



**HEADQUARTERS**  
One Lochside  
1 Lochside Avenue  
Edinburgh  
EH12 9DJ

**Our Ref:** HQ24103

22 August 2024

Dear

Thank you for your request dated 24 July 2024 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI(S)A).

For reference, you requested:

**RFI 1:** "Between 2008 and 2016 how many people sentenced to long-term prison sentences in Scotland were released after serving two-thirds of their sentence or earlier?"

**RFI 2:** "Of those released in response to question (1) how many returned to prison after being released?"

**RFI 3:** "Since 1 February 2016 how many people have been given a long-term prison sentence in Scotland?"

**RFI 4:** "Of those sentenced since 1 February 2016 how many long-term prisoners have been granted parole in Scotland?"

**RFI 5:** "Of those sentenced since 1 February 2016 and granted parole subsequently, how many have returned to prison?"

We have now completed our search for the information you requested.

**RFI 1 Response:** Due to the way the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) Prisoner Records system records data, under section 17 of FOI(S)A I can advise that we do not hold the information for the number of those sentenced to long-term prison sentences released after serving two-thirds of their sentence or earlier.

During this period all long-term prisoners would be released at the two-thirds point of their sentence as long as any extended sentence wasn't invoked, or they weren't released at their Parole Qualifying Date (PQD) or any review after their PQD prior to their Earliest Date of Liberation (EDL).

In the interests of providing reasonable advice and assistance to your request for information, as per Section 15 of FOI(S)A, I have provided a link to the Parole Board for Scotland publications page which may provide you with the information you are looking for: [Publications - Parole Board for Scotland \(scottishparoleboard.scot\)](https://www.scottishparoleboard.scot)

**RFI 2 Response:** As above, as we are unable to identify those released, under section 17 of FOI(S)A I can advise that we do not hold this information.

**RFI 3 Response:** Due to the way the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) Prisoner Records system records data, under section 17 of FOI(S)A I can advise that we do not hold this

information as a number of those sentenced to long-term prison sentences since that date will already have been released.

To be helpful, the average number of long-term prisoners held in SPS custody since 1 February 2016 is provided in the table below:

Year	Average Number of Long-term Prisoners
2016	1820
2017	1811
2018	1864
2019	2019
2020	2127
2021	2067
2022	2113
2023	2248
2024	2410

In the interests of providing reasonable advice and assistance to your request for information, as per Section 15 of FOI(S)A, I have provided a link to the Scottish Governments Prison Population Statistics page which may provide you with the information you are looking for:

[Population Transitions and Out-Flows - Scottish Prison Population Statistics 2022-23 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/population-transitions-and-out-flows-scottish-prison-population-statistics-2022-23)

**RFI 4 Response:** Since 1 February 2016, 1194 prisoners have been liberated on parole. Please note, this includes all prisoners. While the majority of those will be long-term prisoners, this may include anyone with a determinate and extended sentence that is under 4 years.

**RFI 5 Response:** While we endeavour to provide information whenever possible, and we do hold the information that you have requested, in this instance the costs of locating, retrieving, and providing the information requested would exceed the upper cost limit set under section 12 of FOI(S)A.

To clarify, this information is not held in a reportable format on our Prisoner Records system, therefore, to answer this question would require a manual check of the records of the 1194 prisoners liberated on parole. A sample check was carried out, and this identified that it would take an average of 3 minutes to review each record. This was calculated and revealed that to review all records would take approximately 60 hours, which at a cost of £15 per hour, totalled £900, which is over the £600 threshold set under FOI(S)A.

This concludes our response to your request.

If you are unhappy with this response to your request, you may ask us to conduct an internal review, by writing to The Chief Executive, One Lochside, 1 Lochside Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 9DJ. Your request should explain why you wish a review to be conducted and should be made within forty working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within twenty working days of receipt. If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely  
Freedom of Information Manager