

## **Timeliness and quality of prosecution decisions highlighted in PPS Annual Reports**

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) has published its seventh Annual Report detailing the performance of the organisation over the last financial year.

The Annual Report and Resource Accounts 2016-17 contains an overview of the PPS' activities throughout the 12 months as well as accountability reports and financial statements.

One of the key findings of the report was the PPS' performance in respect of timeliness of prosecution decisions, where nine of the 10 targets set for the year were met. The quality of decisions made by the organisation was also maintained during 2016-17 with 98% of decisions assessed as having been taken in accordance with the Code for Prosecutors.

Director of Public Prosecutions Barra McGrory QC welcomed these achievements in what he described as 'a period of transition for the PPS', which included the embedding of a Transformation Programme within the organisation and against a background of ongoing budgetary constraints and reduced staff numbers which dropped 14 per cent from April 2015.

However he added that the major challenges presented by the Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES), combined with reduced financial resources, had been offset somewhat by the Transformation Programme which saw the consolidation of operational teams and the centralisation of some of the most serious indictable cases within the new Serious Crime Unit.

Mr McGrory said: "In developing the new organisational model the aim was to increase the flexibility of the Service, streamlining our operations so as to improve resilience and maintain a high level of effectiveness. As a result, we have been able to maintain our focus on performance and meeting our existing key delivery targets. This is evidenced by our performance in respect of the timeliness of our prosecution decisions, where nine of the 10 targets for the year were met."

Mr McGrory also highlighted the importance of collaborative working with criminal justice partners, the organisation's ongoing commitment to victims and witnesses, and fostering community confidence in the Service, in this year's report.

"The latest findings from the NI Omnibus Survey are very encouraging, with 71% of respondents stating that they were very, or fairly, confident in the fairness and impartiality of the Service," said Mr McGrory.

"Overall this has been a year of considerable change for the PPS but also, in my view, considerable achievement. Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues for their dedicated service and professionalism during this difficult period. All staff have contributed immensely to ensuring the continuity of a quality and effective service across all areas of the business."

Attorney General for Northern Ireland, John Larkin QC praised the Director and his staff for meeting the challenges thrown up by the Voluntary Exit Scheme and a major organisational restructuring.

He said: "That the Director and his colleagues have met so many targets, particularly in the area of timeliness of decision making, in such circumstances is a matter for congratulation."

Advocate General for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP also welcomed the report setting out the work of the Public Prosecution Service for the past year. "What stands out is the vision of senior leaders and the resilience and commitment to justice displayed by all the members of the Service, which has kept the quality of service high," he said.

#### NOTES TO EDITORS:

A copy of the Annual Report and Resource Accounts 2016-17 is available via the PPS website [here](#).

This is the seventh 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.

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