| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 24-1114Responded to: 02 July 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Please provide the number of incidents logged in your force of hate crime which contain the keywords ‘vegan’ or ‘vegans’ in the MO, for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

## With this amendment, the fact veganism is not one of the five social groups protected under hate crime legislation is irrelevant.

Police Scotland defines a **hate incident** as ‘any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated (wholly or partly) by malice and ill-will towards a social group, but which does not constitute a criminal offence.’

Police Scotland defines a **hate crime** as, ‘any crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated (wholly or partly) by malice and ill-will towards a social group.’

Social groups are identified in accordance with the Lord Advocates guidelines on Aggravations of Offences against Prejudice i.e. race, sexual orientation, religion/ faith, age, disability, or transgender identity. Veganism is not listed.

Non-Crime Hate Incidents (NCHIs) and Hate Crimes are recorded on the Police Scotland Interim Vulnerable Person’s Database (iVPD).

This system does not have the facility whereby a keyword search of reports can be carried out and unfortunately therefore, 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) - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

To be of assistance, I have carried out a search of the Police Scotland Storm Unity Command and Control system for any incidents of relevance.

This system records *all* incidents reported to the police, some of which may go on to result in the creation of a report on iVPD.

Between January 2020 and December 2023 inclusive, 4 incidents which have an initial or final classification code of ‘Hate Crime’ include the word ‘Vegan’ in the incident description.

I must stress that Police Scotland does not consider keyword searches for specific words/ phrases to be an accurate means of analysis.

There may be incidents of relevance to your request which do not include the specific phrases you have listed.

Similarly, although the word may appear in an incident log, it cannot be assumed on that basis that the incident was directly related to the subject matter of your request.

It is important to note that some incidents have the keywords noted only due to their location, or items involved in the incident, but have no concerns regarding any person being vegan or any pro or anti vegan beliefs.

Furthermore, the purpose of incident classifications on Storm Unity, such as ‘Hate Crime’, is to assist with resourcing and tasking and the initial police response to incidents.

It does not follow that any such incidents will go on to be recorded on iVPD as a Hate Crime or NCHI.

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.