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Provisional Figures

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[Northern Ireland Court Service Statistical Publications](#)

Executive Summary

This report covers data from July to September 2021, so court activity during this period has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Figures published show that although courts continue to carry out urgent business and make more use of remote audio and video technology, the impact of COVID-19 is evident. It is expected that the limited operation of the county courts during the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have an impact on many of the published figures in this and future releases.

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period July to September 2021 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2012. On 31st October 2016, a single County Court Division called “The County Court of Northern Ireland” replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court Bulletin is now disaggregated by Court Office (Processing Office). During the period July to September 2021:
- There were 1,593 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 2% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,632). In total, 1,794 civil bills were disposed, a 67% increase on the number disposed during the same period in 2020 (1075).
- 44 equity cases were received during July to September 2021, up by ten cases compared to the 34 cases received during the period July to September 2020, while 16 equity cases were disposed, compared with 7 equity cases disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 89 ejectment cases were received, over double the number received during July to September 2020 (39), with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing from five in the same quarter last year to 49 this quarter.
- 1,425 small claims were received, a 59% increase on the 895 cases received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed increased from 719 during July to September 2020 to 1,266 this quarter.
- Two criminal damage cases were received, compared to zero in the period July to September 2020. Three criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, an increase on the one disposed during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 284 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, up 84% on the 154 granted during the same period last year.

- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 857 sitting days during the quarter, a 36% increase on the number that was recorded during the period July to September 2020 (632). Some 48% of time was spent on criminal business with 29% spent on civil business and 23% on family business (compared to 38%, 18% and 45% respectively during July to September 2020).

[Note 1] Administrative case management reviews were introduced by the Lord Chief Justice as part of the coronavirus contingency arrangements. This has resulted in Judges investing significant time reviewing cases and making directions or orders administratively (where appropriate), and this has continued even as courts have resumed to support business recovery. This extra time is not recorded on the courts operating system (ICOS), and therefore is not reflected within the sittings times published within this report.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Civil cases are commenced in the County Court if the value of the case is less than £30,000. The financial limit in the County Court increased from £15,000 to £30,000 on the 25 February 2013. However, for claims concerning matrimonial property or compensation for criminal injuries or criminal damage to property, there is no financial limit. The County Court also has jurisdiction to hear applications for adoptions and undefended divorces. Applications for intoxicating liquor licences and certificates of registration for clubs are also made to the County Court. In addition to its original civil jurisdiction, the County Court hears appeals under a number of statutory provisions from the Magistrates' Courts or from other tribunals.

County courts can deal with a wide range of cases, but the most common ones are:-

- landlord and tenant disputes, for example, possession (eviction), rent arrears, repairs
- consumer disputes, for example, faulty goods or services
- personal injury claims (injuries caused by negligence), for example, traffic accidents, falling into holes in the pavement, accidents at work
- undefended divorce cases, but only in some county courts
- some domestic violence cases, but these may also be heard in the magistrates court
- race and sex discrimination cases
- debt problems, for example, a creditor seeking payment
- employment problems, for example, wages or salary owing or pay in lieu of notice.

The County Court also deals with small claims. In general, a small claim is one where the value of the claim is not more than £3,000. This limit was increased from £2,000 in May 2011.

The most common types of claim dealt with in the Small Claims Court are:

- compensation for faulty services provided, for example, by builders, dry cleaners and garages
- compensation for faulty goods, for example, televisions or washing machines which go wrong
- disputes between landlords and tenants, for example, rent arrears or compensation for not doing repairs
- wages owed or money in lieu of notice.

All claims arising from regulated credit agreements must be started in the County Court, whatever their value.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data sources

Data contained in Tables 1 to 31 and Table 33 uses information inputted into the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS). This system was implemented across the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) over a two-year period from 2005 to 2007. While ICOS was introduced in the County Court during 2005, data derived from ICOS has been used as the source for official government statistics since 2007, when the implementation of ICOS across all court tiers was completed. ICOS is a live operating system used in each court tier to process every part of court business, from receipt of payments through to the production of final orders made. Data is inputted into this system, by court clerks on a daily basis and information is checked and confirmed by another member of staff to ensure data entries are correct. As data on licence applications received and disposed is not recorded on ICOS, these figures are compiled manually by each County Court Office and submitted on a quarterly basis.

2.2 Methodology for generating data

Analytical Services Group (ASG) statisticians based within the NICTS take a download of County Court information from ICOS on a monthly basis. The information is downloaded using a package called Sharepoint, which extracts all the relevant data from ICOS into text files, which are refreshed with up to date information each weekend. The text files are downloaded onto a secure internal facility that only specified statistical personnel have access to. The data contained in the files are identified only by numbers; names and addresses are not held. These statistical files are not transmitted outside the NICTS statistical team. ASG statisticians based in the NICTS import data into the Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is then used to perform extensive data validations to identify potential errors in the data and to ensure data is reliable and robust.

2.3 Baseline and Time period

Data contained within this bulletin relates to the current calendar year 2021. The time series for this information dates back to 2007 when ICOS was adopted as the source of County Court data, however, within this publication, comparisons of trends are viewed over a 10-year period.

2.4 Frequency of Publication

This bulletin is published on a quarterly basis. The next bulletin will cover the fourth quarter of 2021 and will be published on 18th February 2022.

2.5 Data quality and validation

ASG statisticians based in the NICTS have invested significant time and effort creating an extensive computer programme within SPSS to validate the information downloaded from ICOS. The programme includes over 100 checks against downloaded court data to (i)

check consistency over time and between variables, (ii) assess the reliability of data using logic checks, (iii) check that variables fall within accepted ranges, and (iv) check with the ICOS Support Team in the event of any major discrepancies that have occurred since the last download. The validation program produces user friendly tables highlighting potential problems which are circulated to each County Court venue as a validation report.

The NICTS statistics team then ensure that all validations relating to the reporting period are amended prior to publication. Once these amendments have been checked, SPSS syntax programming is then used to generate the tables in the publication. Data contained in this bulletin are currently provisional and will undergo further validation before being published in their final form within the relevant edition of Judicial Statistics (published in June of each year for the previous calendar year).

2.6 Counting rules

Receipts are counted from the date the case is entered onto ICOS and the fees are receipted. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to 'dealt with'. On 31st October 2016, a single County Court Division called "The County Court of Northern Ireland" replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court Bulletin is now disaggregated by Court Office (Processing Office) as at the time of data download.

2.7 Interpreting trends

Care should be taken when comparing data trends before and after 2005, when ICOS was introduced as the source for the majority of County Court data. Additionally, due to on-going changes to the legal jurisdiction of the County Court, users should be cautious of comparing trends in small claims and ordinary civil bills. Changes made to the upper limit of small claims in May 2011 (from £2,000 to £3,000) will have resulted in some claims that would have previously been ordinary civil bills becoming small claims. Also, changes to jurisdiction to increase the upper limit of ordinary civil bills during February 2013 (from £15,000 to £30,000) will have resulted in some cases that were previously High Court writs becoming ordinary civil bills. For further advice on differences in data between years, please contact the statistician responsible for this bulletin.

2.8 Revisions

Any revision to data will be applied in light of the ASG (NICTS) Statistical Note 'Policy Statement on Revisions,' which can be found at, [Northern Ireland Court Service Statistical Publications](#)

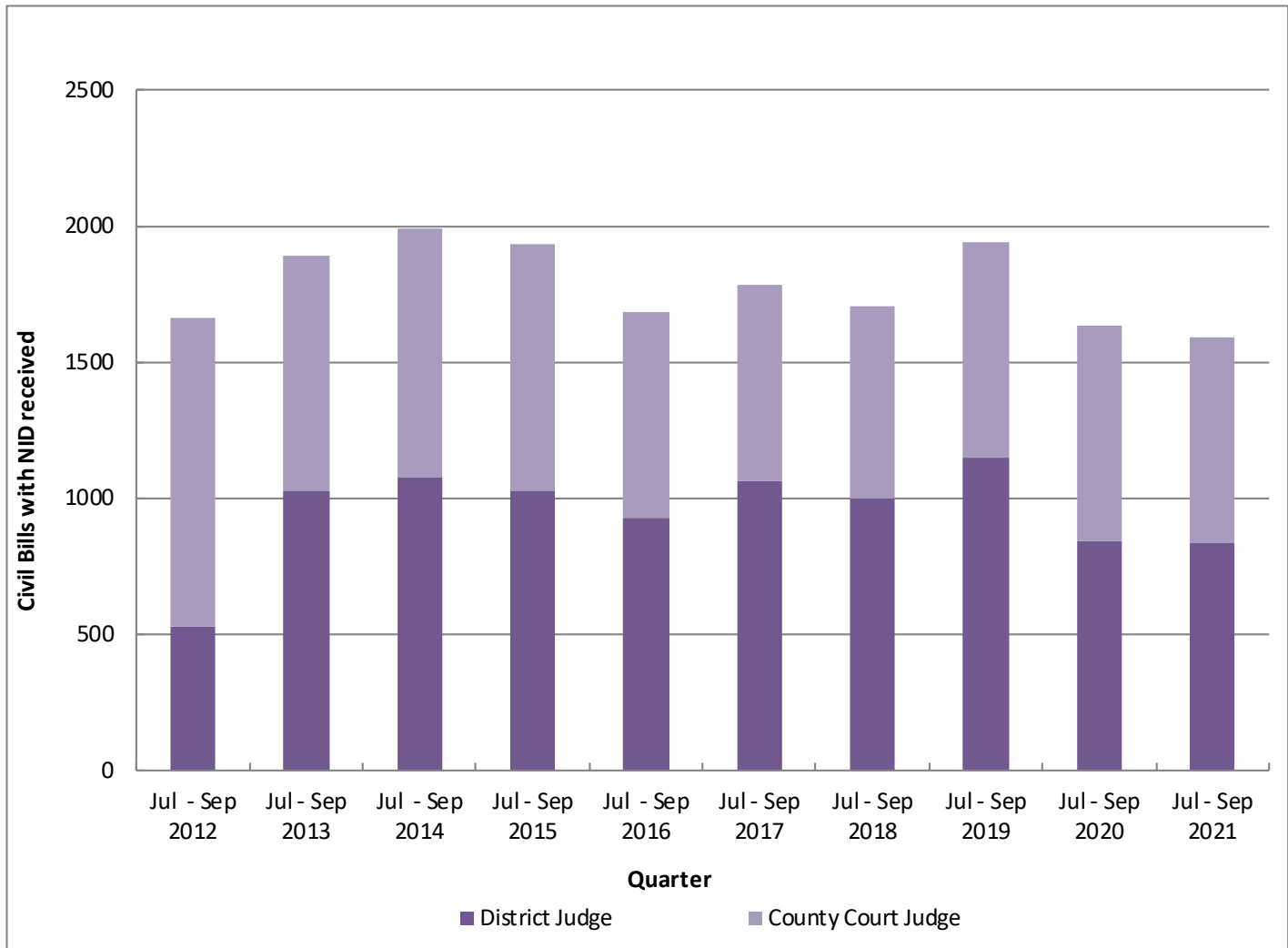
Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

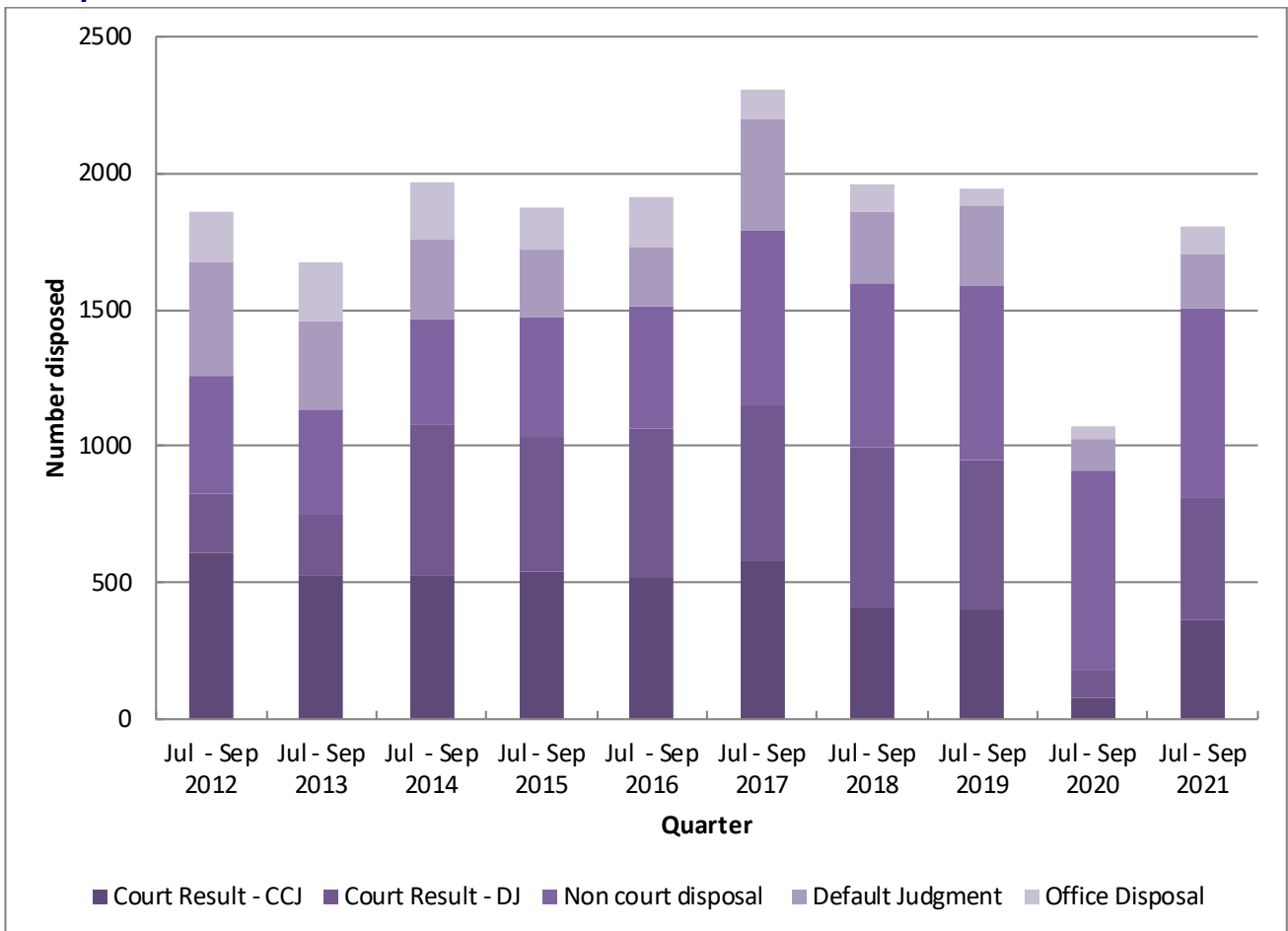
There were 1,593 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 2% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,632) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received – July to September 2012 to July to September 2021



In total, 1,794 civil bills were disposed, a 67% increase on the number disposed during the same period in 2020 (1,075) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal – July to September 2012 to July to September 2021



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 73 weeks; it was 58 weeks for the same quarter in 2020.

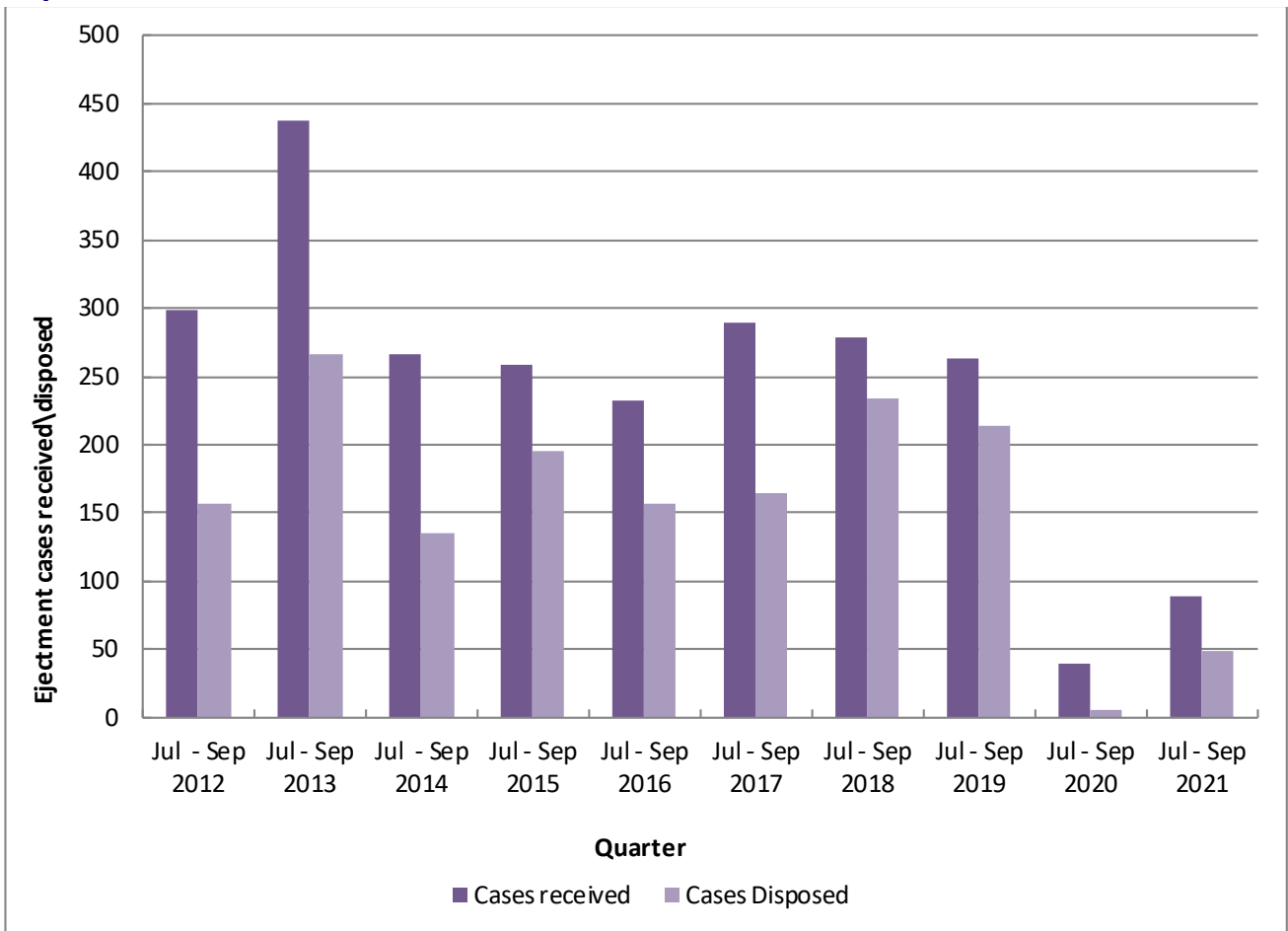
3.2 Equity

A total of 44 equity cases were received during July to September 2021, ten more than the number received during the period July to September 2020 (34). The number of equity cases disposed increased from seven during the period July to September 2020, to 16 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 135 weeks; it was 64 weeks during the same period last year. The relatively small number of equity cases disposed each quarter can lead to significant changes in average times observed from issue to disposal.

3.3 Ejectment

A total of 89 ejectment cases were received, over double the number received during July to September 2020 (39), with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing, from five in the same quarter last year to 49 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed – July to September 2012 to July to September 2021

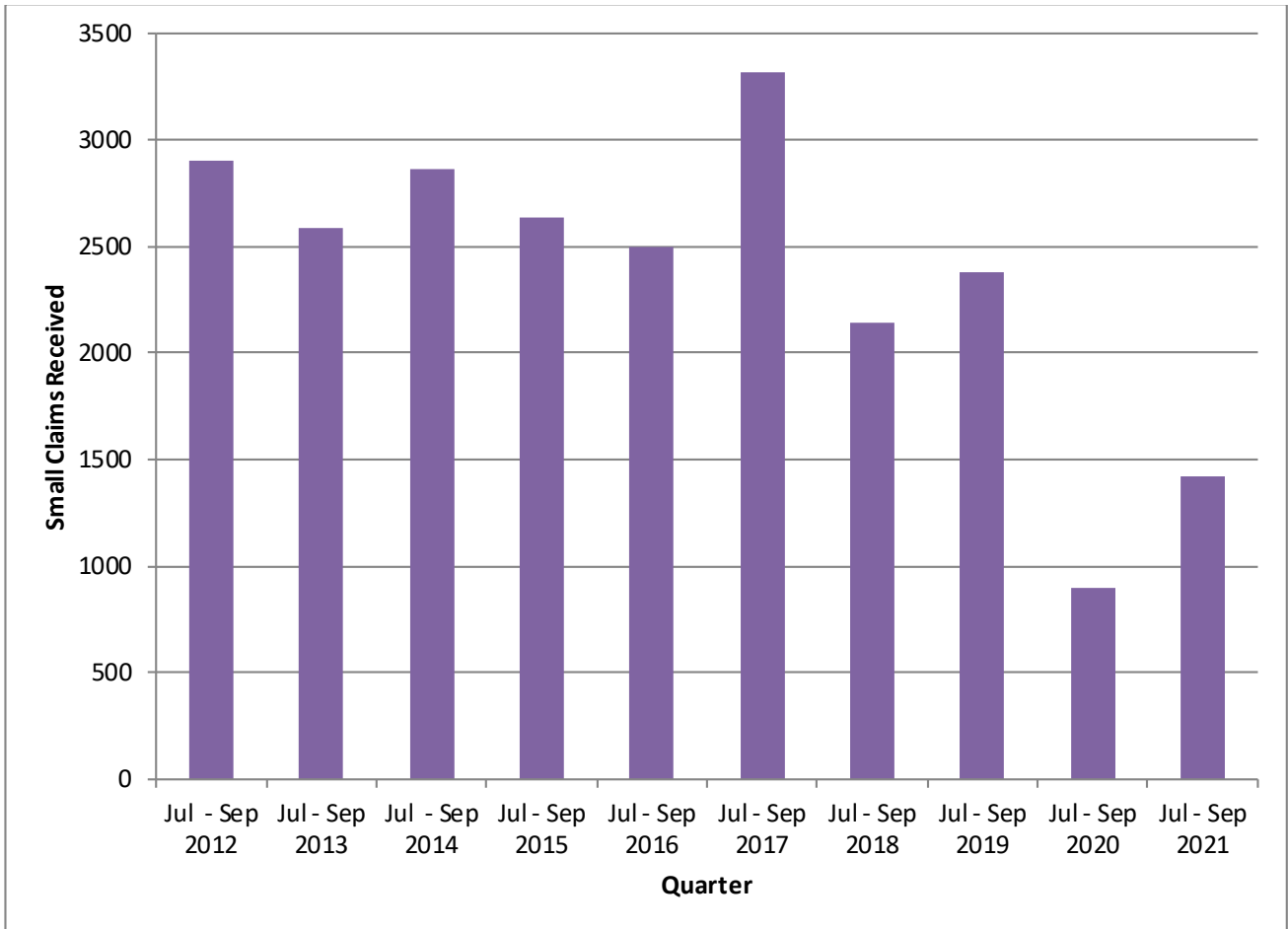


The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 45 weeks. This compares to the 39 weeks for the July to September quarter in 2020.

3.4 Small claims

1,425 small claims were received, a 59% increase on the 895 received during the same quarter last year (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Small claims cases received – July to September 2012 to July to September 2021



The number of small claims cases disposed increased from 719 during July to September 2020 to 1,266 this quarter. Of the 1,266 small claims disposed during the quarter, 49% were disposed by way of default judgment.

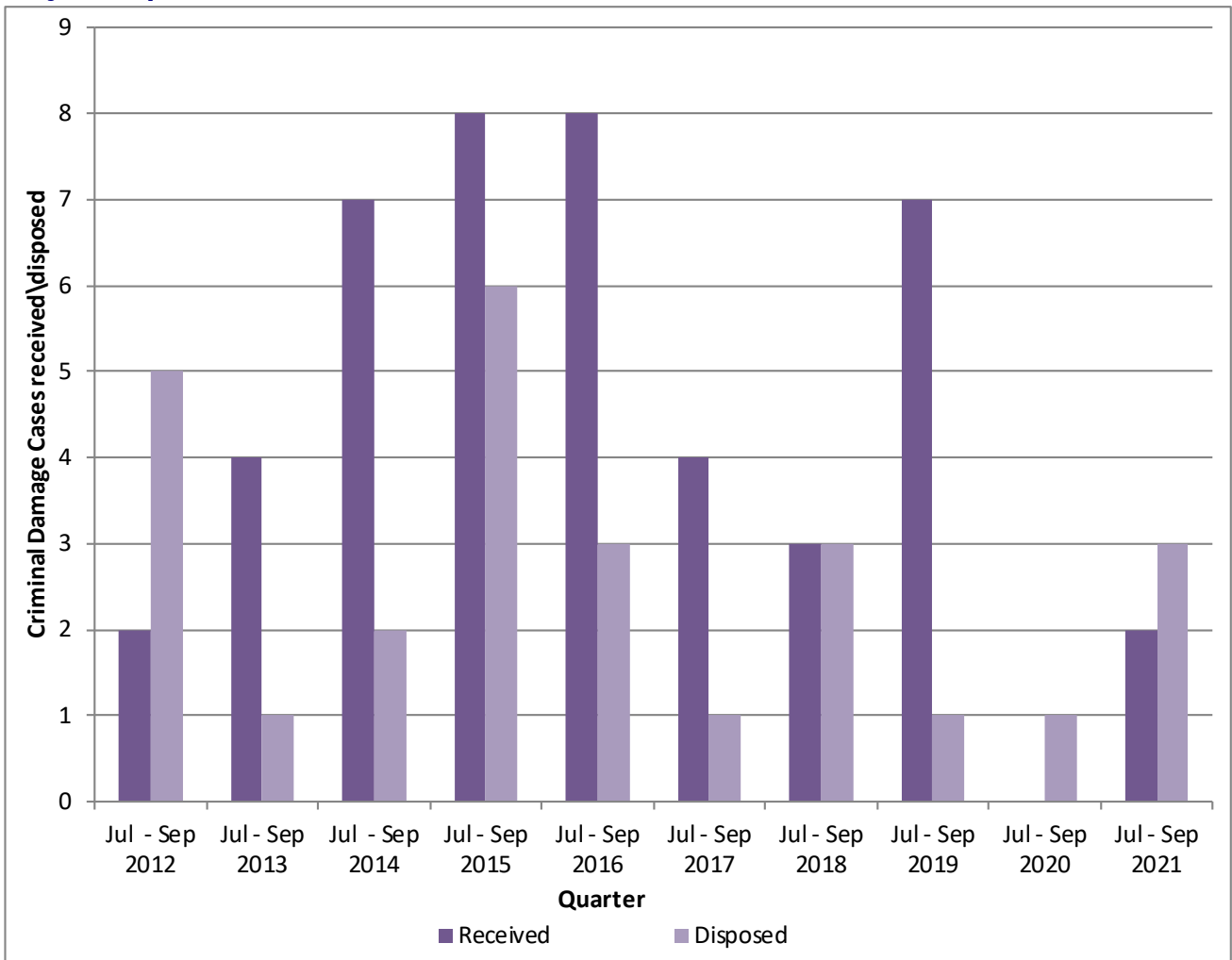
The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 50 weeks; in the corresponding quarter last year the figure was 3 weeks, but this involved no court disposals.

There were 237 small claims court disposals during the period July to September 2021.

3.5 Criminal Damage

Two criminal damage cases were received with three disposed during the quarter. This compares with zero cases received and one case disposed during the same quarter in 2020 (Figure 5)

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed – July to September 2012 to July to September 2021



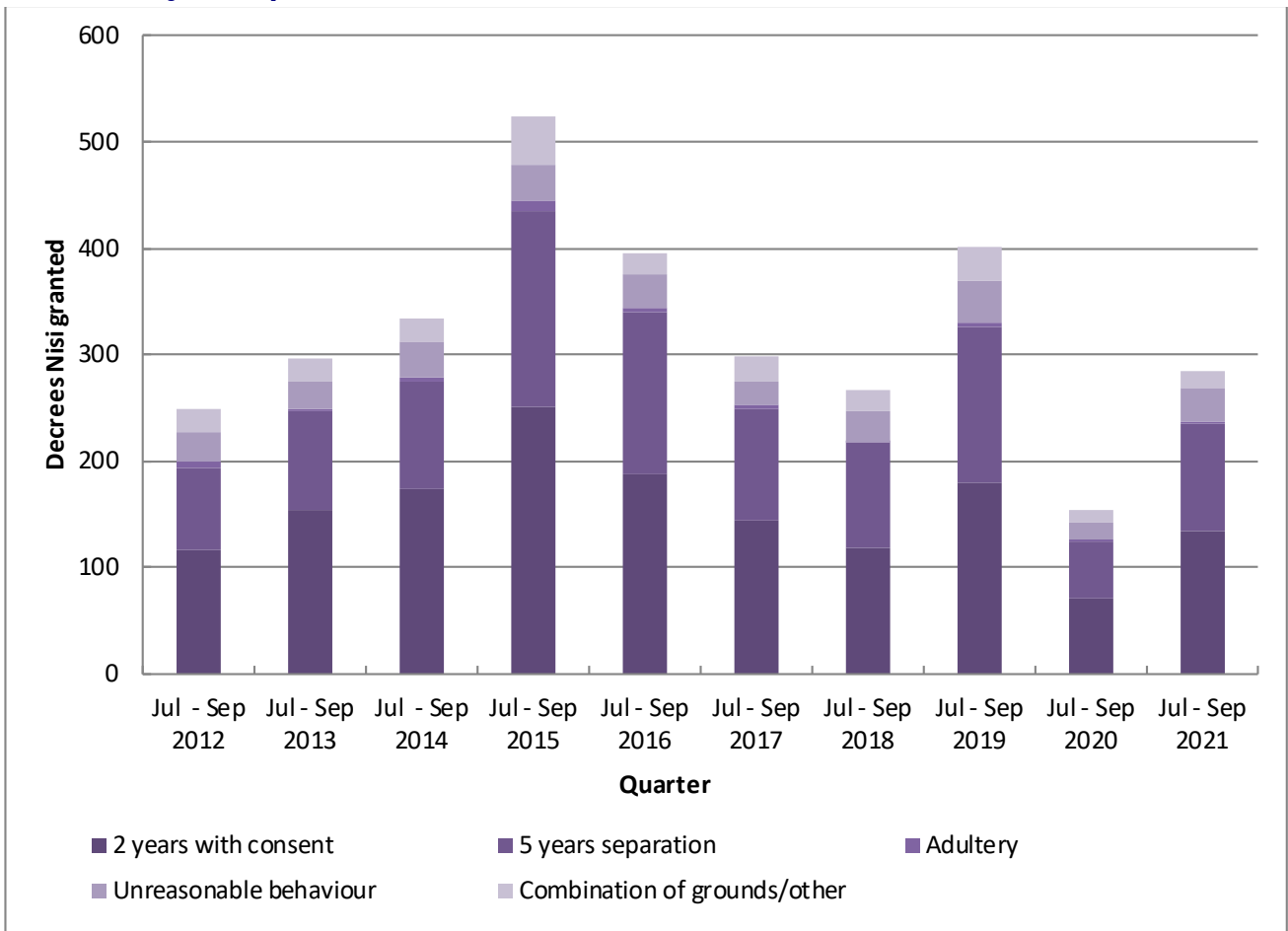
3.6 Divorces

While all divorces are received in the High Court, divorce decrees are also granted and decrees absolute are also issued in the County Court for less contentious and undefended cases.

A total of 284 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, up 84% on the 154 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was ‘2 years with consent’ accounting for 47% of decrees (134), followed by ‘5 years separation’, accounting for 36% of decrees (101) (Figure 6)

Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type – July to September 2012 to July to September 2021



A total of 356 decrees absolute were issued in the County Court, an 11% increase on the 321 issued during the period July to September 2020. The most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 51% (183) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 38 weeks, with an average of nine weeks from the date the decree was granted until the date the decree absolute was issued. This compares to 40 weeks and nine weeks during the same period last year.

3.7 Licences

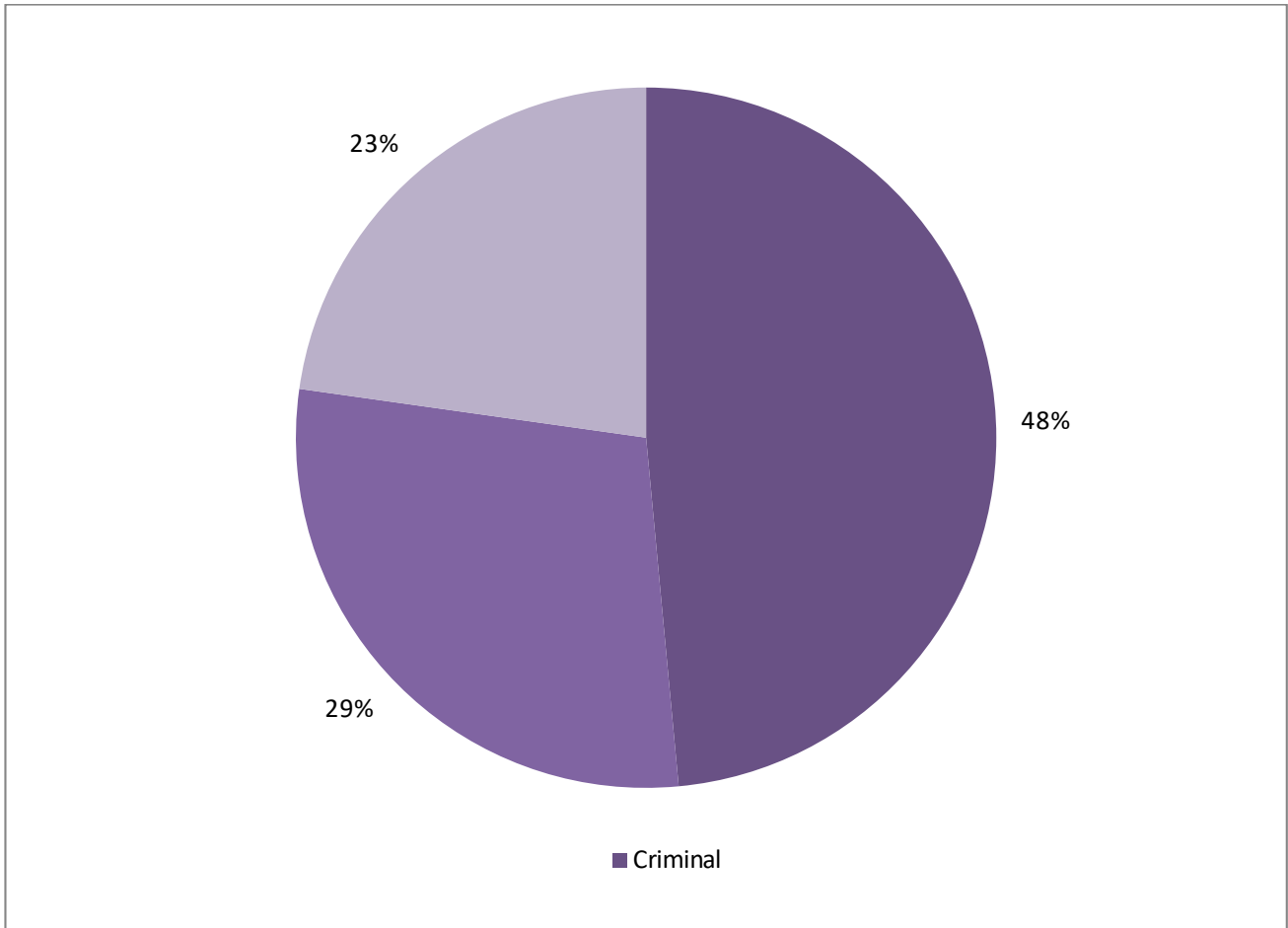
There were 49 licence applications received and 38 disposed, compared to the 32 received and 23 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 857 sitting days during the quarter, a 36% increase on the number of sitting days recorded during the period July to September 2020.

Within these 856 sitting days, 48% of time was spent on criminal business, 29% of time was spent on civil business and 23% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – July to September 2021

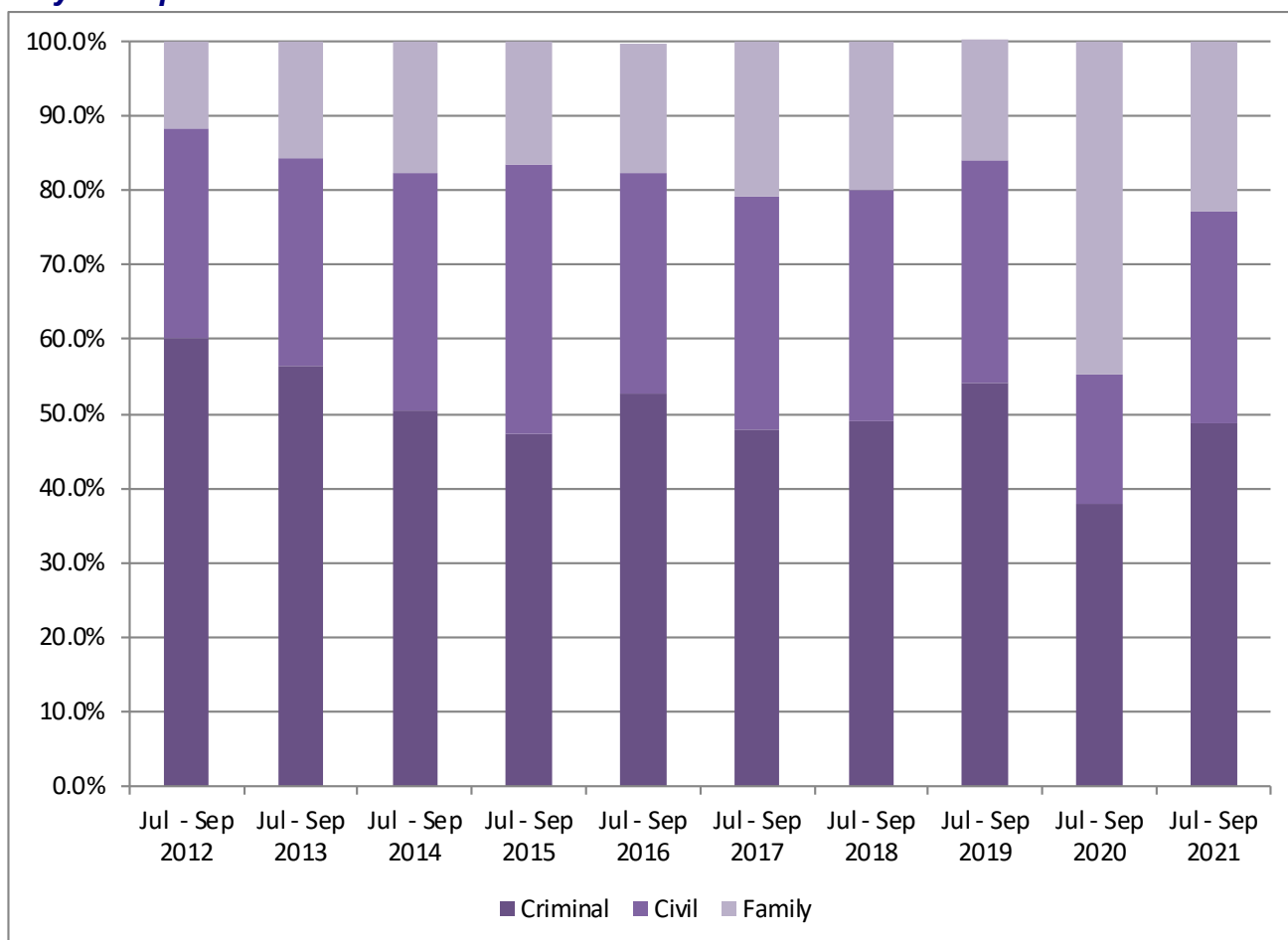


[6] Due to rounding, the percentages may not add up to 100%

The proportion of time spent on criminal business has fluctuated during July to September quarter since 2007, peaking at 60% during the quarter July to September 2013. This is largely reflective of County Court Judges dealing with increased volumes of cases in the Crown Court over that particular period. The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 47% during July to September 2015, which was reflective of the action taken by a number of solicitors and counsel who withdrew their representation from a number of Crown Court cases in response to the introduction, in May 2015, of new rules in relation to legal aid remuneration.

Following resolution of this dispute in February 2016, activity in the Crown Court has fluctuated slightly with the proportion of time spent by County Court Judges on criminal business increasing to 54% of sittings during July to September 2019, while the backlog of cases arising from the dispute was being addressed. Progress made in addressing the backlog has meant the proportion of time spent on criminal business fell to 48/49% percentages in 2017 and 2018. The proportion of time spent on criminal business (48) this quarter, is an increase on the July to September 2020 quarter (38%), then the lowest percentage since the time series began.

Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – July to September 2012 to July to September 2021



APPENDIX 1 – TABLES.

Civil Bills

Table 1: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications received

Type	Processing Office	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	580
	Newtownards Court Office	102
	Downpatrick Court Office	57
	Craigavon Court Office	43
	Armagh Court Office	91
	Omagh Court Office	71
	Strabane Court Office	1
	Antrim Court Office	29
	Londonderry Court Office	81
	Enniskillen Court Office	14
	Coleraine Court Office	85
	Newry Court Office	83
	Limavady Court Office	1
	Magherafelt Court Office	5
	Ballymena Court Office	30
	Lisburn Court Office	42
	Dungannon Court Office	39
	Civil Processing Centre	830
	Total	2184
Application	Laganside Courts	199
	Newtownards Court Office	55
	Downpatrick Court Office	11
	Craigavon Court Office	5
	Armagh Court Office	86
	Omagh Court Office	25
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	52
	Coleraine Court Office	35
	Newry Court Office	9
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	20
	Civil Processing Centre	513
	Total	1012

Table 2: Number of ordinary civil bill cases with NIDs received by judicial level

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	305	332	637
Newtownards Court Office	102	12	114
Downpatrick Court Office	5	61	66
Craigavon Court Office	27	17	44
Armagh Court Office	41	66	107
Omagh Court Office	52	37	89
Strabane Court Office	2	-	2
Antrim Court Office	22	10	32
Londonderry Court Office	42	25	67
Enniskillen Court Office	9	4	13
Coleraine Court Office	58	31	89
Newry Court Office	60	37	97
Limavady Court Office	-	1	1
Magherafelt Court Office	4	4	8
Ballymena Court Office	16	19	35
Lisburn Court Office	24	20	44
Dungannon Court Office	20	33	53
Civil Processing Centre	50	45	95
Total	839	754	1593

Table 3: Number of ordinary civil bills cases and applications disposed

Type	Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Default judgement	Office disposal	Total	
Case	Laganside Courts	222	223	330	10	41	826	
	Newtownards Court Office	1	67	46	2	3	119	
	Downpatrick Court Office	9	-	34	-	6	49	
	Craigavon Court Office	13	19	24	-	3	59	
	Armagh Court Office	9	6	22	2	-	39	
	Banbridge Court Office	-	-	-	-	2	2	
	Omagh Court Office	27	17	24	-	3	71	
	Strabane Court Office	2	-	-	-	-	2	
	Antrim Court Office	7	9	19	-	2	37	
	Londonderry Court Office	15	25	24	-	4	68	
	Enniskillen Court Office	1	2	2	-	-	5	
	Coleraine Court Office	17	23	40	3	4	87	
	Newry Court Office	20	23	39	3	10	95	
	Magherafelt Court Office	-	5	6	-	1	12	
	Ballymena Court Office	5	1	14	1	1	22	
	Lisburn Court Office	4	26	26	-	3	59	
	Dungannon Court Office	7	1	10	-	1	19	
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	36	172	15	223	
	Total		359	447	696	193	99	1794
	Application	Laganside Courts	40	7	106	-	-	153
Newtownards Court Office		14	3	16	-	-	33	
Downpatrick Court Office		-	-	7	-	-	7	
Craigavon Court Office		1	-	2	-	-	3	
Armagh Court Office		4	1	25	-	-	30	
Omagh Court Office		6	1	15	-	-	22	
Londonderry Court Office		3	1	24	-	-	28	
Coleraine Court Office		13	1	20	-	-	34	
Newry Court Office		3	-	5	-	-	8	
Ballymena Court Office		-	-	2	-	-	2	
Lisburn Court Office		3	2	8	-	-	13	
Civil Processing Centre		-	-	21	-	-	21	
Total			87	16	251	-	-	354

Table 4: Number of ordinary civil bills cases by amount awarded

Processing Office	No value	Less than £3000	£3000-14999	£15000-29999	£30000 and over	Total
Laganside Courts	158	88	185	13	1	445
Newtownards Court Office	6	22	40	-	-	68
Downpatrick Court Office	-	1	7	1	-	9
Craigavon Court Office	10	2	16	4	-	32
Armagh Court Office	4	5	5	1	-	15
Omagh Court Office	18	10	14	2	-	44
Strabane Court Office	-	-	2	-	-	2
Antrim Court Office	4	2	10	-	-	16
Londonderry Court Office	17	6	14	3	-	40
Enniskillen Court Office	-	1	2	-	-	3
Coleraine Court Office	5	6	24	5	-	40
Newry Court Office	10	7	24	2	-	43
Magherafelt Court Office	2	2	1	-	-	5
Ballymena Court Office	-	1	3	2	-	6
Lisburn Court Office	9	9	11	1	-	30
Dungannon Court Office	4	-	4	-	-	8
Total	247	162	362	34	1	806

[2] Excludes cases that were adjourned generally, default judgements or had office disposals

Table 5: Outstanding civil bills with NID but no COR

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	934	1769	2703
Newtownards Court Office	127	24	151
Downpatrick Court Office	8	180	188
Craigavon Court Office	72	86	158
Armagh Court Office	52	97	149
Omagh Court Office	167	162	329
Strabane Court Office	3	1	4
Antrim Court Office	34	50	84
Londonderry Court Office	128	123	251
Enniskillen Court Office	15	13	28
Coleraine Court Office	107	102	209
Newry Court Office	135	118	253
Limavady Court Office	1	1	2
Magherafelt Court Office	9	14	23
Ballymena Court Office	42	68	110
Lisburn Court Office	80	73	153
Dungannon Court Office	64	127	191
Civil Processing Centre	120	126	246
Total	2098	3134	5232

Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	382	591	973
Newtownards Court Office	83	1	84
Downpatrick Court Office	1	100	101
Craigavon Court Office	31	24	55
Armagh Court Office	28	49	77
Omagh Court Office	64	80	144
Strabane Court Office	1	1	2
Antrim Court Office	11	30	41
Londonderry Court Office	55	45	100
Enniskillen Court Office	2	4	6
Coleraine Court Office	59	55	114
Newry Court Office	51	65	116
Magherafelt Court Office	2	5	7
Ballymena Court Office	8	26	34
Lisburn Court Office	22	28	50
Dungannon Court Office	10	23	33
Central Office	-	1	1
Civil Processing Centre	5	8	13
Total	815	1136	1951

Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	82
Newtownards Court Office	36
Downpatrick Court Office	79
Craigavon Court Office	67
Armagh Court Office	46
Omagh Court Office	113
Strabane Court Office	145
Antrim Court Office	57
Londonderry Court Office	67
Enniskillen Court Office	82
Coleraine Court Office	58
Newry Court Office	66
Magherafelt Court Office	25
Ballymena Court Office	36
Lisburn Court Office	50
Dungannon Court Office	41
Total	73

[3] Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	24
Newtownards Court Office	14
Craigavon Court Office	3
Armagh Court Office	16
Omagh Court Office	6
Londonderry Court Office	14
Coleraine Court Office	19
Newry Court Office	26
Lisburn Court Office	10
Total	19

[3] Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Equity

Table 9: Equity cases and applications received

Type	Processing Office	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	7
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Downpatrick Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	7
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	3
	Newry Court Office	3
	Ballymena Court Office	4
	Dungannon Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	9
	Total	44
Application	Laganside Courts	6
	Downpatrick Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	6
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	3
	Total	19

Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed

Type	Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	1	2	3
	Downpatrick Court Office	2	-	2
	Craigavon Court Office	-	2	2
	Omagh Court Office	1	-	1
	Londonderry Court Office	1	-	1
	Coleraine Court Office	2	-	2
	Newry Court Office	4	-	4
	Dungannon Court Office	1	-	1
	Total	12	4	16
	Application	Laganside Courts	1	4
Downpatrick Court Office		1	2	3
Omagh Court Office		2	4	6
Londonderry Court Office		1	2	3
Newry Court Office		2	1	3
Total		7	13	20

Table 11: Outstanding equity cases

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	56
Newtownards Court Office	4
Downpatrick Court Office	29
Craigavon Court Office	16
Armagh Court Office	7
Omagh Court Office	70
Antrim Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	27
Enniskillen Court Office	1
Coleraine Court Office	17
Newry Court Office	35
Ballymena Court Office	8
Lisburn Court Office	4
Dungannon Court Office	11
RCJ Front Of House Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	31
Total	318

Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity

Type	Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	14
	Downpatrick Court Office	49
	Omagh Court Office	593
	Londonderry Court Office	33
	Coleraine Court Office	141
	Newry Court Office	134
	Dungannon Court Office	64
	Total	135
	Application	Laganside Courts
Downpatrick Court Office		60
Omagh Court Office		3
Londonderry Court Office		135
Newry Court Office		15
Total		34

Ejectment

Table 13: Ejectment cases received

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	20
Newtownards Court Office	1
Craigavon Court Office	2
Armagh Court Office	3
Omagh Court Office	8
Londonderry Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	4
Lisburn Court Office	3
Civil Processing Centre	46
Total	89

Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed

Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Laganside Courts	2	14	2	18
Newtownards Court Office	-	1	1	2
Craigavon Court Office	-	3	2	5
Armagh Court Office	2	-	2	4
Omagh Court Office	-	3	-	3
Londonderry Court Office	-	6	-	6
Coleraine Court Office	3	-	-	3
Newry Court Office	2	-	2	4
Ballymena Court Office	1	-	-	1
Lisburn Court Office	-	2	1	3
Total	10	29	10	49

Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	14
Newtownards Court Office	1
Downpatrick Court Office	2
Craigavon Court Office	2
Omagh Court Office	6
Strabane Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	4
Coleraine Court Office	4
Newry Court Office	4
Civil Processing Centre	4
Total	42

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	49
Newtownards Court Office	28
Craigavon Court Office	56
Armagh Court Office	42
Omagh Court Office	34
Londonderry Court Office	18
Coleraine Court Office	56
Newry Court Office	79
Ballymena Court Office	80
Lisburn Court Office	46
Total	45

[4] Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Small-Claims

Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received

Type	Processing Office	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	107
	Newtownards Court Office	10
	Downpatrick Court Office	9
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Armagh Court Office	5
	Omagh Court Office	20
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	18
	Coleraine Court Office	24
	Newry Court Office	18
	Ballymena Court Office	3
	Lisburn Court Office	11
	Civil Processing Centre	1196
	Total	1425
	Application	Laganside Courts
Downpatrick Court Office		8
Craigavon Court Office		1
Omagh Court Office		2
Coleraine Court Office		2
Ballymena Court Office		1
Lisburn Court Office		1
Civil Processing Centre		6
Total		32

Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	102
Newtownards Court Office	13
Downpatrick Court Office	13
Craigavon Court Office	6
Armagh Court Office	6
Omagh Court Office	20
Antrim Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	19
Coleraine Court Office	18
Newry Court Office	14
Ballymena Court Office	5
Lisburn Court Office	11
Civil Processing Centre	4
Total	232

Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

Type	Processing Office	Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total	
Case	Laganside Courts	97	5	53	3	158	
	Newtownards Court Office	-	-	1	-	1	
	Downpatrick Court Office	20	-	3	4	27	
	Craigavon Court Office	-	1	2	-	3	
	Armagh Court Office	4	-	3	-	7	
	Omagh Court Office	8	6	4	1	19	
	Antrim Court Office	2	2	-	-	4	
	Londonderry Court Office	32	6	4	1	43	
	Coleraine Court Office	44	8	10	-	62	
	Newry Court Office	27	-	5	-	32	
	Ballymena Court Office	3	1	3	-	7	
	Lisburn Court Office	-	-	1	1	2	
	Civil Processing Centre	-	1	295	605	901	
	Total		237	30	384	615	1266
	Application	Laganside Courts	7	4	-	-	11
		Newtownards Court Office	-	2	-	-	2
		Downpatrick Court Office	-	7	-	-	7
Londonderry Court Office		-	4	-	-	4	
Coleraine Court Office		1	-	-	-	1	
Lisburn Court Office		-	1	-	-	1	
Civil Processing Centre		-	1	-	-	1	
Total			8	19	-	-	27

Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	167
Newtownards Court Office	16
Downpatrick Court Office	39
Craigavon Court Office	65
Armagh Court Office	26
Omagh Court Office	100
Antrim Court Office	3
Londonderry Court Office	43
Enniskillen Court Office	7
Coleraine Court Office	62
Newry Court Office	43
Ballymena Court Office	9
Lisburn Court Office	63
Dungannon Court Office	3
Civil Processing Centre	21
Total	667

Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims

Type	Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	42
	Dow npatrick Court Office	26
	Armagh Court Office	54
	Omagh Court Office	79
	Antrim Court Office	63
	Londonderry Court Office	69
	Coleraine Court Office	49
	Newry Court Office	73
	Ballymena Court Office	25
	Total	50
	Application	Laganside Courts
Coleraine Court Office		6
Total		11

[4] Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Criminal-Damage

Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	1
Dungannon Court Office	1
Total	2

Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

Processing Office	Non court disposal	Total
Laganside Courts	2	2
Omagh Court Office	1	1
Total	3	3

Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	11
Newtownards Court Office	1
Armagh Court Office	1
Omagh Court Office	7
Londonderry Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	1
Newry Court Office	2
Dungannon Court Office	2
Total	27

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage

Due to COVID-19 there have been no court disposals during the period and therefore it has not been possible to produce the time interval calculations as they are based on court disposals and DJ and non-court disposals are excluded.

Divorces

Table 26: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted

Processing Office	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	42	41	1	11	5	100
Downpatrick Court Office	11	8	-	1	1	21
Craigavon Court Office	19	6	-	3	3	31
Armagh Court Office	1	-	-	-	-	1
Omagh Court Office	18	8	-	5	1	32
Londonderry Court Office	7	8	-	2	4	21
Coleraine Court Office	18	15	-	4	2	39
Newry Court Office	18	16	1	5	-	40
Total	134	102	2	31	16	285

Table 27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued

Processing Office	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	63	32	-	14	6	115
Dow npatrick Court Office	11	4	-	1	-	16
Craigavon Court Office	16	7	1	5	5	34
Omagh Court Office	21	14	-	4	-	39
Londonderry Court Office	15	19	-	3	1	38
Coleraine Court Office	39	18	-	12	3	72
New ry Court Office	17	14	1	4	4	40
Dungannon Court Office	1	1	-	-	-	2
Total	183	109	2	43	19	356

Table 28: Matrimonial applications received

Processing Office	Ancillary relief	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	7	-	7
New townards Court Office	2	-	2
Craigavon Court Office	1	-	1
Armagh Court Office	12	-	12
Omagh Court Office	2	-	2
Londonderry Court Office	11	3	14
Coleraine Court Office	11	-	11
Lisburn Court Office	-	1	1
Total	46	4	50

Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed

Processing Office	Ancillary relief	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	6	-	6
Newtownards Court Office	2	-	2
Armagh Court Office	5	-	5
Omagh Court Office	3	-	3
Londonderry Court Office	6	5	11
Coleraine Court Office	4	-	4
Newry Court Office	3	1	4
Ballymena Court Office	-	1	1
Lisburn Court Office	-	1	1
Total	29	8	37

Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

Processing Office	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	38	8
Downpatrick Court Office	33	
Craigavon Court Office	35	11
Armagh Court Office	116	
Omagh Court Office	43	
Londonderry Court Office	46	7
Coleraine Court Office	34	10
Newry Court Office	36	9
Total	38	9

Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	41
Newtownards Court Office	5
Armagh Court Office	20
Omagh Court Office	65
Londonderry Court Office	54
Coleraine Court Office	43
Newry Court Office	63
Lisburn Court Office	0
Total	41

[5] Excludes non court disposals

Licences

Table 32: Licences received and disposed

Processing Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	8	7
Newtownards	13	8
Newry	6	1
Laganside Courts	11	10
Craigavon	6	6
Omagh	5	3
Londonderry	0	3
Total	49	38

County Court and District Judge Sitting Days

Table 33: County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days

Processing Office	Number of sitting days	Average sitting	Total time	Total criminal time	Total civil time	Total family time
Antrim	94	2:28:59	233:25:00	164:59:00	65:30:00	2:56:00
Laganside	360	2:17:05	822:34:00	364:31:00	199:35:00	258:28:00
Armagh	81	2:50:34	230:16:00	2:58:00	110:42:00	116:36:00
Lisburn	16	1:33:52	25:02:00	0:00:00	24:58:00	0:04:00
Dungannon	54	2:37:24	141:40:00	127:00:00	6:50:00	7:50:00
Downpatrick	19	2:17:00	43:23:00	6:50:00	32:55:00	3:38:00
Craigavon	35	3:04:41	107:44:00	103:20:00	0:00:00	4:24:00
Omagh	41	3:22:23	138:18:00	13:55:00	86:50:00	37:33:00
Coleraine	13	3:25:23	44:30:00	0:00:00	34:15:00	10:15:00
Londonderry	57	2:10:16	123:46:00	67:14:00	21:02:00	35:30:00
Newtownards	21	0:47:42	16:42:00	0:00:00	16:17:00	0:25:00
Newry	66	2:33:08	168:27:00	164:51:00	1:28:00	2:08:00
Total	857	2:26:43	2095:47:00	1015:38:00	600:22:00	479:47:00

[1] Administrative case management reviews were introduced by the Lord Chief Justice as part of the [coronavirus contingency](#) arrangements. This has resulted in Judges investing significant time reviewing cases and making directions or orders administratively (where appropriate), and this has continued even as courts have resumed to support business recovery. This extra time is not recorded on the courts operating system (ICOS), and therefore is not reflected within the sittings times published within this report.

[7] A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

APPENDIX 2 - EXPLANATORY NOTES

Amount awarded

This relates to the monetary value awarded in cases such as small claims and ordinary civil bills. On occasion, the amount awarded may be unliquidated which means that the claim was not made for a specific amount of money, but rather, for example, damage caused to a property, for repairs for damage caused or for faulty workmanship.

Application

The act of applying to a civil court to ask it to do something, for example to start proceedings or make an order.

Case

The proceedings, arguments and evidence in court and the court hearing.

Certificate of Readiness (COR)

When a small claim or civil bill is contested by the respondent, the matter will proceed to the county court for judgment. Before the case can be heard, both parties must contribute to the completion of a Certificate of Readiness (COR) which informs the court that the case is ready to heard and can therefore be listed by the court for hearing.

County Court Judge (CCJ)

This is a judge who sits in the County Court and the Crown Court. In the County Court, they will sit on business such as ordinary civil bills (with a value over £10,000 and up to £30,000), criminal damage, licences, equity, ejectment and divorces.

Court Disposal

Includes all cases issued with a final order by County Court Judge or District Judge.

Criminal Damage

These are cases in which there is an allegation that a property has been destroyed or damaged; or where a person is alleged to have made threats; had intent; or was found to have anything on their property with intent to cause damage to another property.

Default Judgment

This is a judgment in favour of one party due to some failure to take action by the other party. In most cases, this will be a judgment in favour of the applicant due to the failure of the respondent to contest the claim brought against them. The failure to take action is the default. The default judgment is the relief requested in the party's original petition.

Disposed

The date a case is finally dealt with via a court or non-court result and the case is no longer in the court process.

District Judge (DJ)

This is a judge who sits in the County Court or Magistrates' Court. In the County Court they will sit on business such as small claims and ordinary civil bills (with a value up to £10,000).

Divorces

These are proceedings initiated in order to dissolve a marriage. Dissolutions of civil partnerships are also included within these figures. Following the issue of a divorce petition in the High Court, if it is a defended case it will be heard in the High Court and if it is an undefended case it may be heard either in the High Court or the County Court (depending on the choice of the individuals involved). Initially a Decree Nisi, judicial separation or nullity is granted, which is an initial order for divorce. Providing that no reason is provided to the court to challenge the nisi, a Decree Absolute, which is a final order for divorce that dissolves a marriage and permits an individual party to remarry, is made. A defended divorce is a proceeding in which an individual (the petitioner) applies for a divorce and the other party (the respondent) indicates that they wish to contest a divorce being granted at all, or on the reasons stated by the petitioner.

Equity

Any type of proceeding which seeks a court judgement on disputes relating to property disputes i.e. who owns it, and should damages be paid.

Ejectment

A legal document which seeks to recover possession of land and/or a dwelling house (e.g. where a tenant has stopped paying rent). Similar matters relating to properties owned with a mortgage are dealt with through proceedings within the Chancery Division of the High Court.

Issue

This is the process by which a complaint or claim is lodged with the court. It can also be described as the 'Received Date'.

Licences

These are applications for intoxicating liquor licences and certificates of registration for public houses and clubs, enabling their legal operation.

Matrimonial Application

These are applications attached to divorce proceedings such as Ancillary Relief applications that relate to financial relief to one or both parties following a petition for divorce, for example, maintenance and the division of property/finances.

Notice of Dispute (NOD)

When a small claim is taken by an applicant against a respondent, the respondent may contest the claim and signal their intention to dispute the claim through a Notice of Dispute. This means that the case will then be listed before a judge in court for resolution.

Non court disposal

Includes all disposals not completed in court, for example settlements or withdrawals.

Notice of Intention to Defend (NID)

When a civil bill is taken by an applicant against a respondent, the respondent may contest the claim and signal their intention to dispute the claim through a Notice of Intention to Defend. This means that the case will then be listed before a judge in court for resolution.

Ordinary civil bills

A legal document which seeks to recover damages for (i) personal injury claims (injuries caused by negligence), for example, traffic accidents, falls on pavements and accidents at work and (ii) consumer disputes, for example, faulty goods or services. There have been a number of changes in the threshold for ordinary civil bills in recent years. Until 25 February 2013 ordinary civil bills related to cases seeking damages between £3,000 and £15,000 (prior to May 2011, the lower limit was £2,000). Following changes made on 25 February 2013, the upper limit for civil bills was extended to include cases seeking damages between £3,000 and £30,000.

Outstanding case

A case that is currently active within the County Court system, for example, live cases not yet disposed.

Received

The date the papers are lodged with the court and the fees receipted.

Sitting Days

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It is a period of work by a judge on a single day. Multiple sittings on one calendar date will be aggregated into one sitting day based on the Judicial Officer, venue and sitting date. Several types of business may be heard within one sitting day.

Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken, except for the Magistrates' Court, when it is based in the first instance, on the earliest scheduled sitting. Where the start time for two or more sittings is the same, the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

Small claims

Small claims allow certain types of claims to be decided informally by the County Court, usually without the need of a solicitor or barrister. In general a small claim is one where the value to be claimed is not more than £3,000 (before May 2011 the upper limit was £2,000). Examples of small claims are (i) compensation for faulty services by, for example, builders, dry cleaners and garages (ii) compensation for faulty goods such as electrical goods (iii) disputes between landlords and tenants for rent arrears or compensation for not doing repairs and (iv) debts or wages owed or money in lieu of notice.

Time intervals

This is the time taken (in weeks) between the case, application or claim being received by the court and the date it is finally resolved, by either the court, an arrangement between parties out of court or by being withdrawn by the applicant.

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