



Public Prosecution Service

Belfast Chambers

93 Chichester Street

Belfast BT1 3JR

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

FOI 67/18-19

17 May 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email dated 19 April 2018 in which you asked for information regarding files submitted to the PPS by PSNI and the decisions taken in these cases. You had asked for this information for Omagh, Strabane, Dungannon and Enniskillen court areas.

As previously advised it is not possible to identify files involving suspects for these specific court areas. We can however provide data on files and decisions made in the Western Region (this will also include the Foyle area). You subsequently requested the list of courts/policing areas which this covers.

This 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:

1). How many case files have been submitted by the PSNI (or investigating authorities) to the PPS for consideration for potential prosecution in the following court areas:

(i) Omagh (ii) Strabane (iii) Dungannon and (iv) Enniskillen;

during the following time periods:

(i) 2014, (ii) 2015, (iii) 2016 and (iv) 2017.

As the requested information is not available it was agreed to provide data on the Western region and to include the relevant list of courts/policing areas covered.

2) Of the figures provided. Can you provide the number of cases where:

(a) a decision was made to prosecute, and;

(b) a decision was made not to prosecute.

Can you break the figures down into the following: (i) 2014, (ii) 2015, (iii) 2016 and (iv) 2017?

In response please see attached Table 1 detailing files received in the Foyle and Western Region from 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2017 and Table 2 detailing decisions issued as of 2nd May 2018, for cases received for the same period. A list of the relevant courts is also attached.

*Please note Table 2 does not reflect the total volume of decisions issued in each calendar year, but rather the total number of decisions issued on **files received** in the calendar year.*

It should be noted that following the establishment of the Serious Crime Unit in PPS Headquarters in January 2016, all murder, manslaughter, sexual offences and a range of other serious offences are dealt with by this unit. Previously these cases were dealt with by regional offices and therefore this will have resulted in a reduction in the number of regional files and decisions, particularly indictable decisions.

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 Unit, 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

Table 1

**Files Received by Western Region
1st January 2014 to 31st December 2017**

| Calendar Year - Files Received | Number of Files |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2014 | 13,962 |
| 2015 | 13,103 |
| 2016 | 12,128 |
| 2017 | 11,412 |
| Total | 50,605 |

Note: A file may include one or more suspects.

Table 2

**Decisions Issued on files received by Western Region
1st January 2014 to 31st December 2017 (as of 2nd May 2018)**

| Calendar Year - Files Received | Indictable Prosecution | Summary Prosecution | Diversion | No prosecution | Total |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------|----------------|--------|
| 2014 | 539 | 9,224 | 1,810 | 5,036 | 16,609 |
| 2015 | 422 | 8,154 | 1,622 | 5,360 | 15,558 |
| 2016 | 240 | 7,551 | 1,427 | 5,127 | 14,345 |
| 2017 | 147 | 7,120 | 1,266 | 4,197 | 12,730 |
| Total | 1,348 | 32,049 | 6,125 | 19,720 | 59,242 |

Note: Decisions data reflect the number of suspects for which a decision was taken (based on the most 'serious' decision for each suspect).

Relevant Courts

Magistrates' Court

Coleraine
Limavady
Londonderry
Strabane
Enniskillen
Omagh
Magherafelt
Dungannon

Youth Court

Coleraine
Londonderry
Strabane
Enniskillen
Omagh
Magherafelt
Dungannon

Crown Court

Antrim
Londonderry
Omagh