



PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

## Statistical Bulletin: Quarters 1-2 2018/19

1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018





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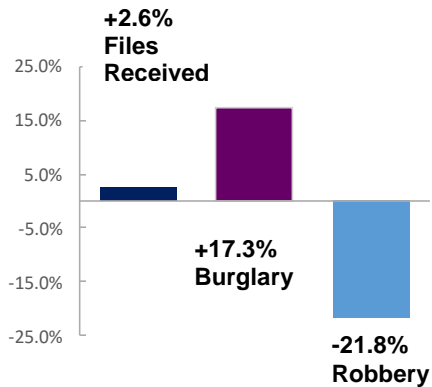
**Note:**

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



# Statistical Bulletin Quarters 1-2 2018/19

## Files Received



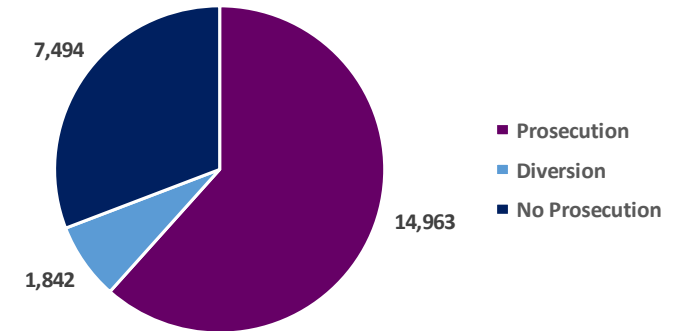
21,811 files were received in Quarters 1-2 2018/19



## Decisions Issued

24,299 decisions were issued in Quarters 1-2 2018/19

The Test for Prosecution was met for 69.2% of these decisions



## Average Days to Issue a Decision



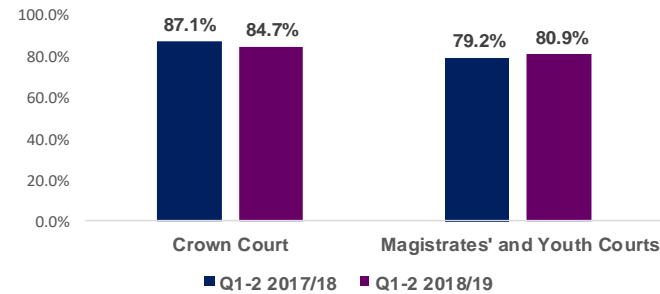
Indictable prosecution  
239 days

Summary prosecution  
25 days

No prosecution  
47 days

## Conviction Rates

Conviction Rate in the Crown Court and Magistrates'/Youth Courts



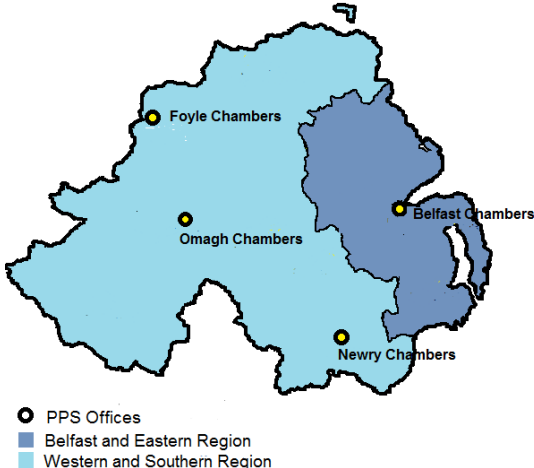
# Introduction

## The Public Prosecution Service

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS), which is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions, is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland. In addition to taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police, it also considers cases investigated by other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs.

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not to prosecute and to have responsibility for the conduct of criminal proceedings. A range of options is also available for dealing with offenders other than through prosecution. These options include restorative cautioning, informed warnings and youth conferencing. Prosecutors may also refer offenders to the National Driver Alertness Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme.

**PPS Regional Structure**



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

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

- The Serious Crime Unit which deals with a range of the most serious offences including murder, manslaughter, rape and serious sexual offences and human trafficking.
- Central Casework Section which deals with some of the most high profile and difficult cases in Northern Ireland, including files relating to terrorism and organised crime;
- Fraud and Departmental Section which deals with serious and complex fraud files

- submitted by the police, as well as files from public bodies; and
- High Court and International Section which deals with a range of specialist legal matters (for example, High Court bail applications, extradition and appeals to the Court of Appeal).

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

### **About this Bulletin**

This bulletin presents key statistics on the activity of the PPS, including caseloads and prosecutorial decisions. It also includes data on the outcomes of prosecutions at court. The report provides information for the first half of the 2018/19 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018) and includes comparisons for the equivalent period in 2017/18. Where appropriate detailed notes have been provided, which give an explanation of the relevant PPS processes and procedures.

All statistics for the current financial year 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:

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# Summary of Key Points

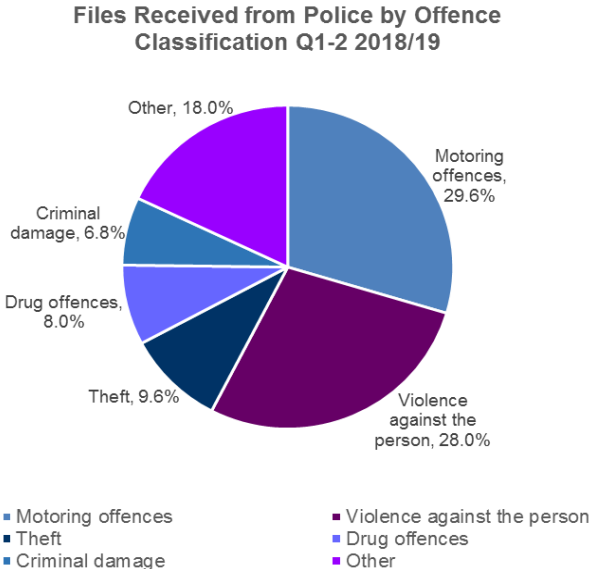
Figures quoted are for the first quarter of the financial year, 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes and user information provided (see pages 18 - 21).

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

- The PPS received 21,811 files during the first half of 2018/19. This was an increase of 2.6% on 2017/18 (21,263).
- Just under half (48.2%) of all files received during the current period related to hybrid offences, 47.4% to summary offences and 4.4% to indictable offences.

## Files Received from Police<sup>1</sup> by Offence Classification (Table 1b)

- During the first half of this financial year, PPS received a total of 21,364 files from police. This represents a 3.1% increase on the previous financial year (20,719).
- In terms of files received by offence classification, the majority fell into two categories; 'motoring offences' (29.6%) and 'violence against the person' (28.0%).
- The offence classification that has shown the largest increase in the number of files received compared with the corresponding half of 2017/18 was 'violence against the person' (+410). The largest decrease in the number of files received was for 'motoring offences' (-579). The largest percentage increase was for 'burglary' (17.3%), while 'robbery' had the largest percentage decrease in files received (-21.8%).



The 'Other' category consists of 'Other Miscellaneous offences' 5.2%, 'Public order' 4.1%, 'Sexual offence' 3.8%, 'Burglary' 1.9%, 'Possession of weapon' 1.7%, 'Fraud and forgery' 1.0% and 'Robbery' 0.3%.

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



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

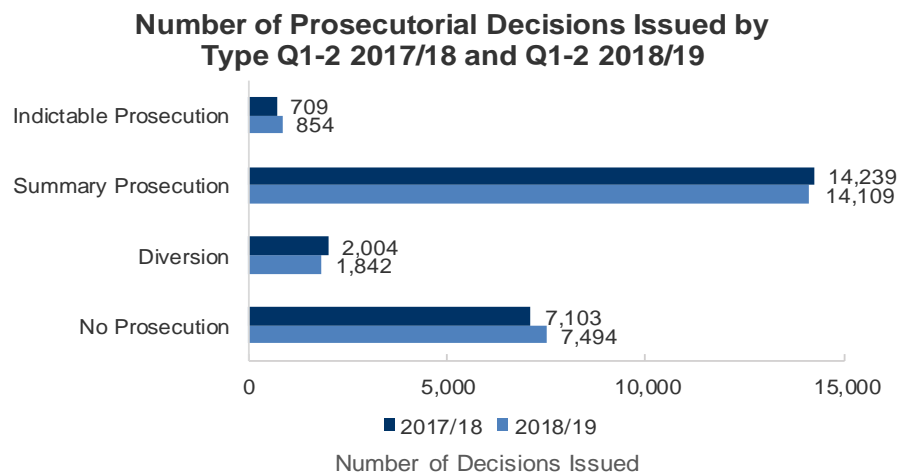
- A total of 382 files were submitted to PPS Departmental Section by departments and agencies during the first half of 2018/19, representing a 20.1% decrease on 2017/18 (478).
- During this period, the majority of files were submitted either by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (55.8%) or the Department for Communities (27.7%).

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

- A total of 13,513 information requests were submitted to police during the first half of 2018/19, an increase of 3.8% on the previous financial year (13,021).
- More than half of all requests submitted during the current period were 'Post Decision Information Requests' (58.0%), 27.8% 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 first half of 2018/19, 24,299 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS, a small increase of 1.0% on the total issued during 2017/18 (24,055).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during the current period. Of the 24,299 decisions issued, 69.2% were for prosecution (14,963) or for diversion from the courts (1,842). This was relatively unchanged from 2017/18 (70.5%).
- Comparing the first half of 2017/18 and the same period of 2018/19, there was a 0.1% increase in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of a 20.5% increase in indictable prosecution decisions while summary prosecution decisions decreased slightly by 0.9%. The number of diversionary decisions fell by 8.1% while no prosecution decisions increased by 5.5%.



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

- Of the 7,494 no prosecution decisions issued during the first half of 2018/19, 97.2% did not pass the evidential test. The remaining 2.8% did not pass the public interest test.

### **Average Days Required<sup>2</sup> for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type – PPS Regions (Table 3c)**

- The average number of calendar days required for the issue of an indictable prosecution decision has increased during the current period to 239 days, compared with 178 days during the equivalent period in 2017/18.
- During the first half of the year, summary prosecution decisions required an average of 25 days, one day less than the previous financial year (26).
- The time taken for diversionary decisions has decreased across all types of diversions issued. Cautions required an average of 23 days (26 days in the first half of 2017/18), informed warnings 13 days (22 days in the first half of 2017/18) and youth conferences 14 days (16 days in the first half of 2017/18).

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

- A total of 15,042 summonses were issued in police cases during the April - September 2018/19, an increase of 1.6% on the same period in 2017/18 (14,811). Comparing the first half of 2017/18 and first half of 2018/19, the number of summonses issued via postal service decreased by 5.5% while those issued via personal service increased by 13.5%.
- During this period 58.6% of summonses issued were served on the defendant by post (62.9% in the first half of 2017/18) and the remainder (41.4%) via personal service by police (37.1% in the first half of 2017/18).

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

- During the first half of 2018/19, 606 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was a decrease of 10.1% on the corresponding period of 2017/18 (674).
- Of these defendants, 84.7% were convicted and 14.9% were acquitted.
- The conviction rate at 84.7% is a decrease on the corresponding period of 2017/18 (87.1%)

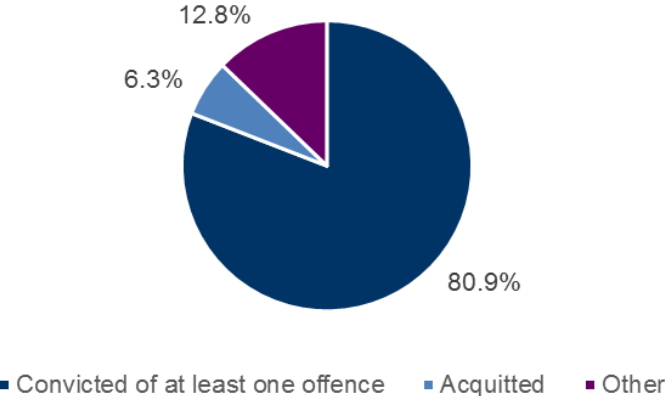
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<sup>2</sup> The average figures are based on calendar days and include the time taken for the police to respond to PPS decision information requests. For indictable prosecution decisions, PPS case preparation time is also included (see explanatory notes, page 19).

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

- A total of 14,922 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the first half of 2018/19, an increase of 5.1% on the first half of 2017/18 (14,196).
- Of the defendants dealt with during the current period, 80.9% were convicted (79.2% in the same period in 2017/18), 6.3% were acquitted (also 6.3% in the first half 2017/18) and 12.8% had an 'other' outcome (14.4% in the same period in 2017/18).
- At 80.9% in the first half of 2018/19, the conviction rate has increased by 1.7 percentage points from the first half of 2017/18 (79.2%).

**Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome Q1-2 2018/19**



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

Quarters 1-2 2017/18 and Quarters 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>					Number of files
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	File Type <sup>3</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-2 2018/19	Indictable	367	266	302	17	952	
	Hybrid	5,913	4,093	348	164	10,518	
	Summary	5,117	4,977	2	245	10,341	
	<b>All Files</b>	<b>11,397</b>	<b>9,336</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>21,811</b>	
Q1-2 2017/18	Indictable	343	266	351	6	966	
	Hybrid	4,984	3,840	414	304	9,542	
	Summary	5,553	5,012	1	189	10,755	
	<b>All Files</b>	<b>10,880</b>	<b>9,118</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>21,263</b>	
<b>% Change (Files Received)</b>							
<b>Q1-2 2017/18 to Q1-2 2018/19</b>		<b>4.8%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>-14.9%</b>	<b>-14.6%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	

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

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

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

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

Quarters 1-2 2017/18 and Quarters 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

Offence Classification <sup>2</sup>	Q1-2 2018/19		Q1-2 2017/18		Number of files Change (Q1-2 2017/18 to Q1-2 2018/19)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Motoring offences	6,322	29.6%	6,901	33.3%	-579	-8.4%
Violence against the person	5,980	28.0%	5,570	26.9%	410	7.4%
Theft	2,041	9.6%	1,755	8.5%	286	16.3%
Drugs offences	1,711	8.0%	1,473	7.1%	238	16.2%
Criminal damage	1,461	6.8%	1,298	6.3%	163	12.6%
Public order	873	4.1%	920	4.4%	-47	-5.1%
Sexual offences	804	3.8%	802	3.9%	2	0.2%
Burglary	413	1.9%	352	1.7%	61	17.3%
Possession of weapons	366	1.7%	340	1.6%	26	7.6%
Fraud and forgery	212	1.0%	191	0.9%	21	11.0%
Robbery	61	0.3%	78	0.4%	-17	-21.8%
Other miscellaneous offences	1,120	5.2%	1,039	5.0%	81	7.8%
<b>All Files</b>	<b>21,364</b>		<b>20,719</b>		<b>645</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

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

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

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

Quarters 1-2 2017/18 and Quarters 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

Department / Agency	Q1-2 2018/19		Q1-2 2017/18		Number of files Change (Q1-2 2017/18 to Q1-2 2018/19)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Driver and Vehicle Agency	213	55.8%	159	33.3%	54	34.0%
Department for Communities	106	27.7%	255	53.3%	-149	-58.4%
NI Environment Agency	17	4.5%	9	1.9%	8	N/A
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs <sup>2</sup>	12	3.1%	15	3.1%	-3	N/A
Child Maintenance Service	8	2.1%	15	3.1%	-7	-N/A
HM Revenue and Customs	7	1.8%	8	1.7%	-1	N/A
Health and Safety Executive	3	0.8%	5	1.0%	-2	N/A
National Crime Agency	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	N/A
Department for the Economy	1	0.3%	2	0.4%	-1	N/A
Other	14	3.7%	10	2.1%	4	N/A
<b>All Departments / Agencies</b>	<b>382</b>		<b>478</b>		<b>-96</b>	<b>-20.1%</b>

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

<sup>2</sup> Figures for NI Environment Agency are presented separately.

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

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

Quarters 1-2 2017/18 and Quarters 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

		Number of requests				
		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Request Type <sup>3</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-2 2018/19	Full File Request	894	928	62	8	1,892
	Decision Information Request	1,269	2,148	314	32	3,763
	Post Decision Information Request	3,983	3,526	321	10	7,840
	No Decision	4	7	7	0	18
	<b>All Requests Submitted</b>	<b>6,150</b>	<b>6,609</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>13,513</b>
Q1-2 2017/18	Full File Request	801	887	99	4	1,791
	Decision Information Request	1,463	2,025	275	35	3,798
	Post Decision Information Request	3,691	3,418	266	31	7,406
	No Decision	3	16	7	0	26
	<b>All Requests Submitted</b>	<b>5,958</b>	<b>6,346</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>13,021</b>
<b>% Change (Requests Submitted) Q1-2 2017/18 to Q1-2 2018/19</b>		<b>3.2%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>-28.6%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>

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

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

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

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

Quarter 1-2 2017/18 and Quarter 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

Number of persons (decisions issued)

Quarters	Type of Decision <sup>3</sup>	PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-2 2018/19	<i>Indictable prosecution</i>	345	267	112	130	854
	<i>Summary prosecution</i>	7,413	6,275	38	383	14,109
	<b>Total Prosecution</b>	<b>7,758</b>	<b>6,542</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>14,963</b>
	<i>Caution</i>	547	526	*	*	1,084
	<i>Informed warning</i>	65	88	*	*	154
	<i>Youth conference</i>	184	123	*	*	311
	<i>Other</i>	107	186	*	*	293
	<b>Total Diversion</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,842</b>
	No Prosecution	3,742	3,137	#	#	7,494
	<b>All Decisions Issued</b>	<b>12,403</b>	<b>10,602</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>24,299</b>
	Q1-2 2017/18	<i>Indictable prosecution</i>	323	212	102	72
<i>Summary prosecution</i>		7,920	5,737	64	518	14,239
<b>Total Prosecution</b>		<b>8,243</b>	<b>5,949</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>14,948</b>
<i>Caution</i>		623	542	*	*	1,179
<i>Informed warning</i>		69	116	*	*	186
<i>Youth conference</i>		178	137	*	*	318
<i>Other</i>		121	200	*	*	321
<b>Total Diversion</b>		<b>991</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>2,004</b>
No Prosecution		3,520	3,002	#	#	7,103
<b>All Decisions Issued</b>		<b>12,754</b>	<b>9,946</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>24,055</b>
<b>% Change (Decisions Issued)</b>						
<b>Q1-2 2017/18 to Q1-2 2018/19</b>		<b>-2.8%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>-10.3%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

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

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

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

"#" 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 1-2 2017/18 and Quarter 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

		Number of persons (decisions issued)				
		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarters	Reason for no prosecution <sup>3</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-2 2018/19	Did not pass the evidential test	3,606	3,076	509	93	7,284
	Did not pass the public interest test	136	61	9	4	210
	<b>All no prosecution decisions</b>	<b>3,742</b>	<b>3,137</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>7,494</b>
Q1-2 2017/18	Did not pass the evidential test	3,335	2,959	#	#	6,864
	Did not pass the public interest test	185	43	#	-	239
	<b>All no prosecution decisions</b>	<b>3,520</b>	<b>3,002</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>7,103</b>
<b>% Change (No prosecution decisions issued) Q1-2 2017/18 to Q1-2 2018/19</b>		<b>6.3%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>5.5%</b>

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

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

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

"-" 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: Average Days Required for the Issue of Prosecutorial Decisions by Decision Type (PPS Regions)**

Quarters 1-2 2017/18 and Quarters 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

			Average (calendar) days
Quarters	Type of Decision <sup>2</sup>		All Regions
Q1-2 2018/19	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	239
		Summary prosecution	25
	Diversion	Caution	23
		Informed warning	13
		Youth conference	14
		Other	25
	No Prosecution	47	
Q1-2 2017/18	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	178
		Summary prosecution	26
	Diversion	Caution	26
		Informed warning	22
		Youth conference	16
		Other	37
	No Prosecution	54	

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

<sup>2</sup> Average days includes time taken for police to respond to decision information requests (see explanatory notes, page 19).

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

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

Quarters 1-2 2017/18 and Quarters 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

		PPS Region				Number of summonses
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	All Regions	
Quarters	Service Method <sup>2</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-2 2018/19	Postal Service	4,307	4,475	27	8,809	
	Personal Service	4,371	1,764	98	6,233	
	<b>All Summonses</b>	<b>8,678</b>	<b>6,239</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>15,042</b>	
Q1-2 2017/18	Postal Service	5,381	3,909	31	9,321	
	Personal Service	3,446	1,990	54	5,490	
	<b>All Summonses</b>	<b>8,827</b>	<b>5,899</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>14,811</b>	
<b>% Change (Summonses Issued)</b>						
<b>Q1-2 2017/18 to Q1-2 2018/19</b>		<b>-1.7%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>47.1%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	

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

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

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

Quarters 1-2 2017/18 and Quarters 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

Number of persons (defendants)

Quarters	Outcome <sup>3</sup>	PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-2 2018/19	Convicted of at least one offence	206	198	61	48	513
	Acquitted	26	29	24	11	90
	Other	0	2	0	1	3
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>606</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>88.8%</b>	<b>86.5%</b>	<b>71.8%</b>	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>84.7%</b>
Q1-2 2017/18	Convicted of at least one offence	293	177	52	65	587
	Acquitted	40	19	21	4	84
	Other	1	1	0	1	3
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>674</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>87.7%</b>	<b>89.8%</b>	<b>71.2%</b>	<b>92.9%</b>	<b>87.1%</b>
<b>% Change (Defendants dealt with) Q1-2 2017/18 to Q1-2 2018/19</b>		<b>-30.5%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>-14.3%</b>	<b>-10.1%</b>

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

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

<sup>3</sup> 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 2017/18 and Quarters 1-2 2018/19 <sup>1</sup>

		Number of persons (defendants)				
		PPS Region / Function <sup>2</sup>				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
Quarter	Outcome <sup>3</sup>	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-2 2018/19	Convicted of at least one offence	6,609	5,130	49	285	12,073
	Acquitted	558	349	13	17	937
	Other	1,005	815	18	74	1,912
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>8,172</b>	<b>6,294</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>14,922</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>80.9%</b>	<b>81.5%</b>	<b>61.3%</b>	<b>75.8%</b>	<b>80.9%</b>
Q1-2 2017/18	Convicted of at least one offence	6,061	4,804	26	359	11,250
	Acquitted	553	327	5	10	895
	Other	1,167	802	23	59	2,051
	<b>All defendants</b>	<b>7,781</b>	<b>5,933</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>14,196</b>
	<b>Conviction Rate (%) <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>77.9%</b>	<b>81.0%</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>79.2%</b>
<b>% Change (Defendants dealt with) Q1-2 2017/18 to Q1-2 2018/19</b>		<b>5.0%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>-12.1%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>

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

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

<sup>3</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.
- An *informed warning* is also a formal reprimand administered by police and is recorded on a person's criminal record.
- A *diversionary youth conference* is an alternative to prosecution in court and may be used in cases where the defendant is a youth. This type of restorative conference may involve a number of parties, including the defendant, the victim and police. A youth conference is a formal process, and although not a conviction, is recorded on a person's criminal record.
- '*Other diversionary options* include referrals to the NI Driver Improvement Scheme or to a Community Restorative Justice Scheme.
- It should be noted that diversionary options are only available to prosecutors if the defendant admits that he/she has committed the offence and agrees to accept and participate in the diversionary option.
- A *decision for no prosecution* will be taken if the prosecutor decides that in any case being considered there is insufficient evidence or that it is not in the public interest to prosecute (see note regarding the Test for Prosecution below).

**Table 3b**

Prosecutions are initiated where the prosecutor is satisfied that the Test for Prosecution is met. There are two aspects to the Test:

- a) Whether the evidence which can be offered in court is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction (the evidential test); and
- b) Whether prosecution is required in the public interest (the public interest test).

Each of these stages must be separately considered but a decision whether or not a prosecution is in the public interest can only arise when the evidential test has been satisfied.

**Table 3c**

As mentioned in note to Table 3a, more than one prosecutorial decision may be recorded against any individual within a case. Therefore these figures are based on the first decision issued. Monitoring covers the period in calendar days from date initial papers (charge cases only) or full file is received by the PPS to the date the prosecutorial decision is issued. This excludes defendants for whom a warrant has been issued but includes any time taken for police to respond to decision information requests (see note to Table 2 above). Average days for indictable prosecution decisions include the time taken for the prosecutor's decision and for case preparation (i.e. where appropriate, ensuring that the case is ready for court). In indictable cases case preparation includes time required for the preparation of committal papers which contain the evidence, such as statements, exhibits etc., to be presented to the

Crown Court. It may also include consideration of duties of disclosure by the prosecutor and applications to be made to the court.

**Table 4**

Information refers to police cases only. A summons may be served on a defendant either by post, or via a personal summons served by the police. The defendant will be required to attend court on the date stated on the summons. Following the commencement of Rule 2(6) of the Magistrates' Courts (Amendment No. 2) Rules 2009, in early 2010, the large majority of offences can now be dealt with by way of a postal summons. The only exceptions relate to corporate defendants, vulnerable defendants and those defendants who have not responded to a postal summons.

More than one summons may be issued in respect of an individual defendant in a case. For example, if the defendant does not attend court on the day stated on an initial postal summons, this will generally be followed up by a personal summons served by police.

**Table 5a**

Includes all defendants dealt with in the Crown Court during the period, based on results data supplied by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (via the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism). Proceedings in the Crown Court generally follow the issue of a decision by PPS to prosecute on indictment. The category 'acquitted' includes the following outcomes: acquittals, acquittals by direction, No Bills, no evidence offered – defendant acquitted, left on books, proceedings stayed, unfit to plead – but found that he/she did not do the act, no case to answer - granted. 'Other' Includes defendant deceased, withdrawal – all charges, bound over for not having shown cause, bound over where charge withdrawn, withdrawn due to diversionary route. It should be noted that if an individual is involved in more than one case which is resulted during this period, they will be counted as a separate defendant on each occasion.

**Table 5b**

Includes all defendants dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during the period, based on results data supplied by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (via the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism). Data reflect the number of persons where PPS has taken a decision to prosecute summarily; i.e. defendants against whom charges were withdrawn prior to decision are excluded. The category 'acquitted' includes the following outcomes: dismissed; no case to answer granted; and proceedings stayed. 'Other' includes: defendant deceased; withdrawal – all charges; bound over for not having shown cause; bound over where charge withdrawn; withdrawn due to diversionary route. Excludes persons returned for trial in the Crown Court. It should be noted that if an individual is involved in more than one case which is resulted during this period, they will be counted as a separate defendant on each occasion.

**Tables 5a and 5b**

Conviction rates are calculated on the basis of the number of persons convicted as a percentage of all persons dealt with during the period.

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



## **User Information**

### **Data sources and validations**

The information presented in this bulletin is derived from the Case Management System (CMS), the main operational system in use within the PPS. This is a 'live' system with data being input on a daily basis.

It should be noted that the CMS is also linked to the CJSNI's Causeway data sharing mechanism. The first phase of Causeway ('DSM 0'), introduced in 2005/06, allowed police to submit files to the PPS electronically. The most recent phase ('DSM 1') was launched at the end of November 2009 and broadened the portfolio of information shared electronically. For example PPS are now supplied with court results by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service which feed into the PPS Case Management System via Causeway.

The information is extracted using Business Objects. It is then validated and quality assured to ensure that the data is reliable and robust for use. Any inconsistencies are reported back to operational staff or to the PPS Information and Communications Technology Branch. If required, any necessary amendments are then made to the data.

### **Rounding conventions**

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

### **Disclosure control**

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

### **Official Statistics**

These are 'Official Statistics' as defined in Section 6 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. Statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are seconded to the PPS and are responsible for ensuring that the statistics produced comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The PPS would value any feedback on this report and welcome recommendations on the future addition of data that may be of interest to readers. Contact details are provided overleaf.

### **Future publications**

The next Statistical Bulletin, covering the period 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018, will be published in 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

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