| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-1973  Responded to: 29th September 2023 |
| --- | --- |

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

**I write, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, to request the number of 999 calls where responses exceeded your internal response time targets, between July 2022 and July 2023.**

**As part of this request, I would like the information to be broken down into the following:**

**i) The number of 999 calls received between July 2022 and July 2023, broken down into months, and a grand total;**

Please be advised that the requested information is publicly available.

As such, in terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought. Section 16 requires Police Scotland when refusing to provide such information because it is exempt, 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.

I can confirm that Police Scotland holds the information that you have requested and the exemption that I consider to be applicable is set out at Section 25(1) of the Act - information otherwise accessible:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it under Section 1(1) is exempt information”

I can confirm that the information requested is available through our website. I have attached a direct link to the relevant pages below:

[**Call Handling Reports 2022 - Police Scotland**](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/what-we-do/how-we-are-performing/call-handling-reports-2022/)

[**Call Handling Reports 2023 - Police Scotland**](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/what-we-do/how-we-are-performing/call-handling-reports-2023/)

**ii) Out of these 999 calls, how many were flagged as no unit/resource available, and how many were not attended within 15 minutes**

In response to your request, I regret to inform you that I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested, as it would prove too costly to do so within the context of the fee regulations.

As you may be aware the current cost threshold is £600 and I estimate that it would cost well in excess of this amount to process your request.

As such, and in terms of Section 16(4) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where Section 12(1) of the Act (Excessive Cost of Compliance) has been applied, this represents a refusal notice for the information sought.

By way of explanation, STORM Unity is the system used by Police Scotland for the management of police incidents and resources and is the source of the data provided in this response. It is worth noting that STORM is primarily a command & control system and has limited value as a statistical tool.

Most data obtained from the system requires further analysis to establish context. In large volumes, this can be extremely difficult to do and in some cases it is not possible to filter or structure data to adequately answer a specific request.

We do not record the specific statistics you have requested and as such a manual review would be required to determine how many of the 999 calls we received met the criteria of your request

In this case 784,461 999 calls would need to be manually checked. At a conservative estimate of 2 minutes per record, this equates to over 26,148 hours of work to provide the information requested.

Police Scotland have assessed that the £600 cost limit within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request would breach the cost threshold.

**iii) Your incident response time targets, and how many times these targets were missed during the above time frame;**

Police Scotland do not have incident response time targets and 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.

To be of some assistance we have incident dispatch times which are 15 minutes for an immediate grade call and 4 hours for a prompt graded call.

**iv) The average time for a 999 call to be attended;**

**v) The longest period of time for a 999 call to be attended.**

In response to questions 4 and 5, I regret to inform you that I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested, as it would prove too costly to do so within the context of the fee regulations.

As you may be aware the current cost threshold is £600 and I estimate that it would cost well in excess of this amount to process your request.

As such, and in terms of Section 16(4) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where Section 12(1) of the Act (Excessive Cost of Compliance) has been applied, this represents a refusal notice for the information sought.

By way of explanation, STORM Unity is the system used by Police Scotland for the management of police incidents and resources and is the source of the data provided in this response. It is worth noting that STORM is primarily a command & control system and has limited value as a statistical tool.

Most data obtained from the system requires further analysis to establish context. In large volumes, this can be extremely difficult to do and in some cases it is not possible to filter or structure data to adequately answer a specific request.

STORM automatically captures timing data when an incident is raised and dispatched. The arrival of a resource at the locus of an incident is recorded via a manual process and as a result is open to error.

The most common method of marking ‘At Scene’ is for officers to select a hotkey on their airwave device. This is often overlooked, particularly when officers arrive at the scene of a dynamic incident. Controllers are able to manually update the status of resources if required but this can naturally lead to errors in the accurate recording of the actual time of arrival. The priority of all staff is the safe and effective management of our policing response.

From previous reviews of data of this type, numerous errors in the accurate recording of this information have been identified. These include:

* Officers failing to update their handsets to mark themselves ‘At Scene’ when they actually arrived at locus. In some cases this was completed after a significant delay and in others the status was not updated until the incident was closed some time later.
* Incidents which were initially, appropriately, assessed at a lower response level but later reassessed and upgraded in response to new information. In these circumstances the timer does not reset, but reflects the total time from creation to dispatch/arrival.

These scenarios distort overall figures meaning that a manual review of several million incidents would be required to remove erroneous results and establish the true ‘response time’. This is an exercise I believe will greatly exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

The only way to obtain the requested information would be for each incident recorded to be manually examined to retrieve the information requested.

In this case 784,461 999 calls would need to be manually checked. At a conservative estimate of 2 minutes per record, this equates to over 26,148 hours of work to provide the information requested.

Police Scotland have assessed that the £600 cost limit within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request would breach the cost threshold.

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.