



PPS Press Release
Date issued: 2 August 2016

Rise in prosecutions for hate crime

The number of people prosecuted for hate crimes which were aggravated by hostility has risen to 314 in the last financial year, compared to 298 in 2014/15.

The statistics were published today (Tuesday 2 August) in the Public Prosecution Service's Annual Statistical Bulletin on Hate Crime.

The bulletin highlights that the overall conviction rate for offences aggravated by hostility in the Crown Court was 77.8% and the conviction rate in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts was 74.2%.

The large majority of the 347 defendants dealt in the Crown and Magistrates' Courts related to offences which were either aggravated on the basis of race (149) or religion (150). Thirty-six defendants were dealt with for offences aggravated on the basis of sexual orientation, and a further 3 in respect of disability.

In total 258 defendants were convicted during 2015/16, and of these 89 were recorded as having received an enhanced sentence where the Judge accepted that the aggravating feature of their offence(s) had been proven beyond reasonable doubt. This compared with the 53 defendants who received an enhanced sentence in the previous year.

Commenting on this year's statistical bulletin, Senior Assistant Director for the PPS, Stephen Herron said:

"We have listened closely to the victims of hate crime and have worked hard to ensure that where there is evidence that a crime is aggravated by hostility based on race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, that it is robustly prosecuted on this basis so that the court has open to it the power to increase the sentence imposed on conviction.

"Overall, we are encouraged that our work, together with that of our partners in the criminal justice sector, is resulting in more prosecutions and convictions for those guilty of crimes motivated by hatred."

The bulletin 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'.

Notes to Editors

The statistical information provided in this bulletin includes caseloads, prosecutorial decisions and the outcomes of prosecutions at court. Figures are provided for the full 2015/16 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016) and include comparisons for the equivalent period in 2014/15.

The statistics should be read in conjunction with the explanatory notes and definitions provided (see pages 3 - 4 and 22 - 25 of the bulletin).

The PPS Hate Crime Policy can be found [here](#).

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.

The bulletin may be viewed or downloaded [here](#). Any member of the public may comment on the report by contacting PPS as follows:

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