



Department of  
**Justice**  
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
Máinnstríe O tha Laa  
[www.justice-ni.gov.uk](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk)

**Department of Justice**  
**Records & Information Team**  
Information Services Division  
Block 5  
Knockview Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3SL

Telephone 028 90378617  
Email: [foi@justice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:foi@justice-ni.gov.uk)

06 June 2023

**REFERENCE: FOI\23\36 - Lavery – Intermediary Services**

Dear Madam,

Thank you for your request for information dated 01 June 2023 and detailed below.

**How many requests were made by PSNI to use the registered intermediary service across N. Ireland in the last 5 years, for children and vulnerable adults aged under 25 years of age. Can you categorize these by victims, witness and suspects?**

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 in scope of your request, and you have the right to have that recorded information given to you. These rights may only be overridden if the information you are looking for is covered by an exemption in the Act.

Please be advised that I can provide a response to your request as follows:

**The number of requests for Registered Intermediaries received from the PSNI over the last 5 years where the individual was under 25 years are as follows:**

<b>1 APRIL 2018 – 31 MARCH 2019</b>			
<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>	<b>Suspects</b>
0-7 years	289	17	0
8-11 years	70	6	2
12-17 years	82	5	22
Adult under 25	30	3	24
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>48</b>

<b>1 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020</b>



Age Range	Victims	Witnesses	Suspects
0-7 years	343	16	0
8-11 years	96	4	3
12-17 years	89	4	59
Adult under 25	23	1	30
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>92</b>

1 APRIL 2020 – 31 MARCH 2021			
Age Range	Victims	Witnesses	Suspects
0-7 years	253	19	1
8-11 years	56	5	0
12-17 years	115	10	90
Adult under 25	39	3	29
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>120</b>

1 APRIL 2021 – 31 MARCH 2022			
Age Range	Victims	Witnesses	Suspects
0-7 years	297	14	0
8-11 years	89	9	9
12-17 years	108	8	113
Adult under 25	39	5	48
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>170</b>

1 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2023			
Age Range	Victims	Witnesses	Suspects
0-7 years	272	24	0
8-11 years	100	7	7
12-17 years	132	5	149
Adult under 25	58	6	58
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>214</b>

CUMULATIVE TOTALS ACROSS 5 YEARS			
Age Range	Victims	Witnesses	Suspects
0-7	1454	90	1
8-11	411	31	21
12-17	526	32	433
Adult under 25	189	18	189
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>644</b>

In providing this information we would ask the requestor to note:



- The Northern Ireland Registered Intermediary Scheme is a statutory scheme that currently operates in criminal cases being heard in Crown, Magistrates' and Youth courts. The scheme is provided for and governed by The Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, as amended by the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the 2011 Act).
- Registered Intermediaries (RIs) come from a variety of backgrounds including speech and language therapists and social workers. They have specialist skills that are used to assist vulnerable victims, witnesses, suspects and defendants with significant communication deficits to communicate their answers more effectively during police interview and when giving evidence at trial.
- All RIs must pass the Department of Justice (NI) Registered Intermediary Accreditation Training (Masters Level) before joining the RI panel. The training provided goes over and above what would be included in a standard social work, psychology or SALT degree and is a new skill set that cannot be found outside the scheme. There are currently 37 RIs on the panel.
- PSNI officers, PPS prosecutors and the legal representatives of defendants (collectively known within the scheme as 'End-Users') are responsible for identifying the need for an RI to assist a vulnerable witness. When an End-User believes an RI is required, they complete a template request form which is submitted to the Department of Justice's Intermediaries Scheme Secretariat (ISS) who then allocate the most suitable RI (based on their specific skill set) to the case.
- The RI is an Officer of the Court and, therefore, is not acting for either the defence or prosecution. They are impartial, neutral, objective and transparent in all that they do. The RI can assist any vulnerable witness, regardless of whether they are a defendant, defence witness, prosecution witness or victim. However, the same RI would not assist both the defendant and prosecution witness in the same case.



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 the Commissioner 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](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

**Freedom of Information Manager**

