

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-2621  
Date: 20 December 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.

Police Scotland is committed to keeping people safe. Our focus is on the protection of those at risk of harm through prevention, early intervention and the robust investigation of those who pose such a risk. We fulfil our role as a Responsible Authority in the delivery of MAPPA providing effective and efficient management of Registered Sex Offenders (RSO's) and Other Risk of Serious Harm Offenders.

This is achieved through each of Police Scotland's 13 local policing Divisions having a dedicated Sex Offender Policing Unit (SOPU) with specialist officers working in partnership to police and reduce the risk posed by such offenders.

While we can never eliminate risk entirely, we want to reassure communities that all reasonable steps are being taken to protect them.

### **Please could you provide the following information regarding Registered Sex Offenders in your police force area:**

#### **1. How many registered sex offenders are currently classed as 'missing' due to a lack of an up-to-date address?**

There are currently no "missing" RSO's.

A *missing* person is defined as anyone whose whereabouts is unknown and:

- where the circumstances are out of character or
- the context suggests the person may be subject to crime or
- the person is at risk of harm to themselves or another.

A wanted Registered Sex Offender is defined as those who are subject to the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and who have a live warrant in force. Police Scotland treats all missing / wanted Registered Sex Offenders with the utmost seriousness and will carry out all possible enquiries to trace their whereabouts and to re-establish the management required to protect the public. On all occasions a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) of a rank no less than Inspector will be appointed to lead these investigations.

There are currently 14 “wanted” RSO’s 12 of which are believed to have left the UK. The remaining two are believed to be elsewhere in the UK and have not provided an address.

As part of our commitment to demonstrate openness and transparency in respect of the information we hold, Police Scotland, on a monthly basis, publish data regarding the number of Registered Sex Offenders in our communities, broken down by policing division and postcode area.

Information regarding “Wanted” or “Missing” Registered Sex Offenders is also published via the link below:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/police-scotland/specialist-crime-division/sex-offender-policing-units/registered-sex-offender-rso-information/>

**2. How many registered sex offenders have notified police that they are living abroad?**

The Violent & Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) is the UK database used to record information concerning the management of Registered Sex Offenders (RSO). What is commonly referred to as the Sex Offenders Register is actually the ViSOR database.

On that basis, ViSOR records 120 offenders as living abroad.

**3. As per question 2 – how many of these registered sex offenders have notified police that they are living in The Gambia?**

None of these have notified police that they are living in Gambia and accordingly Section 17 applies – information not held.

However it should be noted that once the offender has notified that they are leaving the country they are no longer required to update Police Scotland of other destinations that were not in their initial travel plans. E.g. an offender notifies that they are permanently leaving Scotland and going to reside in France. After a period of time in France they move to Gambia or elsewhere, there is no requirement for Police Scotland to be notified.

Where the original host country has recognised Sex Offender Registration practices they may be policed as an RSO in that country and may be subject to a requirement that they notify local police of any travel, however this would not be recorded on ViSOR.

Police Scotland take action to identify RSO’s returning to the UK at which time they again become subject to Sex Offender Notification Requirements and must notify an address within three days.

If you require further assistance or 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](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by post to Information Management (Disclosure), Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH.

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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.