



HEADQUARTERS
 One Lochside
 1 Lochside Avenue
 Edinburgh
 EH12 9DJ

Our Ref: HQ24216

11 December 2024

Dear

Thank you for your request dated 12 November 2024 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI(S)A).

For reference, you requested:

RFI 1: “Could you supply how many people are in jail on this date this year, and on this date in each of the last five years, with a breakdown per jail if possible?”

RFI 2: “Could you supply how many incidents of drugs being intercepted by prison staff after being flown in by drone/flying device in the last three years, with a breakdown per year, what prison, how much drug, what devices were used?”

RFI 3: “Could you supply all briefings and analysis held by SPS about drugs being flown in by drones/flying devices, from the last year?”

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

RFI 1 Response: Please see table below:

Prison Population on 12 November 2020 – 2024					
Establishment	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
HMP Addiewell	708	711	709	722	722
HMP Barlinnie	1236	1228	1225	1406	1350
Bella Centre (CCU)	-	-	8	12	13
HMP Castle Huntly	148	131	127	161	181
HMP & YOI Cornton Vale	67	46	43	-	-
HMP Dumfries	176	193	188	189	184
HMP Edinburgh	885	887	875	930	940
HMP Glenochil	674	704	715	736	742
HMP & YOI Grampian	436	443	434	443	489
HMP Greenock	182	182	183	227	232
HMP Inverness	109	117	114	114	114
HMP Kilmarnock	528	526	536	580	628
Lilias Centre (CCU)	-	-	3	14	23
HMP Low Moss	810	866	765	809	814
HMP Perth	657	653	631	651	684
HMP & YOI Polmont	367	326	261	326	543
HMP Shotts	544	543	542	538	543
HMP & YOI Stirling	-	-	-	90	86

RFI 2 Response: Please see table below:

Drone Incidents Which Resulted in a Confirmed Drug Recovery*			
Establishment	2022	2023	2024
HMP Addiewell			2
HMP Barlinnie		4	9
HMP Edinburgh	1	11	8
HMP Glenochil	1		
HMP Greenock		1	
HMP Perth		2	3

*This table shows the number of drone incidents which resulted in a confirmed drug recovery. This excludes any recoveries where contents were immediately received by Police Scotland and not examined by SPS.

Under section 17 of FOI(S)A I can advise that the information in relation to the quantity of drugs recovered and what devices were used is not held.

RFI 3 Response: While we seek to provide information wherever possible, and we do hold some of the information requested, in this instance we have concluded that disclosure of this material would be exempt in accordance with section 35(1)(a) of the FOI(S)A. That is because disclosing this information would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

Section 35(1)(a) of FOI(S)A is subject to the public interest test. FOI(S)A does not define the public interest test, however it is described as something that is “in the interest of the public”, and not merely something that is “of interest to the public.” In this instance SPS has assessed that the information should be withheld. While it is recognised that there is a general public interest in what SPS is doing to prevent and detect crime within Scottish prisons, in this instance it is considered the public interest is best served in ensuring the prevention or detection of crime, and not disclosing material that might jeopardise that.

Additionally, we have also concluded that disclosure of this material would be exempt in accordance with section 35(1)(f) of the FOI(S)A. That is because disclosing this information would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the maintenance of security and good order in prisons.

Again, section 35(1)(f) of FOI(S)A is subject to the public interest test and in this instance SPS has assessed that the information should be withheld. While it is recognised that there is a general public interest in what SPS is doing to maintain security good order within Scottish prisons, in this instance it is considered the public interest is best served in ensuring the maintenance of security and good order, and not disclosing material that might jeopardise that.

In accordance with section 15 of FOI(S)A, in order to be helpful and provide you with some information to answer your request, I can advise that SPS has seen an increase in incidents relating to the use of drones attempting to introduce illicit items into establishments. Items have included drugs, mobile telephones (including mobile phone accessories) and weapons. SPS are working on a number of fronts to reduce the potential for the introduction of illicit items into our establishment's.

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