



**News Release  
18 June 2015**

## **PPS PUBLISHES ANNUAL STATISTICAL BULLETIN**

The Public Prosecution Service has received a rising number of files in areas such as robbery, violent attacks and sexual offences, new statistics published today have shown.

The number of cases being referred on charges of possession of weapons, drug offences and criminal damage has also increased during the last year.

The rise in referrals on those six serious offences was highlighted by the findings of the latest PPS statistical bulletin which it published today.

The detailed breakdown also revealed that a total of 45,383 files were sent to the PPS last year – and that its prosecutors secured an 85.1% conviction rate in the Crown Court, a rise on the previous year.

The bulletin provides information for the full 2014/15 financial year (from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015) and how it compares with 2013/14.

It presents key statistics on the activity of the PPS, including caseloads and prosecutorial decisions. It also includes data on the outcomes of prosecutions at court.

Overall, the statistics paint a picture of the wide range of cases referred to the PPS for a decision on whether they should be sent to court – and the various ways in which those files were dealt with.

Senior Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions Stephen Herron said the figures were a detailed illustration of the spectrum of work carried out by the organisation.

“This Statistical Bulletin gives the public an in-depth look at the work carried out by the Public Prosecution Service,” he said.

“We had another very busy year last year during which we considered over 45,000 files on a variety of charges and secured a conviction rate of 85.1% in the Crown Court, higher than the year before.”

Key findings for the 2014/2015 financial year include:

- Prosecutors received a total of 45,383 files. This was a decrease of 4.1% on the previous financial year (47,339);
- The majority of those files (43,940) were sent by the PSNI and showed that the most common charges referred were motoring offences (30%) and violence against the person (26%). The next most common offence was theft which accounted for 10% of all police files received.
- Overall, six offence classifications - possession of weapons, robbery, violence against the person, sexual offences, drug offences and criminal damage - have shown an increase in the number of files received compared with 2013/14.
- 53,987 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS. The Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases; more than seven-tenths (71%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (33,023) or for diversion from the courts (5,081). This was similar to the corresponding period of 2013/14 (73%).
- The 5,081 diversions were dealt with in three main ways. Of the overall total, 3,731 were issued with a caution; 537 were issued with an informed warning and 425 were dealt with through Youth Conference. There were also 388 diversions classified as ‘Other’ which included options such as a Driver Improvement Scheme or a Community Restorative Justice Scheme.
- There was a decrease of 7.8% in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised a 7.4% decrease in indictable prosecution decisions and a decline of 7.8% in summary prosecution decisions. The numbers of diversionary decisions fell by 17.2% while no prosecution decisions rose by 3.3%.
- Of the 15,883 decisions for no prosecution, the vast majority (96%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 4% 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 were issued in an average of 158 days, summary prosecution decisions in 23 days, restorative cautions and informed warnings in 17 days and youth conferences in 19 days. Average days to issue included time taken by the police to respond to decision information requests and for case preparation.
- 1,881 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was a decrease of 24.4% on the equivalent period in 2013/14 (2,488). The conviction rate in the Crown Court was 85.1%.
- A total of 30,474 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts, a decrease of 9.9% on 2013/14 (33,834). The conviction rate in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts was 79.8%.

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

1. The Quarterly Statistical Bulletin provides information for the full 2014/15 financial year (from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015) and how it compares with 2013/14. This latest publication is the fourth and final bulletin issued for the 2014/15 year.
2. It is comprised of '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.
3. The bulletin may be viewed or downloaded at [www.ppsni.gov.uk/Quarterly-Statistical-Bulletins-7877.html](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Quarterly-Statistical-Bulletins-7877.html)

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