



Complaints and Allegations Received by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Quarterly Statistical Update to 30th June 2016

Published July 2016

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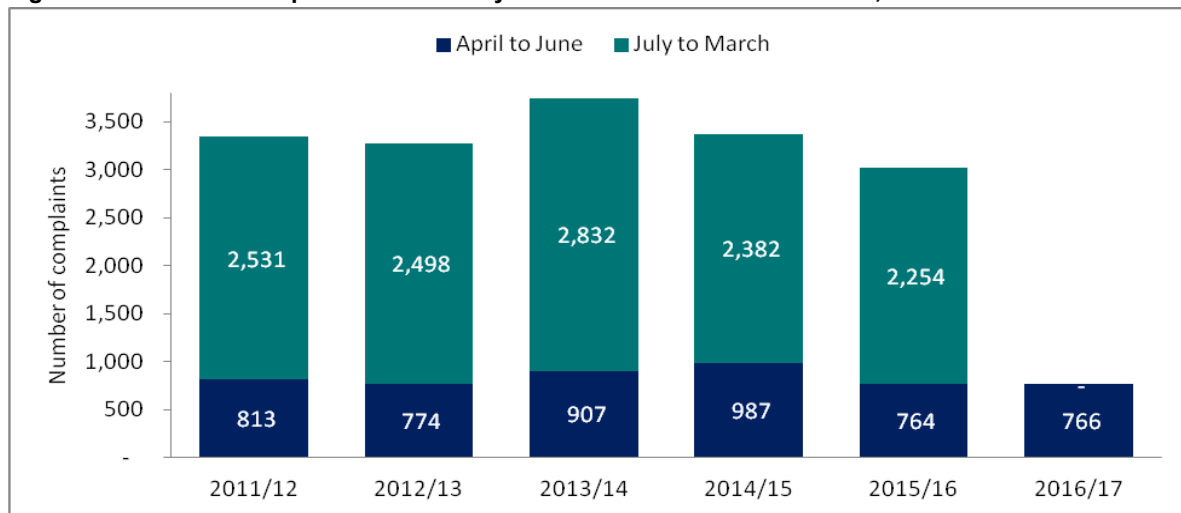
Statistical Update to 30th June 2016, published on 28th July 2016

This quarterly bulletin presents the most recent statistics on the number of complaints and allegations received by the Police Ombudsman, up to 30th June 2016. The statistics are based on information extracted from the Police Ombudsman’s Case Handling System (CHS) on the 25th July 2016.

Complaints Received

In the first quarter of 2016/17, the Office received just over 760 complaints¹. This is similar to the number of complaints reported for the same time period last year (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of complaints received by the Police Ombudsman’s Office, 2011/12 to 2016/17



¹ See Additional Information: Understanding the Statistics

Main Complaint Factor

Between April and June 2016, Criminal Investigation was the most common main factor² underlying complaints followed by Arrests and then Police Searches. This is the normal trend observed for complaint factors.

Complaints arising from Criminal Investigations had the largest increase during the first quarter in 2016 compared with the same time period last year, while complaints arising from Arrests had the largest decrease during this time (Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison in the main factor of complaints received between April to June 2015 and April to June 2016

	April to June 2015/16	April to June 2016/17	Difference	% Difference
Criminal Investigation	176	231	55	31%
Arrest	145	130	-15	-10%
Search	67	64	-3	-4%
Traffic Related Incident	60	61	1	2%
Domestic Incident	43	54	11	-
Police Enquiries (no investigation)	19	27	8	-
Historic Investigation	26	16	-10	-
Parade/Demonstration	4	12	8	-
Other	196	138	-58	-30%
Unknown	28	33	5	-
Total	764	766	2	0%

Note: % Difference only reported when base numbers are greater than 50

² The main complaint factor refers to the main situation giving rise to the complaint.

Complaints Received by Police Area and District

Causeway Coast & Glens had the biggest increase in complaints during the first quarter in 2016 compared with the first quarter in 2015, while Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon and Belfast City had the biggest decreases (Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage increase/decrease in the number of complaints received in each police area between April to June 2015 and April to June 2016

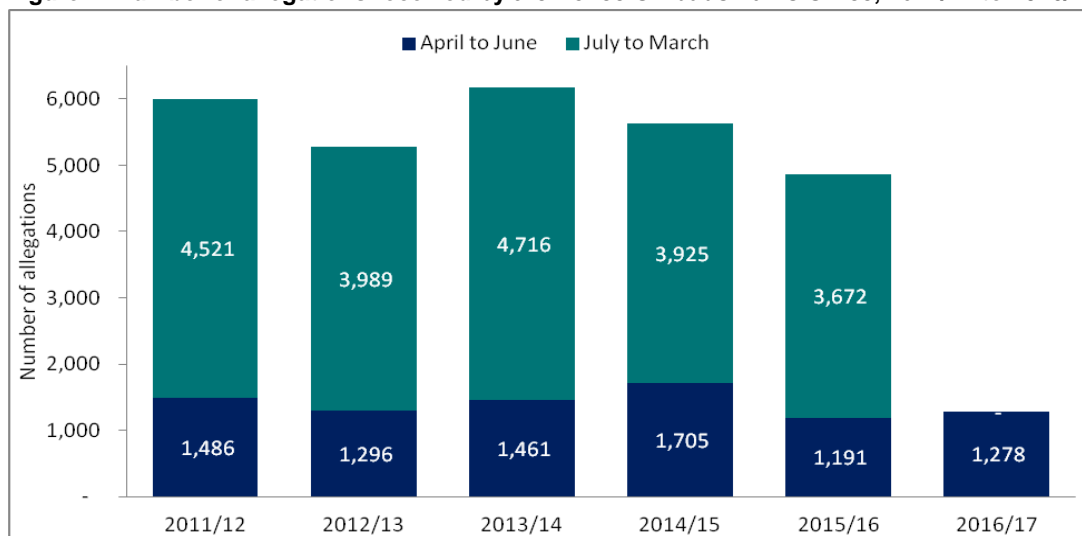
	April to June 2015	April to June 2016	Difference	% Difference
District A - Belfast City	223	202	-21	-9%
District B - Lisburn & Castlereagh City	28	29	1	-
District C - Ards & North Down	49	48	-1	-
District D – Newry, Mourne & Down	45	44	-1	-
District E - Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	65	58	-7	-11%
District F - Mid Ulster	24	33	9	-
District G - Fermanagh & Omagh	32	31	-1	-
District H - Derry City & Strabane	54	56	2	4%
District J - Causeway Coast & Glens	65	75	10	15%
District K - Mid & East Antrim	41	58	17	-
District L - Antrim & Newtownabbey	41	48	7	-
Unknown / Other Organisation	97	84	-13	-13%
Northern Ireland	764	766	2	0%

Note: % Difference only reported when base numbers are greater than 50

Allegations Received

The Office received almost 1,280 allegations during the first quarter of 2016 compared with the same time period last year (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Number of allegations received by the Police Ombudsman's Office, 2011/12 to 2016/17



Allegation Type

Allegations are categorised into 11 different types. Over the last five years, Failure in Duty allegations accounted for the greatest proportion of allegations, followed by Oppressive Behaviour and Incivility.

The number of allegations regarding an officers Failure in Duty has increased more than for other allegation types when compared to the same time period last year. Allegations of Incivility and Oppressive Behaviour saw the greatest percentage decreases when compared to last year (Table 3).

Table 3: Comparison in the Types of Allegations received between April to June 2015 and April to June 2016

	April to June 2015	April to June 2016	Difference	% Difference
Failure in Duty	456	583	127	28%
Oppressive Behaviour	344	305	-39	-11%
Incivility	102	81	-21	-21%
Search	71	74	3	4%
Unlawful/Unnecessary Arrest/Detention	46	55	9	-
Mishandling of Property	31	26	-5	-
Traffic	8	19	11	-
Malpractice	20	18	-2	-
Discriminatory Behaviour	14	15	1	-
Historic Investigation	-	13	13	-
Section 55 Referral	24	8	-16	-
Other	75	81	6	8%
Total	1,191	1,278	87	7%

Note: % Difference only reported when base numbers are greater than 50

Officers with multiple complaints

There were 47 PSNI officers who attracted three or more complaints that were formally investigated or dealt with by way of informal or local resolution between July 2015 and June 2016 (Table 4).

Table 4: Officers with three or more complaints that were formally investigated or dealt with by Informal/Local Resolution, July 2015 to June 2016

Twelve month period ending	Number of officers with three or more complaints that were formally investigated or dealt with Local/Informal Resolution
June 2016	47

Additional Information

Data Use

The information presented in this document has been produced to meet the needs of our key users who need timely information on the number of complaints and allegations received by the Police Ombudsman's Office. The main users of this quarterly bulletin are the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB). This statistical update is the outcome of consultation with these users, it gives them access to information that they can use to form discussions at their regular meetings.

Understanding the Statistics

The number of complaints received by the Police Ombudsman's Office includes complaints made by members of the public relating to the conduct of PSNI officers or those employed by other organisations under the Office's remit³. The number of complaints also includes those matters that have been referred to the Police Ombudsman's Office from other organisations⁴, and any matter that the Police Ombudsman has decided is in the public interest for him to investigate.

There are a number of factors that may influence whether or not a person makes a complaint to the Police Ombudsman. It is important when drawing conclusions from the statistics not to take a simplistic view but to consider the following factors:

- The number and nature of police operations conducted;
- The performance of police officers;
- The level of interaction between the public and the police;
- The awareness of the Police Ombudsman's Office, knowledge of how to make a complaint, and public confidence in the Office;
- The size of the police service;
- Changes to the PSNI's or the Offices' procedures;
- The level of crime;
- The number of public order incidents; and
- Population demographics.

Each complaint the Police Ombudsman's Office receives is made up of one or more allegations. The allegation describes the types of behaviours being complained about or the separate issues making up the complaint. For example, a person may make a complaint stating a police officer had pushed them *and* was rude. This would be recorded as one complaint with two allegations. The number of allegations received also includes a small number of residual matters, these are matters of concern identified during an investigation that were not originally detailed in the complaint, typically these account for around 1% to 2% of the allegations received.

³ The Office's remit extends to: Designated Civilians, G.B Officers, G8, Northern Ireland Airport Constabulary, Harbour Police and National Crime Agency.

⁴ The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Public Prosecution Service (PPS), Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Care should be taken when comparing the number of complaints or allegations received at police district or police area level as some of the differences between areas may reflect variations in their composition, such as the degree of urbanization, level of deprivation and the balance between the resident population, day-time population and the night-time economy.

It is also important to note that the system is live and data may therefore be subject to future revisions.

Further information

A [user guide](#) has been published to give users of these statistics more knowledge about the complaints process, more information regarding the quality of the data and also a glossary of terms used. It is recommended that all users of these statistics should consult the user guide to aid their understanding of the statistics and ensure that they are using them appropriately. Further information regarding the number of complaints and allegations received in 2015/16 is available in the [accompanying excel spreadsheet](#). This spreadsheet also includes the data for the figures and tables in this bulletin.

A more detailed break-down of the types of complaints and allegations received by the Police Ombudsman's Office over the last five years as well as presenting information on the outcomes of complaints is available in the 'Annual Statistical Bulletin of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, 2015/16', which is available on the Office's [website](#).

Additional geographic breakdowns of the types of complaints and allegations received by the Police Ombudsman will be made available later this year on the [Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service \(NINIS\)](#).

If you would like information on other statistics published by the Police Ombudsman's Office please see the statistics and research page on the Police Ombudsman's [website](#).

Publication

This is the third year the Police Ombudsman's Office has published quarterly information on the number of complaints and allegations received. The Office will publish information in-year on a quarterly basis. This information will be published on the Police Ombudsman's website at 9:30am on the fourth Thursday of the month following the end of the quarter. A more detailed publication will be published at the end of the financial year concentrating on the trends in the number of complaints and allegations received over the last five years.

The next quarterly update is due to be published on Thursday 27th October 2016 and it will include statistics up to the 30th September 2016.

User Feedback

We continuously welcome your feedback or comments on the statistics released. If you would like to forward your views or to receive notifications of statistical releases please email your contact details to info@policeombudsman.org, further contact details are available on the back page of this bulletin.

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This publication and other information about the work of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland are also available on the Internet at:

Website: www.policeombudsman.org



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