



17th November 2016

PPS PUBLISHES QUARTERLY STATISTICAL BULLETIN

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) today published its Quarterly Statistical Bulletin, which presents key statistics on the activity of the PPS, including caseloads and prosecutorial decisions and also includes data on the outcomes of prosecutions at court.

The statistics relate to the first six months in the 2016/17 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016) and includes comparisons with the first six months in the 2015/16 financial year.

Key findings

During the first six months of the 2016/17 financial year:

- The PPS received a total of 21,599 files. This was a decrease of 1.0% on the corresponding period of 2015/16 (21,828).
- In terms of offence classification, over two-thirds fell into three categories; 'motoring' (30%), 'violence against the person' (29%) and theft (9%).
- Of the total files received, 526 were submitted by government departments and agencies, 5% fewer than the equivalent period in 2015/16 (555). The majority of the 526 files were from the Department for Communities (41%) or the Driver and Vehicle Agency (33%).
- 25,358 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS. The Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases; more than two-thirds (69%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (15,188) or for diversion from the courts (2,228). This was lower than the equivalent period in 2015/16 (71%).

- There was a 2.3% decrease in the number of decisions to prosecute compared to the first two quarters of 2015/16. This comprised of a 5.4% decrease in indictable prosecution decisions and 2.1% decrease in summary prosecution decisions. The numbers of diversionary decisions fell by 8.2% and no prosecution decisions increased by 7.7%.
- Of the 7,942 decisions for no prosecution, the vast majority (97%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 3% did not pass the public interest test.
- The average number of calendar days required for issue of a decision varied by type. Indictable prosecution decisions (prosecution in the Crown Court) were issued in an average of 189 days. Summary prosecution decisions (prosecution in the Magistrates' or Youth Court) were issued in an average of 25 days, cautions in 20 days, youth conferences in 17 days and informed warnings in 15 days. Average days to issue a decision included time taken by the police to respond to decision information requests and, in indictable prosecution decisions, for case preparation.
- 1,155 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was an increase of 80% on the corresponding period in the previous financial year (640). This reflected the impact of the withdrawal of criminal defence services by the Law Society and the Bar Council for Northern Ireland in response to the new Crown Court legal aid fee scheme introduced by the Department of Justice. As a result, no new cases were conducted in the Crown Court over the period May 2015 to February 2016.
- The conviction rate in the Crown Court was 88% compared to a conviction rate of 85% in the same period during the 2015/16 financial year.
- A total of 13,858 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts, a decrease of 7% on the corresponding period in 2015/16 (14,976). The conviction rate in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts was 78% compared to 79% in the equivalent period in 2015/16.

Further information

This summary should be read in conjunction with the explanatory notes provided (see pages 18 - 20 of the Statistical Bulletin).

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.

The information presented in this bulletin is derived from the Case management System, the main operational system within the PPS. This is a 'live' system with data being input on a daily basis. All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change.

The full bulletin may be viewed or downloaded here: <http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Quarterly-Statistical-Bulletins-7877.html>. Any member of the public may comment on the report by contacting PPS as follows:

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