



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

**Our Ref:** HQ23313

28 March 2024

Dear

Thank you for your request dated 20 February 2024 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI(S)A). Please accept my apologies for the delay in providing this response.

For reference, you requested:

**RFI 1:** “How many mobile phones were given to prisoners during the Covid pandemic and how many of those mobile phones have since been recovered?”

**RFI 2:** “In terms of the installation of the landline phones in prisons, could you confirm (a) how many of these have been installed to date, (b) if any are still due to be installed, how many are awaiting installation (c) what the current running cost of these phones are.”

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

**RFI 1 Response:** Over the course of the Covid pandemic, a total of 14,690 mobile phones were distributed to establishments. However, it is important to note some of these would have been used to replace lost or damaged handsets, and some would not have been distributed, but held in reserve. At the time when prison-issued mobile phones were decommissioned in August 2023, following the introduction of in-cell telephony, there were 5,280 prison issued mobile phones in use by people in our care. Of those 5,280 mobile phones, 4,529 were returned within an agreed period by September 2023, and the remainder were then considered illicit.

Since September 2023, efforts have been ongoing to recover all and any illicit handsets, including those which had previously been issued by SPS. We do not have a current figure of the number of prison-issued handsets recovered during this period, therefore under section 17 of FOI(S)A I can advise that this is information not held, however, work is ongoing to establish this total.

**RFI 2 Response:**

(a) There have been approximately 7200 in-cell telephones installed to date.

(b) There are a further 16 in-cell telephones to be installed to complete the process.

(c) Under section 33(1)(b) of FOI(S)A this information is exempt on the basis of commercial interests, as disclosing this information would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the commercial interests of any person.

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