

1,358 reports of crimes against children in 2015

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THERE were more than 1,000 cases of crimes committed against children in 2015 and more than one-third of these reports were related to sexual abuse.

This was revealed during the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) weekly press briefing on Wednesday at the Police Administration Building on Edward Street, Port of Spain.

At the briefing, acting Sergeant Valarie Hospedales, of the TTPS' Child Protection Unit, explained that an interim report, submitted for the period May 2015 to December 2015, showed that there were 1,358 reports of crimes committed against children.

Of those offences, 500 of those reports were of a sexual nature, which included sexual penetration and sexual touching.

However, of these reports, while some matters have been brought before the courts, there have been no convictions as yet.

It was reiterated that the legal age for consent in this country is now 18, and penetration for sexual gratification of a minor's mouth, nose or ears is a sexual offence under the Children's Act.

The Child Protection Unit, which was set up in March 2015 to deal with cases of child abuse, noted that in some cases children are enticed by offenders into performing sexual acts by being offered money or

other material things.

In many instances the perpetrators are persons close to the child--someone in a position of trust.

Acting Sgt Hospedales also reiterated that in 2015, there was a 24 per cent drop in sexual offences.

"Generally, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service recorded a 24.6 per cent decrease in sexual offences and a 12.5 (per cent) decline in reports of sexual indecency against victims for the period 2014 to 2015," Hospedales said.

Turning to homicides, it was noted that the homicide toll for the year (up to Wednesday morning) was seven, when compared to 15 homicides for the same period in 2015.