



**News Release
16 June 2016**

PPS PUBLISHES ANNUAL STATISTICAL BULLETIN

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) today published its latest statistics for activity over the past year – including caseloads, prosecutorial decisions and court outcomes.

The statistics relate to the full 2015/16 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016) and include comparisons with 2014/15.

The Bulletin also sets out the significant organisational change within the service during the period, including a reshaping of its structures and a 20% reduction in staffing.

The Director of Public Prosecutions Barra McGrory QC explains: “The PPS rolled out its Transformation Programme during the year with the aim of stream-lining operations while maintaining a high level of effectiveness.

“The scale of change we have experienced is significant and reflects on-going budgetary constraints.

“I am pleased to say that staff have taken on the challenges positively and have continued to deliver strongly across the year.”

In a breakdown of key PPS figures for the 2015/16 financial year, the statistics show prosecutors received a rising number of files in areas such as possession of weapons, violence against the person and robbery.

Key findings include:

- The PPS received a total of 43,914 files. This was a decrease of 3.2% on the previous financial year (45,383).
- Five offence classifications, ‘possession of weapons’, ‘violence against the person’, ‘robbery’, ‘criminal damage’ and ‘drug offences’ have shown an increase in the number of files received compared with 2014/15.
- 51,872 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS. The Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases; seven-tenths (70%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (31,396) or for diversion from the courts (4,744). This was similar to the 2014/15 financial year (71%).

- Of the 15,732 decisions for no prosecution, the vast majority (96%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 4% did not pass the public interest test.
- 1,026 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was a decrease of 45.5% on the previous financial year (1,881). 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 81.6%.
- A total of 28,726 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts, a decrease of 5.7% on 2014/15 (30,474). The conviction rate in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts was 78.8%.

Notes to Editors

The Transformation Programme included the consolidation of the PPS' operational teams which have been brought together in three main locations, in Belfast, Londonderry and Newry.

The PPS also created a Serious Crime Unit to specifically deal with a range of the most serious indictable cases, including murder, manslaughter, sexual offences, human trafficking and prostitution.

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. All statistics for the current financial year have now 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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