



News Release

26th April 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE AT 9.30AM ON THURSDAY 26th APRIL 2018

PPS PUBLISHES NEW STATISTICAL BULLETIN ON SEXUAL OFFENCES

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) today published its first [Statistical Bulletin: Cases Involving Sexual Offences 2016/17](#) which presents key statistics in relation to the prosecution of sexual offences, including rape.

The statistics relate to the full 2016/17 financial year with comparisons to the equivalent period of the 2015/16 financial year. The bulletin includes caseloads and prosecutorial decisions on all sexual offences, as well as statistics on the outcomes of prosecutions at court involving these offences.

One of the key findings contained in the detailed report is a recorded rise in the number of files being sent to the PPS involving the offence of rape.

The PPS's Head of Policy and Information, Dr Richard Scullion, said: "Sexual offences are among the most serious criminal acts that can be perpetrated and the PPS is fully committed to robustly prosecuting these types of cases where the Test for Prosecution is met.

"In developing this Statistical Bulletin, we want to contribute to a greater understanding of the prosecution of such cases and of the end-to-end criminal justice processes.

“Statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency have spent time collating, analysing and verifying these Official Statistics. The PPS will now undertake a programme of engagement with all interested stakeholders in order to develop and publish a new annual Bulletin in the Autumn, which will contain the figures for the 2017/18 financial year.”

Key findings for the 2016/17 financial year include:

- The PPS received a total of 1,312 files involving a sexual offence. This was an increase of 5.4% on the corresponding period of 2015/16 (1,245). There was a rise of 17.9% in the number of files received involving a rape offence from 335 to 395.
- Files received included a total of 1,399 suspects, 415 of whom were charged or reported for rape (an increase of 17.6% on 2015/16) and 984 were for other sexual offences (a decrease of 0.8%).
- 1,087 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS for suspects in cases involving sexual offences. The evidential Test for Prosecution was met for 36.7% of cases which included 363 decisions for prosecution and 36 for diversion from the courts. The percentage of decisions meeting the Test was slightly higher than in 2015/16 (33.7%).
- Of the 688 decisions for no prosecution, the vast majority (96.5%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 3.5% did not pass the public interest test.
- 267 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. The overall conviction rate for all sexual offences in the Crown Court was 73.8% compared with 76.5% in 2015/16.
- Of the 267 defendants, 67.4% were convicted of at least one sexual offence. 64 defendants were dealt with for an offence of rape and 57.8% of these were convicted of at least one offence (i.e. any offence). Just under a quarter (23.4%) of defendants were convicted of an offence of rape.

- A total of 148 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts, an increase of 11.3% on the corresponding period in 2015/16 (133). 62.8% of defendants were convicted of at least one offence (i.e. of any offence) which is similar to 2015/16 (61.7%).

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS:

1. This press release should be read in conjunction with the explanatory notes and user information provided (see pages 20 - 24 of the Statistical Bulletin). Please also refer to the supporting document to this release *Sexual Offences Classification (Offence Description and Legislation)* available on the PPS website at <https://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Thematic-Statistical-Bulletins-7882.html>.
2. 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 (as explained in the full Bulletin).
3. What is the Test for Prosecution?

The PPS takes decisions on files by applying what is known as the Test for Prosecution which is met if: the evidence gathered is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of the conviction at court, known as the Evidential Test; and that prosecution is required in the public interest – known as the Public Interest Test. All decision-making is taken entirely in line with the PPS Code for Prosecutors which can be [found here](#).

For media enquiries, please contact the PPS Communications Unit on 02890 897187. The out of hours duty media officer can be contacted on 07990 031568.

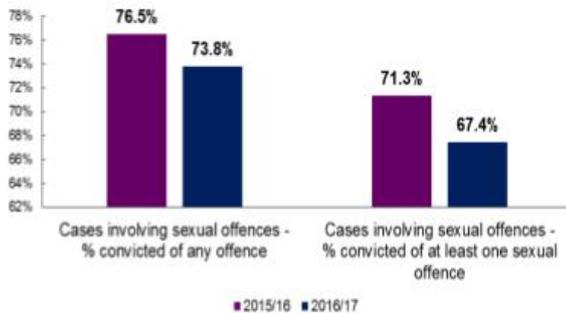
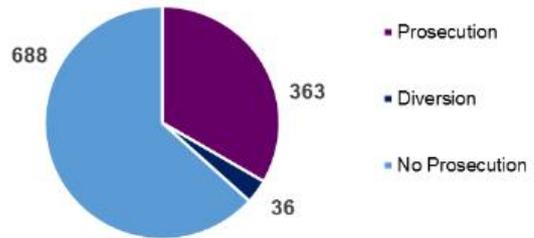
Statistical Bulletin: Cases Involving Sexual Offences 2016/17

2016/17 at a glance



The overall number of files received by the PPS involving a sexual offence increased by 5.4% between 2015/16 and 2016/17. Files received involving an offence of rape rose by 17.9% over the same period.

1,087 decisions were issued by the PPS during 2016/17 in sexual offence cases. The Test for Prosecution was met (i.e. prosecution or diversion) in respect of 36.7% of these decisions.



Nearly three-quarters (73.8%) of defendants were convicted in the Crown Court. The conviction rate including a sexual offence was 67.4%.

Over three-fifths (62.8%) of defendants were convicted in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts. The conviction rate including a sexual offence was 54.1%.

