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Our Ref: FOI2018/00739

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 Ref No: FOI2018/00739

I write in connection with your request for information received on 9th February. I note you seek access to the following information:

I am doing a story looking into the issue of “youth produced sexual imagery” (sexting by under 18s) and am particularly interested to find out about the impact/usage of a new outcome code introduced by the Home Office in January 2016 – Outcome 21 – in relation to it.

Bearing that in mind I have the following FOI for your force please:

Freedom of Information Request

All questions relate to period covering January 2016 – December 2017 (or most up to date data):

- 1. How many times in total has your force used Outcome 21?**
- 2. How many of those Outcome 21s relate to Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (sexting by under 18s)?**
 - a. How many of those Outcome 21s (relating to Youth Produced Sexual Imagery) involved 11-17 year olds?**
 - b. How many of those Outcome 21s (relating to Youth Produced Sexual Imagery) involved children aged 10 and under?**
- 3. How many overall reports of crimes relating to Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (sexting by under 18s) have been made to your force?**
- 4. Of those overall reports**
 - a) how many were by pupils aged 11-17?**
 - b) how many were by pupils aged 10 and under?**

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.

Due to the way the crime details are recorded on our Crime Information System – it is not possible to identify which of these crimes relate to Images of the Young people themselves as opposed to photos of others.

In line with the general UK Police Force's for safeguarding and support for the child concerned to be of more importance than the criminal process, information which would identify the nature of the crime is only to be found in the free text fields of the crime reports and as such are not easily analysable.

Identification of these would involve reading the details of every report and as such would exceed the limit of 18 hours as stated in the Freedom of Information Act.

Only on further reading of the crime free text could it be ascertained whether or not the offence involved children and whether or not the offence involved “Sexting” or “Distribution of an Indecent Photo of a Child” (i.e. not of themselves).

The vast majority of the cases, where the age of the suspect was not given, involved minors both in the role of offender and victim, where this was not the case – in some instances the offender was a complete stranger “met” over the

internet! The information about the children involved is not recorded in the "formal" Suspect fields but often informally in the free text fields, sometimes involving terms such as 'Year 9 pupil' rather than any specific demographic details.

Recording the information in this way avoids criminalising young people, where the commission of an offence may be more through misadventure than criminal intent and would typically be dealt with through words of advice being given by a Police Officer or PCSO.

There is no way of identifying the nature of the offence (and indeed any Internet platforms used) without reading through each record individually and recording it. This would far exceed the time limit required. Any partial provision of information would not provide a complete and accurate picture of the nature of such offences.

Following enquiries within the Constabulary please see our response below.

Response

Q1 – 88

Q2 – As detailed above, we cannot provide this figure within cost. However the total number of offences relating to "Indecent Images of Children" during this period was 76. We cannot provide information as to the ages of the children involved as this is not always formally recorded.

Q3 - As detailed above, we cannot provide this figure within cost. The total number of offences relating to "Indecent Images of Children" during this period was 622. We cannot provide information as to the ages of the children involved as this is not always formally recorded.

The numerical data presented in this response is an un-audited snapshot of un-published data sourced from "live" systems and is subject to the interpretation of the original request by the individual extracting the data.

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.