| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-1890  Responded to: 23 August 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## I am writing to formally request information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act regarding the "welfare check" facility operated by Police Scotland. Specifically, I would like to request the following information:

## Statistical Data: Please provide statistical data on the number of welfare checks conducted in Scotland over the past five years. I would appreciate this data broken down by postcode to identify any areas that may have been subject to potential abuse of this facility.

Unfortunately, I 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) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

To explain, there is no specific category for ‘welfare check’ incidents and the most relevant wider categories are ‘assist member of the public’, ‘concern for person’ and ‘external agency request’. The only way to extract the data required in an accurate and consistent manner would be to assess each individual incident for relevance.

To illustrate, in 2023 alone, there were 96,660 recorded ‘concern for person’ incidents.

## Definition of Abuse: I would also appreciate clarification on the criteria used by Police Scotland to determine if a welfare check request may be deemed as abusive or unwarranted or grossly repetitive.

The information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

To explain, there is no specific criteria or definition used.

## Procedures in Place: Please outline any procedures or guidelines that Police Scotland has implemented to prevent the misuse of the welfare check system.

The [THRIVE](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/call-handling/our-new-approach/) model is used by Police Scotland to assess all contact and identify the most appropriate response.

It is designed to ensure we jointly assess risk and decision making in a consistent way and record our rationale. Public safety and wellbeing are a priority.

THRIVE is used at key decision-making points in order to fully capture rationale and an assessment would always be added when:

* an incident is created
* ownership of incident is transferred - for example initial call to Service Centre transferred to ACR
* a review of an incident is carried out, after a period of time

## Charges or Cautions: Additionally, I would like to know if there have been any charges or cautions issued to individuals for abusing the welfare check system, including the number of such incidents over the past five years.

A caution in Scotland has a different meaning to that in England and Wales.

In England and Wales, the term relates to a formal police warning.

In Scotland a caution is common law, used when interviewing a suspect, when taking a statement from someone who may end up being an accused person, or when charging someone. The caution is simply informing that person of their rights.

The information sought is therefore not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act applies.

As regards charges, we have no means of searching crime reports based on whether there are any links to welfare checks. Researching your request would therefore require the individual assessment of all potentially crime reports, an exercise which would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600.

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.