Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0297
Date: 23 February 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.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please can you provide me with responses to the following regarding police attendance response times for 999 calls:

1/ Please provide the average annual police response time to attend 999 calls categorised as (i) grade 1 emergency, (ii) grade 2, (iii) grade 3, and (iv) all grades, for each year from 2011 up until and including 2021. Please also provide both the total annual number of calls and time taken to attend for each part of the question. Grades 1 to 3 typically refer to an emergency response, a prompt response and a routine response. Please provide a description of the different grades (including expected response times to attend) used by the force if these differ. An example for GMP is included here: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-47582743

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 we have interpreted that where this request references 'response times' this means the time taken form an incident being created to a resource arriving at scene.

We have also interpreted 'calls' in this instance to refer to incidents. Incidents are raised where it is assessed that some form of police response is required. This can be in response to contact by telephone or any other means, or at the request of officers or partners.

It is also worth noting that an incident will have the most appropriate grade applied regardless of whether it is received via 999, 101 or any other channel.

STORM Unity is the system used by Police Scotland for the management of police incidents and resources and is the source of the data provided in this response. It is worth noting that STORM is primarily a command & control system and has limited value as a statistical tool.

Most data obtained from the system requires further analysis to establish context. In large volumes, this can be extremely difficult to do and in some cases it is not possible to filter or structure data to adequately answer a specific request.

STORM automatically captures timing data when an incident is raised and dispatched. The arrival of a resource at the locus of an incident is recorded via a manual process and as a result is open to error.

The most common method of marking 'At Scene' is for officers to select a hotkey on their airwave device. This is often overlooked, particularly when officers arrive at the scene of a dynamic incident. Controllers are able to manually update the status of resources if required but this can naturally lead to errors in the accurate recording of the actual time of arrival. The priority of all staff is the safe and effective management of our policing response.

From previous reviews of data of this type, numerous errors in the accurate recording of this information have been identified. These include:

- Officers failing to update their handsets to mark themselves 'At Scene' when they actually arrived at locus. In some cases this was completed after a significant delay and in others the status was not updated until the incident was closed some time later.

- Incidents which were initially, appropriately, assessed at a lower response level but later reassessed and upgraded in response to new information. In these circumstances the timer does not reset, but reflects the total time from creation to dispatch/arrival.

These scenarios distort overall figures meaning that a manual review of several million incidents would be required to remove erroneous results and establish the true 'response time'. This is an exercise I believe will greatly exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

Police Scotland have determined that the £600 threshold within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request exceeds this limit.

In order to be of assistance I can advise, Police Scotland came into existence on 1st April 2013. The process of moving from legacy, local systems to national systems took some time.

STORM Unity was selected as the national command and control system and migration began in 2015. As such, no data can be provided prior to this. Some areas did not migrate fully until 2017, which is reflected in the provided figures.

The introduction of the Contact Assessment Model (CAM) was completed in a phased approach between June 2019 and June 2020. As a result, some areas continued to use legacy grades for longer than others. Again, this can be seen in the data provided.

The total number of incidents raised for each grade are detailed in the table below. For the reasons stated above, 'response times' are not included.

Volume of incidents by Priority							
Priority	2015*	2016*	2017*	2018	2019	2020	2021
0	43	14	15	13	14	10	44
1	29,597	31,601	45,590	47,638	47,062	11,264	5,126
2	309,894	353,418	435,902	471,052	438,887	80,768	20,336
3	482,243	525,038	605,858	639,818	561,399	102,212	10,963
4	105,056	149,652	141,576	136,063	109,864	15,789	1,133
5	194,606	261,893	312,067	335,750	317,162	66,327	4,311
Diary/Standard	42,273	56,694	61,915	57,013	76,500	120,966	180,463
Immediate					26,233	175,359	171,015
Prompt				3	61,341	581,571	656,797
Other Resolution				4	67,955	383,431	445,543
	1,163,712	1,378,310	1,602,923	1,687,354	1,706,417	1,537,697	1,495,731
* Data not available for some areas due to ongoing migration to STORM Unity							

The Contact Assessment Model was implemented by Police Scotland in a phased approach beginning in June 2019 and completing in June 2020. Under CAM, all decisions around deployment and appropriate resolution of incidents are based on the assessment of threat, risk, harm, investigative opportunity, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE). Incidents are subject to continuous review throughout their lifecycle to ensure that the principles of CAM and THRIVE are properly applied and that callers receive the most appropriate response at the most appropriate time.

Prior to CAM, incidents were graded in a similar way to what you have referenced above, using numbers 1-5. CAM saw the introduction of revised incident grades. Due to the phased nature of implementation there was a period of crossover where some areas used legacy grades and others used CAM grades. Priority 1-5 remains available for use for specific call types such as alarm activations for administrative purposes.

Details of CAM incident grades and their definitions are already published as part of the C3 National Guidance document here https://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/policies-and-procedures/guidance-documents/guidance-documents-c/

Prior to CAM, the priorities below were used:

Priority	Definition
1	IMMEDIATE On-going incident where there is: • Immediate or apparent threat to life • Serious crime in progress
2	PRIORITY Crime/incident with a degree of importance/urgency associated with initial police action
3	STANDARD • Not on-going but police attendance is required • Outcome could be prejudiced by significant delay
4	SCHEDULED Crimes/incidents which will not be prejudiced by a scheduled response
5	NON ATTENDANCE Incidents that can be resolved by phone or by some other means which do not require police attendance
DIARY	Attended by Diary Officer(s) for area at pre-booked time.

2/ Please provide the total number of occasions that police did not attend i) grade 1, ii) grade 2 or iii) grade 3 emergencies last year (2021).

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, while many incidents may result in the need for the physical attendance of a police resource, there are occasions where it is recognised that another emergency service or agency may be the most appropriate to respond. In those

circumstances our focus is on ensuring the fast and efficient transfer of information to the relevant agency while assessing any requirement for police to attend.

Vigorous risk assessment to take place prior to deployment which can include input from force negotiators, public order advisors, tactical firearms commanders and others. This allows control rooms to identify the most suitable resource to attend the scene, maximising public safety and minimising the risk to officers. For obvious reasons resources are not necessarily dispatched until these risk assessments have taken place.

CAM also affords the ability to resolve some incidents remotely, including the noting of crime reports. These incidents would not see any officer dispatched to a particular location, but would see appropriate action taken to resolve them in line with force guidance and SCRS.

In order to establish details of incidents where no resource was dispatched we would require to ascertain how many of the several million incidents identified included no record of a mobilisation message indicating dispatch. In order to provide proper context and say with confidence how many of these incidents saw no police attend 'at any time' a manual review of the incidents noted about would need to be manually reviewed. This is an exercise I believe will greatly exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

Police Scotland have determined that the £600 threshold within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request exceeds this limit.

3/ Please provide the longest individual time taken to attend a grade 1 emergency call in 2021.

In response to this question please see the response to question 1.

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.