

FOI 12/25-26

18 April 2025

I refer to your email dated 9th April 2025 in which you requested information in relation to non-fatal strangulation. 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:

"I am looking for something and wondering if you would have access to the most recent figures on Non-Fatal Strangulation.....Also, in relation to the disposals and sentencing etc, would that be Court Service we would need to go to?"

In response, please see tables 1-3 below which detail the number of prosecutions for the offence of non-fatal strangulation or asphyxiation (Section 28 of the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (NI) 2022) and Court outcomes (Magistrate's and Crown Court) for the period 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. As the legislation for this offence only came into effect on 26 June 2023, it would explain the low number of court disposals, particularly in the Crown Court.

Please be advised that it is not possible, when extracting data from the PPS Case Management System (CMS) to accurately align sentencing with specific offences and therefore we are unable to provide precise data in relation to sentencing for these cases. You may wish to contact the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service (NICTS), who are best placed to assist.

Table 1- Prosecution decisions issued in respect of the offence of Non-Fatal Strangulation or Asphyxiation for the period 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025

(Based on most serious decision issued date)

Indictable Prosecution	Summary Prosecution	Total
64	214	278

Table 2- Magistrates' and Youth Court Outcomes in respect of the offence of Non-Fatal Strangulation or Asphyxiation for the period 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025

(Based on summary disposal date)

Overall Outcome	Number of Defendants
Convicted of at least one offence	123
Acquitted	36
Other	18
Total	177

Table 3- Crown Court Outcomes in respect of the offence of Non-Fatal Strangulation or Asphyxiation for the period 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025

(Based on indictable disposal date)

Overall Outcome	Number of Defendants
Convicted of at least one offence	23
Acquitted	1
Total	24

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