

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

Statistical Bulletin

Quarter 1 2013/14

(April to June 2013)



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Note:

All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change.

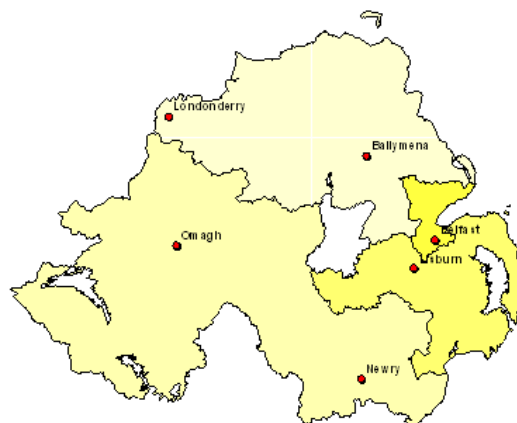
Introduction

The Public Prosecution Service

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS), which is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions, is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police, it also considers cases investigated by other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs.

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not to prosecute and to have responsibility for the conduct of criminal proceedings. A range of options is also available for dealing with offenders other than through prosecution. These options include restorative cautioning, informed warnings and youth conferencing. Prosecutors may also refer offenders to the NI Driver Improvement Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme.

PPS Regional Office Locations



The PPS is a regionally based organisation. There are four regions, each of which is headed by a Regional Prosecutor. The Regional Prosecutor has overall responsibility for decisions as to prosecution in that region, with the exception of those cases which are considered by prosecutors in Headquarters. Headquarters Sections deal with specialised areas of work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy Section and High Court and International Matters.

About this Bulletin

This bulletin presents key statistics on the activity of the PPS, including caseloads and prosecutorial decisions. It now also includes data on the outcomes of prosecutions at court. The report provides information for the first three months of the 2013/14 financial year (i.e. 1 April to 30 June 2013) and includes comparisons for the equivalent period in 2012/13. Where appropriate detailed notes have been provided, which give an explanation of the relevant PPS processes and procedures.

All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change. For further details, see 'User Information' on page 21.

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Summary of Key Points

Figures quoted are for the current quarter, 1 April to 30 June 2013, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes provided (see pages 18 - 20).

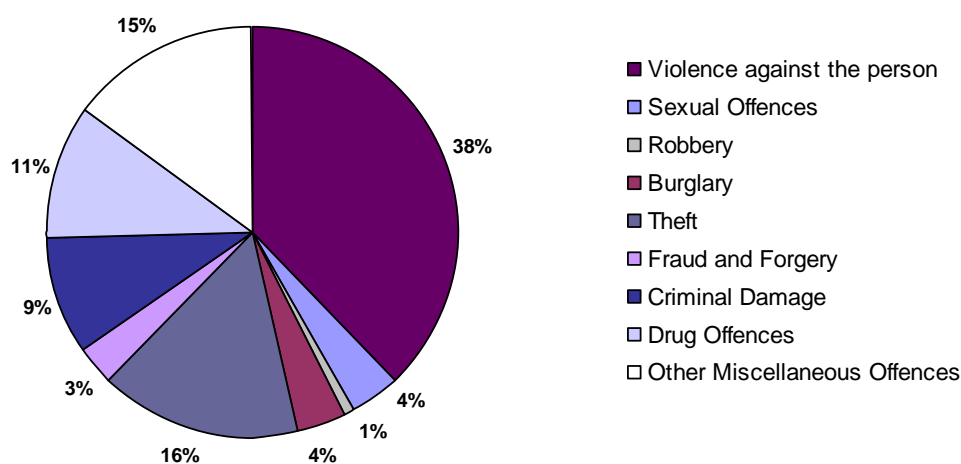
Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 1a)

- The PPS received 12,144 files during the first quarter of the financial year. This was a decrease of 9.8% on the corresponding quarter of 2012/13 (13,461).
- Just over half (51%) of all files received during the current quarter related to summary offences, 45% to hybrid offences and the remaining 4% to indictable offences.

Files Received from Police by Recorded Crime Offence Group (Table 1b)

- During the first quarter of 2013/14, PPS received a total of 11,742 files from police. This represents a 9.5% decrease on the first quarter of 2012/13 (12,971). The number of files relating to recorded ('notifiable') offences decreased by 8.2% while the number of files relating to other ('non-notifiable') offences fell by 11.8%.
- In terms of files received by recorded crime offence group, nearly seven tenths fell into three categories; 'violence against the person' (38%), 'theft' (16%) and 'other miscellaneous offences' (15%).
- All recorded crime offence groups have shown a reduction in the number of files received compared with the corresponding quarter of 2012/13.

**Files Received from Police (notifiable offences) by Recorded Crime Offence Group
Quarter 1 2013/14**



Files Submitted to PPS Departmental Section by Source Department / Agency (Table 1c)

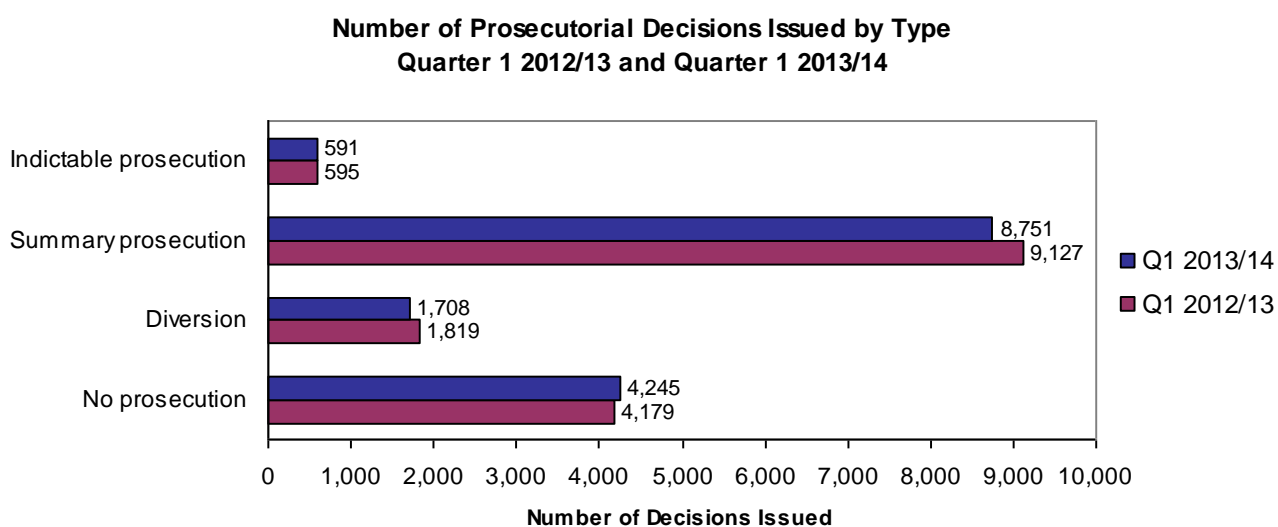
- Three hundred and thirty-one files were submitted to PPS Departmental Section by departments and agencies during the first quarter of the financial year, representing a 19.5% decrease on the equivalent period in 2012/13 (411).
- During the current quarter, the majority of the files were submitted either by the Department for Social Development (44%) or the Driver and Vehicle Agency (30%).

Information Requests Submitted to Police by Request Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 2)

- A total of 6,751 information requests were submitted to police during the first quarter of the financial year, an increase of 7.4% on the first quarter of 2012/13.
- Fifty-five percent of all requests submitted during the current quarter were 'Post Decision Information Requests', 32% were 'Decision Information Requests' and 12% were 'Full File Requests'.

Prosecutorial Decisions Issued by Decision Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 3a)

- During the first quarter of this financial year, 15,295 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS. This was 2.7% less than the total issued during the first quarter of 2012/13 (15,720).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during the current quarter. Of the 15,295 decisions issued, more than seven-tenths (72%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (9,342) or for diversion from the courts (1,708). This was marginally lower than the equivalent period in 2012/13 (73%).



- Comparing the first quarters of 2012/13 and 2013/14, there was a decrease of 3.9% in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of a 4.1% decrease in summary prosecution decisions and a smaller decline of 0.7% in indictable prosecution decisions. The numbers of diversionary decisions fell by 6.1% while no prosecution decisions increased by 1.6%.

Prosecutorial Decisions Issued – Reasons for No Prosecution by PPS Region / Function (Table 3b)

- Of the 4,245 no prosecution decisions issued during the first quarter of this financial year, the vast majority (96%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 4% did not pass the public interest test.

Average Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type – PPS Regions (Table 3c)

- The average number of calendar days required for the issue of an indictable prosecution decision during the first quarter of this financial year was 171, compared to 238 days during the equivalent period in 2012/13. This was an improvement of 28.2%
- During the current quarter, summary prosecution decisions required an average of 20 days. This was 6 days less than during the first quarter of 2012/13 (26), representing a 23.1% improvement.
- The time taken for diversionary decisions varied according to the type of diversion issued, with informed warnings requiring an average of 25 days, cautions 16 days and youth conferences 16 days.

Summonses Issued in Police Cases by Service Method and PPS Region (Table 4)

- A total of 8,650 summonses were issued in police cases during the first quarter of this financial year, an increase of 4.5% on 2012/13. Comparing the first quarters of 2012/13 and 2013/14, the number of summonses issued via personal service experienced a greater increase than those issued by post, up 9.0% and 2.6% respectively.
- Sixty-nine percent of summonses issued during the quarter were served on the defendant by post and the remainder via personal service by police.

Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court by Outcome and PPS Region / Function (Table 5a)

- During the first quarter of 2013/14, 738 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was an increase of 39.5% on the equivalent period in 2012/13 (529).
- Of these defendants, 83.9% were convicted, 15.1% were acquitted and the remaining 1% had an 'other' outcome.

- Comparing the first quarters of 2012/13 and 2013/14, the conviction rate rose by 1.1% from 82.8%.

Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome and PPS Region / Function (Table 5b)

- A total of 8,294 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the first quarter of the financial year, a decrease of 15.3% on 2012/13 (9,797).
- Of the defendants dealt with during the current quarter, 80.3% were convicted, 4.5% were acquitted and 15.2% had an 'other' outcome.
- The conviction rate rose by 0.8% from 79.5% during the equivalent period in 2012/13.

**Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome
Quarter 1 2013/14**

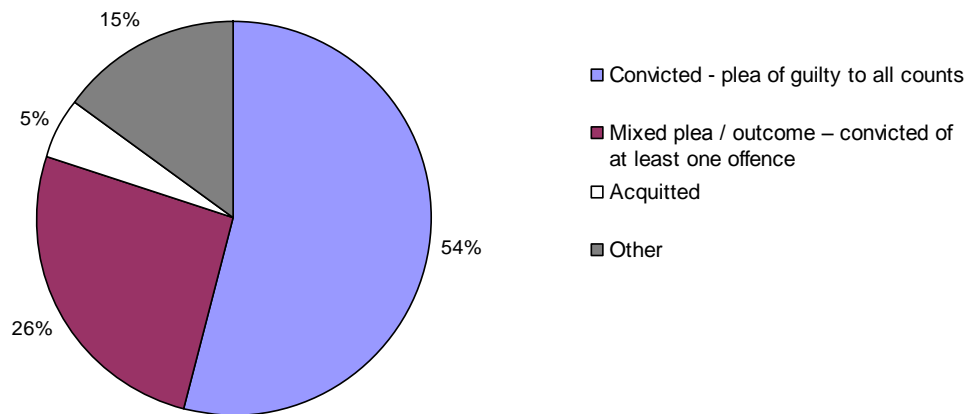


Table 1a: Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²						Number of files
Quarters	File Type ³	Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2013/14	Indictable	162	117	144	113	1	537	
	Hybrid	1,629	1,179	1,298	1,136	185	5,427	
	Summary	1,535	1,425	1,489	1,584	147	6,180	
	All Files	3,326	2,721	2,931	2,833	333	12,144	
Q1 2012/13	Indictable	179	124	138	125	10	576	
	Hybrid	1,847	1,205	1,353	1,292	193	5,890	
	Summary	1,724	1,460	1,632	1,956	223	6,995	
	All Files	3,750	2,789	3,123	3,373	426	13,461	
% Change (Files Received)								
2012/13 to 2013/14		-11.3%	-2.4%	-6.1%	-16.0%	-21.8%	-9.8%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² Headquarters Sections deal with specialist work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy and High Court and International Matters.

³ See explanatory notes, page 18.

Table 1b: Files Received from Police by Recorded Crime Offence Group

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

Recorded Crime Offence Group ²	Number of files					
	Q1 2013/14		Q1 2012/13		Change (2012/13 to 2013/14)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Violence against the person	2,895	37.9%	3,140	37.7%	-245	-7.8%
Sexual offences	295	3.9%	322	3.9%	-27	-8.4%
Robbery	47	0.6%	69	0.8%	-22	-31.9%
Burglary	307	4.0%	309	3.7%	-2	-0.6%
Theft	1,203	15.8%	1,326	15.9%	-123	-9.3%
Fraud and forgery	241	3.2%	248	3.0%	-7	-2.8%
Criminal damage	700	9.2%	839	10.1%	-139	-16.6%
Drug offences	808	10.6%	810	9.7%	-2	-0.2%
Other Miscellaneous offences	1,141	14.9%	1,256	15.1%	-115	-9.2%
All Recorded Crime Files	7,637		8,319		-682	-8.2%
Other files (Non-notifiable offences)	4,105		4,652		-547	-11.8%
All Files	11,742		12,971		-1,229	-9.5%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² See explanatory notes, page 18.

Table 1c: Files Submitted to PPS Departmental Section by Source Department / Agency

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

Department / Agency	Number of files					
	Q1 2013/14		Q1 2012/13		Change (2012/13 to 2013/14)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Dept. for Social Development	144	43.5%	152	37.0%	-8	-5.3%
Driver and Vehicle Agency	99	29.9%	174	42.3%	-75	-43.1%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division	20	6.0%	22	5.4%	-2	-9.1%
NI Environment Agency	15	4.5%	17	4.1%	-2	-11.8%
HM Revenue and Customs	9	2.7%	3	0.7%	6	200.0%
Dept. of Enterprise Trade and Investment	6	1.8%	5	1.2%	1	20.0%
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	5	1.5%	6	1.5%	-1	-16.7%
Health and Safety Executive	3	0.9%	5	1.2%	-2	-40.0%
Other	30	9.1%	27	6.6%	3	11.1%
All Departments / Agencies	331		411		-80	-19.5%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

Table 2: Information Requests Submitted to Police by Request Type and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²						Number of requests
Quarters	Request Type ³	Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2013/14	Full File Request	224	174	158	262	0	818	
	Decision Information Request	593	494	652	439	3	2,181	
	Post Decision Information Request	1,296	742	841	852	3	3,734	
	No Decision	5	1	2	10	0	18	
	All Requests Submitted	2,118	1,411	1,653	1,563	6	6,751	
Q1 2012/13	Full File Request	202	181	157	294	5	839	
	Decision Information Request	529	222	620	276	18	1,665	
	Post Decision Information Request	1,459	670	773	851	4	3,757	
	No Decision	4	10	1	12	0	27	
	All Requests Submitted	2,194	1,083	1,551	1,433	27	6,288	
% Change (Requests Submitted) 2012/13 to 2013/14		-3.5%	30.3%	6.6%	9.1%	-77.8%	7.4%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² Headquarters Sections deal with specialist work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy and High Court and International Matters.

³ See explanatory notes, page 18.

Table 3a: Prosecutorial Decisions Issued by Decision Type and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

			Number of persons (decisions issued)					
			PPS Region / Function ²					
			Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Type of Decision ³		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2013/14	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	169	99	125	147	51	591
		Summary prosecution	2,376	1,943	2,214	1,913	305	8,751
	Diversion	Caution	294	305	354	311	3	1,267
		Informed warning	54	40	77	17	0	188
		Youth conference	36	28	33	38	0	135
		Other	23	10	62	23	0	118
		No Prosecution	1,223	882	1,173	903	64	4,245
	All Decisions Issued		4,175	3,307	4,038	3,352	423	15,295
Q1 2012/13	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	214	112	108	111	50	595
		Summary prosecution	2,344	1,842	1,999	2,593	349	9,127
	Diversion	Caution	348	277	421	354	0	1,400
		Informed warning	74	56	89	23	0	242
		Youth conference	14	24	29	23	0	90
		Other	21	6	42	18	0	87
		No Prosecution	1,065	1,066	964	1,017	67	4,179
	All Decisions Issued		4,080	3,383	3,652	4,139	466	15,720
% Change (Decisions Issued) 2012/13 to 2013/14		2.3%	-2.2%	10.6%	-19.0%	-9.2%	-2.7%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² Headquarters Sections deal with specialist work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy and High Court and International Matters.

³ See explanatory notes, page 19.

Table 3b: Prosecutorial Decisions Issued - Reasons for No Prosecution by PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²						Number of persons (decisions issued)
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	Reason for no prosecution ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2013/14	Did not pass the evidential test	1,161	827	1,142	869	62	4,061	
	Did not pass the public interest test	62	55	31	34	2	184	
	All no prosecution decisions	1,223	882	1,173	903	64	4,245	
Q1 2012/13	Did not pass the evidential test	990	1,011	930	984	66	3,981	
	Did not pass the public interest test	75	55	34	33	1	198	
	All no prosecution decisions	1,065	1,066	964	1,017	67	4,179	
% Change (No prosecution decisions issued) 2012/13 to 2013/14		14.8%	-17.3%	21.7%	-11.2%	-4.5%	1.6%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² Headquarters Sections deal with specialist work and include Central Prosecutions, Fraud and Departmental Prosecutions, Policy and High Court and International Matters.

³ See explanatory notes, page 19.

**Table 3c: Average Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions
by Decision Type (PPS Regions)**

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

			Average (calendar) days
Quarters	Type of Decision ²		All Regions
Q1 2013/14	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	171
		Summary prosecution	20
	Diversion	Caution	16
		Informed warning	25
		Youth conference	16
		Other	21
	No Prosecution		44
Q1 2012/13	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	238
		Summary prosecution	26
	Diversion	Caution	18
		Informed warning	10
		Youth conference	21
		Other	35
	No Prosecution		48

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² Average days includes time taken for police to respond to decision information requests (see explanatory notes, page 19).

Table 4: Summonses Issued in Police Cases by Service Method and PPS Region

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

		Number of summonses				
		PPS Region				
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	All Regions
Quarters	Service Method ²	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2013/14	Postal Service	1,667	1,430	1,557	1,319	5,973
	Personal Service	1,175	746	428	328	2,677
	All Summonses	2,842	2,176	1,985	1,647	8,650
Q1 2012/13	Postal Service	1,513	1,282	1,202	1,827	5,824
	Personal Service	1,069	527	399	462	2,457
	All Summonses	2,582	1,809	1,601	2,289	8,281
% Change (Summonses Issued) 2012/13 to 2013/14		10.1%	20.3%	24.0%	-28.0%	4.5%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² See explanatory notes, page 20.

Table 5a: Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court by Outcome and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

		Number of persons (defendants)					
		PPS Region / Function					
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarter	Outcome ²	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2013/14	Convicted - plea of guilty to all counts	72	43	54	50	34	253
	Mixed plea / outcome – convicted of at least one offence	150	65	50	61	40	366
	Acquitted	44	8	25	32	3	112
	Other	1	2	0	4	0	7
	All defendants	267	118	129	147	77	738
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	83.1%	91.5%	80.6%	75.5%	96.1%	83.9%
Q1 2012/13	Convicted - plea of guilty to all counts	44	53	43	46	14	200
	Mixed plea / outcome – convicted of at least one offence	71	62	51	50	4	238
	Acquitted	33	15	17	16	7	88
	Other	3	0	0	0	0	3
	All defendants	151	130	111	112	25	529
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	76.2%	88.5%	84.7%	85.7%	72.0%	82.8%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2012/13 to 2013/14		76.8%	-9.2%	16.2%	31.3%	208.0%	39.5%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Q1 reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² See explanatory notes, page 20.

Table 5b: Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2012/13 and Quarter 1 2013/14 ¹

		Number of persons (defendants)					
Quarter	Outcome ²	PPS Region / Function					All PPS
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2013/14	Convicted - plea of guilty to all counts	1,300	954	1,103	958	174	4,489
	Mixed plea / outcome – convicted of at least one offence	622	507	472	522	44	2,167
	Acquitted	128	67	89	80	6	370
	Other	382	268	320	273	25	1,268
	All defendants	2,432	1,796	1,984	1,833	249	8,294
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	79.0%	81.3%	79.4%	80.7%	87.6%	80.3%
Q1 2012/13	Convicted - plea of guilty to all counts	1,476	1,004	1,017	1,131	248	5,058
	Mixed plea / outcome – convicted of at least one offence	812	598	534	729	57	2,730
	Acquitted	197	99	98	97	11	502
	Other	433	329	308	386	51	1,507
	All defendants	2,918	2,030	1,957	2,525	367	9,797
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	78.4%	78.9%	79.3%	80.9%	83.1%	79.5%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2012/13 to 2013/14		-16.7%	-11.5%	1.4%	-27.4%	-32.2%	-15.3%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Q1 reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

² See explanatory notes, page 20.

Explanatory Notes

Table 1a

A file may refer to one or more individuals. 'File type' is based on the 'primary' offence (generally the most serious offence in terms of the potential penalties in law) in each case at the time the file is submitted to PPS. In general, *summary offences* relate to less serious criminal behaviour and are tried in the Magistrates' Court before a District Judge. *Indictable offences* relate to more serious criminal behaviour and are tried at the Crown Court before a judge, and in most cases, a jury. There are a number of *hybrid offences* which may be tried at either the Magistrates' or Crown Court, for example: theft; assault occasioning actual bodily harm, etc. For these offences, on taking a decision to prosecute, the Public Prosecutor must also decide whether the defendant should be tried in the Magistrates' Court or the Crown Court. In making this decision the prosecutor will consider whether the Magistrates' Court is the appropriate venue in that it has sufficient sentencing powers in relation to the gravity of the offence. For a range of offences, the defendant may also elect for trial in the Crown Court.

The figures include all files submitted by police (Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast / Londonderry Harbour Police and British Transport Police), the Office of the Police Ombudsman and a range of statutory authorities, for example the Driver and Vehicle Agency and HM Revenue and Customs. It should be noted that files submitted by the Office of the Police Ombudsman may be considered by prosecutors in the regional offices or Headquarters.

Table 1b

The classification used reflects the Home Office Recorded Crime Offence Categories. Recorded crime figures (sometimes referred to as 'notifiable' offences) detail those crimes and offences, including attempts, recorded by the police, which are deemed to be indictable, or triable-either-way (hybrid). Certain closely associated summary offences are also counted in the recorded crime figures.

Files have been assigned to the respective categories on the basis of the 'primary' offence (see above) in each case at the time the file is submitted to PPS from police.

'Police' includes the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast / Londonderry Harbour Police and British Transport Police. Files received by the PPS Regions / Headquarters from the Office of the Police Ombudsman are excluded.

Table 2

The various types of request are defined as follows:

- *Full file requests* are designed to allow the PPS to ask the PSNI for a full file as defined in the relevant protocols.
- A *decision information request (DIR)* is issued by PPS to police where the evidence and information contained in an investigation file is incomplete and a further written report or action is required before a prosecutorial decision can be taken.
- *Post decision information requests* are designed to allow the PPS to ask the PSNI to gather additional evidential material or provide other information required at some further stage in the prosecution process (e.g. for trial).
- Finally a '*no decision*' *decision information request* may issue when, on the evidence submitted by police in an investigation file, it is not possible to take a prosecution decision and it is not reasonable to issue a detailed DIR having regard to the number or type of deficiencies in the file.

Table 3a

More than one prosecutorial decision may be recorded against any individual within a case. Therefore 'type of decision' refers to the most serious decision issued, in the following order: Indictable prosecution; summary prosecution; diversion; and no prosecution. A number of types of prosecutorial decision are available to the prosecutor, as follows:

- *Indictable prosecution* applies in the more serious offences which may be heard in the Crown Court.
- *Summary prosecution* applies to cases which may be heard in the Magistrates' Courts.
- A *caution* is a formal reprimand administered by the police. Whilst it is not a conviction it is recorded on a person's criminal record for a period of 30 months for youths and 5 years for adults.
- An *informed warning* is also a formal reprimand administered by police and is recorded on a person's criminal record for a period of 12 months.
- A *diversionary youth conference* is an alternative to prosecution in court and may be used in cases where the defendant is a youth. This type of restorative conference may involve a number of parties, including the defendant, the victim and police. A youth conference is a formal process, and although not a conviction, is recorded on a person's criminal record for a period of 30 months.
- '*Other*' *diversionary options* include referrals to the NI Driver Improvement Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme. It should be noted that diversionary options are only available to prosecutors if the defendant admits that he/she has committed the offence and agrees to accept and participate in the diversionary option.
- A *decision for no prosecution* will be taken if the prosecutor decides that in any case being considered there is insufficient evidence or that it is not in the public interest to prosecute (see note regarding the Test for Prosecution below).

Table 3b

Prosecutions are initiated where the prosecutor is satisfied that the Test for Prosecution is met. There are two aspects to the Test:

- a) Whether the evidence which can be offered in court is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction (the evidential test); and
- b) Whether prosecution is required in the public interest (the public interest test).

Each of these stages must be separately considered but a decision whether or not a prosecution is in the public interest can only arise when the evidential test has been satisfied.

Table 3c

As mentioned in note to Table 3a, more than one prosecutorial decision may be recorded against any individual within a case. Therefore these figures are based on the first decision issued. Monitoring covers the period in calendar days from date initial papers (charge cases only) or full file is received by the PPS to the date the prosecutorial decision is issued. This excludes defendants for whom a warrant has been issued but includes any time taken for police to respond to decision information requests (see note to Table 2 above). Average days for indictable prosecution decisions include the time taken for the prosecutor's decision and for case preparation (i.e. where appropriate, ensuring that the case is ready for court). In indictable cases case preparation includes time required for the preparation of committal papers which contain the evidence, such as statements, exhibits etc., to be presented to the Crown Court. It may also include consideration of duties of disclosure by the prosecutor and applications to be made to the court.

Table 4

Information refers to police cases only. A summons may be served on a defendant either by post, or via a personal summons served by the police. The defendant will be required to attend court on the date stated on the summons. Following the commencement of Rule 2(6) of the Magistrates' Courts (Amendment No. 2) Rules 2009, in early 2010, the large majority of offences can now be dealt with by way of a postal summons. The only exceptions relate to corporate defendants, vulnerable defendants and those defendants who have not responded to a postal summons.

More than one summons may be issued in respect of an individual defendant in a case. For example, if the defendant does not attend court on the day stated on an initial postal summons, this will generally be followed up by a personal summons served by police.

Table 5a

Includes all defendants dealt with in the Crown Court during the period, based on results data supplied by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (via the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism). Proceedings in the Crown Court generally follow the issue of a decision by PPS to prosecute on indictment. The category 'acquitted' includes the following outcomes: acquittals, acquittals by direction, No Bills, no evidence offered – defendant acquitted, left on books, proceedings stayed, unfit to plead – but found that he/she did not do the act, no case to answer - granted. 'Other' Includes defendant deceased, withdrawal – all charges, bound over for not having shown cause, bound over where charge withdrawn, withdrawn due to diversionary route. It should be noted that if an individual is involved in more than one case which is resulted during this period, they will be counted as a separate defendant on each occasion.

Table 5b

Includes all defendants dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the period, based on results data supplied by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (via the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism). Data reflect the number of persons where PPS has taken a decision to prosecute summarily; i.e. defendants against whom charges were withdrawn prior to decision are excluded. The category 'acquitted' includes the following outcomes: dismissed; no case to answer granted; and proceedings stayed. 'Other' includes: defendant deceased; withdrawal – all charges; bound over for not having shown cause; bound over where charge withdrawn; withdrawn due to diversionary route. Excludes persons returned for trial in the Crown Court. It should be noted that if an individual is involved in more than one case which is resulted during this period, they will be counted as a separate defendant on each occasion.

Tables 5a and 5b

Conviction rates are calculated on the basis of the number of persons convicted as a percentage of all persons dealt with during the period.

User Information

Data sources and validations

The information presented in this bulletin is derived from the Case Management System (CMS), the main operational system in use within the PPS. This is a 'live' system with data being input on a daily basis.

It should be noted that the CMS is also linked to the CJSNI's Causeway data sharing mechanism. The first phase of Causeway ('DSM 0'), introduced in 2005/06, allowed police to submit files to the PPS electronically. The most recent phase ('DSM 1') was launched at the end of November 2009 and broadened the portfolio of information shared electronically. For example PPS are now supplied with court results by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service which feed into the PPS Case Management System via Causeway.

The information is extracted using Business Objects. It is then validated and quality assured to ensure that the data is reliable and robust for use. Any inconsistencies are reported back to operational staff or to the PPS Information and Communications Technology Branch. If required, any necessary amendments are then made to the data.

All statistics for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change.

Rounding conventions

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and as a consequence some percentages may not sum to 100.

Official Statistics

These are 'Official Statistics' as defined in Section 6 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. Statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are seconded to the PPS and are responsible for ensuring that the statistics produced comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The PPS would value any feedback on this report and welcome recommendations on the future addition of data that may be of interest to readers. Contact details are provided overleaf.

Future publications

The next Statistical Bulletin, covering the period 1 April to 30 September, will be published on 14 November 2013.

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