

17th May 2024

REFERENCE: FOI24\55

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your request for information dated 2nd May 2024 as detailed below.

'I am submitting an FOI request for the following information relating to cases of domestic abuse cases and their prosecution, spanning the past 5 years up to the latest available data.

1. How many of these cases resulted in a prosecution?
2. Of the reported domestic abuse cases, how many were given a domestic violence protection order?

In your response, please include the following information (where available):
1. The nature of the abuse (e.g. psychological, physical, sexual, emotional)

2. The gender of the victims
3. The gender of the offenders
4. The ethnic background of the victims
5. The age of the victims

Please present this data annually for each of the below periods:

1st January 2024 > 4th April 2024 (or to the latest available date)

1st January 2023 > 31st December 2023

1st January 2022 > 31st Dec 2022

1st January 2021 > 31st Dec 2021

1st January 2020 > 31st Dec 2020

1st January 2019 > 31st Dec 2019.'

In relation to your query, the Department is only able to supply the information in relation to prosecutions and convictions at courts and in relation to the gender of offenders.

Details on the nature of any abuse inflicted or details on the gender, age or ethnic background of any victims concerned is not held as part of Departmental prosecutions and convictions datasets, although this information may be held as part of court records for individual cases.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you two rights of access when you write to us asking for information. You have the right to know whether we hold recorded information falling in scope of your request, and you have the right to receive this recorded information subject to cost limit or exemption.

In this instance, in relation to questions about the nature of abuse imposed and the gender, age or ethnic background of any victims concerned, the DoJ has estimated that to locate, retrieve and extract the information that might be relevant to your request would involve work considerably more than the appropriate limit. This is due to the fact that details of this information is not held on the Department's prosecutions and convictions datasets and to obtain this information would involve a manual search of the relevant court records. The appropriate limit is specified in regulations and for central government is set at £600. This represents an estimated cost of one person spending 24 working hours, at a cost of £25.00 per hour, to determining whether the Department holds the information, and then retrieve and extract that information.

Records show there were 1,562 cases dealt with at courts in 2020 alone where there was a domestic abuse motivation. It is estimated that the additional amount of work required to extract, validate and aggregate data on the detail of the information requested, would be in excess of 390 hours. At a cost of £25 per hour, this equates to over £9,750, which is higher than the appropriate limit. Further, it should be noted that, whilst it may be possible to narrow the scope of your overall request to bring it within the cost limit by, for example by reducing the time period to be covered for the specified court case details, any resulting information would be exempt from disclosure under S32 Court Records exemption of FOIA.

However, police may hold some victim data in relation to offences reported to them. You may therefore wish to contact them in relation to that element of your request. Freedom of information requests can be made to the PSNI at foi@psni.police.uk .

In part 2 of your request, you ask for information in relation to the number of cases where a domestic violence protection order was imposed. These Orders, while in place in England and Wales, are not currently in place in Northern Ireland, so information in relation to this part of your request is not available.

Information in relation to the numbers of prosecutions and convictions at courts where there was a domestic violence motivation attributed to an offence, as well as for the gender of those convicted in those cases, has been provided in relation to the years 2019 – 2022, the most recent year for which statistics are available. Statistics in relation to cases dealt with at courts in 2023 are currently undergoing preparation and it is hoped that information for 2023 may be available by late June 2024.

Prosecutions and convictions for cases where there was a domestic violence motivation for an offence, 2019 – 2022

Year	Prosecutions	Convictions
2019	1,997	1,173
2020	1,448	870
2021	2,485	1,420
2022	2,954	1,562

Convictions for cases where there was a domestic violence motivation for an offence by gender of defendant, 2019 – 2022

Year	Male	Female	Total
2019	1,060	113	1,173
2020	794	76	870
2021	1,267	153	1,420
2022	1,418	144	1,562

Source: DoJ

Note:

1. Figures relate to initial disposals at courts.

2. Figures relate to cases where there was a prosecution or conviction for at least one offence where there was a domestic abuse motivation, as assessed by Public Prosecution Service, or where there was at least one instance of the new domestic abuse offence, as introduced under the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021.
3. Figures for males include a small number of cases where the gender of the offender was not recorded.

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