

25th January 2022

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 2022- 49

REQUEST

1. How many reports of 'romance fraud*' has your police department received in the last year?
2. How much money did the victims of romance fraud lose as a result of the scams?
*Romance fraud is when a person is tricked into an online relationship where the other party is just trying to extort money fraudulently.

RESPONSE

I approached our Performance Review Unit for assistance with your request. An analyst within this unit has conducted a search of our Crime Management System – Connect which records complaints or allegations of those matters, which the Home Office specify should be recorded as ‘crimes’.

She provided me with the table below in response and the following comments:

In answer to question 1, I have completed a search of ‘romance fraud’ in the Initial MO and Investigation Summary fields for the year 2021 which returned two offences. I have attached an Excel spreadsheet with these in so you can see the filters that were added. I’m also not sure if searching for ‘romance fraud’ only will have captured all of the relevant offences. In which case we may need further clarification from the requester with alternative search terms to capture other offences which may be relevant to their request.

SYP & crime only filter

Reported Date is between **01/01/2021** and **31/12/2021** and

Investigation Summary is LIKE (pattern match) %romance fraud% **OR**

Initial MO is LIKE (pattern match) %romance fraud%

HMIC Crime Tree Level 2	Count Of Crimes
THEFT OFFENCES	1
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	1
Grand Total	2

I am not sure how we would be able to answer question 2 of this request or whether it is possible to determine.

Unfortunately there is no specific category which will automatically return the data you are requesting, unless the specific phrase is mentioned in the circumstances of

the offence as searched above. There is the possibility that the offences you are seeking may be recorded as fraud where the victim is the partner, girlfriend, boyfriend of the suspect. However, the number of records returned are likely to be very high and we will need to review each one manually to ensure it meets the criteria of your request. This would likely then trigger Section 12 – Appropriate Limit.

If you would like to re-submit a request on this basis or provide any alternative search fields that are of interest, we would be happy to look into this further.