



PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Statistical Bulletin: **2018/19**

1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019



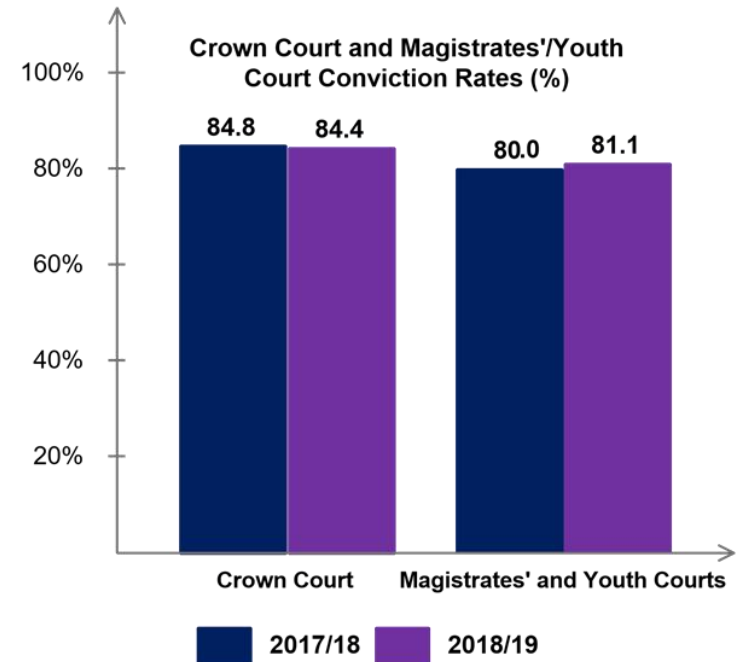
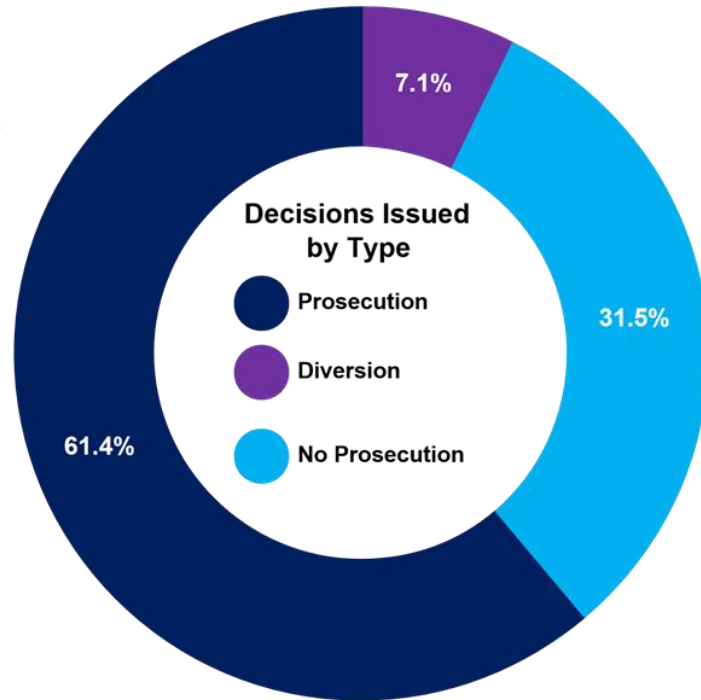
Contents		Page
Infographic		1
Introduction		3
Summary of Key Points		5
Table 1a	Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function	9
Table 1b	Files Received from Police by Offence Classification	10
Table 1c	Files Submitted to PPS by Other Departments / Agencies	11
Table 2	Information Requests Submitted to Police by Request Type and PPS Region / Function	12
Table 3a	Prosecutorial Decisions Issued by Decision Type and PPS Region / Function	13
Table 3b	Prosecutorial Decisions Issued – Reasons for No Prosecution by PPS Region / Function	14
Table 3c	Average Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type (PPS Regions)	15
Table 4	Summonses Issued in Police Cases by Service Method and PPS Region	16
Table 5a	Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court by Outcome and PPS Region / Function	17
Table 5b	Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome and PPS Region / Function	18
Explanatory Notes		19
User Information		23

Note:

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



Changes from 2017/18 to 2018/19



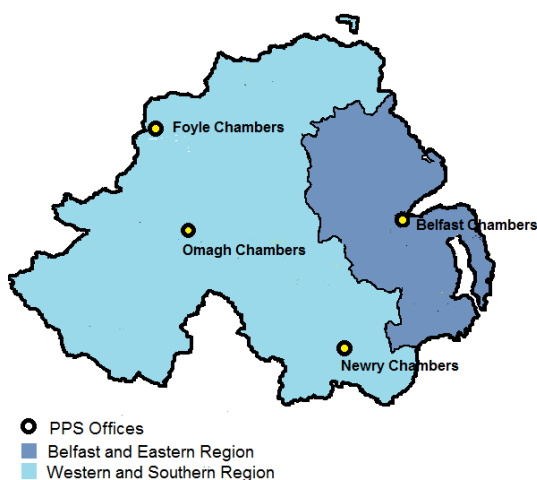
Introduction

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 National Driver Alertness Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme.

PPS Regional Structure



There are two PPS regions. Each of the regions, Belfast and Eastern Region and Western and Southern Region, is headed by an Assistant Director (AD). The AD is responsible for working with the courts and the police to provide a high quality prosecution service in their area. The regions deal with a wide range of cases, from the less serious summary cases, which are heard in the Magistrates' Courts, through to more serious indictable cases which are heard in the Crown Court.

In addition there are four legal sections, based in PPS Headquarters, which are also headed at AD level. These are as follows:

- The Serious Crime Unit which deals with a range of the most serious offences including murder, manslaughter, rape and serious sexual offences and human trafficking.
- Central Casework Section which deals with some of the most high profile and difficult cases in Northern Ireland, including files relating to terrorism and organised crime;
- Fraud and Departmental Section which deals with serious and complex fraud files submitted by the police, as well as files from public bodies; and
- High Court and International Section which deals with a range of specialist legal matters (for example, High Court bail applications, extradition and appeals to the Court of Appeal).

Corporate Services is responsible for the organisation's support services such as Policy and Information, Finance, Resource Management and ICT, as well as the Victim and Witness Care Unit (VWCU).

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. The report provides information for the 2018/19 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019) and includes comparisons for 2017/18. 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 been finalised. For further details, see 'User Information' on page 23.

If you have any feedback, questions or requests for further information about this bulletin, please contact us as follows:

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Summary of Key Points

Figures quoted are for the 2018/19 financial year, 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes and user information provided (see pages 19 - 23).

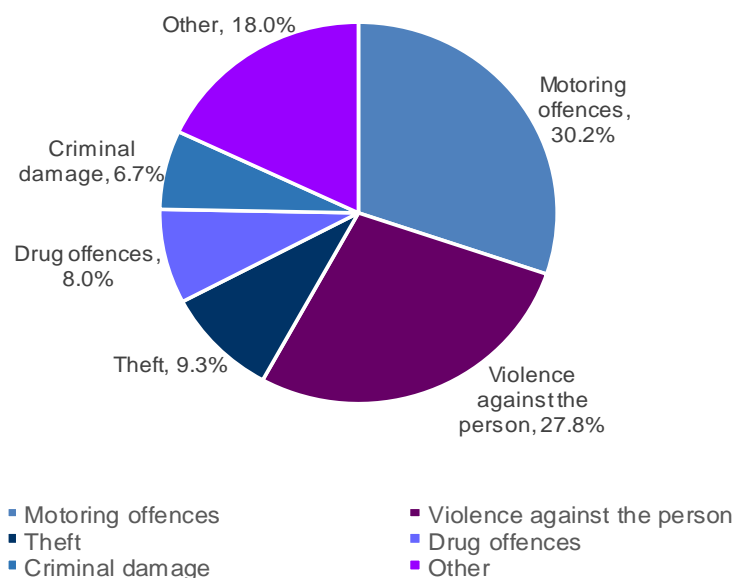
Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 1a)

- The PPS received 43,298 files during 2018/19. This was an increase of 2.1% on 2017/18 (42,395).
- Just under half (47.7%) of all files received during the current period related to hybrid offences, 47.8% to summary offences and 4.5% to indictable offences.

Files Received from Police¹ by Offence Classification (Table 1b)

- During this financial year, PPS received a total of 42,324 files from police. This represents a 2.4% increase on the previous financial year (41,350).
- In terms of files received by offence classification, the majority fell into two categories; 'motoring offences' (30.2%) and 'violence against the person' (27.8%).
- The offence classification that has shown the largest increase in the number of files received compared with 2017/18 was 'violence against the person' (+641). The largest decrease in the number of files received was for 'motoring offences' (-733). The largest percentage increase was for 'fraud and forgery' (+9.2%), while 'motoring offences' had the largest percentage decrease in files received (-5.4%).

Files Received from Police by Offence Classification 2018/19



The 'Other' category consists of 'Other Miscellaneous offences' 5.3%, 'Public order' 4.2%, 'Sexual offences' 3.5%, 'Burglary' 1.9%, 'Possession of weapons' 1.7%, 'Fraud and forgery' 1.1% and 'Robbery' 0.3%.

¹ 'Police' includes the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Belfast/Londonderry Harbour Police and British Transport Police.

Files Submitted to PPS by Other Departments / Agencies (Table 1c)²

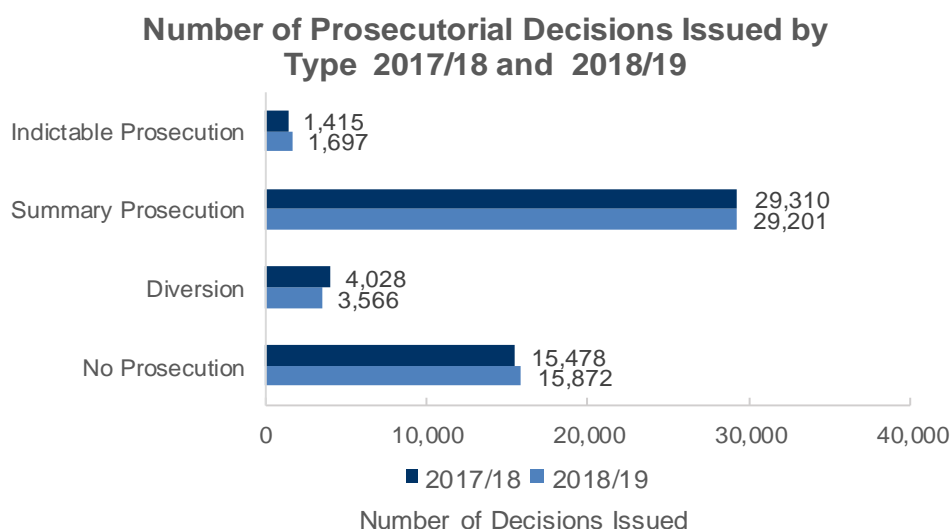
- A total of 974 files were submitted to PPS by departments and agencies during 2018/19, representing a 6.9% decrease on 2017/18 (1,046).
- During this period, the vast majority of files were submitted either by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (45.6%) or the Department for Communities (24.3%).

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

- A total of 27,974 information requests were submitted to police during 2018/19, an increase of 3.5% on the previous financial year (27,025).
- More than half of all requests submitted during the current period were 'Post Decision Information Requests' (57.3%), 28.7% were 'Decision Information Requests' and 13.8% were 'Full File Requests'.

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

- During 2018/19, 50,336 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS, a small increase of 0.2% on the total issued during 2017/18 (50,231).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during the current period. Of the 50,336 decisions issued, 68.5% were for prosecution (30,898) or for diversion from the courts (3,566). This was slightly lower than 2017/18 (69.2%).
- Comparing 2018/19 with 2017/18, there was a 0.6% increase in the number of decisions to prosecute. This is comprised of a 19.9% increase in indictable prosecution decisions while summary prosecution decisions decreased by 0.4%. The number of diversionary decisions fell by 11.5% while no prosecution decisions increased by 2.5%.



² Please note that Table 1c has been revised to include all files submitted to the Public Prosecution Service from Departments or Agencies (i.e. excluding Police – see Table 1b) rather than files submitted to Departmental section only. This change was made as of the 'Statistical Bulletin Quarters 1-3 2018/19'. Previously published figures for financial year 2017/18 have been revised to reflect this change.

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

- Of the 15,872 no prosecution decisions issued during 2018/19, 96.9% did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 3.1% did not pass the public interest test.

Average Days Required³ 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 has increased during the current period to 244 days, up from 201 days in 2017/18.
- During 2018/19, summary prosecution decisions required an average of 28 days, five days less than the previous financial year (33).
- The time taken for diversionary decisions has decreased across most types of diversions issued. Cautions required an average of 24 days (25 days in of 2017/18) and informed warnings 15 days (24 days in of 2017/18). Youth conferences remained at an average of 17 days, with 'other' diversions decreasing from 33 days in 2017/18 to 22 days in 2018/19.

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

- A total of 32,007 summonses were issued in police cases during 2018/19, a decrease of 1.7% on 2017/18 (32,553). Comparing 2018/19 with 2017/18, the number of summonses issued via postal service decreased by 1.8% while those issued via personal service decreased by 1.5%.
- During 2018/19 57.9% of summonses issued were served on the defendant by post (58.0% in 2017/18) and the remainder (42.1%) via personal service by police (42.0% in 2017/18).

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

- During 2018/19, 1,458 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was a decrease of 3.4% on 2017/18 (1,510).
- Of these defendants, 84.4% were convicted, 15.0% were acquitted and 0.6% had an 'other' outcome.
- At 84.4%, the conviction rate represents a 0.4 percentage point decrease on 2017/18 (84.8%).

³ The average figures are based on calendar days and include the time taken for the police to respond to PPS decision information requests. For indictable prosecution decisions, PPS case preparation time is also included (see explanatory notes, page 21).

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

- A total of 29,155 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during 2018/19, an increase of 3.9% on 2017/18 (28,066).
- Of the defendants dealt with during the current period, 81.1% were convicted (80.0% in 2017/18), 6.0% were acquitted (6.1% in 2017/18) and 12.8% had an 'other' outcome (13.9% in 2017/18).
- At 81.1%, the conviction rate has increased by 1.1 percentage points from 2017/18 (80.0%).

Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome 2018/19

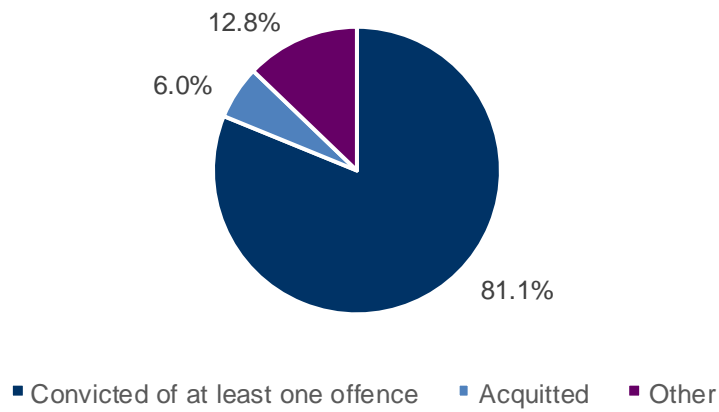


Table 1a: Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of files
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Financial Year	File Type ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
2018/19	Indictable	716	557	654	31	1,958	
	Hybrid	11,650	8,033	589	370	20,642	
	Summary	10,487	9,684	5	522	20,698	
	All Files	22,853	18,274	1,248	923	43,298	
2017/18	Indictable	645	560	642	21	1,868	
	Hybrid	10,393	7,756	792	528	19,469	
	Summary	10,743	9,902	4	409	21,058	
	All Files	21,781	18,218	1,438	958	42,395	
% Change (Files Received) 2017/18 to 2018/19		4.9%	0.3%	-13.2%	-3.7%	2.1%	

¹ 'Financial year' reflects the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 19.

Table 1b: Files Received from Police by Offence Classification

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

Offence Classification ^{2,3}	2018/19		2017/18		Number of files Change (2017/18 to 2018/19)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Motoring offences	12,777	30.2%	13,510	32.7%	-733	-5.4%
Violence against the person	11,762	27.8%	11,121	26.9%	641	5.8%
Theft	3,940	9.3%	3,778	9.1%	162	4.3%
Drugs offences	3,371	8.0%	3,114	7.5%	257	8.3%
Criminal damage	2,836	6.7%	2,616	6.3%	220	8.4%
Public order	1,779	4.2%	1,780	4.3%	-1	-0.1%
Sexual offences	1,483	3.5%	1,381	3.3%	102	7.4%
Burglary	795	1.9%	748	1.8%	47	6.3%
Possession of weapons	728	1.7%	676	1.6%	52	7.7%
Fraud and forgery	474	1.1%	434	1.0%	40	9.2%
Robbery	132	0.3%	130	0.3%	2	1.5%
Other miscellaneous offences	2,247	5.3%	2,062	5.0%	185	9.0%
All Files	42,324		41,350		974	2.4%

¹ 'Financial year' reflects the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² A review of offence classifications has been conducted to ensure continued alignment with the Department of Justice Northern Ireland. Therefore, some revisions have been made to previously published figures for financial year 2017-18. For example, miscellaneous sexual offences have been moved from 'Sexual offences' to 'Other miscellaneous offences.'

³ See explanatory notes, page 19.

Table 1c: Files Submitted to PPS by Other Departments / Agencies ⁴

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

Department / Agency	2018/19		2017/18		Number of files Change (2017/18 to 2018/19)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Driver and Vehicle Agency	444	45.6%	358	34.2%	86	24.0%
Department for Communities	237	24.3%	414	39.6%	-177	-42.8%
Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland	117	12.0%	105	10.0%	12	11.4%
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ²	40	4.1%	27	2.6%	13	N/A
British Airports Authorities	31	3.2%	38	3.6%	-7	N/A
NI Environment Agency	27	2.8%	22	2.1%	5	N/A
NI Statistical Research Agency	19	2.0%	12	1.1%	7	N/A
HM Revenue and Customs	16	1.6%	22	2.1%	-6	N/A
Companies House	13	1.3%	2	0.2%	11	N/A
Child Maintenance Service	9	0.9%	23	2.2%	-14	N/A
Health and Safety Executive	8	0.8%	7	0.7%	1	N/A
Department for the Economy	7	0.7%	7	0.7%	0	N/A
Other	6	0.6%	9	0.9%	-3	N/A
All Departments / Agencies	974		1,046		-72	-6.9%

¹ 'Financial year' reflects the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² Figures for NI Environment Agency are presented separately.

³ Some percentage changes are stated as 'N/A' due to base number being too small to allow for the calculation of a percentage.

⁴ Please note that Table 1c has been revised to include all files submitted to the Public Prosecution Service from Departments or Agencies (i.e. excluding Police – see Table 1b) rather than files submitted to Departmental section only. This change was made as of 'Statistical Bulletin Quarters 1-3 2018/19'. Previously published figures for financial year 2017/18 have been revised to reflect this change. See explanatory notes, page 19.

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

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of requests
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Financial Year	Request Type ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
2018/19	Full File Request	1,818	1,927	111	17	3,873	
	Decision Information Request	2,815	4,552	563	96	8,026	
	Post Decision Information Request	7,934	7,435	623	36	16,028	
	No Decision	8	16	20	3	47	
	All Requests Submitted	12,575	13,930	1,317	152	27,974	
2017/18	Full File Request	1,654	1,770	177	14	3,615	
	Decision Information Request	2,976	4,350	580	78	7,984	
	Post Decision Information Request	7,529	7,236	559	52	15,376	
	No Decision	5	36	9	0	50	
	All Requests Submitted	12,164	13,392	1,325	144	27,025	
% Change (Requests Submitted) 2017/18 to 2018/19		3.4%	4.0%	-0.6%	5.6%	3.5%	

¹ 'Financial year' reflects the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 20.

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

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

		Number of persons (decisions issued)				
		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Financial Year	Type of Decision ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
2018/19	<i>Indictable prosecution</i>	679	584	256	178	1,697
	<i>Summary prosecution</i>	16,006	12,319	82	794	29,201
	Total Prosecution	16,685	12,903	338	972	30,898
	<i>Caution</i>	1,101	1,033	*	*	2,158
	<i>Informed warning</i>	99	172	*	*	274
	<i>Youth conference</i>	302	249	*	*	558
	<i>Other</i>	215	361	*	*	576
	Total Diversion	1,717	1,815	24	10	3,566
	No Prosecution	8,153	6,390	1,143	186	15,872
	All Decisions Issued	26,555	21,108	1,505	1,168	50,336
2017/18	<i>Indictable prosecution</i>	606	464	196	149	1,415
	<i>Summary prosecution</i>	15,835	12,401	161	913	29,310
	Total Prosecution	16,441	12,865	357	1,062	30,725
	<i>Caution</i>	1,225	1,198	#	#	2,447
	<i>Informed warning</i>	121	221	-	-	344
	<i>Youth conference</i>	349	267	#	-	621
	<i>Other</i>	224	392	-	-	616
	Total Diversion	1,919	2,078	25	6	4,028
	No Prosecution	7,405	6,684	1,195	194	15,478
	All Decisions Issued	25,765	21,627	1,577	1,262	50,231
% Change (Decisions Issued)						
2017/18 to 2018/19		3.1%	-2.4%	-4.6%	-7.4%	0.2%

¹ 'Financial year' reflects the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 20.

"-" refers to a count less than 3.

"#" refers to a number >=3 which has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

"*" refers to a category where a detailed breakdown cannot be provided due to small numbers involved.

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

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of persons (decisions issued)
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Financial Year	Reason for no prosecution ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
2018/19	Did not pass the evidential test	7,825	6,258	1,119	180	15,382	
	Did not pass the public interest test	328	132	24	6	490	
	All no prosecution decisions	8,153	6,390	1,143	186	15,872	
2017/18	Did not pass the evidential test	7,043	6,574	1,168	185	14,970	
	Did not pass the public interest test	362	110	27	9	508	
	All no prosecution decisions	7,405	6,684	1,195	194	15,478	
% Change (No prosecution decisions issued) 2017/18 to 2018/19		10.1%	-4.4%	-4.4%	-4.1%	2.5%	

¹ 'Financial year' reflects the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section

³ See explanatory notes, page 20.

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

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

			Average (calendar) days ²
Financial Year	Type of Decision ³		All Regions
2018/19	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	244
		Summary prosecution	28
	Diversion	Caution	24
		Informed warning	15
		Youth conference	17
		Other	22
	No Prosecution	50	
2017/18	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	201
		Summary prosecution	33
	Diversion	Caution	25
		Informed warning	24
		Youth conference	17
		Other	33
	No Prosecution	55	

¹ 'Financial year' reflects 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).

³ See explanatory notes, page 21.

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

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

		Number of summonses			
		PPS Region ²			
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	All Regions
Financial Year	Service Method ³	Number	Number	Number	Number
2018/19	Postal Service	9,828	8,651	49	18,528
	Personal Service	8,961	4,300	218	13,479
	All Summonses	18,789	12,951	267	32,007
2017/18	Postal Service	10,231	8,550	89	18,870
	Personal Service	9,322	4,239	122	13,683
	All Summonses	19,553	12,789	211	32,553
% Change (Summonses Issued) 2017/18 to 2018/19		-3.9%	1.3%	26.5%	-1.7%

¹ 'Financial year' reflects the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 21.

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

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

		Number of persons (defendants)				
		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Financial Year	Outcome ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
2018/19	Convicted of at least one offence	552	451	126	102	1,231
	Acquitted	62	75	52	29	218
	Other	0	4	4	1	9
	All defendants	614	530	182	132	1,458
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	89.9%	85.1%	69.2%	77.3%	84.4%
2017/18	Convicted of at least one offence	633	398	114	136	1,281
	Acquitted	82	66	62	12	222
	Other	4	1	1	1	7
	All defendants	719	465	177	149	1,510
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	88.0%	85.6%	64.4%	91.3%	84.8%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2017/18 to 2018/19		-14.6%	14.0%	2.8%	-11.4%	-3.4%

¹ 'Financial year' reflects the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 21.

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

2017/18 and 2018/19 ¹

		Number of persons (defendants)				
		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Financial Year	Outcome ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
2018/19	Convicted of at least one offence	12,807	10,170	80	601	23,658
	Acquitted	1,063	638	22	29	1,752
	Other	1,989	1,581	40	135	3,745
	All defendants	15,859	12,389	142	765	29,155
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	80.8%	82.1%	56.3%	78.6%	81.1%
2017/18	Convicted of at least one offence	12,065	9,648	75	675	22,463
	Acquitted	1,032	622	15	29	1,698
	Other	2,098	1,611	56	140	3,905
	All defendants	15,195	11,881	146	844	28,066
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	79.4%	81.2%	51.4%	80.0%	80.0%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2017/18 to 2018/19		4.4%	4.3%	-2.7%	-9.4%	3.9%

¹ 'Financial year' reflects the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016. 'Headquarters' includes Central Casework Section and Fraud and Departmental Section.

³ See explanatory notes, page 21.

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 for Northern Ireland 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 for Northern Ireland may be considered by prosecutors in the regional offices or Headquarters.

Table 1b

The Offence Classifications used are standardised across the criminal justice organisations in Northern Ireland. While current classifications continue to mirror the Home Office Recorded Crime Offence Categories, there may be some variation in the offences included within each category. Therefore, data published on Recorded Crime Offence Groups prior to 2014/15 will not be directly comparable with the Offence Classifications.

In January 2019 a review of Offence Classifications was undertaken to ensure continued alignment with Department of Justice Northern Ireland. As a result, some revisions were made to the Offence Classifications in the Statistical publication for financial year 2018-19. For example, miscellaneous sexual offences have been moved from 'Sexual offences' to 'Other miscellaneous offences'. Previously published figures for financial year 2017-18 were also revised in this bulletin to reflect these changes. It should be noted that data published prior to 2017/18 will not be directly comparable with the updated Offence Classifications.

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 for Northern Ireland are included in Table 1c.

Table 1c

As of 'Statistical Bulletin Quarters 1-3 2018/19' Table 1c was amended to include all files submitted to the Public Prosecution Service from Departments or Agencies (excluding Police) rather than files submitted to Departmental section only. Previously published figures for financial year 2017/18 were

revised in this bulletin to reflect this change. Therefore, data published prior to 2017/18 will not be directly comparable.

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.
- An *informed warning* is also a formal reprimand administered by police and is recorded on a person's criminal record.
- 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.
- *'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.

Rounding conventions

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and may not always sum to 100%. Where a base number is less than 50, percentages are not provided.

Disclosure control

Where small numbers (less than 3) within the tables have the potential to disclose sensitive information, disclosure controls have been applied and numbers less than three have been suppressed (see notes to individual tables).

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 2019 to 30 June 2019, will be published on 22 August 2019.

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