

Man jailed for grooming and sexual offences



A 24-year-old man who groomed dozens of young girls online, meeting and raping some of them, has today been jailed.

In June 2014 Gavin Scoular was convicted of online grooming and sexual activity with children. Subsequently, extensive work began to examine numerous devices seized from him.

This further investigation found that he had communicated indecently with dozens more girls, and when they were contacted five disclosed that he had raped them.

These rapes took place in 2012 and 2013, the victims being girls aged between 13 and 17-years-old. Scoular had invited them to his home address in Edinburgh, and also carried out attacks on wasteground behind Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and in Holyrood Park.

Scoular would randomly chat to girls on Facebook and Skype to befriend them and then groom them, using a mixture of fake profiles and some using his real details.

Following a trial at Livingston High Court, Scoular was convicted of 17 charges in addition to 11, which he admitted, and has today at Edinburgh High Court been sentenced to 12-years in prison, with a five year extended sentence. He will also remain on the Sex Offenders Register for life.

Detective Chief Inspector Martin Maclean of Edinburgh's Public Protection Unit said, "Scoular is an extremely dangerous individual, taking every opportunity he could to go online and exploit young girls – it is fair to say he was compelled to do this for his own sexual gratification.

"Scoular would initiate conversation with girls under the age of 16, building up to him exposing himself to them online or bribing them to expose themselves to him. In the cases of the five girls he raped, he would communicate with them, build up a relationship and then arrange to meet them.

"Having been released on licence, as soon as sufficient evidence was gathered Scoular was rearrested and remanded in custody, unable to offend further. The Public Protection Unit investigation into his devices revealed offending on a scale amongst the worst I have ever come across in such a short space of time.

"I would urge parents to ensure their children are only chatting to people they genuinely know online, are keeping accounts private, not putting personal details on social media and parental controls are activated where possible. Those intent on offending like Scoular will try any means of gaining trust and befriending in order to coerce vulnerable victims into chatting, performing sexual acts online or meeting and being subjected to sexual assault or rape.

"We regularly visit schools and community groups to speak to young people and educate them in how to stay safe online, whilst also acting on any information we receive that indicates that a child has been abused or exploited. Safeguarding our young people is a priority and we will do all we can to remove opportunities for offending and put suspects before the courts