| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-0237  Responded to: 3rd February 2023 |
| --- | --- |

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

**Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please can you provide me with responses to the following regarding police attendance response times for 999 calls.**

**If you do not use the grades 1-3 grading system, please could you provide the equivalent figures for the system you use for prioritising calls.**

**1) Please could you provide the average police response time to attend 999 calls categorised as (i) grade 1 emergency, (ii) grade 2, (iii) grade 3, for each of the five calendar years from 2018 to 2022.**

**2) Please could you provide the number and proportion of emergency calls that were not responded to within the target time for (i) grade 1 emergency, (ii) grade 2, (iii) grade 3, for each of the five calendar years from 2018 to 2022.**

**2) Please could you provide the individual longest police response time to attend a 999 call for (i) a grade 1 emergency, (ii) grade 2, (iii) grade 3, for each of the five calendar years from 2018 to 2022.**

I would firstly like to emphasise that Police Scotland do not have specific targets for responding to calls. We do have targets for dispatching resources to incidents i.e. 15 minutes for incidents graded as Immediate and 4 hours for incidents graded as Prompt.

In relation all of your questions I regret to inform you that I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested, as it would prove too costly to do so within the context of the fee regulations.

As you may be aware the current cost threshold is £600 and I estimate that it would cost well in excess of this amount to process your request.

As such, and in terms of Section 16(4) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where Section 12(1) of the Act (Excessive Cost of Compliance) has been applied, this represents a refusal notice for the information sought.

By way of explanation we have interpreted that where this request references ‘response times’ this means the time taken form an incident being created to a resource arriving at scene.

We have also interpreted ‘calls’ in this instance to refer to incidents. Incidents are raised where it is assessed that some form of police response is required. This can be in response to contact by telephone or any other means, or at the request of officers or partners.

It is also worth noting that an incident will have the most appropriate grade applied regardless of whether it is received via 999, 101 or any other channel.

STORM Unity is the system used by Police Scotland for the management of police incidents and resources and is the source of the data provided in this response. It is worth noting that STORM is primarily a command & control system and has limited value as a statistical tool.

Most data obtained from the system requires further analysis to establish context. In large volumes, this can be extremely difficult to do and in some cases it is not possible to filter or structure data to adequately answer a specific request.

STORM automatically captures timing data when an incident is raised and dispatched. The arrival of a resource at the locus of an incident is recorded via a manual process and as a result is open to error.

The most common method of marking ‘At Scene’ is for officers to select a hotkey on their airwave device. This is often overlooked, particularly when officers arrive at the scene of a dynamic incident. Controllers are able to manually update the status of resources if required but this can naturally lead to errors in the accurate recording of the actual time of arrival. The priority of all staff is the safe and effective management of our policing response.

From previous reviews of data of this type, numerous errors in the accurate recording of this information have been identified. These include:

* Officers failing to update their handsets to mark themselves ‘At Scene’ when they actually arrived at locus. In some cases this was completed after a significant delay and in others the status was not updated until the incident was closed some time later.
* Incidents which were initially, appropriately, assessed at a lower response level but later reassessed and upgraded in response to new information. In these circumstances the timer does not reset, but reflects the total time from creation to dispatch/arrival.

These scenarios distort overall figures meaning that a manual review of several million incidents would be required to remove erroneous results and establish the true ‘response time’. This is an exercise I believe will greatly exceed the cost threshold set out within the Act.

I would also point out that the grading of an incident can change whilst it is open. A call may be re-graded as more or less urgent depending on additional information being received which adds additional complexity to the search required to answer your questions.

Police Scotland have determined that the £600 threshold within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request exceeds this limit.

Whilst I would normally suggest a refined timescale is considered in cases where excessive cost is an issue, unfortunately due to the number of incidents Police Scotland deals with each day, I do not believe there is a way to refine your request and still produce meaningful statistics.

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.