



LETTER SENT BY E-MAIL ONLY

28 October 2022

2022-074

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

Request

Please find below our response to your correspondence dated 4 October, in which you made the following request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002:

I would be obliged if you can tell me 1) How soon after being taken, should a sample be tested for drugs? 2) Is a seven month delay acceptable? 3) After a seven month gap, would the sample deteriorate?

Response

Your request for information has been considered and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) is able to provide the following.

SPA Forensic Services does not hold information relevant to your request. Therefore this represents a notice in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information not held.

By way of assistance, guidance for the collection and storage of samples as set out by the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine is publicly available [here](#). Please refer to the Toxicology section on page 7 that sets out the guidance for the method of sampling for analysis and packaging and storage.

SPA Forensic Services toxicology follows laboratory guidelines developed by the United Kingdom and Ireland association of forensic toxicologists which is publicly available [here](#).

As long as samples are stored correctly, they can be examined many months or even years after being taken. It is scientifically recognised that drugs/alcohol deteriorate in a sample over time. The rate of deterioration can vary between drugs and conditions of storage.

Right to Review

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which your request has been dealt with you are entitled, in the first instance, to request a review of our actions and decisions

Your request must specify the matter which gives rise to your dissatisfaction and it must be submitted within 40 working days of receiving this response - either by email to foi@spa.police.uk or by post to Corporate Management Team, Scottish Police Authority, 1 Pacific Quay, Glasgow, G51 1DZ.

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of that review, you are thereafter entitled to apply to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months for a decision.

You can apply [online](#), by email to enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info or by post to Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Scottish Information Commissioner's decision, there is an appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

As part of our commitment to demonstrate openness and transparency in respect of the information we hold, an anonymised version of this response will be posted to the Scottish Police Authority Freedom of Information [Disclosure Log](#) in seven days' time.