| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-1203  Responded to: 6th June 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**I’d like to ask how much has been spent by Police Scotland on the purchase of FFP3 masks since 2020.**

In response to your request, 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, Police Scotland do not have a specific code within our finance systems that would allow FFP3 masks to be automatically extracted. Whilst it was initially hoped results could be provided by examining the invoices for main suppliers of masks to Police Scotland, it has become clear that not all FFP3 purchases would be covered.

In order to obtain accurate figures, all purchases made by the relevant departments would need to be gathered with manual examination of invoices conducted to determine whether they related to FFP3 masks. This would also extend to physical examination of invoices where it was unclear what the purchase related to. This is a task that would be further complicated in instances where part of an invoice related to FFP3 masks and part related to other items.

To give some scale to the task involved, looking at just the relevant department for the East of Scotland for the 20/21 financial year would require 5,128 entries to be examined. Extending this to the whole of Scotland and for the full period required would mean tens of thousands of records would need to be checked. At a rough estimate of 5 minutes per record to take account of those that will need to be physically examined and the complexity of mixed item orders, this is a task that would take a large amount of time to complete. In the limited example provided above which covers only part of Scotland and part of the period requested, it would take in excess of 427 hours of work.

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

Whilst I would normally suggest a revised timescale is considered, in this case as one year will vastly exceed the cost threshold within the Act I do not believe this would be possible.

Consideration was also given to suggesting the request was limited to just the main suppliers of face masks to Police Scotland but again, as they will not have exclusively provided FFP3 masks and invoices can include a mixture of items, a level of manual review would be required. Using the same example of the East of Scotland for the 2020/21 financial year for just one of these companies resulted in an estimated 77 hours of work being required and so unfortunately I do not believe this is a viable option either.

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.