



This report presents information on complaints about **Fife Constabulary** for the year 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

1 All complaints

- At 240, the total number of complaint cases received by Fife Constabulary in 2012-13 fell by -28.1 per cent on the previous year, the largest fall in Scotland. Overall, Scotland experienced a decrease of -1.7 per cent.
- At 490, the force also experienced the largest year-on-year decline in total complaint allegations received (-21.6 per cent), compared with an overall decline for Scotland of just -0.5 per cent.
- The majority of allegations received concerned on-duty conduct (80.4 per cent), followed by 18.6 per cent about the quality of service and 1.0 per cent for off-duty conduct.
- Most of its on- and off-duty allegations received were directed at police officers (95.5 per cent), followed by 7.3 per cent at police staff – again the largest share shown by any Scottish force for this group of staff – and just one (0.3 per cent) at an unspecified member of the force¹.
- At 509, the force also experienced the largest year-on-year decline in total allegations disposed of (-30.7 per cent), compared with a rise of just 0.9 per cent nationally.

Table 1: Summary statistics: Fife Constabulary, 2007-08 to 2012-13⁴

Fiscal year	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Complaint cases recorded	307	407	340	284	334	240
Complaint allegations received: on duty	302	366	438	405	493	394
Complaint allegations received: quality of service	51	71	77	116	111	91
Complaint allegations received: off duty	16	21	11	25	21	5
Complaint allegations received: total	369	458	526	546	625	490
Complaint allegations disposed of: on duty	211	387	391	509	570	409
Complaint allegations disposed of: quality of service	47	66	70	108	135	96
Complaint allegations disposed of: off duty	10	23	13	20	30	4
Complaint allegations disposed of: total	268	476	474	637	735	509
Complaint cases recorded per 10k population: Fife	8.5	11.3	9.4	7.8	9.2	6.5
Complaint cases recorded per 10k population: Scotland	8.3	9.4	8.8	8.1	8.4	8.2
Complaint allegations received per 10k population: Fife ³	10.2	12.7	14.5	15.0	17.1	13.3
Complaint allegations received per 10k population: Scotland ⁴	13.3	16.6	14.8	13.4	15.2	15.0

Differences over time in these statistics can be down to a number of reasons. The force has, however, introduced a new recording procedure, whereby those dealt with at point of (frontline) contact are not captured on the main database:

- The substantial decrease in complaint cases received this year has brought Fife's rate per 10,000 population to the lowest it has been in at least six years and the lowest currently in Scotland.
- Fife's rate of allegations received is the lowest recorded by the force in the last four years, though it is not the lowest in Scotland. The force's new recording practices are likely to be behind much of this change.

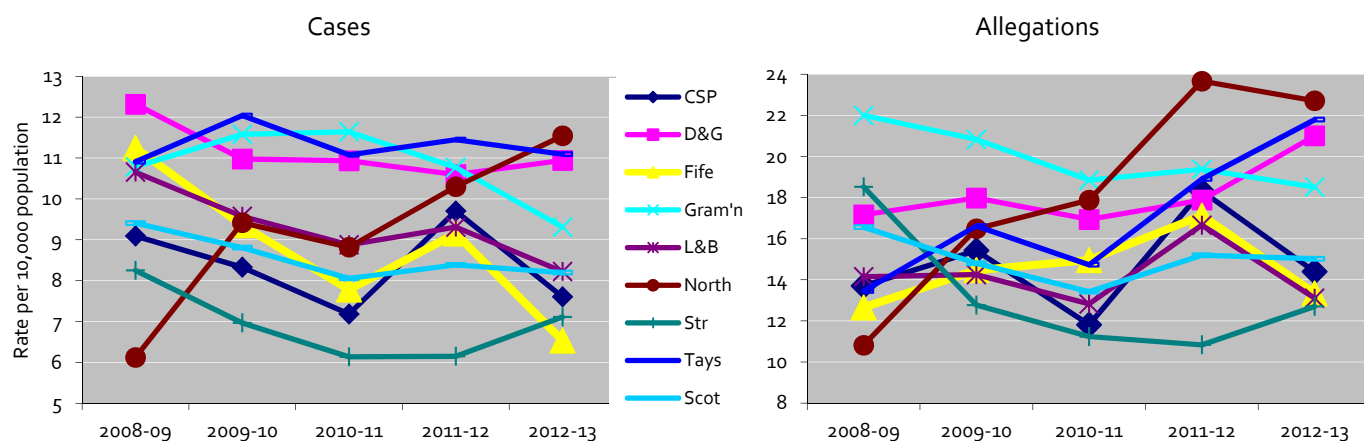
^[1] A single allegation may be directed at more than one member of a police force – hence percentages may not add up to 100%.

^[2] Complaints prior to April 2007 were recorded under an earlier definition that did not include off-duty and quality of service complaints.

^[3] Following recalculation, revised figures are presented for allegations prior to 2009/10 from those in the 2008/09 version of this report.

^[4] Following recalculation, revised figures are presented for allegations prior to 2009/10 from those in the 2008/09 version of this report.

Figure 1: Complaints received per 10k population for all forces and Scotland overall, 2007-08 to 2012-13



2 On-duty complaints

- A total of 80.4 per cent of all allegations received by Fife Constabulary in 2012-13 were allegations concerning on-duty conduct. This is one of the lowest proportions, sitting below the Scottish average of 84.5 per cent.
- At 394, the number of on-duty allegations received by the force in 2012-13 fell by 20.1 per cent on the previous year - the largest individual force decline - compared with an overall rise for Scotland of 2.8 per cent.
- The majority of on-duty allegations received were directed at *police officers* (95.4 per cent compared with 95.7 per cent for Scotland as a whole), followed by 7.4 per cent at *police staff* (the highest, against a Scottish average of 5.1 per cent). There were none against *special constables* (0.7 per cent for Scotland) and one unknown⁵.
- At 409, the number of on-duty allegations disposed of is down 28.2 per cent on the previous year - the largest of the three declines recorded across the eight forces - against a 3.5 per cent increase nationally.
- The most common types of allegation against on-duty members of the force disposed of were allegations of *irregular procedure* (48.7 per cent), *neglect of duty* (14.9 per cent) and *incivility* (13.0 per cent).
- The most common outcomes of allegations that were disposed of were *concluded by explanation*⁶ to the complainer (46.5 per cent), *not upheld due to insufficient evidence*⁷ (38.4 per cent), and *leading to a decision of "no proceedings"* by the procurator fiscal (8.8 per cent).

Table 2⁷: Top three allegations types closed by Fife Constabulary, 2007-08 to 2012-13

Fiscal year	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Irregular procedure - number disposed of	79	108	137	199	217	199
Percentage change on previous year (%)	203.8	36.7	26.9	45.3	9.0	-8.3
Neglect of duty - number disposed of	37	77	60	59	91	61
Percentage change on previous year (%)	68.2	108.1	-22.1	-1.7	54.2	-33.0
Incivility - number disposed of	31	63	81	67	83	53
Percentage change on previous year (%)	138.5	103.2	28.6	-17.3	23.9	-36.1

- Given the fairly large drop in on-duty allegations disposed of by the force in 2012-13, it is perhaps not surprising that its top three allegation types have all experienced decreases.
- In fact, with just two exceptions - traffic irregularity and corrupt practice - every other type of allegation saw a year-on-year decline or stayed the same.
- Both excessive force and oppressive conduct saw some of the greatest decreases.

^[5] A single allegation may be directed at more than one member of a police force – hence percentages may not add up to 100%.

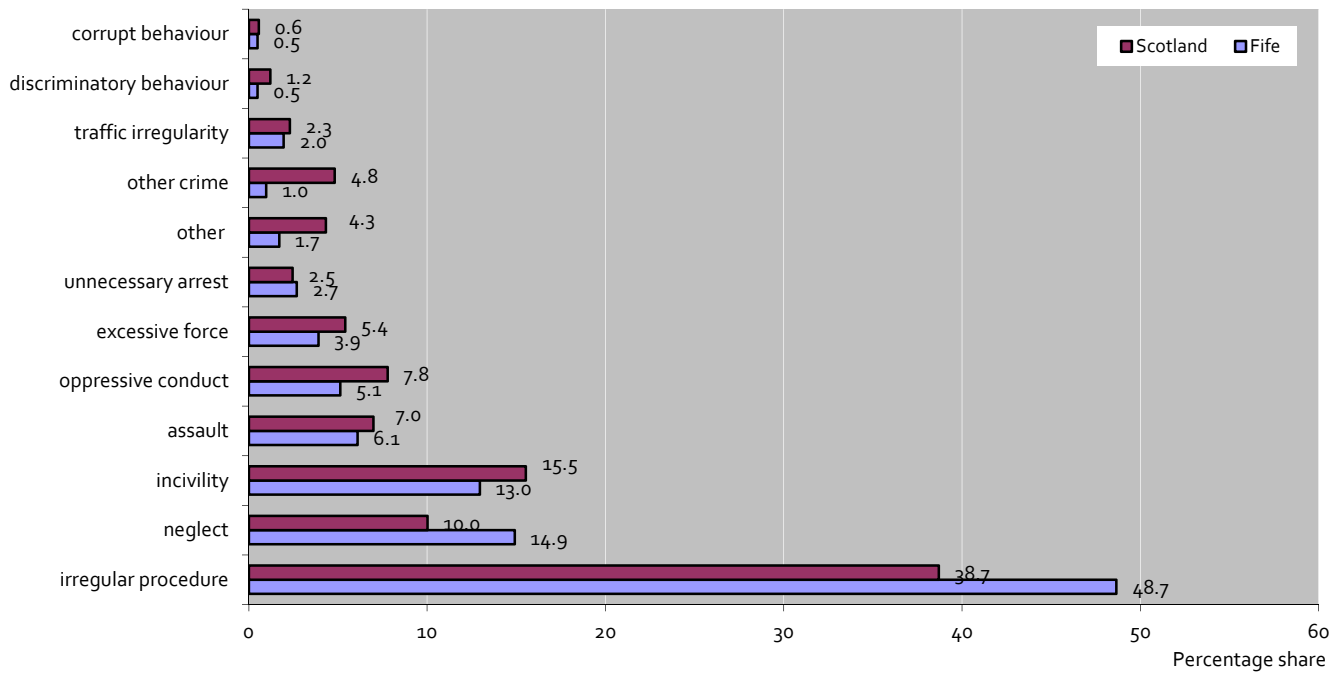
^[6] Resolved by explanation may now include allegations concluded by explanation, regardless of whether or not they were upheld.

^[6] NB: Large percentage changes can be a consequence of small raw numbers.

^[7] "Unsubstantiated" is in the process of being replaced by new closure code 'not upheld due to insufficient evidence'.

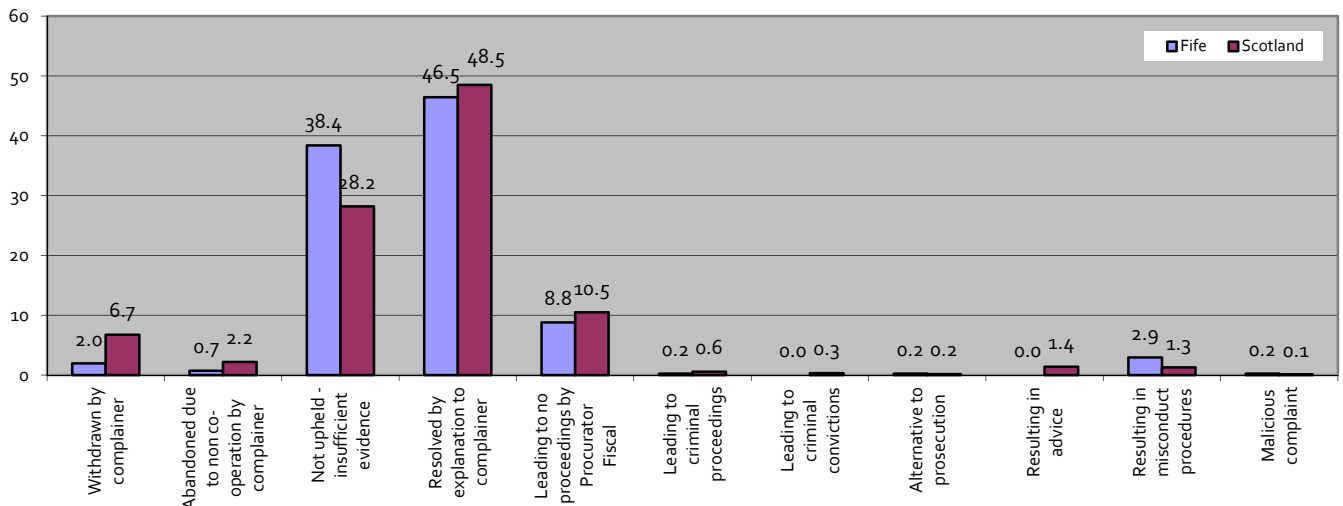
- Compared with the national average, the force has a higher share of disposed of allegations of neglect of duty and irregular procedure.
- In all other categories its share of allegations disposed of is lower than the Scottish average.

Figure 2: Percentage share of on-duty allegations disposed of - Fife and Scotland 2012-13



- The largest proportion of allegations disposed of by Fife Constabulary in 2012-13 is no longer those that are *not upheld due to insufficient evidence*⁷ but those *concluded by explanation* to complainers (46.5 per cent). Most Scottish forces have experienced similar changes - a reduction in *unsubstantiated/not upheld* and a rise in *resolved/concluded*. As a result, the national average for *resolved/concluded* disposals has risen from 20.6 last year to 48.5 per cent and that for *unsubstantiated/not upheld* disposals has fallen from 43.8 to 28.2 per cent.
- Also down is the force's proportion of disposals *resulting in advice* being given to a member of the force, which had been rising annually but is now down to 0.0 per cent. The same picture - of past annual increases followed by a sharp drop in 2012-13 - can be seen for Scotland as a whole.
- Elsewhere, the force's proportion of disposals *leading to a "no proceedings" decision* by the procurator fiscal has fallen for the second consecutive year.

Figure 3: Outcomes of on-duty allegations - Fife Constabulary and Scotland, 2012-13



3 Off-duty complaints

- The proportion of allegations received by Fife in 2012-13 concerning off-duty conduct fell for a second consecutive year to just 1.0 per cent. The proportion for Scotland as a whole fell to 3.1 per cent.
- At just five, the number of these allegations received by the force in 2012-13 is down -76.2 per cent on last year compared with an overall decline for Scotland of -31.9 per cent. Similarly, the number disposed of fell by -86.7 per cent over the same period to stand at four, compared with a fall of -19.2 per cent nationally.
- All five allegations received were directed at *police officers*.
- Of the four allegations disposed of by the force only one (25.0 per cent) was of a criminal nature, compared with 73.4 per cent nationally. Two were disposed of by explanation, one was *unsubstantiated/not upheld due to insufficient evidence* and one resulted in *action being taken*.

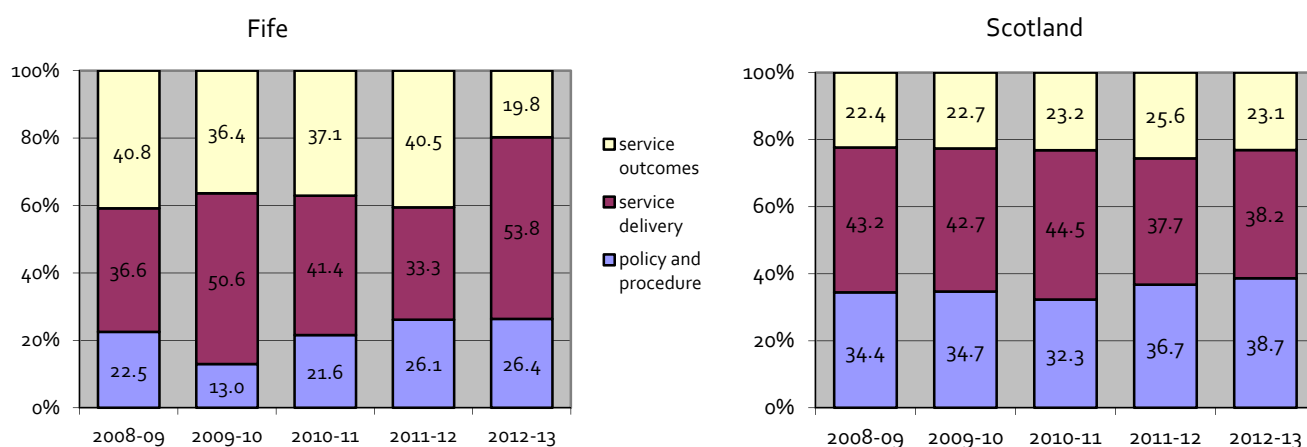
Table 3: Outcomes of all off-duty allegations - Fife and Scotland, 2009-10 to 2012-13

Fiscal year'	Fife Constabulary				Scotland			
	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
% Action taken	61.5	15.0	33.3	25.0	52.9	51.3	50.7	39.3
% Unsubstantiated / Not upheld	30.8	70.0	50.0	25.0	30.1	37.6	38.2	47.6
% Resolved	7.7	0.0	0.0	50.0	11.1	7.4	3.1	12.1
% Withdrawn	0.0	15.0	16.7	0.0	5.3	3.6	7.2	0.3
% Abandoned	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0	0.8	0.7
TOTAL - number	13	20	30	4	342	417	359	290

4 Quality of service complaints

- A total of 18.6 per cent of all allegations received by Fife Constabulary in 2012-13 concerned quality of service. The equivalent proportion for Scotland is just 12.4 per cent.
- At 91 the number of quality of service allegations received by the force in 2012-13 is down -18.0 per cent on last year, compared with a fall for Scotland as a whole of -9.9 per cent.
- The most common type of allegations received was *service delivery* (at 53.8 per cent one of the highest shares in Scotland), followed by *policy and procedure* at 26.4 per cent and *service outcomes* at just 19.8 per cent.
- At 96, the number of quality of service allegations disposed of by the force also fell year-on-year (by -28.9 per cent) compared with a fall of -8.2 per cent for Scotland as a whole.

Figure 4: Percentage share of type of quality of service allegations received, 2012-13



5 Complainer characteristics

- Nearly all complainers (94.8 per cent) made their complaint to the force as opposed to having someone else do so on their behalf. This is three points lower than the 97.7 per cent recorded nationally. Where someone else did so on their behalf, it was more likely to be an agent acting for the complainer (3.7 per cent) than a witness (1.5 per cent).
- The majority of complainers were male (61.0 per cent), slightly lower than the Scottish average of 62.4 per cent. Fife was one of only two forces to capture details on the gender of all its complainers.
- In 19.1 per cent of cases the age of the complainer was unknown; in a similar proportion (21.7 per cent) the occupational status of the complainer was unknown. Despite being some of the lowest proportions nationally, they are still too large to make further comment. In only 4.9 per cent of cases the ethnicity of the complainer was unknown (the lowest nationally). Of those remaining, 4.8 per cent were of Asian or other (non- white) background.

Figure 5a: Age of complainer - Fife Constabulary and Scotland, 2012-13

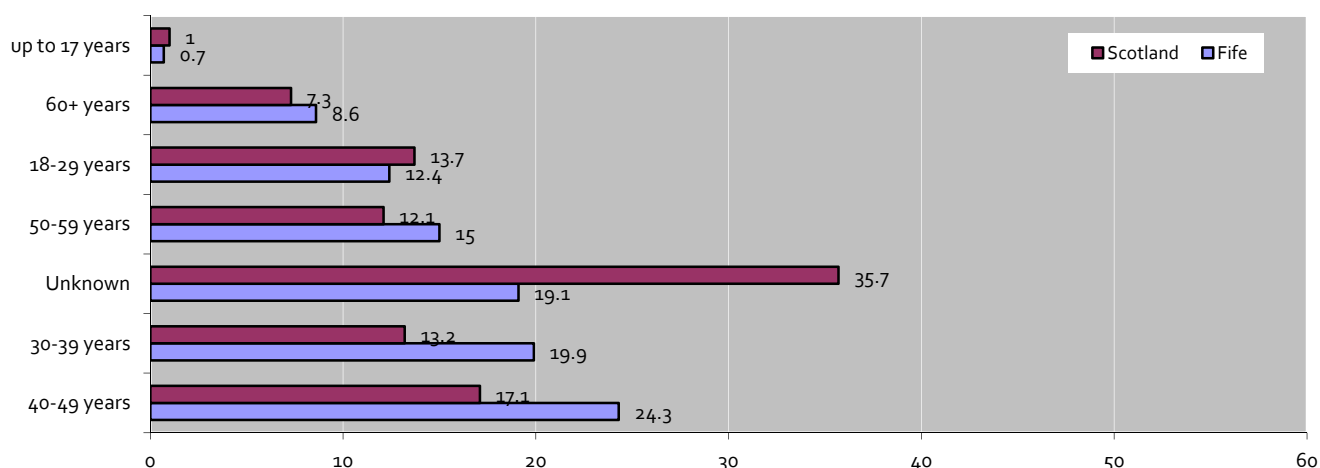
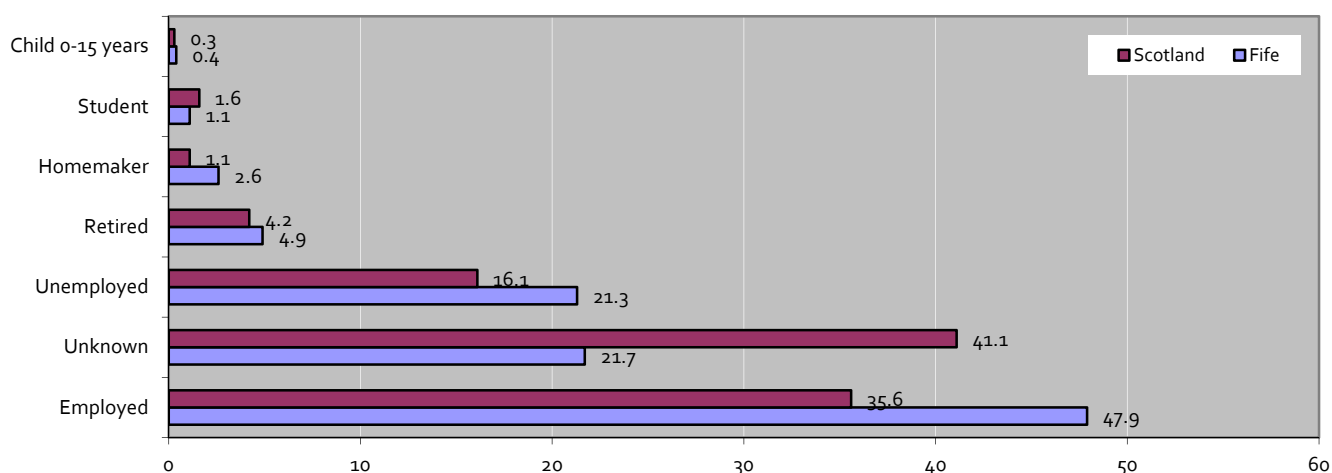


Figure 5b: Occupation of complainer - Fife Constabulary and Scotland, 2012-13



6 Subject of complaint characteristics

- We have said elsewhere that the majority of subjects of allegations were police officers. Over three-quarters of all those complained about in the force were male (76.0 per cent), 18.3 per cent were female and 5.7 per cent were unknown. The equivalent figures for Scotland are 72.5 per cent, 20.7 per cent and 6.8 per cent respectively.
- The peak ages for being complained about in the force are 40-49 (33.0 per cent, compared with 29.4 per cent nationally) and 30-39 (31.7 per cent, compared with 30.6 per cent nationally). This is only indicative, however, given that in 7.7 per cent of cases the age of the subject was unknown.
- In 6.8 per cent of cases the ethnicity of the subject of the complaint was unknown. Only 0.4 per cent of those remaining were of non-white background.