

STATISTICAL PRESS NOTICE

The PSNI's Statistical Report 1st April 2008 – 31st March 2009

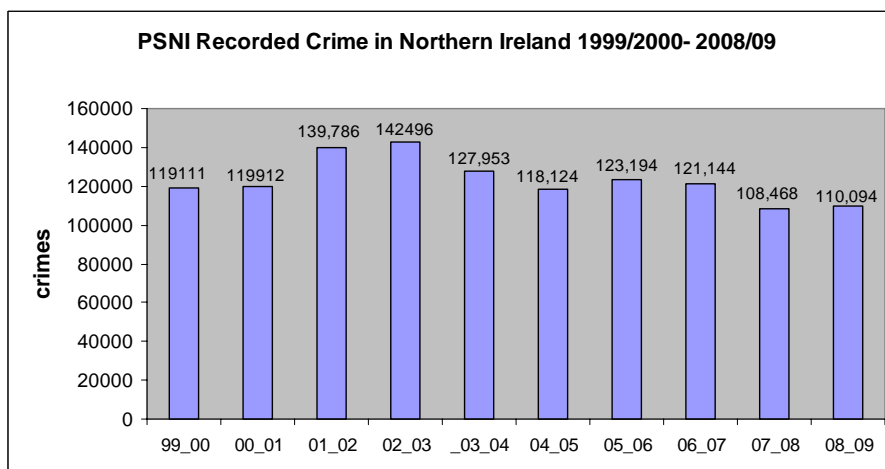
The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) today (Friday 8th May 2009) published its Statistical Report covering the period 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009. This National Statistics publication includes details on the following areas for that period;

- Recorded crime & clearances (National Statistics)
- Domestic abuse incidents & crimes
- Hate incidents and crimes
- Drug seizures and arrests
- Statistics relating to the security situation (National Statistics)
- Injury Road Traffic Collisions (National Statistics)

Key Findings

1. Recorded Crime & Clearances

- There were 110,094 crimes recorded by the PSNI in 2008/09 compared with 108,468 in 2007/08, an increase of 1,626 crimes (+ 1.5%). Across the 8 Policing Districts, 4 experienced an increase in crime (ranging from +0.5% to +9.8%) whereas the remaining 4 Districts had a decrease in crime (ranging from -1.1% to -3.5%).
- Although crime increased slightly in 2008/09, the trend over recent years has generally been downward since crime peaked in 2002/03. The level of crime recorded in 2008/09 was the second lowest recorded in Northern Ireland in the last 10 years (with 2007/08 being the lowest).



- Crime decreased in two of the nine main offence categories (offences against the person & criminal damage) and increased in the remaining 7 offence categories (sexual offences, burglary, robbery, theft, fraud & forgery, offences against the state and other notifiable offences).
- Offences against the person fell by 112 (-0.4%) and criminal damage offences fell by 2,474 (-8.0 %).
- Sexual offences increased by 121 offences (+6.6%), burglaries increased by 776 (+6.6%), robberies by 140 (+12.2%), thefts went up by 1,508 (+6.1%), fraud & forgery by 793 (+28.4%), offences against the state by 275 (+24.3%) and other notifiable offences increased by 599 (+12.8%).

- Violent crime (i.e. offences against the person, sexual offences and robberies) increased by 149 offences (+0.5%) compared with the previous year.
- The overall clearance rate increased by 2.5 percentage points from 20.5% in 2007/08 to 23.0% in 2008/09.
- During 2008/09 crime clearance rates increased in seven of the nine main offence categories and decreased in the remaining two in comparison with the previous year. Increases were recorded for offences against the person (+3.4 percentage points), sexual offences (+4.2 percentage points), burglary offences (+1.0 percentage point), theft offences (+1.3 percentage points), fraud & forgery offences (+2.0 percentage points), criminal damage offences (+0.9 of a percentage point) and other notifiable offences (+6.7 percentage points).
- Decreases in clearance rates were recorded for robbery offences (-1.6 percentage points) and for offences against the state (-3.6 percentage points).

2. Incidents¹ & Crimes with a Domestic Abuse Motivation

- There were 23,591 incidents with a domestic abuse motivation recorded by the PSNI in 2008/09, an increase of 515 (+2.2%) on the 23,076 recorded in 2007/08.
- The number of crimes recorded as having a domestic abuse motivation decreased by 72 or -0.8% from 9,283 in 2007/08 to 9,211 in 2008/09. The associated clearance rate rose by some 4.0 percentage points from 33.9% in 2007/08 to 37.8% in 2008/09.
- Violent crime (i.e. offences against the person, sexual offences & robberies) accounted for 70.3% of all crimes recorded with a domestic abuse motivation in 2008/09.

3. Incidents¹ & Crimes with a Hate Motivation

- In 2008/09 the PSNI recorded 1,595 sectarian incidents, 990 racist incidents, 179 homophobic incidents, 46 faith/religion incidents, 44 disability incidents and 10 transphobic incidents. Compared with the previous year there was an increase in sectarian incidents (11 more or +0.7%), racist incidents (14 more or +1.4%), homophobic incidents (19 more or +11.9%) and in transphobic incidents (3 more or +42.9%). Faith /religion incidents decreased by 22 (-32.4%) and disability incidents decreased by 5 (-10.2%).
- Compared with 2007/08, the number of crimes with a hate motivation decreased in four of the six hate crime types. Faith/religion crimes were down by 27 offences (-43.5%), sectarian crimes were down 39 (-3.7%), disability crimes were down 14 (-33.3%) and transphobic crimes were down by 2 offences (-50.0%). Crimes with a homophobic motivation increased by 20 offences (+17.5%) and crimes with a racist motivation increased by 14 (+1.8%).
- Hate crime clearance rates increased for five of the six hate crime types. The clearance rate for sectarian crimes was 15.2% (+0.8 percentage points), for racist crimes it was 12.5% (up +1.1 percentage points), for homophobic crimes it was 21.6% (up 5.9 percentage points), for disability crime it was 14.3% (up 2.4 percentage points) and for transphobic crimes it was 50.0% (up 50 percentage points). The clearance rate for faith/religion crimes was 11.4%, 4.7 percentage points lower than the 16.1% achieved in 2007/08.

¹ The PSNI records and reports incidents and crimes that are perceived to have a domestic or hate motivation. Incidents relate to specified reports (see Notes for Editors at the end of this Press Release) regardless of whether an offence occurred. Crimes are a subset of these and relate to those where a notifiable offence occurred during the incident. Note: more than one crime may result from a given incident so occasionally more crimes are recorded than incidents for any given motivation.

4. Drug Seizures and Arrests

- There were 3,198 drug seizure incidents recorded in 2008/09, an increase of 7.7% on the previous year.
- Within Class A drug seizures, cocaine accounted for the most seizure incidents and seizures of cocaine powder increased from 17.9 kg in 2007/08 to 24.2 kg in 2008/09. The amount of ecstasy tablets seized fell from 244,720 tablets in 2007/08 to 34,404 tablets in 2008/09.
- Seizures of cannabis increased by 11.9% from 2,219 seizure incidents in 2007/08 to 2,484 in 2008/09. The most marked change was in seizures of cannabis plants which increased from 4,006 plants seized in 2007/08 to 30,904 plants seized in 2008/09.
- There were 2,014 people arrested for drug related offences in 2008/09, an increase of 6.2% on the 1,896 arrested in the previous year.

5. Statistics Relating to the Security Situation

- There were five security related deaths recorded during 2008/09, four more than in the previous year. These include the first Police and Army deaths since 1998.
- Shooting incidents increased by 12 from 42 in 2007/08 to 54 in 2008/09. The number of bombing incidents also increased from 23 in 2007/08 to 46 in 2008/09. While there were increases in both these incident types in 2008/09, they were still below the levels experienced prior to 2006/07.
- There were 20 casualties resulting from paramilitary style **shootings** in 2008/09, an increase of 13 on the previous year. Loyalists were responsible for 2 of these shootings whilst Republicans were responsible for the other 18.
- The number of casualties resulting from paramilitary style **assaults** decreased by 4 from 45 in 2007/08 to 41 in 2008/09. Loyalists were responsible for 28 of these (68.3%) with Republicans deemed responsible for the remaining 13 casualties (31.7%).
- The numbers of persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act increased from 131 in 2007/08 to 174 in 2008/09. Similarly, the number of persons subsequently charged following arrest under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act rose from 34 in 2007/08 to 40 in 2008/09.

6. Injury Road Traffic Collisions & Casualties

- During 2008/09 there were 6,149 injury road traffic collisions which resulted in 106 deaths, 998 people seriously injured and 8,367 people slightly injured. The total number of injury road traffic collisions decreased compared with the previous year (-2.7%) as did the total number of persons injured (-2.8%).
- The number of persons killed or seriously injured on the roads (KSI casualties) decreased by 82 (-6.9%) with 4 fewer deaths and 78 fewer persons seriously injured during 2008/09 compared with the previous year.
- Over the last ten years there has been a gradual decrease in the number of road traffic collisions and associated casualties. There were 27.8% fewer collisions resulting in deaths or serious injury in 2008/09 compared with 1999/2000. Similarly, there were 44 fewer deaths and 575 fewer people seriously injured in 2008/09 than 10 years ago.

Notes for Editors

The PSNI reports its performance on a financial year basis and this is the 6th Statistical Report that has been issued with the first report relating to 2003/04. Prior to this the PSNI's statistics were published in the Chief Constable's Annual Report.

The PSNI's statistics on recorded crime & clearances, injury road traffic collisions and the security situation are all National Statistics. The remaining statistics on incidents and crimes with a domestic or hate motivation and on drug seizures are not National Statistics.

PSNI records its crimes and clearances in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules and adopted the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002 at the same time as all police services in England & Wales.

Clearances

Clearances (or detections as they may alternatively be known) are, broadly speaking, those crimes that have been 'cleared up' by the police. Crimes are counted as 'cleared or detected' in accordance with strict counting rules issued by the Home Office. They are counted on the basis of crimes rather than offenders. For example, if six offenders are involved in a robbery and are all arrested and charged, then this counts as one clearance (i.e. the robbery is deemed to be 'cleared'). Alternatively if only one of the six is identified and charged while the other five remain unidentified and at large, this also means that the robbery can still be deemed as 'cleared'.

The following methods of clearance involve a formal sanction:

- Charging or issuing a summons to an offender;
- Issuing a caution to the offender;
- Having the offence accepted for consideration in court;
- The offender is a juvenile who is dealt with by means of an informed warning or restorative caution.

In addition, for the most serious offence types (indictable only) a non sanction clearance can be claimed if ;

- The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) directs no prosecution, or
- The case cannot proceed because the offender has died.

'Indictable only' offences are the most serious types of offences and are those which must be tried in the Crown Court. Instances of these non sanction clearances are rare and they are few in number each year.

Recent Changes in the Recording of Clearances

Prior to April 2006 a variety of non sanction clearances could be claimed where police took no further action, the main one being where the victim declined to prosecute. At that time these clearance types accounted for around 50% of the PSNI's total clearance rate. However, since then some major changes have been introduced which have substantially limited the clearance options open to the PSNI.

In April 2006, a higher evidential standard was adopted within the PSNI following the establishment of the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland. Then in April 2007 the Home Office significantly restricted the clearance types available to the police which meant that virtually all non sanction clearances could no longer be claimed as valid clearances. Both of these changes had the impact of greatly reducing the number of non sanction clearances to such an extent that the PSNI overall clearance rate and its sanction clearance rate and now virtually one and the same (only a very small proportion of non sanction clearances are now claimed each year).

Definition of a Domestic abuse Incident

Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) by one family member against another or adults who are or who have been intimate partners, regardless of gender, and whether a crime has occurred or not, will be recorded as domestic abuse.

Definition of Hate Incidents

Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate (ACPO definition)

The various sections of the PSNI's Statistical Report for 2008/09 are available in PDF format from the PSNI web-site (www.psni.police.uk) or from the Central Statistics Unit, PSNI Lisnasharragh, 42 Montgomery Road, Belfast, BT6 9LD (Telephone: 0845 600 8000 Ext. 24135; Email: statistics@psni.police.uk).

Press queries about this publication should be directed to the PSNI Media and PR Dept. tel. 0845 600 8000 ext.21084 or ext. 21085