

27th February 2018

Freedom of Information Request – Reference No:20180234

REQUEST

I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

1. a) How many offences of meeting a child following sexual grooming were recorded between 1st January 2015 and the present day? Please break these figures down by year.

I would like the information to be based on the Home Office Classification of 88A Sexual Grooming, which covers the following offences:

88/1 - Meeting a female child following sexual grooming etc. (Offender is aged 18 or over and victim is under 16)

88/2 - Meeting a male child following sexual grooming etc. (Offender is aged 18 or over and victim is under 16)

b) For this same time period, how many times were the police alerted by a sting operation carried out by a member of the public? (NB The term 'sting operation' refers to an independent investigation carried out by a member of the public with the explicit aim of catching sexual groomers. It does not apply to members of the public reporting concerns about their own children being groomed online.)

CLARIFICATION

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

Our Crime Management System (CMS) does not electronically record whether evidence from 'Paedophile Hunters' was gathered/used. If such groups are reporting incidents/crimes. This would perhaps be recorded on our *Incident* database (providing they identify themselves as such). However, a search of such reports would require a key word search and a manual trawl through any resulting records containing that particular word/phrase. 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 – it is identifying those involving 'paedophile hunters' that is problematic. Can you advise how you would like us to progress your request.

Clarification from the Requestor

If question 1b) were limited to crime reports resulting in a charge only, would it be possible to search the incident database and remain within the cost limit?

**For question 2, please could they search for the 'Ambassador Course' and the 'Thinkuknow Introduction Course', both of which are run by CEOP?
Please could the results be broken down to show how many officers have completed each course.**

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 attached spreadsheet has been 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 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 vigilante group/hunter element the administrator has

searched the circumstances of offence free text field for the word 'Paedophile' this has returned 9 offences.

I reviewed the nine offences to check that each referred to a Paedophile Hunter/Group or similar. As previously explained (CMS) does not electronically record whether evidence from 'Paedophile Hunters' was gathered/used.

This particular search by the administrator was a search using the words "Paedophile" this data may not give a full and accurate picture, as it is reliant on the information of how the evidence was obtained being inputted on the crime report in the first instance, and then correct spelling of the words used.

In relation to Question 2, South Yorkshire Police can neither confirm nor deny that information is held relevant to your request as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 23(5) Information supplied by or concerning certain Security Bodies

Section 23 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest.

None of the above can be viewed as an inference that any other information does or does not exist.