



Thursday 23 August

PPS publishes annual statistical bulletin on hate crime

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) has published its annual statistical bulletin: 'Cases Involving Hate Crime 2017/18'.

The bulletin relates to the full 2017/18 financial year with comparisons to the equivalent period of the 2016/17.

It is set out in two parts, reflecting the two distinct definitions applied in cases involving hate crime, as recorded by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the PPS.

In Part One key statistics are presented in relation to cases involving hate crime submitted to the PPS by the PSNI, while in Part Two key statistics are presented in relation to cases considered by a Prosecutor to have involved hate crime which was 'aggravated by hostility'.

Among the key findings is a notable decrease in the number of cases submitted to the PPS by police in the last year, marking the second year in a row that case numbers have declined. A total of 335 files were received in 2017/18, compared to 386 the previous year and 573 the year before that.

The PPS's Head of Policy and Information, Dr Richard Scullion, said:

"These are distressing cases in which victims suffer simply because of their race, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

"The Public Prosecution Service understands the devastating effect hate crime has not just on the lives of its victims, but also the wider community. That is why we work hard to ensure the public can have confidence in the PPS playing its important role in the Criminal Justice System's handling of these types of offences.

"We are fully committed to continuing our strong partnership working with the PSNI, and other agencies, to ensure that perpetrators of hate crime are held to account, where possible.

“This Bulletin is compiled annually by statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It gives us all an important and detailed understanding of the trends around the prosecution of hate crime offences.

“We look forward to discussing these key statistics with interested stakeholders later this year.”

The key findings include:

Part One: Cases Involving Hate Crime Submitted by the PSNI

- There has been a decline in the number of cases submitted to PPS by police. In 2017/18 335 files were received, compared to 386 in the previous year.
- The majority of files received fell into the category ‘violence against the person’ (62.4%). However the number of cases involving violent offences fell by just over a tenth (11.4%), from 236 in 2016/17 to 209 in 2017/18.
- Prosecutorial decisions were issued in respect of 425 persons, a decrease of 17.3% on 2016/17 (514).
- Ten of the thirteen defendants dealt with in the Crown Court were convicted, while the conviction rate in the Magistrates’ and Youth Courts was 67.4%.

Part Two: Cases Considered by a PPS Prosecutor to have Involved Hate Crime which was ‘Aggravated by Hostility’

- The PPS issued 279 prosecutorial decisions in 2017/18, over two-thirds (67.7%) of which were for prosecution (178) or diversion from the courts (11). This compared to the 347 prosecutorial decisions taken in 2016/17, of which 67.4% were for prosecution (208) or diversion from the courts (26).
- The majority of the 279 decisions in 2017/18 related to offences which were either aggravated on the basis of race (111) or religion (106). Thirty-nine decisions related to offences aggravated on the basis of sexual orientation, while five related to disability. Eighteen were recorded as having multiple motivations.
- All six defendants dealt with in the Crown Court in 2017/18 were convicted of at least one offence. Nearly seven-tenths (68.3%) of those dealt with in the Magistrates’ and Youth Courts were convicted, an increase on 2016/17 (65.9%)

- Of the total of 131 defendants convicted during 2017/18, 53 were recorded as having received an increased sentence where the judge accepted that the aggravating feature of their offence(s) had been proven beyond reasonable doubt.

The full Bulletin can be [found here](#).

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Notes to Editors

1. The statistical information provided in this bulletin includes caseloads, prosecutorial decisions and outcomes of prosecutions at court. Figures are provided for the full 2017/18 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018), and includes comparisons for the equivalent period in 2016/17.
2. This summary should be read in conjunction with the explanatory notes and definitions provided (see pages 3 - 4 and 22 - 25 of the Bulletin).
3. These are 'Official Statistics' as defined in Section 6 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. Statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are seconded to the PPS and are responsible for ensuring that the statistics produced comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. All statistics for the current financial year have been finalised.
4. The PPS Hate Crime Policy can be [read in full here](#).
5. Hate crime statistics from the previous financial year (2016/17) can be found [here](#).
6. Any member of the public may comment on the report by contacting PPS as follows:
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