| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 24-0600Responded to: 4 April 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Under the Freedom of Information Act, could you provide me with the number of blackmail crimes, in each of the past three financial years (April 1 to March 31 - 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23) and the current financial year to date (April 1 2023 to date), where a webcam has been involved in some way, i.e. where either webcam, web cam, video or social media are mentioned in the summary of the report.

## Could you provide a summary of each report, including outcome, and state whether the alleged victim was aged under 16, 16 to 18 or over 18.

Crimes in Scotland are recorded in accordance with the [Scottish Government Justice Department (SGJD)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/user-guide-recorded-crime-statistics-scotland-3/documents/) offence classifications and there is no crime of ‘blackmail’ specifically.
Section 17 of the Act therefore applies as the information sought is not held by Police Scotland.

To be of assistance, I have provided you with data for the classification ‘Threats and Extortion’ with a breakdown of whether the crime was detected.

Detected crimes are those where an accused has been identified and there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots Law to justify consideration of criminal proceedings.

| **Threats and Extortion**  | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Recorded  | 943 | 1393 | 2003 | 2294 |
| Detected  | 189 | 150 | 124 | 105 |

*All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.
All data have been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as at 20th March 2024.*

With regard to the ages of the victims I would refer you to the explanation below - and the same rationale would apply as regards establishing any link to social media/ webcams etc.

## Please could you also provide me with a count of the number of crimes recorded as threatening to/disclosing private images in each of the past three financial years (April 1 to March 31 - 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23) and the current financial year to date (April 1 2023 to date). Again, please provide information about outcomes for these and a breakdown by whether the alleged victim was aged under 16, 16 to 18 or over 18.

Data for the classifications ‘Threatening to disclose an intimate image’ and ‘Disclosure of an intimate image’ is detailed in the tables below.

| **Threatening to disclose an intimate image** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Recorded  | 335 | 388 | 294 | 264 |
| Detected  | 136 | 138 | 114 | 101 |

| **Disclosure of an intimate image** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Recorded  | 439 | 527 | 503 | 464 |
| Detected  | 205 | 222 | 201 | 174 |

*All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.
All data have been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as at 20th March 2024.*

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to provide you with details of the age of the victim in each case.

I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

To explain, prior to the introduction of a new, national crime recording system in December 2023, such data is neither searchable nor automatically retrievable from the system, having been initially recorded using legacy system parameters.

We would require to individually assess every crime report to establish the age of the victim at the time of the offence.

If it would be of interest, we can provide age information for the small number of crimes which were recorded between 1 January 2024 and the current date.

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.