



HEADQUARTERS
One Lochside
1 Lochside Avenue
Edinburgh
EH12 9DJ

Our Ref: FOI HQ 26169

02 September 2026

Dear

Thank you for your request dated 16 August 2026 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

For reference, you requested:

As part of research, I am requesting the following information.

Part 1

Please provide

RFI 1 a full breakdown of the prison officer training scheme in as much detail as you can.

- advertising methods
- recruitment process
- a blank copy of the application form
- academic qualifications required
- mental health and physical health requirements
- training process package in as much detail as you can provide - length of training, modules covered, delivered by who... and any other information
- supervision arrangements provided for new recruits
- length of probation period
- whistleblowing policy

Part 2

From 2005-2025

RFI 2 How many prison officers (of all levels) were internally disciplined for having an inappropriate relationship with an inmate?

RFI 3 What is the breakdown within this category of gender

Male (officer) with male (inmate)

Male (officer) with female (inmate)
Female (officer) with male (inmate)
Female (officer) with female (inmate)

RFI 4 How many prison officers (of all levels) were dismissed from post for having an inappropriate relationship with an inmate?

RFI 5 What is the breakdown within this category of gender

Male (officer) with male (inmate)
Male (officer) with female (inmate)
Female (officer) with male (inmate)
Female (officer) with female (inmate)

RFI 6 Of those that were dismissed, how many of those cases had internally raised concerns prior to their dismissal?

In any of these cases had the whistleblowing policy been enacted?

RFI 7 How many of those cases ended up in a prosecution against the prison officer?

We have now completed our search for the information you requested and provide the undernoted response.

Part 1

RFI 1 – Response

Advertising methods – All Prison Officer opportunities are advertised on the Scottish Prison Service recruitment portal. The Scottish Prison Service also at times utilises other advertising platforms and medias to further promote opportunities. This varies by campaign, but some platforms used include Social Media, Jobs Boards and Radio.

Recruitment process – There are two entry routes to joining the Scottish Prison Service as a Prison Officer. Both require candidates to submit an online application, and if the minimum eligibility criteria is met, candidates will progress to an online Situational Judgement Test. If successful, candidates will then progress to an online Cognitive Ability Test. The stages thereafter vary between opportunity and are summarised below.

- **Operations Officer:** applicants successful at cognitive ability test will then progress to an interview. If successful at interview, pre-employment checks are undertaken prior to assignment
- **Residential Officer:** applicants successful at cognitive ability test will then progress to a Group and Written Exercise assessment. If successful at this stage, the applicant will then progress to interview. If successful at interview, pre-employment checks are undertaken prior to assignment

A blank copy of the application form – As the application is completed online, there is not an offline version. However, candidates applying for Prison Officer opportunities will be asked to provide information and responses to the following sections/questions:

- Personal Details
- Employment History
- Education History
- Languages
- Eligibility Questions (Confirmation of being over the age of 18, and confirmation of right to work in the UK)
- Nationality
- Confirmation of whether the applicant has ever been reported for or charged with a criminal offence with a pending outcome
- Confirmation on whether the applicant has ever been declared bankrupt or entered into a Trust Deed or IVA
- Reasonable Adjustments & Disability Confident Scheme
- Reasons for Applying
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Monitoring
- Socio-Economic Background Monitoring
- Declaration

Academic qualifications required – There are no formal qualifications required to apply for either Prison Officer opportunity.

Mental health and physical health requirements – The mental and physical health requirements are set out within our pre-placement standards. These standards were developed by Optima, our occupational health provider, which has advised that the content constitutes its intellectual property. We are therefore unable to provide a copy of these standards.

A full breakdown of the prison officer training scheme in as much detail as you can (training process package in as much detail as you can provide - length of training, modules covered, delivered by who / supervision arrangements provided for new recruits) – Please note that the information we are able to provide as part of a FOISA response is as follows.

Officer Foundation Programme (OFP) recruit training takes place at SPSC and runs for 6 weeks. Recruits carry out a National Induction week at their establishment for 1 week, prior to attending SPSC.

OFP recruit training covers: Equality & Diversity, Health & Well-being Awareness, Understanding Desistance, Control & Restraint Foundation, Disciplinary Procedures, Emergency Response, Escorting Individuals in Custody, Family Strategy & Child Protection, Introduction to Electronic Control Room (ECR) and Job Role, Introduction to Front of House, Introduction to Patrol Duties, Introduction to Radios and SND, Introduction to SVQ (Custodial Care), Introduction to Visits Job Role & Function, Introduction to Working with Women in Custody, PPT (Operational Foundation), Prisoners Complaints Procedures, Professional Boundaries, Safe Working & Fire Awareness, Searching (Individuals), Searching (Introduction), Searching (Vehicle, Area & Cell), Substance Use, Talk to Me, Types of Report & Report Writing, X-Ray Safety & Screening Skills, SPS Context, Vision, Mission & Values, PR2, PR2 Visits, Trauma.

Residential Officer Foundation Programme (ROFP) recruit training takes place at SPSC and runs for 7 weeks. Recruits carry out a National Induction week at their establishment for 1 week, prior to attending SPSC.

ROFP recruits training covers: Defensible decision -Making, Desistance, Equality & Diversity, Health & Well-being, Interpersonal Skills, Self-Reflective Practice, SPS Context, Vision, Mission & Values, Trauma Informed Practice, Alarm Response, Cell Certification and Checks, Communication (Staff), Control & Restraint Foundation, Emergency Response, Escorting Individuals in Custody, Good Report Writing, Human Factors – Health & Safety in Prisons, Introduction to Patrol Duties, Introduction to Radios & SND, Locking & Numbers, Maintaining Security, PPT (Operational Foundation), PR2, Professional Boundaries, Route Movements, Routines, Safe Working & Fire Awareness, Searching (Intro, Individuals, VAC), Disciplinary Proceedings, Family Strategy & Child Protection, Individual Rights, Initial Assessments & First Night in Custody, Integrated Case Management, Introduction to Visits Job Role and Function, Managing Complaints, Partnerships & Programmes, Substance Use, Talk to Me, Women & Young people in Custody.

Those officers being promoted from Operations to Residential attend SPS College for the last 2 weeks of ROFP training.

All training is delivered by Learning & Development Managers.

Once training is complete, all recruits return to their establishment and are then managed and supported by their respective Line Manager. They follow the Probationary Policy for 1 year, in which time, all OFP must complete 4 x SVQ Units.

Length of probation period – Twelve months.

Whistleblowing policy – Please refer to Annex A.

Part 2

Please note that, for the purposes of this request, we have interpreted the term "inappropriate relationship" as referring solely to romantic relationships between a prison officer and an inmate.

We also note that the timeframe specified in your request covers the period 2002 to 2025. Our records do not cover this entire period. While records are available from 2008 onwards, they were not maintained in a format that enables us to identify and retrieve the requested information until 2011. Accordingly, the information provided below relates only to the period for which relevant records are held and can be reasonably extracted.

RFI 2

Nine instances were identified within the scope of your request where prison officers were subject to internal disciplinary action in relation to a romantic relationship with an inmate.

RFI 3 & 5

We do endeavour to provide information whenever possible and we do hold the information requested. However, in this instance an exemption under section 38(1)(b) (personal information) of

FOI(S)A applies to the information requested. Personal data is exempt from disclosure if disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the UK GDPR and in section 34(1) of the DPA 2018. The Scottish Prison Service seeks to be as open and transparent as possible, while also upholding our statutory obligation to protect the personal information of our employees. The information you have requested relates to a small group of individuals and providing the information requested could, together with other available information lead to their inadvertent identification.

RFI 4

Five prison officers were dismissed in relation to matters falling within the scope of your request. A further four prison officers resigned.

RFI 6

This information is not held. Concerns may be raised through a variety of formal and informal channels, including discussions with line managers. Such interactions are not centrally recorded in a manner that would enable us to identify, retrieve or quantify them for the purposes of your request. Similarly, we do not hold a record that would allow us to determine whether the whistleblowing policy had been invoked in relation to the cases identified above.

Under section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, we confirm that this information is not held.

RFI 7

This information is not held. Where an employee is dismissed or resigns from the organisation, we are not routinely notified of the outcome of any subsequent criminal proceedings and therefore do not hold information on whether a prosecution took place.

Under section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, we confirm that this information is not held.

This concludes our response to your request.

If you are unhappy with this response to your request, you may ask us to carry out 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 carried out, and should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 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,

HR Data Analytics Lead

Whistleblowing Policy

**This document outlines the Scottish Prison Service
Policy in relation to Whistleblowing**

Published by Human Resources, Corporate Services

Published 18 November 2019

Unlocking Potential - Transforming Lives.

Policy Number:

HR076/V003

Directorate Owners:

Corporate Services, Human Resources

Policy Scope:

All Scottish Prison Service Employees

Links to Other Policies:

[Grievance Policy](#)

[Employee Code of Conduct](#)

[Government Protective Marking Scheme](#)

[Information Security Policy](#)

[Record Management Policy](#)

Approved by:

Head of Human Resources

Effective date:

18 November 2019

Review Date:

18 November 2022



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1. Introduction

The Scottish Prison Service aims to conduct its business at all times with the highest standards of integrity and honesty. We expect all employees and workers to maintain the same standards in everything they do. It is important to the Scottish Prison Service that any wrongdoing is reported and properly dealt with.

The Scottish Prison Service therefore encourages all colleagues to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the organisation. This policy sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns of wrongdoing that they may have.

2. Aim

The aim of the Scottish Prison Service Whistleblowing Policy is to:

- Assist us in the early detection of any inappropriate behaviour or practices;
- Provide a clear procedure for our employees and workers to report to us any wrongdoing at work which they believe has occurred, or is likely to occur, and where appropriate, to receive feedback on any action taken;
- Ensure that individuals feel confident and able to raise any reasonable concern about our business activities in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously, and that no action will be taken against them by either the Scottish Prison Service or their colleagues.

3. Policy Statement

The Scottish Prison Service Whistleblowing Policy complies with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).

This policy aims to protect those who make a 'protected disclosure' either during their employment (or duration of the contract/agreement in the case of workers) and after this has ended. Additionally, it enables them to take action in respect of any victimisation. For a disclosure to be protected it must reasonably appear to the employee or worker that it is in the 'public interest'.

This policy takes account of the Whistleblowing Arrangements Code of Practice issued by the British Standards Institute and the Protect, and recommendations issued by the Public Accounts Committee, UK Government.

4. Scope

This policy has been developed by Management and the Trade Union Side working in Partnership.

This policy applies to all Scottish Prison Service employees. Other individuals working in the Scottish Prison Service, such as agency workers, contractors, external professionals and advisors are also encouraged to use it.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Director of Corporate Services** – has overall responsibility for this policy, ensuring that the requirements are adhered to and that concerns raised are treated in accordance with this policy.
- **HR Business Partner, EACH** – has responsibility for adhering to the requirements of this policy, maintaining a central log of all information received, and providing advice on the policy process to employees wishing to raise a public interest disclosure
- **HR Business Partners** - are responsible for adhering to the requirements of this policy in ensuring that this policy is applied appropriately, for providing advice and that they take any concerns raised seriously.
- **Managers** – are responsible for adhering to the requirements of this policy, for ensuring that this policy is applied and that they take any concerns raised seriously.
- **Employees** – are responsible for adhering to the requirements of this policy and for ensuring that they provide the appropriate information in support of any concern that is raised.

6. What is Whistleblowing?

‘Blowing the whistle’ occurs when an employee or other individuals working in the organisation raise a concern about past, present or imminent wrongdoing, or an attempt to cover up wrongdoing, within the Scottish Prison Service. It is more formally known as ‘making a disclosure in the public interest’, meaning that the issue must affect others, for example the organisation, work colleagues or the general public.

Further information on whistleblowing can be found on the [UK Government's homepage](#)

Qualifying Disclosures

Qualifying disclosures are disclosures of information where there is a reasonable belief that one or more of the following matters is either happening, has taken place, or is likely to happen in the future:

- A criminal offence;
- The breach of a legal obligation;
- A miscarriage of justice;
- A danger to the health and safety of any individual;
- Damage to the environment;
- Deliberate attempt to conceal any of the above.

It is important to understand that if by making a disclosure a criminal offence is being committed (e.g. under the Official Secrets Act, such as by releasing confidential papers), that disclosure will not be a qualifying disclosure under the PIDA.

Protected Disclosures

An individual qualifies for protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) if the disclosure is a qualifying disclosure, and is made:

- Where it is reasonably believed that the disclosure is made in the public interest;
- Where it is reasonably believed that the information is substantially true;
- Where it is reasonably believed that the individual is making the disclosure to the right person.

A disclosure about an 'exceptionally serious' failure made will also be protected:

- Where the individual makes the disclosure in good faith;
- Where the individual reasonably believes that the information disclosed and any allegations contained in it are substantially true;
- Where the individual is not acting for personal gain - provided that it is reasonable for the individual to make the disclosure, having regard, in particular, to the identity of the person to whom the disclosure is made.

It will be for the employment tribunals to consider whether any particular failure is 'exceptionally serious'; this is a matter of fact, not just an individual's personal belief.

7. Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

It is important that concerns are raised at the earliest opportunity possible. This will allow any concerns to be addressed and resolved quickly and by the most appropriate means.

When raising a whistleblowing concern:

- The individual should report the matter, in the first instance, either to their immediate Line Manager or another appropriate Line Manager. Advice may be sought from the local HR Team;
- If the individual believes that these people might themselves be involved in wrongdoing they should contact a more senior manager.

Ideally, an initial meeting should be held within two working days of the concern being raised, however, practicalities of operational circumstances such as prolonged public holidays, shift-working and part-time working, must be taken into account.

After initial assessment, if the situation remains unresolved, or if the individual believes that it has not been adequately addressed, they can raise the concern by contacting the Director of Corporate Services by e-mail or telephone.

or by e-mailing the generic whistleblowing e-mail address:

whistleblowing@sps.gov.uk

The Director of Corporate Services will consider concerns and let the individual know what action is proposed to be taken.

If the individual believes that the response from the Director of Corporate Services does not represent a reasonable response to concerns raised, the matter may be reported to the Civil Service Commissioners:

Civil Service Commission

G/8

1 Horse Guards Road

London

SW1A 2HQ

Email: info@civilservicecommission.org.uk

[Tel.: 020 7271 0831](tel:02072710831)

Concerns should be raised initially with the Scottish Prison Service. However, complaints can be raised directly with the Civil Service Commission if an explanation

is provided as to why it is not appropriate to raise the complaint internally in the first instance.

Concerns should not at any time be raised outside the routes outlined, i.e. with the media, campaign groups, on social network sites or with politicians, political parties, or other avenues. Raising a concern outside of the routes outlined may, if it amounts to an unauthorised disclosure, result in disciplinary action under the [Scottish Prison Service Code of Conduct Policy](#).

8. Investigation and Outcome

Once a concern has been raised an initial assessment will be conducted to determine the scope of any investigation. The Scottish Prison Service will inform the individual of the outcome of the assessment.

In some cases, there may be a person, or team, appointed to carry out an investigation. This may result in recommendations for change to enable the Scottish Prison Service to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

A Whistleblower may be invited by their Line Manager or the person investigating the concern to attend a meeting at which they may be accompanied by a colleague or a Trade Union representative.

In the event that a conclusion has found a Whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the Whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action under the [Scottish Prison Service Code of Conduct Policy](#).

9. Confidentiality

Any disclosures made under this procedure will be treated in a sensitive manner. The Scottish Prison Service recognises that individuals may want to raise a concern in confidence and will respect any request for anonymity as far as possible, restricting it to a 'need to know basis'.

However, if the situation arises where it is not possible to resolve the concern without revealing the individual's identity, the Scottish Prison Service may need to continue with the investigation and may not be able to guarantee anonymity. However, the individual would be advised if this is the case. The same degree of confidentiality should be afforded to the employee(s) or other individuals at the centre of the concern, as far as appropriate.

10. Record Keeping

The Employee Absence Conduct and Health department should keep a record of all whistleblowing approaches made, along with a brief note of the issue which should include:

- the date the issue was raised;
- the outcome, including how the issue was resolved and by whom;
- how long the process took;
- any other relevant management information.

All records and correspondence should have the appropriate protective marking in line with the [Government Protective Marking Scheme](#) and the [SPS Information Security Policy](#) and be kept securely, for a period of five years, in line with the [SPS Record Management Policy](#).

At all stages, documentation should be managed in compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Act (GDPR).

Further Information:

The SPS recognises that from time to time employees may have questions or concerns relating to this policy and wishes to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. Employees are encouraged to seek clarification on any issues with their Line Manager or local HR Team in the first instance.

In certain situations, employees' rights and obligations regarding this policy may change. In these circumstances, the SPS will abide by any statutory obligations.

Sustainability

Improving our environmental performance and doing things in a more sustainable way should be seen as integral to our core business practices.

In line with the SPS Sustainable Policy and to demonstrate compliance with the Scottish Government's commitment to improving environmental and sustainable development performance, please be mindful if printing this document – keeping paper usage to a minimum (print only version), printing on both sides, and recycling.

Equality Statement

The SPS is an equal opportunities employer where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We are fully committed to equality, diversity and human rights and to ensuring our culture, working environment, policies, processes and practices are free from bias. This policy applies to all employees regardless of protected characteristics, and, subject to any eligibility criteria, length of service, grade, working pattern or operational status.

GDPR

This Policy has been subject to a Data Protection Impact Assessment to ensure compliance with GDPR.

Inclusive Communications

It is our ambition to ensure that SPS documents are readable, accessible and engaging for staff.

In formatting this document, good practice principles around engagement and inclusive communications have been adhered to.

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact Human Resources.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner where applicable to reflect changing business and legislative requirements.

Human Resources Policy and Guidance in SPS

SPS policies take into account current legislation, rules, regulations and best practice guidance from a range of professional and public bodies, including the following:



UK Civil
Service
Management
Code



UK Legislation



EU
Legislation



ACAS



CIPD Best
Practice