

**have faced police after committing crimes as serious as vandalism, theft and robbery**

- **Shocking figures revealed by Freedom of Information request**
- **Crimes include vandalism, break-ins and robberies**
- **Under-10s can't be charged as they are not deemed criminally responsible**

By Daily Mail Reporter

Children as young as four have committed offences as serious as vandalism, theft and robbery, shock figures reveal today.

A Freedom of Information request has revealed the disturbing catalogue of child crime dealt with by just one regional police force over the past two years.

In one incident a pair of four-year-olds vandalised a car - leaving their parents to pay for the damage.



Watch out for the cute ones: A Freedom of Information request has revealed the disturbing catalogue of child crime dealt with by just one regional police force over the past two years. (Stock image)

In another, a seven-year-old was responsible for breaking into a shed while elsewhere a nine-year-old was caught committing a robbery.

But no children were charged as they were under ten and therefore not deemed criminally responsible for their actions.

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Instead child offenders are normally subjected to curfews or referred to youth offending teams. The figures, released by Nottinghamshire Police following a Freedom of Information request, show that 83 offences were committed by under-tens between April 2011 and April 2013.

No children under the age of ten were charged as they are not deemed responsible for criminal actions. (Picture posed by model)

Officers were called to incidents involving 94 children - including some repeat offenders. Roger Hopkins Burke, criminology lecturer at Nottingham Trent University said very young children who committed crime could be influenced by older youngsters.

'I think ten is too young but the worry is people assume you do things under the age of criminal responsibility and you get away with it - but that's not true,' he said.

'Some children are out on the street without adult supervision. It is about upbringing and what goes on in the family home.' Paddy Tipping, Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire Police, said the force was committed to dealing with youngsters outside of the courts.

He said community resolutions are used in the hope children will accept responsibility and learn from their actions. He added: 'I'm not sure these numbers are surprising, given the size of Notts. The fact that very young children don't go to court doesn't mean that nothing happens. We know we need to keep young people away from court using early intervention. The action of the four year-old is not as important as what the copper says to the parents.' Sergeant Deb Barton, from Notts Police's youth issues division, said: 'What we are doing now is going back with the children to their parents, talking to the victims of the crime and saying, "this is what's happened, it needs to be put right