| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 24-2578Responded to: 16 October 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**In the years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 how many police informants were used?**

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the following exemptions apply:

* Section 35(1)(a)&(b) - Law Enforcement
* Section 39(1) - Health and Safety
* Section 34(1)(b) - Investigations
* Section 38(1)(b) - Personal information

Disclosure of data on the number Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) builds a picture of policing activity that would be invaluable to offenders.

Disclosure would present an increased risk to those operating as CHIS as it would lead to members of organised crime groups seeking to identify individuals who may be reporting their activities.

This increases the risk to individuals, whether there are CHIS reporting on that group or not. Disclosure would allow apparent spikes to be identified that could in turn be associated to a particular serious crime and compromise a CHIS operation.

Further, where significant arrests and recoveries have been made from a CHIS-led operation then it would be conceivable that Organised Crime Groups could effectively ascertain that it was CHIS information that lead to the police action, due to any significant spike in CHIS numbers. From there they might assume, rightly or wrongly, that a particular individual was providing information to the police, putting this person at risk of harm.

Although I consider that public awareness would favour a disclosure as it would contribute to the public debate surrounding the application of these measures, we must ensure that the release of this level of detail is not inadvertently providing potentially harmful information and placing an individual at risk.

This is a matter of principle which applies equally to any member of the public who could find themselves subject to this or other protective measures in a variety of circumstances.

The public interest in terms of accountability is provided for via disclosure of the associated financial information which is provided at question two below.

**how much money was paid out to police informants?**

The information below provides the financial rewards paid to CHIS for the calendar years 2019 to 2023, inclusive:

2019 - £277,027.30

2020 - £264,607.24

2021 - £305,588.72

2022 - £288,850.80

2023 - £321,419.41

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.