| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 24-3097Responded to: 06 January 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**For each calendar year 2021, 2022, 2023 and for the period 1st January 2024 to 28th November 2024, please could you tell me:
1) The number of cases of abuse linked to faith or belief (as defined above) that have been reported
2) A brief description of each case and the outcome if known (i.e. arrest, charge, on bail, no further action, etc)**

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

By way of explanation, there is no consistent and accurate way of collating this information as Police Scotland does not have any relevant markers or categorisation to identify such cases.

**3) The number of crime reports where the term "witch", or "witchcraft", or "demon", or "exorcism" is mentioned in the MO field of the crime report**

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

There may be crimes of relevance to your request which do not include the specific words listed.

Similarly, spelling errors can skew the results of any analysis based on the presence of keywords.

Although a word appears in the MO of a crime report, it cannot be assumed on that basis that the crime was directly related to the subject matter, 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 the prevalence of crimes of this nature.

However, I can confirm that a search was conducted and brought back 54 results.

On further assessment only 25 of these had any actual relevance to witches, witchcraft, demon or exorcism.

**4) A brief description of each reported crime from your answer to question 3) and the outcome if known (i.e. arrest, charge, on bail, no further action, etc)**

For a breakdown by crime type, please see the table below.

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| **Crime type** | **Recorded crimes** |
| Threatening or abusive behaviour | 13 |
| Domestic abuse of a female | 2 |
| Vandalism | 2 |
| Minor assault | 1 |
| Racially aggravated assault | 2 |
| General post office telecommunication offences | 4 |
| Theft – excluding motor vehicle | 1 |

All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information.
Data were extracted from Police Scotland systems and are correct as at 13/12/2024
Keyword searches of the crime MO text within National UNIFI were carried out for 'WITCH', 'WITCHCRAFT', 'DEMON' and 'EXORCISM'.
Data for the 2024\_25 period covers up to and including 28 November 2024 only.

I can confirm that 21 of the 25 crimes are detected crimes - those where an accused has been identified and there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots Law to justify consideration of criminal proceedings.

You should note that Home Office outcome classifications are not used in Scotland.

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.