



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** FOI-2022-01499

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Disability Hate Crimes

### Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act we can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

#### Request 1

How many disability hate crimes have been recorded by your police force for the last two financial years – 2021/22?

#### Answer

There have been 58 disability hate crimes recorded by PSNI in year 2020/2021 and 93 in year 2021/2022.

Hate crime is defined as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic. PSNI also use the principles of this definition to record non-crime hate incidents.

Police recorded crime data is a victim oriented approach to crime recording. A crime will be recorded as having a hate motivation where it meets the relevant definition provided above. Not all hate motivated incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a crime being recorded. Where crimes with a hate abuse motivation are recorded, they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics.

Further details of the background and recording practice in relation to police recorded crime statistics are available in the User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics. An explanation of what constitutes an incident and a crime is provided in Section 2.1 of this guide, while reference to hate motivated incidents and crimes is available in Section 6. These recording practices, methods of counting outcomes and allocation of crime types apply equally to crimes with a hate motivation.

By Disability PSNI understands any disability including physical or sensory disability, learning disability, long-term illness and mental health.

#### The Perception Test

Evidence is not the test when reporting an incident or crime of this nature; when an incident or crime

has been reported to police by the victim or by any other person and they perceive it as being motivated by prejudice or hostility, it will be recorded and investigated as a non-crime hate incident or crime. The perception of the victim or any other person is the defining factor in determining whether an incident is a hate incident, or in recognising the hostility element of a hate crime. Perception-based recording refers to the perception of the victim, or any other person. It would not be appropriate to record a crime or incident as a hate crime or hate incident if it was based on the perception of a person or group who had no knowledge of the victim, crime or the area, and who may be responding to media or internet stories or who are reporting for a political or similar motive. The other person could, however, be one of a number of people, including: police officers or staff; witnesses; family members; civil society organisations who know details of the victim, the crime or hate crimes in the locality, such as a third-party reporting charity; a carer or other professional who supports the victim; someone who has knowledge of hate crime in the area – this could include many professionals and experts such as the manager of an education centre used by people with learning disabilities who regularly receives reports of abuse from students; a person from within the group targeted with the hostility, eg, a Traveller who witnessed racist damage in a local park.

## Request 2

How many disability hate crimes were committed by repeat offenders (of a previous disability hate crime) in the last two financial years- 2021/22?

### Answer

There have been 16 disability hate crimes committed by repeat offenders (of a previous disability hate crime) in year 2020/2021 and 17 crimes in year 2021/2022.

## Request 3

How many disability hate crimes during each financial year (2021/22) concerned acts of violence against a person?

### Answer

There have been 45 disability hate crimes, concerned as acts of violence against a person in year 2020/2021 and 79 in year 2021/2022.

Violence Against the Person consists of three offence classifications: Violence with Injury, Violence without Injury, and Stalking & Harassment.

Please see below a number of disability hate crimes, concerned as acts of violence against a person broken down by each of the classifications.

	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Violence Against the Person</b>	45	79
<i>Of which Violence with Injury</i>	1	7
<i>Of which Violence without Injury</i>	9	20
<i>Of which Stalking &amp; Harassment</i>	35	52

## Request 4

How many incidents of disability hate crime were recorded as taking place online in each financial year (2021/22)?

### Answer

There have been 14 disability hate crimes, flagged as 'online' in year 2020/2021 and 11 in year 2021/2022.

### Online/Cyber Crime

Home Office Definition and guidance: Online crime (formerly cyber-crime) is identified through the use of a 'flag' on the crime recording system. Its aim is to help provide a national and local picture of the extent to which the internet and digital communications technology are being used to commit

crimes. An offence should be flagged where the reporting officer believes that on the balance of probability the offence was committed, in full or in part, through a computer, computer network or other computer-enabled device.

Below is an outline of the circumstances in which a crime should be flagged as 'online':

- a crime was committed online or through internet-based activities, such as: sending or receiving emails, use of social media or networking sites, use of internet forums or blogs, online auction or retail sites, communication via online video game networks or communications platforms; and
- a 'computer, computer network or other computer-enabled devices were used to commit a crime. This includes desktop computers or laptops in the home or in the workplace, smartphones, tablets and other telecommunications devices linked to computer networks, or any other identifiable computer system or network that produces, processes and transmits data.

In the following circumstances a crime should not be flagged as 'online':

- The crime has already been recorded by Action Fraud (ie in the case of fraud and computer misuse offences).
- The crime only involved a phone network to make phone calls or send/receive text messages, rather than an internet network. Some use of a computer network or internet technology is required.
- The computer was used to make or design fraudulent items such as fake gift or shopping vouchers.
- The offence involved theft of computers or other internet-enabled devices.
- The crime was committed using a machine but the intention was not to interact with the computer e.g. theft at an ATM or self-service tills.

The first complete financial year for which online crimes are available is 2014/15. As Action Fraud took over responsibility for the central recording of fraud and cyber-crime previously recorded by PSNI from 1 April 2015, the figures provided here exclude Action Fraud.

While crimes included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules, the identification of an online crime is derived from a motivation 'tick box' on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime. The correct application of an online motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch.

### **Request 5**

How many of the recorded disability hate crimes in each financial year (2021/22) resulted in a PPS referral?

### **Answer**

There have been 8 recorded disability hate crimes, which resulted in a PPS referral in year 2020/2021 and 13 crimes in year 2021/2022.

### **Request 6**

How many of the recorded online disability hate crimes in each financial year (2021/22) resulted in a PPS referral?

### **Answer**

There have been 3 recorded online disability hate crimes, which resulted in a PPS referral in year 2020/2021 and 1 in year 2021/2022.

### **Request 7**

How many incidents of disability hate crime during each financial year (2021/22) were recorded as also being linked to other protected characteristics like race, gender, or sexual orientation?

### **Answer**

There have been 4 disability hate crimes recorded as including an additional hate motivation in year 2020/2021 and 13 in year 2021/2022.

An 'additional hate motivation' relates to the offence, which had a disability hate motivation and at least one other hate motivation from the remaining strands: racist, homophobic, sectarian, faith/religion and transphobic.

**Please mind, that all information provided is based on data extracted from a live crime recording system and may be subject to change. It is dependent on the information having been input into the system in such a way as to identify those records that are relevant.**

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 Corporate Information Branch, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

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 Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing [foi@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@psni.pnn.police.uk).

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, 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', or use the ICO self-service portal available at [www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/officialinformation-concerns-report/official-information-concern/](http://www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/officialinformation-concerns-report/official-information-concern/)

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 their discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ [www.psnj.police.uk](http://www.psnj.police.uk)

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