

6 February 2025

REFERENCE: FOI\25\5

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your request for information dated 11th January 2025, as detailed below.

'please provide me with a breakdown of the number of people convicted of sexual communication with a child and blackmail (also referred by police sometimes as sextortion/catfishing), in Northern Ireland between 2019 and 2024.

As well as an annual breakdown, please provide me with a breakdown of the profile of people convicted including age brackets and gender. Please also provide a breakdown of what court the conviction took place at.'

Convictions datasets held by the Department do not hold details on the circumstance in which an offence occurred beyond that of the offence description. Therefore, information provided in the tables relates only to cases where there was a conviction for at least one offence of 'Sexual communication with a child'. Information on convictions for blackmail has not been included. Due to the generic nature of the offence description, offences where the circumstances were not of a sexual nature, or where the victim was not a child, may be included in any totals provided. Information has been provided for the years 2019 – 2023, the most recent period for which information is available.

Convictions for offences of 'sexual communications with a child' by court type, 2019 - 2023

Year	Crown Court	Magistrates' courts	Total
2019	13	15	28
2020	13	12	25
2021	21	15	36
2022	19	9	28
2023	41	17	58

Convictions for offences of 'sexual communications with a child' by defendant gender, 2019 - 2023

Year	Male	Female	Total
2019	28	0	28
2020	25	0	25
2021	36	0	36
2022	#	*	28
2023	#	*	58

Convictions for offences of 'sexual communications with a child' by defendant age band, 2019 - 2023

Age band	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
18 - 24	#	*	12	4	8
25 - 29	*	#	*	4	8
30 - 39	11	5	8	10	12
40 - 49	8	6	6	4	8
50 - 59	5	4	#	3	14
60 & over	0	5	*	3	8
Total	28	25	36	28	58

Note:

1. Figures relate to initial disposals at courts. Appeals are not included.
 2. Figures relate to cases where there was a conviction for at least one offence of 'Sexual communication with a child'.
 3. Age is at date case was dealt with.
- * means a figure of less than 3 has been suppressed under rules of disclosure.
- # means a figure of 3 or more has been treated to prevent disclosure of a small number elsewhere.

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you request an internal review please do so in writing stating the reasons to the address above.

If following an internal review you were to remain dissatisfied you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner and ask the Commissioner to investigate whether the DoJ has complied with the terms of the FOIA. You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out.

Further details on the role of the Information Commissioner and the handling of appeals can be found at: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

If you wish to discuss this please contact the Freedom of Information Team using the contact details provided at the top of the first page. Please remember to quote your reference in any correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Manager