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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0685  
Date: 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

- 1/ On how many occasions have school pupils been strip-searched – sometimes described as ‘further searches’ - by officers on school grounds within the last four academic years (beginning August 1st 2018)?**
- 2) Please break down the instances into these categories:**
- a) How many were male, how many were female?**
  - b) How many related to suspicions about i) drugs ii) weapons and iii) stolen property?**
  - c) How many were i) black and b) all ethnicities other than white?**
  - d) How many searches were negative with an outcome of no further action recorded?**

In response to your request, 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, our stop and search system does not have a specific category for school pupil or for searches that were conducted on school grounds. Each strip search record would need to be checked and cross-referenced with data from additional systems to confirm if it related to a school pupil. This may involve checking free text entries in officers notebooks in instances where a crime or similar was not recorded. Once this had been done, these would then need to be checked to confirm if they took place on school grounds.

In this case 5,958 records would need to be manually checked. At a conservative estimate of 5 minutes per record, this equates to over 496 hours of work to provide the information requested.

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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.

Whilst I would normally suggest that a reduced timescale is considered, even looking at just 2021 would give 1,130 records to check at an estimated time of over 94 hours to complete the task. I must also advise that as this is information we do not specifically record, even if it was possible to complete these checks within the cost limits of the Act, it is doubtful that the retrieved information would be complete enough to accurately answer your request.

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.