



16 March 2020

FOI: 595

Dear Applicant

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Thank you for your request received under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) for:

- “1) How many times have police Scotland officers tasered people?*
- 2) Of those, how many related to a "concern for welfare" call out?*
- 3) Of these, how many claim to have in response to the victim having a knife/blade/scissors etc IN THEIR OWN HOME?*
- 4) Of these, how many civilian witnesses can corroborate the police claim that such a knife/blade/scissors etc were actually presented, and presented in a credibly threatening manner*
- 5) How many times did the officers insist on entering the victims home without a warrant? How long did the officers continue to insist on illegal entry on average? So how often are the police using tasers to terrorise vulnerable adults compared to actually tasing the likes of bank robbers etc?”*

The PIRC has considered this as a request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (“FOISA”). An application for information held by public authorities under section 1 of FOISA requires that a public authority release all information held, subject to any applicable exemptions. Public authorities have twenty working days following the date of receipt of the request to respond to an applicant, and therefore, the deadline for response is 24 March 2020.

I can confirm we hold this information. I will address your queries in turn below, however before doing so I would like to highlight some additional information beforehand which will assist you in understanding the information we are providing.

Firstly, policing bodies are required to report any taser use to the PIRC who then determine whether or not these should be investigated further. The first stage of reporting is therefore recorded by us as a “referral”, and those we go on to investigate are reported as an “investigations”, categorised as a firearm (taser).

Secondly our records management policy, specifically the retention schedule, details how long we retain information for. This is a requirement of the data protection act which stipulates that personal information can only be held for as long as an organisation requires it. As a result we do not hold some information in relation to taser *referrals* for the period April 2013 – March 2018 which would allow us to provide a full and complete response to your queries. However, we do hold information relating to taser investigations, and therefore the figures provided below are compiled from the information we have recorded on our systems.

### **1. How many times have police Scotland officers tasered people?**

The Police Investigations & Review Commissioner (PIRC) receives referrals from policing bodies where a taser is fired by a policing body in Scotland. Although you have not specified any particular timescale for this information, the PIRC was set up on 1 April 2013, and therefore I have assumed you wish us to provide information from this period. As already indicated we no longer hold all information in relation to taser referrals from the police from the period 1 April 13 to March 2018 unless we took the decision to fully investigate these referral to determine if police action in these situations was justified. Therefore the information we are providing does not give the full number of people who were tasered.

Since April 2013 until the date of your request, we have received 70 referrals. From these 70 referrals, tasers were fired 57 times.

### **2. Of those, how many related to a "concern for welfare" call out?**

There were 19 occasions where there was a concern for welfare which led to the taser being used.

### **3. Of these, how many claim to have in response to the victim having a knife/blade/scissors etc IN THEIR OWN HOME?**

There were 26 incidences of taser use where the taser was used due to someone having a weapon in their own home.

### **4. Of these, how many civilian witnesses can corroborate the police claim that such a knife/blade/scissors etc were actually presented, and presented in a credibly threatening manner**

In 10 incidences, there is a civilian witness who can confirm a weapon was present.

### **5. How many times did the officers insist on entering the victims home without a warrant? How long did the officers continue to insist on illegal entry on average?**

For the vast majority of incidents the police had legal power of entry due to the circumstances of the incident(s) they had been called out to. However as stated earlier we no longer hold all records in relation to taser use referred to us, and some of these incidents occurred in locations outside and therefore no warrant was required.

## **YOUR RIGHT TO REQUEST A REVIEW**

You have a right under the Act to request a review of this decision. If you wish to exercise this right, you must do so within forty working days following the date of receipt of this decision. Your request for a review must be in writing and you must specify your name and address for correspondence. You must also identify the decision that you wish to be reviewed. Should you wish to request a review, please address your request to:

**Police Investigations & Review Commissioner  
Hamilton House  
Caird Park  
HAMILTON  
ML3 0QA**

Or Email to [informationrequests@pirc.gov.scot](mailto:informationrequests@pirc.gov.scot)

Your review will be undertaken by an individual not involved in the original decision making process.

## **YOUR RIGHT OF APPEAL**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a review, you have a right under the Act to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. If you wish to do so, you must appeal to the Commissioner within six months following the date of receipt of the review notice. The Commissioner's contact details are as follows:

The Scottish Information Commissioner  
Kinburn Castle  
Doubledykes Road, St Andrews  
Fife, KY16 9DS  
Email: [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info)  
Tel: 01334 464610

Yours sincerely



Janice Carter  
Information Officer