| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-2681  Responded to: 13th December 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

1. **When and how Police Scotland’s Executive Team, or someone on their behalf/with their knowledge, informed the Scottish Government of their intention to postpone the recruitment of 200 probationary constables in January 2024 which was a decision publicly announced on 6 October 2023. Please provide the date, and time if possible, along with the means by which this decision was communicated (i.e email/in person meeting etc.).**

At the SPA Board on 28th September 2023 Deputy Chief Constable Designate Fiona Taylor said: “I have been clear that we will continue to communicate about the hard choices being taken to maintain effective policing within the funding available.”

She also said: “Of necessity, as part of our commitment to delivering a balanced budget we are closely assessing the officer recruitment profile for the remainder of 2023-24.”

These comments were published on the Police Scotland website following the board meeting: [Police Scotland update on policing our communities work to deliver effective policing within the funding available. - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2023/september/policing-our-communities-update/)

The decision to postpone the next probationer intake was taken on the week of 02 October 2023. Both Scottish Government officials were notified by DCC Taylor on Thursday 05 October 2023 of the decision taken within Police Scotland.

This decision was communicated more widely the following morning, Friday 6 October: [Police Scotland update on training and recruitment - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2023/october/policing-our-communities-update/)

1. **If this decision was communicated in writing (either via email, or letter etc.) please provide this correspondence that was sent to the Scottish Government and any further emails from Police Scotland or the Scottish Government related to the decision. If the decision was communicated verbally, please provide the minutes of the meeting/phone call/zoom meeting etc. where it took place.**

The information was provided verbally by Police Scotland, there is no recorded minute of those discussions. As such, in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information requested is not held by Police Scotland.

1. **Whether the 200 probationary constables not being recruited means Police Scotland are now operating on a model which assumes that there will be ~16,400 officers employed across the force, roughly 200 lower than set out in the 2023-24 budget.**

Future intakes of probationers will be determined by the budget settlement for 24/25 and it is Police Scotland’s intention to recruit to 16,600 if the budget allows.

1. **Are the 200 probationary constables due to start their service in January scheduled to start at a later date (on top of other already planned recruitment intakes) or is this intake due to start in January not going ahead at all, or is the decision pending the budget settlement from the Scottish Government for 2024-25 and if so, how much extra funding would be required in order to allow for the 200 probationers to start?**

In respect of the January intake no formal offers had been made to potential recruits, however Police Scotland continue to plan for the following intake currently scheduled for late March 2024. The exact number of recruits will be predicated upon budgetary provision. Police Scotland will seek a budgetary provision which allows us to maintain around 16,600 police officers.

Year 1 cost of 200 new probationary recruits is circa £6,600,000.

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.