

FOI 568/18-19

Via email: [REDACTED]

3 July 2018

Dear Sir / Madam,

I refer to your email dated 13 June 2018 in which you asked for statistics on prosecutions involving the use of a drone to commit a criminal offence and the number of prosecutions for all other offences in 2017.

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:

1) How many prosecutions took place in 2017 for the use of a drone to commit a criminal offence? These are crimes that would typically be prosecuted using the Air Navigation Order legislation.

2) How many prosecutions took place in 2017 in total of all crimes? (This is just to derive a percentage of drone prosecutions versus all other crime).

In response to question 1, I can advise that the legislation which relates to the flying of a small unmanned surveillance aircraft without permission, such as a drone, is Article 241(1) and (6) of the Air Navigation Order 2009.

During 2017 the PPS considered 4 cases involving this offence and all of these cases were directed as no prosecutions.

In response to question 2, a total of 30,640 indictable/summary prosecution decisions were issued by the PPS during 2017. A further 4,067 diversionary decisions were issued (e.g. caution, informed warning).

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,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'S. M.', is written below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

PPS FOI Section