



Complaints and Allegations Received by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

Quarterly Statistical Update to 30th June 2015

Published July 2015

Complaints and Allegations Received by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland:

Statistical Update to 30th June 2015, published on 23rd July 2015

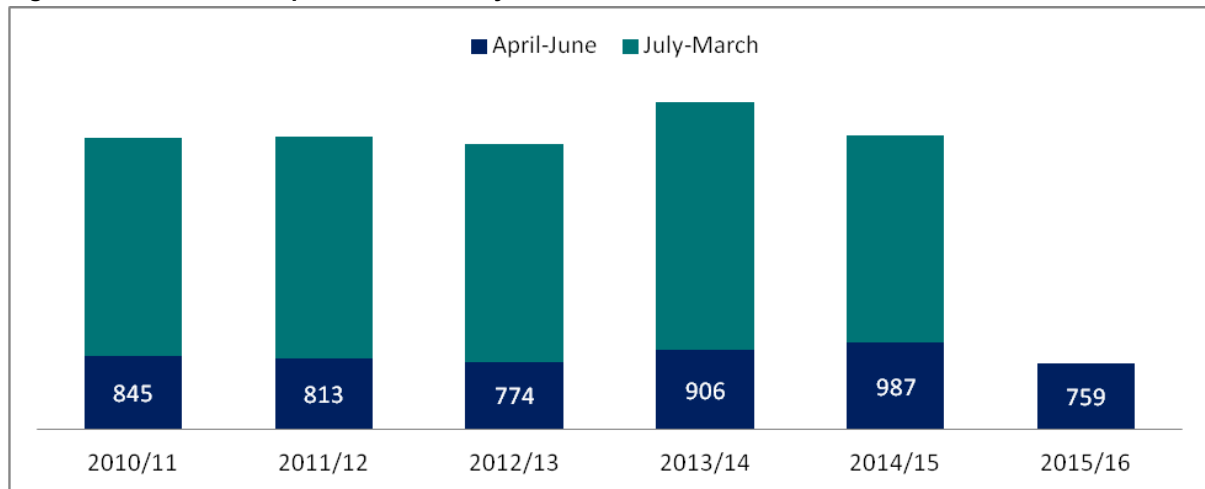
This quarterly bulletin presents the most recent statistics on the number of complaints and allegations received by the Police Ombudsman, up to 30th June 2015. The statistics are based on information extracted from the Police Ombudsman’s Case Handling System (CHS) on the 16th July 2015.

Complaints Received

The number of complaints received by the Police Ombudsman’s Office includes complaints made by members of the public, matters that have been referred to the Police Ombudsman’s Office from other organisations¹, and any matter that the Police Ombudsman has decided is in the public interest for him to investigate.

In the first quarter of 2015/16, the Office received over 750 complaints. This is the fewest number of complaints received than in each of the previous five years. It is 23% fewer complaints than in the first quarter of last year. It should be noted however that in 2014/15 the Office received more complaints than normal in the first three months of the year (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of complaints received by the Police Ombudsman’s Office, 2010/11 to 2015/16



¹ The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Public Prosecution Service (PPS), Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Main Complaint Factor

The main complaint factor refers to the main situation giving rise to the complaint. Criminal investigation was the most common main factor underlying complaints in all but one of the last five years; in 2013/14 Arrest was the most common factor underlying complaints.

The number of complaints either decreased or remained unchanged for all of the complaint factors during the first quarter of 2015/16 compared with the same time period in 2014/15. The number of complaints arising from criminal investigations, arrests and domestic incidents decreased more than for other factors during this time (Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison in the main factor of complaints received between April to June 2014 and April to June 2015

	April to June 2014	April to June 2015	Difference
Criminal Investigation	239	171	↓ -68
Arrest	184	142	↓ -42
Search	89	67	↓ -22
Traffic Related Incident	61	60	↓ -1
Domestic Incident	88	43	↓ -45
Historic Investigation	31	25	↓ -6
Police Enquiries (no investigation)	53	19	↓ -34
Parade/Demonstration	8	8	- 0
Other	195	194	↓ -1
Unknown	39	30	↓ -9
Total	987	759	↓ -228

Complaints Received by Police Area and District

From 1st April 2015 the PSNI area and district boundaries changed to reflect the new council boundaries in Northern Ireland (see PSNI [website](#) for more details).

The number of complaints received in each of the policing districts decreased between April to June 2014 and April to June 2015 with Lisburn & Castlereagh City and Mid-Ulster showing the largest percentage decrease in complaints received (Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage increase/decrease in the number of complaints received in each police area between April to June 2014 and April to June 2015

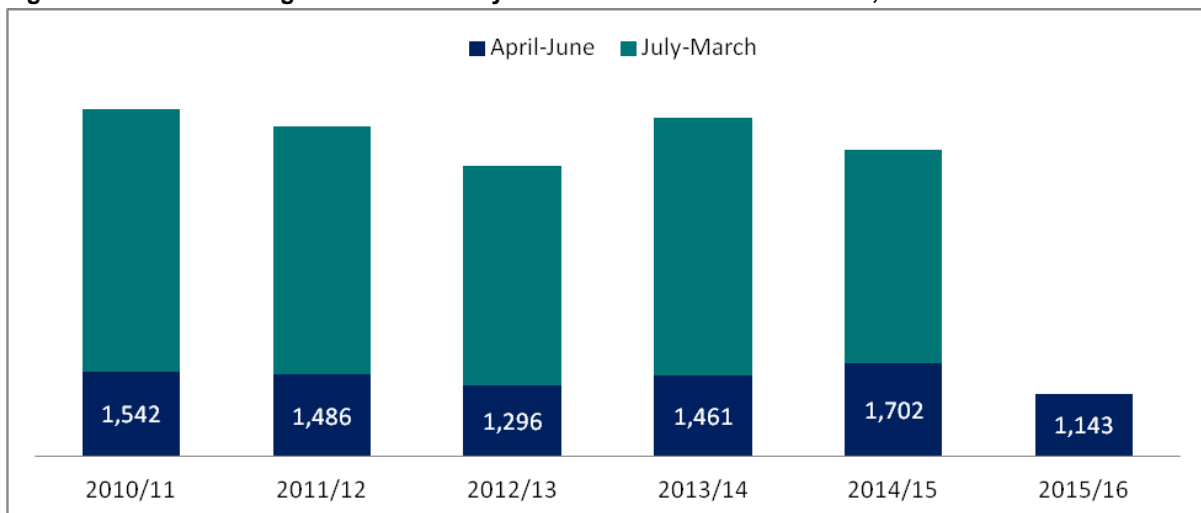
	April to June 2014	April to June 2015	% Increase/Decrease
Belfast City	287	222	-23%
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	54	28	-48%
Ards & North Down	61	48	-21%
Newry Mourne & Down	54	45	-17%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	83	65	-22%
Mid Ulster	41	22	-46%
Fermanagh & Omagh	48	32	-33%
Derry City & Strabane	75	55	-27%
Causway Coast & Glens	73	65	-11%
Mid & East Antrim	46	41	-11%
Antrim & Newtownabbey	56	42	-25%
Unknown / Other Organisation	109	94	-14%
Northern Ireland	987	759	-23%

Allegations Received

Each complaint the Police Ombudsman's Office receives is made up of one or more allegations. The allegation describes the types of behaviours being complained about or the separate issues making up the complaint. For example, a person may make a complaint stating a police officer had pushed them *and* was rude. This would be recorded as one complaint with two allegations. The number of allegations received also includes a small number of residual matters, these are matters of concern identified during an investigation that were not originally detailed in the complaint, typically these account for around 1% to 2% of the allegations received.

The Office received more than 1,000 allegations during the first quarter of 2015/16. This is the fewest number of allegations received compared to the same time period in each of the previous five years (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Number of allegations received by the Police Ombudsman's Office, 2010/11 to 2015/16



Allegation Type

Allegations are categorised into 11 different types. Over the last five years, Failure in Duty allegations accounted for the greatest proportion of allegations, followed by Oppressive Behaviour and Incivility.

The number of allegations decreased for almost all of the allegation types during the first quarter of 2015/16 compared with the same time period during 2014/15. The number of allegations regarding an officers Failure in Duty or Oppressive Behaviour decreased more than for other allegation types during this time. The only allegation type to show an increase during this time was Section 55 referrals (Table 3).

Table 3: Comparison in the Types of Allegations received between April to June 2014 and April to June 2015

	April to June 2014	April to June 2015	Difference
Failure in Duty	711	438	↓ -273
Oppressive Behaviour	442	334	↓ -108
Incivility	125	94	↓ -31
Search	110	69	↓ -41
Unlawful/Unnecessary Arrest/Detention	72	44	↓ -28
Mishandling of Property	35	26	↓ -9
Section 55 Referral	17	23	↑ 6
Malpractice	54	20	↓ -34
Discriminatory Behaviour	20	14	↓ -6
Traffic	9	8	↓ -1
Other	107	73	↓ -34
Total	1,702	1,143	↓ -559

Officers with multiple complaints

There were 66 PSNI officers who attracted three or more complaints that were formally investigated or dealt with by way of informal or local resolution between July 2014 and June 2015 (Table 4).

Table 4: Officers with three or more complaints that were formally investigated or dealt with by Informal/Local Resolution, July 2014 to June 2015

Twelve month period ending	Number of officers with three or more complaints that were formally investigated or dealt with Local/Informal Resolution
June 2015	66

Policing Plan 2014/17 Targets

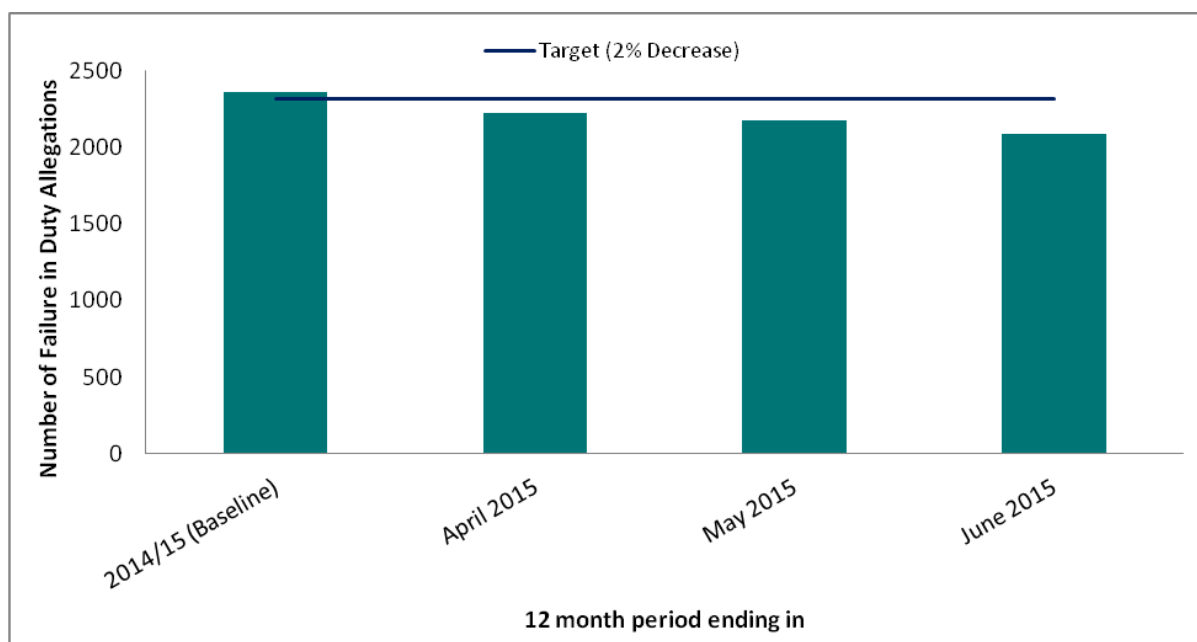
The 2014/17 Policing Plan sets the strategic policing priorities and objectives over the coming years, along with a range of targets and measures for the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to achieve by the end of March 2017. The 2015/16 annual update to this plan, highlights three measures of success that require data from the Police Ombudsman's Office and these are outlined below. These measures are included under the Professional Policing section, and are an indicator of 'Treating People Fairly and with Respect'. The targets refer to specific types of allegations made against the PSNI only and do not include allegations made against PSNI designated civilians or against any other organisation.

To reduce by 2% the number of allegations of Failure in Duty

The baseline information for this target is based on the data produced for the Annual Statistical Bulletin of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, 2014/15' which was published in June 2015. Progress has been tracked on the number of allegations received in the 12 month period up to the most recent month.

There were 2,365 allegations regarding the Failure in Duty of PSNI officers in 2014/15. In order to meet this target the number of allegations received has to be lower than 2,318. In 2015/16 so far there has been a 12% decrease in the number of Failure in Duty allegations received (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Progress on the Police Plan target to reduce the number of Failure in Duty allegations, from 2014/15 to the most recent 12 month period (July 2014 to June 2015)

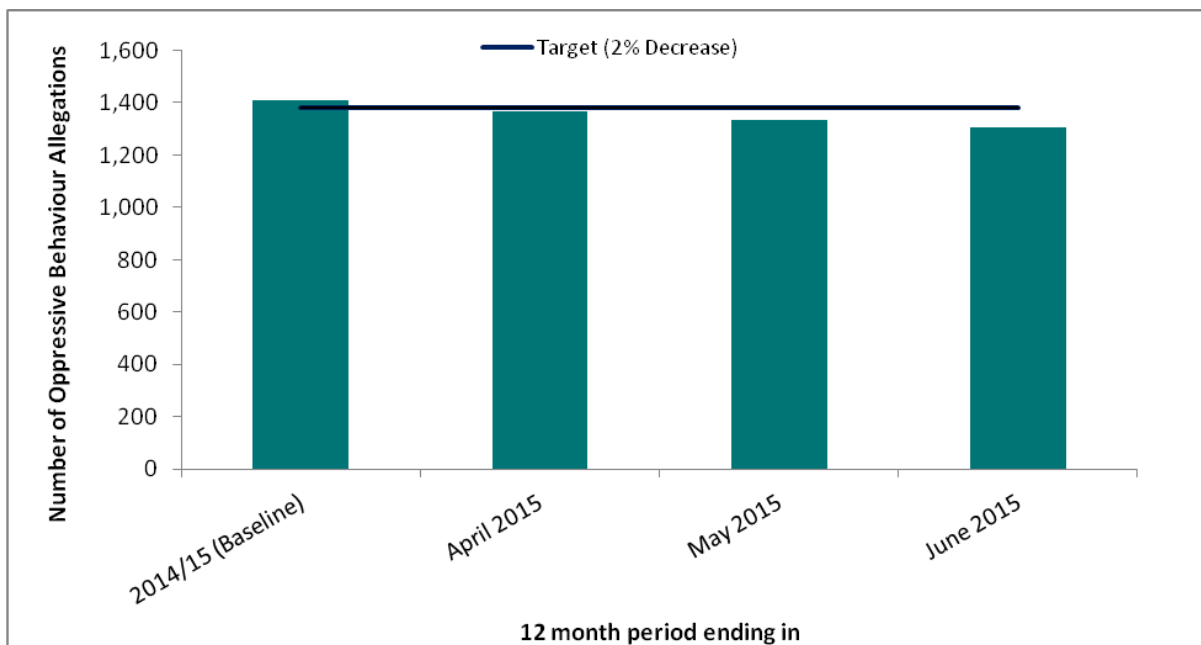


To reduce by 2% the number of allegations of Oppressive Behaviour

Similar to Failure in Duty, the baseline information for this target is based on the data produced for the Annual Statistical Bulletin of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, 2014/15' which was published in June 2015. To compare like with like, progress has been tracked on the number of allegations received in the 12 month period up to the most recent month.

There were 1,409 allegations regarding the Oppressive Behaviour of PSNI officers in 2014/15. In order to meet this target the number of allegations received has to be lower than 1,381. So far this year there has been a 7% decrease in the number of Oppressive Behaviour allegations received (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Progress on the Police Plan target to reduce the number of Oppressive Behaviour allegations, from 2014/15 to the most recent 12 month period (July 2014 to June 2015)

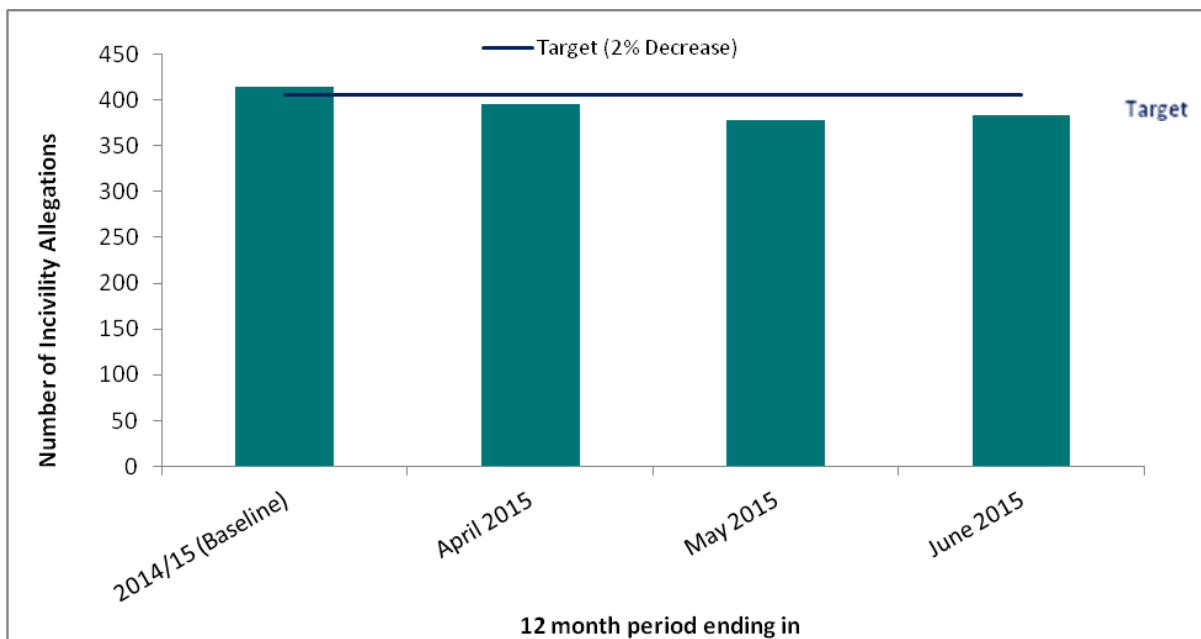


To reduce by 2% the number of allegations of Incivility

As with previous targets the baseline information for this target is based on the data produced for the Annual Statistical Bulletin of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, 2014/15' which was published in June 2015. To compare like with like, progress has been tracked on the number of allegations received in the 12 month period up to the most recent month.

There were 414 allegations regarding the Incivility of PSNI officers in 2014/15. In order to meet this target the number of allegations received has to be lower than 406. So far this year there has been a 7% decrease in the number of Incivility allegations received (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Progress on the Police Plan target to reduce the number of Incivility allegations, from 2014/15 to the most recent 12 month period (July 2014 to June 2015)



Additional Information

Data Use

The information presented in this document has been produced to meet the needs of our key users who need timely information on the number of complaints and allegations received by the Police Ombudsman's Office. The main users of this quarterly bulletin are the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB). This statistical update is the outcome of consultation with these users, it gives them access to information that they can use to form discussions at their regular meetings.

Understanding the Statistics

There are a number of factors that may influence whether or not a person makes a complaint to the Police Ombudsman. It is important when drawing conclusions from the statistics not to take a simplistic view but to consider the following factors:

- The number and nature of police operations conducted;
- The performance of police officers;
- The level of interaction between the public and the police;
- The awareness of the Police Ombudsman's Office, knowledge of how to make a complaint, and public confidence in the Office;
- The size of the police service;
- Changes to the PSNI's or the Offices' procedures;
- The level of crime;
- The number of public order incidents; and
- Population demographics.

Care should be taken when comparing the number of complaints or allegations received at police district or police area level as some of the differences between areas may reflect variations in their composition, such as the degree of urbanization, level of deprivation and the balance between the resident population, day-time population and the night-time economy.

It is also important to note that the system is live and data may therefore be subject to future revisions.

Further information

A [user guide](#) has been published to give users of these statistics more knowledge about the complaints process, more information regarding the quality of the data and also a glossary of terms used. It is recommended that all users of these statistics should consult the user guide to aid their understanding of the statistics and ensure that they are using them appropriately.

Further information regarding the number of complaints and allegations received in 2014/15 is available in the [accompanying excel spreadsheet](#). This spreadsheet also includes the data for the figures and tables in this bulletin.

A more detailed break-down of the types of complaints and allegations received by the Police Ombudsman's Office over the last five years as well as presenting information on the outcomes of complaints is available in the 'Annual Statistical Bulletin of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, 2014/15', which is available on the Office's [website](#).

Additional geographic breakdowns of the types of complaints and allegations received and recommendations made by the Police Ombudsman will be made available later this year on the [Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service \(NINIS\)](#).

If you would like information on other statistics published by the Police Ombudsman's Office please see the statistics and research page on the Police Ombudsman's [website](#).

Publication

This is the second year the Police Ombudsman's Office has published quarterly information on the number of complaints and allegations received. The Office will publish information in-year on a quarterly basis. This information will be published on the Police Ombudsman's website at 9:30am on the fourth Thursday of the month following the end of the quarter. A more detailed publication will be published at the end of the financial year concentrating on the trends in the number of complaints and allegations received over the last five years.

The next quarterly update is due to be published on Thursday 22nd October 2015 and it will include statistics up to the 30th September 2015.

User Feedback

We continuously welcome your feedback or comments on the statistics released. If you would like to forward your views or to receive notifications of statistical releases please email your contact details to info@policeombudsman.org, further contact details are available on the back page of this bulletin.

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This publication and other information about the work of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland are also available on the Internet at:

Website: www.policeombudsman.org



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