

[REDACTED]

FOI 18/25-26

13 May 2025

[REDACTED]

I refer to your email dated 11 April 2025 in which you requested information. 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 writing to request the following information under FOI:

- 1. The number of cases referred to the PPS by the PSNI relating to human trafficking offences in each of the last 10 years. Please provide a breakdown by type of exploitation.*
- 2. The number of human trafficking cases prosecuted by the PPS in each of the last 10 years. Please provide a breakdown by type of exploitation.*
- 3. The outcome of human trafficking prosecutions (conviction, acquittal, discontinued) in each of the last 10 years.*
- 4. Sentencing outcomes for individuals convicted of human trafficking offences in each of the last 10 years.*
- 5. The number of cases referred to the PPS relating to the purchase of sex since June 1st, 2015.*
- 6. The number of prosecutions related to the purchase of sex since June 1st, 2015.*

7. *The outcome of prosecutions related to the purchase of sex (conviction, acquittal, discontinued)”.*

In response to questions 1-3, please see Tables 1-3 below which detail the number of files referred to the PPS, the number of prosecutions and outcomes in respect of human trafficking offences for the period 2015 - 2024. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by type of exploitation as the numbers are too low and would therefore risk disclosure of personal information.

Offences considered in the analysis can be found at **Annex A**.

Table 1: Number of cases referred to the PPS by the PSNI in respect of human trafficking offences for the period 2015 - 2024

Based on first papers received date

Calendar Year	Number of Cases
2015	6
2016	8
2017	5
2018	6
2019	6
2020	5
2021	4
2022	9
2023	10
2024	9
Total	68

Table 2: Number of prosecutorial decisions issued in respect of human trafficking offences for the period 2015 - 2024

Based on most serious decision issued date

Year	Indictable Prosecution	No Prosecution	Total (Suspects)
2015	#	#	4
2016	5	7	12
2017	#	#	5
2018	5	7	12
2019	#	#	6
2020	0	8	8
2021	#	#	5
2022	#	#	2
2023	4	7	11
2024	6	8	14
Total	28	51	79

Note: '#' - numbers suppressed to avoid disclosure of personal information

Table 3: Crown Court outcomes in respect of human trafficking offences for the period 2015 - 2024

Based on indictable disposal date

Year	Convicted of at least one offence	Acquitted	Total
2016	4	0	4
2017	0	1	1
2018	4	2	6
2019	1	2	3
2020	1	0	1
2021	0	1	1
2022	1	0	1
2023	1	0	1
2024	4	0	4
Total (Defendants)	16	6	22

In response to question 4, 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 Tribunals Service (NICTS), who may be able to assist.

In response to questions 5-7, please see Tables 4-7 below which detail the number of files referred to the PPS, the number of prosecutions and outcomes in the Magistrates' and Crown Courts in respect of the offence of paying for sex for the period 2015 - 2024. Please note that we are unable to provide a breakdown of prosecutions for each calendar year as these numbers are too low and would risk disclosure of personal information. Offences considered in the analysis can be found at **Annex B**.

Table 4: Number of cases referred to the PPS by the PSNI in respect of the offence of paying for sex for the period 2015 - 2024

Based on first papers received date

Calendar Year	Number of Cases
2015	3
2016	6
2017	9
2018	7
2019	11
2020	16
2021	22
2022	24
2023	15
2024	18
Total	131

Table 5: Number of prosecutorial decisions issued in respect of the offence of paying for sex for the period 2015 - 2024

Based on most serious decision issued date

Indictable Prosecution	Summary Prosecution	Diversion	No Prosecution	Total (Suspects)
16	17	43	55	131

Table 6: Outcomes in the Magistrates' Court in respect of the offence of paying for sex for the period 2015 - 2024

Based on disposal date

Year	Convicted of at least one offence	Acquitted	Other
2015	0	0	0
2016	0	0	0
2017	0	0	0
2018	1	0	0
2019	0	1	0
2020	2	0	0
2021	3	0	0
2022	0	0	4
2023	0	0	1
2024	2	0	0
Total (Defendants)	8	1	5

Table 7: Outcomes in the Crown Court in respect of the offence of paying for sex for the period 2015 - 2024

Based on indictable disposal date

Year	Convicted of at least one offence	Acquitted
2015	0	0
2016	0	0
2017	0	0
2018	0	0
2019	0	0
2020	0	0
2021	1	0
2022	2	0
2023	1	0
2024	6	1
Total (Defendants)	10	1

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

Offence Description	Legislation
ARRANGING OR FACILITATING TRAVEL OF ANOTHER WITH A VIEW TO EXPLOITATION	Section 2 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
COMMITTING AN OFFENCE WITH INTENT TO COMMIT A SLAVERY OR HUMAN TRAFFICKING OFFENCE	Section 4(1) of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
CONSPIRACY TO TRAFFICK FOR EXPLOITATION	Article 9(1) of the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 and Section 2(1) of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland)
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	Section 2(1) of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
TRAFFICKING WITHIN THE UK FOR PURPOSES OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (BY ANOTHER)	Section 58(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
TRAFFICKING OUT OF THE UK FOR THE PURPOSES OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	Section 59(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
TRAFFICKING INTO THE UK FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	Section 57(1)(a) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
TRAFFICKING INTO THE UK FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (FACILITATING ANOTHER)	Section 57(1)(b) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
TRAFFICKING OUTSIDE OF THE UK FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	Section 58A (1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
TRAFFICKING WITHIN THE UK FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	Section 58(1)(a) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
TRAFFICKING PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF THE UK FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	Article 58A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
CONSPIRACY TO TRAFFICK WITHIN THE UK FOR EXPLOITATION	Article 9(1) of the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 and section 4(2) of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004
TRAFFICKING PEOPLE WITHIN UK FOR EXPLOITATION	Section 4(2) of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004
TRAFFICKING OF PEOPLE INTO UK FOR EXPLOITATION	Section 4(1) of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004

Annex B

Offence Description	Legislation
ATTEMPTING TO PAY FOR SEXUAL SERVICES OF A PERSON	Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 and Article 3(1) of the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (NI) Order 1983
PAYING FOR SEXUAL SERVICES OF A PERSON	Article 64A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
PAYING FOR THE SEXUAL SERVICES OF A PERSON (In force from 1 June 2015)	Article 64A(1)(a) of The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008