| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 23-0809Responded to: 13 April 2023 |
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Your recent request for information has been passed to Freedom of Information and is replicated below, together with our response.

## Questions 1:

## As the majority of crime is committed by men, would you say the impact from society is significant in causing this? if so, in what way does society impact men specifically to commit more crime

***My understanding is the bio - psycho - social framework provides the best explanatory framework and it is not a case of either, or. That said, socialisation and society factors definitely do impact on the genders in different ways. Despite increased awareness, boys are raised to think, act and behave differently. Unfortunately traditional masculine roles endorse and even encourage aggression, risk taking, dominance - and this can manifest in private home settings and the community - and even in the world of business where there is white collar crime. From my own experience, men are also more likely to tolerate others' - and their own - aggression. They are likely to "problem solve" through exerting power and achieving physical superiority and there is, at least in some subcultures, an expectation to do so. I have worked with many violent offenders and it is an expectation that if someone crosses a line (actual or perceived) it is a must to respond in a harmful way. It is also the case that the way men are socialised is highly relevant to sexual offending. The objectification of women and the celebration of sexual behaviours as some sort of male prowess is highly distorting.***

**Questions 2:**

## Would you say that labelling impacts men more than women and makes them more likely to commit crime? For instance through the community that they are a part of viewing them a certain way.

***Labelling theory has an important role in understanding a person's behaviour and their recidivism. In my experience, it is extremely difficult to cross back from being an offender to non-offender (and that is relevant for all offence types). Indeed, just the other day, a person who I know and works with vulnerable people in the city, and who spent time in prison decades ago, said he wondered when he would stop being an 'ex-offender' and just a person. His conclusion would be that would be "never". Once society sees you in a particular way, identity - internal and external - tends to become more entrenched and deeply rooted. Opportunities change, perceptions change, and therefore attitudes change. this can start very early on on life (eg. at school) and follow one all the way into adulthood. The self-fulfilling prophecy is a powerful one.***

***I think too that if a person has been 'prepared' before to commit offences, temptation might come their way again. Many people I have worked with will say that it is all fine and well to talk about leading an offence free lifestyle whilst they are in the sterility of a prison setting but the reality is, they will return to a community ravaged by property and disadvantage, they might need to live in a hostel with people who are seriously disadvantaged - often drug users, they have little access to money, and their peers are the same as them. They might or might not have family to support them. Some people who commit serious crimes are disowned by their support networks and are very much on their own. There is no fairytale ending when a prison sentence runs its course. In my experience, individuals are often more disadvantaged than when they first came in and commenced their offence trajectory. And, some people I have worked with in prison have very candidly told me "I have food to eat and a bed to sleep in, I have friends, I know the rules, I am safe here. I can't cope in the community. There is nothing out there for me."***

***In relation to the genders, yes I do think it has a differential effect. Our society views women as victims and men as victimisers and support and resources is distributed accordingly. Women are given more sympathy and lesser sentences than men. Women's trauma is recognised, men's isn't. We are more willing to lend compassion to women and more punitive to men. All of this is, in my view, contributory to the supports and successes we observe.***

In response, I must advise you that in terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, a public authority is only obliged to provide recorded information.

Under Section 8 of the Act, information which requires an opinion response is not in essence a valid request, accordingly, in this instance I cannot process your request.

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 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 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.