

[REDACTED]

FOI 42/25-26

6 June 2025

[REDACTED]

I refer to your email dated 16 May 2025 in which you requested information regarding protest related offences. 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:

“We request that the PPS disclose the following information from 1 May 2022:

- 1. The quantity of prosecutions, convictions and decisions not to prosecute for protest- or parade-related offences, delimited by:*
 - a) Subject-matter of protest or parade;*
 - b) Offence;*
 - c) Outcome;*
 - d) Gender identity of person arrested, charged, prosecuted or convicted; and*
 - e) Race/ethnicity of person arrested, charged, prosecuted or convicted.*

By a ‘protest- or parade-related offence’, we mean both (1) offences relating to the holding of an unauthorised parade or protest meeting; and (2) offences committed during a protest, or immediately before or after a protest”.

In response to question 1(a), please be advised this information is not held in a format which can be easily extracted from the PPS Case Management System (CMS). Therefore, to answer your request accurately would require a manual search of all cases and would easily exceed the cost limit as defined in Section 12 of the Act which makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit; for the PPS as a Government Department the limit is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

In response to questions 1(b) -1(d), please see **Tables 1 and 2** below which detail the numbers of prosecution / diversionary / no prosecution decisions issued for unlawful / un-notified processions related offences for the period 1 May 2022 - 30 April 2025, as well as Magistrates' Court outcomes over the same period. Please note that there were no Crown Court outcomes relating to these offences.

Offences considered in the analysis are provided at **Annex A**.

**Table 1: Decisions issued for unlawful / un-notified processions related offences
1 May 2022 - 30 April 2025**

Gender	Summary Prosecution / Diversion	No Prosecution	Total
Female	26	4	30
Male	104	59	163
Unknown	0	1	1
Total	130	64	194

Note: Based on most serious decision issued date. Decisions may relate to files received in earlier years.

Table 2: Magistrates' Court outcomes for unlawful / un-notified processions related offences 1 May 2022 - 30 April 2025

Gender	Convicted of at least one offence	Acquitted	Other*	Total
Female	10	8	14	32
Male	65	41	37	143
Total	75	49	51	175

Note: Based on Summary Disposal Date

*'Other' - includes defendant deceased; withdrawal – all charges; bound over for not having shown cause; bound over where charge withdrawn; withdrawn due to diversionary route

In response to question 1(e), please be advised this information is not recorded on PPS databases. 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.

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. 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,

Information Management Team
Public Prosecution Service

Annex A: Offences included in the Analysis

Offence Description	Offence Legislation
ORGANISING PROCESSION WHICH FAILED TO COMPLY WITH NOTICE	Article 3(5)(b) of the Public Order (NI) Order 1987.
TAKING PART IN PROCESSION WHICH FAILED TO COMPLY WITH NOTICE	Article 3(5)(b) of the Public Order (NI) Order 1987.
ORGANISING UNLAWFUL PUBLIC PROCESSION	Article 3(5)(a) of the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987.
TAKING PART IN AN UNLAWFUL PUBLIC PROCESSION	Article 3(5)(a) of the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987.
ORGANISER FAILING TO GIVE NOTICE OF PUBLIC PROCESSION	Section 6 of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998
AIDING AND ABETTING TAKING PART IN AN UN-NOTIFIED PUBLIC PROCESSION	Section 6(7)(a) of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998
TAKING PART IN AN UN-NOTIFIED PUBLIC PROCESSION	Section 6(7)(a) of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998
ORGANISER FAILING TO COMPLY WITH NOTICE OF PUBLIC PROCESSION	Section 6(7)(a) of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998
ORGANISING/TAKING PART IN AN UN-NOTIFIED PROTEST MEETING	Section 7(6) of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998
TAKING PART IN UN-NOTIFIED PROTEST MEETING	Section 7 of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.
FAIL TO COMPLY WITH CONDITIONS IMPOSED ON PUBLIC PROCESSION	Section 8 of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.
FAILING TO COMPLY WITH CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY THE PARADES COMMISSION	Section 8(7) of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998
ORGANISING AN UNLAWFUL PUBLIC PROCESSION	Section 6(7)(b) of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.
FAILING TO COMPLY WITH CONDITION OF PROTEST	Section 9(A) of The Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998
ORGANISING AN UN-NOTIFIED PUBLIC PROCESSION	Section 6(7)(a) of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998
ORGANISING OR TAKING PART IN PUBLIC PROCESSION ON DIFFERENT DATE/TIME/PLACE THAN SPECIFIED IN NOTICE	Section 7(6)(b) of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998