

Statistical Bulletin 2015/16



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Note:

All statistics for the 2015/16 financial year have now been finalised.

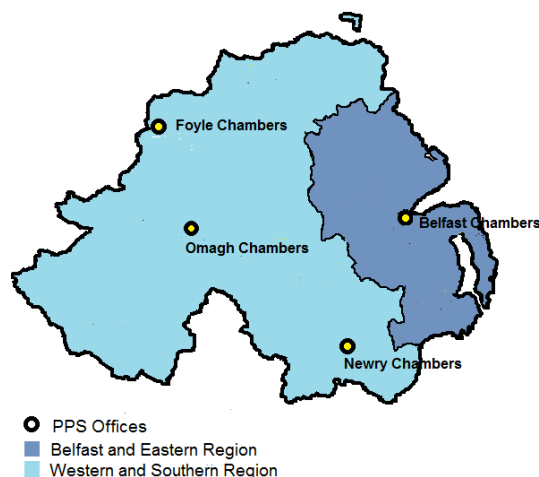
Introduction

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 Structure



A revised organisational structure was introduced in January 2016 as a result of the PPS Transformation Programme. This included the implementation of a two region model, reducing from the four regions in place previously. 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.

A new Serious Crime Unit (SCU) was also implemented in January 2016. The SCU, which is headed by an AD, deals with a range of the most serious offences including murder, manslaughter, rape and serious sexual offences, human trafficking, prostitution and related offences. Prior to January, cases of this type would typically have been dealt with by the regions.

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

- 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
- Appeals 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).

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 full 2015/16 financial year (i.e. 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016) 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 2015/16 have now been finalised. 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 full financial year, 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, unless otherwise stated. This summary should be read together with the explanatory notes provided (see pages 18 - 20).

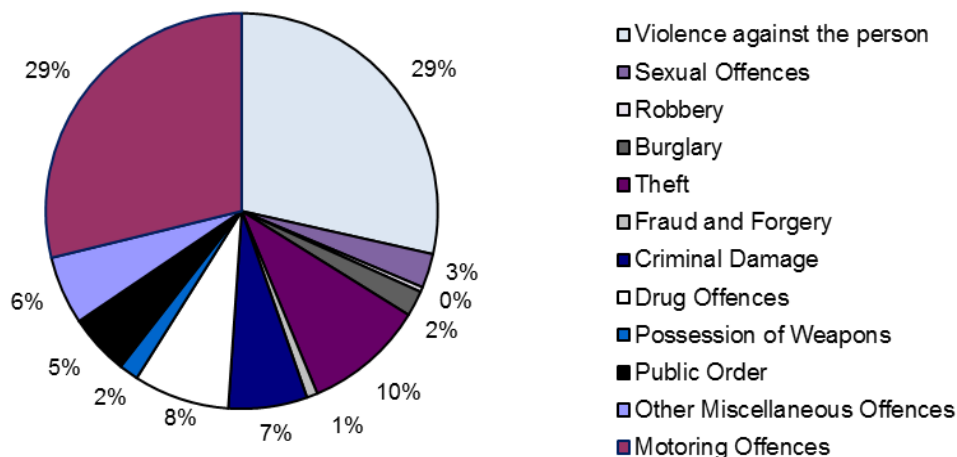
Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function (Table 1a)

- The PPS received 43,914 files during 2015/16. This was a decrease of 3.2% on 2014/15 (45,383).
- Just under half (49%) of all files received during the current period related to hybrid offences, 46% to summary offences and the remaining 5% to indictable offences.

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

- During 2015/16, PPS received a total of 42,595 files from police. This represents a 3.1% decrease on the previous financial year (43,940).
- In terms of files received by offence classification, over two-thirds fell into three categories; 'motoring' (29%), 'violence against the person' (29%) and 'theft' (10%).
- Five offence classifications have shown an increase in the number of files received compared with 2014/15. These are 'possession of weapons', 'violence against the person', 'robbery', 'criminal damage' and 'drug offences'.

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



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

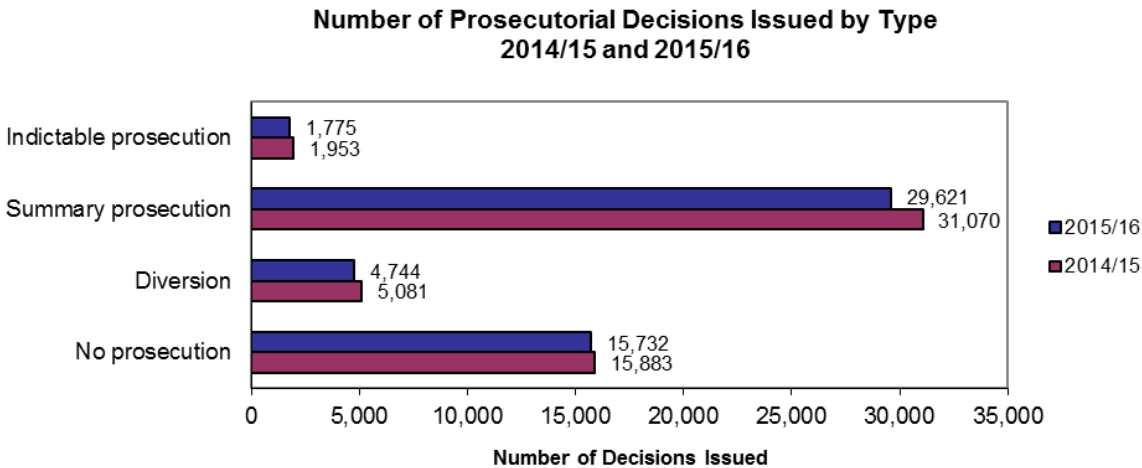
- A total of 1,135 files were submitted to PPS Departmental Section by departments and agencies during 2015/16, representing a 6.0% decrease on 2014/15 (1,207).
- During 2015/16 the majority of files were submitted either by the Department for Social Development (40%) or the Driver and Vehicle Agency (34%).

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

- A total of 25,049 information requests were submitted to police during 2015/16, an increase of 0.3% on the previous financial year (24,968).
- Fifty-five percent of all requests submitted during the current period were 'Post Decision Information Requests', 31% were 'Decision Information Requests' and 14% were 'Full File Requests'.

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

- During 2015/16, 51,872 prosecutorial decisions were issued by the PPS, a decline of 3.9% on the total issued during 2014/15 (53,987).
- The evidential Test for Prosecution was met in the majority of cases considered by public prosecutors during 2015/16. Of the 51,872 decisions issued, seven-tenths (70%) were issued with a decision for prosecution (31,396) or for diversion from the courts (4,744). This was similar to 2014/15 (71%).



- Comparing 2014/15 and 2015/16, there was a decrease of 4.9% in the number of decisions to prosecute. This comprised of a 9.1% decrease in indictable prosecution decisions and a decline of 4.7% in summary prosecution decisions. The number of diversionary decisions fell by 6.6% while no prosecution decisions fell by 1.0%.

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

- Of the 15,732 no prosecution decisions issued during 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 2015/16 was 170, compared with 158 days during the previous financial year.
- During the current period, summary prosecution decisions required an average of 27 days. This compared with 23 days during 2014/15.
- The time taken for diversionary decisions varied according to the type of diversion issued, with cautions requiring an average of 21 days, informed warnings requiring an average of 14 days and youth conferences 22 days.

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

- A total of 26,687 summonses were issued in police cases during 2015/16, a decrease of 8.6% on 2014/15 (29,184).
- Over seven-tenths (72%) of summonses issued during the current period were served on the defendant by post and the remaining 28% via personal service by police.

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

- During 2015/16, 1,026 defendants were dealt with in the Crown Court. This was a decrease of 45.5% on 2014/15 (1,881).¹
- Of these defendants, 81.6% were convicted, 16.7% were acquitted and the remaining 1.8% had an 'other' outcome.
- Comparing 2014/15 and 2015/16, the conviction rate showed a decrease from 85.1% to 81.6%.

¹ In May 2015 the Law Society and the Bar Council for Northern Ireland withdrew criminal defence services in response to the new Crown Court legal aid fee scheme introduced by the Department of Justice. As a result, no new cases were conducted in the Crown Court over the period May 2015 to February 2016.

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

- A total of 28,726 defendants were dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts during 2015/16, a decrease of 5.7% on the previous financial year (30,474).
- Of the defendants dealt with during the current period, 78.8% were convicted, 6.3% were acquitted and 15.0% had an 'other' outcome.
- The conviction rate decreased by one percentage point compared with 2014/15 (79.8%).

Defendants Dealt with in the Magistrates' and Youth Courts by Outcome 2015/16

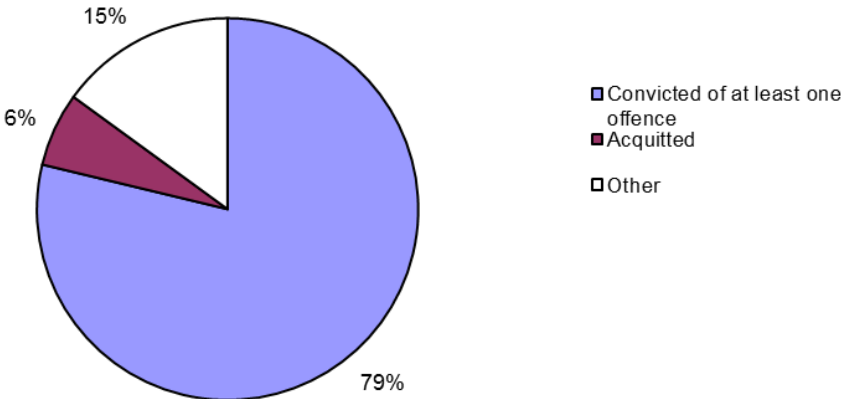


Table 1a: Files Received by File Type and PPS Region / Function

2014/15 and 2015/16 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of files
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	File Type ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-4 2015/16	Indictable	997	829	121	22	1,969	
	Hybrid	11,176	9,676	171	649	21,672	
	Summary	10,145	9,603	1	524	20,273	
	All Files	22,318	20,108	293	1,195	43,914	
Q1-4 2014/15	Indictable	1,019	918	N/A	23	1,960	
	Hybrid	11,468	9,626	N/A	610	21,704	
	Summary	10,623	10,454	N/A	642	21,719	
	All Files	23,110	20,998	N/A	1,275	45,383	
% Change (Files Received) 2014/15 to 2015/16		-3.4%	-4.2%	N/A	-6.3%	-3.2%	

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

³ See explanatory notes, page 18.

Table 1b: Files Received from Police by Offence Classification

2014/15 and 2015/16 ¹

Offence Classification ²	Number of files					
	Q1-4 2015/16		Q1-4 2014/15		Change (2014/15 to 2015/16)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Violence against the person	12,127	28.5%	11,563	26.3%	564	4.9%
Sexual offences	1,187	2.8%	1,260	2.9%	-73	-5.8%
Robbery	178	0.4%	173	0.4%	5	2.9%
Burglary	900	2.1%	983	2.2%	-83	-8.4%
Theft	4,198	9.9%	4,495	10.2%	-297	-6.6%
Fraud and forgery	370	0.9%	385	0.9%	-15	-3.9%
Criminal damage	2,788	6.5%	2,716	6.2%	72	2.7%
Drug offences	3,354	7.9%	3,330	7.6%	24	0.7%
Possession of weapons	695	1.6%	638	1.5%	57	8.9%
Public order	2,149	5.0%	2,560	5.8%	-411	-16.1%
Other Miscellaneous offences	2,378	5.6%	2,548	5.8%	-170	-6.7%
Motoring offences	12,271	28.8%	13,289	30.2%	-1,018	-7.7%
All Files	42,595		43,940		-1,345	-3.1%

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² See explanatory notes, page 18.

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

2014/15 and 2015/16 ¹

Department / Agency	Number of files					
	Q1-4 2015/16		Q1-4 2014/15		Change (2014/15 to 2015/16)	
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	Number	% Change
Dept. for Social Development	452	39.8%	385	31.9%	67	17.4%
Driver and Vehicle Agency	381	33.6%	448	37.1%	-67	-15.0%
NI Environment Agency	87	7.7%	74	6.1%	13	17.6%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division	60	5.3%	82	6.8%	-22	-26.8%
HM Revenue and Customs	33	2.9%	48	4.0%	-15	-31.3%
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	28	2.5%	48	4.0%	-20	-41.7%
Dept. of Enterprise Trade and Investment	14	1.2%	24	2.0%	-10	-41.7%
Health and Safety Executive	8	0.7%	10	0.8%	-2	-20.0%
Other	72	6.3%	88	7.3%	-16	-18.2%
All Departments / Agencies	1,135		1,207		-72	-6.0%

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

2014/15 and 2015/16 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of requests
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarters	Request Type ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-4 2015/16	Full File Request	1,528	1,986	36	18	3,568	
	Decision Information Request	3,880	3,673	116	38	7,707	
	Post Decision Information Request	7,764	5,887	18	24	13,693	
	No Decision	28	52	0	1	81	
	All Requests Submitted	13,200	11,598	170	81	25,049	
Q1-4 2014/15	Full File Request	1,761	2,008	N/A	22	3,791	
	Decision Information Request	3,734	3,955	N/A	65	7,754	
	Post Decision Information Request	7,386	5,912	N/A	16	13,314	
	No Decision	33	75	N/A	1	109	
	All Requests Submitted	12,914	11,950	N/A	104	24,968	
% Change (Requests Submitted) 2014/15 to 2015/16		2.2%	-2.9%	N/A	-22.1%	0.3%	

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

³ See explanatory notes, page 18.

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

2014/15 and 2015/16 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	
Q1-4 2015/16	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	884	757	4	130	1,775
		Summary prosecution	15,761	12,753	20	1,087	29,621
	Diversion	Caution	1,583	1,782	1	8	3,374
		Informed warning	202	257	0	1	460
		Youth conference	374	212	3	0	589
		Other	107	214	0	0	321
	No Prosecution	7,959	7,475	91	207	15,732	
All Decisions Issued	26,870	23,450	119	1,433	51,872		
Q1-4 2014/15	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	1,052	753	N/A	148	1,953
		Summary prosecution	16,072	13,924	N/A	1,074	31,070
	Diversion	Caution	1,656	2,071	N/A	4	3,731
		Informed warning	294	241	N/A	2	537
		Youth conference	261	164	N/A	0	425
		Other	112	276	N/A	0	388
	No Prosecution	7,821	7,859	N/A	203	15,883	
All Decisions Issued	27,268	25,288	N/A	1,430	53,987		
% Change (Decisions Issued) 2014/15 to 2015/16		-1.5%	-7.3%	N/A	0.2%	-3.9%	

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

³ See explanatory notes, page 19.

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

2014/15 and 2015/16 ¹

Number of persons (decisions issued)

Quarters	Reason for no prosecution ³	PPS Region / Function ²				
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Q1-4 2015/16	Did not pass the evidential test	7,597	7,286	90	188	15,161
	Did not pass the public interest test	362	189	1	19	571
	All no prosecution decisions	7,959	7,475	91	207	15,732
Q1-4 2014/15	Did not pass the evidential test	7,465	7,647	N/A	178	15,290
	Did not pass the public interest test	356	212	N/A	25	593
	All no prosecution decisions	7,821	7,859	N/A	203	15,883
% Change (No prosecution decisions issued) 2014/15 to 2015/16		1.8%	-4.9%	N/A	2.0%	-1.0%

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

³ See explanatory notes, page 19.

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

2014/15 and 2015/16 ¹

			Average (calendar) days
Quarters	Type of Decision ²		All Regions
Q1-4 2015/16	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	170
		Summary prosecution	27
	Diversion	Caution	21
		Informed warning	14
		Youth conference	22
		Other	23
	No Prosecution	47	
Q1-4 2014/15	Prosecution	Indictable prosecution	158
		Summary prosecution	23
	Diversion	Caution	17
		Informed warning	17
		Youth conference	19
		Other	18
	No Prosecution	43	

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

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

2014/15 and 2015/16 ¹

		PPS Region				Number of summonses
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	All Regions	
Quarters	Service Method ²	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-4 2015/16	Postal Service	10,800	8,389	9	19,198	
	Personal Service	4,215	3,267	7	7,489	
	All Summonses	15,015	11,656	16	26,687	
Q1-4 2014/15	Postal Service	10,455	9,487	N/A	19,942	
	Personal Service	5,840	3,402	N/A	9,242	
	All Summonses	16,295	12,889	N/A	29,184	
% Change (Summonses Issued) 2014/15 to 2015/16		-7.9%	-9.6%	N/A	-8.6%	

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

² See explanatory notes, page 20.

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

2014/15 and 2015/16 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
Q1-4 2015/16	Convicted of at least one offence	430	337	0	70	837
	Acquitted	69	78	0	24	171
	Other	10	6	0	2	18
	All defendants	509	421	0	96	1,026
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	84.5%	80.0%	N/A	72.9%	81.6%
Q1-4 2014/15	Convicted of at least one offence	858	604	N/A	138	1,600
	Acquitted	136	115	N/A	19	270
	Other	6	5	N/A	0	11
	All defendants	1,000	724	N/A	157	1,881
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	85.8%	83.4%	N/A	87.9%	85.1%
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2014/15 to 2015/16 ⁴		-49.1%	-41.9%	N/A	-38.9%	-45.5%

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

³ See explanatory notes, page 20.

⁴ In May 2015 the Law Society and the Bar Council for Northern Ireland withdrew criminal defence services in response to the new Crown Court legal aid fee scheme introduced by the Department of Justice. As a result, no new cases were conducted in the Crown Court over the period May 2015 to February 2016.

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

2014/15 and 2015/16 ¹

		PPS Region / Function ²					Number of persons (defendants)
		Belfast and Eastern	Western and Southern	Serious Crime Unit	Headquarters	All PPS	
Quarter	Outcome ³	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Q1-4 2015/16	Convicted of at least one offence	11,409	10,431	0	783	22,623	
	Acquitted	1,007	749	0	41	1,797	
	Other	2,119	1,989	2	196	4,306	
	All defendants	14,535	13,169	2	1,020	28,726	
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	78.5%	79.2%	N/A	76.8%	78.8%	
Q1-4 2014/15	Convicted of at least one offence	12,023	11,406	N/A	897	24,326	
	Acquitted	929	640	N/A	56	1,625	
	Other	2,276	2,039	N/A	208	4,523	
	All defendants	15,228	14,085	N/A	1,161	30,474	
	Conviction Rate (%) ³	79.0%	81.0%	N/A	77.3%	79.8%	
% Change (Defendants dealt with) 2014/15 to 2015/16		-4.6%	-6.5%	N/A	-12.1%	-5.7%	

¹ Refers to the financial year; i.e. the period from 1 April to 31 March.

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

³ See explanatory notes, page 20.

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 2016 to 30 June 2016, will be published on 25th August 2016.

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