| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-0141  Responded to: 30 January 2025 |
| --- | --- |

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

**We are conducting research on the use of emergency securing services (such as boarding up and securing buildings) for the UK police force. As part of this research, we would like to find out the following information about your police force's practices in this area. Specifically, we are looking to cover the following:**

**Scenarios and Usage:**

**-             In what scenarios do you use emergency securing services? Are there standard guidelines or policies governing when these services are used?**

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available:

[Forced Entry to Insecure Premises SOP](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/tn3p2kul/forced-entry-and-insecure-premises-sop.docx)

**Frequency:**

**-             How many cases require emergency securing services annually (ideally from 2010 to 2024)? If possible, please provide a geographical breakdown and include the cause of forced entry (i.e. executing a search warrant, immigration, etc).**

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.

By way of explanation, there is no recording classification which specifically relates to this subject matter. In addition, the above question covers a significant time period and would require information to be obtained from multiple sources. The only way to extract the data required in an accurate and consistent manner would be to assess each individual incident for relevance.

I am sure you can appreciate that this is an exercise which would greatly exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

**Service Providers:**

**-             Who are the main providers or contractors engaged for emergency securing services?**

**-             What proportion of emergency securing services does each contractor achieve?**

In response to the two questions above, SPS Doorguard Ltd have recently been awarded the contract as of August 2024. They manage subcontractors across all Scottish policing divisions.

**Expenditure and remuneration:**

**-             How are these services funded – is there a framework in place (if so, please provide detail)? Which parties are responsible for remunerating the emergency securing service contractor (please provide any data that shows a breakdown of this)?**

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available:

[Forced Entry to Insecure Premises SOP](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/tn3p2kul/forced-entry-and-insecure-premises-sop.docx)

**-             If possible, please provide a breakdown of the services used (e.g. locksmith, boarding-up, etc) and the incurred cost, and the average cost per emergency securing process.**

I must respond in terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 however, I am refusing to provide you with this information. 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 requested. The exemption that I consider to be applicable is:

Section 33(1)(b) - Commercial Interests

The information requested is a specific part of the contract details with Police Scotland and the service provider. As you may be aware the tendering process is open to competition and if utilised, companies are invited to submit their tender bid with details of the costs and processes they would use for the successful completion of the contract. As a result any company who submits a tender bid is required to give detailed information regarding the capabilities and financial ability of the company to complete a contract. Public disclosure of such information is likely to give competitive advantage to other similar companies and as a result would have a damaging impact on the company concerned.

Any relevant information supplied by a successful tender company is provided in the expectation that whilst remaining relevant, details within their tender bid, which is commercially sensitive, will be held by Police Scotland and not disclosed to another organisation which may gain a competitive advantage in receiving this information. However, if the information was disclosed this may, in the future, reduce the number of companies tendering for the supply of goods and services, they being aware that the Police will disclose commercially sensitive information. This is likely to negatively impact on the tendering process used by the service to ensure it purchases the most efficient and cost effective services in the future, and prejudice the commercial interests of Police.

This is a non-absolute exemption which requires the application of the Public Interest Test.

Public Interest Test

Public Interest arguments in support of disclosure

- Would allow greater scrutiny of the way public funds are spent;

- Would increase accountability and transparency in terms of this spending;

- It is in the public interest for Police Scotland to procure services competitively, to ensure best value for money.

Public Interest arguments in support of withholding the information

- Would be commercially unfair to our current suppliers;

- Could damage Police Scotland’s relationship with the suppliers;

- The purpose of the tender process is to ensure that all options are presented to Police Scotland and from there the best option in terms of service and cost is selected.

Public Interest Balancing Test.

Police Scotland is a publicly funded organisation and therefore the Service has an obligation to obtain best value for money with particular services. Further, in order to do this, it is essential to maintain working relationships with these companies that tender their services.

As such, Police Scotland will not disclose any information that would impact on the ability to do both. The public interest would not be served if it were no longer possible to engage companies in a tender offer if they believed that conducting business with Police Scotland would result in their confidential financial information being released.

**-             What has been the annual expenditure on emergency securing services for each year from 2010 to 2024?**

Table 1 provides you with a yearly breakdown of Securing of Premises Police Scotland Spend (not including accruals) from 2019. Please note that due to our record retention policy, records do not go back as far as 2010.

*Table 1*

| **Financial Year** | **Analysed Amount** | **Analysed Gross** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2019-2020 | £268,957.61 | £320,192.00 |
| 2020-2021 | £328,490.68 | £394,427.89 |
| 2021-2022 | £145,120.79 | £174,068.88 |
| 2022-2023 | £186,245.95 | £223,350.15 |
| 2023-2024 | £254,183.83 | £304,895.59 |
| **Grand Total** | **£1,182,998.86** | **£1,416,934.51** |

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.