| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-1681  Responded to: xx July 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## In 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 how many times were the police called to a hospital or clinic providing abortion care, due to anti-abortion protesters? Please could I have this data broken down by which hospital or clinic the police were called to.

In researching your request, our main source of data would be the Police Scotland incident recording system - STORM. To explain, when a matter is reported to the police - usually by 101 or 999 call - or otherwise comes to police attention, an incident will be logged on this system.

Incidents are categorised to an extent but I would stress first of all that there is no incident classification which would directly relate to the type of incident described in your request. On the contrary, it is considered likely that such incidents could be recorded under a number of different categories depending on the circumstances - for example *noise, disturbance, assault, crime in progress, concern for person* etc. As such, there is no meaningful way the incident classifications could be used as a search criteria.

Similarly, there is no facility whereby we can search based on abortion provider premises - or more generally all hospitals and clinics. Furthermore, it is recognised that such groups can tend to congregate around the outskirts of such premises - particular larger hospitals - the junction/ road leading up to etc. For that reason, it is considered more likely that any incidents of relevance to your request might actually be recorded *not* at the exact address of a premises but at a location in the near vicinity.

Taking all of the above into account, 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 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.

In terms of our section 15 duty to advise and assist applicants, I can also offer the following advice.

In terms of the time period in your request our STORM incident recording system was only introduced nationally in February 2018. The period prior has all of the issues outlined above but further exacerbated by the fact that data is held in eight different systems - all with different system architecture and search capabilities.

I cannot stress enough that Police Scotland *do not* consider key word searches for specific words/ phrases to be an accurate means of analysis in most circumstances - *however* we do have the ability in STORM to conduct such searches.

Applicants in previous FOIs have requested data on incidents where the description includes some or all of the following words/ phrases - 'pro-life', 'pro-choice', 'abortion', 'vigil' or 'prayer' etc. Whilst it would be nigh on impossible to come up with a list of comprehensive search terms, it is considered likely that the phrases listed above ought to capture any incidents of relevance. That may be something you wish to consider albeit I must stress that there may well be incidents of relevance which do not include the specific phrases chosen.

You should also consider that a keyword search will undoubtedly include incidents *not relevant* to your request - for example where the keyword hit has been a mere coincidence rather than directly relevant. An individual may attend at an abortion clinic and have a handbag stolen etc.

Further, we cannot exclude hits where the search term is part of a word - and so an incident with a comment - *hospital staff have been advised to be* ***vigil****ant given the recent thefts* etc. would be captured.

It is also quite common for the mere presence of an anti-abortion group to be reported to the police for information purposes - not a complaint as such.

If you did decide to submit a revised request you would also have to provide a list of premises and I would suggest that you consider a specifying a boundary area around each location - for example within 100m of a smaller premises, within 300m of a larger premises etc.

Finally, you can view FOIs on this subject by searching our [FOI Disclosure Log](https://www.scotland.police.uk/search/?query=pro-life) for 'pro-life' and you may find response 23-0212 provides information of particular interest.

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.