



## NEWS RELEASE

Date Issued Wednesday 29 June 2016

### ***ANNUAL REPORT REVEALS STRONG PERFORMANCE BY THE PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE***

The Public Prosecution Service today publishes its sixth Annual Report.

The report presents a detailed breakdown of the activities of the PPS during the 2015-16 financial year – including significant achievements and how the organisation performed in key target areas.

Director of Public Prosecutions Barra McGrory QC said his staff had worked hard to continue to deliver a high quality service, despite the challenge of significant structural change over the year, along with budget pressures.

**“This has been a year of considerable re-structuring for the PPS, with the roll out of our Transformation Programme,” he said.**

**“PPS staff have not lost focus on the need to perform highly and meet key delivery targets, alongside their on-going commitment to delivering a more efficient and effective service for the future. We continue to work hard to achieve these aims in tandem with our responsibilities to victims and witnesses, which are now underpinned in statutory form through the Victim Charter.**

**“Looking at the Annual Report’s findings, I am particularly pleased to note our performance in respect of the timeliness of our prosecution decisions, where nine out of ten targets for the year were exceeded. This was in spite of the loss of almost a fifth of legal and administrative staff through the NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme.**

**“It is also satisfying to note a rise in public confidence last year with nearly three quarters of respondents to a survey stating they were very or fairly confident in the impartiality and fairness of the PPS.”**

The PPS Transformation Programme was rolled out during 2015-16. It saw the organisation consolidate operational teams in three main locations at Belfast, Londonderry and Newry, and also led to the creation of a Serious Crime Unit to deal with the most serious cases such as murder, manslaughter and human trafficking.

Key findings of the 2015-16 Annual Report include:

- 74% of the public having confidence in the PPS providing a fair and impartial service (according to the NI Omnibus Survey of 2015, compared to 71% for the year before);
- A conviction rate of 81.6% in the Crown Court;
- A conviction rate of 78.8% in the Magistrates' Courts;
- 97% of PPS decisions being taken in accordance with the Code for Prosecutors; and
- Exceeding nine of the ten targets set for the timeliness of prosecutorial decisions. These included 85% of summary prosecution decisions being issued within 40 days (against a target of 80%) and 86.3% of diversionary decisions being issued within 30 days (against a target of 80%).

The Annual Report examines performance in a number of areas which were identified as significant priorities for the PPS, including providing an enhanced service to victims and witnesses.

PPS work towards meeting this target in the past year has included the publication of a revised Victim and Witness Policy, as well as continued investment in the Victim and Witness Care Unit.

Mr McGrory said this commitment to victims and witnesses will continue to be a key priority for the PPS in the year ahead.

**“We have a responsibility to provide a high quality service to all victims and witnesses and we take that responsibility very seriously,” the Director added.**

**“Coming into contact with the criminal justice system can be a daunting experience for anyone in that position. We are working to ensure that the needs of a victim to effectively participate in prosecutions are assessed and that it is clear to them what our responsibilities are and what they can expect from the PPS at all stages.”**

Looking to the future, the Director paid tribute to the professionalism of his staff in making the PPS a more streamlined and flexible service.

**“It is down to the sheer hard work and dedication of our staff that we have so successfully re-shaped how we deliver an effective prosecution service for everyone in Northern Ireland. I am confident that we can work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that the structures we have in place meet the demands and challenges of the coming years,” he concluded.**

**ENDS**

## NOTES TO EDITORS:

- A copy of the Annual Report and Resource Accounts 2015-16 is available via the [PPS website](#)
- This is the sixth PPS Annual Report and Resource Accounts to be published since the PPS was designated as a non-ministerial department in April 2010, following the devolution of policing and justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- For media enquiries, please telephone PPS Communications on 02890 897187 or email to [ppspressoffice@ppsni.gov.uk](mailto:ppspressoffice@ppsni.gov.uk). An out of hours press officer can be contacted on 07990 031568.