| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 23-2918Responded to: 07 December 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## The number of police reports that include the words begging/beggar/beggars in them. Can this data be broken down per year for the past five years and according to police division?

**Clarified as incidents reported.**

In response to your request, I must first of all must stress that begging is not a criminal matter and there are no classifications on any of our systems that would directly align to solely that behaviour.

It is not possible for us to conduct searches of our system based on what callers may have mentioned in their account.

We can however base searches on the presence of particular words/ phrases in the notes taken by the call handlers and input on to our STORM incident recording system.

We have therefore progressed your request on that basis, searching for the words and phrases included in your request.

I must stress that Police Scotland do not consider keyword searches for specific words/ phrases to be an accurate means of analysis.

There may have been incidents of relevance to your request which do not include the specific phrases that you have listed.

It would however be nigh on impossible to come up with a list of comprehensive search terms – hence why we would not recommend the approach.

Similarly, although the phrase appears in an incident log, it cannot be assumed on that basis that the incident was directly related to the subject matter of begging as per the context of your request.

For the reasons above, we would therefore take the view that the data below does not accurately reflect reports of matters concerning begging.

The table below details incidents with the search terms beggar/ begging/ beggars for the time period 1 January 2018 to 31 October 2023 (inclusive):

| **Police Division** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| North East | 173 | 215 | 160 | 159 | 156 | 157 |
| Tayside | 306 | 294 | 447 | 404 | 349 | 222 |
| Highland and Islands | 58 | 111 | 65 | 60 | 73 | 55 |
| Forth Valley | 148 | 153 | 102 | 82 | 82 | 67 |
| Edinburgh | 541 | 663 | 709 | 527 | 397 | 300 |
| Lothian and Borders | 119 | 121 | 151 | 136 | 172 | 137 |
| Fife | 194 | 195 | 202 | 194 | 239 | 189 |
| Greater Glasgow | 1037 | 1068 | 791 | 724 | 679 | 553 |
| Ayrshire | 149 | 129 | 183 | 137 | 117 | 108 |
| Lanarkshire | 123 | 222 | 238 | 233 | 181 | 210 |
| Argyll and West Dunbartonshire | 41 | 51 | 47 | 58 | 47 | 54 |
| Renfrewshire and Inverclyde | 125 | 97 | 104 | 141 | 125 | 91 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 17 | 16 | 20 | 28 | 39 | 18 |
| Total | 3031 | 3335 | 3219 | 2883 | 2656 | 2161 |

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.