SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY
ÙGHDARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

2 Clyde Gateway
French Street
Glasgow
G40 4EH

LETTER SENT BY EMAIL ONLY

3 July 2026

FOI 2026/27-021

Request

Your request for information dated 14 June 2026 is copied below.

I request the following recorded information:

1. In relation to complaints received by the Scottish Police Authority concerning the "Speirs Directive":
   a. How many complaints have been received from individuals resident in Scotland?
   b. How many complaints have been received from individuals who are not resident in Scotland?

2. How many of those complaints have been received that relate solely to Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs?

3. How many of those complaints have been received that relate solely to Operation Talla and allegations that Operation Talla was used to suppress the reporting of crimes to Police Scotland concerning COVID-19 vaccines, COVID-19, or the handling of the pandemic by government authorities?

4. What is the total number of complaints received and acknowledged by the Scottish Police Authority in relation to the matters referred to above for each category?

5. What is the total number of such complaints that are currently under active investigation?

6. What is the total number of such complaints that have been rejected, closed without investigation, or otherwise not progressed?

7. what is the total number of complaints for all categories received by the Scottish Police Authority since April 23rd 2026 up to and including the date 14th of June 2026?

Response

The Scottish Police Authority has considered your request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA).

Each part of your request is copied below along with the Authority's response.

1. **In relation to complaints received by the Scottish Police Authority concerning the "Speirs Directive":**
   a. How many complaints have been received from individuals resident in Scotland?
   b. How many complaints have been received from individuals who are not resident in Scotland?

2. **How many of those complaints have been received that relate solely to Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs?**

In terms of part 1 and 2, which refer to a named individual, the Authority considers that to reveal whether the information exists, or is held, would be contrary to the public interest.[1] Section 18 applies where the following two conditions are met:

- If the information was held, it would be exempt from disclosure in terms of one or more of the exemptions set out in sections 28 to 35, 38, 39(1) or 41 of the Act.
- It would be contrary to the public interest to reveal whether the information is held.

If information did exist, and was held, exemptions in sections 38 and 30 would apply.

38(1)(b) and 38(2a) of the Act apply as you have requested third party personal data which is exempt where assessed that disclosure would contravene the data protection principles as defined in the Act.

Section 30(c) applies where assessed that disclosure would otherwise prejudice substantially, or be likely to prejudice substantially, the effective conduct of public affairs.

While you may have a particular interest in whether or not the information sought exists, and is held, this is outweighed by the significant public interest in protecting the privacy and data protection rights of individuals and maintaining expectations of confidentiality. Further, if information existed and was held, disclosure would be contrary

[1] This represents a notice in terms of Section 18 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

to the public interest as it would impact the Authority's ability to undertake such investigations and would harm working relationships.

3. **How many of those complaints have been received that relate solely to Operation Talla and allegations that Operation Talla was used to suppress the reporting of crimes to Police Scotland concerning COVID-19 vaccines, COVID-19, or the handling of the pandemic by government authorities?**

4. **What is the total number of complaints received and acknowledged by the Scottish Police Authority in relation to the matters referred to above for each category?**

5. **What is the total number of such complaints that are currently under active investigation?**

6. **What is the total number of such complaints that have been rejected, closed without investigation, or otherwise not progressed?**

In terms of part 3 to 6 of your request, the Authority can confirm that correspondence regarding Operation Talla is held in relation to our complaint handling functions. The information requested is considered exempt in terms of FOISA as disclosure would prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs,[2] or prejudice the public authority's functions.[3] Contact received to our complaints handling function requires assessment to consider if it is a relevant complaint that the Authority can progress, or for another body. Where assessed as relevant, heads of complaint need to be agreed prior to any further enquiry. This work is ongoing and should be allowed to be progressed in line with procedure.

These exemptions require application of the public interest test.

Public Interest Test

The public interest factors in favour of disclosure is that:

- This would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent.

The public interest factors in favour of maintaining the exemptions are:

[2] This represents a notice under Section 30(c) of FOISA - Information is exempt from disclosure where disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice substantially the effective conduct of public affairs.
[3] This represents a notice under Section 35(1)(g) of FOISA - Information will be exempt if disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the exercise by any Scottish public authority of its functions under Section 35(2).

- Those with a direct interest in this aspect of the Authority's functions may lose confidence if the information requested were to be disclosed publicly, particularly where matters had not concluded.

- The Authority has a statutory function to consider complaints about policing in Scotland. Its approach to complaints is underpinned by the principles of necessity, fairness, procedural openness and transparency, while respecting individual confidentiality. The Authority's complaints policy and handling procedures are therefore publicly available.

- The Authority's Complaints and Conduct Committee provides assurance that complaint handling arrangements are suitable. Public sessions of this Committee are available to watch, and agendas and papers are available on the website. Complaints performance is reported publicly to this Committee, most recently on 19 May 2026, see item 4.

- The public interest lies in maintaining established processes for the consideration of complaints about policing in Scotland. If a complainer is dissatisfied with the handling of their complaint, they can contact the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) to request that their complaint is reviewed. PIRC is an independent organisation not connected to the police or the Authority.

On balance, at this time, our conclusion is that maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

7. What is the total number of complaints for all categories received by the Scottish Police Authority since April 23rd 2026 up to and including the date 14th of June 2026?

The Authority received 36 complaint contacts across all categories between 23 April and 14 June 2026. Please note, this number may include complaints received which are not relevant or for another body.

Right to Review

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your request you can ask for a review within 40 working days. You must specify the reason for your dissatisfaction and submit your request by email to foi@spa.police.uk or by letter to Scottish Police Authority, 2 Clyde Gateway, French Street, Glasgow, G40 4EH.

If you remain dissatisfied after review, you can appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months. You can apply online, by

email to enquiries@foi.scot or by letter to Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Commissioner's decision, you can appeal to the Court of Session, only if you think the law has not been applied correctly.

This response will be posted to our Disclosure Log after seven working days.

Yours faithfully

Scottish Police Authority