



**Public
Prosecution
Service**

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

[REDACTED]

FOI 1427/21-22

10 December 2021

[REDACTED]

I refer to your email dated 13th November 2021 in which you asked for information regarding the prosecutions of sub-postmasters. 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.

Your request was twofold:

1. Please provide me with a breakdown of the number of prosecutions per year brought against sub-postmasters in Northern Ireland starting from the year 2000.
2. Please provide me with the total number of successful prosecutions against sub-postmasters that you have brought to the attention of Post Office Ltd and the CCRC in connection with the Horizon scandal.

In response to question 1, I can advise the PPS Case Management System (CMS) does not have the functionality to extract this specific level of detail, and hence difficulties identifying prosecutions brought against sub-postmasters. Suspect occupation data held on CMS is incomplete and to provide figures based on occupation could be very misleading. To respond to your request would require a manual search of all cases. This 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 question 2, please be advised there were 23 prosecutions brought to the attention of the CCRC, 19 of which resulted in successful convictions. However, the CCRC have not taken these cases on for investigation. Please note it was the Post Office Ltd who initially approached the PPS in relation to these cases following an internal review when the findings about the Horizon system were made in England.

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 clearly 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