



A. Jackson
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Our Reference: 202100220293

26 July 2021

Dear A. Jackson ,

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 (FOISA)

Thank you for your request dated 5 July 2021 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

Your request

You asked for information on:

- From 01 January 2011 - 30 June 2021, what is the total number of prosecutions for sectarian offences throughout Scotland?
- For the same time period, what percentage of crime in Scotland was for sectarian offences?
- For the same period, what was the total amount and percentage of sectarian offences that are attributed to anti-Catholicism?
- For the same period, what was the total amount and percentage of sectarian offences that are attributed to anti-Protestantism?
- For the same period, of the offences that are anti-Catholic in nature, how many of them involved usage of the word "fenian"?
- For the same period, of the offences that are anti-Protestant in nature, how many of them involved usage of the word "hun"?
- As July tends to be a contentious time in the west of Scotland, I'd additionally be thankful to provided with the figures and percentages of sectarian hate crime (and what terminology was used) that took place in July 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020.

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Response to your request

Whilst our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance the Scottish Government does not hold the specific information you requested. Further guidance on this is provided below for each part of your request.

The current Scottish Government definition for sectarianism states that: Sectarianism in Scotland is a mixture of perceptions, attitudes, actions, and structures that involves overlooking, excluding, discriminating against or being abusive or violent towards others on the basis of their perceived Christian denominational background. This perception is always mixed with other factors such as, but not confined to, politics, football allegiance and national identity. Sectarianism is not defined within Scots Law and therefore crimes and offences that may be considered to meet this definition would most likely be those which attracted a religion and/or race aggravation(s).

We cannot identify from the Scottish Government's criminal proceedings database whether prosecutions relate to sectarian offences. This is because only limited information is held on the circumstances of the offences, and there is no charge under legislation that only relates to sectarian-related offences. We do hold information on when a crime or offence is aggravated on the basis of religion or race, but this may relate to any religion or race. This data is published in [Table 12](#) and [Table 13](#) of the Criminal Proceedings in Scotland National Statistics.

The data we receive from Police Scotland for the production of the annual National Statistics on Recorded Crime, is a simple count of the number of crimes and offences, for each local authority, which the police have recorded. This means that we do not have any specific information as to the nature of any individual crime including whether they related to sectarian behaviour.

However, in February 2021 the Scottish Government published a [study into the characteristics of police recorded hate crime in Scotland](#). This report includes information on the number of hate aggravated crimes recorded by the police between 2014-15 and 2019-20, including the percentage of these crimes which included a race and (or) religion aggravator ([Table 6](#) in the supporting documents). This report also includes details on the characteristics of hate crime, based on a random sample of police recorded crimes, including information on what prejudice was shown by the perpetrator. Again this does not include information on whether these crimes were sectarian in nature, albeit in the context of your request - you may find [Table 17](#) useful as it presents information on the prejudices shown by perpetrators for hate crimes that had a religion aggravator. In 2018-19, 42% of religion aggravated hate crimes in Scotland showed a prejudice against Catholicism, 12% showed prejudice against Protestantism. Information regarding any wording used by perpetrators is unavailable due to small sample sizes.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to Don McGillivray, Director of Safer Communities, Area 1R, ST ANDREWS HOUSE, REGENT ROAD, EDINBURGH, EH1 3DG or by email at Donald.McGillivray@gov.scot. Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review in accordance with FOISA as soon as possible, and not later than 20 working days from the day following the date we receive your review request.

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If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website at: <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>.

Yours sincerely

Anna Mackinnon
JAS : Safer Communities Analytical Unit

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