

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

Statistical Bulletin

Quarters 1-2 2015/16

(April to September 2015)



Contents

	Page
Introduction	2
Summary of Key Points	4
Table 1a Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function	8
Table 1b Files Received from Police by Offence Classification	9
Table 1c Files Submitted to PPS Departmental Section by Source Department / Agency	10
Table 2 Information Requests Submitted to Police by Request Type and PPS Region / Function	11
Table 3a Prosecutorial Decisions Issued by Decision Type and PPS Region / Function	12
Table 3b Prosecutorial Decisions Issued – Reasons for No Prosecution by PPS Region / Function	13
Table 3c Average Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type (PPS Regions)	14
Table 4 Summonses Issued in Police Cases by Service Method and PPS Region	15
Table 5a Defendants Dealt with in the Crown Court by Outcome and PPS Region / Function	16
Table 5b Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome and PPS Region / Function	17
Explanatory Notes	18
User Information	21

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 six months of the 2015/16 financial year (i.e. 1 April to 30 September 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.

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

Central Management Unit
Public Prosecution Service
Linum Chambers
2 Bedford Square
Belfast BT2 7ES

Tel: 02890 897100

Deaf / hard of hearing (SMS): 07795 675528

Fax: 02890 897030

Email: info@ppsni.qsi.gov.uk

Website: www.ppsni.gov.uk

Summary of Key Points

Figures quoted are for the first six months of the financial year, 1 April to 30 September 2015, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes provided (see pages 18 - 20).

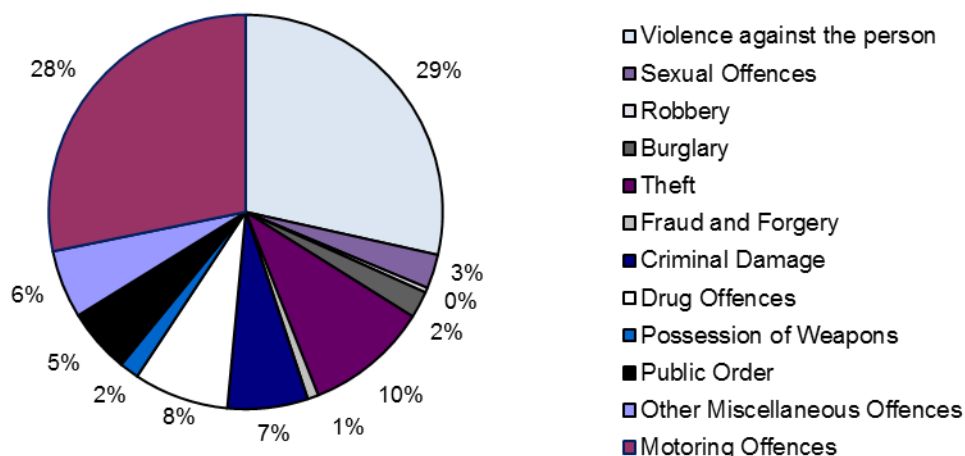
Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 1a)

- The PPS received 21,828 files during the first half of this financial year. This was a decrease of 3.3% on the corresponding period of 2014/15 (22,571).
- Half (50%) of all files received during the current period related to hybrid offences, 46% to summary offences and the remainder to indictable offences.

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

- During the first six months of 2015/16, PPS received a total of 21,170 files from police. This represents a 3.1% decrease on the first half of 2014/15 (21,845).
- In terms of files received by offence classification, around two-thirds fell into three categories; 'motoring' (28%), 'violence against the person' (29%) and 'theft' (10%).
- Four offence classifications have shown an increase in the number of files received compared with the corresponding period of 2014/15. These are 'criminal damage', 'violence against the person', 'drug offences' and 'possession of weapons'.

**Files Received from Police by Offence Classification
Quarters 1-2 2015/16**



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

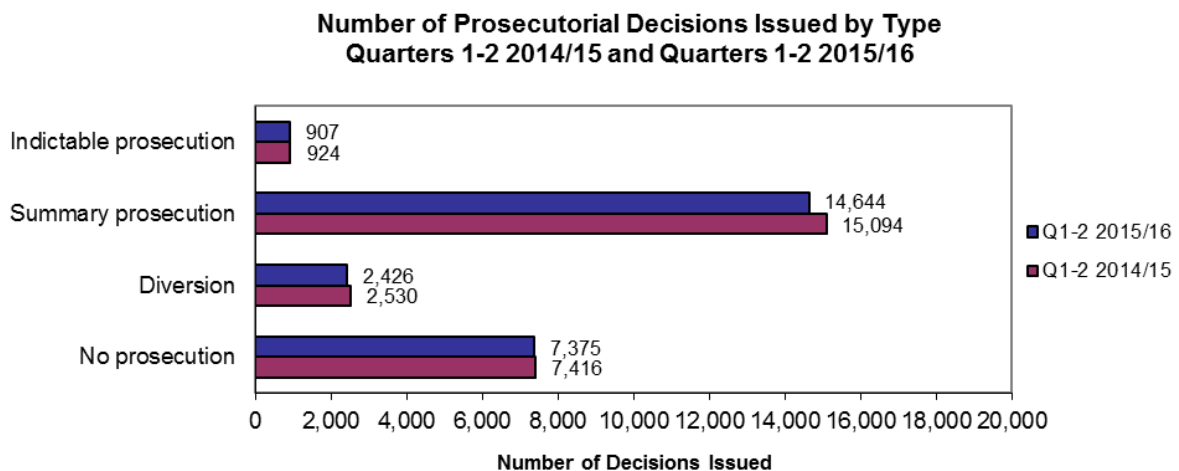
- A total of 555 files were submitted to PPS Departmental Section by departments and agencies during the first half of 2015/16, representing a 7.5% decrease on the corresponding half of 2014/15 (600).
- During the current period, the majority of the files were submitted either by the Department for Social Development (38%) or the Driver and Vehicle Agency (34%).

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

- A total of 12,280 information requests were submitted to police during the first six months of 2015/16, a decrease of 1.6% on the first half of 2014/15 (12,481).
- Fifty-four percent of all requests submitted during the current period were 'Post Decision Information Requests', 31% were 'Decision Information Requests' and 15% were 'Full File Requests'.

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

- During the first half of this financial year, 25,352 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS, a decline of 2.4% on the corresponding period of 2014/15 (25,964).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during the current period. Of the 25,352 decisions issued, more than seven-tenths (71%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (15,551) or for diversion from the courts (2,426). This was in line with the first half of 2014/15 (71%).



- Comparing the first six months of 2014/15 and 2015/16, there was a decrease of 2.9% in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of a 1.8% decrease in indictable prosecution decisions and a decline of 3.0% in summary prosecution decisions. The numbers of diversionary and no prosecution decisions fell by 4.1% and 0.6% respectively.

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

- Of the 7,375 no prosecution decisions issued during the first half of 2015/16, the vast majority (96%) did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 4% did not pass the public interest test.

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

- The average number of calendar days required for the issue of an indictable prosecution decision during the first six months of this financial year was 156, which compared with 155 days during the equivalent period in 2014/15.
- During the current period, summary prosecution decisions required an average of 25 days. This was 5 days more than during the first half of 2014/15 (20).
- The time taken for diversionary decisions varied according to the type of diversion issued, with cautions and youth conferences each requiring an average of 23 days and informed warnings 14 days.

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

- A total of 13,719 summonses were issued in police cases during the first half of the financial year, a decrease of 3.1% on the same period of 2014/15. Comparing the first six months of 2014/15 and 2015/16, the number of summonses issued via postal service experienced a greater decline than those issued by personal service, down 4.3% and 0.6% respectively.
- Two-thirds (67%) of summonses issued during the current period 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 half of 2015/16, 640 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was a decrease of 28.7% on the equivalent period in 2014/15 (897).
- Of these defendants, 85.3% were convicted, 14.1% were acquitted and the remaining 0.6% had an 'other' outcome.
- Comparing the first six months of 2014/15 and 2015/16, the conviction rate rose by 0.6% from 84.7%.

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

- A total of 14,976 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the first half of this financial year, a decrease of 3.1% on 2014/15 (15,457).

- Of the defendants dealt with during the current period, 79.1% were convicted, 5.9% were acquitted and 15.0% had an 'other' outcome.
- The conviction rate fell by 1.0% from 80.1% during the equivalent period in 2014/15.

**Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome
Quarters 1-2 2015/16**

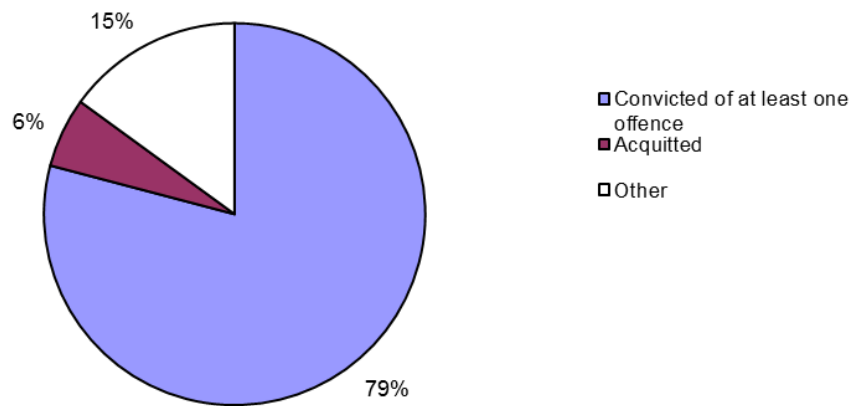


Table 1a: Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function

Quarters 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²						Number of files
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	File Type ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-2 2015/16	Indictable	285	237	256	206	7	991	
	Hybrid	3,104	2,507	2,430	2,480	316	10,837	
	Summary	2,450	2,496	2,321	2,480	253	10,000	
	All Files	5,839	5,240	5,007	5,166	576	21,828	
Q1-2 2014/15	Indictable	275	209	283	222	9	998	
	Hybrid	2,941	2,606	2,373	2,356	286	10,562	
	Summary	2,507	2,910	2,501	2,766	327	11,011	
	All Files	5,723	5,725	5,157	5,344	622	22,571	
% Change (Files Received) 2014/15 to 2015/16		2.0%	-8.5%	-2.9%	-3.3%	-7.4%	-3.3%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

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 Offence Classification

Quarters 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 ¹

Offence Classification ²	Number of files					
	Q1-2 2015/16		Q1-2 2014/15		Change (2014/15 to 2015/16)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Violence against the person	6,035	28.5%	5,656	25.9%	379	6.7%
Sexual offences	597	2.8%	607	2.8%	-10	-1.6%
Robbery	83	0.4%	94	0.4%	-11	-11.7%
Burglary	474	2.2%	485	2.2%	-11	-2.3%
Theft	2,146	10.1%	2,148	9.8%	-2	-0.1%
Fraud and forgery	188	0.9%	199	0.9%	-11	-5.5%
Criminal damage	1,405	6.6%	1,301	6.0%	104	8.0%
Drug offences	1,649	7.8%	1,604	7.3%	45	2.8%
Possession of weapons	329	1.6%	323	1.5%	6	1.9%
Public order	1,112	5.3%	1,376	6.3%	-264	-19.2%
Other Miscellaneous offences	1,180	5.6%	1,315	6.0%	-135	-10.3%
Motoring offences	5,972	28.2%	6,737	30.8%	-765	-11.4%
All Files	21,170		21,845		-675	-3.1%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

² See explanatory notes, page 18.

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

Quarters 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 ¹

Department / Agency	Number of files					
	Q1-2 2015/16		Q1-2 2014/15		Change (2014/15 to 2015/16)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Dept. for Social Development	212	38.2%	179	29.8%	33	18.4%
Driver and Vehicle Agency	189	34.1%	238	39.7%	-49	-20.6%
NI Environment Agency	49	8.8%	37	6.2%	12	32.4%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division	20	3.6%	32	5.3%	-12	-37.5%
HM Revenue and Customs	16	2.9%	23	3.8%	-7	-30.4%
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	15	2.7%	29	4.8%	-14	-48.3%
Dept. of Enterprise Trade and Investment	9	1.6%	9	1.5%	0	0.0%
Health and Safety Executive	6	1.1%	5	0.8%	1	20.0%
Other	39	7.0%	48	8.0%	-9	-18.8%
All Departments / Agencies	555		600		-45	-7.5%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

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

Quarters 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²						Number of requests
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	Request Type ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-2 2015/16	Full File Request	479	367	365	602	7	1,820	
	Decision Information Request	845	961	1,058	875	20	3,759	
	Post Decision Information Request	2,054	1,727	1,363	1,499	13	6,656	
	No Decision	10	3	9	23	0	45	
	All Requests Submitted	3,388	3,058	2,795	2,999	40	12,280	
Q1-2 2014/15	Full File Request	479	411	366	668	6	1,930	
	Decision Information Request	845	882	964	970	30	3,691	
	Post Decision Information Request	2,310	1,517	1,347	1,637	7	6,818	
	No Decision	5	11	1	25	0	42	
	All Requests Submitted	3,639	2,821	2,678	3,300	43	12,481	
% Change (Requests Submitted) 2014/15 to 2015/16		-6.9%	8.4%	4.4%	-9.1%	-7.0%	-1.6%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

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 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 ¹

			PPS Region / Function ²					Number of persons (decisions issued)
			Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Type of Decision ³		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-2 2015/16	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	185	226	204	226	66	907
		Summary prosecution	4,306	3,253	3,142	3,379	564	14,644
	Diversion	Caution	339	415	497	444	2	1,697
		Informed warning	55	75	89	60	0	279
		Youth conference	58	100	54	61	0	273
		Other	21	23	76	57	0	177
	No Prosecution		1,776	1,723	1,835	1,954	87	7,375
	All Decisions Issued			6,740	5,815	5,897	6,181	719
Q1-2 2014/15	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	254	195	189	204	82	924
		Summary prosecution	3,915	3,791	3,276	3,567	545	15,094
	Diversion	Caution	394	463	478	521	1	1,857
		Informed warning	58	111	73	38	0	280
		Youth conference	71	38	49	43	0	201
		Other	17	41	82	52	0	192
	No Prosecution		1,839	1,880	1,761	1,823	113	7,416
	All Decisions Issued			6,548	6,519	5,908	6,248	741
% Change (Decisions Issued) 2014/15 to 2015/16			2.9%	-10.8%	-0.2%	-1.1%	-3.0%	-2.4%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

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 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 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	
Q1-2 2015/16	Did not pass the evidential test	1,661	1,652	1,777	1,902	76	7,068	
	Did not pass the public interest test	115	71	58	52	11	307	
	All no prosecution decisions	1,776	1,723	1,835	1,954	87	7,375	
Q1-2 2014/15	Did not pass the evidential test	1,736	1,801	1,720	1,777	104	7,138	
	Did not pass the public interest test	103	79	41	46	9	278	
	All no prosecution decisions	1,839	1,880	1,761	1,823	113	7,416	
% Change (No prosecution decisions issued) 2014/15 to 2015/16		-3.4%	-8.4%	4.2%	7.2%	-23.0%	-0.6%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

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 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 ¹

			Average (calendar) days
Quarters	Type of Decision ²		All Regions
Q1-2 2015/16	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	156
		Summary prosecution	25
	Diversion	Caution	23
		Informed warning	14
		Youth conference	23
		Other	18
	No Prosecution		44
Q1-2 2014/15	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	155
		Summary prosecution	20
	Diversion	Caution	15
		Informed warning	14
		Youth conference	14
		Other	20
	No Prosecution		38

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

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 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 ¹

		PPS Region					Number of summonses
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	All Regions	
Quarters	Service Method ²	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-2 2015/16	Postal Service	2,637	2,474	1,771	2,321	9,203	
	Personal Service	1,226	1,516	862	912	4,516	
	All Summonses	3,863	3,990	2,633	3,233	13,719	
Q1-2 2014/15	Postal Service	2,414	2,728	1,921	2,557	9,620	
	Personal Service	1,846	1,081	761	855	4,543	
	All Summonses	4,260	3,809	2,682	3,412	14,163	
% Change (Summonses Issued) 2014/15 to 2015/16		-9.3%	4.8%	-1.8%	-5.2%	-3.1%	

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

² See explanatory notes, page 20.

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

Quarters 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 ¹

		Number of persons (defendants)					
		PPS Region / Function					
		Belfast	Eastern	Northern	Western and Southern	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Outcome ²	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-2 2015/16	Convicted of at least one offence	134	143	123	110	36	546
	Acquitted	26	17	19	21	7	90
	Other	0	1	0	2	1	4
	All defendants	160	161	142	133	44	640
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	83.8%	88.8%	86.6%	82.7%	81.8%	85.3%
Q1-2 2014/15	Convicted of at least one offence	252	124	152	146	86	760
	Acquitted	49	18	20	34	9	130
	Other	0	2	1	4	0	7
	All defendants	301	144	173	184	95	897
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	83.7%	86.1%	87.9%	79.3%	90.5%	84.7%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2014/15 to 2015/16		-46.8%	11.8%	-17.9%	-27.7%	-53.7%	-28.7%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

² See explanatory notes, page 20.

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

Quarters 1-2 2014/15 and Quarters 1-2 2015/16 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
Q1-2 2015/16	Convicted of at least one offence	3,134	2,774	2,684	2,847	407	11,846
	Acquitted	255	214	163	233	21	886
	Other	538	523	506	568	109	2,244
	All defendants	3,927	3,511	3,353	3,648	537	14,976
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	79.8%	79.0%	80.0%	78.0%	75.8%	79.1%
Q1-2 2014/15	Convicted of at least one offence	3,410	2,701	2,829	2,972	464	12,376
	Acquitted	316	145	180	141	28	810
	Other	574	553	502	528	114	2,271
	All defendants	4,300	3,399	3,511	3,641	606	15,457
	Conviction Rate (%) ²	79.3%	79.5%	80.6%	81.6%	76.6%	80.1%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2014/15 to 2015/16		-8.7%	3.3%	-4.5%	0.2%	-11.4%	-3.1%

¹ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarters 1-2 (Q1-2) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 September.

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 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 31 December 2015, will be published on 11 February 2016.

Copyright

This publication, excluding logos, may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium for research, private study or for internal circulation within an organisation. This is subject to it being reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the publication specified.

**Central Management Unit
Public Prosecution Service
for Northern Ireland
Linum Chambers
2 Bedford Square
Belfast BT2 7ES**

www.ppsni.gov.uk

This document is available in a range of alternative formats

Published: 12 November 2015

