| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-3214  Responded to: 20 January 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## 1. I know that most people are generally accommodated in either a hotel or safehouse alone (apart from perhaps their families), but do safehouses exist where someone(s) lives there, either to protect or just keep an eye on them? (this is the scenario in my story)

## --and would they have to be police and/or witness protection officers? Or only vetted?

## 2. Could there ever potentially be more than one person (perhaps witnesses in unrelated cases) ever living in the same safe house?

## --e.g. if there were no other places available?

## --e.g. if the situation was as above (i.e. similar to a women’s refuge but on much smaller scale)

## 3. Are people sometimes able to go back to their own lives after e.g. testifying?

## Or is witness protection always viewed as a long-term/permanent commitment?

## 4. Do the police (or another body) pay for the protected person’s accommodation?

## --How long for approx.? Months/years?

## 5. Do the police (or another body) give the protected person money/allowance?

## --How long for approx.? Months/years?

6. Are safe houses just temporary stop gaps, (even if the protected person is in long-term witness protection)?

 7. Would a protected person be told they can’t tell anyone their name while living in a safe house?

## 8. Under what circumstances might their identity have to be changed? (e.g. only if a real and continuing threat is established and the witness can never return home?)

## --When is identity changed? (e.g. after testifying?)

## 9. Would a police officer working specifically on a case, and directly with a witness, ever know where that witness was being housed by the UKPPS?

## Or is the UKPPS an entirely closed loop, where they would never divulge, even to a police officer working directly on a case/with a witness, where that witness was?

## Or allow them a means to contact them directly? (only indirectly through the WPO/UKPPS instead?)

## In my story, I want it to be at least feasible that a senior investigating officer in Police Scotland would know the location of the safehouse where their key witness in the case was/would be living until the trial. And would also be able to contact them directly. Do you think that would ever be possible??

I can advise that Police Scotland does not hold information in the format requested. In terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

As you will be aware an individual’s right in terms of the legislation is to obtain recorded information held by a public authority at the time a request is received and there is no obligation on them to create new information specifically for such a request.

In addition, information which requires opinion or a yes/no response is not a valid request.

Accordingly, 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.