



Public  
Prosecution  
Service

Policy and Information Unit  
Public Prosecution Service  
Belfast Chambers  
93 Chichester Street  
Belfast BT1 3JR

[REDACTED]

FOI 16/23-24

[REDACTED]

28 April 2023

I refer to your email dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023 in which you asked for information in relation to the number of prosecutions under the new stalking legislation introduced in Northern Ireland in 2022. Your request has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

The Freedom of Information Act creates rights of access for any person making a request for information to a public authority. The rights of access are twofold. First, to be informed by the public authority if it holds information of the description specified in the request, and if that is the case, secondly, to be provided with that information. These rights are subject to important limitations, which are designed to achieve a proper balance between the right to know and considerations of law and policy in the broader public interest.

You had asked the following:

1. *“When the first case was prosecuted?”*
2. *How many cases have been prosecuted under the new legislation?*
3. *And what the average sentence has been? Or give some examples of sentences?*
4. *I also wished to ask if the PPS was given any funding for training linked to either the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) or the Protection from Stalking Act (Northern Ireland) 2022”.*

In response to question 1, we can advise that the first prosecution decision for the Threatening and Abusive Behaviour offence (section 2 of the 2022 Act) was taken on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and the first prosecution decision for the Stalking offence (section 1 of the 2022 Act) was taken on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

**Independent, fair and effective**

In response to question 2, please see Table 1 below which provides the number of prosecution decisions issued under the new legislation for the period 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 to 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

**Table 1: Number of Prosecution Decisions Issued (26 April 2022 – 4 April 2023)**

Decision Offence Code Description	Number of Suspects
STALKING	47
THREATENING AND ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR	16

Please note that a number of suspects have been prosecuted for both offences, therefore the number of individual suspects is less than the total of 63.

In response to question 3, please be advised the PPS do not hold this information. Therefore, in terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I can confirm that under Section 1(1) (a) of the Act the PPS does not hold the requested information. You may wish to direct your request to the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service (NICTS) who may be able to assist in this regard.

In response to question 4, I can confirm that a comprehensive package of training and guidance has been provided to PPS prosecutors and other staff in support of the new Stalking / Domestic Abuse provisions. However, no external funding was provided for this purpose.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review in accordance with our review procedure. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of this response and you can do so by writing to the Head of Policy and Information, Public Prosecution Service, Belfast Chambers, 93 Chichester Street, BELFAST, BT1 3JR or alternatively by sending an e-mail to [info@ppsni.gov.uk](mailto:info@ppsni.gov.uk). You should state the grounds on which you are requesting the review.

Alternatively, you may wish to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

**PPS Information Management Team**