| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-2072  Responded to: 20 September 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## What is Police Scotland’s current available resource of skilled road policing officers in comparison to April 1, 2013

The above requested information is provided below:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Road Policing | Headcount | FTE |
| 31st March 2014 | 642 | 636.7 |
| 31st March 2023 | 556 | 554.5 |
| 30th June 2023 | 548 | 546.3 |

I would ask that you note that the above figures include Collision Oversight Unit, Management, Divisional Road Policing Unit, Management, Management Support, Motorcycles, Road Patrol East/North/West, Safety Camera Unit, Training and Policy, Traffic Management, Truck Road Policing and Transport Scotland.

Further, from the creation of Police Scotland to the current date the Service was significantly restructured which included the use of common terminology and role descriptors e.g. where legacy Forces used different terminology to record different functions and the department/sections listed above may longer exist.

## and where are those officers now deployed?

This portion of your information request was clarified and as requested, I have considered this on the basis of a breakdown of the figures, provided at question 1, for each police division in Scotland.

I would advise that this information is considered to be exempt in terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (the Act).

Section 16 of the Act requires Police Scotland to provide you with a notice which: (a) states that it holds the information, (b) states that it is claiming an exemption, (c) specifies the exemption in question and (d) states, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies. Where information is considered to be exempt, this letter serves as a Refusal Notice that information is held and an explanation of the appropriate exemption is provided.

**Section 35(1) (a) and (b) Law Enforcement**

Release of the information requested would adversely impact on the operational effectiveness of the Service. Being aware of the numbers of officers deployed to a specific area would allow persons or groups intent on committing offences, or causing disorder, with the means to make a reasonable assessment of the number of officers on duty and thus to make an assessment of the capacity of the Service to deal with such eventualities.

Disclosure of this information would compromise any tactical advantage the police may have over such persons or groups when dealing with any crime or disorder.

Disclosure of this information would, or would be likely, to prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

This is a non-absolute exemption which requires the application of the public interest test.

**Section 39 (1) – Health, Safety and the Environment**

The safety of police officers who have to deal with any crime and disorder is also a consideration. Where disclosure of the information would adversely impact on the effectiveness of the Service in preventing crime and disorder then it follows that this would subsequently increase the risk to the safety of the public and police officers through them becoming victims of such conduct.

Release of the information therefore would, or would be likely to endanger the physical or mental health or the safety of an individual.

This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.

**Public Interest Test**

Public awareness and accountability would favour a disclosure on this subject as it would contribute to the public debate surrounding the efficient and effective use of resources by the Service. However, in contrast, there is no public interest in disclosing information which is likely to damage the efficient and effective conduct of the police service in relation to its law enforcement role, or which is likely to have an adverse impact upon public safety. As explained above, disclosure would allow those intent on wrong-doing to gauge, with some accuracy, the level of specific police resources in existence in certain areas, thus affording them the opportunity to take steps to circumvent the ability of the Police to deliver effective law enforcement provision, and placing themselves, members of the public and the police force at increased risk.

I consider that the decision must fall in favour of preventing crime and safeguarding the health and safety of the public. Accordingly, on balance, the public interest in disclosing the information requested is outweighed by that in maintaining the exemptions detailed above.

If you require any further assistance please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.