| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0441  Responded to: xx February 2024 |
| --- | --- |

Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## How many total police officers do you have serving?

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 section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available at:

[Police Scotland Officer Numbers - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/police-scotland-officer-numbers/)

## Please provide the number and percentage of serving police officers who have failed re-vetting procedures in the last five years. How many of these officers are still serving even though they have failed re-vetting?

I must first advise you that Police Scotland undertake ‘re-vetting’ on Management Vetting clearances when they expire.

We do not currently undertake re-vetting of Recruitment Vetting clearances.

On that basis I can advise that a check of our systems for the period between 16/02/2019 and 16/02/2024 confirms that two officers did not meet the Management Vetting (MV) clearance standard.

To clarify, both officers are still serving and continue to hold Recruitment Vetting (RV) clearance which is the minimum vetting standard required to work within Police Scotland.

## For the last three years, please provide as many examples as is financially possible of the following:

I must advise you that Section 12 (1) of the Act does not require a public authority to comply with a request for information under Section 1(1) if the authority *estimates* that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

## The rationale provided for rejecting vetting clearance for officers in relation to adverse information recorded as Violence Against Women and Girls-related. In each example, I would like a copy of the report made in rejecting vetting clearance, or as much of it as possible.

It has been estimated that to provide the requested information will exceed the £600 cost threshold defined in the Act.

To explain, our vetting system does not record adverse information by category and accordingly, the only methodology we could utilise for your request at this time is a manual check of every single record of both prospective and existing officers.

On this occasion it is assessed that the cost of locating, retrieving and providing the information sought would take over 40 hours and be in excess of the £600 cost limit.

I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 16(4) of the Act, as section 12(1) - Excessive Cost of Compliance - applies.

For clarity, if we were to check all prospective police officers, this would require us to examine 132 cases.

There are on average six separate police system checks that would require to be considered, together with the recorded vetting rationale.

An average case would take 20-25 minutes to review, estimated to equate to 2,640 - 3,300 minutes (44-55 hours) work, exceeding the cost limit.

If this exercise was applied to existing officers, we would need further clarity on whether any such query referred to (i) on first application of MV clearance (this would be when they take up a designated post requiring a higher level of vetting clearance) or (ii) on renewal of MV clearance.

## Does your force conduct face-to-face interviews (not including through audio/video telecommunications) as part of the vetting process?

## Does your force check the content on publicly available social media to ensure that the applicant’s online behaviour is compatible with the Code of Ethics or Standards of Professional Behaviour, as part of the vetting process?

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 section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available at:   [Vetting Manual Guidance](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/g3xlghjn/vetting-manual-of-guidance-v-1-10-_redacted.pdf)

The Vetting Manual of Guidance details what checks we do as part of the vetting process. Paragraphs 5.23 and 5.13 may assist you in respect of the questions posed.

## Please provide the average time between a police officer’s initial vetting and re-vetting in your police force.

Management Vetting clearances are renewed every seven years. As detailed at Q1 above we do not currently renew Recruitment Vetting clearance, however this is subject to ongoing review and consultation.

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.