| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-3075  Responded to: 21 January 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.**

**Specifically, I seek details regarding protest events in Scotland since 2013, as outlined below:**

**1. The total number of protest events recorded annually in Scotland from 2013 to the present.**

**2. A regional breakdown of these events by local authority area or region.**

**3. Estimated numbers of attendees at protest events, provided on an annual basis.**

**4. The methods or criteria used by Police Scotland to estimate attendance numbers.**

**5. A breakdown of protests by type (e.g., marches, rallies, sit-ins, vigils).**

**6. The number of protests requiring police attendance and the number categorized as peaceful or non-disruptive.**

**7. Data on the themes or causes of the protests, if available (e.g., climate change, independence, social justice).**

**8. Records of counter-protests occurring alongside other protest events, if applicable.**

**9. The number of police officers deployed to protest events annually.**

**10. The number of protests categorized as "major incidents" per year.**

**11. The annual number of protests that required pre-approval or permits and those that occurred without official permission.**

**12. The number of arrests made at protest events annually and the main charges or reasons for these arrests.**

In response to the questions listed above, 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, the above questions cover a significant time period and would require information to be obtained from multiple sources. There would need to be input from territorial policing divisions. Many database systems including legacy policing systems would require to be searched and once incidents were identified, these would need to be manually assessed for relevance. Application records, our STORM incident recording system along with briefing notes and Incident of Note records would all require to be interrogated for incidents of relevance.

There are also a large number of spontaneous events which would require a manual search protocol.

Furthermore, there will be limits in terms of data retention and archive structures.

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

**13. The annual number of protests that were denied permission due to the perceived extent of possible disruptions caused by the protests, such as road closures or public safety concerns.**

In response to this part of your request, and in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information you seek is not held by Police Scotland.

I would advise that this information is held by local authorities across Scotland.

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.