



**News Release  
11 February 2016**

## **PPS PUBLISHES QUARTERLY STATISTICAL BULLETIN**

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) has received a rising number of files in areas such as violent attacks, criminal damage, and possession of weapons, new statistics published today have shown.

However, the overall number of files received by the PPS has fallen, according to figures covering the first nine months of the current financial year.

The PPS Quarterly Statistical Bulletin presents key statistics on the activity of the organisation, including caseloads, prosecutorial decisions and outcomes of prosecutions at court. The information relates to the first three quarters of the 2015/16 financial year (from 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015) and includes comparisons with the same period in 2014/15.

As well as noting the rise and fall in various offence classifications, the statistics also look at how many defendants were dealt with in the Crown, Magistrates and Youth Courts.

During the period examined, 824 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court, a decrease of 40.9% on the year before when the total was 1,394. However, no new cases were conducted in the Crown Court over the period May to December 2015 following the withdrawal of criminal defence services as part of the on-going legal aid fees dispute. The 824 defendants identified were either dealt with before the start of the withdrawal or were already in the Crown Court system by that date.

The conviction rate in the Crown Court was 84.2%; for Magistrates and Youth Courts it was 78.9% after a total of 21,988 cases were processed.

### **Other key findings for the first three quarters of the 2015/16 financial year include:**

- The PPS received a total of 32,767 files. This was a decrease of 3.5% on the corresponding period of 2014/15 (33,956).

- Files received involving 'violence against the person' went up by 6% on the equivalent period in 2014/15, while criminal damage cases rose by 4.7%, possession of weapons increased by 2.8% and drug offences went up by 1.1%.
- Of the total files received, 874 were submitted by government departments and agencies, the majority of which were from the Department for Social Development (38%) or the Driver and Vehicle Agency (34%).
- 37,715 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 (23,125) or for diversion from the courts (3,563). This was the same as the corresponding period of 2014/15 (71%).
- There was a decrease of 4.2% in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of a 8.5% decrease in indictable prosecution decisions and a decline of 3.9% in summary prosecution decisions. The numbers of diversionary and no prosecution decisions fell by 5.4% and 1.5% respectively.
- Of the 11,027 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. The most serious indictable prosecution decisions were issued in an average of 168 days. Summary prosecution decisions were issued in 25 days, restorative cautions in 22 days, youth conferences in 21 days and informed warnings in 13 days. Average days to issue included time taken by the police to respond to decision information requests and for case preparation.
- A total of 21,988 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts, a decrease of 3.2% on 2014/15 (22,722). The conviction rate in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts was 78.9%.

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

Media Enquiries please contact PPS Communications on 02890897187, out of hours officer on 07990 031568 or email: [ppspressooffice@ppsni.gov.uk](mailto:ppspressooffice@ppsni.gov.uk).

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 are provisional and may be subject to change.

The bulletin may be viewed or downloaded at [www.ppsni.gov.uk](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk). Any member of the public may comment on the report by contacting PPS as follows:

Central Management Unit

Public Prosecution Service

Linum Chambers

2 Bedford Square

Belfast BT2 7ES

Tel: 02890 897100

Deaf / hard of hearing (SMS):

07795 675528

Email: [info@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ppsni.gov.uk](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk)