

[REDACTED]

FOI 1453/21-22

15 December 2021

[REDACTED],

I refer to your correspondence dated 17 November 2021 in which you asked for information relating to sexual offences where the suspect was a child. 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 the following:

*“Covering the financial years 2019/20 and 2020/21:*

- *The number of files received in relation to cases involving a sexual offence, where the suspect was a child\**
- *The prosecutorial decisions issued by decision type in respect of cases involving a sexual offence, where the suspect was a child\**
- *Defendants dealt with by Outcome (All sexual offences), where the suspect (defendant) was a child\**

*\*[The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#) defines a 'child' as a person under the age of 18”.*

In response, please see Tables 1 and 2 below which provide the numbers of files received and decisions issued during 2019/20 and 2020/21 in respect of cases involving a sexual offence where the suspect was a child (<18 years). Tables 3 and 4

provide the outcomes for cases dealt with in the Crown and Youth Courts over the same period. These tables should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

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](mailto: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: Files received in relation to cases involving a sexual offence where the suspect was a child <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>**

Financial year	Files received
2019/20	331
2020/21	281

**Table 2: Prosecutorial decisions issued by decision type in respect of cases involving a sexual offence where the suspect was a child <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>**

Decision Type	2019/20	2020/21
Indictable Prosecution	34	47
Summary Prosecution	24	15
Diversion	13	7
No prosecution	231	267
<b>Total Decisions</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>336</b>

**Table 3: Defendants dealt with by outcome (all sexual offences) where the defendant was a child - Crown Court <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>**

Outcome	2019/20	2020/21
Convicted of at least one sexual offence including rape	6	1
Convicted of at least one sexual offence excluding rape	23	11
Acquitted	14	2
<b>Total Outcomes</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>14</b>

**Table 4: Defendants dealt with by outcome (all sexual offences) where the defendant was a child – Youth (Magistrates’) Court <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>**

Outcome	2019/20	2020/21
Convicted of at least one sexual offence	16	6
Convicted of at least one other offence	0	1
Acquitted	1	1
Other	8	5
<b>Total Outcomes</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>

**Notes:**

1. Based on the young person's age at time of offence.
2. Please note that age is based on date of birth information provided to the PPS by the PSNI and no data validation checks have been undertaken by PPS. A small minority of suspects (fewer than 2%) did not have an age recorded.
3. Please refer to the explanatory notes on pages 21-25 of the Sexual Offences Bulletin [here](#) where you will find further information on files received, decision types and outcomes.