| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-3022  Responded to: 15 December 2023 |
| --- | --- |

Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Please provide the following under freedom of information legislation, in relation to the investigation into a fire at the New Couty Hotel in Perth on January 2 2023.

## How many suspects have been identified?

## How many people have been interviewed under caution? Please provide genders and ages here.

## How many people have been arrested?

## How many people have been charged?

## What has been established as the cause of the fire?

In terms of section 18 of the Act, I am refusing to confirm or deny whether the information sought is held by Police Scotland as the public interest overwhelmingly lies in protecting the integrity of the investigation.

The exemptions outlined as follow would apply, were the information held:

Section 34(1)(b) - Investigations - Information is exempt information if it has at any time been held by Police Scotland for the purposes of an investigation which may lead to a decision to make a report to the Procurator Fiscal to enable it to be determined whether criminal proceedings should be instituted.

Section 35(1)(a)&(b) - Law enforcement - Disclosure would be likely to prejudice substantially the ability of the police to investigate and detect crime and would have a similar detrimental impact on the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Public Interest Test

Public awareness would favour disclosure as it would contribute to the public debate surrounding the police handling of such an enquiry.

I would, however, contend that the efficient/ effective conduct of the service favours non disclosure as it cannot be in the public interest to release information that would prejudice law enforcement.

Accordingly, at this time the public interest lies in protecting the integrity of investigative and criminal justice procedures by refusing to provide the information sought.

I appreciate that there is a public interest in relation to police investigations. That said, it is essential that neither the investigation nor the potential for proceedings to be brought against an individual are put at risk.

## How many witnesses have been spoken to?

## How many officers remain dedicated to investigating the incident?

In response to these questions, I can advise you that 195 witnesses have been spoken to and that 13 officers are currently dedicated to the enquiry in partnership with staff from other agencies.

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.