



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

FOI 3002-18/19

Via email: [REDACTED]

10 January 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 8 January 2019 in which you asked for information relating to the number of prosecutions in respect of assaults on police over the last five years.

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 for the following:

"Figures relating to the number of prosecutions for police assaults in the last five years."

In response, please see the table below detailing prosecutorial decisions issued by the PPS (number of suspects) between 1/1/14 and 31/12/18 in respect of an offence of 'assault on police'.

Calendar Year - Decision Issued	Prosecution	Diversion (e.g. caution)	No prosecution	Total
2014	1,567	108	47	1,722
2015	1,641	162	37	1,840
2016	1,526	132	38	1,696
2017	1,401	107	49	1,557
2018	1,444	138	40	1,622
Total	7,579	647	211	8,437

Data for 2018 are provisional at this stage.

A list of the offences considered is outlined below.

Complaint Offence Description	Complaint Offence Legislation
ASSAULT ON POLICE (OFFENCES PRIOR TO 9 FEBRUARY 1999 ONLY)	Section 7(1)(a) of the Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1968
ASSAULT ON POLICE	Section 66(1) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998

Please be aware that the above figures do not account for all cases involving an assault on police. The specific offence of 'assault on police' is used in respect of less serious incidents and the offence itself is equivalent to that of common assault. More serious incidents (e.g. where injuries are sustained) would typically be dealt with under alternative provisions, such as section 47 (Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm) or section 20 (Grievous Bodily Harm / Wounding) of the Offences against the Persons Act 1861. *However it is not possible to provide information regarding such offences as the occupation of the victim (in this instance as a police officer) is not recorded on the PPS Case Management System.*

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 FOI Section

