

# **Taskforce established to tackle online child sexual abuse makes 39 arrests in first month**

**A new taskforce set up to tackle online child sexual abuse has already made 39 arrests in its first four-weeks of operation from 1st September.**

37 resulted in the recovery of material relating to online child sexual abuse and exploitation.



Police Scotland. Photo: Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)  
All of those arrested were men ranging in age from 15 to 76 years old.

Dozens of children were identified as being at risk or potentially at risk and have now been protected.

Internet grooming and online child sexual abuse (CSA) remains a priority for Police Scotland.

Assistant Chief Constable Judi Heaton, Lead for Major Crime, Public Protection and Local Crime, said: "Recorded crimes for online offending have risen substantially in line with our determined and recent proactive work to uncover this hidden criminality.

"Online offenders may think they are anonymous, and they may not comprehend the terrible, devastating and lifelong impact their actions have on children. But there is no excuse for their actions.

“Online images of child abuse and exploitation are not virtual, they show the very real abuse of a real child.

“We are determined to improve our response, invest in resources and latest technologies, to track down predators and abusers, and to make sure they face the full consequences of their actions.

“Tackling online CSA requires a cross partnership effort not only through enforcement but also on deterrence by means of offender programmes. And we are also working with the National Police Chiefs Council on ways we can prevent this criminality on a larger scale.”

From next week Police Scotland will run the next phase of its online child sexual abuse campaign #GetHelpOrGetCaught, which signposts offenders or potential offenders to Stop It Now!Scotland for help to stop or prevent offending.

A total of 1,036 online child sexual abuse crimes were recorded between April and September, according to Police Scotland’s 2010-21 Quarter 2 Performance Report, an increase of 18.4% on the previous year and 162.1% above the five year mean.