

8th April 2021

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20210519

REQUEST

The total number of reports received by the police of racist abuse on social media from March 4, 2017 to March 4, 2021?

Of that figure, how many were investigated?

And how many of the investigations resulted in an arrest/charge?

Also, can you please give me a breakdown of which social media sites the offences were committed on - meaning the total number of offences on each site?

Clarification request

We could provide you with offences and outcomes with an online indicator. However, our Crime Management systems do not have a generic marker for 'Social Media', and we would search the text in the initial MO free text for specified social media apps. Would this be useful for your research? If so, could you please confirm the social media apps you are wishing for us to search.

Reply to Clarification

Yes - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok please

RESPONSE

I approached our Crime Management Data Returns Administrator for assistance with your request. There are two crime management systems that are used, CMS – our legacy system which provides data up to the 4th December 2017, and the Connect System which records crimes from that date onwards. These are used to record complaints or allegations of those matters, which the Home Office specify should be recorded as 'crimes'.

The Administrator has provided the following explanation and attached data:-

CONNECT –

I have provided a count of offences recorded for CONNECT Crime between 04-Dec-2017 and 28-Feb-2021 where the offence is recorded with the Hate Indicator – Racial and the Online Indicator is Yes. Of the offence count, I have provided a breakdown the Offence Outcome, and the number of offences where the following keywords are mentioned within the Initial MO free text field.

FACEBOOK
INSTAGRAM
TWITTER
TIKTOK

The requestor should be made aware of the following regarding this data set –

- Some offences may mention more than one of the specified Social Media platforms, and I have only searched for the specified platforms. Should the requester be interested in other Social Media Platforms then please can they provide details.
- There are no specific markers to identify the specified platforms, therefore we would search for the specified words using a free text search within the INITIAL MO free text within CONNECT. However, this may not accurately identify what is potentially recorded on the crime systems due to spelling variations\errors. As a result, the circumstances of each offence would have to be reviewed at record level in order to potentially identify if the offence is relevant to the request. However, reviewing each record may still not guarantee complete data accuracy.
- Offences are recorded in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules –
General Rules - The Principal Crime Rule (1 of 1) - IF THE SEQUENCE OF CRIMES
IN AN INCIDENT, OR A COMPLEX CRIME, CONTAINS MORE THAN ONE TYPE
OF CRIME, THEN COUNT THE MOST SERIOUS.

CMS –

Given the present situation, I am working from home and I am currently experiencing technical difficulties and cannot access the software needed to extract data from CMS(ii) at this time, I will therefore provide data between 04-Mar-2017 and 04-Dec-2017 at a later date.