



Heddlu Police  
**DYFED-POWYS**

**FOI Reference: 393/2021**

**Request:**

1. Please tell me the number of recorded offences under s.15A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, sexual communication with a child, (Home Office recording code 71/17) recorded from (and including) April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 until (and including) March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
2. Where possible I would like to know the age and gender of the victim, broken down into age groups: 11 and under, 12-15, 16 and over.
3. Please tell me the age and gender of the youngest victim.
4. Please tell me all the forms of communication (eg. which social media or messaging platform such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Kik etc.) that have been recorded as having been used in connection with recorded offences under s.15A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, sexual communication with a child, from (and including) April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 , until (and including) March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021.

I suggest a table as follows:

Total number of offences	Number of female victims		Number of male victims		Age and gender of the youngest victim	Method of communication used	Number of times each method was used
	11 and under		11 and under				
	12-15		12-15				
	16 and over		16 and over				

Where the number of victims is greater than zero but fewer than five, please use a \* if necessary, rather than rejecting my request on the grounds of protecting personal information.

**You have previously provided three months of this data (April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2020) so if preferable/easier please provide the remaining nine months (July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021) rather than reject the request on grounds of duplication.**

OFFICAL

**Response 1:**

I can confirm that Dyfed-Powys Police does hold the information requested,

There have been 34 offences recorded under s15A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, sexual communication with a child within the dates given.

**Response 2:**

I can confirm that Dyfed-Powys Police does hold the information requested, however the following exemption has been applied to part of the information:

**Section 30(1)(a) Investigations and Proceedings conducted by Public Authorities**

**Age of victim**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Number</b>
11 and under	8
12 – 15	11
16 and over	1
Not recorded	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Section 30 exemption x 10</b>	

**Response 3:**

I can confirm that Dyfed-Powys Police does hold the information requested as detailed below:

The age of the youngest victim is 8 years old. There have been male and female victims of this age.

***The above does not take into account the 10 crimes which are currently under investigation as a Section 30 exemption applies to those 10 crimes therefore they have been excluded.***

**Response 4:**

I can confirm that Dyfed-Powys Police does hold the information requested, however the following exemption has been applied to part of the information:

**Section 30(1)(a) Investigations and Proceedings conducted by Public Authorities**

## OFFICAL

### Forms of communication

Communication method	Number
Facebook	3
Facebook messenger	1
game chat	1
Instagram	3
online	4
snapchat	9
text	1
Whatsapp	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Section 30 exemption x 10</b>	

### Explanation of the applied exemptions:

#### Section 30(1)(a) Investigations and Proceedings conducted by Public Authorities:

(1) Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it has at any time been held by the authority for the purposes of –

(a) Any investigation which the public authority has a duty to conduct with a view to it being ascertained (i) whether a person should be charged with an offence, or (ii) whether a person charged with an offence is guilty of it.

Section 30(1)(a) is a class-based qualified exemption. This means that the legislators when writing the legislation considered that the release of such information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 would cause harm to the public authority or individual concerned. There is therefore no requirement to carry out a HARM Test in respect of such information. However there is a requirement to carry out a Public Interest Test in order to establish whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption may be outweighed by a wider public benefit in disclosure.

### Public Interest Test

#### **Considerations favouring disclosure:**

Disclosure of the information would improve the public's knowledge and awareness regarding the frequency of such crimes.

#### **Considerations favouring non-disclosure:**

This exemption covers information held at any time for the purpose of an investigation, whether the case is ongoing, closed or abandoned. To release details of an ongoing investigation, as in this case, could undermine and prejudice those investigations. This would impact on the forces' future law enforcement capabilities by hindering the prevention or detection of crime.

### Balancing Test

After considering the advantages and disadvantages in disclosure, it falls upon Dyfed-Powys Police to conduct a balance test on the issues. The strongest argument for disclosure, which is public awareness,

This is a response under the Freedom of Information Act and disclosed on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

## OFFICIAL

needs to be weighed against the strongest arguments for non-disclosure, which in this case is that the release would undermine and prejudice an ongoing investigation, which would impact on the forces' future law enforcement capabilities by hindering the prevention or detection of crime. Therefore, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**It should be noted that as a result of the systems adopted by Dyfed-Powys Police in relation to the recording of such information that the information released may or may not be accurate.**

**Furthermore, it should also be noted that Police forces in the United Kingdom are routinely required to provide crime statistics to government bodies and the recording criteria is set nationally. However, the systems used for recording these figures are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the crime data. It should be noted that for these reasons this force's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other response you may receive.**