

22nd February 2018

Freedom of Information Request – Reference No:20180075

REQUEST

I would like to make the following request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

For the calendar year 2017 (1/1/17-31/12/17) please can you tell me:

1 - How many people were charged by your force for meeting a child following sexual grooming contrary to section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

2 - How many people were charged by your force for attempting to meet a child following sexual grooming contrary to section 1(1) of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981.

3 - Of the total number from answer 1 added to answer 2 (so the total number of people charged with meeting a child plus those charged with attempting to meet a child) how many were charged based on some or all evidence provided by what are commonly known as vigilante paedophile hunter groups.

By that I mean any member of the public who acts as independent investigator to target people who use the internet to meet or attempt to meet children for sexual reasons.

CLARIFICATION

Please could you clarify the following point(s): -

Our Crime Management System is used to record complaints or allegations of those matters which the Home Office specify should be recorded as 'crimes'. This system contains data regarding the offence/victim/offender/outcome – it does not have a specific field/flag which identifies 'where evidence comes from'.

CMS does have a 'circumstances of the offence' field which could be searched using *specified* words/phrases but obviously record retrieval would be reliant on a) data regarding evidence being input into this field and b) the actual specified words being used and correctly spelt.

Evidence supplied by a specific group/individual could form part of a case file but these would need to be manually reviewed.

We can provide the number of crimes and those charged. Can you advise how you would like us to progress your request.

FROM REQUESTOR

Suggest we see how many there are and where they are and then address that aspect? If there are just three and they are easy to read, great....if there are 30 and many are difficult to access I accept we may need to take look at alternatives.

RESPONSE

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

She conducted a search of the two crime management systems. (CMS - our legacy system which provides data up to 4th December 2017 and our new CONNECT system which records crimes from that date onwards)

She was able to provide me with data from which the below tables were compiled and the following explanation.

I have included a count of offences recorded under the Home Office Offence class – Sexual Grooming, where the offence was recorded on the CMS/Connect Crime register between 01-Jan-2015 and 31-Dec-2017.

Of the offence count, I have also provided details of the offender outcome, if currently recorded.

Of the 2017 offences 9 involved intelligence from paedophile/vigilante hunter groups.

Please be advised that due to the low numbers involved in this request the information has been provided in a table format in order to anonymise it and make it suitable for release into the public domain.