



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2008-03892

Keyword: Crime

Subject: YOUTH CRIME - TYRONE AREA

Request:

My first question concerns youth crime in the four DCU areas of: Dungannon, Cookstown, Omagh and Strabane;

i) How many persons under the age of 10 (i.e. too young to be prosecuted) were suspected of committing a criminal offence in each of these areas during each of the last three years (2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08)

ii) A breakdown by crime category of the figures referred to in question one part (i) (i.e. how many for theft, arson, criminal damage etc each year)

For questions i/ii we can provide a breakdown of cleared offences by the 9 home office crime categories that are regarded as cleared by means of Offender is under the age of criminal responsibility (under 10 years) for the years 2005/06 and 2006/07. We cannot supply this information for 2007/08 as it is no longer regarded as a clearance from 1st April 2007.

Do I assume from this that there is now no longer any way of identifying the number of offences committed by those under the age of criminal responsibility in these areas, even without a breakdown? If that is the case how are such offences recorded in the PSNI annual reports (i.e. as unsolved, simply not recorded)?

iii) How many persons between 10 and under 16 years of age were convicted of committing a criminal offence in each of these areas during each of the last three years (2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08)

iv) A breakdown by crime category of the figures referred to in question one part (iii) (i.e. how many for theft, arson, criminal damage etc each year)

For questions iii/iv we can supply a breakdown of cleared offences by the 9 home office crime categories that are regarded as cleared by means of juvenile caution for the years 2005/06 and 2007/08. However it should be made clear that juvenile cautions were given to 10-16 year olds up until 30th August 2005 and 10-17 year olds after this time.

That is acceptable, however do you not have the figures for the middle year (2006/07)?

The information we can supply is focussed on the number of committed offences cleared rather than the number of offenders.

Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

Please find attached records numbered 01639.pdf (Appendix A). The figures supplied cover the total number of recorded offences in the areas requested and the number of offences cleared including those offences committed by children under 10 years of age and those offences cleared by means of juvenile cautions. The explanation of the recording of these offences should answer any queries you may have in relation to the recording of offences committed by children and juveniles.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this email.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that all PSNI replies under Freedom of Information will be released simultaneously into the public domain via our website @ www.psni.police.uk .

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Recorded and cleared offences in the Omagh, Cookstown, Strabane and Dungannon & South Tyrone DCUs by crime classification

2005/06 Dungannon and South Tyrone

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	693	442	0	11
Sexual offences	30	19	0	0
Burglary	303	44	0	0
Robbery	19	2	0	0
Theft	623	120	1	7
Fraud and forgery	143	88	0	0
Criminal damage	774	146	0	16
Offences against the state	29	15	0	0
Other notifiable offences	202	160	0	13
Total	2816	1036	1	47

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

2005/06 Cookstown

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	560	322	1	6
Sexual offences	23	8	0	0
Burglary	237	80	0	1
Robbery	6	2	0	0
Theft	380	131	1	12
Fraud and forgery	103	52	0	0
Criminal damage	711	141	1	6
Offences against the state	18	17	0	0
Other notifiable offences	154	124	0	14
Total	2192	877	3	39

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

2005/06 Omagh

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	831	1049	0	10
Sexual offences	54	21	2	0
Burglary	206	34	0	1
Robbery	4	0	0	0
Theft	450	106	2	9
Fraud and forgery	114	62	0	0
Criminal damage	614	161	3	11
Offences against the state	13	9	0	2
Other notifiable offences	259	169	0	13
Total	2545	1611	7	46

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Appendix A

2005/06 Strabane

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	686	497	0	9
Sexual offences	35	19	0	0
Burglary	133	17	0	1
Robbery	20	2	0	0
Theft	321	82	0	4
Fraud and forgery	103	39	0	1
Criminal damage	607	123	2	5
Offences against the state	29	13	0	0
Other notifiable offences	87	65	0	3
Total	2021	857	2	23

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

2006/07 Dungannon and South Tyrone

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	635	300	3	18
Sexual offences	35	10	0	0
Burglary	275	35	0	4
Robbery	19	3	0	0
Theft	584	173	3	24
Fraud and forgery	125	49	0	1
Criminal damage	764	125	2	18
Offences against the state	40	31	0	5
Other notifiable offences	135	136	0	6
Total	2612	862	8	76

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

2006/07 Cookstown

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	571	276	0	16
Sexual offences	22	5	0	0
Burglary	122	26	0	2
Robbery	8	1	0	0
Theft	378	112	1	11
Fraud and forgery	69	39	0	1
Criminal damage	578	114	1	19
Offences against the state	25	11	0	1
Other notifiable offences	124	126	0	6
Total	1897	710	2	56

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Appendix A

2006/07 Omagh

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	927	380	0	26
Sexual offences	65	12	0	1
Burglary	169	28	1	0
Robbery	11	1	0	0
Theft	520	134	1	16
Fraud and forgery	112	107	0	0
Criminal damage	783	184	7	17
Offences against the state	24	19	0	4
Other notifiable offences	143	169	0	26
Total	2754	1034	9	90

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

2006/07 Strabane

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	689	342	2	15
Sexual offences	44	8	0	0
Burglary	119	26	0	0
Robbery	14	3	0	0
Theft	328	67	2	8
Fraud and forgery	67	31	0	0
Criminal damage	589	88	1	13
Offences against the state	35	14	0	2
Other notifiable offences	78	69	0	2
Total	1963	648	5	40

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

2007/08 Dungannon and South Tyrone

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age ³	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	633	171	-	8
Sexual offences	32	10	-	0
Burglary	246	29	-	3
Robbery	27	9	-	0
Theft	530	90	-	14
Fraud and forgery	132	12	-	1
Criminal damage	766	73	-	17
Offences against the state	38	26	-	2
Other notifiable offences	141	124	-	7
Total	2545	544	-	52

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Appendix A

2007/08 Cookstown

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age ³	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	627	196	-	8
Sexual offences	22	4	-	0
Burglary	146	35	-	0
Robbery	8	3	-	0
Theft	329	90	-	8
Fraud and forgery	42	19	-	0
Criminal damage	549	69	-	6
Offences against the state	9	5	-	1
Other notifiable offences	97	73	-	1
Total	1829	494	-	24

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

2007/08 Omagh

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age ³	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	846	267	-	4
Sexual offences	62	8	-	0
Burglary	159	15	-	2
Robbery	9	0	-	0
Theft	496	129	-	16
Fraud and forgery	61	14	-	0
Criminal damage	594	100	-	7
Offences against the state	28	12	-	2
Other notifiable offences	214	140	-	5
Total	2469	685	-	36

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

2007/08 Strabane

	Recorded	Cleared ¹	Cleared by means of Offender Under Age ³	Cleared by means of Juvenile Caution ²
Offences against the person	566	168	-	13
Sexual offences	49	0	-	0
Burglary	102	13	-	1
Robbery	13	3	-	0
Theft	298	43	-	8
Fraud and forgery	49	10	-	1
Criminal damage	550	73	-	29
Offences against the state	25	4	-	0
Other notifiable offences	44	37	-	1
Total	1696	351	-	53

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

¹ 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. Alternatively if only one of the six is identified and charged while the other five remain unidentified and go free, this also counts as one clearance. In this respect clearance data differs from conviction data as conviction data counts offenders while clearance data counts crimes.

Appendix A

In April 2006 PSNI adopted a higher evidential standard in respect of non sanction clearances (those where no further action is taken by the police, mainly due to the victim not wanting formal action taken by the police or due to no prosecution being directed). This change was introduced in order to bring these clearance types more closely into line with police services in England and Wales where they have been applying the Crown Prosecution Service evidential test since 2002. In Northern Ireland the equivalent standard only became relevant to PSNI clearances with the establishment of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) in June 2005. Sanction clearances remained unaffected by this change.

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.

Up to 1st April 2007, offences not involving a formal sanction but still regarded as 'cleared up' were those where the police took no further action for the following reasons:

- Offender, victim or essential witness is dead or too ill;
- Victim refuses or is unable to give evidence;
- Offender is under the age of criminal responsibility;
- Police or PPS decides that no useful purpose would be served by proceeding;
- Time limit of six months for commencing prosecution has been exceeded.

The Home Office significantly restricted the clearance types available to the police from 1st April 2007, which meant that virtually all clearances resulting in 'no further police action' (i.e. non sanction clearances) could no longer be claimed as a valid clearance. These clearance types accounted for 4 percentage points of the PSNI clearance rate in 2006/07 but only accounted for less than 0.1 of a percentage point in 2007/08 following this latest restriction. This means that the PSNI overall clearance rate and its sanction clearance rate are now virtually one and the same. This same change also applied to all police services in England and Wales from 1st April 2007.

² Juvenile cautions include juvenile restorative cautions, juvenile informed warnings and juvenile prosecutorial diversions.

³ From 1st April 2007 offender under age is no longer included as a valid clearance.