

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

# Statistical Bulletin

## Quarter 1 2015/16

(April to June 2015)



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**Note:**

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

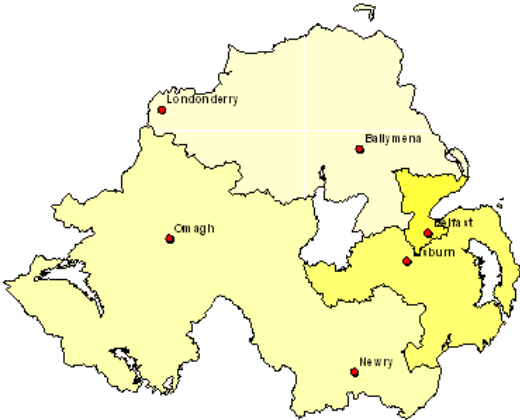
# Introduction

## 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 also includes data on the outcomes of prosecutions at court. The report provides information for the first three months of the 2015/16 financial year (i.e. 1 April to 30 June 2015) and includes comparisons for the equivalent period in 2014/15. 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 2015, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes provided (see pages 18 - 20).

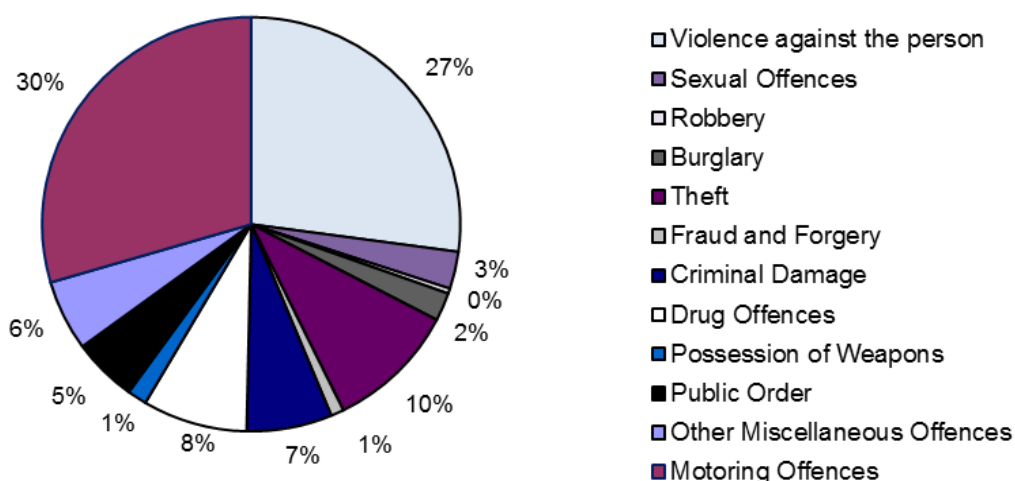
### Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 1a)

- The PPS received 10,880 files during the first quarter of this financial year. This was a decrease of 3.0% on the corresponding quarter of 2014/15 (11,215).
- Just under half (49%) of all files received during the current quarter related to hybrid offences, 46% to summary offences and the remaining 5% to indictable offences.

### Files Received from Police by Offence Classification (Table 1b)

- During the first quarter of 2015/16, PPS received a total of 10,537 files from police. This represents a 2.9% decrease on the first quarter of 2014/15 (10,856).
- In terms of files received by offence classification, almost two-thirds fell into three categories; 'motoring' (30%), 'violence against the person' (27%) and 'theft' (10%).
- Six offence classifications have shown an increase in the number of files received compared with the corresponding quarter of 2014/15. These are 'sexual offences', 'violence against the person', 'criminal damage', 'drug offences', 'fraud and forgery' and 'theft'.

**Files Received from Police by Offence Classification  
Quarter 1 2015/16**



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

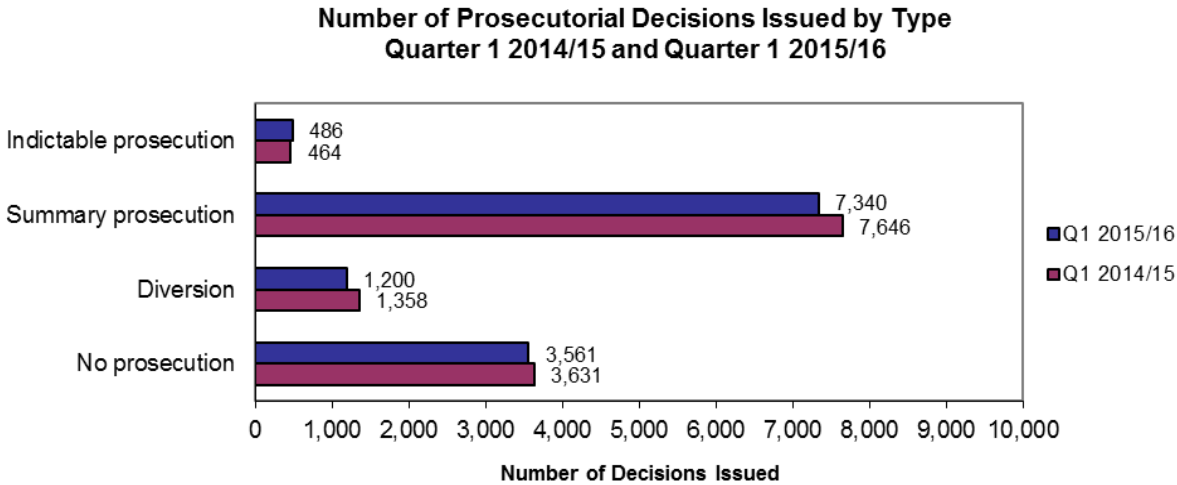
- A total of 288 files were submitted to PPS Departmental Section by departments and agencies during the first quarter of 2015/16, representing a 3.7% decrease on the corresponding quarter of 2014/15 (299).
- During the current period, the majority of the files were submitted either by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (32%) or the Department for Social Development (42%).

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

- A total of 6,056 information requests were submitted to police during the current quarter, a decrease of 5.5% on the first quarter of 2014/15 (6,409).
- Fifty-four percent of all requests submitted during the current period were 'Post Decision Information Requests', 31% were 'Decision Information Requests' and 14% were 'Full File Requests'.

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

- During the first quarter of this financial year, 12,587 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS, a decline of 3.9% on the total issued during the first quarter of 2014/15 (13,099).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during the current quarter. Of the 12,587 decisions issued, almost three-quarters (72%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (7,826) or for diversion from the courts (1,200). This was in line with the first quarter of 2014/15 (72%).



- Comparing the first quarters of 2014/15 and 2015/16, there was a decrease of 3.5% in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of a 4.7% increase in

indictable prosecution decisions and a decline of 4.0% in summary prosecution decisions. The numbers of diversionary and no prosecution decisions fell by 11.6% and 1.9% respectively.

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

- Of the 3,561 no prosecution decisions issued during the first quarter of 2015/16, 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 the first quarter of this financial year was 153, which compared with 158 days during the equivalent period in 2014/15. This was an improvement of 3.2%.
- During the current quarter, summary prosecution decisions required an average of 24 days. This was 6 days more than during the first quarter of 2014/15 (18).
- The time taken for diversionary decisions varied according to the type of diversion issued, with cautions requiring an average of 25 days, youth conferences 22 days and informed warnings 10 days.

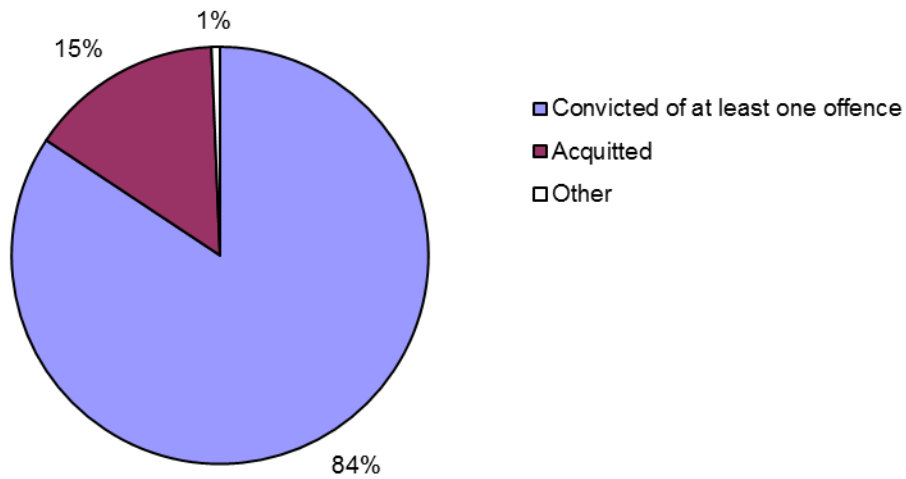
#### **Summonses Issued in Police Cases by Service Method and PPS Region (Table 4)**

- A total of 7,672 summonses were issued in police cases during the current period, an increase of 1.3% on the same period of 2014/15. Comparing the first quarters of 2014/15 and 2015/16, the number of summonses issued via personal service experienced a greater decline than those issued by postal service, down 1.9% and 1.0% respectively.
- Sixty-seven percent of summonses issued during the current 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 2015/16, 459 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was a decrease of 24.8% on the equivalent period in 2014/15 (610).
- Of these defendants, 84.3% were convicted, 15.0% were acquitted and the remaining 0.7% had an 'other' outcome.
- Comparing the first quarters of 2014/15 and 2015/16, the conviction rate remained the same at 84.3%.

**Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court by Outcome  
Quarter 1 2015/16**



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

- A total of 7,788 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the first quarter of this financial year, a decrease of 3.6% on 2014/15 (8,081).
- Of the defendants dealt with during the current quarter, 79.2% were convicted, 5.6% were acquitted and 15.2% had an 'other' outcome.
- The conviction rate fell by 0.6% from 79.8% during the equivalent period in 2014/15.



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

Quarter 1 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>						Number of files
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	File Type <sup>3</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2015/16	Indictable	133	127	119	112	4	495	
	Hybrid	1,537	1,207	1,199	1,218	172	5,333	
	Summary	1,221	1,309	1,180	1,220	122	5,052	
	<b>All Files</b>	<b>2,891</b>	<b>2,643</b>	<b>2,498</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>10,880</b>	
Q1 2014/15	Indictable	135	107	133	112	5	492	
	Hybrid	1,438	1,217	1,183	1,202	142	5,182	
	Summary	1,269	1,500	1,209	1,403	160	5,541	
	<b>All Files</b>	<b>2,842</b>	<b>2,824</b>	<b>2,525</b>	<b>2,717</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>11,215</b>	
<b>% Change (Files Received) 2014/15 to 2015/16</b>		<b>1.7%</b>	<b>-6.4%</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>	<b>-6.1%</b>	<b>-2.9%</b>	<b>-3.0%</b>	

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

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

<sup>3</sup> See explanatory notes, page 18.

**Table 1b: Files Received from Police by Offence Classification**

Quarter 1 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

Offence Classification <sup>2</sup>	Number of files					
	Q1 2015/16		Q1 2014/15		Change (2014/15 to 2015/16)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Violence against the person	2,860	27.1%	2,673	24.6%	187	7.0%
Sexual offences	301	2.9%	279	2.6%	22	7.9%
Robbery	38	0.4%	41	0.4%	-3	-7.3%
Burglary	232	2.2%	242	2.2%	-10	-4.1%
Theft	1,066	10.1%	1,050	9.7%	16	1.5%
Fraud and forgery	108	1.0%	103	0.9%	5	4.9%
Criminal damage	695	6.6%	655	6.0%	40	6.1%
Drug offences	856	8.1%	815	7.5%	41	5.0%
Possession of weapons	156	1.5%	174	1.6%	-18	-10.3%
Public order	531	5.0%	709	6.5%	-178	-25.1%
Other Miscellaneous offences	584	5.5%	669	6.2%	-85	-12.7%
Motoring offences	3,110	29.5%	3,446	31.7%	-336	-9.8%
<b>All Files</b>	<b>10,537</b>		<b>10,856</b>		<b>-319</b>	<b>-2.9%</b>

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

<sup>2</sup> See explanatory notes, page 18.

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

Quarter 1 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

Department / Agency	Number of files					
	Q1 2015/16		Q1 2014/15		Change (2014/15 to 2015/16)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Driver and Vehicle Agency	92	31.9%	113	37.8%	-21	-18.6%
Dept. for Social Development	122	42.4%	88	29.4%	34	38.6%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division	11	3.8%	17	5.7%	-6	-35.3%
NI Environment Agency	28	9.7%	14	4.7%	14	100.0%
HM Revenue and Customs	8	2.8%	13	4.3%	-5	-38.5%
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	7	2.4%	15	5.0%	-8	-53.3%
Dept. of Enterprise Trade and Investment	2	0.7%	7	2.3%	-5	-71.4%
Health and Safety Executive	3	1.0%	4	1.3%	-1	-25.0%
Other	15	5.2%	28	9.4%	-13	-46.4%
<b>All Departments / Agencies</b>	<b>288</b>		<b>299</b>		<b>-11</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>

<sup>1</sup> '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 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>						Number of requests
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	Request Type <sup>3</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2015/16	Full File Request	207	170	187	307	5	876	
	Decision Information Request	438	428	569	429	12	1,876	
	Post Decision Information Request	964	865	714	727	6	3,276	
	No Decision	6	1	6	15	0	28	
	<b>All Requests Submitted</b>	<b>1,615</b>	<b>1,464</b>	<b>1,476</b>	<b>1,478</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6,056</b>	
Q1 2014/15	Full File Request	222	205	170	330	4	931	
	Decision Information Request	425	464	487	393	10	1,779	
	Post Decision Information Request	1,284	813	743	835	3	3,678	
	No Decision	4	8	0	9	0	21	
	<b>All Requests Submitted</b>	<b>1,935</b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>1,567</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6,409</b>	
<b>% Change (Requests Submitted) 2014/15 to 2015/16</b>		<b>-16.5%</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>-5.7%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>-5.5%</b>	

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

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

<sup>3</sup> See explanatory notes, page 18.

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

Quarter 1 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

			PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>					Number of persons (decisions issued)
			Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Type of Decision <sup>3</sup>		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2015/16	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	110	129	93	130	24	486
		Summary prosecution	2,223	1,617	1,608	1,638	254	7,340
	Diversion	Caution	180	208	270	195	2	855
		Informed warning	30	33	51	23	0	137
		Youth conference	23	48	29	25	0	125
		Other	13	11	36	23	0	83
	No Prosecution		873	813	938	896	41	3,561
<b>All Decisions Issued</b>		<b>3,452</b>	<b>2,859</b>	<b>3,025</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>12,587</b>	
Q1 2014/15	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	133	92	87	107	45	464
		Summary prosecution	1,952	2,035	1,696	1,691	272	7,646
	Diversion	Caution	217	247	265	269	0	998
		Informed warning	32	73	37	16	0	158
		Youth conference	40	13	31	21	0	105
		Other	12	16	48	21	0	97
	No Prosecution		892	1,009	902	759	69	3,631
<b>All Decisions Issued</b>		<b>3,278</b>	<b>3,485</b>	<b>3,066</b>	<b>2,884</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>13,099</b>	
<b>% Change (Decisions Issued) 2014/15 to 2015/16</b>			<b>5.3%</b>	<b>-18.0%</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>-16.8%</b>	<b>-3.9%</b>

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

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

<sup>3</sup> See explanatory notes, page 19.

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

Quarter 1 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

Number of persons (decisions issued)

		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>					
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Reason for no prosecution <sup>3</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2015/16	Did not pass the evidential test	808	782	901	865	37	3,393
	Did not pass the public interest test	65	31	37	31	4	168
	<b>All no prosecution decisions</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>3,561</b>
Q1 2014/15	Did not pass the evidential test	837	964	874	743	64	3,482
	Did not pass the public interest test	55	45	28	16	5	149
	<b>All no prosecution decisions</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>1,009</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>3,631</b>
<b>% Change (No prosecution decisions issued) 2014/15 to 2015/16</b>		<b>-2.1%</b>	<b>-19.4%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>-40.6%</b>	<b>-1.9%</b>

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

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

<sup>3</sup> See explanatory notes, page 19.

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

Quarter 1 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

			Average (calendar) days
Quarters	Type of Decision <sup>2</sup>		All Regions
Q1 2015/16	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	153
		Summary prosecution	24
	Diversion	Caution	25
		Informed warning	10
		Youth conference	22
		Other	16
	No Prosecution	43	
Q1 2014/15	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	158
		Summary prosecution	18
	Diversion	Caution	13
		Informed warning	13
		Youth conference	10
		Other	20
	No Prosecution	37	

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

<sup>2</sup> 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 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

		PPS Region					Number of summonses
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	All Regions	
Quarters	Service Method <sup>2</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2015/16	Postal Service	1,568	1,451	1,009	1,148	5,176	
	Personal Service	609	955	430	502	2,496	
	<b>All Summonses</b>	<b>2,177</b>	<b>2,406</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>7,672</b>	
Q1 2014/15	Postal Service	1,381	1,476	1,023	1,246	5,126	
	Personal Service	1,130	436	404	479	2,449	
	<b>All Summonses</b>	<b>2,511</b>	<b>1,912</b>	<b>1,427</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>7,575</b>	
<b>% Change (Summonses Issued) 2014/15 to 2015/16</b>		<b>-13.3%</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>-4.3%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	

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

<sup>2</sup> See explanatory notes, page 20.



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

Quarter 1 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

		Number of persons (defendants)					
		PPS Region / Function					
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Outcome <sup>2</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2015/16	Convicted of at least one offence	99	99	94	69	26	387
	Acquitted	22	13	15	15	4	69
	Other	0	1	0	1	1	3
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>459</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>81.8%</b>	<b>87.6%</b>	<b>86.2%</b>	<b>81.2%</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>84.3%</b>
Q1 2014/15	Convicted of at least one offence	154	83	108	108	61	514
	Acquitted	31	12	15	27	6	91
	Other	0	0	1	4	0	5
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>610</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>83.2%</b>	<b>87.4%</b>	<b>87.1%</b>	<b>77.7%</b>	<b>91.0%</b>	<b>84.3%</b>
<b>% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2014/15 to 2015/16</b>		<b>-34.6%</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>-12.1%</b>	<b>-38.8%</b>	<b>-53.7%</b>	<b>-24.8%</b>

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

<sup>2</sup> See explanatory notes, page 20.

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

Quarter 1 2014/15 and Quarter 1 2015/16 <sup>1</sup>

		Number of persons (defendants)					
		PPS Region / Function					
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarter	Outcome <sup>2</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2015/16	Convicted of at least one offence	1,592	1,437	1,410	1,505	225	6,169
	Acquitted	120	111	74	121	9	435
	Other	240	291	269	314	70	1,184
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>1,952</b>	<b>1,839</b>	<b>1,753</b>	<b>1,940</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>7,788</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>81.6%</b>	<b>78.1%</b>	<b>80.4%</b>	<b>77.6%</b>	<b>74.0%</b>	<b>79.2%</b>
Q1 2014/15	Convicted of at least one offence	1,785	1,419	1,450	1,527	264	6,445
	Acquitted	173	64	110	56	22	425
	Other	315	273	280	288	55	1,211
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>2,273</b>	<b>1,756</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>1,871</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>8,081</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>78.5%</b>	<b>80.8%</b>	<b>78.8%</b>	<b>81.6%</b>	<b>77.4%</b>	<b>79.8%</b>
<b>% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2014/15 to 2015/16</b>		<b>-14.1%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>-4.7%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>-10.9%</b>	<b>-3.6%</b>

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

<sup>2</sup> 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 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.

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 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 2015 to 30 September 2015, will be published on 12 November 2015.

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**Published: 27 August 2015**

