



16th February 2017

PPS PUBLISHES QUARTERLY STATISTICAL BULLETIN

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) today published its Quarterly Statistical Bulletin, which presents key statistics on the activity of the PPS, including caseloads and prosecutorial decisions and also includes data on the outcomes of prosecutions at court.

The statistics relate to the first nine months in the 2016/17 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016) and includes comparisons with the first nine months in the 2015/16 financial year.

Key findings

During the first nine months of the 2016/17 financial year:

- The PPS received a total of 32,344 files. This was a decrease of 1.3% on the corresponding period of 2015/16 (32,767).
- In terms of offence classification, over two-thirds fell into three categories; 'motoring' (31%), 'violence against the person' (28%) and 'theft' (9%).
- Three offence classifications have shown an increase in the number of files received compared with the corresponding period in 2015/16. These are 'motoring offences' (+830), 'sexual offences' (+12) and 'possession of weapons' (+6). The largest reductions occurred in 'violence against the person' (-225), 'drug offences' (-218), 'public order' (-218) and 'theft' (-202).
- Of the total files received, 801 were submitted by government departments and agencies, 8.4% fewer than the equivalent period in 2015/16 (874). The majority of the 801 files were from the Department for Communities (44%) or the Driver and Vehicle Agency (31%).

- 37,894 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS. The Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases; more than two-thirds (69%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (22,857) or for diversion from the courts (3,328). This was lower than the equivalent period in 2015/16 (71%).
- There was a 1.2% decrease in the number of decisions to prosecute compared to the first three quarters of 2015/16. This comprised of a 1.0% increase in indictable prosecution decisions and 1.3% decrease in summary prosecution decisions. The numbers of diversionary decisions fell by 6.6% and no prosecution decisions increased by 6.2%.
- Of the 11,709 decisions for no prosecution, the vast majority (97%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 3% 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 (prosecution in the Crown Court) were issued in an average of 187 days. Summary prosecution decisions (prosecution in the Magistrates' or Youth Court) were issued in an average of 24 days, cautions in 20 days, youth conferences in 15 days and informed warnings in 14 days. Average days to issue a decision included time taken by the police to respond to decision information requests and, in indictable prosecution decisions, for case preparation.
- 1,748 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was more than double that of the equivalent period in the previous financial year (824). This reflected the impact of the withdrawal of criminal defence services by the Law Society and the Bar Council for Northern Ireland in response to the new Crown Court legal aid fee scheme introduced by the Department of Justice. As a result, no new cases were conducted in the Crown Court over the period May 2015 to February 2016.
- The conviction rate in the Crown Court was 88% compared to a conviction rate of 84% in the same period during the 2015/16 financial year.
- A total of 20,667 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts, a decrease of 6% on the corresponding period in 2015/16 (21,988). The conviction rate in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts was 79%, the same as that in the equivalent period in 2015/16.

Further information

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.

The information presented in this bulletin is derived from the Case management System, the main operational system within the PPS. This is a 'live' system with data being input on a daily basis. All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change.

The full bulletin may be viewed or downloaded here: <http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Quarterly-Statistical-Bulletins-7877.html>. Any member of the public may comment on the report by contacting PPS as follows:

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