| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0384  Responded to: xx February 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000. Please see below a request for the following information relating to offences involving a blade or pointed article. I would like to know if there has been an increase in the number of minors carrying weapons, the number arrested and charged for carrying weapons and number of victims. All questions below relate to minors (under 18) only. Due to the number of attacks (acts of violence) amongst under 18s, I would like to know the following:**

**For each question, I would like data for each of the following time periods:**

**January 2021 – December 2021**

**January 2022 – December 2022**

**January 2023- December 2023**

**Question 1: How many minors under the age of 18 have been arrested for possession of a knife blade or pointed article? If it is within the time/cost limit set by the FOI Act, please provide a break down by age**

The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 removed the separate concepts of arrest and detention and replaced them with a power of arrest without warrant - where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting a person has committed, or is committing, an offence.

When a person is arrested, a statement of arrest should be read over as soon as reasonably practical and details recorded in the arresting officer’s notebook.

A person is ‘Not Officially Accused’ (a suspect) when arrested *and* *not* cautioned and charged. They are ‘Officially Accused’ once arrested *and* cautioned and charged.

If conveyed to a police station, the arrested person will have their details recorded in our National Custody System.

There are situations however whereby a person must be released from police custody prior to their arrival at a police station - effectively they are ‘de-arrested’ where the reasonable grounds for suspicion no longer exist. In those circumstances, the details of an arrested person are not held electronically.

As a result, we are unfortunately unable to collate comprehensivearrest data, as case by case assessment of all officer notebooks would be required - in addition to the partialarrest data held in the National Custody System.

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request and I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

Data for detected knife crimes can be accessed online:

[Crime data - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/)

**Question 2: How many minors under the age of 18 have been charged specifically with murder or manslaughter, as a result of a knife blade or pointed article being used? If it is within the time/cost limit set by the FOI Act, please provide a break down by age**

**Question 4: What is the age of the youngest detainee to be charged with murder or manslaughter for the years provided?**

Crimes in Scotland are recorded in accordance with the Scottish Government Justice Department offence classifications and there is no Scottish classification equivalent to manslaughter. Section 17 of the Act therefore applies as the information sought is not held by police.

Offences of Murder and Culpable Homicide have been searched and the results broken down by year are as follows:

1 January - 31 December 2021 - 3 - Ages 17 years, 17 years and 16 years

1 January - 31 December 2022 - 1 - Age 17 years

1 January - 31 December 2023 - 1 - Age 16 years

**Question 5: How many minors under the age of 18 have been recorded as being a seriously injured by a minor carrying a blade or sharply pointed article**

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process this part of your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

To explain, we have no means of searching crime reports based on the age of the victim or accused at the time of the offence.  Researching your request would therefore require the individual assessment of all crime reports relating to knife crime.

**Question 6: How many minors under the age of 18 have died as a result of seriously injured by a minor carrying a knife or sharply pointed article.**

In relation to cases of murder and culpable homicide, I can advise that one minor under the age of 18 has died during the period.

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.