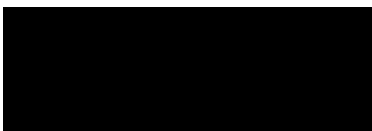




Policy and Information Unit
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR

27 October 2020



FOI 888-20/21



I refer to your email dated 28 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. How many referrals did the PSNI make to the PPS for a charging decision of suspects of domestic abuse-related cases in the last five financial years? (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20)
2. How many domestic abuse-related prosecutions have there been in the last five financial years? (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20)

3. How many domestic abuse-related prosecutions were successful in securing a conviction in the last five financial years? (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20)

4. How many prosecutors and staff have the PPS trained in relation to prosecuting cases of domestic abuse in the last five financial years? (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20)

In response to question 1, please note that charging is a matter for police in Northern Ireland. As an alternative, Table 1 below provides the numbers of prosecutorial decisions issued by the PPS on an annual basis (number of suspects) where the offence(s) were considered by a prosecutor to be motivated by domestic violence.

In respect of questions 2 and 3, please see Tables 2 and 3 below which provide the numbers of defendants dealt with in the Crown and Magistrates' Courts on an annual basis, including the numbers of convictions.

Please be advised that the tables should be read in conjunction with the explanatory notes provided as these set out any limitations which may apply to the data.

In respect of question 4, the numbers of staff trained annually are as follows.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of prosecutors and other staff trained in relation to domestic abuse cases	-	4	258	1	6

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:
Offences Considered by a PPS Prosecutor to be Motivated by Domestic Violence (No. of Suspects) – Prosecutorial Decisions Issued by Type¹
2015-16 to 2019/20

Based on Most Serious Decision Issued Date

Financial Year	Indictable Prosecution (Crown)	Summary Prosecution (Magistrates')	Diversion	No prosecution	Total
2015/16	152	2,155	217	3,862	6,386
2016/17	152	2,016	223	4,244	6,635
2017/18	121	2,070	226	4,394	6,811
2018/19	182	2,164	205	5,116	7,667
2019/20	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 2:
Offences Considered by a PPS Prosecutor to be Motivated by Domestic Violence¹ – Number of Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court 2015-16 to 2019/20

Based on Indictable Disposal Date

Year	Convicted of at least one offence	Acquitted	Other	Total
2015/16	73	21	3	97
2016/17	150	35	1	186
2017/18	98	32	2	132
2018/19	100	19	2	121
2019/20	144	30	1	175
Total	565	137	9	711

¹ Please note that while the defendants included were considered by a PPS prosecutor to have 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 3:
Offences Considered by a PPS Prosecutor to be Motivated by Domestic Violence¹ – Number of Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' Courts 2015-16 to 2019/20

Based on Summary Disposal Date

Year	Convicted of at least one offence	Acquitted	Other	Total
2015/16	1,178	403	765	2,346
2016/17	1,181	397	822	2,400
2017/18	1,120	391	739	2,250
2018/19	1,219	415	723	2,357
2019/20	1,404	464	801	2,669
Total	6,102	2,070	3,850	12,022

¹ Please note that while the defendants included were considered by a PPS prosecutor to have 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).