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Our Ref: FOI2018/03262

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 Ref No: FOI2018/03262

I write in connection with your request for information received on 15th June. I note you seek access to the following information:

This request is for the time period starting from January 2015 up until the most recent date you hold records to. I would like to know the following:

- 1. How many incidents in relation to the offences listed below were recorded by your force where some or all of the evidence was supplied by so-called Paedophile Hunters?**
- 2. How many of those incidents were subsequently acted on and recorded as a crime and how many resulted in a person being prosecuted.**
- 3. How many of those acted upon led to convictions?**

Offences in relation to:

- 18 or over attempt to cause / incite a girl 13 to 15 to engage in sexual activity - no penetration**
- Attempt to cause / incite a boy 13 to 15 to engage in sexual activity - offender 18 or over - penetration**
- Attempt to cause / incite a boy aged 13 to 15 to engage in a penetrative sexual activity - offender aged under 18**
- Attempt to cause / incite a boy under 13 to engage in sexual activity - no penetration**
- Attempt to cause / incite a female child aged under 13 to engage in sexual activity - no penetration**
- Attempt to cause / incite a female child under 13 to engage in sexual activity - offender 18 or over - penetration**
- Attempt to cause / incite a girl 13 to 15 to engage in sexual activity - offender 18 or over - penetration**
- Attempt to cause / incite a girl aged 13 to 15 to engage in a penetrative sexual activity - offender aged under 18**
- Offender 18 or over attempt to cause / incite a boy under 13 to engage in sexual activity - no penetration**
- Offender under 18 attempt to cause / incite a girl 13 to 15 to engage in sexual activity - no penetration**
- Cause a child aged 13 to 15 to watch / look at an image of sexual activity - offender 18 or over**
- Offender 18 or over attempt to cause a child aged 13 to 15 to watch / look at an image of sexual activity**
- Offender 18 or over cause a child under 13 to watch / look at an image of sexual activity**
- Adult attempt to meet a boy under 16 years of age following grooming**
- Adult attempt to meet a girl under 16 years of age following grooming**

Can I ask that when searching any systems a search all also made for any Paedophile Hunters groups known to your force as searching just the for the term Paedophile Hunter may not bring up any results, as some incidents may have been reported by a group

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (The Act) to handle all requests in a manner that is blind to the identity of the requestor. Any information released in response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore, in the public domain without caveat.

Following enquiries within the Constabulary please see our response below.

Response – Hertfordshire Constabulary do not have a flag on our Crime Recording System for 'paedophile hunters'. Therefore to answer this request each 'attempting to cause or incite a child to engage in sexual activity' offence would require manually reading the crime text to see if it relates to vigilante groups. Given the amount of these crimes that exist over the 3 year period this would take 2-4 weeks.

Unfortunately this means it is not possible to suggest a way to refine this request, as even if the date range were reduced it would still require hundreds of records to be manually checked.

We therefore, consider that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the appropriate limit of £450 as has been stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees & Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004.

Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides that –
“Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.”

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Hertfordshire Constabulary, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

Should you have any further enquiries concerning this matter please do not hesitate to contact me quoting the above reference number.

Yours sincerely

James Hodson
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Hertfordshire Constabulary provides you the right to request an independent review of this response under its review procedure. If you require such a review you must notify us within two months from the date of this letter. After lodging a complaint with Hertfordshire Constabulary if you are still dissatisfied with the decision you may make an application to the Information Commissioner. For information on how to make a complaint please visit their website at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/> or contact them on 0303 123 1113.