



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Máinnystrie O tha Laa

www.justice-ni.gov.uk

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Freedom of Information Team
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12th March 2024

REFERENCE: FOI24\29

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your request for information dated 8th March 2024 as detailed below.

'1. Please provide for the years 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 the average time for a murder case to go from charge to trial in Northern Ireland.

2. Please provide for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 the average time for a Crown Court case to go from charge to trial in Northern Ireland.'

In relation to your query, figures have been provided for the average (median) time from the date of offence reported to the date a case has been dealt with, where the main offence at disposal was a substantive murder charge and, for all Crown Court charge cases. This measure of average time taken for a case to complete is the one that the Department uses and reports on in its annual case processing time publications.

Figures have also been provided for the average (median) time from date of charge/summons to first court date after PPS decision. The figures provided are also in relation to cases where the main offence at the point the case was dealt with was a substantive murder charge and for all Crown Court charge cases.

Average time taken for all charge cases dealt with at Crown Court, 2020/21 – 2022/23

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Offence reported date to case dealt with date	470	535	561
Charge date to first court date after decision	226	241	245

Average time taken for all cases where the main offence was a substantive murder offence, 2020/21 – 2022/23

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Offence reported date to case dealt with date	2,517	858	1,053
Charged/informed date to first court date after decision	867	257	350

Notes:

1. Figures relate to the number of calendar days between the listed dates for each table. Court recess dates are not taken into account.
2. Figures relate to cases disposed at court during the time period specified. Each period is a financial year, running from 1st April to the following 31st March.
3. Figures relate to cases brought on behalf of the PSNI, NCA, Harbour and Airport police in Northern Ireland that resulted in a court disposal. Appeals are not included.
4. The date of the first court appearance relates to the first occasion on which the case appears in court after the PPS has taken a decision to prosecute. However, first court date after PPS decision may not equate to first date of trial in all cases.
5. Caution should be taken in interpreting figures provided for murder cases, as the number of cases involved were small.
6. All cases where the main offence was one of substantive murder have been included in figures for the table relating to murder offences, whether or not the case was a charge case or whether it was dealt with at Crown Court.
7. The form of average measured is the median.

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you request an internal review please do so in writing stating the reasons to the address above.

If following an internal review you were to remain dissatisfied you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner and ask him to investigate whether the DoJ has complied with the terms of the FOIA. You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out.

Further details on the role of the Information Commissioner and the handling of appeals can be found at: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Manager