| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-1123  Responded to: xx May 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## 1. How many internal “whistleblowing” integrity matters were submitted in 2020 within the N division area?

## 2. How many internal “whistleblowing” integrity matters were submitted in 2021 within the N division area?

## 3. How many internal “whistleblowing” integrity matters were submitted in 2022 within the N division area?

## 4. How many internal “whistleblowing” integrity matters were submitted in 2023 within the N division area?

## 5. How many internal “whistleblowing” integrity matters were submitted to date in 2024 within the N division area?

We have provided a response for Q1 to Q5 as noted below.

If the information requested were held, I consider that it would be exempt from disclosure in terms of Section 18 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Section 18 provides that an authority does not have to confirm whether or not information is held where; if the information were held, it would be considered exempt from disclosure in terms of any of sections 28 to 35, 38, 39(1) or 41 of the Act; and disclosing whether or not information is held would be contrary to the public interest:

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

Section 39(1) - Health and Safety

## Section 30(c) - Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs.

Police Scotland seeks to provide an environment where individuals feel confident to raise concerns when they reasonably believe that wrongdoing has been, is being or will be done in the future.

Police Scotland actively encourages officers and members of police staff to report concerns or wrongdoing, often referred to under the title of ‘Whistleblowing’, as it recognises that such reporting has many potential benefits for the organisation.

With this in mind, Police Scotland aims to ensure that an open culture exists which recognises the potential for officers and members of police staff to make a valuable contribution to the running of public services and to the protection of the public interest.

Section 2(1) & (2) of the Act provide that information can only be considered exempt in terms of the exemptions set out above to the extent that the public interest in disclosing the information is not outweighed by that in maintaining the exemption.

Disclosure of the information requested, if held, would highlight the scope of this reporting and dramatically weaken its effectiveness by deterring future reporting and potentially alerting those who may be subject to any related enquiry.

Moreover, releasing information about a particular division and/or particular reporting period would accurately identify whether reports had been made and consequently alert those individuals directly involved.

If a concern is raised in confidence, Police Scotland will seek to respect that confidence.

Police Scotland aims to create an open, transparent and safe working environment where officers and members of police staff feel able to speak up, and disclosure of the information requested, if held, would seriously undermine this approach.

There should be no concerns that the release of any information on this subject matter would undermine the approach and reduce the number of people willing to engage with the process.

In this case, and irrespective of what information is or isn’t held, to merely confirm or deny that information is held would provide information which would directly or inadvertently assist those intent on causing harm.

No inference should be taken from this response as to whether the information you have requested does or does not exist.

## 6. How many of these submissions 2020-2024 have been investigated and found to be wrong/malicious?

All reports are investigated as appropriate and Police Scotland do not categorise any such submissions as “wrong” or “malicious”. On that basis section 17 of the Act applies and I can confirm that the information sought is not held by Police Scotland.

All officers and members of staff have a positive obligation to question the conduct of colleagues that they believe falls below expected standards and, if necessary, challenge, report or take action against such conduct.

## 7. Are these submissions fully anonymous with no way to locate the submitting officers?

I can confirm that Integrity Matters is a one-way mechanism which gives the submitter the option to provide their contact details or the option to make their submission anonymously.  The Integrity Matters portal does not provide the facility to locate or identify the submitting officer or member of police staff if their submission is made anonymously.

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.