *all* potentially relevant crime reports would have to be individually assessed for relevance (we are unable to conduct a key word search of our crime recording systems).

We cannot create new information and subjectively categorise crime reports as 'satanic ritual abuse', but we could theoretically (if cost allowed) look for any specific reference to the phrase.

As we have advised you previously, Police Scotland report offences to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

Thereafter, COPFS decide whether to prosecute the accused.

If there are court proceedings, the result of those proceedings is only passed to Police Scotland in terms of updating the Scottish Criminal History System.

It is not recorded alongside the original crime report and the outcome of a particular crime report is therefore not searchable in that way.

Further to all of the above, I note that in your request above you mention one date specifically.

In the context of how that's written, I'm afraid it doesn't actually refine your request at all.

You are still asking for all relevant information held, as at 20 April 2022.

To summarise... *If* we were to attempt to research your request we would have to individually examine tens of thousands of crime reports looking for any reference to 'satanic ritual abuse'.

Thereafter, we would have to look up the names of any individuals reported to COPFS in relation to those crimes to determine whether or not they were convicted of the offence.

Even if we were to restrict your request to, for example, assaults, and for a very short period, the numbers involved combined with the in-depth research required are such that no meaningful attempt could be conducted.

On that basis, I must reiterate the response provided in relation to your three prior requests and confirm that we are 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.

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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.

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.