| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-0559  Responded to: 18 March 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Police Scotland and we are committed to working with our partners to reduce the harm it causes and ultimately eradicate it.

Domestic abuse is a despicable and debilitating crime which affects all of our communities and has no respect for ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Police Scotland will not tolerate it.

Police Scotland will proactively target perpetrators and support victims to prevent domestic abuse from damaging the lives of victims and their families.

Police Scotland defines domestic abuse as:

“Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse may be committed in the home or elsewhere including online”

Please note that the definition of Domestic abuse in Scotland differs from the definition of Domestic Violence in England and Wales which includes wider familial abuse e.g. from parents or children etc.

## I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from your police authority. Please may you provide me with the number of Clare's Law applications you have received since the law came into force in March 2014.

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), known as ‘Clare’s Law’ was introduced in England and Wales in March 2014. The DVDS was not introduced in Scotland. On 1 October 2015, Police Scotland introduced the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) which operates in a similar way to the DVDS. As such, in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information requested is not held by Police Scotland.

The DSDAS database is a dynamic database which is constantly being updated and changed.

Duplicate applications are often submitted for persons potentially at risk.

Every application received by Police Scotland is assessed to confirm that it meets the criteria for disclosure.

Once an application has been submitted further information may come to light meaning that the application is no longer appropriate, for example if the applicant is no longer in a relationship with that person. In this instance the application will not be progressed further.

Additionally in such circumstances where there is no information to disclose the application will not progress to a disclosure. In this instance the applicant will be informed.

Each potential disclosure is subject to multi-agency discussion, with at least two partner agencies. There, those that are agreed to be Lawful, Necessary and Proportionate proceed to disclosure.

The table below provides the number of applications received from 1st October 2015 until present.

**Table 1. Number of DSDAS applications received per year**

| **Year** | **Applications** |
| --- | --- |
| 2015 | 347 |
| 2016 | 956 |
| 2017 | 1,157 |
| 2018 | 1,494 |
| 2019 | 2,401 |
| 2020 | 3,287 |
| 2021 | 3,862 |
| 2022 | 4,293 |
| 2023 | 5,303 |
| 2024 | 6,883 |

## All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.

## \*All data has been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as of 07 March 2025.

## Could you please also provide the average time it took to complete each application per year.

With regards to providing data prior to 2020 I regret to inform you the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

By way of explanation, data prior to 2020 has been weeded in line with our Record Retention Standard Operating Procedures.

The average number of days per calendar year from 2020 has been provided below within table 2.

**Table 2. Average number of days taken per year**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Average number of days** |
| 2020 | 32 |
| 2021 | 21 |
| 2022 | 20 |
| 2023 | 17 |
| 2024 | 15 |

## All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.

## \*All data has been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as of 07 March 2025.

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](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@foi.scot) 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.