

AN INSPECTION OF THE OFFICE OF THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN FOR NORTHERN IRELAND'S INVESTIGATION OF ABUSE OF POSITION CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

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Northern Ireland
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WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

ABUSE OF POSITION

Occurs when a serving Police Officer or staff member with the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) abuses their powers, position or authority for an improper use.

It can cover a range of offences and behaviours.

Some examples could be misuse of a police computer, police records or phone to abusing their powers for sexual purposes or financial gain.

VS

VS

VS

MALPRACTICE

Occurs when a serving Police Officer or staff member with the PSNI commits negligence or deliberate fault.

Different procedures exist according to the type of misconduct alleged and the origins of the allegation.

Some examples could be an unlawful arrest, or failure to investigate a crime.

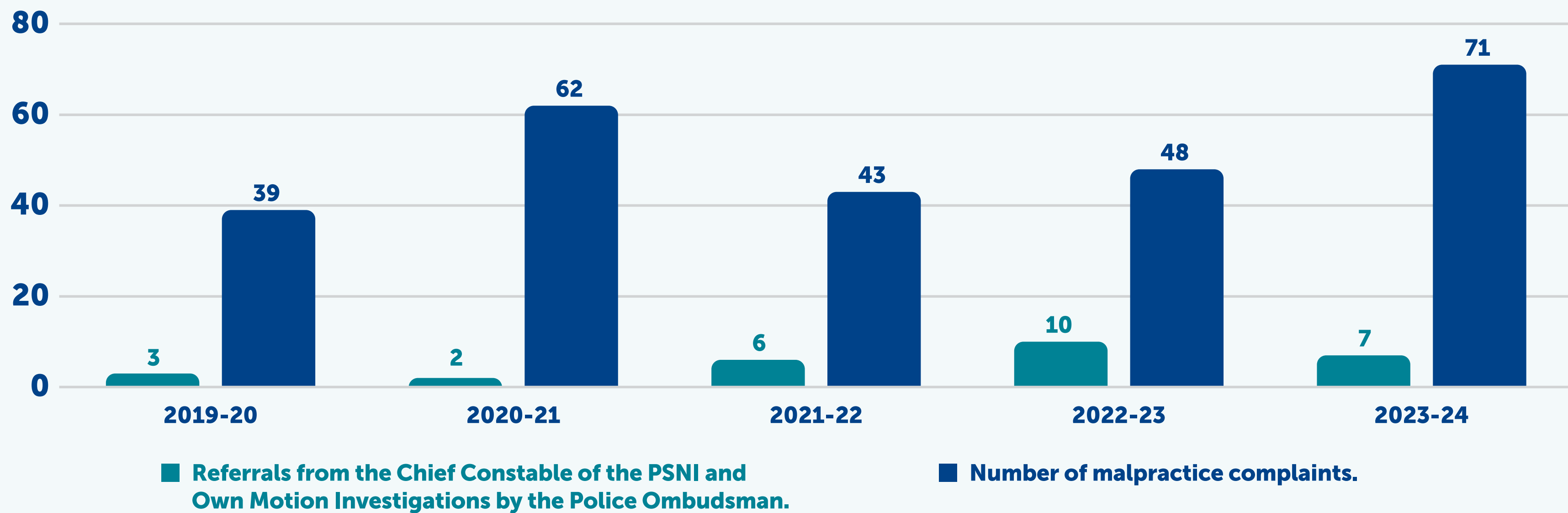


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ABUSE OF POSITION REFERRALS AND COMPLAINTS (FROM 2019-20 TO 2023-24)



Source: Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

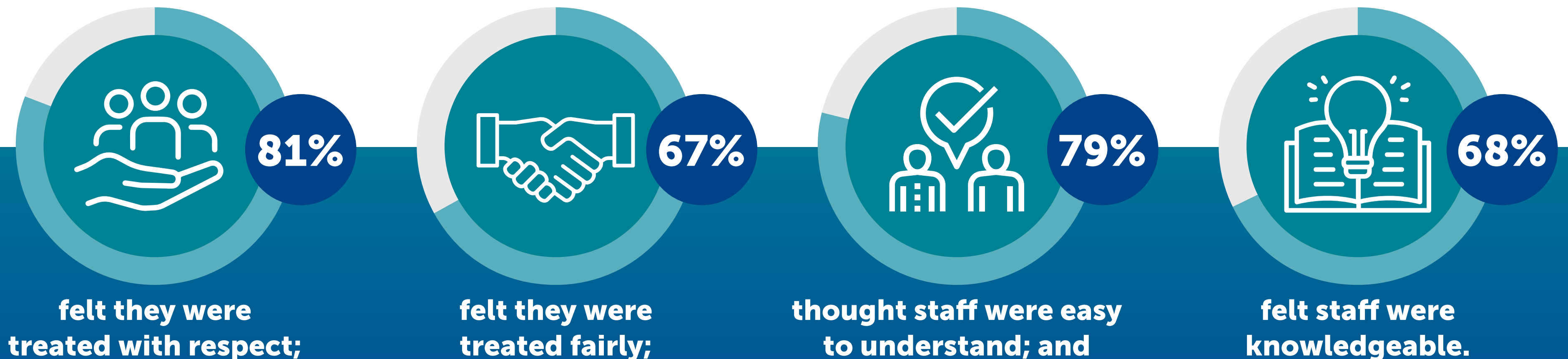
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2023-24 OFFICE OF THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN FOR NORTHERN IRELAND COMPLAINANT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS.

75% of complainants reported that they had spoken to a member of staff from the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. Of these:

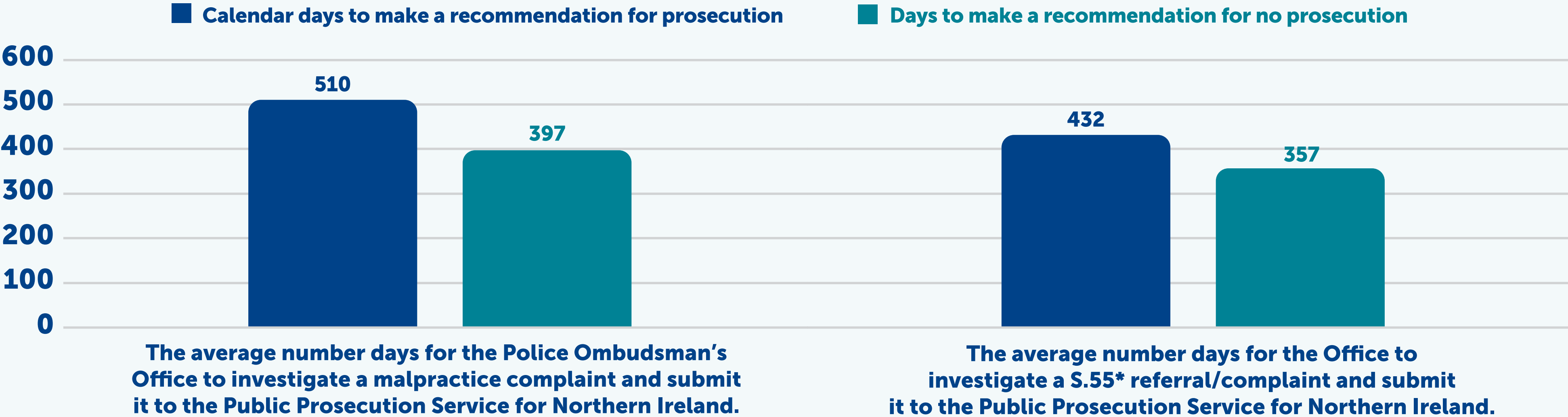


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**TIMELINESS OF CASE INVESTIGATION AND SUBMISSION
BETWEEN 1 APRIL 2019 TO 31 MARCH 2024.**



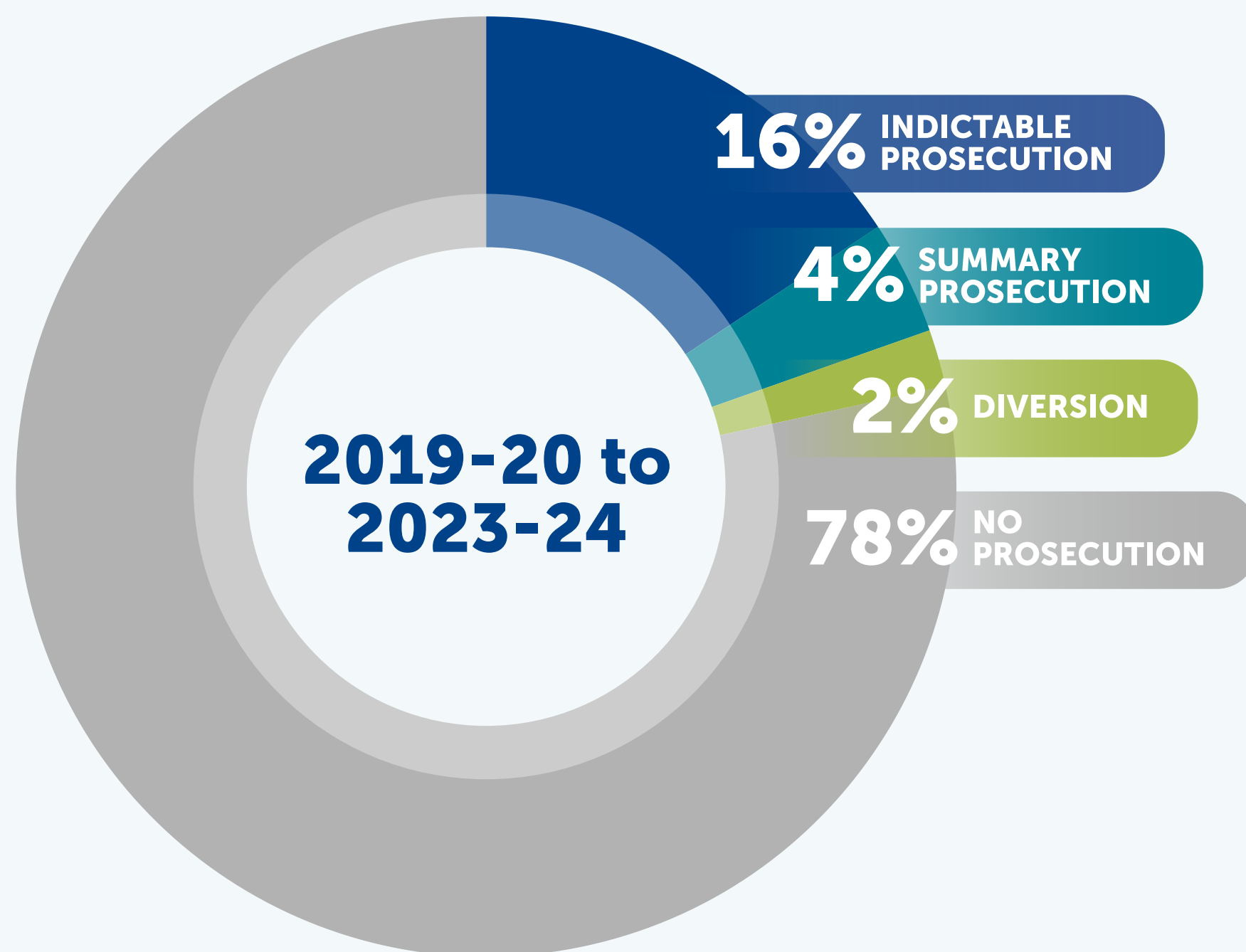
**Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998*

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PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND DECISIONS ON ABUSE OF POSITION CASES



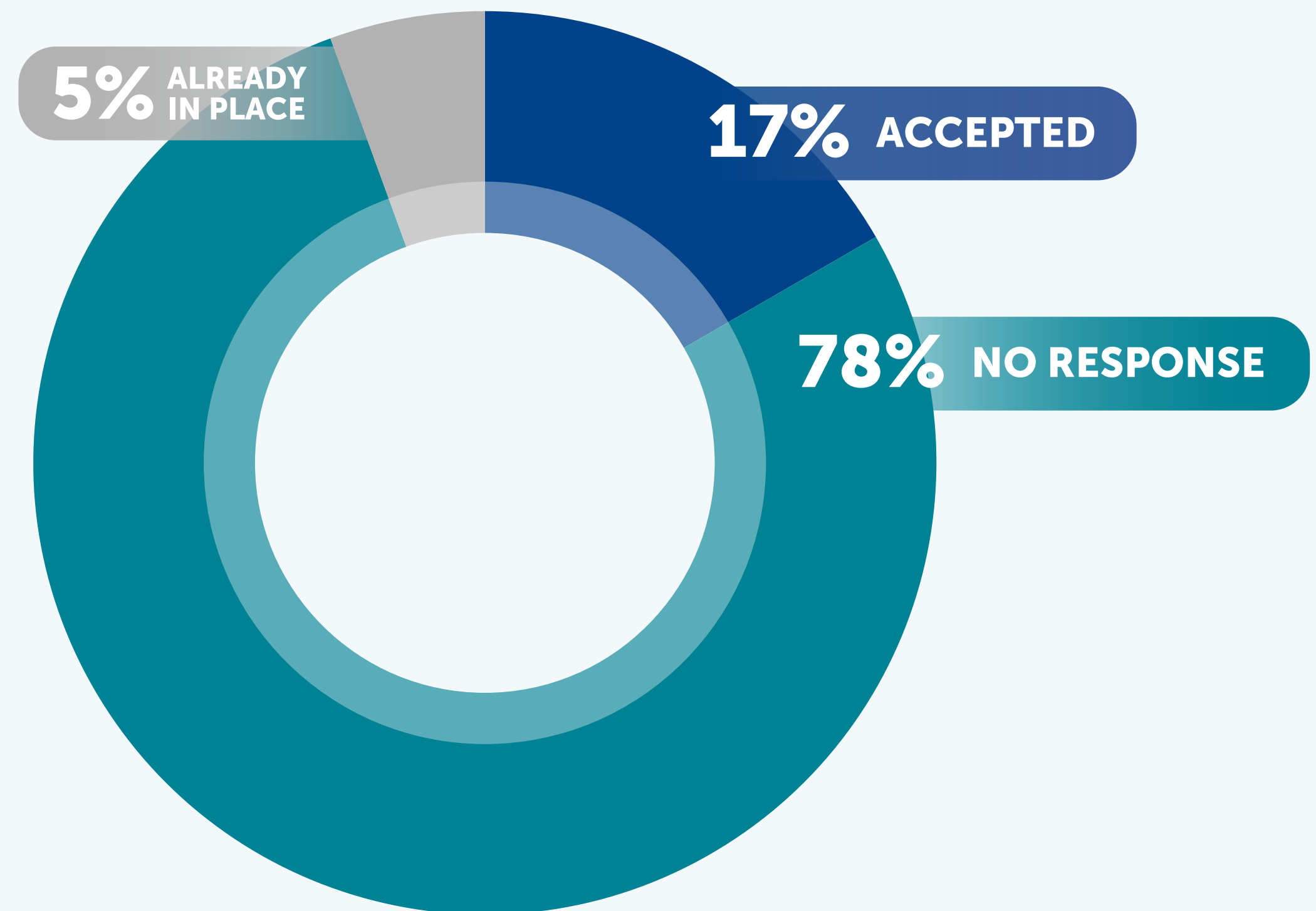
Abuse of Position cases took on average **129 days** for the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland to take a 'no prosecution' decision. Decisions to prosecute or offer diversion took on average **366 days.**

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**STATUS OF POLICY
RECOMMENDATIONS
MADE BY THE POLICE
OMBUDSMAN FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND
TO THE PSNI
FROM 1 APRIL - 30
SEPTEMBER 2024.**

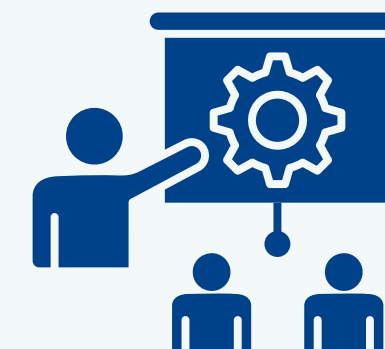


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CJI'S 5 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



**Create a definition
of Abuse of Position
and develop an
Abuse of Position
Strategy.**

**Improved working
relationship between
the Department of
Justice and the Police
Ombudsman's Office.**

**Development of a
Workforce Strategy
and Learning and
Development
Strategy to meet
future staff needs to
ensure delivery of a
high-quality service.**

**The PSNI needs to review
its guidance and training
provided to Police
Officers and staff as well
as monitor the recording
and referral of Abuse
of Position allegations/
offences.**

**The Police
Ombudsman's Office
needs to monitor
the effectiveness
of its policy
recommendations in
improving the PSNI's
service delivery.**

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CJI'S 6 OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS



The Department of Justice needs to progress legislation to enable swifter disciplinary action to be taken by the PSNI when/if appropriate.

Review the Northern Ireland Victim Charter to ensure the rights and entitlements of victims who report a crime to the Police Ombudsman are guaranteed.

Improve the effectiveness of victim support.

Better working partnership between the Police Ombudsman's Office and the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland.

Improved resources to address delays in internal disciplinary proceedings in the PSNI.

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland should develop additional up-to-date guidance on Abuse of Position for Sexual Purposes offences and the power of referral to the Police Ombudsman's Office.