

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

Statistical Bulletin

Quarters 1-4 2013/14

(April 2013 to March 2014)



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Note:

All statistics for the current financial year have now been finalised.

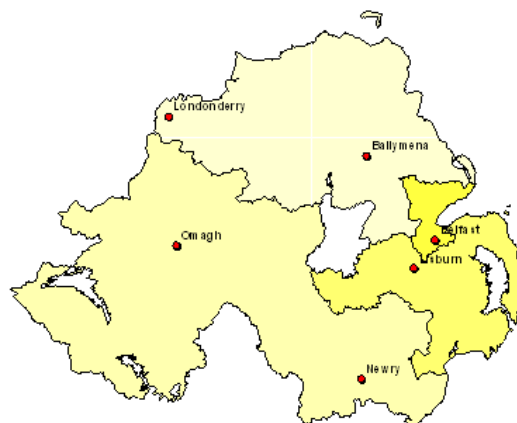
Introduction

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 also includes data on the outcomes of prosecutions at court. It provides information for the full 2013/14 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014) and includes comparisons with 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 have now been finalised. For further details, see 'User Information' on page 21.

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Summary of Key Points

Figures quoted are for the full financial year, 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes provided (see pages 18 - 20).

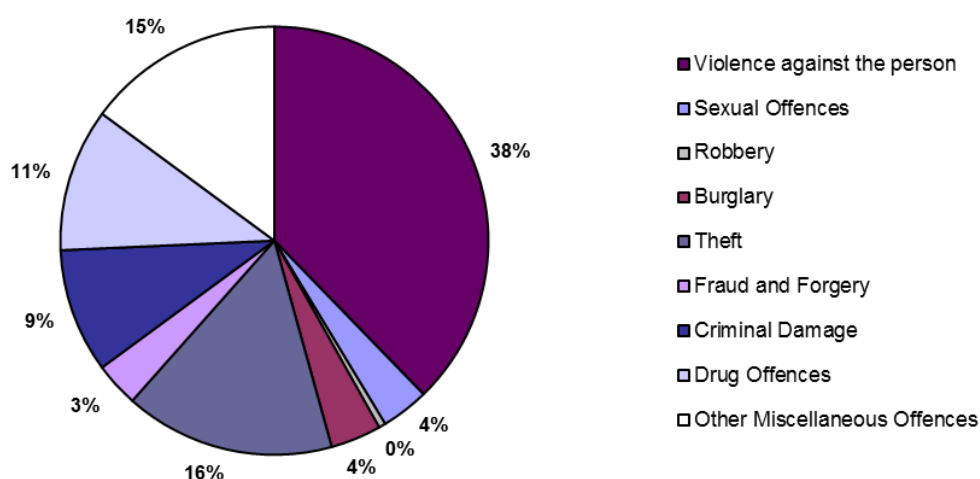
Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 1a)

- The PPS received 47,339 files during 2013/14. This was a decrease of 4.6% on 2012/13 (49,628).
- Just over half (51%) of all files received during 2013/14 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 2013/14, PPS received a total of 45,560 files from police. This represents a 4.9% decrease on the previous financial year (47,913). The number of files relating to recorded ('notifiable') offences decreased by 5.8% while the number of files relating to other ('non-notifiable') offences fell by 3.2%.
- In terms of files received by recorded crime offence group, just under seven tenths fell into three categories; 'violence against the person' (38%), 'theft' (16%) and 'other miscellaneous offences' (15%).
- All recorded crime offence groups, with the exception of theft, have shown a reduction in the number of files received compared to 2012/13.

**Files Received from Police (notifiable offences) by Recorded Crime Offence Group
Quarters 1 - 4 2013/14**



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

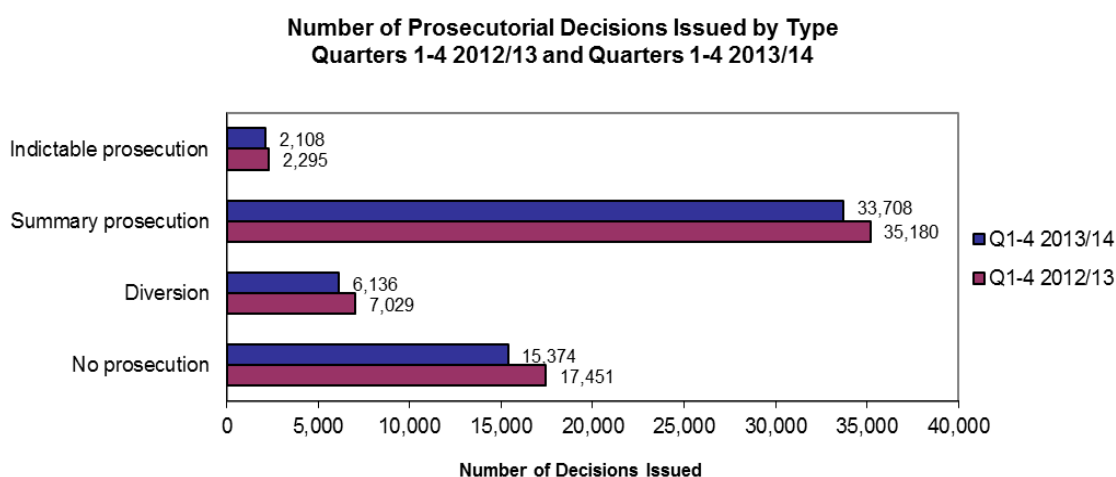
- A total of 1,500 files were submitted to PPS Departmental Section by departments and agencies during 2013/14, representing a 4.1% increase on the previous financial year (1,441).
- During the current period, the majority of the files were submitted either by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (39%) or the Department for Social Development (38%).

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

- A total of 26,127 information requests were submitted to police during this financial year, an increase of 2.5% on 2012/13 (25,486).
- Fifty-seven percent of all requests submitted during the current period were 'Post Decision Information Requests', 30% were 'Decision Information Requests' and 13% were 'Full File Requests'.

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

- During 2013/14, 57,326 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS, a decline of 7.5% on the total issued during 2012/13 (61,955).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during 2013/14. Of the 57,326 decisions issued, almost three-quarters (73%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (35,816) or for diversion from the courts (6,136). This was broadly in line with 2012/13 (72%).



- Comparing 2012/13 and 2013/14, there was a decrease of 4.4% in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of an 8.1% decrease in indictable prosecution decisions and a decline of 4.2% in summary prosecution decisions. The numbers of diversionary and no prosecution decisions fell by 12.7% and 11.9% respectively.

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

- Of the 15,374 no prosecution decisions issued during 2013/14, the vast majority (95%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 5% 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 2013/14 was 155, which compared with 212 days during 2012/13. This was an improvement of 26.9%.
- During the current period, summary prosecution decisions required an average of 20 days. This was 9 days less than during the 2012/13 financial year (29), representing a 31.0% improvement.
- The time taken for diversionary decisions varied according to the type of diversion issued, with informed warnings requiring an average of 17 days, cautions 14 days and youth conferences 18 days.

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

- A total of 33,023 summonses were issued in police cases during 2013/14, a decrease of 7.0% on 2012/13. Comparing 2012/13 and 2013/14, the number of summonses issued via personal service experienced a greater decline than those issued by post, down 13.7% and 3.5% respectively.
- Sixty-eight percent of summonses issued during 2013/14 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 2013/14, 2,488 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was an increase of 12.6% on 2012/13 (2,209).
- Of these defendants, 84.5% were convicted, 14.9% were acquitted and the remaining 0.6% had an 'other' outcome.
- The conviction rate, at 84.5%, showed an increase on 2012/13 (83.8%).

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

- A total of 33,834 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during 2013/14, a decrease of 8.3% on 2012/13 (36,907).
- Of the defendants dealt with during 2013/14, 80.2% were convicted, 4.9% were acquitted and 14.9% had an 'other' outcome.

- Comparing 2012/13 and 2013/14, the conviction rate rose from 79.1% to 80.2%.

**Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome
Quarters 1-4 2013/14**

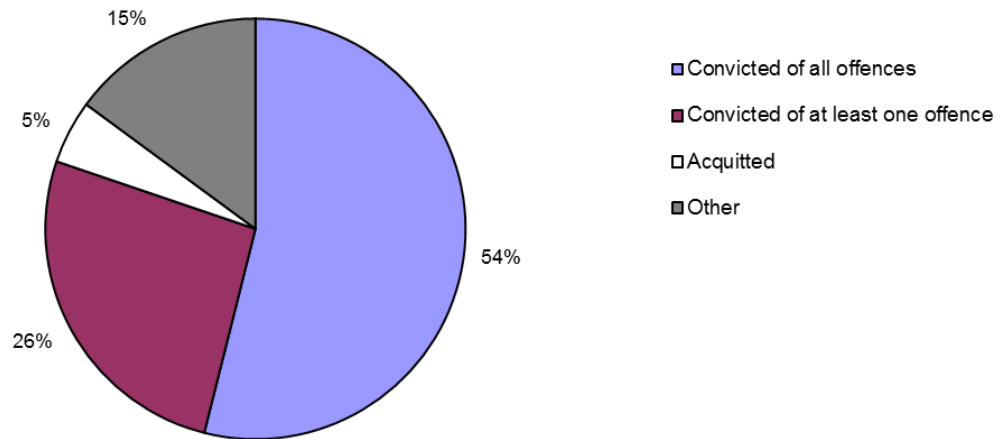


Table 1a: Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 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	
Q1-4 2013/14	Indictable	671	394	497	420	29	2,011	
	Hybrid	6,359	4,634	4,993	4,675	763	21,424	
	Summary	5,760	5,763	5,581	6,035	765	23,904	
	All Files	12,790	10,791	11,071	11,130	1,557	47,339	
Q1-4 2012/13	Indictable	725	463	561	484	35	2,268	
	Hybrid	6,755	4,722	5,343	4,954	791	22,565	
	Summary	6,102	5,475	5,943	6,595	680	24,795	
	All Files	13,582	10,660	11,847	12,033	1,506	49,628	
% Change (Files Received) 2012/13 to 2013/14		-5.8%	1.2%	-6.6%	-7.5%	3.4%	-4.6%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-4 (Q1-4) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 2013/14 ¹

Recorded Crime Offence Group ²	Number of files					
	Q1-4 2013/14		Q1-4 2012/13		Change (2012/13 to 2013/14)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Violence against the person	11,278	37.7%	12,109	38.2%	-831	-6.9%
Sexual offences	1,080	3.6%	1,212	3.8%	-132	-10.9%
Robbery	155	0.5%	213	0.7%	-58	-27.2%
Burglary	1,144	3.8%	1,242	3.9%	-98	-7.9%
Theft	4,746	15.9%	4,715	14.9%	31	0.7%
Fraud and forgery	1,003	3.4%	1,089	3.4%	-86	-7.9%
Criminal damage	2,803	9.4%	3,017	9.5%	-214	-7.1%
Drug offences	3,233	10.8%	3,311	10.4%	-78	-2.4%
Other Miscellaneous offences	4,453	14.9%	4,828	15.2%	-375	-7.8%
All Recorded Crime Files	29,895		31,736		-1,841	-5.8%
Other files (Non-notifiable offences)	15,665		16,177		-512	-3.2%
All Files	45,560		47,913		-2,353	-4.9%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-4 (Q1-4) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² See explanatory notes, page 18.

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

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 2013/14 ¹

Department / Agency	Number of files					
	Q1-4 2013/14		Q1-4 2012/13		Change (2012/13 to 2013/14)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Driver and Vehicle Agency	578	38.5%	531	36.8%	47	8.9%
Dept. for Social Development	570	38.0%	605	42.0%	-35	-5.8%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division	78	5.2%	85	5.9%	-7	-8.2%
NI Environment Agency	78	5.2%	81	5.6%	-3	-3.7%
HM Revenue and Customs	36	2.4%	26	1.8%	10	38.5%
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	36	2.4%	33	2.3%	3	9.1%
Dept. of Enterprise Trade and Investment	19	1.3%	18	1.2%	1	5.6%
Health and Safety Executive	9	0.6%	14	1.0%	-5	-35.7%
Other	96	6.4%	48	3.3%	48	100.0%
All Departments / Agencies	1,500		1,441		59	4.1%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-4 (Q1-4) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 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	
Q1-4 2013/14	Full File Request	897	725	610	1,092	23	3,347	
	Decision Information Request	2,024	1,811	2,217	1,746	43	7,841	
	Post Decision Information Request	5,068	3,155	3,045	3,534	15	14,817	
	No Decision	31	13	7	71	0	122	
	All Requests Submitted	8,020	5,704	5,879	6,443	81	26,127	
Q1-4 2012/13	Full File Request	934	709	660	1,105	23	3,431	
	Decision Information Request	1,993	1,153	2,540	1,327	73	7,086	
	Post Decision Information Request	5,435	2,732	3,178	3,531	15	14,891	
	No Decision	13	19	5	40	1	78	
	All Requests Submitted	8,375	4,613	6,383	6,003	112	25,486	
% Change (Requests Submitted) 2012/13 to 2013/14		-4.2%	23.7%	-7.9%	7.3%	-27.7%	2.5%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-4 (Q1-4) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 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
Q1-4 2013/14	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	590	366	470	482	200	2,108
		Summary prosecution	9,283	7,489	7,863	7,735	1,338	33,708
	Diversion	Caution	1,123	1,042	1,197	1,187	3	4,552
		Informed warning	161	191	251	94	4	701
		Youth conference	147	88	113	130	0	478
		Other	55	50	204	96	0	405
	No Prosecution		4,161	3,347	4,004	3,601	261	15,374
	All Decisions Issued		15,520	12,573	14,102	13,325	1,806	57,326
Q1-4 2012/13	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	741	428	476	470	180	2,295
		Summary prosecution	9,974	7,075	7,847	8,994	1,290	35,180
	Diversion	Caution	1,308	1,284	1,414	1,363	3	5,372
		Informed warning	270	218	272	133	0	893
		Youth conference	89	101	147	101	0	438
		Other	71	48	141	66	0	326
	No Prosecution		4,758	4,123	4,059	4,280	231	17,451
	All Decisions Issued		17,211	13,277	14,356	15,407	1,704	61,955
% Change (Decisions Issued) 2012/13 to 2013/14		-9.8%	-5.3%	-1.8%	-13.5%	6.0%	-7.5%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-4 (Q1-4) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 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	
Q1-4 2013/14	Did not pass the evidential test	3,926	3,169	3,849	3,476	243	14,663	
	Did not pass the public interest test	235	178	155	125	18	711	
	All no prosecution decisions	4,161	3,347	4,004	3,601	261	15,374	
Q1-4 2012/13	Did not pass the evidential test	4,449	3,845	3,907	4,131	223	16,555	
	Did not pass the public interest test	309	278	152	149	8	896	
	All no prosecution decisions	4,758	4,123	4,059	4,280	231	17,451	
% Change (No prosecution decisions issued) 2012/13 to 2013/14		-12.5%	-18.8%	-1.4%	-15.9%	13.0%	-11.9%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-4 (Q1-4) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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)**

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 2013/14 ¹

			Average (calendar) days
Quarters	Type of Decision ²		All Regions
Q1-4 2013/14	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	155
		Summary prosecution	20
	Diversion	Caution	14
		Informed warning	17
		Youth conference	18
		Other	19
	No Prosecution		40
Q1-4 2012/13	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	212
		Summary prosecution	29
	Diversion	Caution	19
		Informed warning	16
		Youth conference	25
		Other	28
	No Prosecution		51

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-4 (Q1-4) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 2013/14 ¹

		PPS Region					Number of summonses
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	All Regions	
Quarters	Service Method ²	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-4 2013/14	Postal Service	6,341	5,633	5,157	5,361	22,492	
	Personal Service	4,312	2,696	1,749	1,774	10,531	
	All Summonses	10,653	8,329	6,906	7,135	33,023	
Q1-4 2012/13	Postal Service	7,086	5,113	4,871	6,227	23,297	
	Personal Service	6,413	2,166	1,758	1,860	12,197	
	All Summonses	13,499	7,279	6,629	8,087	35,494	
% Change (Summonses Issued) 2012/13 to 2013/14		-21.1%	14.4%	4.2%	-11.8%	-7.0%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-4 (Q1-4) reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² See explanatory notes, page 20.

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

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 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
Q1-4 2013/14	Convicted of all offences	263	157	205	126	137	888
	Convicted of at least one offence	423	235	206	249	102	1,215
	Acquitted	137	42	70	101	20	370
	Other	2	4	2	7	0	15
	All defendants	825	438	483	483	259	2,488
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	83.2%	89.5%	85.1%	77.6%	92.3%	84.5%
Q1-4 2012/13	Convicted of all offences	244	173	172	143	99	831
	Convicted of at least one offence	361	186	203	218	53	1,021
	Acquitted	144	61	57	63	19	344
	Other	8	0	1	4	0	13
	All defendants	757	420	433	428	171	2,209
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	79.9%	85.5%	86.6%	84.3%	88.9%	83.8%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2012/13 to 2013/14		9.0%	4.3%	11.5%	12.9%	51.5%	12.6%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Q1-4 reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² See explanatory notes, page 20.

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

Quarters 1-4 2012/13 and Quarters 1-4 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
Q1-4 2013/14	Convicted of all offences	5,027	3,826	4,535	4,089	769	18,246
	Convicted of at least one offence	2,339	2,101	2,024	2,217	209	8,890
	Acquitted	612	275	431	310	24	1,652
	Other	1,359	1,128	1,282	1,106	171	5,046
	All defendants	9,337	7,330	8,272	7,722	1,173	33,834
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	78.9%	80.9%	79.3%	81.7%	83.4%	80.2%
Q1-4 2012/13	Convicted of all offences	5,466	3,772	4,306	4,700	932	19,176
	Convicted of at least one offence	2,995	1,965	2,130	2,654	264	10,008
	Acquitted	855	327	410	302	24	1,918
	Other	1,791	1,212	1,148	1,479	175	5,805
	All defendants	11,107	7,276	7,994	9,135	1,395	36,907
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	76.2%	78.8%	80.5%	80.5%	85.7%	79.1%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2012/13 to 2013/14		-15.9%	0.7%	3.5%	-15.5%	-15.9%	-8.3%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Q1-4 reflect the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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.

The Department of Justice publish conviction data on an annual basis; however this may not be directly comparable with data included in this report due to variations in data quality validations and counting rules.

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 have now been finalised.

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 2014 to 30 June 2014, will be published on 14 August 2014.

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