| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 24-0610Responded to: 13th June 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Please could you provide us with a list of all female victims of homicide killed between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023 (inclusive) which your authority has been responsible for investigating and, for each victim:

## the date of the homicide;

## the names of the victims and the accused / perpetrator;

## the age of the victim;

## the ethnicity/race of the victim;

## the relationship between the accused and the victim;

## the sex of the accused / perpetrator;

## the ethnicity/race of the perpetrator;

## if identified, the way in which the victim was killed;

## Also, if possible, we would appreciate the following information.

## whether there were any previous reports from the victim (or any third party) regarding the accused / perpetrator; and

## whether there were any previous reports and / or convictions of any other offences related to violence against women perpetrated by the accused / perpetrator.

After considering your request within the Act I regret to inform you that I am refusing to comply with your request in terms of section 34 (1)(b) and section 35 of the Act.

Section 34(1)(b) of the Act provides an absolute exemption from disclosure in that information is exempt information if it has at any time been held by Police Scotland for the purposes of an investigation which may lead to a decision to make a report to the Procurator Fiscal to enable it to be determined whether criminal proceedings should be instituted.

Furthermore, in the course of investigations the police interview and obtain evidence from persons who are in a position to assist them. The co-operation of witnesses is vital to policing and witnesses assist in this process, in the belief that not only their identities, but also the information that they provide will remain confidential.

There is an understanding that any statements given, or other evidence obtained will not be disclosed to third parties other than in the course of criminal proceedings.

Anything that undermines this expectation of confidentiality is likely to impact on the willingness of victims or witnesses to report matters to or assist the police.

This, in turn, would be likely to prejudice substantially the ability of the police to investigate and detect crime, and in turn would have a similar detrimental impact on the apprehension or prosecution of offenders - making the information exempt from disclosure in terms of Section 35(1)(a)&(b).

Information is exempt information under section 35 (1)(a)&(b) if its disclosure under this Act would or would be likely to prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Disclosure of the requested information would impact on the process of investigating this case. One of the main purposes of the Police Service is to prevent crime but to release this information would be contrary to that purpose.

These are non-absolute exemptions and require the application of the public interest test:
Public awareness would favour a disclosure as it would contribute to the public debate surrounding murder investigations and the police handling of such enquiries.

Nevertheless, it cannot be in the public interest to release information that would prejudice law enforcement, or which is likely to have an adverse impact upon public safety.
I appreciate that there is a public interest in relation to police investigations and in particular murder investigations. That said, it is essential that neither investigations nor the potential for proceedings to be brought against an individual are put at risk.
Accordingly, in this case it is assessed that the public interest lies firmly in refusing disclosure.

To provide context, given the recent nature of the crimes committed they all are still subject to either criminal proceedings, appeals or Fatal accident investigations.

However, to be of assistance I can advise that during the period of 1st January 2023 – 31st December 2023 there were 14 female victims of homicide/culpable homicide in Scotland with their ages ranging from 3weeks to 74 years. The incidents involved 14 male accused and 6 female accused. Of the 14 incidents, only 4 of the accused were partners/ex partners of the deceased. The other 10 were either a relative, acquaintance or stranger of the deceased. Please note that some incidents involved multiple accused.

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 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 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.