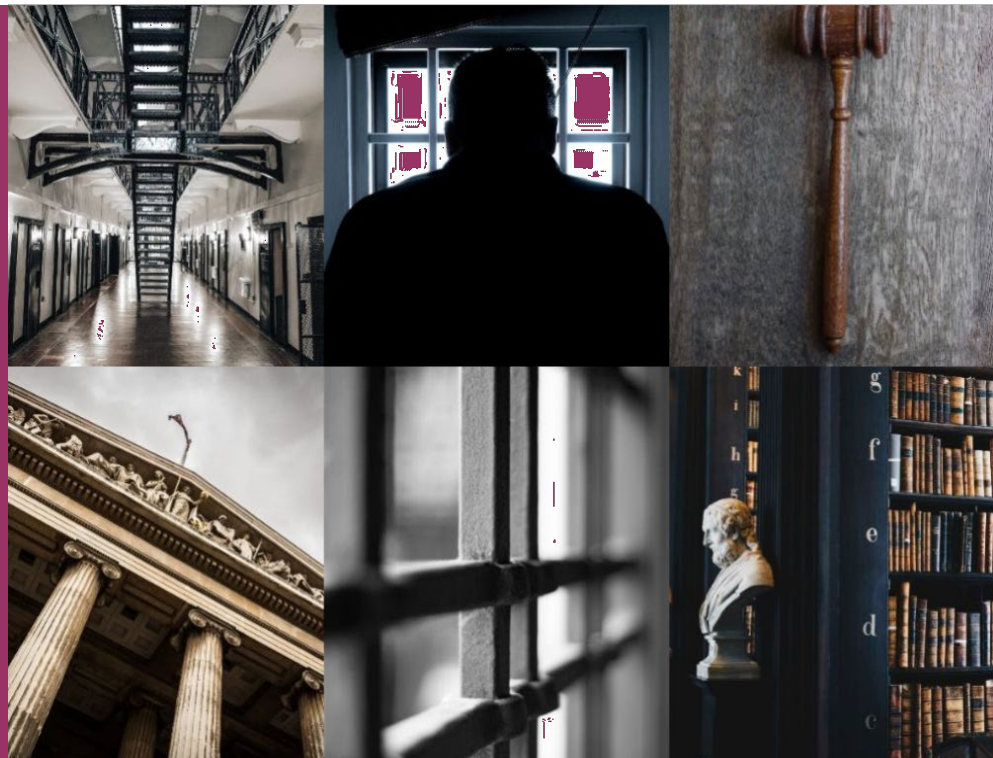


# Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Publications Consultation

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This bulletin is available at [Northern Ireland Court Service Statistical Publications](#).

# 1

## Background

Analytical Services Group (ASG), the statisticians within the Department of Justice (DoJ), have produced five individual quarterly publications (County Court, Crown Court, Magistrates' Court, High Court, and Children Order) and an annual Judicial Statistics report in their current format since 2015 and 2012 respectively.

ASG recently reviewed the content and format of these publications with a view to providing users with more streamlined, targeted and user-friendly bulletins. Following this review, the suggested approach was to amalgamate and simplify the data from the five quarterly reports into one single document, and to simplify the format of the annual Judicial Statistics publication.

A consultation opened on 25 March 2022 and closed on 22 April 2022. Users were provided with templates of how the new publications would look and the information they would contain and were invited to complete a survey to provide feedback on the new proposed approach. The following chapter provides an overview of the consultation findings.

# 2

## Summary of Responses

### Respondents

A total of five responses were received – one from an internal user, one an external user and three users who preferred to remain anonymous.

The main reasons for using the publications were identified as –

- Monitoring/bench marking (4);
- Briefing (4);
- Policy development or review (3); and
- General information (2).

### Information Sources Used

All five respondents indicated they used the County, Crown and Magistrates' bulletins; four used the High Court and Children Order, and three the Judicial Statistics bulletins.

In terms of the Excel tables, three respondents indicated they used those for the County, Crown and Magistrates' bulletins and two the High Court, Children Order and Judicial Statistics bulletins.

### Meeting Needs

When asked if the new single quarterly report format met their future needs in terms of content, format and presentation of data, all five respondents indicated that it did. When asked to what extent the new, amalgamated publication met their needs, three said fully and two said mostly.

All three respondents who indicated that they used the Judicial Statistics report indicated that the new publication met their future needs for information in terms of content, format and presentation of data. When asked to what extent the new format publication meets their needs, two said fully and one said mostly.

Comments remarked on the ease of use of one collated rather than five separate quarterly documents and on the modernised format of the Judicial Statistics publication. While all responses and comments were in support of the new format for both publications, one respondent highlighted that the data needed to continue to be available in tabular format, i.e. Excel, for both publications and that publishing in the new format should not result in any undue delay.

## 2 Summary of Responses

Respondents were asked for feedback on the NICTS publications to help ASG understand future needs; 2 respondents provided feedback. A summary of the feedback is provided below along with ASG's response.

Respondent Comment	ASG Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Quarterly publication of statistics valued but would like them to be available closer to the period covered.</li><li>Could more in-depth information, e.g. reasons for adjournment, cracked trials, reasons for removal of cases, those who are self-representing etc. be provided.</li><li>HMCTS published additional information during lockdown on a weekly basis, showing the impact on workload, volumes and activity. Also published data on alternative methods of facilitating court business (remote hearings alongside face-to-face) - could ASG do the same?</li><li>HMCTS in England and Wales publish monthly management report of same figures as in quarterly bulletins – could ASG do the same?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The time lag is required to allow data to be updated and the substantial validation required to be undertaken. It is unlikely that the report could be produced in a shorter timeframe but we will continue to review our processes.</li><li>Current resources mean that more in-depth information, additional information or monthly management information cannot be provided on a quarterly basis. Provision of further information, outside of the existing publications, can however be provided for one off ad hoc queries by direct requests to ASG.</li></ul>

## 2 Summary of Responses

Respondent Comment	ASG Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would it be possible for cases received in a quarter, dealt with in a quarter and outstanding, be carried over to the next quarter and published to show backlog?</li><li>• Inclusion of legal aid statistics within the quarterly publications.</li><li>• Greater publicity of publication revisions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cases received and disposed each quarter are published alongside previous quarters for the current calendar year, within the excel tables. Outstanding cases cannot be provided by NICTS statisticians as the data files exported from the Courts operating system (ICOS) are all restricted to keep them within manageable size limits.</li><li>• Legal Aid statistics are outside the remit of ASG as the Legal Services Agency have their own statisticians.</li><li>• Revision notices are currently placed on the internet at <a href="https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics">https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics</a>. ASG will however explore how revisions can be more widely highlighted.</li></ul>

# 2

## Summary of Responses

Respondent Comment	ASG Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comments on printing of publications – would prefer a set print layout on Excel spreadsheets, the use of a different colour scheme requested.</li><li>• Would like a centralised schedule of publications to inform those preparing briefings/ performance reports of what information is available, as well as a list of statisticians responsible.</li><li>• Harmonisation of periods covered by reports would be helpful.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ASG will explore what can be done to aid printing concerns. Colours are dictated by accessibility requirements and so possible changes will be limited.</li><li>• ASG publish a schedule of reports for the coming year at <a href="https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/release-dates-analytical-services-group-publications">https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/release-dates-analytical-services-group-publications</a>. Contact details for all ASG statisticians are available on the departmental intranet.</li><li>• Each publication has been developed in conjunction with the relevant policy team to meet their individual needs. Cases within the publication are therefore defined for that specific purpose and consequently it is not possible to count cases across the same time frame across all DoJ publications.</li></ul>

# 2

## Summary of Responses

Respondent Comment	ASG Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="146 365 749 394">• NICTS stats team to be available on Jabber.</li> <li data-bbox="146 594 923 622">• NICTS stats to provide other informal support as required.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1058 365 1808 508">• It is ASG's preference that requests and queries are emailed to the team to enable records of contacts to be more easily maintained.</li> <li data-bbox="1058 594 1823 736">• Ad hoc informal statistical support is provided across DoJ by direct request to all ASG statisticians as and when required.</li></ul>



## 3 | Proposed Changes

Many thanks to all those who responded to the consultation. Based on the responses ASG statisticians will adopt the new layout for publications from May 2022 onwards.