



Public
Prosecution
Service

Policy and Information Unit
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR

2 October 2020

[REDACTED]
(Via email)

FOI 697-20/21
[REDACTED]

I refer to your email dated 4 September 2020 in which you asked for information relating to prosecution statistics for domestic abuse.

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. Firstly, 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:

1. The number of defendants reported to the PPS in the last five years in relation to a domestic violence offence (plus gender breakdown).
2. Number of defendants prosecuted in connection with a domestic violence offence (including gender breakdown).
3. How many domestic violence convictions there have been in the last five years (including gender breakdown).
4. What percentage of victims were men in the same categories.
5. In the event of not giving a gender breakdown, an explanation as to why it cannot be provided.

In response to questions 1-3, please see Tables 1 to 11 below which provide the information requested for the financial years 2015/16 to 2019/20. These tables include details of files / suspects received on files, PPS prosecutorial decisions issued by type and convictions in both the Crown and Magistrates' Courts. An analysis of suspect / defendant gender has also been provided where appropriate.

Please note the following:

- Tables should be read in conjunction with the explanatory notes provided as these set out any definitions / limitations which may apply to the data.
- Tables 1 and 2 are based on an assessment of domestic violence motivation as provided by police on submission of a file to PPS. Subsequent tables are based on the prosecutor's assessment (i.e. where the prosecutor considered that an offence was motivated by domestic violence).

In respect of questions 4 and 5, please be advised that the PPS does not hold the information requested. Files received from police may relate to multiple suspects, offences and victims; in such cases it is not possible to link individual victims to specific suspects, nor can victims be linked to specific offences. As a result PPS cannot report on the number of victims which relate specifically to suspects or offences flagged as being motivated by domestic violence. Therefore in terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I can confirm that under Section 1(1)(a) of the Act we do 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 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,

**Information Management Team
Public Prosecution Service**

**Table 1:
Number of Suspects on Files Received by PPS Including an Offence
Motivated by Domestic Violence (as Flagged by PSNI) 2015/16 – 2019/20**

Based on First Papers Received Date

Financial Year - File Received	Number of Cases	Number of Suspects
15/16	5,406	5,931
16/17	5,566	6,113
17/18	5,860	6,362
18/19	6,806	7,393
19/20	7,068	7,691
Total	30,706	33,490

**Table 2:
Number of Suspects on Files Received by PPS Including an Offence
Motivated by Domestic Violence (as Flagged by PSNI) by Suspect Gender¹
2015/16 – 2019/20**

Based on First Papers Received Date

Financial Year	Male	Female	Transgender	Not Recorded	Total
15/16	4,841	1,086	-	/	5,931
16/17	4,970	1,142	0	1	6,113
17/18	5,197	1,162	0	3	6,362
18/19	5,995	1,394	-	/	7,393
19/20	6,182	1,509	0	0	7,691
Total	27,185	6,293	4	8	33,490

¹ Suspect gender is based on data provided by PSNI.

"/" refers to a count less than 3.

"/" refers to a number which has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of a small number elsewhere.

Table 3:
Prosecutorial Decisions Issued¹ by Type (Number of Suspects) Where a Prosecutor Considered an Offence to be Motivated by Domestic Violence 2015/16 – 2019/20

Based on Most Serious Decision Issued Date

Financial Year	Indictable Prosecution	Summary Prosecution	Diversion	No prosecution	Total
15/16	152	2,155	217	3,862	6,386
16/17	152	2,016	223	4,244	6,635
17/18	121	2,070	226	4,394	6,811
18/19	182	2,164	205	5,116	7,667
19/20	170	2,515	231	5,134	8,050
Total	777	10,920	1,102	22,750	35,549

¹ Please note that for those suspects issued with a decision for prosecution/diversion, the prosecution or diversion may not relate to the offence(s) considered to be motivated by domestic violence but instead may relate to another offence.

Table 4:
Indictable Prosecution Decisions Issued¹ (Number of Suspects) Where a Prosecutor Considered an Offence to be Motivated by Domestic Violence by Suspect Gender² 2015/16 – 2019/20

Based on Most Serious Decision Issued Date

Financial Year	Indictable Prosecution		
	Male	Female	Not Recorded
15/16	134	18	0
16/17	130	21	1
17/18	110	11	0
18/19	163	18	1
19/20	150	20	0
Total	687	88	2

¹ Please note that those suspects issued with a decision to prosecute may not have been prosecuted for the offence(s) considered to be motivated by domestic violence but instead may have been prosecuted for another offence.

² Suspect gender is based on data provided by PSNI.

Note: Indictable prosecution refers to prosecution in the Crown Court.

Table 5:
Summary Prosecution Decisions Issued¹ (Number of Suspects) Where a Prosecutor Considered an Offence to be Motivated by Domestic Violence by Suspect Gender² 2015/16 – 2019/20

Based on Most Serious Decision Issued Date

Summary Prosecution				
Financial Year	Male	Female	Transgender	Not Recorded
15/16	1,925	223	*	*
16/17	1,794	222	*	*
17/18	1,866	202	*	*
18/19	1,940	223	*	*
19/20	2,258	256	*	*
Total	9,783	1,126	-	#

¹ Please note that those suspects issued with a decision to prosecute may not have been prosecuted for the offence(s) considered to be motivated by domestic violence but instead may have been prosecuted for another offence.

² Suspect gender is based on data provided by PSNI.

“*” refers to a category where a detailed breakdown cannot be provided due to the small number involved.

“-” refers to a count less than 3

“#” refers to a number >=3 which has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

Note: Summary prosecution refers to prosecution in the Magistrates’ Court.

Table 6:
Diversions Issued¹ (Number of Suspects) Where a Prosecutor Considered an Offence to be Motivated by Domestic Violence by Suspect Gender² 2015/16 – 2019/20

Based on Most Serious Decision Issued Date

Diversion			
Year	Male	Female	Not Recorded
15/16	157	60	0
16/17	154	68	1
17/18	158	68	0
18/19	153	51	1
19/20	162	69	0
Total	784	316	2

¹ Please note that for those suspects issued with a decision for diversion, the diversion may not relate to the offence(s) considered to be motivated by domestic violence but instead may relate to another offence.

² Suspect gender is based on data provided by PSNI.

Note: Diversions include cautions, informed warnings and youth conferencing.

Table 7:
No Prosecution Decisions Issued¹ (Number of Suspects) Where a Prosecutor Considered an Offence to be Motivated by Domestic Violence by Suspect Gender 2015/16 – 2019/20

Based on Most Serious Decision Issued Date

No prosecution				
Year	Male	Female	Transgender	Not Recorded
15/16	2,922	938	*	*
16/17	3,133	1,109	*	*
17/18	3,247	1,146	*	*
18/19	3,769	1,345	*	*
19/20	3,712	1,421	*	*
Total	16,783	5,959	5	3

¹ Suspect gender is based on data provided by PSNI.

*** refers to a category where a detailed breakdown cannot be provided due to the small number involved.

Table 8:
Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court in Cases Considered by a PPS Prosecutor to Include an Offence Motivated by Domestic Violence¹ 2015/16 – 2019/20

Based on Indictable Disposal Date

Year	Convicted of at least one offence	Acquitted	Other	Total
15/16	73	21	3	97
16/17	150	35	1	186
17/18	98	32	2	132
18/19	100	19	2	121
19/20	144	30	1	175
Total	565	137	9	711

¹Please note that while the defendants included were considered by a PPS prosecutor to include an offence(s) motivated by Domestic Violence, they may not have been prosecuted for that offence(s) but instead prosecuted for another offence(s). In addition, those prosecuted for an offence(s) motivated by domestic violence and who have an overall outcome of 'Convicted of at least one offence' may not have been convicted of that offence(s) but instead convicted of another offence(s)

**Table 9:
Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' Courts in Cases Considered by a PPS Prosecutor to Include an Offence Motivated by Domestic Violence¹
2015/16 – 2019/20**

Based on Summary Disposal Date

Year	Convicted of at least one offence	Acquitted	Other	Total
15/16	1,178	403	765	2,346
16/17	1,181	397	822	2,400
17/18	1,120	391	739	2,250
18/19	1,219	415	723	2,357
19/20	1,404	464	801	2,669
Total	6,102	2,070	3,850	12,022

¹Please note that while the defendants included were considered by a PPS prosecutor to include an offence(s) motivated by Domestic Violence, they may not have been prosecuted for that offence(s) but instead prosecuted for another offence(s). In addition, those prosecuted for an offence(s) motivated by domestic violence and who have an overall outcome of 'Convicted of at least one offence' may not have been convicted of that offence(s) but instead convicted of another offence(s).

**Table 10:
Defendants with a Conviction¹ in the Crown Court in Cases Considered by a PPS Prosecutor to Include an Offence Motivated by Domestic Violence by Defendant Gender² 2015/16 – 2019/20**

Based on Indictable Disposal Date

Year	Convicted of at least one offence			Total
	Male	Female	Not Recorded	
15/16	64	9	0	73
16/17	130	19	1	150
17/18	90	8	0	98
18/19	88	12	0	100
19/20	130	14	0	144
Total	502	62	1	565

¹Please note that while the defendants included were considered by a PPS prosecutor to include an offence(s) motivated by Domestic Violence, they may not have been prosecuted for that offence(s) but instead prosecuted for another offence(s). In addition, those prosecuted for an offence(s) motivated by domestic violence and who have an overall outcome of 'Convicted of at least one offence' may not have been convicted of that offence(s) but instead convicted of another offence(s).

²Defendant gender is based on data provided by PSNI.

**Table 11:
Defendants with a Conviction¹ in the Magistrates' Courts in a Case
Considered by a PPS Prosecutor to Include an Offence Motivated by
Domestic Violence by Defendant Gender² 2015/16 – 2019/20**

Based on Summary Disposal Date

Convicted of at least one offence				
Year	Male	Female	Not Recorded	Total
15/16	1,059	116	3	1,178
16/17	1,057	122	2	1,181
17/18	998	122	0	1,120
18/19	1,117	101	1	1,219
19/20	1,273	130	1	1,404
Total	5,504	591	7	6,102

¹ Please note that while the defendants included were considered by a PPS prosecutor to include an offence(s) motivated by Domestic Violence, they may not have been prosecuted for that offence(s) but instead prosecuted for another offence(s). In addition, those prosecuted for an offence(s) motivated by domestic violence and who have an overall outcome of 'Convicted of at least one offence' may not have been convicted of that offence(s) but instead convicted of another offence(s).

² Defendant gender is based on data provided by PSNI.