

29th June 2021

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20210999

REQUEST

- 1. Please tell me the number of recorded offences under s.15A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, sexual communication with a child, (Home Office recording code 71/17) recorded from (and including) July 1st 2020 to (and including) March 31st 2021**
- 2. Where possible I would like to know the age and gender of the victim, broken down into age groups: 11 and under, 12-15, 16 and over.**
- 3. Please tell me the age and gender of the youngest victim.**
- 4. Please tell me all the forms of communication (eg. which social media or messaging platform such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Kik etc.) that have been recorded as having been used in connection with recorded offences under s.15A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, sexual communication with a child, from (and including) April 1st 2020 , until (and including) March 31st 2021.**

RESPONSE

I approached our Crime Management Data Returns Administrator for assistance with your request. The Connect System is used to record complaints or allegations of those matters, which the Home Office specify should be recorded as 'crimes'.

All our systems are designed and used first and foremost for Policing Purposes and have limited search capability.

They provided me with the enclosed spreadsheet and the following explanation of their search criteria:

Please see the attached and below explanation for FOI 20210999.

CONNECT data –

I have included a count of offence 7117 - ENGAGE IN SEXUAL COMMUNICATION WITH A CHILD, recorded under the Home Office Offence class 88A _ Sexual Grooming where the offence was recorded for CONNECT crime between 01-JUL-2020 and 31-MAR-2021, with a breakdown by Online Crime Indicator.

Of the offence count, I have included a breakdown of the victim's age at the time of offence and gender. 30 offences are currently recorded without victim details.

Offences have been recorded where the age of the victim is over 18, this will be referred to the relevant unit for review.

I have also searched for the following keywords if mentioned within the Initial MO free text field and provided the number of offences where mentioned for the time period specified between 01-APR-2020 and 31-MAR-2021

*WHATSAPP – 2 Offence
FACEBOOK – 7 Offence
TWITTER – Nil Return
INSTAGRAM – 10 Offences
SNAPCHAT – 7 Offence
KIK – 1*

Please note –

- Searching for keywords may not accurately identify all offences that are relevant to the request due to spelling variations/errors. We can only search the Initial MO free text within CONNECT, therefore results may not accurately reflect what is potentially recorded.*
- More than one of the above keywords maybe mentioned within the Initial MO field.*

Any further breakdown of data for Q3, due to the low numbers and small timescale involved may make it possible to identify individuals from that data, and/or other information in the possession of a data controller. It is not therefore available in this format as it would be exempt from release under Section 40(2) *Personal Information* of the FOI Act. I also considered engaging Section 44 (1) *Prohibition on Disclosures*, in respect of Section 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 1992 (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003) which gives victims/offenders of specific offences a guaranteed anonymity. However, I believe in releasing age and genders details in the tabled format attached will mitigate this concern.