



**News Release  
28 July 2016**

## **STRONG LEVELS OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE PPS**

Over seven tenths of the public have confidence that the Public Prosecution Service provides a fair and impartial service to the people of Northern Ireland, an independent survey has revealed.

According to the findings of the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey published today (THURSDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> JULY), 71% of those questioned said they were either very or fairly confident in the fairness and impartiality of the PPS.

The bulletin also shows almost equal levels of confidence in the impartiality of the PPS among both the Catholic and Protestant communities.

**PPS Senior Assistant Director Stephen Herron said: “The PPS sits at the heart of the criminal justice system and it is essential that the public understand our role and have confidence in the crucial work we do.**

**“PPS staff work very hard to provide a service that is independent, fair and effective. It is therefore satisfying to see that the public hold strong levels of confidence in those key aims of our service.**

**“It is also heartening to note this broad public support is shared almost equally when the survey looked at the religious breakdown of those questioned.”**

The survey - entitled [“Perceptions of the Public Prosecution Service”](#) - provides information on levels of public awareness and understanding of the work of the PPS, as well as public confidence in and views on the effectiveness of the organisation.

The survey was conducted over the months of April and May 2016. As well as presenting the latest findings, the bulletin includes comparisons with the previous survey in January 2015 and, where appropriate, information from earlier years.

### **Key findings**

Results from the 2016 survey were as follows:

- Seventy-one per cent of respondents in the survey were very or fairly confident in the fairness and impartiality of the PPS.

- Seventy-one per cent of Catholics questioned felt very or fairly confident in the fairness and impartiality of the PPS, compared to 73% of Protestants.
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents were very or fairly confident that the PPS was effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime.
- The majority of respondents (67%) felt very or fairly confident the PPS took its decisions independently of police, the Government or any other body.
- Nearly four-fifths (79%) of respondents stated that they had heard of the PPS.
- Eighty-three per cent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that it is important for people to know what the PPS does and what its role is within the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland.

ENDS

### ***Notes to Editors***

The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey is a regular sample survey carried out by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). It is designed to provide a snapshot of the behaviour, lifestyle and views of a representative sample of people in Northern Ireland, and is used to inform Government policy in a range of areas, including criminal justice.

The PPS has commissioned questions for inclusion in the Omnibus Survey on an annual basis since 2006. A total of six questions were included in the latest survey in order to gauge the following:

- Public awareness of the PPS and its role (Questions 1, 2 and 6).
- Views as to the PPS's effectiveness (Question 3).
- Public perceptions of the Service's independence, fairness and impartiality (Questions 4 and 5).

The information gathered via the survey is used by the PPS for a variety of purposes, such as informing the development of policy and assessing the effectiveness of the Service's Communication and Outreach Strategies. Data in respect of the PPS's effectiveness and its fairness and impartiality are also used as key performance indicators for the Service.

Detailed notes have been supplied, which provide an account of the technical aspects of the survey, including the origin of the sample, response rates and its 'representativeness' (see 'User Information' on page 12 of the 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 bulletin may be viewed or downloaded at [www.ppsni.gov.uk](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk). Any member of the public may comment on the report by contacting PPS as follows:

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