

[REDACTED]

FOI 657/23-24

28th March 2024

[REDACTED]

I refer to your email dated 28th February 2024 in which you asked for information in relation to false allegations in the Family Court. Your request has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act creates rights of access for any person making a request for information to a public authority. The rights of access are twofold. First, to be informed by the public authority if it holds information of the description specified in the request, and if that is the case, secondly, to be provided with that information. These rights are subject to important limitations, which are designed to achieve a proper balance between the right to know and considerations of law and policy in the broader public interest.

You had asked the following:

“1. What case tracking data do the PPS hold on the prevalence of false allegations in the family court arena?

2. How many cases of perjury/perverting the course of justice have the PPS prosecuted in the last 5 years?

3. What measures have the PPS put in place to identify if a problem exists?

4. What Section 75 data do the PPS have on the outcomes of allegations/false allegation prosecutions in relation to family court cases?”

In response to questions 1, 3 and 4, please be advised that the PPS do not hold this information. Therefore, in terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I can confirm that under Section 1(1)(a) of the Act the PPS does not hold the requested information.

In response to question 2, please see table below which provides the number of

prosecution decisions issued for offences of perjury and perverting the course of justice over the last 5 years (2019 - 2023). It should be noted that the figures refer to all perjury / perverting the course of justice cases dealt with by the PPS over this period (i.e. they are not limited to cases arising from the Family Court).

Legislation	Offence	Number of Decisions (Suspects)
Article 3 of the Perjury (Northern Ireland) Order 1979	Perjury by Witness	5
Common Law	Perverting the Course of Justice	99

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review in accordance with our review procedure. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of this response and you can do so by writing to the Head of Policy and Information, Public Prosecution Service, Belfast Chambers, 93 Chichester Street, BELFAST, BT1 3JR or alternatively by sending an e-mail to info@ppsni.gov.uk. You should state the grounds on which you are requesting the review.

Alternatively, you may wish to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
 Wycliffe House
 Water Lane
 Wilmslow
 Cheshire
 SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Information Management Team
Public Prosecution Service