| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-1014  Responded to: xx May 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**For each year, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024 to date, please provide Domestic Abuse statistics, including the information at a) – e) where available:**

Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Police Scotland and we are committed to working with our partners to reduce the harm it causes and ultimately eradicate it. Domestic abuse is a despicable and debilitating crime which affects all of our communities and has no respect for ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Police Scotland will not tolerate it.

Police Scotland will proactively target perpetrators and support victims to prevent domestic abuse from damaging the lives of victims and their families.

Police Scotland defines domestic abuse as:

“Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners.

The abuse may be committed in the home or elsewhere including online”.

This definition is included in the Joint Protocol between Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), “In partnership challenging domestic abuse” which is a public document that can be found on the Police Scotland website at;

[Police Scotland (scotland.police.uk)](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/ymzlwhwj/joint-protocol-between-police-scotland-and-copfs-in-partnership-challenging-domestic-abuse.pdf?view=Standard)

or on the COPFS website at;

[Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (copfs.gov.uk)](https://www.copfs.gov.uk/)

I must also underline that this response is comprised of two separate sets of statistics which are drawn from separate databases. The two data sets are not comparable.

## How many incidents of domestic violence were reported by the public and recorded during the requested timeframes?

In Scotland, the term ‘domestic abuse’, rather than ‘domestic violence’ has been adopted to better represent the combination of psychological and physical dimensions of violence to broaden the focus from physical abuse to the ongoing manipulation of power in intimate relationships.

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”.

This information is publicly available (by financial year) via the links below:

[Domestic abuse: statistics recorded by the police in Scotland, 2022-23 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-statistics-recorded-police-scotland-2022-23/)

[Domestic abuse: statistics recorded by the police in Scotland - 2021/22 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-recorded-police-scotland-2021-22/)

[Domestic abuse: statistics recorded by the Police in Scotland - 2020/21 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-recorded-police-scotland-2020-21/)

[Domestic abuse: statistics recorded by the police in Scotland - 2019/20 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-statistics-recorded-police-scotland-2019-20/)

[Key Points - Domestic abuse: statistics recorded by the police in Scotland - 2018/19 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-scotland-2018-2019-statistics/pages/1/)

1. **The nature of the abuse (e.g. psychological, physical, sexual, emotional)**

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.

Domestic abuse encompasses a host of examples of types of abusive behaviour and there is no way to automatically extract this level of detail. Accordingly, we would have to research many thousands of incidents to establish an accurate response. This is an exercise that would far exceed the cost threshold of the Act.

The publicly available links include some information about the most frequently recorded crimes and offences as part of domestic abuse.

## The gender of the victims

This information is available within the included links.

As the 2023/2024 statistics are not yet available, the 2024 data to date is noted below, however please note these figures are by calendar year and not financial year as above.

This data has been extracted from the interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD).

The iVPD is the formal means by which Police Scotland record police contact with adults, children and young people who are, or are perceived to be, experiencing some form of adversity and / or situational vulnerability, which may impact on their current or future wellbeing; or where force policy dictates e.g. domestic abuse, hate crime, youth offending or to record details of victim’s rights under Section 8 and 9 of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014.

The iVPD is a dynamic database which is constantly being updated and changed in line with our weeding and retention policy.

Table 1.Gender of domestic abuse victims 2024 (to date)

|  | **2024\*** |
| --- | --- |
| Female | 6,665 |
| Male | 3,995 |
| Unknown | 38 |

1. **The gender of the offenders.**

This information is available within the included links.

As the 2023/2024 statistics are not yet available, the available 2024 data is noted below - however, please note these figures are calendar year (to date) and not financial year as above.

Table 2. Gender of domestic abuse suspected perpetrator

|  | **2024\*** |
| --- | --- |
| Female | 2,649 |
| Male | 12,213 |
| Unknown | 96 |

The term suspected perpetrator is used to encompass both a person suspected to have committed an offence where the police attend an incident *and* a person charged by the police with having committed a criminal offence.

1. **The ethnic background of the victims**

A breakdown by ethnicity of victims of domestic abuse (across the entire period requested) is recorded as follows:

| **Description** | **No. of victims** |
| --- | --- |
| African | 2,818 |
| Any Mixed Ethnic group | 1,362 |
| Arab | 864 |
| Bangladeshi | 319 |
| Black Scottish or Other Black | 902 |
| Caribbean | 143 |
| Chinese | 904 |
| Indian | 1,647 |
| Other African, Caribbean or Black | 731 |
| Other Asian | 2,652 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 2,061 |
| Other White | 10,225 |
| Pakistani | 3,092 |
| White British | 66,334 |
| White English | 9,300 |
| White Gypsy/Traveller | 755 |
| White Irish | 1,336 |
| White Northern Ireland | 511 |
| White Polish | 10,414 |
| White Scottish | 251,140 |
| White Welsh | 772 |
| Not Recorded | 13,887 |
| **Grand Total** | **382,169** |

1. **The age of the victims**

This information is available within the included links above.

Please note the caveats below:

* All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.
* The data provided within the tables have been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems (iVPD) and are correct at 3rd May 2024\*.
* The data was extracted using the incident's raised date.
* Police Scotland does not retain any information for statistical purposes once a record has been weeded from iVPD.  When a record is weeded, it is removed from the system, and there is no retention of data outside the weeding and retention policy.  Please note, the weeding and retention policy states that if a person is recorded as "no concern / not applicable" then this will only be retained for six months.

You will also find statistical information published by the Scottish Government (provided by Police Scotland) via the links above.

## Of those reported, how many cases of domestic violence were followed up by a police officer? The term ‘followed up by a police officer’ is clarified as being either where an officer attended the scene OR attended the scene whilst the incident was ongoing.

Every incident of domestic abuse reported to the police will be reviewed and investigated. Police Scotland treat all incidents of domestic abuse as high priority and will prioritise incidents to ensure that, as far as possible, any incident reported is met with an appropriate response by police officers.

THRIVE (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement) is the model used by Police Scotland to assess all contact and identify the most appropriate response. It is designed to ensure that we jointly assess risk and decision making in a consistent way and record our rationale.

The initial priority for police officers attending a domestic abuse incident is the safety and well-being of the victims, their family and any other person present. The circumstances of a domestic abuse incident should not be looked at in isolation and officers must also have regard to the history and nature of the relationship and previous incidents. Careful consideration should be given to all relevant factors (THRIVE) which will vary depending on the circumstances.

The Police response should be victim led as much as possible. If the victim is reluctant to have Police attend at their home address, an agreed location to meet officers can be established. They can also attend at a local Police station. In either case, the victim should do so imminently if there is no risk involved in leaving their current location. A full and comprehensive THRIVE assessment should be carried out to enable informed decision making.

Given the unpredictable and often violent nature of domestic abuse, incidents should be assessed, and consideration should always be given to the safety of the victim and family, background history for the victim and suspect, severity of the report and evidential opportunities which could diminish with time.  An incident may require an immediate or prompt response and fast tracked where necessary.

As Police adopt a Duty-of-Care approach, they will attend at the locus if there is no engagement from the victim.

Local Policing Appointments (LPAs) are only suitable for incidents which are not ongoing and assessed, following a thorough THRIVE assessment, that there is no investigative urgency or apparent risk of harm to the victim, family members, public or the reported perpetrator. The victim's wishes should also be considered however the safety and wellbeing of the victim, and their family is the paramount consideration.

## What were the police officer’s response times for each domestic violence incident/report/call?

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, we cannot search incident / crime systems to establish an accurate response time for those incidents that officers attend in the course of their enquiries.

In order to extract the data you require a manual search of all domestic abuse incidents would have to be carried out to determine any timestamps recorded. This is an exercise that would far exceed the cost threshold of the Act.

1. **How many of these cases resulted in a prosecution?**

Police Scotland does not hold prosecution information. As such, 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.

You may wish to contact the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscals Service (COPFS) which holds conviction information for Scotland. A request can be submitted to COPFS via email using the following address [foi@copfs.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foi@copfs.gsi.gov.uk).

1. **Of the reported domestic abuse cases, how many were given a domestic violence protection order?**

Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) were rolled out across all 43 police forces in England and Wales from 8 March 2014 but are not in effect in Scotland.

In terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

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.