| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 24-1643Responded to: 31 July 2024 |
| --- | --- |

Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## I'm writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) to ask that you please disclose to me the operation names of any large scale protest action that you have been called out to as a force over the last two calendar years (2023 and 2024 to present).

## I’d like the operation name, date, the name of the group involved (this could span anything from white nationalists to environmentalists - XR, BLM, anti-ULEZ, National Action, EDL, NBU, Covid conspiracy protests, Insulate Britain, Women's Rights marches, anti-military Marches like the anti-Elbit Systems action recently, Palestine action or other pro-Palestine marches, etc).

You have since clarified:

I put in 'large scale' as I understand some forces measure protests in different ways. For ease, any protest that is given an operation name, focuses on a specific group, or is recorded in numbers above 10 individuals, or in the most appropriate way it would be recorded would be perfect (as I understand some forces are smaller, and more likely to get smaller protests, for example things like 4-10 people sit-ins, which I'd also like to be counted if they pertain to a select group or collective of individuals, please.

**I’d also like to know how many people, and for what reason and from what groups, have been arrested under section 7 of the public order act, and those arrested under section 12 of the act as well.**

**Two areas of focus specifically however - in these instances spanning larger and smaller scale protests caught up in public order offences - would include arrests of environmental protestors specifically from the following: XR, JSO (Just Stop Oil), Greenpeace, Ocean Rebellion, Fossil Free Parliament/Fossil Free London/Fossil Free Politics, Insulate Britain, Friends of the Earth or other related groups thart fall into this category.**

**And on the far right: the EDL (or newer associated groups), the New British Union of Fascists, Patriotic Alternative, Pie and Mash Squad, The Yorkshire (or East Yorkshire) Patriots, The National Support Detachment, the National Rebirth Party, National Action (now proscribed), Britain First, the English Democrats, UKIP, the National Front, the BNP, Homeland, or any other groups that fall into this category.**

**I’d like this information to include figures of arrests, and appreciate that in some instances there will be multiple arrests over a year for the same activists. This doesn’t matter for the purposes of this request, as it’s numbers of arrests specifically that I am seeking.**

The Public Order Act 2023 (which it is assumed you are referring to) does not extend to Scotland and so in terms of section 17 of the Act, the information sought regarding arrests under sections 7 and 12 of same is not held by Police Scotland.

We estimate that based on the definition of ‘large scale’ provided, Police Scotland will have recorded a minimum of around 1,000 protests for the period covered by your request. It would be close to double that, were we not to limit the results to protests with 10 or more individuals present.

You ask about ‘call outs’ which we would interpret to mean recorded incidents attended by a police officer.

We are unable to research incidents related to protest activity specifically, and your request would therefore require the cross-referencing of details of recorded protests with data held on our Command and Control system.

It is important to note that not all protests will result in the recording of any incidents whether attended or otherwise - and conversely, some may have a pre-planned police presence due to their nature and/ or scale.

Unfortunately, I therefore estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request.

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

Moving on to operation names, I would advise you that most protests will not have an operation name - typically that would only be the case for major incidents/ national operations etc.

Notwithstanding however, I am refusing to confirm or deny whether the information sought exists or is held by Police Scotland in terms of section 18.

Section 18 applies where the following two conditions are met:

* It would be contrary to the public interest to reveal whether the information is held.

Whilst we accept that the public seek to be better informed regarding the use of police resources in this regard, the overwhelming public interest lies in protecting the integrity of the operational response to such matters.

Given operation names will only exist in limited circumstances, confirming even the existence of these over a given period would provide a valuable insight into the intelligence picture surrounding same.

* If the information was held, it would be exempt from disclosure in terms of at least one exemption set out in the Act. In this instance, the following exemptions apply:

Section 31(1) - National Security

Section 35(1)(a)&(b) - Law Enforcement

Disclosure would substantially prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension and prosecution of offences.

Furthermore, exemption is required for purpose of safeguarding national security. Disclosure would undermine any ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the United Kingdom and increase the risk of harm to the public.

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.