

Our Ref: HQ 18287

1 March 2019

Dear,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your recent freedom of information request, which was received on 5 February 2019. This gives a statutory deadline for responding of 4 March 2019 under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

You asked the following, and for ease of reference I have copied your original request for information (RFI) as follows.

Request for Information

How many reported incidents there have been in Scottish prisons in the last five years in which animals have been found to be kept by inmates? I would like all cases of these animals being kept by prisoners in accordance with prison rules and those which broke them. For each of these could you give me the animal in question, the date and the prison in which it happened?

In response, having completed our search of all electronic and paper records held by the SPS I can confirm there is no information held. To clarify, there are no recorded incidents of animals being found in an individual's possession within the timescales requested. Our prison rules do not support animals being kept by those in our care. We do however have therapy animals and these include Hamsters, Chickens & visiting therapy dogs and other pets. Details of these can be researched on our website www.sps.gov.uk under the section 'Gallery Magazine' where our involvement in such therapeutic activity is regularly published. The link below will take you to the specific area.

<http://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Information/GalleryMagazine.aspx>

In addition, and although not technically an animal, we are aware that the private prison HMP Kilmarnock operated by Serco on behalf of the SPS allow individuals to purchase and keep fish in their cells. As they are not contractually required to report such matters to the SPS, we do not hold any detailed information.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you have the right to request a review. Your request should be made within 40 working days of the date of receipt of this letter and we will reply within 20 working days of receiving your request. Under section 20(3) (c) (ii) of the Act your request should outline your reason for seeking a review. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain unsatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to Colin McConnell, Chief Executive, Scottish Prison Service, Calton House, Redheughs Rigg, Edinburgh EH12 9HW. The review will be undertaken by staff not involved in the original decision making process.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely