



PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Statistical Bulletin: **Quarter 1 2019/20**

1 April 2019 to 30 June 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 Number of Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type (Median and 80 th Percentile)	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 are provisional and may be subject to change.

**Files
Received**
-0.8%



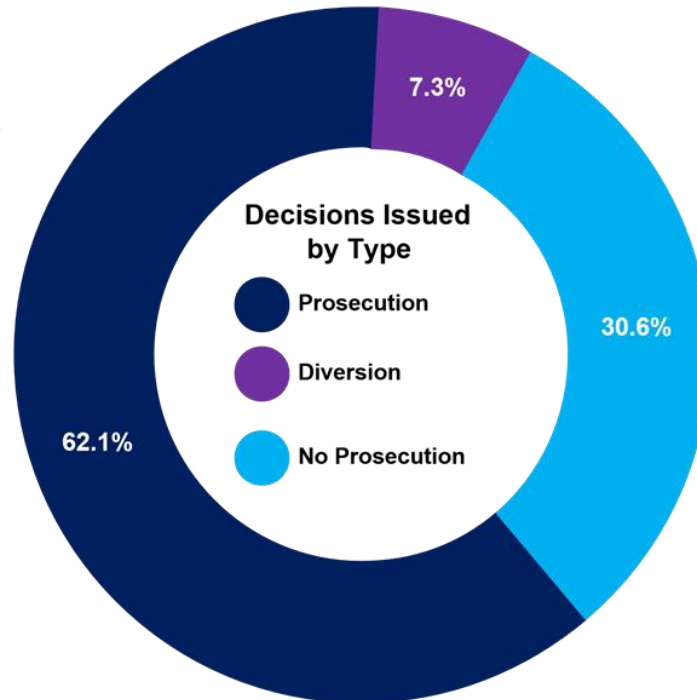
**Sexual
Offences**
+16.0%



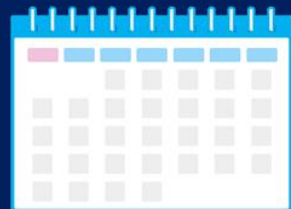
**Fraud
and
Forgery**
-21.8%



Changes from Q1 2018/19
to Q1 2019/20



Median number of calendar days to issue a decision during
Q1 2019/20 compared with Q1 2018/19



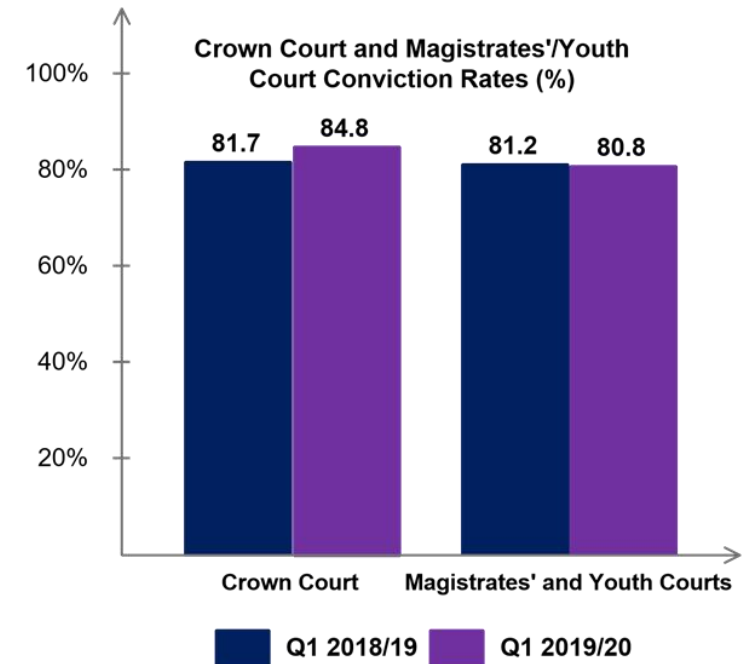
Indictable Prosecution 147 days



Summary Prosecution 4 days



No Prosecution 11 days



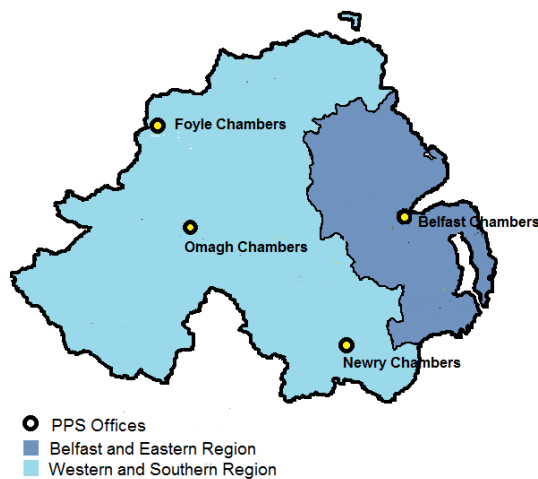
Introduction

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 cautions, 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, Communications 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 first quarter of the 2019/20 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019) and includes comparisons for the equivalent period in 2018/19. Where appropriate detailed notes have been provided, which give an explanation of the relevant PPS processes and procedures.

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

Policy and Information Unit
Public Prosecution Service
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR

Tel: 02890 897100
Deaf / hard of hearing (SMS): 07795 675528
Email: info@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.ppsni.gov.uk

Summary of Key Points

Figures quoted are for the first quarter of the 2019/20 financial year, 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes and user information provided (see pages 19 - 23).

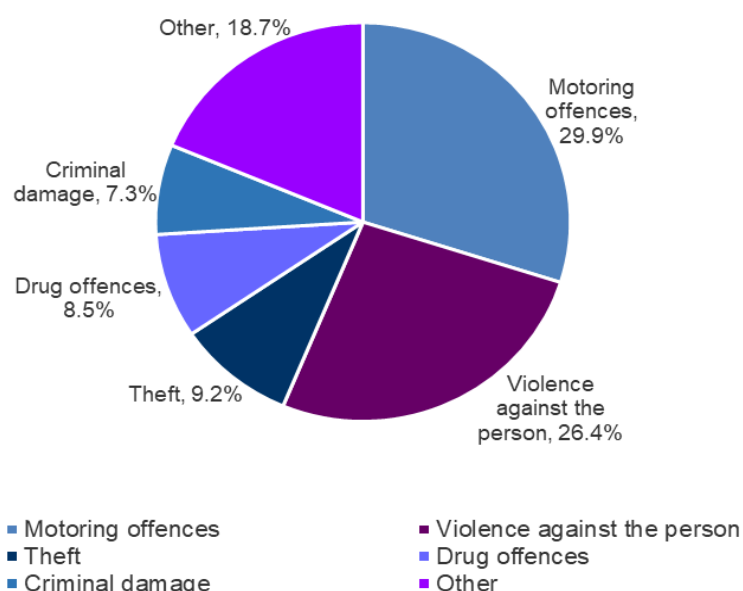
Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 1a)

- The PPS received 11,186 files during the first quarter of 2019/20. This was a decrease of 0.8% on the same period in 2018/19 (11,273).
- Just under half (49.3%) of all files received during the current period related to hybrid offences, 46.1% to summary offences and 4.6% to indictable offences.

Files Received from Police¹ by Offence Classification² (Table 1b)

- During the first quarter of this financial year, PPS received a total of 10,942 files from police. This represents a 1.0% decrease on the corresponding quarter in the previous financial year (11,050).
- In terms of files received by offence classification, the majority fell into two categories; 'motoring' (29.9%) and 'violence against the person' (26.4%).
- The offence classification that has shown the largest increase in the number of files received compared with the corresponding quarter of 2018/19 was 'sexual offences' (+59). The largest decrease in the number of files received was for 'violence against the person' (-105). The largest percentage increase was for 'sexual offences' (+16.0%), while 'fraud and forgery' had the largest percentage decrease in files received (-21.8%).

Files Received from Police by Offence Classification Q1 2019/20 ²



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

² The 'Other' category consists of 'Other Miscellaneous offences' 6.1%, 'Sexual offences' 3.9%, 'Public order' 3.6%, 'Burglary' 2.1%, 'Possession of weapons' 1.8%, 'Fraud and forgery' 1.0% and 'Robbery' 0.4%.

Files Submitted to PPS by Other Departments / Agencies (Table 1c)³

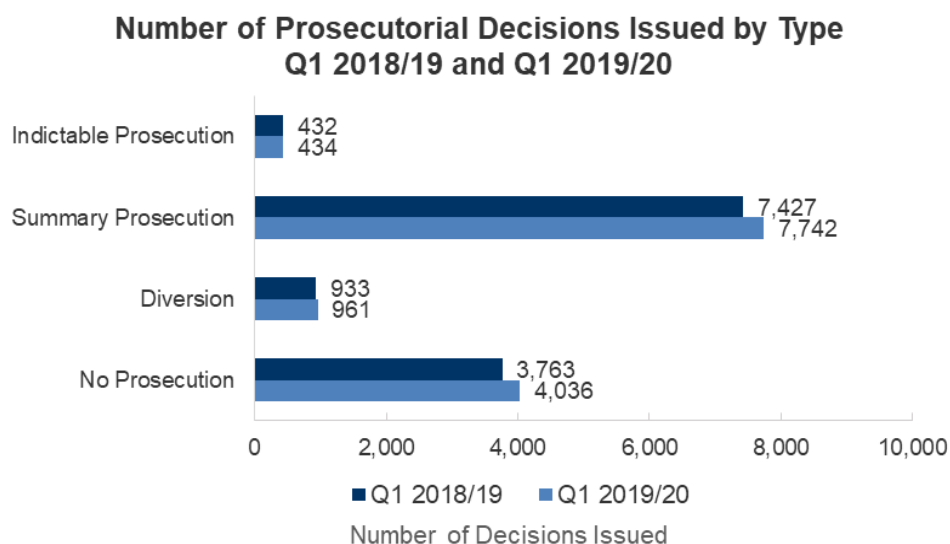
- A total of 244 files were submitted to PPS by departments and agencies during the first quarter of 2019/20, representing a 9.4% increase on the first quarter in 2018/19 (223).
- During the current quarter, the majority of files were submitted either by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (36.5%) or the Department for Communities (25.8%).

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

- A total of 7,617 information requests were submitted to police during the current quarter, an increase of 9.3% on the same period in the previous financial year (6,968).
- More than half of all requests submitted during the current period were 'Post Decision Information Requests' (56.7%), 28.9% were 'Decision Information Requests' and 14.0% were 'Full File Requests'.

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

- During the current quarter, 13,173 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS, an increase of 4.9% on the total issued during the first quarter of 2018/19 (12,555).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during the current period. Of the 13,173 decisions issued, 69.4% were for prosecution (8,176) or for diversion from the courts (961). This was relatively unchanged from 2018/19 (70.0%).
- Comparing the first quarter of 2018/19 and the same period in 2019/20, there was a 4.0% increase in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of a 0.5% increase in indictable prosecution decisions while summary prosecution decisions also increased, by 4.2%. The number of diversionary decisions rose by 3.0% while no prosecution decisions increased by 7.3%.



³ 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 the first quarter of 2018/19 have been revised to reflect this change.

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

- Of the 4,036 no prosecution decisions issued during the first quarter of 2019/20, 96.5% did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 3.5% did not pass the public interest test.

Number of Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type (Median and 80th Percentile)^{4,5,6} (Table 3c)

- Median calendar days required for the issue of an indictable prosecution decision decreased during the current period to 147 days, down from 154 days during the equivalent period in 2018/19.
- During the current quarter, summary prosecution decisions required a median of 4 days, which is the same as in the equivalent quarter of the previous financial year.
- Cautions required a median of 5 days (3 days in the first quarter of 2018/19), informed warnings 4 days (the same as the first quarter of 2018/19) and youth conferences 5 days (4 days in the first quarter of 2018/19).

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

- A total of 8,377 summonses were issued in police cases during the first quarter of 2019/20, an increase of 7.7% on the same period in 2018/19 (7,775). Comparing the first quarter of 2018/19 and the first quarter of 2019/20, the number of summonses issued via postal service increased by 3.9% while those issued via personal service increased by 13.7%.
- During this period, 58.5% of summonses issued were served on the defendant by post (60.7% in quarter one 2018/19) and the remaining 41.5% via personal service by police (39.3% in quarter one 2018/19).

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

- During the first quarter of 2019/20, 363 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was a decrease of 8.8% on the corresponding quarter in 2018/19 (398).
- Of these defendants, 84.8% were convicted and 14.9% were acquitted.
- At 84.8% in the first quarter of 2019/20, the conviction rate represents a 3.2 percentage point increase on the first quarter of 2018/19 (81.7%).

⁴ Timeliness data were previously presented as average (mean) figures. This has now been amended to reflect the values at the median (50th percentile) and 80th percentile (see explanatory notes, page 21). This is in line with the approach taken by the Department of Justice (Northern Ireland). Mean data can be provided on request.

⁵ Reflects police cases only.

⁶ Median and eightieth percentile figures are based on calendar days and include time taken for 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 7,364 defendants was dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during quarter one of 2019/20, a decrease of 5.9% on quarter one in 2018/19 (7,824).
- Of the defendants dealt with during the current period, 80.8% were convicted (81.2% in the same period in 2018/19), 5.9% were acquitted (6.2% in 2018/19) and 13.3% had an 'other' outcome (12.6% in the same period in 2018/19).
- At 80.8% in the first quarter of 2019/20, the conviction rate has decreased by 0.4 percentage points from the first quarter of 2018/19 (81.2%).

Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome Q1 2019/20

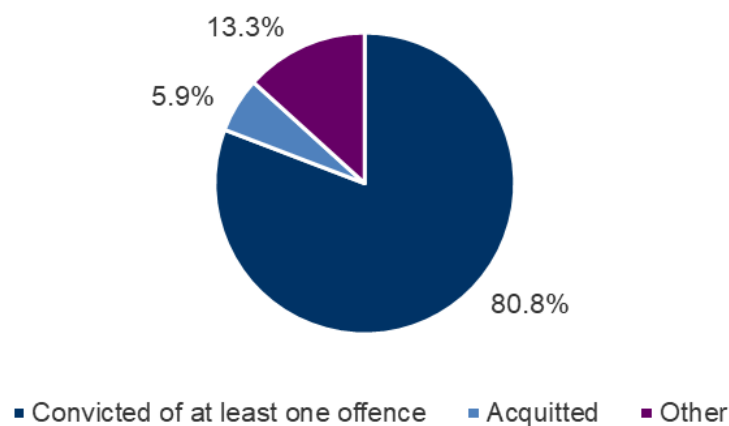


Table 1a: Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of files
Quarters	File Type ³	Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1 2019/20	Indictable	188	130	194	3	515	
	Hybrid	3,149	2,137	140	86	5,512	
	Summary	2,754	2,292	1	112	5,159	
	All Files	6,091	4,559	335	201	11,186	
Q1 2018/19	Indictable	189	140	148	4	481	
	Hybrid	3,023	2,151	190	87	5,451	
	Summary	2,607	2,616	1	117	5,341	
	All Files	5,819	4,907	339	208	11,273	
% Change (Files Received)							
Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20		4.7%	-7.1%	-1.2%	-3.4%	-0.8%	

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

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

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ¹

Offence Classification ^{2,3}	Q1 2019/20		Q1 2018/19		Change (Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change ⁴
Motoring offences	3,268	29.9%	3,347	30.3%	-79	-2.4%
Violence against the person	2,888	26.4%	2,993	27.1%	-105	-3.5%
Theft	1,010	9.2%	1,077	9.7%	-67	-6.2%
Drugs offences	927	8.5%	885	8.0%	42	4.7%
Criminal damage	802	7.3%	765	6.9%	37	4.8%
Sexual offences	428	3.9%	369	3.3%	59	16.0%
Public order	392	3.6%	472	4.3%	-80	-16.9%
Burglary	227	2.1%	218	2.0%	9	4.1%
Possession of weapons	193	1.8%	180	1.6%	13	7.2%
Fraud and forgery	104	1.0%	133	1.2%	-29	-21.8%
Robbery	39	0.4%	28	0.3%	11	N/A
Other miscellaneous offences	664	6.1%	583	5.3%	81	13.9%
All Files	10,942		11,050		-108	-1.0%

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

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 Q1 2018-19. For example, miscellaneous sexual offences have been moved from 'Sexual offences' to 'Other miscellaneous offences.'

³ See explanatory notes, page 19.

⁴ Some percentage changes are stated as 'N/A' due to base number being too small to allow for the calculation of a percentage.

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

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ²

Department / Agency	Q1 2019/20		Q1 2018/19		Number of files Change (Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change ³
Driver and Vehicle Agency	89	36.5%	97	43.5%	-8	-8.2%
Department for Communities	63	25.8%	57	25.6%	6	10.5%
Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland	41	16.8%	21	9.4%	20	N/A
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ⁴	13	5.3%	7	3.1%	6	N/A
NI Statistical Research Agency	10	4.1%	9	4.0%	1	N/A
British Airports Authorities	9	3.7%	11	4.9%	-2	N/A
HM Revenue and Customs	9	3.7%	3	1.3%	6	N/A
NI Environment Agency	6	2.5%	9	4.0%	-3	N/A
Other	4	1.6%	9	4.0%	-5	N/A
All Departments / Agencies	244		223		21	9.4%

¹ 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 Quarter 1 2018/19 have been revised to reflect this change. See explanatory notes, page 19.

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

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 Figures for NI Environment Agency are presented separately.

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

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Request Type ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2019/20	Full File Request	551	495	21	2	1,069
	Decision Information Request	807	1,294	86	16	2,203
	Post Decision Information Request	2,112	2,018	170	18	4,318
	No Decision	8	18	1	0	27
	All Requests Submitted	3,478	3,825	278	36	7,617
Q1 2018/19	Full File Request	463	454	34	2	953
	Decision Information Request	670	1,111	143	14	1,938
	Post Decision Information Request	2,050	1,869	144	6	4,069
	No Decision	1	6	1	0	8
	All Requests Submitted	3,184	3,440	322	22	6,968
% Change (Requests Submitted)						
Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20 ⁴		9.2%	11.2%	-13.7%	N/A	9.3%

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

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.

⁴ Some percentage changes are stated as 'N/A' due to base number being too small to allow for the calculation of a percentage.

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

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ¹

		Number of persons (decisions issued)				
		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Type of Decision ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2019/20	<i>Indictable prosecution</i>	211	136	50	37	434
	<i>Summary prosecution</i>	4,281	3,176	15	270	7,742
	Total Prosecution	4,492	3,312	65	307	8,176
	<i>Caution</i>	243	288	*	*	533
	<i>Informed warning</i>	29	59	*	*	88
	<i>Youth conference</i>	91	83	*	*	175
	<i>Other</i>	53	112	*	*	165
	Total Diversion	416	542	-	-	961
	No Prosecution	1,941	1,789	#	#	4,036
	All Decisions Issued	6,849	5,643	298	383	13,173
Q1 2018/19	<i>Indictable prosecution</i>	157	139	53	83	432
	<i>Summary prosecution</i>	3,959	3,257	26	185	7,427
	Total Prosecution	4,116	3,396	79	268	7,859
	<i>Caution</i>	277	275	#	-	559
	<i>Informed warning</i>	29	41	-	-	71
	<i>Youth conference</i>	77	61	-	-	139
	<i>Other</i>	63	101	0	0	164
	Total Diversion	446	478	#	-	933
	No Prosecution	1,850	1,645	#	#	3,763
	All Decisions Issued	6,412	5,519	317	307	12,555
% Change (Decisions Issued)						
Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20		6.8%	2.2%	-6.0%	24.8%	4.9%

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

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

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ¹

		Number of persons (decisions issued)				
		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Reason for no prosecution ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2019/20	Did not pass the evidential test	1,853	1,740	232	70	3,895
	Did not pass the public interest test	88	49	0	4	141
	All no prosecution decisions	1,941	1,789	232	74	4,036
Q1 2018/19	Did not pass the evidential test	1,771	1,610	#	#	3,646
	Did not pass the public interest test	79	35	-	-	117
	All no prosecution decisions	1,850	1,645	230	38	3,763
% Change (No prosecution decisions issued)						
Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20		4.9%	8.8%	0.9%	N/A	7.3%

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

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.

**Table 3c: Number of Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions
by Decision Type (Median and 80th Percentile) ^{1,2}**

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ³

			Calendar days ⁴	
			Median	80 th Percentile
Quarters	Type of Decision ⁵		All PPS	All PPS
Q1 2019/20	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	147	341
		Summary prosecution	4	34
	Diversion	Caution	5	34
		Informed warning	4	14
		Youth conference	5	19
		Other	7	40
		No Prosecution	11	64
Q1 2018/19	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	154	359
		Summary prosecution	4	29
	Diversion	Caution	3	15
		Informed warning	4	19
		Youth conference	4	13
		Other	9	44
		No Prosecution	8	55

¹ Timeliness data were previously presented as average (mean) figures. This has now been amended to reflect the values at the median (50th percentile) and 80th percentile. This is in line with the approach taken by the Department of Justice (Northern Ireland). Mean data can be provided on request.

² Reflects police cases only.

³ 'Quarter' refers to the financial year; i.e. Quarter 1 (Q1) reflects the period from 1 April to 30 June.

⁴ Median and 80th percentile days include time taken for police to respond to decision information requests (see explanatory notes, page 21).

⁵ See explanatory notes, page 21.

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

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ¹

		Number of summonses			
		PPS Region ²			
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	All Regions
Quarters	Service Method ³	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2019/20	Postal Service	2,692	2,201	10	4,903
	Personal Service	2,476	961	37	3,474
	All Summonses	5,168	3,162	47	8,377
Q1 2018/19	Postal Service	2,354	2,349	17	4,720
	Personal Service	2,048	956	51	3,055
	All Summonses	4,402	3,305	68	7,775
% Change (Summonses Issued)					
Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20		17.4%	-4.3%	-30.9%	7.7%

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

² The Serious Crime Unit was established in January 2016.

³ See explanatory notes, page 21.

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

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ¹

		Number of persons (defendants)				
		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Outcome ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2019/20	Convicted of at least one offence	130	120	39	19	308
	Acquitted	16	14	16	8	54
	Other	1	0	0	0	1
	All defendants	147	134	55	27	363
	Conviction Rate (%) ⁴	88.4%	89.6%	70.9%	70.4%	84.8%
Q1 2018/19	Convicted of at least one offence	134	140	29	22	325
	Acquitted	19	25	19	7	70
	Other	0	2	0	1	3
	All defendants	153	167	48	30	398
	Conviction Rate (%) ⁴	87.6%	83.8%	N/A	N/A	81.7%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20		-3.9%	-19.8%	N/A	N/A	-8.8%

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

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.

⁴ See explanatory notes, page 22.

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

Quarter 1 2018/19 and Quarter 1 2019/20 ¹

		Number of persons (defendants)				
		PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Outcome ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1 2019/20	Convicted of at least one offence	3,276	2,487	23	162	5,948
	Acquitted	241	191	0	5	437
	Other	561	369	9	40	979
	All defendants	4,078	3,047	32	207	7,364
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	80.3%	81.6%	N/A	78.3%	80.8%
Q1 2018/19	Convicted of at least one offence	3,361	2,817	28	146	6,352
	Acquitted	294	176	5	11	486
	Other	490	452	9	35	986
	All defendants	4,145	3,445	42	192	7,824
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	81.1%	81.8%	N/A	76.0%	81.2%
% Change (Defendants dealt with)						
Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20		-1.6%	11.6%	N/A	7.8%	-5.9%

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

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 22.

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 Quarters 1-3 2018-19. For example, miscellaneous sexual offences have been moved from 'Sexual offences' to 'Other miscellaneous offences'. Consistent with these changes, previously published figures for Quarter 1 2018-19 have also been revised in the current bulletin. 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. Consistent with these changes, previously published figures

for Quarter 1 2018/19 have been revised in the current bulletin. Therefore, it should be noted that data published prior to 2017/18 will not be directly comparable with data published since.

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

Timeliness data was previously presented as average (mean) figures. This has now been amended to reflect the values at the median (50th percentile) and 80th percentile. This is in line with the approach taken by the Department of Justice (Northern Ireland). Mean data can be provided on request.

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).

Median days is the number of days at which 50% of those persons included under counting rules have had a first decision issued. Eightieth percentile is the number of days at which 80% of those persons included under counting rules have had a first decision issued. Median and eightieth percentile 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). They also include time taken for response from police to any decision information requests. 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. Data in this table is based on police files only.

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 September 2019, will be published on 21 November 2019.

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.

**Policy and Information Unit
Public Prosecution Service
for Northern Ireland
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR**

www.ppsni.gov.uk

This document can be made available in a range of alternative formats

Published: 22 August 2019

