



Department of  
**Justice**

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
Máinnstríe O tha Laa

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**Analytical Services Group**  
**County Court Bulletin**

**October to December 2021**

**Research and Statistical Bulletin**

**Provisional Figures**

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This bulletin is available on the Internet at:

[Northern Ireland Court Service Statistical Publications](#)

## Executive Summary

This report covers data from October to December 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 October to December 2021 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2012. On 31<sup>st</sup> 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 October to December 2021:
- There were 1,609 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 3% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,656). In total, 2,418 civil bills were disposed, a 23% increase on the number disposed during the same period in 2020 (1,967).
- 40 equity cases were received during October to December 2021, down by two cases compared to the 42 cases received during the period October to December 2020, while 37 equity cases were disposed, compared with 28 equity cases disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 130 ejectment cases were received, over double the number received during October to December 2020 (59), with the number of ejectment cases disposed more than doubling from 35 in the same quarter last year to 78 this quarter.
- 1,566 small claims were received, a 20% increase on the 1,308 cases received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed increased from 853 during October to December 2020 to 1,380 this quarter.
- Two criminal damage cases were received, compared to four in the period October to December 2020. Two criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, a decrease on the three disposed during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 432 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, up 20% on the 360 granted during the same period last year.

- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,341 sitting days during the quarter, a 29% increase on the number that was recorded during the period October to December 2020 (1043). Some 54% of time was spent on criminal business with 23% spent on civil business and 23% on family business (compared to 40%, 28% and 31% respectively during October to December 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 first quarter of 2022 and will be published on 20<sup>th</sup> May 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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](#)

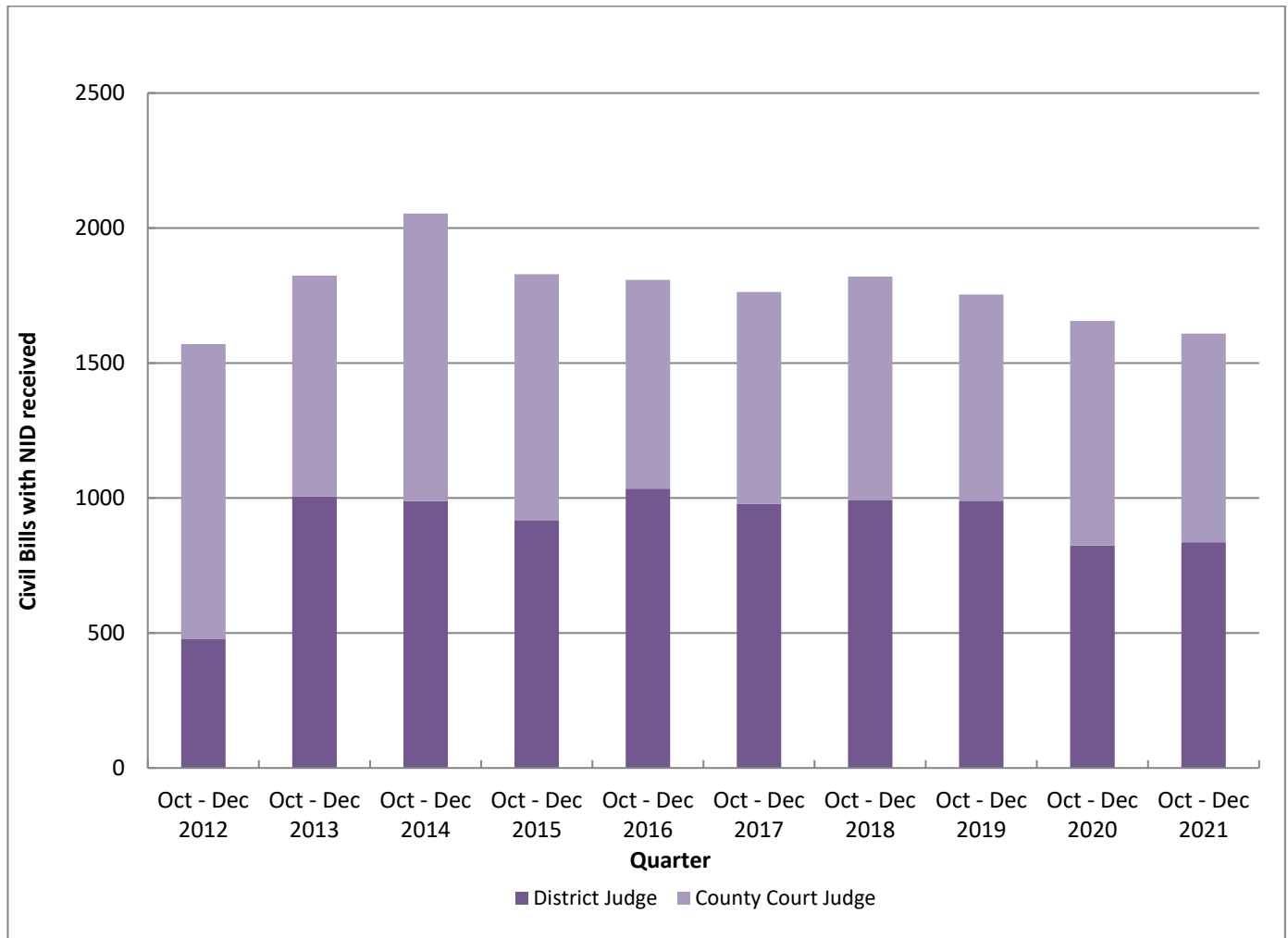
Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Ordinary civil bills

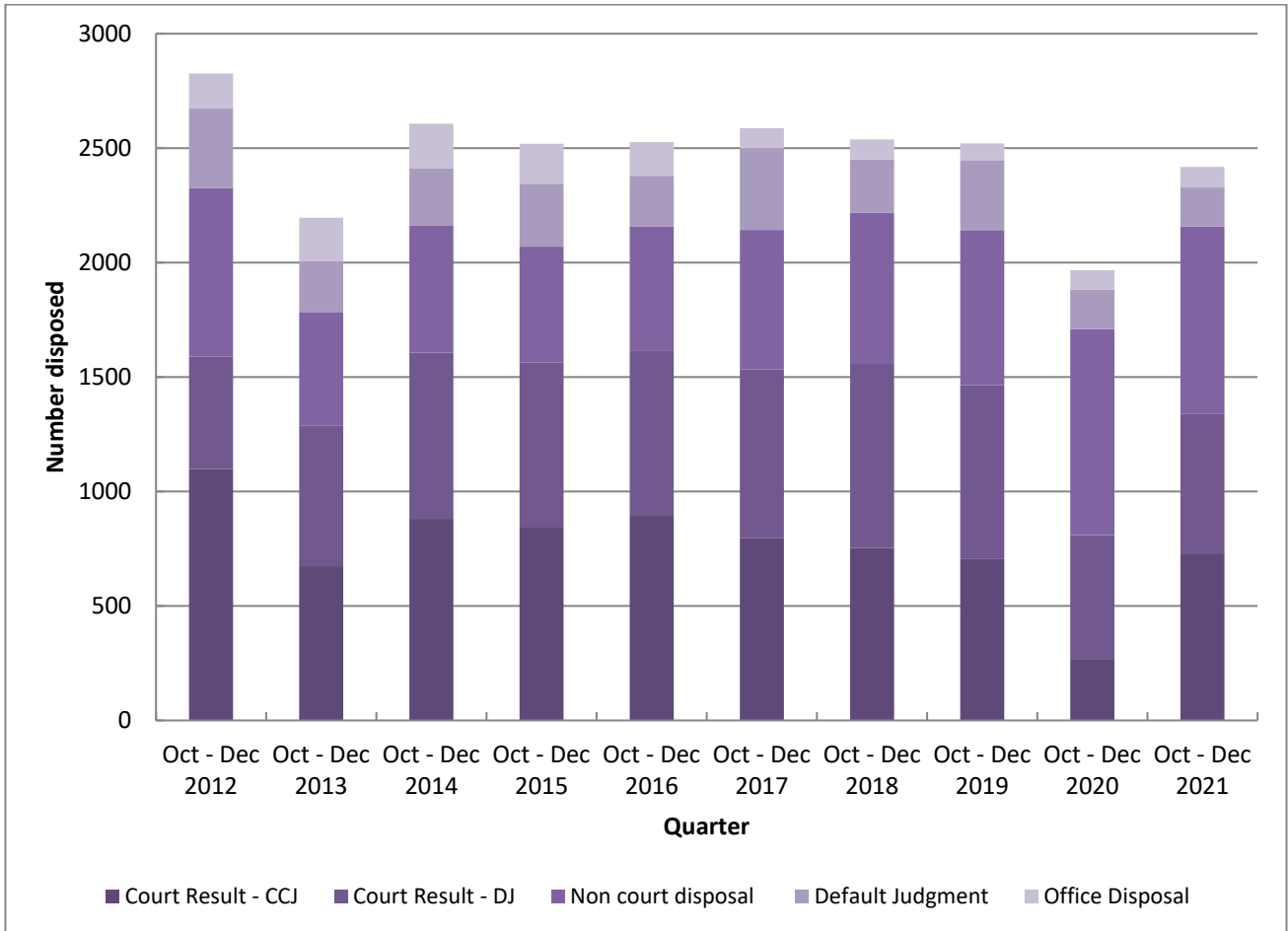
There were 1,609 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 3% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,656) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received – October to December 2012 to October to December 2021**



In total, 2,418 civil bills were disposed, a 23% increase on the number disposed during the same period in 2020 (1,967) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal – October to December 2012 to October to December 2021**



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 70 weeks; it was 59 weeks for the same quarter in 2020.

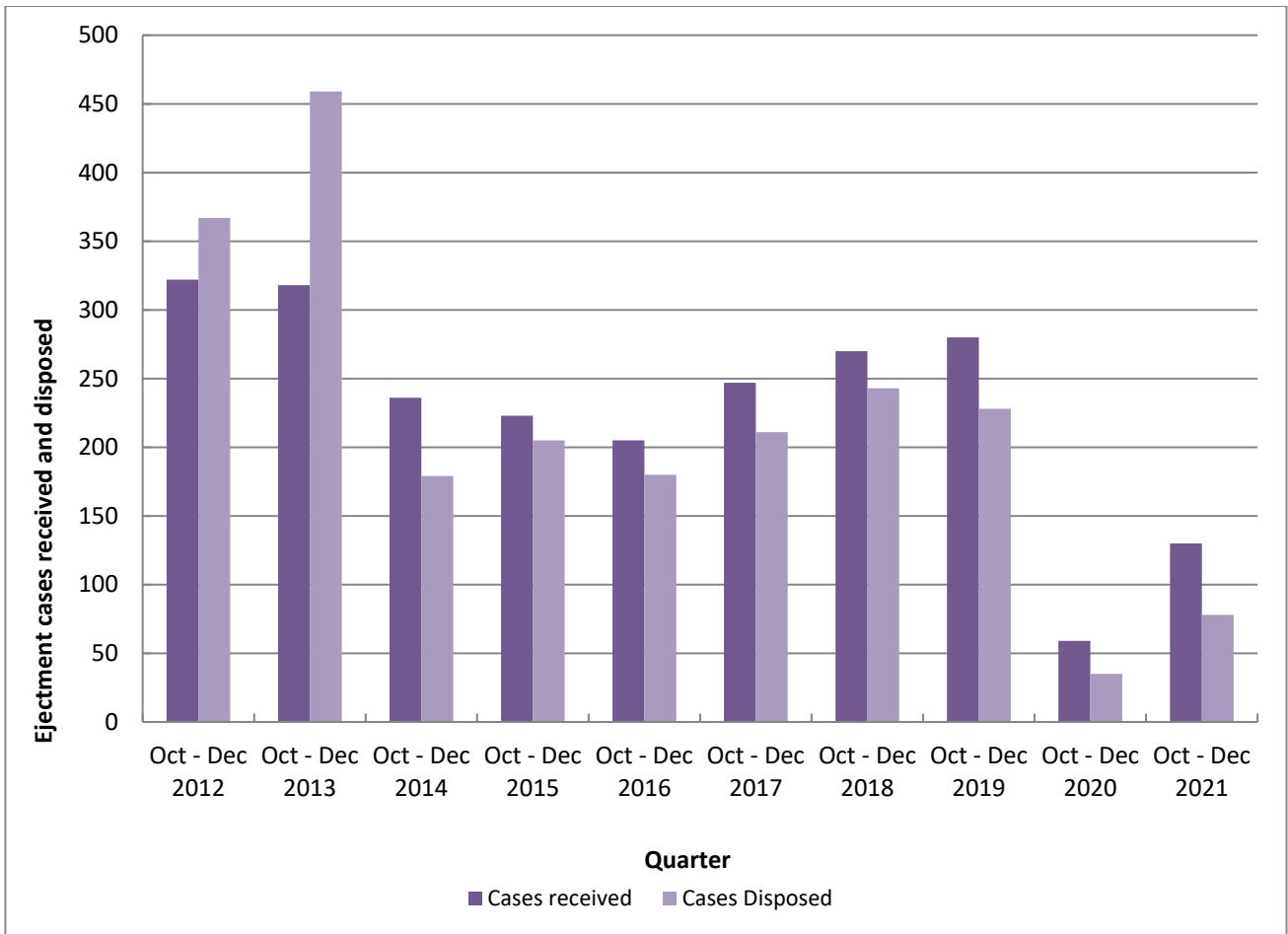
### 3.2 Equity

A total of 40 equity cases were received during October to December 2021, two less than the number received during the period October to December 2020 (42). The number of equity cases disposed increased from twenty-eight during the period October to December 2020, to 37 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 86 weeks; the same as during October to December 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 130 ejectment cases were received, over double the number received during October to December 2020 (59), with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing, from thirty-five in the same quarter last year to 78 this quarter (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed – October to December 2012 to October to December 2021**

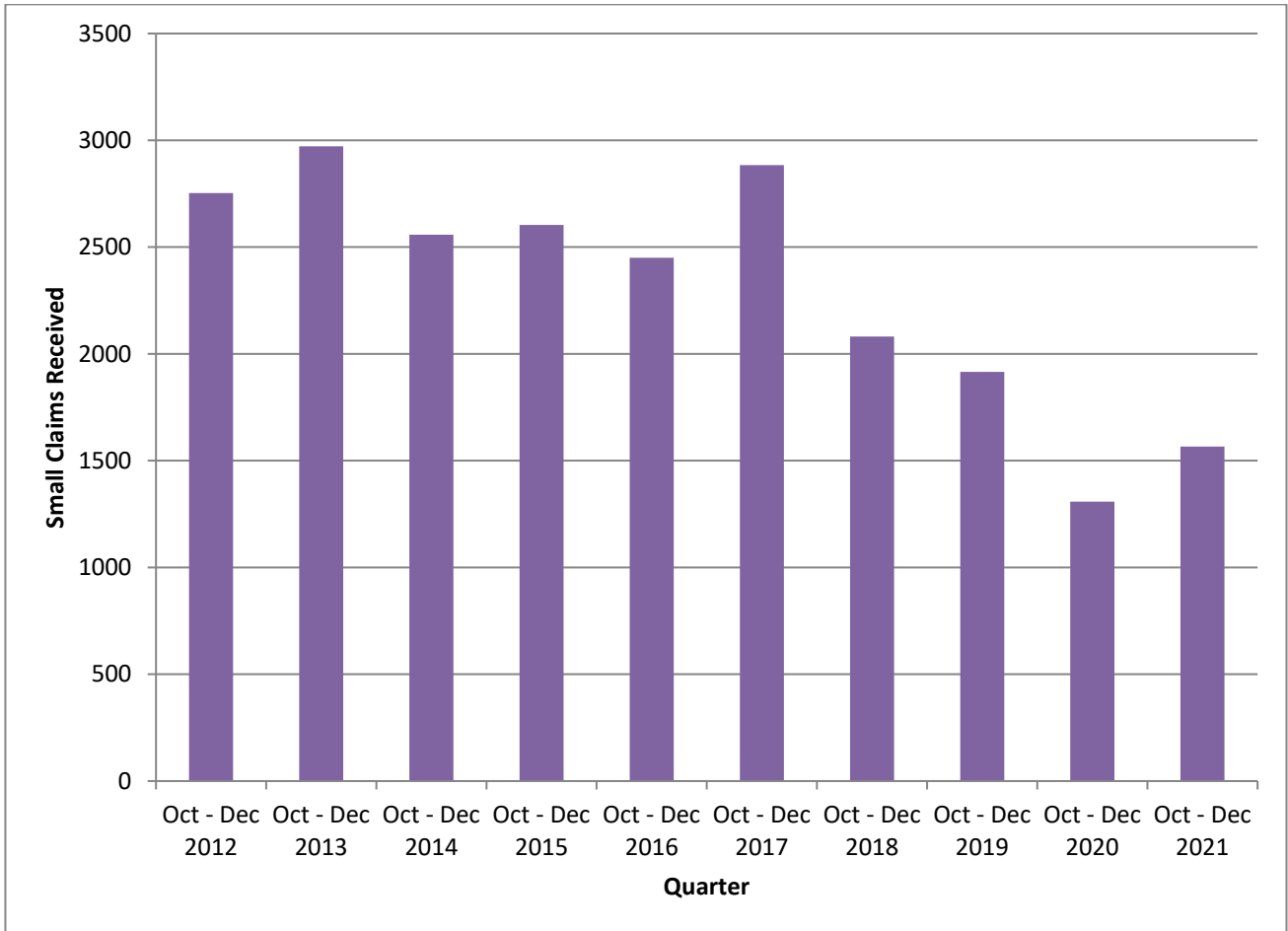


The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 40 weeks. This compares to the 39 weeks for the October to December quarter in 2020.

### 3.4 Small claims

1,566 small claims were received, a 20% increase on the 1,308 received during the same quarter last year (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Small claims cases received – October to December 2012 to October to December 2021**



The number of small claims cases disposed increased from 853 during October to December 2020 to 1,380 this quarter. Of the 1,380 small claims disposed during the quarter, 55% were disposed by way of default judgment.

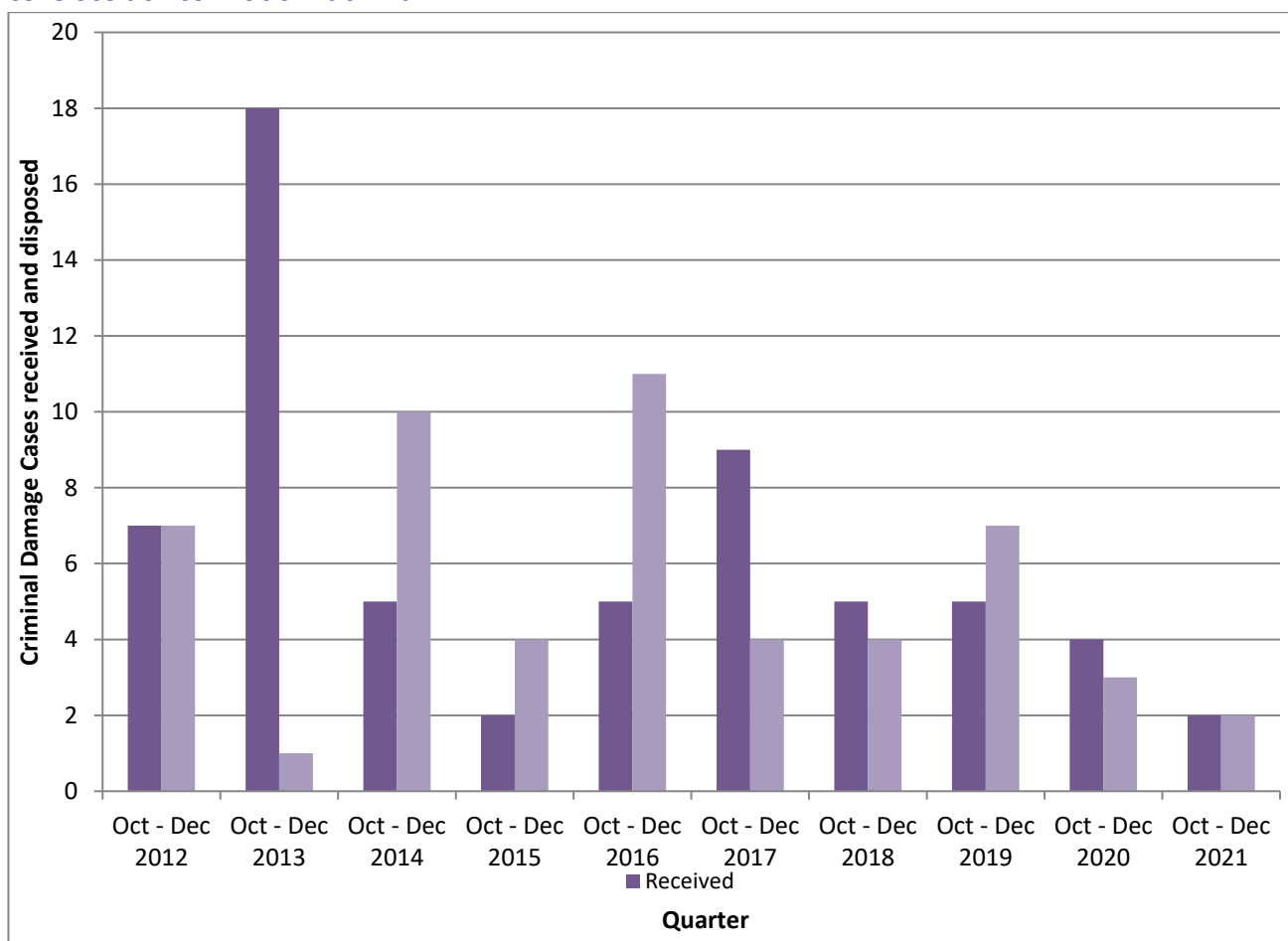
The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 53 weeks; in the corresponding quarter last year the figure was 7 weeks, but this involved no court disposals.

There were 234 small claims court disposals during the period October to December 2021.

### 3.5 Criminal Damage

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

**Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed – October to December 2012 to October to December 2021**



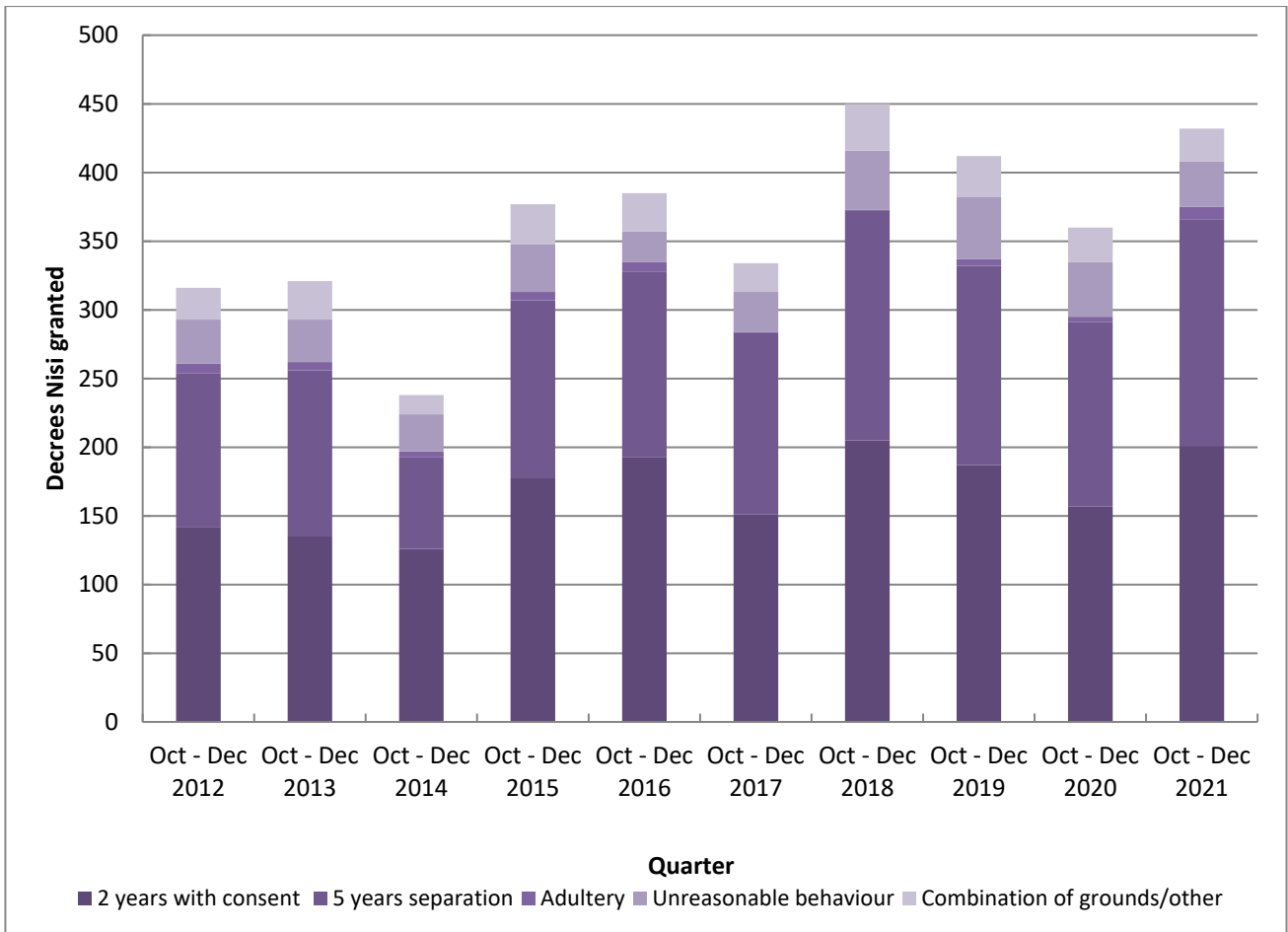
### 3.6 Divorces

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 432 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, up 20% on the 360 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 47% of decrees (201), followed by '5 years separation', accounting for 38% of decrees (165) (Figure 6)

**Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type – October to December 2012 to October to December 2021**



A total of 351 decrees absolute were issued in the County Court, a 54% increase on the 228 issued during the period October to December 2020. The most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 47% (164) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 45 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 39 weeks and eight weeks during the same period last year.

### 3.7 Licences

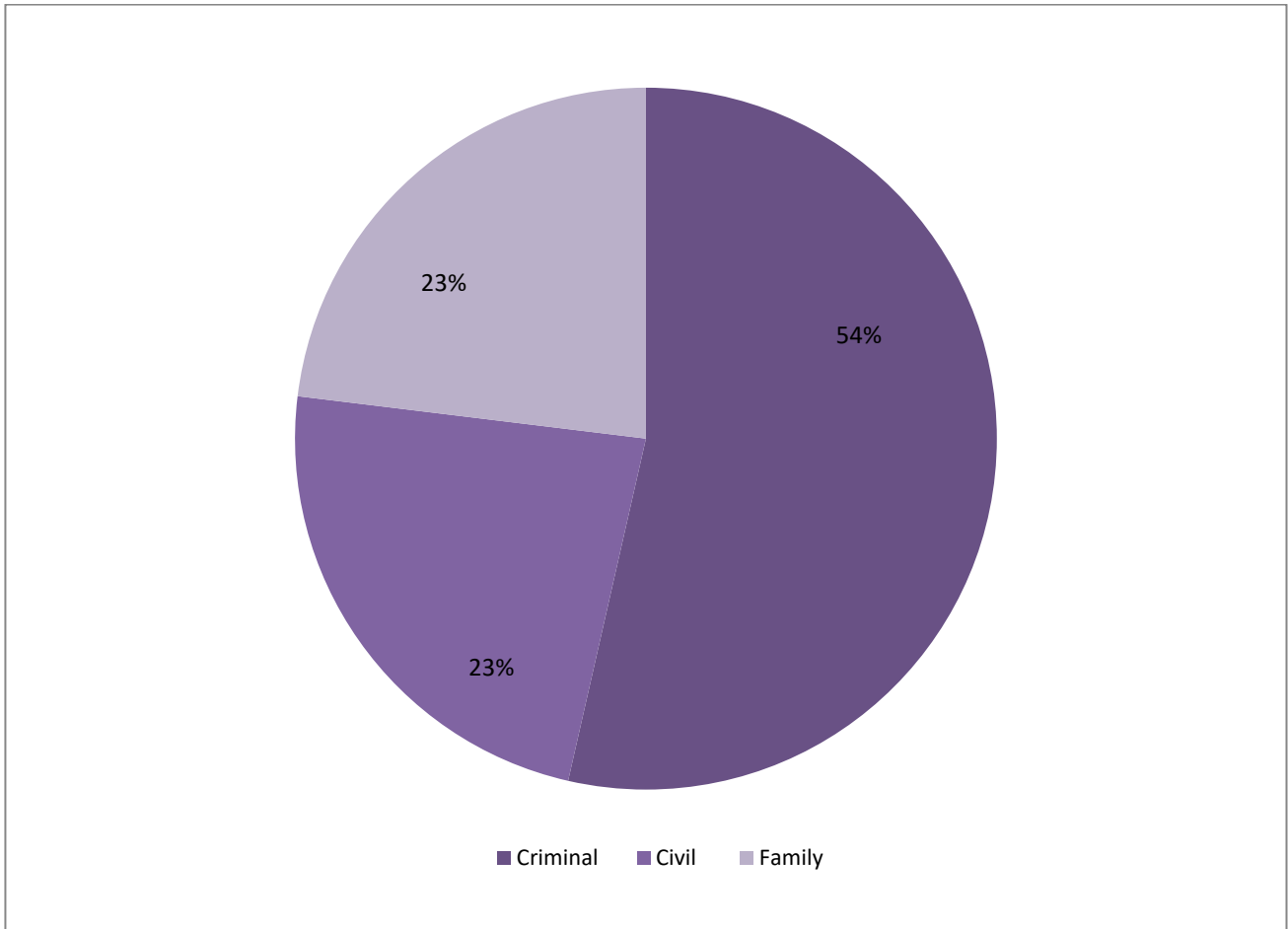
There were 53 licence applications received and 61 disposed, compared to the 56 received and 67 disposed during the same quarter last year.

### 3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,341 sitting days during the quarter, a 29% increase on the number of sitting days recorded during the period October to December 2020.

Within these 1,341 sitting days, 54% of time was spent on criminal business, 23% 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 – October to December 2021**



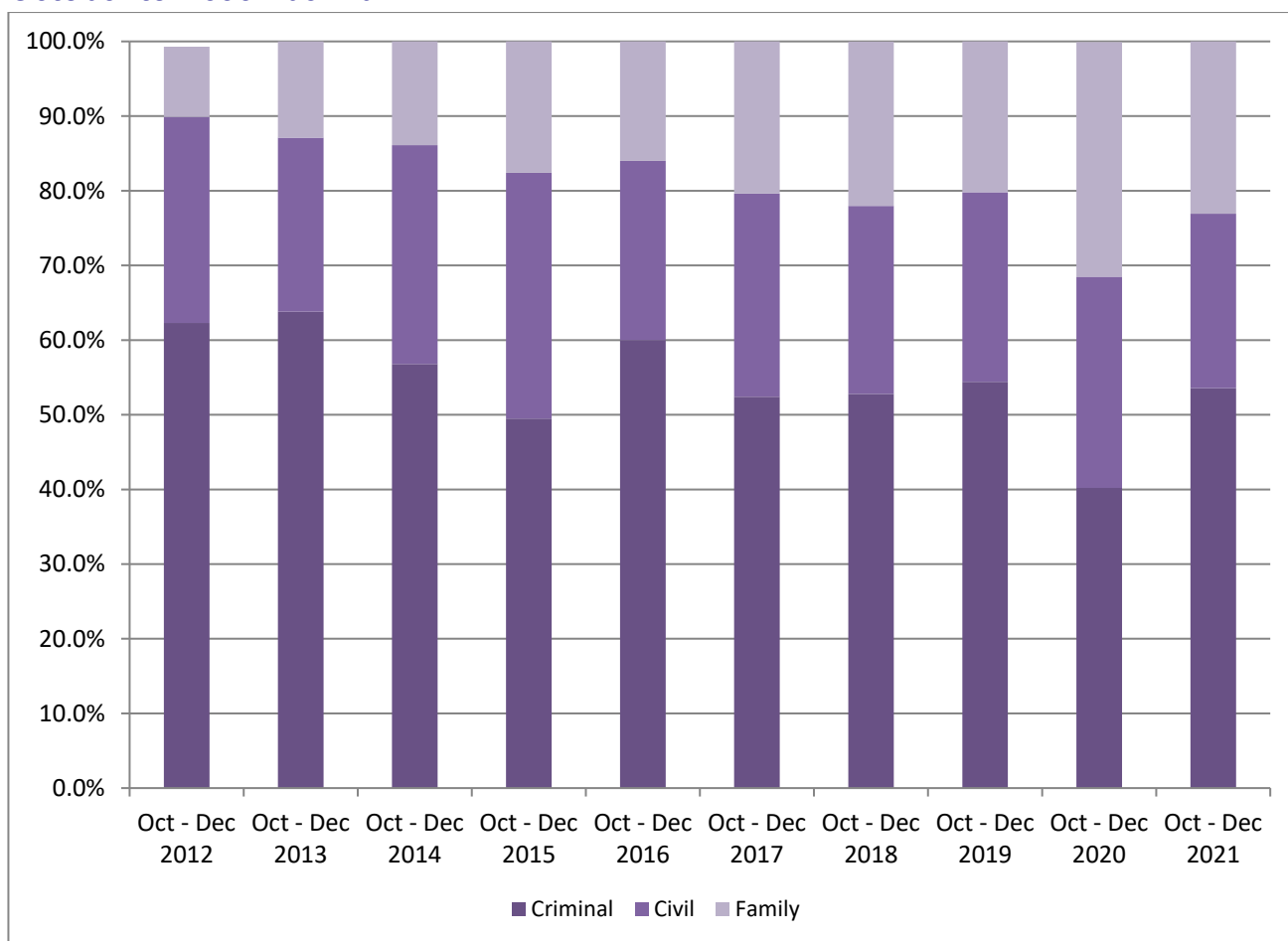
[6] Due to rounding, the percentages may not add up to 100%

The proportion of time spent on criminal business has fluctuated during October to December quarter since 2007, peaking at 64% during the quarter October to December 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 50% during October to December 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 60% of sittings during October to December 2016, 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 52/53% percentages in 2017 and 2018. The proportion of time spent on criminal business (54%) this quarter, is an increase on the October to December 2020 quarter (40%), then the lowest percentage since the time series began.

**Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – October to December 2012 to October to December 2021**



## APPENDIX 1 – TABLES.

### Civil Bills

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

Type	Processing Office	Total	
Case	Lagside Courts	376	
	Newtownards Court Office	88	
	Downpatrick Court Office	45	
	Craigavon Court Office	53	
	Armagh Court Office	87	
	Omagh Court Office	53	
	Strabane Court Office	1	
	Antrim Court Office	43	
	Londonderry Court Office	68	
	Enniskillen Court Office	2	
	Coleraine Court Office	35	
	Newry Court Office	51	
	Magherafelt Court Office	5	
	Ballymena Court Office	13	
	Lisburn Court Office	41	
	Dungannon Court Office	24	
	Civil Processing Centre	1237	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2222</b>	
	Application	Lagside Courts	254
		Newtownards Court Office	73
Downpatrick Court Office		11	
Craigavon Court Office		9	
Armagh Court Office		111	
Omagh Court Office		39	
Antrim Court Office		17	
Londonderry Court Office		75	
Coleraine Court Office		20	
Newry Court Office		7	
Ballymena Court Office		1	
Lisburn Court Office		21	
Civil Processing Centre		610	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1248</b>	

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

<b>Processing Office</b>	<b>District judge</b>	<b>County court judge</b>	<b>Total</b>
Laganside Courts	265	279	544
Newtownards Court Office	110	5	115
Downpatrick Court Office	2	58	60
Craigavon Court Office	31	29	60
Armagh Court Office	52	56	108
Omagh Court Office	31	33	64
Strabane Court Office	-	2	2
Antrim Court Office	33	17	50
Londonderry Court Office	60	38	98
Enniskillen Court Office	-	4	4
Coleraine Court Office	29	25	54
Newry Court Office	34	34	68
Magherafelt Court Office	4	3	7
Ballymena Court Office	9	12	21
Lisburn Court Office	29	23	52
Dungannon Court Office	17	17	34
Civil Processing Centre	130	138	268
<b>Total</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>1609</b>

**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
<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	366	231	365	5	32	999
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	1	95	48	1	3	148
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	50	-	29	-	12	91
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	20	30	23	2	3	78
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	41	22	50	1	3	117
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	48	34	53	2	5	142
	<b>Strabane Court Office</b>	1	1	1	-	-	3
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	13	7	21	1	-	42
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	38	49	44	2	3	136
	<b>Enniskillen Court Office</b>	2	1	5	-	-	8
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	29	38	39	-	3	109
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	55	51	42	1	4	153
	<b>Magherafelt Court Office</b>	6	2	4	-	-	12
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	12	5	14	-	4	35
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	31	37	23	-	4	95
	<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	17	8	14	1	3	43
		<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	-	-	42	154	11
	<b>Total</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>2418</b>
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	52	15	111	-	-	178
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	8	-	27	-	-	35
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	3	-	8	-	-	11
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	3	2	4	-	-	9
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	14	5	31	-	-	50
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	3	-	21	-	-	24
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	-	-	5	-	-	5
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	8	5	20	-	-	33
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	21	5	6	-	-	32
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	6	-	5	-	-	11
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	-	-	1	-	-	1
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	4	-	9	-	-	13
		<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	-	-	30	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>432</b>

**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	201	106	268	22	-	597
Newtownards Court Office	11	37	48	-	-	96
Downpatrick Court Office	10	2	30	8	-	50
Craigavon Court Office	7	16	24	3	-	50
Armagh Court Office	8	12	32	11	-	63
Omagh Court Office	19	16	41	6	-	82
Strabane Court Office	1	-	1	-	-	2
Antrim Court Office	4	3	12	1	-	20
Londonderry Court Office	22	20	40	3	2	87
Enniskillen Court Office	1	-	2	-	-	3
Coleraine Court Office	27	13	25	1	1	67
Newry Court Office	16	27	56	7	-	106
Magherafelt Court Office	-	-	6	2	-	8
Ballymena Court Office	3	5	7	2	-	17
Lisburn Court Office	20	11	30	6	1	68
Dungannon Court Office	1	2	20	2	-	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1341</b>

[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	795	1532	2327
Newtownards Court Office	139	22	161
Downpatrick Court Office	3	152	155
Craigavon Court Office	57	80	137
Armagh Court Office	79	116	195
Omagh Court Office	141	136	277
Strabane Court Office	2	3	5
Antrim Court Office	48	52	100
Londonderry Court Office	130	130	260
Enniskillen Court Office	8	15	23
Coleraine Court Office	90	92	182
Newry Court Office	122	100	222
Limavady Court Office	1	-	1
Magherafelt Court Office	9	11	20
Ballymena Court Office	32	62	94
Lisburn Court Office	53	62	115
Dungannon Court Office	59	116	175
Civil Processing Centre	197	221	418
<b>Total</b>	<b>1965</b>	<b>2902</b>	<b>4867</b>

**Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR**

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	395	569	964
Newtownards Court Office	55	1	56
Downpatrick Court Office	1	112	113
Craigavon Court Office	32	29	61
Armagh Court Office	19	29	48
Omagh Court Office	64	70	134
Antrim Court Office	18	26	44
Londonderry Court Office	38	32	70
Enniskillen Court Office	1	2	3
Coleraine Court Office	38	53	91
Newry Court Office	22	47	69
Limavady Court Office	-	1	1
Magherafelt Court Office	3	2	5
Ballymena Court Office	14	27	41
Lisburn Court Office	37	20	57
Dungannon Court Office	13	23	36
Central Office	-	1	1
Civil Processing Centre	4	8	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>1052</b>	<b>1806</b>

**Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases**

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	84
Newtownards Court Office	37
Downpatrick Court Office	71
Craigavon Court Office	48
Armagh Court Office	45
Omagh Court Office	74
Strabane Court Office	102
Antrim Court Office	48
Londonderry Court Office	78
Enniskillen Court Office	61
Coleraine Court Office	61
Newry Court Office	55
Magherafelt Court Office	41
Ballymena Court Office	63
Lisburn Court Office	62
Dungannon Court Office	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>

[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	17
Downpatrick Court Office	6
Craigavon Court Office	27
Armagh Court Office	16
Omagh Court Office	2
Londonderry Court Office	14
Coleraine Court Office	18
Newry Court Office	61
Lisburn Court Office	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

[3] Excludes default judgements and office disposals

## Equity

**Table 9: Equity cases and applications received**

Type	Processing Office	Total	
Case	Laganside Courts	6	
	Downpatrick Court Office	2	
	Craigavon Court Office	2	
	Armagh Court Office	2	
	Omagh Court Office	2	
	Londonderry Court Office	7	
	Coleraine Court Office	1	
	Newry Court Office	7	
	Ballymena Court Office	2	
	Civil Processing Centre	9	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	
	Application	Laganside Courts	2
		Craigavon Court Office	1
Omagh Court Office		4	
Londonderry Court Office		1	
Coleraine Court Office		1	
Newry Court Office		5	
Lisburn Court Office		1	
Civil Processing Centre		1	
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>	

**Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed**

Type	Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	5	-	5
	Downpatrick Court Office	1	2	3
	Craigavon Court Office	2	-	2
	Omagh Court Office	8	1	9
	Londonderry Court Office	9	1	10
	Newry Court Office	4	1	5
	Dungannon Court Office	1	1	2
	Civil Processing Centre	-	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>37</b>
Application	Laganside Courts	1	2	3
	Craigavon Court Office	1	-	1
	Omagh Court Office	2	3	5
	Londonderry Court Office	1	-	1
	Newry Court Office	2	-	2
	Lisburn Court Office	-	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table 11: Outstanding equity cases**

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	52
Newtownards Court Office	3
Downpatrick Court Office	28
Craigavon Court Office	17
Armagh Court Office	10
Omagh Court Office	59
Antrim Court Office	2
Londonderry Court Office	20
Enniskillen Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	20
Newry Court Office	41
Ballymena Court Office	8
Lisburn Court Office	4
Dungannon Court Office	9
RCJ Front Of House Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>



**Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity**

Type	Processing Office	Issue to disposal	
Case	Laganside Courts	57	
	Downpatrick Court Office	57	
	Craigavon Court Office	81	
	Omagh Court Office	122	
	Londonderry Court Office	84	
	Newry Court Office	58	
	Dungannon Court Office	108	
	Total	<b>86</b>	
	Application	Laganside Courts	8
		Craigavon Court Office	0
Omagh Court Office		18	
Londonderry Court Office		4	
Newry Court Office		40	
Total		<b>18</b>	

## **Ejectment**

**Table 13: Ejectment cases received**

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	26
Newtownards Court Office	4
Craigavon Court Office	6
Armagh Court Office	5
Omagh Court Office	3
Antrim Court Office	5
Londonderry Court Office	7
Lisburn Court Office	7
Civil Processing Centre	67
Total	<b>130</b>

**Table 14: Ejection cases disposed**

Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Laganside Courts	2	32	2	36
Newtownards Court Office	4	3	2	9
Craigavon Court Office	-	4	-	4
Armagh Court Office	-	2	1	3
Omagh Court Office	-	9	-	9
Antrim Court Office	1	-	-	1
Londonderry Court Office	5	-	-	5
Coleraine Court Office	5	-	-	5
Newry Court Office	2	2	-	4
Lisburn Court Office	1	1	-	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>78</b>

**Table 15: Outstanding ejection cases with NID**

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	11
Downpatrick Court Office	3
Craigavon Court Office	4
Armagh Court Office	2
Omagh Court Office	9
Strabane Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	3
Coleraine Court Office	4
Newry Court Office	2
Lisburn Court Office	1
Dungannon Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>

**Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejection**

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	30
Newtownards Court Office	77
Craigavon Court Office	61
Armagh Court Office	18
Omagh Court Office	25
Antrim Court Office	17
Londonderry Court Office	59
Coleraine Court Office	40
Newry Court Office	70
Lisburn Court Office	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

[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	92	
	Newtownards Court Office	5	
	Downpatrick Court Office	14	
	Craigavon Court Office	2	
	Armagh Court Office	7	
	Omagh Court Office	13	
	Antrim Court Office	17	
	Londonderry Court Office	14	
	Coleraine Court Office	5	
	Newry Court Office	7	
	Ballymena Court Office	2	
	Lisburn Court Office	7	
	Civil Processing Centre	1381	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1566</b>	
	Application	Laganside Courts	4
		Craigavon Court Office	2
Armagh Court Office		1	
Omagh Court Office		6	
Londonderry Court Office		1	
Coleraine Court Office		3	
Lisburn Court Office		2	
Civil Processing Centre		5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>		

**Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received**

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	76
Newtownards Court Office	2
Downpatrick Court Office	15
Craigavon Court Office	5
Armagh Court Office	6
Omagh Court Office	25
Antrim Court Office	13
Londonderry Court Office	20
Coleraine Court Office	14
Newry Court Office	12
Ballymena Court Office	4
Lisburn Court Office	7
Civil Processing Centre	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>

**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	48	8	23	1	80	
	Downpatrick Court Office	7	1	4	1	13	
	Craigavon Court Office	10	1	9	1	21	
	Armagh Court Office	10	-	4	1	15	
	Omagh Court Office	52	14	5	1	72	
	Antrim Court Office	1	-	2	-	3	
	Londonderry Court Office	37	-	3	-	40	
	Enniskillen Court Office	7	-	-	-	7	
	Coleraine Court Office	31	2	10	-	43	
	Newry Court Office	16	1	4	-	21	
	Ballymena Court Office	3	1	2	-	6	
	Lisburn Court Office	11	-	19	1	31	
	Dungannon Court Office	1	1	-	-	2	
	Civil Processing Centre	-	1	270	755	1026	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>234</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>1380</b>
	Application	Laganside Courts	9	-	-	-	9
		Downpatrick Court Office	-	2	-	-	2
Craigavon Court Office		-	4	-	-	4	
Omagh Court Office		1	6	-	-	7	
Coleraine Court Office		4	1	-	-	5	
Lisburn Court Office		-	2	-	-	2	
<b>Total</b>			<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29</b>

**Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD**

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	167
Newtownards Court Office	4
Downpatrick Court Office	61
Craigavon Court Office	53
Armagh Court Office	18
Omagh Court Office	63
Antrim Court Office	14
Londonderry Court Office	23
Enniskillen Court Office	1
Coleraine Court Office	39
Newry Court Office	34
Ballymena Court Office	8
Lisburn Court Office	44
Civil Processing Centre	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>549</b>

**Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims**

Type	Processing office	Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	43
	Downpatrick Court Office	57
	Craigavon Court Office	83
	Armagh Court Office	73
	Omagh Court Office	53
	Antrim Court Office	22
	Londonderry Court Office	42
	Enniskillen Court Office	56
	Coleraine Court Office	49
	Newry Court Office	78
	Ballymena Court Office	35
	Lisburn Court Office	56
	Dungannon Court Office	77
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>
	Application	Laganside Courts
Omagh Court Office		1
Coleraine Court Office		20
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>

[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
Armagh Court Office	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

**Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed**

Processing Office	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Total
Laganside Courts	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

**Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases**

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	5
Newtownards Court Office	1
Armagh Court Office	2
Omagh Court Office	5
Londonderry Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	1
Newry Court Office	2
Dungannon Court Office	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

**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	45	42	1	7	5	100
Downpatrick Court Office	30	24	1	3	3	61
Craigavon Court Office	30	15	1	2	3	51
Armagh Court Office	9	4	-	-	2	15
Omagh Court Office	17	20	-	2	-	39
Londonderry Court Office	21	21	-	9	4	55
Coleraine Court Office	46	36	5	10	7	104
Newry Court Office	3	3	1	-	-	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>432</b>

**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	56	47	1	16	5	125
Downpatrick Court Office	17	12	-	2	1	32
Craigavon Court Office	17	6	-	2	-	25
Armagh Court Office	-	2	-	-	-	2
Omagh Court Office	14	17	-	4	2	37
Londonderry Court Office	17	18	-	3	4	42
Coleraine Court Office	24	22	1	3	1	51
Newry Court Office	18	10	2	4	-	34
Ballymena Court Office	-	-	-	1	-	1
Dungannon Court Office	1	1	-	-	-	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>351</b>

**Table 28: Matrimonial applications received**

Processing Office	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	10	3	-	13
Newtownards Court Office	-	-	1	1
Craigavon Court Office	2	-	-	2
Armagh Court Office	8	-	-	8
Omagh Court Office	4	-	2	6
Antrim Court Office	1	-	-	1
Londonderry Court Office	3	1	-	4
Coleraine Court Office	5	-	-	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>

**Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed**

Processing Office	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	4	1	-	5
Craigavon Court Office	2	-	-	2
Armagh Court Office	9	-	-	9
Omagh Court Office	9	-	2	11
Londonderry Court Office	4	-	-	4
Coleraine Court Office	7	-	-	7
Newry Court Office	4	-	-	4
Ballymena Court Office	1	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>43</b>

**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	40	9
Downpatrick Court Office	50	10
Craigavon Court Office	53	9
Armagh Court Office	43	8
Omagh Court Office	58	9
Londonderry Court Office	42	9
Coleraine Court Office	39	9
Newry Court Office	25	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>9</b>

**Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications**

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	59
Craigavon Court Office	8
Armagh Court Office	21
Omagh Court Office	66
Londonderry Court Office	32
Coleraine Court Office	84
Newry Court Office	124
Ballymena Court Office	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>

[5] Excludes non court disposals



## Licenses

**Table 32: Licences received and disposed**

Processing Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	5	2
Newtownards	3	4
Newry	5	14
Laganside Courts	18	19
Craigavon	3	3
Omagh	14	14
Londonderry	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>61</b>

## 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	143	2:26:37	349:28:00	268:16:00	65:12:00	16:00:00
Laganside	437	2:39:31	1161:56:00	541:06:00	192:33:00	428:17:00
Armagh	134	2:17:51	307:54:00	1:08:00	173:01:00	133:45:00
Lisburn	24	1:36:07	38:27:00	0:00:00	38:04:00	0:23:00
Dungannon	98	2:01:30	198:27:00	189:59:00	0:30:00	7:58:00
Royal Courts Of Justice	1	0:45:00	0:45:00	0:45:00	0:00:00	0:00:00
Downpatrick	30	2:41:04	80:32:00	5:05:00	65:17:00	10:10:00
Craigavon	103	2:19:56	240:14:00	236:04:00	4:10:00	0:00:00
Omagh	69	2:54:49	201:03:00	18:30:00	106:55:00	75:38:00
Coleraine	35	2:32:00	88:40:00	82:28:00	1:50:00	4:22:00
Londonderry	123	2:29:01	305:30:00	131:38:00	91:48:00	82:04:00
Newtownards	34	1:06:03	37:26:00	0:00:00	36:01:00	1:25:00
Newry	110	2:47:24	306:55:00	300:20:00	0:32:00	6:03:00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1341</b>	<b>2:28:25</b>	<b>3317:17:00</b>	<b>1775:19:00</b>	<b>775:53:00</b>	<b>766:05:00</b>

[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, ejection 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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