

[REDACTED]

FOI 703/23-24

22 April 2024

[REDACTED]

I refer to your email dated 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 in which you requested information relating to the use of lip-reading testimony in criminal trials in Northern Ireland. 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. *"I am writing to see if you would hold any records relating to the number of criminal prosecutions that have heard expert witness testimony from lip readers.*
2. *I am specifically interested in someone called Jessica Rees who I know was helping police in England and Scotland between 1999 and around 2005/6 and have read she may have worked in Northern Ireland too during this time.*
3. *I would also like to ask if PPSNI allows for expert lip-reading testimony to be heard in a criminal trials today?"*

In response to questions 1 & 2, we can advise the information requested is not held by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) for Northern Ireland. 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 3 we can advise that to date the PPS has not had to rely on or utilise expert lip-reading testimony in a criminal trial. 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.

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](mailto: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**