

Judicial Statistics



serving the community through the administration of justice

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<https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/statistics-on-court-activity-in-northern-ireland-letter-of-confirmation-as-national-statistics/>

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Glossary of terms

Introduction

The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) is an agency within the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland.

The NICTS carries out the court administrative functions previously undertaken by the Northern Ireland Court Service. The Court Service became part of the Department of Justice upon the devolution of policing and justice and its functions transferred to the Department (by virtue of the Northern Ireland Court Service (Abolition and Transfer of Functions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2010 made under section 78 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002).

The principal functions of the NICTS are:

- Providing administrative support for Northern Ireland's courts and tribunals.
- Enforcing civil court judgments through the Enforcement of Judgments Office.
- Providing support for the judiciary.
- Providing advice to the Minister for Justice on matters relating to the operation of the courts and tribunals and the Enforcement of Judgments Office.
- Providing, managing and maintaining court and tribunal buildings.
- Acting as the Central Authority under certain international Conventions.

This publication provides statistical information in relation to the criminal, civil and family business conducted by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) and the work of some associated offices.

The criminal, civil and family justice systems are impartial and the numbers that are processed through the courts and the corresponding time for processing this information are related to a number of factors. For instance, in relation to criminal cases this may include the seriousness of the offence, the availability of the witnesses and the complexity of individual cases.

For civil cases, this might include external factors such as the state of the economy in relation to mortgage cases received and disposed. The complexity of individual cases and the nature of individual claims may also be factors here.

The Court Structure in Northern Ireland

The Supreme Court

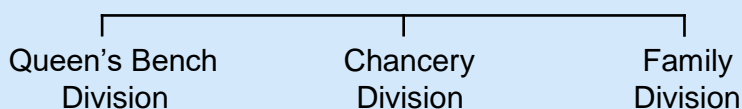
Final Court of Appeal on points of law for the United Kingdom in civil cases.
Final Court of Appeal on points of law for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in criminal cases.

The Court of Appeal

Deals with appeals in civil cases from the High Court and with appeals in criminal cases from the Crown Court. Hears appeals on points of law from the county courts and the magistrates' courts.

The High Court

Hears complex or important civil cases in three divisions and also appeals from county courts.



County Courts

(including family care centres)
Hear a wide range of civil actions and also appeals from magistrates' courts.

Small Claims Courts

Hear consumer claims and minor civil cases.

Coroners' Courts

Investigate the circumstances of sudden, violent or unnatural deaths.

The Enforcement of Judgments Office

Enforces money and other judgments.

The Crown Court

Hears all serious criminal cases.

Magistrates' Courts

(including youth courts and family proceedings courts) (21 petty sessions districts)

Conduct preliminary hearings in more serious criminal cases.

Hear and determine less serious criminal cases, cases involving youths and some civil and domestic cases, including family proceedings.

Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners

Hear appeals from unified Appeal

Tribunals in matters arising from social security, child support, tax credits etc.

Users

Who will be interested in this publication?

The information presented in this publication will be of interest to a wide variety of people. For example the statistics within and those derived from this bulletin are typically used by NICTS policy officials in their role of assisting and advising the Minister for Justice to discharge his duties; by the NI Assembly and Justice committee; by students conducting research into Justice issues; and by the media.

Users of Judicial Statistics

This publication is disseminated directly to approximately 30 users. In addition, it is also published on the NICTS' website and the Department's website and the UK Government Statistics Release Calendar (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements>). Users include policy colleagues in NICTS, academics, researchers, members of the public, the NI Assembly, other government departments and other interested parties and individuals.

The publication and further analysis of the data provide an evidence base that is used in a number of NICTS policies, strategies and reviews. Some of the most recent examples are:

- Consultation on review of Scale Costs and Recent Practice and Procedural changes in the County court
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/proposed-increase-court-fees>
- Consultation on proposals for the rationalisation of the court estate
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/proposals-rationalisation-court-estate>
- Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Annual Report and Resource Accounts 2017-2018
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-annual-report-and-accounts>

In addition, NICTS data are used within other NI departments and their agencies. Some of the most recent examples are: -

- Department of Justice Digest of information on the NI Criminal Justice system
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/compendia-publications>
- Department for Communities – Northern Ireland Housing Statistics
<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing-statistics>

Around 250 statistical enquiries per year are received by the NICTS from various sources. These include requests for further breakdowns by specific offence codes, specific legislation and court outcomes. In addition, approximately 100 Assembly Questions (either written or oral) and Freedom of Information requests relating to statistical data are received by the NICTS each year.

Levels of Reporting

Due to the extensive volume of information contained within this publication it has not been possible to provide comparisons across all case types, County Court Divisions and processing offices. At the beginning of each chapter a summary section detailing five year trend data at the Northern Ireland level has been included, along with key facts. Within the chapters a further breakdown by processing office for the (Crown Court, County Court, Magistrates and Children Order Chapters) has been provided.

On the 31st October 2016, a single County Court division called 'The County Court of Northern Ireland' replaced the seven existing County Court divisions. Relevant data contained in the publication were published by County Court division up until 2016. From 2017 onwards the data has been disaggregated by court office (processing office).

The principle users of this publication are internal business managers and court administrators. Both these users are primarily interested in the regional breakdowns by processing office of court business for the most recent calendar year. This information is used to assess volumes of court business at a regional level to assist in the decisions around staffing levels, prepare business cases for additional sitting days and inform the setting of operational targets.

Each chapter details the figures for 2019 and direct comparisons to 2018 have been outlined within the text. Detailed figures for 2018 can be accessed by following the link to the Judicial Statistics 2018 publication within the summary section of each chapter or by accessing the link below.

Judicial Statistics 2018:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

More information in relation to technical terms throughout the publication can be found within the Glossary section.

Databases

This section will cover how the databases are constructed from the data input stage through to the full validated datasets which are used to produce the figures contained within this publication. This section is split into the following subsections:

1. Data sources
2. Data downloads
3. Data validation
4. Quality assurance
5. Data extract
6. Accessibility
7. Comparability
8. Revisions
9. Other useful information

1. Data sources

This publication uses data which is primarily based on data input onto the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS). This system was implemented across the NICTS over a two year period from 2005 to 2007.

In 2005, ICOS was introduced in the High Court and county court. As regular downloads of information were available from the new system, more detailed information across all court tiers was included in Judicial Statistics. The High Court and county court sections have been completed based on ICOS since 2005 and caution should be taken when comparing Judicial Statistics from publications prior to this.

During 2006, ICOS was introduced in the Crown Court and criminal magistrates' court. Caution should be taken when comparing figures prior to this.

During 2007, the civil and family module of ICOS was completed. This affected the information in the civil and family magistrates' court section and also in the Children Order section from publications prior to this.

For further advice on the differences between 2019 figures and previous years, please contact the statisticians responsible for this publication.

The ICOS system is a live operating system used in each court tier to process every part of the court business from receipt of payments through to the production of final orders made. The data are input into this system on a daily basis by court clerks, and this information is checked and confirmed by another member of staff to ensure the data entries are correct.

Other data are also used to compile the information presented in Section G: Miscellaneous in this publication. The Enforcement of Judgments Office use a specially designed system to capture all applications to enforce called the Judgment Enforcement Management System (JEMS). The information in this publication has been extracted from this system. Manual spreadsheets on Excel are used to record information that relate to the Coroners Service for Northern Ireland and the Social Security and Child Support Commissioners. These systems are suitable to extract the data for this publication. Like ICOS, the information is recorded on these databases on a daily basis. The

information is validated internally by staff in these offices who check that the system and databases hold the correct information. The statistics and research team within the NICTS check the data that are provided from these systems to ensure that they are robust. However, statisticians in NICTS do recognise that as the information is input manually there is the potential for errors to occur.

2. Data downloads

The statistics and research team receive a download of information on a monthly basis from the ICOS system. The information is downloaded using a web based platform called Sharepoint. This package 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 by the Analytical Services Group (ASG) statisticians in NICTS on a monthly basis, using a weekly rotation based on each court tier, as shown below.

Week	Files Downloaded
1	Magistrates' court – civil and family business areas
2	Crown Court and Magistrates' court – criminal business areas
3	High Court – including Queens Bench, Bails, Chancery, Judicial Reviews, Matrimonial and Wardship & Adoption business areas. County Court – all business areas.
4	Magistrates' court – children order business area. Sittings – all court sittings information

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 branch.

ASG import the data into a program called SPSS (Statistics Package for Social Sciences). SPSS is then used to perform extensive data validations to identify potential errors in the data and ensure the data are reliable and robust.

3. Data validation

ASG have invested a lot of time and effort into writing an extensive computer program within SPSS to validate the information downloaded from ICOS. The program includes over 100 checks against each business area.

- (i) checking consistency over time and between variables;
- (ii) reliability of data using logic checks;
- (iii) checking that variables fall within accepted ranges; and
- (iv) checking with the ICOS Support Team in the event of any major discrepancies that have occurred since the last download.

The validation program runs in unison with the download program, for example in week 1 the magistrates' civil and family information is downloaded and the corresponding validation checks

are run on the newly downloaded information. This pattern follows for all the court tiers and business areas.

The validation program is designed to produce user friendly tables highlighting the potential problems with data in the title of the table, and the case numbers of the records affected. A validation report is compiled for each court venue and circulated to the Case Progression Officer for amendment. Each court division has a Case Progression Officer who is responsible for:

- Monitoring accuracy levels on ICOS by carrying out sample checks on data entry and court resulting, ensuring that all validations on ICOS and manual statistical returns are completed in a timely manner. Providing advice and identifying training needs;
- Monitoring the confirmation of ICOS criminal court resulting, including the inputting of adjournment codes;
- Promoting awareness of the impact error can have, its wide ranging consequences and negative impact on the reliability of management information;

The Case Progression Officer is given a two week period from the date the validation report issues until all records are amended on ICOS. This ensures that the corrections are updated before the next download of files by the statistics and research team. After the files have been refreshed each weekend all the data is then downloaded again (in accordance with the schedule) and this new download will reflect the amendments made as a result of the validation reports. If any errors have not been corrected, they will continue to appear in the validation reports until the necessary amendments are made on the ICOS system.

ASG then ensure that all validations in relation to the reporting period are amended prior to publication. Once these amendments have been checked, computer syntax is then used to produce the tables in this publication.

4. Quality assurance

Once computed, the figures in the report are checked carefully prior to publication. The data are broken down by court location as this is the established way of producing and presenting these data. The table below indicates the quality of the data prior to the full years' validation schedule being completed, and then again after the final year figures have been produced. This has been based on the numbers of defendants / cases disposed during the period. As shown, the percentage changes in the figures remain consistently low across all major business areas, typically less than 2%.

Court Tier	Business Area	Disposals (provisional data as published in quarterly bulletins)	Disposals (final year data)	% change
High Court	Chancery	968	948	-2.1%
	Bankruptcy	1247	1215	-2.6%
	Companies	479	476	-0.6%
	Queen's Bench Writs	2767	2708	-2.1%
	Judicial Reviews	279	274	-1.8%
	Probate Grants	6547	6547	-
	Divorces	758	759	+0.1%
	Wardship & Adoption	88	88	-
	Bails	1364	1351	-1.0%
Crown Court	Cases Disposed	1295	1295	-
	Defendants Disposed	1584	1587	+0.2%
County	Appeals	3691	3691	-
	Civil Bills	9391	9156	-2.5%
	Ejectment	941	936	-0.5%
	Small Claims	8892	8722	-1.9%
	Divorces – Decrees Granted	1457	1456	-0.1%
Magistrates	Adult Defendants Disposed	39987	39992	<+0.1%
	Youth Defendants Disposed	1255	1256	+0.1%
	Civil / Family Applications Disposed	3814	3773	-1.1%
Children Order	Applications Disposed	4482	4472	-0.2%

5. Data extract

The statistics in this report are taken from the latest available data that are held on the NICTS systems as of 15 July 2020. ASG check all data that are to be published carefully in order to provide a high level of quality assurance in relation to the data. However, NICTS does acknowledge that some errors may occur due to the inputting of incorrect data on to the ICOS. Most of these errors are detected and corrected by the validations that are computed by the statistics and research team before publication. Nonetheless, there is scope for error to occur. There is also scope for error in relation to the report itself. The information here is manually typed and there is the possibility of transcription errors here.

6. Accessibility

In order that the information provided in this publication is accessible to all groups of people, it is available on the NICTS website in a number of formats – pdf, Excel and html. This publication also complies with the NICTS's Internet Accessibility policy. Requests for the information in different formats can be made by contacting the communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk. A charge may apply for formats not routinely used and individuals will be made aware of any charges and asked to confirm their willingness to pay prior commencement of the work.

7. Comparability

The court structure of Northern Ireland does not equate to the court structures of England and Wales, Scotland or the Republic of Ireland, and therefore no comparisons have been made between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK and Ireland.

Direct comparisons can be made for data across all court tiers over an eleven year period, as the ICOS roll out was complete by 2007, except for tables F.4, F.5 and F.6 within the Children Order section.

The recording of orders made within the Children Order courts have been reported at the participant level since 2007, and the introduction of ICOS. Children Order data in relation to orders made, is recorded on ICOS at the **application level**. The data is then extracted based on the **participants** selected on ICOS which indicate all relevant parties to whom the order applies.

Following an operational review of recording practices surrounding the selection of participants to whom orders apply in November 2013, a training program was implemented by operational colleagues. This training was delivered in early 2014 to ensure all relevant participants were being consistently applied on ICOS. This has had a knock-on effect on the numbers of own motion, interim and final orders being reported within the Children Order courts, with figures showing large increases since 2014.

Following a National Statistics consultation with users (for more information click on the following link: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics> a change in the reporting of the orders being made within the Children Order courts from the participant level to the application level from 2016 onwards has been introduced, (and final year figures for 2015 and 2016 have prepared using this new methodology) to overcome issues surrounding the inconsistent recording of participants to whom the orders apply and provide more user friendly data in terms of relating the orders made to the applications being received and disposed. Application level data counts distinct orders made during the court process. This new methodology has been introduced to cover own motion, interim and final orders and will affect the numbers reported in Tables F.4, F.5 and F.6 in this publication.

The numbers of orders made will not be comparable with those published in Judicial Statistics in previous years. To assist with comparisons over time, a back series of orders data from April 2007 to the end of 2015 are available on the Court and Tribunals website at the following link: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

Before September 2009 all the courthouses opened from 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday each week (excluding public holidays). In September 2009 5 of the 23 courthouses became "Hearing Centres" because they were not fully utilised when the courts weren't sitting and NICTS needed to make better use of their courthouses and staff.

These courthouses were Bangor, Larne, Limavady, Magherafelt and Strabane. They were only open on the day that court hearings take place, and the rest of the time they remain closed.

When the Hearing Centres were opened they offered all of the usual services. However, when the Hearing Centres closed people had to access these services:-

- At other courthouses
- On the telephone
- Over the internet

The NICTS financial situation is different from what it was in 2009. They are now being asked to operate within tighter financial limits but are still required to provide the same range and standard of services.

In March 2013 two of these hearing centres were closed permanently – Larne and Bangor and the court business for these two venues was moved to Ballymena and Newtownards respectively. Caution should therefore be taken when comparing figures with preceding years for Larne and Bangor court houses. For more information on the consultation exercise under taken, please use the link below:

Consultation on proposals to close Hearing Centres

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/proposals-rationalisation-court-estate>

8. Revisions

Any revisions to data will be applied in light of the NICTS Statistical Notice ‘Policy Statement on Revisions’. Incorrect figures or changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice. For further information, please see the following web link:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-statistics-and-research-useful-documents>

9. Other Useful Information

The court structure of Northern Ireland does not equate to the court structures of England and Wales, Scotland or the Republic of Ireland.

Further information on judicial and court statistics for England and Wales can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics?keywords=&topics%5B%5D=all&departments%5B%5D=ministry-of-justice&from_date=&to_date

Further information on crime and justice statistics in Scotland can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice>

Information on court statistics from the Republic of Ireland can be found at:

<http://www.courts.ie/courts.ie/library3.nsf/PageCurrentWebLookUpTopNav/STATISTICS?opendocument&l=en>

The following web links contain details of information that relates to other criminal justice agencies in Northern Ireland:

Department of Justice (Northern Ireland)

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/type/statisticalreports>

Police Service of Northern Ireland

<https://www.psnl.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/>

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

<https://www.ppsni.gov.uk/publications/type/statisticalreports>

Youth Justice Agency

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/youth-justice>

Northern Ireland Prison Service

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/prisons/prison-statistics-and-reports>

Probation Board for Northern Ireland

<https://www.pbni.org.uk/about-us/statistics-research/>

Key Highlights

High Court

- Between 2015 and 2019 the number of chancery cases received increased by 31% overall and by 65% between 2018 and 2019. These figures reflect an increase of 43% in cases received in relation to mortgages between 2015 and 2019, from 1,232 to 1,766. (Mortgages made up 87% of cases received into the Chancery division in 2019). The major changes that caused the increase in mortgage cases received in 2019 were:
 - *The implementation of an FSA-compliant computer system, one that would ensure that customers in arrears were not charged twice for their arrears. This was to comply with the judgement of Master Ellison from 2014, which had prevented at least a third of banks from pursuing arrears.*
 - *The compliance of Barclays bank with a ruling to rename its retail lending section to 'Barclays Bank UK Ltd' before issuing further proceedings.*
 - *The processing of a number of cases that had been pending on ICOS. These cases had been purchased from the lending institution by a third-party debt company to be pursued.*
- Queen's Bench writs received have fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, experiencing an increase of 9% overall. The increase in writs received in 2017 may be largely attributed to an influx of writs (approximately 360) regarding the Voluntary Exit Scheme and how it applied to members of the NI Prison Service. There was a 29% decrease in the number of Queen's Bench writs disposed of between 2015 and 2019. Various manual exercises occurred during this period to dispose of a number of old cases which were either withdrawn or settled out of court and so caution should be exercised when comparing between years.

Crown Court

- Figure C.1 outlines the number of Crown Court defendants committed and disposed of during the last 5 years. The number of defendants committed between 2015 and 2019 has generally decreased, with an overall decrease of 3%. The highest number of committals to the Crown Court occurred in 2015 (1,844). The fall in defendants committed over the last five years indicates that there has been a decrease in the number of defendants committing more serious offences, which as a result must be tried in the Crown Court.
- There was an increase of 45% in the number of defendants disposed of between 2015 and 2016, before decreasing by 28% between 2016 and 2018, and then increasing by 8% between 2018 and 2019. **The introduction of new rules in May 2015 in relation to legal aid remuneration resulted in a number of solicitors and counsel withdrawing their representation from a range of court cases. This has affected defendants' access to legal aid representation and has had an impact on disposals and delay within the Crown Court process.** In 2016 as the dispute ended and cases began to progress through the system again and this led to a spike in disposals in 2016. The disposals began to decline in 2017 and again in 2018, as the majority of the backlog had been cleared.
- Average waiting times between committal and start of trial increased between 2015 and 2016 by 47%, to 168 days. This was due in part to the cases delayed due to the legal aid dispute in 2015 beginning to progress through the Crown Court in 2016. The average waiting times then decreased by 30% between 2016 and 2019 as the backlog was cleared.

County Court

- Ordinary civil bill cases received decreased each year between 2015 and 2017, before increasing slightly by 1% from 2017 to 2019. Overall civil bill cases received decreased by 3%. Civil bills disposed fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, peaking at 9,885 disposals in 2017. There was an overall decrease of less than one percent between 2015 and 2019.

- Ejectment cases received and disposed fluctuated over the last 5 years. Between 2015 and 2019, both receipts and disposals increased by 20% and 12% respectively. While Equity cases received remained relatively stable between 2015 and 2018, and then increased by 15% in 2019, and equity cases disposed fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, with an overall increase of 9%.
- The number of small claims received generally decreased between 2015 and 2019, apart from a spike in 2017. There has been an 11% decrease in receipts overall between 2015 and 2019. There has also been a decreasing trend in the number of small claims disposed between 2015 and 2019, again apart from a spike in 2017. The increases in receipts and disposals are primarily the result of proceedings issued by two debt recovery companies during 2017.
- The total number of decrees granted across the High Court and County Court decreased between 2015 and 2019 by 9% overall.

Magistrates' Court

- Adult and Youth criminal defendants received have decreased by 2% and 29% respectively between 2015 and 2019. The decreases since 2013 are partly a result of the introduction of Penalty Notices of Disorder which were introduced on 6th June 2012. These are new diversionary disposals aimed at dealing with minor offences as a direct alternative to a prosecution before the court. The number of defendants received is affected by crime rates, Police arrests and the decision by the PPS to prosecute. For more information on Police and PPS figures, please follow the links below:
<https://www.psnipolice.uk/inside-psni/statistics>
<https://www.ppsni.gov.uk/publications/type/statisticalreports>
- Adult criminal disposals have decreased by 4% and Youth disposals have decreased by 33% between 2015 and 2019 with an increase of 3% and a decrease of 13% being observed respectively between 2018 and 2019.
- Civil & Family business received generally decreased between 2015 and 2019, with an overall decrease of 19% between 2015 and 2019. Disposals have followed the same pattern as the receipts, generally decreasing between 2015 and 2019 with an overall decrease of 16%.

The Children Order

- Applications lodged increased by 4% between 2015 and 2017 before decreasing by 8% between 2017 and 2018, and a further 7% between 2018 and 2019. The applications lodged declined by 11% overall between 2015 and 2019.
- Applications disposed generally decreased between 2015 and 2019, apart from a small increase of 1% in 2018. Between 2015 and 2019 applications disposed decreased by 13%.
- The number of children involved also generally decreased between 2015 and 2019, with an overall decrease of 16%.

Part A: Court Of Appeal

The Court of Appeal normally sits at the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast. The judges of the Court of Appeal are the Lord Chief Justice (who is the President) and three Lord Justices of Appeal. The Court of Appeal hears appeals in criminal matters from the Crown Court and in civil matters from the High Court. It also hears appeals on points of law from the County Courts, Magistrates' Courts and certain Tribunals. A Court of Appeal case will usually be heard by three judges but can be heard by two. Incidental matters may be heard by one Court of Appeal judge.

Key Facts

- Criminal Appeals received increased by 15% between 2015 and 2017, before decreasing by 5% in 2018 and a further 13% in 2019. Between 2015 and 2019 there was a 4% decrease in Criminal Appeal receipts.
- Criminal Appeals disposed fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, peaking at 122 in 2017, before decreasing by 20% between 2017 and 2019.
- Civil Appeals received have fluctuated over the period with an overall decrease of 10% between 2015 and 2019. Civil Appeals disposed also fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, peaking at 101 in 2019.
- Civil Appeal Court sitting days have fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, peaking in 2019 with 136 sitting days. Between 2016 and 2018 the number of civil appeals sitting days decreased by 17%, from 134 to 111 days, before increasing by 23% to 136 in 2019. Criminal Appeal Court sitting days have fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, with an overall decrease of 2%. The highest number of Criminal Appeal Court sitting days occurred in 2015 with 91 days.

Summary Table 1: Court of Appeal 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Criminal Appeals Received	93	93	107	102	89
Criminal Appeals Disposed	109	91	122	104	97
Civil Appeals Received	99	75	90	94	89
Civil Appeals Disposed	70	92	68	79	101
Criminal Appeal Court Sitting Days	91	80	65	83	89
Civil Appeal Court Sitting Days	102	134	129	111	136

Section 1: Criminal appeals

There were 89 criminal appeals lodged during 2019, this was a 13% decrease when compared to 2018 when 102 criminal appeals were lodged (Table A.1).

Table A.1: Criminal appeals lodged and disposed of in 2019

	Lodged	Disposed of
	89	97

In 2019, there were 64 appeals lodged against sentence only, 16 were against conviction, 6 were against both conviction and sentence and there were 3 appeals lodged pursuant to Article 17 of Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2004. This compares with 69 appeals lodged against sentence only, 20 against conviction, 10 against both conviction and sentence, and 3 appeals lodged pursuant to Article 17 of Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2004, in 2018. Of the 89 appeals lodged during 2019, 4 resulted from trials dealing with scheduled offences (Table A.2)

Table A.2: Types of criminal appeals lodged in 2019

	Appeal pursuant to Article 17 of Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2004	Appeal against			Total
		Sentence	Conviction	Conviction and sentence	
Scheduled	-	1	2	1	4
Non-Scheduled	3	63	14	5	85
Total	3	64	16	6	89

There were 33 successful appeals (where either the conviction was quashed or the sentence was varied) in 2019 with no appeals refused, and 22 appeals abandoned/ withdrawn/ stayed (Table A.3). In comparison, there were 37 successful appeals in 2018, with no appeals refused and 31 appeals abandoned or withdrawn.

Table A.3: Results of criminal appeals by type in 2019

	Appeal pursuant to Article 17 of Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2004	Conviction only or conviction & sentence		Sentence only		Total
		Scheduled	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Non-Scheduled	
Conviction Quashed	-	1	2	-	-	3
Appeal Dismissed – Sentence Affirmed	1	-	10	3	28	42
Sentence Varied	-	-	4	-	26	30
Withdrawn/ Abandoned/ Stayed	-	-	5	2	15	22
Refused	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1	1	21	5	69	97

Section 2: Civil appeals

There were 89 civil appeals received in 2019, 5 less than the 2018 total of 94. As in previous years, the main source of civil appeals was the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court with 37 cases received. A total of 101 appeals were disposed of during the year (Table A.4) which compares with the 79 appeals disposed of in 2018.

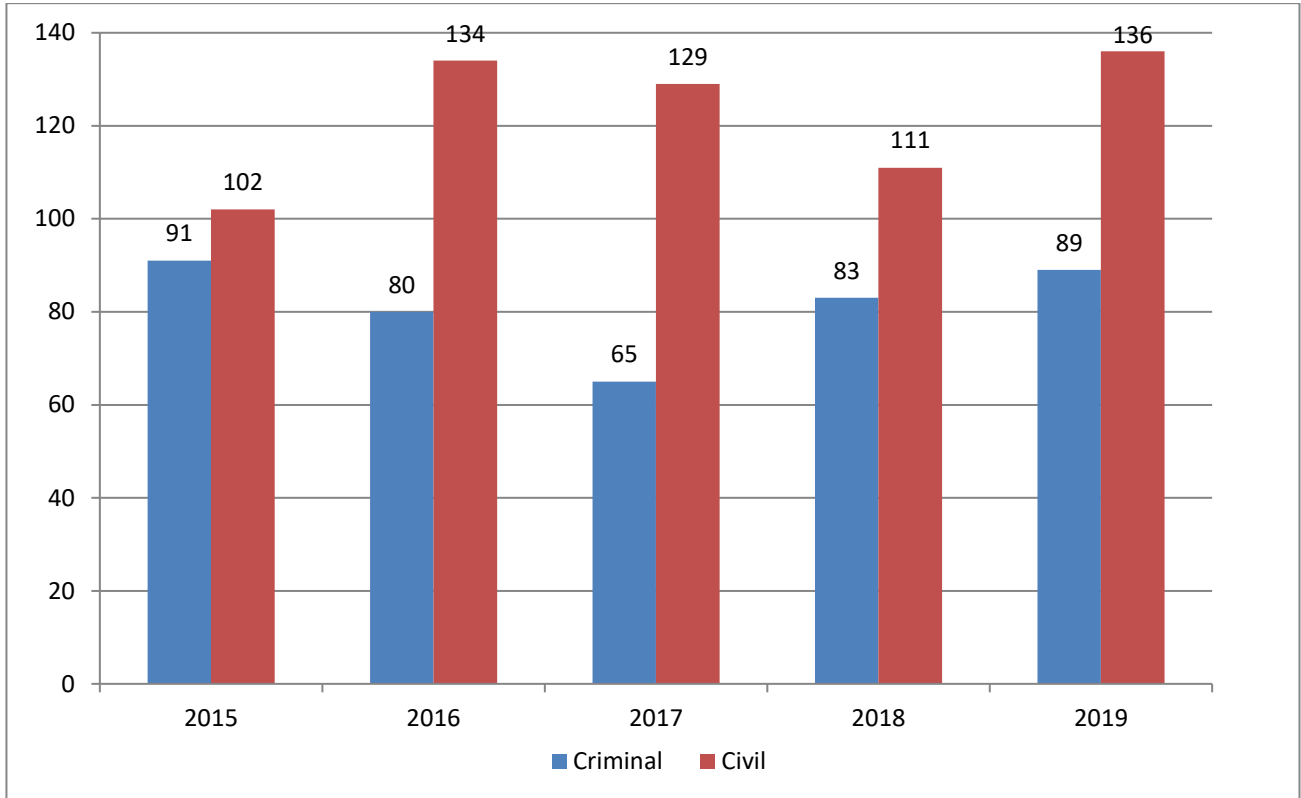
Table A.4: Appeals received and disposed of by origin and type in 2019

	Received	Disposed
Chancery Division: Final	18	13
Chancery Division: Interlocutory	3	3
Family Division: Final	5	5
Family Division: Interlocutory	1	1
Queen's Bench Division:		
Judicial Review: Final	21	34
Judicial Review: Interlocutory	1	4
Commercial: Final	5	4
Commercial: Interlocutory	-	-
Other: Final	10	9
Other: Damages	-	-
Other: Interlocutory	-	1
Magistrates' court (Section 44 of Judicature Act)	-	1
Court of Appeal Cross Appeal	-	-
Case Stated		
Court of Appeal (Appeal or Case Stated)	18	15
Requisition to Judge to State a Case	-	-
By Outside Body	1	-
By Lands Tribunal	-	-
By High Court Judge	3	5
By County Court Judge	1	3
By District Judge	-	1
By District Judge (Magistrates' Court)	2	2
Determination of pensions: Pension appeal	-	-
Immigration Tribunal	-	-
Motions on Notice	-	-
Proceeds of crime	-	-
Master (EJO)	-	-
Other	-	-
Total	89	101

Section 3: Court sitting times

The number of court sitting days spent on criminal appeals (by majority type of work) increased from 83 days in 2018 to 89 days in 2019. A total of 110 hours were spent in court hearing criminal appeals in 2019 compared with 146 court hours in 2018. There were 136 court sitting days (by majority type of work) spent on civil appeals during 2019, compared with 111 in 2018. A total of 150 hours were spent in court hearing civil appeals in 2019 compared with 181 court hours during 2018 (Figure A.1 & Table B.42).

Figure A.1: Number of court sitting days (majority days) in the Court of Appeal from 2015 to 2019



Part B: The High Court

The High Court sits at the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast. It consists of the Lord Chief Justice (who is the President of the High Court), and three Lords Justices of Appeal along with ten High Court Judges. The High Court hears high value and complex civil cases and deals with civil cases, hears appeals in criminal cases, and also has the power to review the actions of individuals or organisations to make sure they have acted legally and justly. The High Court comprises three Divisions: the Chancery Division, Queen's Bench Division and Family Division.

This section is separated into 4 Sections:

Section 1: Chancery Division

- 1.1 Key Facts
- 1.2 Chancery Division - 2019 Data

Section 2: The Queen's Bench Division

- 2.1 Key Facts
- 2.2 Queens' Bench Division - 2019 Data

Section 3: Family Division

- 3.1 Key Facts
- 3.2 Family Division - 2019 Data

Section 4: Sitting Days

- 4.1 Key Facts
- 4.2 Sitting Days - 2019 Data

Section 1: The Chancery Division

The Chancery Division deals with four main areas of business: Chancery, Bankruptcy, Companies and Probate.

Chancery Office

The main area of business in the Chancery office relates to disputes involving land and property. These include disputes between vendors, purchasers, landlords and tenants; mortgage repossession actions; trespass; right of way; construction of a lease; and squatters. Most actions begin with the issue of a claim or originating proceedings by the claimant against the defendant. The Chancery section also deals with disputes involving copyright; partnerships; patents; execution of trusts; charities; inheritance; and the administration of estates.

People can get into housing debt for a variety of reasons:

- Change in circumstances like job loss, reduction in working hours, sickness or relationship breakdown
- Accessing high cost credit / mortgages from non-traditional lenders and securing it on their homes
- Over borrowing during the property boom

The NICTS produced guidelines for lenders known as Pre-Action Protocols for Mortgage Possession Proceedings. They have been in operation since October 2009 and were revised in August 2011. The Protocols ensure that possession action against homeowners is taken only as a last possible resort <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/information-repossession>

Bankruptcy Office

The Bankruptcy Office deals with all matters relating to insolvency. These include applications to set aside statutory demands; petitions (by creditors and debtors) and voluntary arrangements.

If you cannot repay the debts that you owe, you may be made bankrupt. The most common situations in which you can be made bankrupt are at the request of someone to whom you owe money (a creditors petition) and at your own request (a debtor's petition).

Companies Office

The Companies Office deals with all matters relating to the Companies Order including winding up petitions; insolvent partnerships; and disqualification of directors.

If the Court makes an order to wind up a company it means that the company has gone into compulsory liquidation. The court will then appoint an Official Receiver (OR) to act as liquidator for the company.

Probate Office

The principal business assigned to the Probate Office includes Contentious and Non-contentious Probate applications, leading to the issue of a Grant of Representation in the estate of the deceased person, to facilitate the gathering in and distribution of the assets of the deceased's estate. Probate applications are processed through two registry locations –

- The Principal Registry in Belfast (located in the Royal Courts of Justice)
- The District Registry in Londonderry (located in Londonderry Courthouse)

Since 30 September 2015 the Principal Registry in Belfast manages all probate applications in Northern Ireland, however pending applications lodged prior to this date continue to be managed by the District Registry in Londonderry.

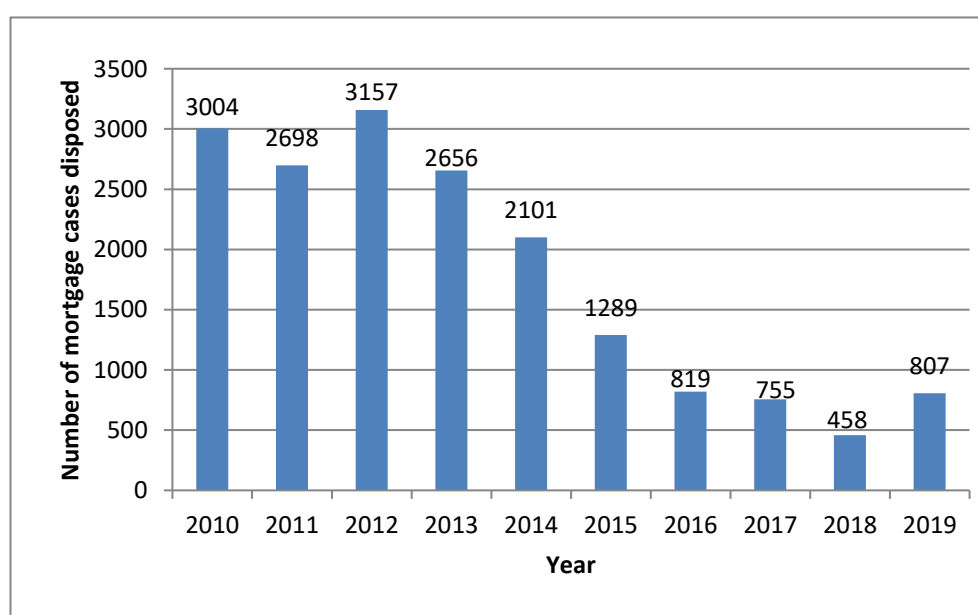
1.1 Key Facts

- Between 2015 and 2018 the number of chancery cases received generally decreased, with a 21% decrease overall, however in 2019 this trend reversed with an increase of 65% in Chancery cases received. These figures reflect an increase of 87% in cases received in relation to mortgages from 946 in 2018 to 1,766 in 2019. (Mortgages made up 87% of cases received into the Chancery division in 2019). The increase in mortgages received may be attributed to the removal of two limiting factors from previous years: compliance with the judgement of Master Ellison requiring the implementation of a new computer system for many lending institutions and a major lending institution being required to change the name on any cases it submits to the court. A further source of cases received may have been the consolidation of a number of cases listed as 'pending' on ICOS into a third party debt company, who is now pursuing these instead of the original lending institution.
- The graph below indicates the trend for the last ten years of Mortgage cases disposed in the High Court. The numbers of disposals fluctuated between 2010 and 2012, but showed a declining trend from then until last year, with an overall 85% decrease in mortgage cases disposed between 2012 and 2018. However, there was an increase of 76% in mortgage cases disposed between 2018 and 2019.
- This increase in the number of mortgages cases disposed is different to the general UK trend, which is relatively unchanged from last year, as published by UK Finance:

[https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Data%20\(XLS%20and%20PDF\)/UKF-Mortgage-Arrears-Possessions-Update-13-August-2020-FINAL.pdf](https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Data%20(XLS%20and%20PDF)/UKF-Mortgage-Arrears-Possessions-Update-13-August-2020-FINAL.pdf)

- This local trend, counter to the general UK trend, may be a result of the increased number of mortgage cases received as a result of the limiting factors being removed as discussed above.

Figure B.1 Mortgage cases disposed from 2010 - 2019



- There has been a downward trend in the number of bankruptcy cases received between 2015 and 2019, with an overall decrease of 29%.
- There has been a similar trend in Bankruptcy cases disposed with disposals decreasing each year between 2015 and 2019, with an overall decrease of 34% over the period. Figures published by the Insolvency Service show that bankruptcy orders in Northern Ireland decreased by 22% between 2017/18 and 2018/19

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Insolvency-Service-Annual-report-2018-19.pdf>

- A 2016 amendment to the Insolvency (NI) Order 1989 increased the amount a creditor must be owed by a debtor before the creditor may petition to have the debtor made bankrupt. The increase was from £750 to £5,000. Amendments to the Insolvency (Monetary Limits) Order (NI) have also increased the amount of debt a debtor may owe before applying for a Debt Relief Order (DRO) from £15,000 to £20,000 and also increased the value of the property they may own from £300 to £1,000. This would have reduced the number of applications for bankruptcy coming through the Debt Relief Scheme. There has also been an increase in the number of Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) between debtors and creditors, where if the debtor owes more than £12,000 and cannot afford to repay the debt, they enter into an agreement without the involvement of the court. A combination of all these factors, will have had an impact on the numbers of in bankruptcies cases proceeding to court.
- The number of companies cases received fluctuated between 2015 and 2019 with an overall decrease of 4%. There was a 23% decrease between 2016 and 2017, followed by a further 7% decrease in 2018, but an increase of 19% between 2018 and 2019. The number of companies cases disposed increased between 2015 and 2016, but has shown a declining trend since then, with an overall decrease between 2015 and 2019 of 16%. The reason for the declines may be linked to the uptake of Company Voluntary Arrangements for which there is no court involvement.
- Probate grants issued increased each year between 2015 and 2018, but decreased by 6% between 2018 and 2019.
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2018:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 2: Chancery Division cases received 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Chancery	1,548	1,376	1,439	1,226	2,029
Bankruptcy	1,779	1,755	1,506	1,150	1,268
Companies	589	659	510	474	564
Probate grants	6,550	6,688	6,758	6,989	6,547

Summary Table 3: Chancery Division cases disposed 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Chancery	1,510	1,048	956	653	948
Bankruptcy	1,843	1,755	1,498	1,271	1,215
Companies	568	622	538	500	476

1.2 Chancery Division - 2019 Data

Table B.1 shows that during 2019, a total of 2,029 Chancery cases were received. This was an increase of 65% from 1,226 in 2018. Mortgage suits accounted for the majority (87%) of cases received in 2019. The number of mortgages received has increased by 87% during 2019 (946 in 2018 compared with 1,766 in 2019).

Table B.1: Chancery cases and applications received in 2019

Cases	Mortgages	1766
	Other land and property	23
	Trade and business	2
	Trusts	1
	Other	237
	Total	2029
Applications	Notice of appointment	1311
	Summons	428
	Notice of motion	34
	Exparte application	204
	Injunction	9
	Other	-
	Transfer to Commercial List	6
	Total	1992

There were 1,614 cases and applications disposed of in 2019 compared with 1,204 in 2018, representing a 34% increase. Mortgages accounted for the majority of disposals with 807 cases disposed of (Table B.2).

Table B.2: Chancery cases and applications disposed of in 2019

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Mortgages	5	801	1	807
	Other land and property	10	1	-	11
	Trade and business	1	-	-	1
	Trusts	-	2	-	2
	Other	66	60	1	127
	Total	82	864	2	948
Applications	Notice of appointment	1	107	-	108
	Summons	42	289	-	331
	Notice of motion	9	14	-	23
	Ex-parte application	2	196	-	198
	Injunction	5	-	-	5
	Transfer to Commercial List	1	-	-	1
	Other	-	-	-	-
	Total	60	606	-	666

Bankruptcy

There were 2,021 bankruptcy cases and applications received in 2019 compared with 1,845 in 2018 – an increase of 10%. In 2019 these included 1,024 bankruptcy petitions, 80% of which were creditor petitions (petition by another person). Figures for 2018 revealed that there were 982 bankruptcy petitions, of which 71% were creditor petitions. In 2019, other bankruptcy proceedings included 131 originating applications and 671 ordinary applications (Table B.3). Corresponding figures were 97 and 599 respectively in 2018.

Table B.3: Bankruptcy cases and applications received in 2019

Cases	Petition by another person	816
	Petition by debtor	191
	Other petition	17
	Originating application	131
	Other	113
	Total	1268
Applications	Notice of motion	12
	Ordinary application	671
	Certificate of automatic discharge	45
	Other	25
	Total	753

The Master dealt with a total of 1,846 bankruptcy cases and applications in 2019 compared with 1,784 the previous year, an increase of 3%. The main area of work disposed of by the Master was bankruptcy petitions, a total of 1,007 in 2019 (Table B.4). This was a decrease of less than 1% on the 1,012 bankruptcy petitions disposed of by the Master in 2018.

Table B.4: Bankruptcy cases and applications disposed of in 2019

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Petition by another person	-	796	20	816
	Petition by debtor	-	193	4	197
	Other petition	-	18	-	18
	Originating application	4	105	-	109
	Other	-	75	-	75
	Total	4	1187	24	1215
Applications	Notice of motion	7	5	-	12
	Ordinary application	4	632	4	640
	Certificate of automatic discharge	-	11	30	41
	Other	-	11	-	11
	Total	11	659	34	704

Companies

Table B.5 and B.6 show the companies cases and applications received and disposed of in 2019. There were 647 companies cases and applications received and 541 disposed of. This represented a 20% increase for cases and applications received (538) and a 5% decrease for cases and applications disposed of (567) in 2018.

Table B.5: Companies cases and applications received in 2019

Cases	Winding up petition	397
	Other petitions	11
	Originating summons	30
	Other	126
	Total	564
Applications	Notice of motion	4
	Ordinary application	75
	Other	4
	Total	83

Table B.6: Companies cases and applications disposed of in 2019

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Winding up petition	-	351	-	351
	Other petitions	2	9	-	11
	Originating summons	3	15	-	18
	Other	7	89	-	96
	Total	12	464	-	476
Applications	Notice of motion	3	-	-	3
	Ordinary application	-	60	-	60
	Other	1	1	-	2
	Total	4	61	-	65

Table B.7 shows the average time intervals in weeks for cases and applications in the Chancery Division for the three business areas. A chancery case took on average 66 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal in 2019, the same as in 2018 (66). It took 16 weeks on average for a bankruptcy case from date of issue to date of disposal in 2019, three weeks less than 2018 (19), and 11 weeks for a companies case, three weeks less than in 2018 (14).

Table B.7: Average time intervals in weeks for business in the Chancery Division in 2019

	Chancery		Bankruptcy		Companies	
	Cases	Applications	Cases	Applications	Cases	Applications
Issue to first listing	57	9	8	2	8	6
First listing to disposal	10	8	8	3	3	11
Issue to disposal	66	17	16	5	11	17

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Due to lenders not being able to submit more recent mortgage cases, mortgages disposed of in 2018 and 2019 had a higher proportion of older cases than in previous years, with a consequent effect on waiting times.

Probate

The number of grants of probate issued during 2019 decreased by 6% from 6,989 in 2018 to 6,547 in 2019 (Table B.8).

Since 30 September 2015, the Principal Registry in Belfast manages all probate applications in Northern Ireland, however pending applications lodged prior to this date continue to be managed by the District Registry in Londonderry.

Table B.8: Probate grants issued in non-contentious proceedings in 2019

	District Registry		Probate		Northern Ireland
	By solicitor	Personal	By solicitor	Personal	
Grant of administration	-	-	11	-	11
Pendente Lite	-	-	-	-	-
Letters of administration with will annexed	-	-	246	1	247
Letters of administration with will annexed (DBN)	-	-	16	-	16
Letters of administration	-	-	1088	173	1261
Grant of probate	-	-	4543	444	4987
Letters of administration (DBN)	-	-	24	1	25
Total grants issued	-	-	5928	619	6547

Section 2: The Queen's Bench Division

The Queen's Bench Division comprises of a number of business areas, namely: the Writ Office, Appeals & Lists Office; Judicial Reviews Office; Commercial Office; and Bail Office. Collectively these Offices are referred to as The Central Office.

The principal business dealt with by the Queen's Bench Division is;

- Claims for damages
- Medical Negligence actions
- Commercial actions
- Matters involving contract
- Personal injury actions
- Appeals from the County Court
- Judicial Reviews
- Bail applications
- Admiralty matters
- Injunctions

Each business area within the Queen's Bench Division has discrete functions, namely;

Writ Office

The primary function of the office is to manage the 'Writ Process' for actions in the Queen's Bench Division, from commencement of proceedings until the trial of the action or final determination. This involves a review process which is initiated approximately 9 months after the last notification by a defendant that they intend to dispute the claim. The aim of the reviews is to progress cases to trial by dealing with matters between the parties which may delay the case being set-down for trial. The Office is also responsible for providing adequately trained staff to act as Court registrars in all Queen's Bench Courts. The Queen's Bench Division deals with large value and/or complex claims for damages including libel and slander actions which may require a jury.

The lower threshold for claims to the High Court increased from £15,000 to £30,000 on 25 February 2013. Cases previously received into the Writ Office for claims between £15,000 and £30,000 are now processed by the County Court. Care should therefore be taken when comparing Writs data before and after this date.

Appeals & Lists Office

The office has overall responsibility for compiling the daily Court List. This involves collating business listed across all the High Court Divisions on a daily basis. The Listing Officer must ensure that business is allocated to appropriate Judges and that adequate courtrooms are available.

Commercial Office

Deals with business relating to a 'business or commercial transaction' such as building contracts, sales of goods, insurance, banking or carriage of goods, may be assigned to the Commercial list, if so directed by the Commercial Judge. One of the ten puisne Judges has been assigned as the Commercial Judge. The Judge carries out regular reviews of actions entered into the Commercial List to ensure that the action is progressed to trial in a timely manner.

Judicial Reviews Office

Judicial Reviews are cases where the court considers if the decision reached by an inferior court, Tribunal, public body or Government Minister followed the proper procedure. The applicant must first apply to the Court for leave to apply for Judicial Review if leave is granted then the applicant has 14 days to apply for a full hearing of the matter.

Bail Office

This office deals with repeat bail applications, i.e. an application to release a defendant from custody who has been refused bail by the Magistrates Court. The Bail Order normally requires the defendant to comply with various conditions and may require money to be lodged or security to be given.

2.1 Key Facts

- Queen's Bench writs received have fluctuated between 2015 and 2019 (9% increase overall). The large increase in writs received in 2017 was primarily due to one specific issue, that of the administration of the Voluntary Exit Scheme and its application to members of the NI Prison Service.
- There was a 29% decrease in the number of Queen's Bench writs disposed of between 2015 and 2019. Various manual exercises were carried out during this period to deal with old cases which were withdrawn or settled out of court, therefore caution should be taken comparing data between years.
- There was a 29% decrease in the number of Judicial Review applications received and a 14% decrease in the number disposed of between 2015 and 2019. The number of applications received and disposed decreased by 6% and 24% respectively between 2018 and 2019.
- The number of High Court bail applications received increased by 18% between 2015 and 2019. There was a 7% increase and a 3% increase respectively, in receipts and disposals between 2018 and 2019.
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2018:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 4: Queen's Bench cases received 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Queen's Bench Division - writs	3,062	3,068	3,469	3,285	3,347
Commercial List set-down ^[R]	111	78	94	52	55
Judicial Reviews (applications)	96	101	92	72	68
Masters' appeals	67	86	87	68	51
High Court bails (applications)	1,458	1,668	1,449	1,609	1,714

^[R] Revised figures. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

Summary Table 5: Queen's Bench cases disposed 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Queen's Bench Division – writs	3,808 ^[1]	3,009 ^[2]	1,970	2,298 ^[2]	2,708
Commercial List	170	149	121	124	137
Judicial reviews (applications) ^[R]	78	86	92	72	68
Masters' appeals	72	68	83	80	55
High Court bails (applications)	1,347	1,387	1,241	1,308	1,351

^[1] Please note a manual exercise was carried out during the period to deal with a number of old cases which were withdrawn or settled out of court.

^[2] Please note a manual exercise was carried out during the period to deal with a number of old Personal Injury cases which had a Memorandum of Appearance lodged but no further action had been undertaken.

^[R] Please note that Judicial Reviews disposed for 2017, 2018 and 2019 have been revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

2.2 Queen's Bench Division - 2019 Data

There were 5,644 Queen's Bench cases and applications received during 2019, 59% of these were made up of writs and originating summonses. This was 3% more than the figure relating to 2018, when there were 5,503 cases and applications received of which 60% were writs and originating summonses. There has been a 2% increase in the number of writs received from 3,285 in 2018 to 3,347 in 2019 (Table B.9).

Table B.9: Queen's Bench cases and applications received in 2019

Writs and originating summonses	Negligence	1678
	Breach	146
	Road injuries	728
	Personal injuries	385
	Monies due	190
	Other	220
	Total	3347
Miscellaneous	Foreign judgment	123
	Other	22
	Total	145
Applications	Summons/interlocutory applications	1319
	Remittals and removals	319
	Exparte applications	240
	Other	274
	Total	2152

Table B.10 shows the breakdown of the amount claimed in writs and originating summonses in 2019. The majority of writs and originating summonses were unliquidated in 2019 – 97%, 2 percentage points more than in 2018 (95%).

Table B.10: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses received by amount claimed in 2019

	No Value	Less than £15,000	£15,000-29,999	£30,000-49,999	£50,000 and over	Total
Negligence	1678	-	-	-	-	1678
Breach	142	1	1	1	1	146
Road injuries	725	1	2	-	-	728
Personal injuries	385	-	-	-	-	385
Monies due	102	8	5	19	56	190
Other	219	-	-	-	1	220
Total	3251	10	8	20	58	3347

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount claimed recorded on ICOS.

There were 857 Queen's Bench writs (excluding commercial actions) set-down for trial during 2019 (Table B.11) compared with 772 the previous year, which represented an increase of 11%. The change in the financial limit within the county court in 2013 has had an impact upon the Queen's Bench writs received and set-down since 2013. The number of Queen's Bench writs set-down, have decreased by 47% from 1,605 in 2013 to 857 in 2019. Please note that Queens Bench Writs set-

down from 2010 to 2016 were revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

Table B.11: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses set-down by amount claimed in 2019

	No Value	Less than £15,000	£15,000-29,999	£30,000-49,999	£50,000 and over	Total
Negligence	523	-	-	1	-	524
Breach	9	-	2	3	-	14
Road injuries	207	3	2	5	-	217
Personal injuries	73	-	-	3	-	76
Monies due	2	-	1	1	3	7
Other	19	-	-	-	-	19
Total	833	3	5	13	3	857

Excludes commercial actions.

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount claimed recorded on ICOS.

There were 988 writs dealt with in court and 1,604 writs disposed of as office disposals. Actions set-down as negligence constituted 51% of writs disposed of (Table B.12). In 2018, there were 832 writs dealt with in court and 1372 writs disposed of as office disposals while negligence accounted for 51% of writs disposed.

Table B.12: Queen's Bench cases and applications disposed of in 2019 ^[1]

		High Court Judge	Master	Office Disposal ^[1]	Default judgment	Total
Writs and originating summonses	Negligence	410	84	863	21	1378
	Breach	27	3	362	8	400
	Road injuries	173	10	139	3	325
	Personal injuries	100	75	118	-	293
	Monies due	12	7	68	78	165
	Other	52	35	54	6	147
	Total	774	214	1604	116	2708
Miscellaneous	Foreign judgment	-	-	2	-	2
	Other	12	1	3	-	16
	Total	12	1	5	-	18
Applications	Summons/interlocutory applications	41	1183	3	-	1227
	Remittals and removals	1	302	1	-	304
	Exparte applications	19	166	1	-	186
	Other	129	105	-	-	234
	Total	190	1756	5	-	1951

Excludes commercial actions.

^[1] Please note a manual exercise was carried out during the period to deal with a number of old Personal Injury cases which had a Memorandum of Appearance lodged but no further action had been undertaken.

Of the 1,104 writs disposed of in 2019, either in court or by way of a default judgment, 41% were for £15,000 or more (Table B.13). The proportion of writs disposed of that were £15,000 and over in 2018 was also 41% (377).

Table B.13: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses disposed by amount in 2019

		No Value	Less than £15,000	£15,000-29,999	£30,000-49,999	£50,000 and over	Total
High Court Judge	Negligence	181	34	56	45	94	410
	Breach	18	2	5	1	1	27
	Road injuries	25	4	27	47	70	173
	Personal injuries	84	3	4	4	5	100
	Monies due	12	-	-	-	-	12
	Other	41	2	-	5	4	52
Master	Negligence	82	1	1	-	-	84
	Breach	3	-	-	-	-	3
	Road injuries	9	-	-	1	-	10
	Personal injuries	74	1	-	-	-	75
	Monies due	6	-	-	-	1	7
	Other	35	-	-	-	-	35
Default judgments	Negligence	20	-	-	1	-	21
	Breach	2	-	-	2	4	8
	Road injuries	2	-	-	-	1	3
	Personal injuries	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Monies due	-	10	7	19	42	78
	Other	-	-	-	3	3	6
Total		594	57	100	128	225	1104

Excludes commercial actions and office disposals.

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount awarded recorded on ICOS. No amount awarded can arise when a case has been settled and the value was not notified to the court or the terms of the settlement do not include a monetary value.

In 2019, the average length of time for a writ from first listing to disposal was 23 weeks (Table B.14). In 2018, this was 25 weeks.

Table B.14: Average time intervals in weeks for Queen's Bench cases and applications in 2019

	Writs and originating summonses	Miscellaneous	Applications
Issue to first listing	119	8	5
First listing to disposal	23	6	6
Issue to disposal	142	14	11

Excludes default judgments and office disposals.

Due to rounding and not all writs and originating summonses having a set-down date, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Tables B.15, B.16 and B.17 show the number of commercial actions received, set-down and disposed of. During 2019, there were 55 cases set-down compared with 52 in 2018. In 2019, 137 cases were disposed of with 95 of these disposed of by a High Court Judge. Comparable figures in 2018 were 124 and 105 respectively.

Table B.15: Queen's Bench commercial actions received in 2019

Negligence	33
Breach of Contract	23
Personal injuries	-
Monies due	21
Other	17
Total	94

Table B.16: Queen's Bench commercial actions set-down in 2019

Negligence	28
Breach of Contract	10
Personal injuries	-
Monies due	12
Other	5
Total	55

Table B.17: Queen's Bench commercial actions disposed of in 2019

	High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Default judgment	Total
Negligence	49	-	9	1	59
Breach of Contract	17	-	9	-	26
Personal injuries	-	-	-	-	-
Monies due	19	-	8	-	27
Other	10	-	15	-	25
Total	95	-	41	1	137

In 2019, the average length of time for a commercial action from first listing to disposal was 34 weeks (Table B.18). In 2018, this was 44 weeks.

Table B.18: Average time intervals in weeks for commercial actions in 2019

	Commercial actions
Received to Entry to commercial list	88
Entry to commercial list to first listing	53
First listing to disposal	34
Received to disposal	175

Excludes default judgments and office disposals.

Due to rounding and not all writs and originating summonses having a set-down date, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Judicial Reviews

Tables B.19 to B.21 are in relation to Judicial Reviews. There were 68 applications for Judicial Review in 2019 compared with 72 in 2018. There were 93 applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review granted (47%). The proportion in 2018 for this was 32%. Of the 67 applications for Judicial Review that were disposed in 2019, 46% were granted. In 2018, there were 88 applications for Judicial Review and 20% of these were granted. Please note that 2018 and 2019 data has been revised, more details are available [here](#).

Table B.19: Judicial Review applications received in 2019 ^[R]

Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	271
Applications for Judicial Review	68
Ancillary applications	13

Table B.20: Judicial Review applications disposed of in 2019 ^[R]

	Granted	Withdrawn/ Refused/ Dismissed	Other	Total
Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	93	104	2	199
Applications for Judicial Review	31	35	1	67
Ancillary applications	1	5	2	8

In 2019, the average length of time from issue to disposal of applications for Judicial Review was 45 weeks (Table B.21) which was a decrease on the 50 weeks in 2018.

Table B.21: Average time intervals in weeks for Judicial Review applications in 2019 ^[R]

	Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	Applications for Judicial Review	Ancillary applications
Issue to first listing	20	33	2
First listing to disposal	4	12	1
Issue to disposal	25	45	2

Due to rounding and not all applications having a court date, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

^[R] Please note that tables have been revised after a substantial manual exercise at the request of the NI Audit Office. This request focused on disposals that were classified as 'Other', to investigate and reclassify them as 'Granted' or 'Withdrawn/Refused/Dismissed' if appropriate. One original disposal was further reclassified as an appeal and was thus removed from the disposals figures for 2019. This has changed the distribution of receipts and distribution and number of disposals and consequently the processing times for 2019. Further details may be found in a statistical notice available [here](#).

Masters' appeals

There were 51 Masters' appeals received and 55 Masters' appeals disposed of in 2019 (Tables B.22 and B.23). This compares with the 68 Masters' appeals received and the 80 Masters' appeals disposed of in 2018.

Table B.22: Masters' appeals received in 2019

Queen's Bench Masters' appeals	29
Chancery Masters' appeals	22
Total	51

Table B.23: Masters' appeals disposed of in 2019

Queen's Bench Masters' appeals	30
Chancery Masters' appeals	25
Total	55

High Court Bails

There were 1,714 applications for bail received in the High Court during 2019, an increase of 7% from 1,609 in 2018. Of the 1,243 applications disposed in court in 2019, 59% were granted (Table B.26). In 2018, 1,168 applications were disposed in court. Of these, 58% (675) were granted.

Table B.24: Number of bail applications received in 2019

Bail applications	1404
Bail pending appeals to the county court	35
Compassionate bail applications	33
Miscellaneous applications	1
Applications to revoke bail	2
Schedule 2 breaches	-
Time extension	-
Bail variations	239
Total	1714

Table B.25: Number of bail applications disposed of in chambers in 2019

	Granted	Refused	Revoke	Other	Total
Bail applications	3	-	-	-	3
Bail pending appeals to the county court	-	-	-	-	-
Compassionate bail applications	1	-	-	-	1
Application to revoke bail	-	-	-	-	-
Bail variations	98	1	-	5	104
Total	102	1	-	5	108

Table B.26: Number of bail applications disposed of in court in 2019

	Granted	Refused	Revoke	Other	Total
Bail applications	628	405	4	62	1099
Bail pending appeals to the county court	15	11	-	3	29
Compassionate bail applications	15	10	-	-	25
Miscellaneous applications	-	-	-	-	-
Application to revoke bail	-	-	-	-	-
Schedule 2 breaches	-	-	-	-	-
Bail variations	71	18	-	1	90
Total	729	444	4	66	1243

Section 3: Family Division

The Family Division comprises of four key business areas, namely: -

- The Matrimonial Office
- The Office of Care and Protection (Children's Section)
- The Office of Care and Protection (Patient's Section)
- The Official Solicitor's Office

The Matrimonial Office

The Matrimonial Office deals with the following: -

Petitions for divorce - to obtain a decree of divorce the marriage must be proved to have broken down irretrievably with proof of one or more of the following facts:

- adultery
- behaviour with which the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live
- desertion of at least two years
- two years separation where the respondent consents
- five years separation without consent

No petition may be made for divorce within the first year of marriage.

Petitions for nullity - a Decree of Nullity of Marriage is granted where the petitioner proves that the marriage is either void or voidable.

A void marriage is one that is legally invalid because, for example:

- either party was under the age of sixteen at the time of the marriage
- either party was already married
- the parties are prohibited from marrying, for example father and daughter

A voidable marriage is one which is legal but may be nullified by order of the court because, for example:

- it is not consummated due to incapacity or wilful refusal (most nullities are on these grounds)
- where one party was suffering from a venereal disease in a communicable form, or was pregnant by someone else at the time of marriage

Judicial separation - an alternative to divorce is a decree of judicial separation. This does not dissolve the marriage but absolves the parties from the obligation to live together. This procedure might, for instance, be used if religious beliefs forbid or discourage divorce.

Ancillary relief applications - During or after a divorce, the annulment of a marriage (nullity) or judicial separation, there may still be a need for the court to settle disputes over money or property. The court can make a financial order. This is known as ancillary relief and may deal with the sale or transfer of property, maintenance payments (for example weekly or monthly maintenance), a lump sum payment and/or a pension sharing or attachment order.

Dissolution of a Civil Partnership - You can apply to end ('dissolve') your civil partnership if you have been in the partnership for at least a year.

There are 3 main steps to ending a civil partnership:

- File a dissolution petition - you have to apply to court for permission to end your civil partnership, and show reasons why you want to split up.
- Apply for a conditional order - if your civil partner agrees to the petition, you'll get a document saying there's no reason you can't divorce.
- Apply for a final order - this legally ends your civil partnership - you need to wait 6 weeks after you get the conditional order before you can apply.

The Office of Care and Protection (OCP) (Children's Section)

The principal business assigned to this Office is: -

- Guardianship and Wardship of children
- Adoption
- Applications under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Applications under the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998

Wardship and Adoption - The principal business assigned to Wardship and Adoption office includes applications in relation to the Guardianship and Wardship of children, Adoption applications and applications under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

Family Homes and Domestic Violence - The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998, is designed to offer civil protection against domestic violence. The 1998 Order provides a single set of remedies which are available in all court tiers. Two main remedies were created: the non-molestation order and the occupation order. Both of these orders can be applied for by way of an ex parte application - that is without the respondent or alleged perpetrator of the violence being present. The number of these type of applications are relatively small in the High Court, and are usually dealt with at this court tier, as they are linked to other proceedings being held in the High Court.

The Office of Care and Protection (OCP) (Patients Section)

Responsibility for the management of the property and affairs of people in Northern Ireland who, through mental disorder, are incapable of managing their own financial affairs is vested in the High Court under the provisions of Part VIII of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. The '**Patient**' is the name given by the Order to a person who is suffering from mental disorder and whose financial affairs are subject to the Court's control. A '**Controller**' is the name given to those appointed by court order to manage a Patient's financial affairs.

The Office of Care and Protection, commonly referred to as OCP is the department of the High Court in which administrative work relating to a Patient's case is dealt with under the supervision of the Master (Care and Protection). The Master is the judicial officer of the Court who is authorised to exercise any discretion, power or other functions of the Court and s/he may also, in particular cases, refer a question to the Judge for decision.

A Controller is a person appointed by the Court to deal with the day-to-day management of the Patient's financial affairs. He or she can be a relative, a friend, or perhaps a professional adviser. If there is no one else suitable or willing to act, an officer of the Court or the Official Solicitor can be appointed in the last resort.

The OCP reviews accounts operated by the Controller (on behalf of the Patient) on an annual basis.

The OCP is also responsible for the registration of Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPA).

The Official Solicitors Office

The Official Solicitor (OS) is an independent statutory officer holder appointed under section 75 of the Judicature (NI) Act 1978 (as amended by section 103 of the Courts Act 2003).

The OS has a wide range of functions primarily necessitating acting as next friend, guardian ad litem or 'Controller' of last resort (for certain minors or adults (known as 'patients') who lack mental capacity to manage their own financial affairs by reason of 'mental disorder' under Part VIII of the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 ('the 1986 Order'). The OS also represents the interests of minors in a range of legal proceedings at the request of the judiciary.

3.1 Key Facts

- The number of divorce petitions received fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, with an overall decrease of 11%. The number of divorce petitions received was at its highest in 2015 at 2,714 before decreasing by 14% between 2015 and 2017, then increasing by 10% in 2018, but decreasing by 6% again in 2019. Between 2015 and 2019, the number of divorce petitions granted decreased by 7% overall. Divorce petitions granted peaked in 2016. While all divorce petitions are received in the High Court, divorces are granted in both the High Court and County Court.
- Over the last five years the Orders issued in Mental Health Proceedings have fluctuated, peaking in 2016. Orders issued decreased by 4% between 2018 and 2019.

Summary Table 6: High Court Family cases received 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Divorce petitions ^[1]	2,714	2,418	2,322	2,556	2,411
Wardship and adoption	89	77	73	79	110
Family Homes & Domestic Violence	46	63	57	30	39
Mental Health Proceedings (Orders Issued) ^[2]	1,241	1,519	855	1,331	1,283
Official Solicitor's Office – live patient Cases ^[3]	165	147	141	130	123
Official Solicitor's Office – current Minor Cases ^[3]	68	88	104	181	176

^[1] Data include civil partnership petitions.

^[2] 2018 figures have increased compared to 2017, however 2017 figures were lower than usual due to staffing challenges during the period.

^[3] Please note that Minors and Patients caseloads for 2018 were revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

Summary Table 7: High Court Family cases disposed 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Divorce petitions granted ^[1]	812	884	768	804	759
Wardship and adoption	75	89	58	70	88
Family Homes & Domestic Violence	44	48	46	18	35
Official Solicitor's Office – Minors' cases Disposed ^[2]	48	34	46	47	142

^[1] Data include civil partnership dissolutions.

^[2] Please note that Minors and Patients caseloads for 2018 were revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

3.2 Family Division – 2019 Data

Matrimonial

The number of divorce petitions received decreased by 6%, from 2,556 in 2018 to 2,411 in 2019 (Table B.27). 38% (912) of the divorce petitions received in 2019 were as a result of 2 years separation with consent, the same percentage as in 2018 (974).

Table B.27: Divorce petitions received in 2019

		Filed by			Total
		Wife	Husband	Unknown	
Divorce Petitions	2 years with consent	500	412	-	912
	5 years separation	364	311	-	675
	Adultery	22	18	-	40
	Unreasonable behaviour	358	77	-	435
	Combination of grounds/other	249	100	-	349
Total		1493	918	-	2411

Data include civil partnership petitions.

There were 759 decrees granted in the High Court during 2019, a decrease of 6% on the 804 granted during 2018. The most common ground for dissolution continued to be separation (2 years with consent) accounting for 31% of all decrees granted in 2019 (Table B.28), similar to 32% in 2018.

Table B.28: Divorce petitions by type of decrees granted in 2019

		Wife	Husband	Both	Total
Decrees Nisi	2 years with consent	137	98	-	235
	5 years separation	71	55	-	126
	Adultery	11	3	-	14
	Unreasonable behaviour	131	19	-	150
	Combination of grounds/other	124	63	39	226
Nullity	Combination of grounds/other	5	-	-	5
Judicial Separation	2 years with consent	-	1	-	1
	5 years separation	1	-	-	1
	Adultery	-	-	-	-
	Unreasonable behaviour	1	-	-	1
	Combination of grounds/other	-	-	-	-
Total		481	239	39	759

Data include civil partnership dissolutions.

Table B.29: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued in 2019

		Found by			Total
		Wife	Husband	Both	
Divorce Petitions	2 years with consent	140	114	-	254
	5 years separation	84	61	-	145
	Adultery	16	2	-	18
	Unreasonable behaviour	164	25	-	189
	Combination of grounds/other	134	61	48	243
Total		538	263	48	849

Data include civil partnership dissolutions.

During 2019, there were 1,030 matrimonial applications received, 1% less than the 1040 received in 2018. In total, 52% of applications were for ancillary relief in 2019 (Table B.30) compared to the 50% in 2018.

Table B.30: Matrimonial applications received in 2019

Applications	Combination of grounds/other	6
	Ancillary relief	533
	Matrimonial application	464
	Other	27
Total		1030

Of the 838 matrimonial applications disposed of during 2019, 458 (55%) were for ancillary relief (Table B.31). The corresponding number of matrimonial applications disposed of in 2018 was 839 of which 432 (51%) were for ancillary relief.

Table B.31: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2019

		Judge	Master	Total
Applications	Combination of grounds/other	4	-	4
	Ancillary relief	9	449	458
	Matrimonial application	26	344	370
	Other	4	2	6
Total		43	795	838

The average time from the issue of a petition to the date the decree was granted was 45 weeks in 2019 (Table B.32) compared with 39 weeks in 2018.

Table B.32: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2019

	Divorce Petitions
Issue to first listing	43
First listing to date decree granted	1
Issue to date decree granted	45

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

During 2019, the average time from issue to disposal of a matrimonial application was 10 weeks which was less than the average time of 12 weeks in 2018. Applications for ancillary relief took on average 57 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal in 2019 (Table B.33) which was less than the 63 weeks in 2018.

Table B.33: Average time intervals in weeks for matrimonial applications in 2019

	Combination of grounds/other	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial applications	Other
Issue to first listing	-	11	6	1
First listing to disposal	3	46	4	23
Issue to disposal	3	57	10	25

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Wardship and Adoption

During 2019, adoption order applications accounted for 37% (41) of the total applications received (Table B.34) compared with 43% (34) in 2018.

Table B.34: Adoption cases and applications received in 2019

Adoption Order Applications	41
Child Abduction Originating Summonses	16
Children (NI) Order Application	-
Freeing Order Applications	20
Originating Summons (General)	4
Human Fertilisation Originating Summons	4
Interlocutory Applications	5
Wardship Originating Summonses	20
Total	110

Of the cases disposed in 2019, 88% were disposed of by a High Court Judge. The majority of applications disposed of (39%) were adoption order applications (Table B.35). In 2018, 86% of cases were disposed by a High Court Judge with 53% (37) being adoption order applications.

Table B.35: Adoption cases and applications disposed of in 2019

	High Court Judge	Master	Total
Adoption Order Applications	34	-	34
Child Abduction Originating Summonses	11	-	11
Children (NI) Order Application	1	-	1
Freeing Order Applications	22	-	22
Originating Summons (General)	-	-	-
Human Fertilisation Originating Summons	1	-	1
Interlocutory Applications	2	-	2
Wardship Originating Summonses	6	11	17
Total	77	11	88

Ex-parte applications for occupation/non-molestation orders accounted for 41% (16) of the total number of Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications received in 2019 (Table B.36). The number of ex-parte applications was lower in 2018 at 13, and accounted for 43% of cases and applications received.

Table B.36: Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications received in 2019

Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	17
Ex-parte Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	16
Application to Extend/Discharge/Vary Occupation/Non-Molestation	6
Article 11 Occupation order	-
Total	39

The Master disposed of 80% (28) of the total number of Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications during 2019 compared with 61% (11) in 2018. Table B.37 shows that 46% (16) of all cases in 2019 were ex-parte compared with 50% (9) the previous year.

Table B.37: Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications disposed of in 2019

	High Court Judge	Master	Total
Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	6	11	17
Ex-parte Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	-	16	16
Application to Extend/Discharge/Vary Occupation/Non-Molestation	1	1	2
Article 11 Occupation order	-	-	-
Total	7	28	35

Table B.38 shows the average time in weeks for adoption and Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications during 2019. It took on average 34 weeks for an adoption case from date of issue to date of disposal in 2019, more than the 27 weeks in 2018.

Table B.38: Average time intervals in weeks for Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications in 2019

	Adoption	Family Homes And Domestic Violence
Issue to first listing	17	3
First listing to disposal	17	14
Issue to disposal	34	17

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Care and Protection

There were 1,929 patients referred to the Office of Care and Protection in 2019 for investigation under the Mental Health Order, representing a 6% decrease on the 2018 total of 2,049 patients. The total live caseload for 2019 was 1,768 (Table B.39) an increase of 1% on the previous year (1,747).

Table B.39: Office of Care and Protection – Mental Health proceedings in 2019

New referrals^[1]	1929
Enduring Power of Attorney applications received	1224
Orders issued	1283
Certificates issued	5326
Reviews completed	1602
Visits^[2]	50
Live Caseload at 31st December^[3]	1768

^[1]The figure for 'New Referrals' includes all new cases, including applications to register EPA detailed separately in the line below

^[2]The figure for 'visits' represents the number of visits made to patients by the Lord Chief Justice's General Visitors. From June 2015, visits to patients whose affairs are managed by the Official Solicitor were added to the General Visitors annual schedule hence the significant increase.

^[3] Live caseload is the number of active Full Controller Orders at 31 December 2019.

Official Solicitor's Office

Tables B.40 and B.41 demonstrate the caseload of the Official Solicitor's Office. In preparation for a new computer system, together with the variation of roles carried out by the Official Solicitor, the recording of cases has been updated. Statistics now show the type of proceedings and where applicable, the role carried out in those cases. Up to December 2018 all Parental Incapacity cases were lodged in the Minor Statistics. In 2019, a change in recording split the cases into Minor Parents and Parental Incapacity (over 18).

During 2019 a manual review exercise of outstanding cases was conducted, and as a result a number of cases were disposed. Caution should be therefore be taken when comparing disposals to previous years.

There were 123 live cases relating to patients and 176 current cases relating to minors in 2019. In 2018, there were 130 live cases relating to patients and 181 current cases relating to minors. Please note that Minors and Patients caseloads for 2018 were revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

Table B.40: Official Solicitor's Office – Patient caseload in 2019

		Received ^[1]	Current Caseload ^[2]	Disposed ^[3]
Chancery Court	As Amicus Curiae	2	2	-
	As Controller ad Interim	-	-	1
	As Guardian ad Litem	4	5	-
	As Next Friend	-	2	-
	Total	6	9	1
Declaratory Proceedings	Deprivation of Liberty	20	32	6
	Medical	10	5	5
	Other	4	3	1
	Annual Review DOL	-	-	-
	Total	34	40	12
Judicial Review		-	-	-
Matrimonial	As Guardian ad Litem	3	9	3
	As Next Friend	1	1	1
	Total	4	10	4
Miscellaneous		1	6	-
Non-Molestation Orders	As Guardian ad Litem	1	1	1
	As Next Friend	5	5	1
	Total	6	6	2
Office of Care & Protection	As Amicus Curiae	-	1	-
	As Controller ad Interim	21	33	10
	As Full Controller	3	123	10
	As Guardian ad Litem	1	2	-
	As Next Friend	3	2	2
	Total	28	161	22
Parental Incapacity (over 18)		8	8	-
Queen's Bench	As Guardian ad Litem	-	1	2
	As Next Friend	2	2	-
	Total	2	3	2
Trustee		-	12	-
Certificates Drafted		926		
General Enquiries		41		
Post Received (combined)		5848		

^[1] Received during 2019

^[2] Current Caseload – total number of live cases – received in current year and all previous years, which are not yet “disposed” of (closed/deceased/completed)

^[3] Disposed – total number of cases closed in 2019, regardless of when they were received. During 2019 a manual review exercise of outstanding cases was conducted, and as a result a number of cases were disposed. Caution should be therefore be taken when comparing disposals to previous years.

Table B.41: Official Solicitor's Office – Minors' caseload in 2019

		Received ^[1]	Current Caseload ^[2]	Disposed ^[3]
Adoption		1	1	1
Chancery Court	Administration of Estate	-	4	-
	Other	-	2	-
	Total	-	6	-
Child Abduction (Hague)		5	1	5
Children's Order Article 7 (Parental Responsibility)	As Guardian ad Litem	-	-	-
	As Next Friend	-	1	-
	As Amicus Curiae Nominal Respondent	-	-	1
	Total	-	1	1
Children's Order Article 8 (Contact/Residency)	As Legal Rep/Guardian ad Litem	7	20	13
	As Next Friend	-	-	-
	As Nominal Respondent	-	-	-
	Total	7	20	13
Children's Order Article 13 (Relocation)		7	7	2
Children's Order Other		47	68	37
Compensation Cases	Criminal Injury	-	5	1
	Personal Injury	1	5	-
	Total	1	10	1
Declaration of Parentage		-	-	-
Declaratory Proceedings	Deprivation of Liberty	2	1	2
	Medical	-	1	-
	Other	-	1	-
	Total	2	3	2
Guardian of the Fortune		-	6	2
Judicial Review		3	2	4
Minor Parent	Acting in adoption	3	3	1
	Acting in Children's Order	14	16	47
	Total	17	19	48
Miscellaneous Cases		2	1	2
Non-Molestation Orders	As Guardian ad Litem	4	2	7
	As Next Friend	9	6	6
	Total	13	8	13
Queen's Bench	House Purchase	3	6	4
	Other	4	10	3
	Total	7	16	7
Trustee		-	3	-
Wardship		6	4	4
Total		118	176	142
Total Number of Cases involving Personal Litigants		5		

^[1] Received during 2019

^[2] Current Caseload – total number of live cases – received in current year and all previous years, which are not yet “disposed” of (closed/deceased/completed)

^[3] Disposed – total number of cases closed in 2019, regardless of when they were received. During 2019 a manual review exercise of outstanding cases was conducted, and as a result a number of cases were disposed. Caution should therefore be taken when comparing disposals to previous years.

Section 4: Sitting Days

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. In the High Court the Judiciary are made up of the Lord Chief Justice, three Lords Justices of Appeal and ten High Court Judges.

They sit on a variety of business types as shown in Table B.42, and a sitting day is classified on the basis of the business type on which the majority of time was spent.

4.1 Key Facts

- The number of days sat by High Court judges generally increased between 2015 and 2019, increasing by 7% overall.
- Overall sitting times have decreased each year over between 2015 and 2018, before increasing by 2% over the last year, and decreasing by 14% overall when compared with 2015.

Summary Table 8: High Court Judge Sitting Days 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Court Sitting Days	1,890	2,045	1,972	2,001	2,013
Total Court Sitting Time (hrs:mins)	4222:34	3995:23	3810:02	3559:45	3631:47

4.2 Sitting Days – 2019 Data

Court sitting days and court sitting times

High Court Judges sat on a total of 2,013 court sitting days, an increase of 1% on the 2,001 days sat during 2018. By majority type of work, High Court Judges sat for a total 445 days hearing Queen's Bench business and 155 in the Crown Court in 2019 (Table B.42). In 2018, High Court Judges sat for a total of 433 days hearing Queen's Bench business and 160 in the Crown Court.

Table B.42 High Court Judges court sitting days and court sitting times in 2019 (hrs : mins)

	Court sitting days	Total court sitting time
Crown	155	343:48
Queen's Bench	445	887:00
Judicial Reviews	228	344:15
Children Order	297	560:47
Other Family	71	110:05
Appeals	21	30:47
Chancery	225	544:12
Bails	346	550:47
Callover	-	-
Court of Appeal - Civil	136	150:14
Court of Appeal - Criminal	89	109:52
Total	2013	3631:47

Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken.

Total court sitting time is classified on the basis of all court sitting time spent on each business area.

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.

Part C: The Crown Court

The Crown Court has exclusive jurisdiction to try offences charged on indictment. Offences tried on indictment are more serious offences. The Lord Chief Justice is President of the Crown Court and the Lords Justices of Appeal, High Court Judges and county court judges all sit in the Crown Court.

Trial on indictment in the Crown Court follows after the accused has been returned for trial at committal proceedings in a magistrates' court. The Public Prosecution Service is responsible for preparing a formal document called an indictment, stating the charges which the accused will face. The matters are then tried before a judge sitting with a jury.

The Crown Court normally sits at seven different venues throughout Northern Ireland and the trial of non-scheduled offences takes place at the sitting of the Crown Court determined by the District Judge who committed the accused. This is usually the Crown Court acting for the county court division in which the offence is alleged to have been committed.

Appeal from the Crown Court is to the Court of Appeal. If a person wishes to appeal against conviction on a question of fact, the permission of either the Crown Court Judge or the Court of Appeal is required. To appeal against sentence he or she needs the leave of the Court of Appeal.

All persons convicted of a scheduled offence tried on indictment can appeal against conviction to the Court of Appeal on any grounds and without leave. This automatic right of appeal is a safeguard built into the system because in these cases there is no jury.

The prosecution has no right to appeal against the acquittal of a defendant who has been tried on indictment. The Attorney-General can refer a point of law to the Court of Appeal for its opinion, but even if the Court of Appeal considers that the trial judge made an error of law resulting in an acquittal, the acquittal still stands. The reference and subsequent ruling is useful in guiding the prosecution of future trials.

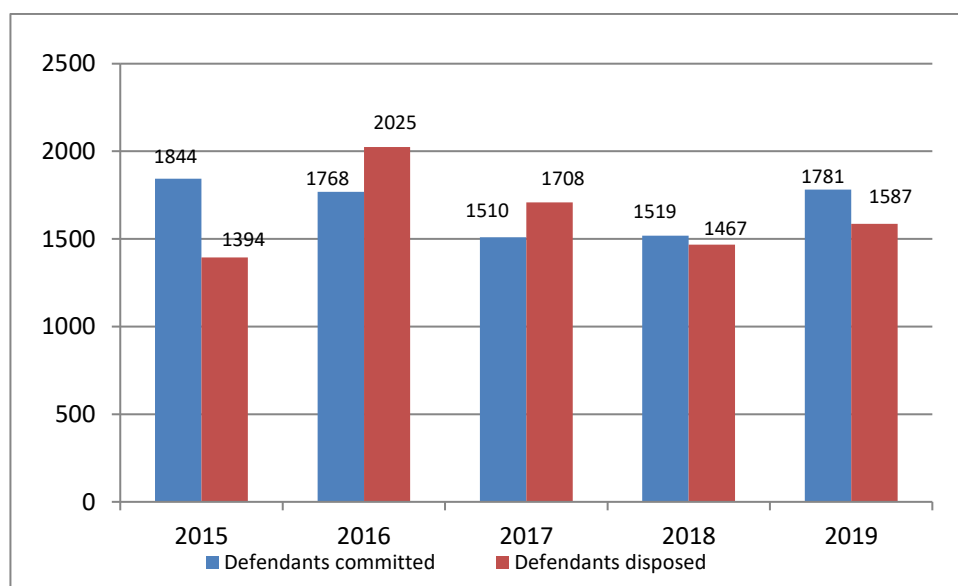
In 2008 the NICTS appointed Case Progression Officers to work with other criminal justice agency officials and the judiciary to minimise delay in the Criminal Courts. Case listing and management are the responsibility of the court; however Case Progression Officers provide support and work with other agency representatives to ensure that all procedural matters are effectively progressed by the parties in the case, therefore reducing unnecessary delay within the system. This includes addressing issues such as:-

- Checking the availability of witnesses
- Managing the arrangements for special measures
- Monitoring disclosure applications
- Ensuring that courtroom technology and interpreter facilities are available
- Monitoring the completion of specialist reports

Key Facts

- Figure C.1 outlines the number of Crown Court defendants committed and disposed of during the last 5 years. The number of defendants committed between 2015 and 2019 has generally decreased, with an overall decrease of 3%. The highest number of committals to the Crown Court occurred in 2015 (1,844). The fall in defendants committed over the last five years indicates that there has been a decrease in the number of defendants committing more serious offences, which as a result must be tried in the Crown Court.
- There was an increase of 45% in the number of defendants disposed of between 2015 and 2016, before decreasing by 28% between 2016 and 2018, and then increasing by 8% between 2018 and 2019. **The introduction of new rules in May 2015 in relation to legal aid remuneration resulted in a number of solicitors and counsel withdrawing their representation from a range of court cases. This has affected defendants' access to legal aid representation and has had an impact on disposals and delay within the Crown Court process.** In 2016 as the dispute ended and cases began to progress through the system again and this led to a spike in disposals in 2016. The disposals began to decline in 2017 and again in 2018, as the majority of the backlog had been cleared.

Figure C.1: Crown Court defendants committed and disposed from 2015 to 2019



- Average waiting times between committal and start of trial increased between 2015 and 2016 by 47%, to 168 days. This was due in part to the cases delayed due to the legal aid dispute in 2015 beginning to progress through the Crown Court in 2016. The average waiting times then decreased by 30% between 2016 and 2019 as the backlog was cleared.
- Crown Court sittings have fluctuated over the last 5 years, with an overall increase of 8% between 2015 and 2019. (see table C.6).
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2018:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 9: Crown Court 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cases received	1,492	1,438	1,214	1,237	1,434
Cases disposed	1,080	1,640	1,408	1,181	1,295
Defendants committed	1,844	1,768	1,510	1,519	1,781
Defendants disposed	1,394	2,025	1,708	1,467	1,587
Average time from committal to start of trial	114	168	135	128	118
Average time from conviction to disposal (days)	100	55	63	60	57
Sittings	2,326	2,539	2,536	2,448	2,521

Foot Note – Committed – the procedure by which a person is returned for trial to the Crown Court by the magistrates' court.

Crown Court – 2019 Data

Section 1: Cases received and disposed of

Table C.1 shows the number of cases received in 2019. There were 1,434 cases received in 2019 compared with 1,237 in 2018, an increase of 16%. In 2019, there were 1,295 cases disposed of (Table C.2), a 10% increase on the 1,181 disposed of in 2018.

Table C.1: Crown Court cases received in 2019

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	171	-	171
Belfast	13	486	-	499
Craigavon	-	159	-	159
Downpatrick	-	152	-	152
Dungannon	-	165	-	165
Londonderry	-	165	-	165
Newry	-	123	-	123
Total	13	1421	-	1434

^[1] Refers to cases to be tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

Table C.2: Crown Court cases disposed of in 2019

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	1	169	-	170
Belfast	13	415	-	428
Craigavon	-	154	-	154
Downpatrick	-	131	-	131
Dungannon	-	145	-	145
Londonderry	-	144	-	144
Newry	-	123	-	123
Total	14	1281	-	1295

^[1] Refers to cases to be tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

Table C.3 Defendants committed to Crown Court in 2019

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	227	-	227
Belfast	22	586	-	608
Craigavon	-	194	-	194
Downpatrick	-	194	-	194
Dungannon	-	207	-	207
Londonderry	-	191	-	191
Newry	-	160	-	160
Total	22	1759	-	1781

^[1] Refers to cases to be tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

In 2019, there were 1,781 defendants committed to the Crown Court (Table C.3). This was a 17% increase on the 1,519 committed in 2018. There was a total of 1,587 defendants disposed of during 2019 (Table C.4). This was an increase of 8% when compared with the 1,467 defendants disposed of in 2018.

Table C.4: Crown Court defendants disposed of in 2019

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	1	194	-	195
Belfast	25	508	-	533
Craigavon	-	194	-	194
Downpatrick	-	173	-	173
Dungannon	-	182	-	182
Londonderry	-	164	-	164
Newry	-	146	-	146
Total	26	1561	-	1587

^[1] Refers to cases to be tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

Section 2: Crown Court waiting times

The average waiting time between committal and start of trial was 118 days (Table C.5). This was a decrease of 8% on the 128 days in 2018. The average waiting time between conviction and disposal was 57 days, 5% less than in 2018 (60 days).

Table C.5: Average waiting time in the Crown Court in days in 2019

	Committal to start of trial – days	Conviction to disposal – days	Total defendants disposed of
Antrim	128	48	189
Belfast	124	50	496
Craigavon	94	52	186
Downpatrick	106	72	166
Dungannon	125	59	175
Londonderry	112	60	157
Newry	124	73	136
Total	118	57	1505

Excludes defendants who had a bench warrant or deferred sentence.

Section 3: Defendants disposed of

The majority of defendants were disposed of by a county court judge (99%) (Table C.6). This was more than 2018 when 98% of defendants were disposed of by a county court judge.

Table C.6: Crown Court defendants disposed of by judge type in 2019

	Judicial Level		Total
	County Court Judge	High Court Judge	
Antrim	194	1	195
Belfast	518	15	533
Craigavon	194	-	194
Downpatrick	173	-	173
Dungannon	182	-	182
Londonderry	164	-	164
Newry	145	1	146
Total	1570	17	1587

Table C.7: Crown Court defendants disposed of by charge type in 2019

All Offences Against the Person	210
All Sexual Offences	174
All Burglary Offences	43
All Robbery Offences	14
All Theft Offences	70
All Fraud and Forgery Offences	85
All Criminal Damage Offences	15
All Offences Against the State	12
All Other Offences	86
All Drug Offences	180
All Motoring Offences	59
All Non-Police Offences	2
Combination of Charges	637
Total	1587

In total, 33% of defendants made a plea of guilty on all charges (32% in 2018) and 14% were acquitted on all charges (17% in 2018). (Table C.8).

Table C.8: Outcome of Crown Court defendants in 2019

	Plea of guilty on all charges	Plea of not guilty on at least one charge – found guilty on at least one charge	Plea of not guilty – acquitted on all charges	All charges withdrawn	Total
Antrim	84	99	12	-	195
Belfast	168	278	87	-	533
Craigavon	78	86	30	-	194
Downpatrick	49	111	13	-	173
Dungannon	59	83	40	-	182
Londonderry	56	88	20	-	164
Newry	33	93	20	-	146
Total	527	838	222	-	1587

Section 4: Crown Court sittings and times

There were 2,521 sittings in the Crown Court in 2019. This was a 3% increase on the number in 2018 (2,448). The total time spent on Crown Court business (5979:19) has increased by 2% from 2018 (5874:14).

Table C.9: Crown Court sittings and total Crown Court time in 2019 (hrs : mins)

	Number of sittings	Total time
Antrim	312	681:51
Armagh	4	2:02
Belfast	903	2217:57
Coleraine	2	1:56
Craigavon	272	546:16
Downpatrick	204	508:59
Dungannon	273	887:04
Enniskillen	1	1:30
Lisburn	5	5:43
Londonderry	262	581:57
Newtownards	18	28:32
Newry	179	370:15
Omagh	28	78:04
Royal Courts of Justice	58	67:13
Total	2521	5979:19

Crown Court sittings refer to a sitting where any Crown Court business is heard.

Total Crown time includes all time spent on Crown business.

High Court Judges & county court judges sit on Crown business.

Due to rounding individual Crown Court Sitting times may not add up to the total time.

Part D: The County Court

Previously in Northern Ireland, there were seven county court divisions, however 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 section is now disaggregated solely by Court Office (Processing Office). There are currently eighteen county court judges and four district judges. 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.

The number of cases received and disposed in the county court between 2015 and 2019 is documented in Summary Tables 10 and 11 respectively.

Key Facts

- The number of appeals from the magistrates' courts received and disposed in the County Court increased by 6% and 5% respectively between 2015 and 2019. Both the receipts and disposals decreased each year between 2015 and 2017, before increasing in 2018 and again in 2019.
- Ordinary civil bill cases received decreased each year between 2015 and 2017, before increasing slightly by 1% in 2019. Overall civil bill cases received decreased by 3%. Civil bills disposed fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, peaking at 9,885 disposals in 2017. There was an overall decrease of less than one per cent between 2015 and 2019.
- Ejectment cases received and disposed fluctuated over the last 5 years. Between 2015 and 2019, both receipts and disposals increased by 20% and 12% respectively. The increases and declines in ejectment cases disposed are likely to be due to the changing economic conditions experienced during the period.
- Equity cases received remained relatively stable between 2015 and 2018, and then increased by 15% in 2019, while equity cases disposed generally increased between 2015 and 2019, with an overall increase of 9%.
- Despite the limit of the small claims court increasing from £2,000 to £3,000 in May 2011, the number of small claims received decreased on a yearly basis between 2015 and 2019, apart from a spike in 2017. There has been an 11% decrease in receipts overall between 2015 and 2019. There has also been a decreasing trend in the number of small claims disposed between 2015 and 2019, again apart from a spike in 2017. The increases in receipts and disposals are primarily the result of proceedings issued by two debt recovery companies during 2017.
- While all divorce petitions are received in the High Court, divorces can be granted in either the High Court or the County Court. Decrees granted in the County Court fluctuated between 2015 and 2019 with an overall decrease of 10% during the period, with peaks in 2015 and 2016. The total number of decrees granted across the High Court and County Court decreased between 2015 and 2019 by 9% overall. The number of decrees granted in the County Court was at its highest level in 2016 while in the High Court it was also at its highest level in 2016 across the 5 year time series (see Figure D.1).
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2018:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

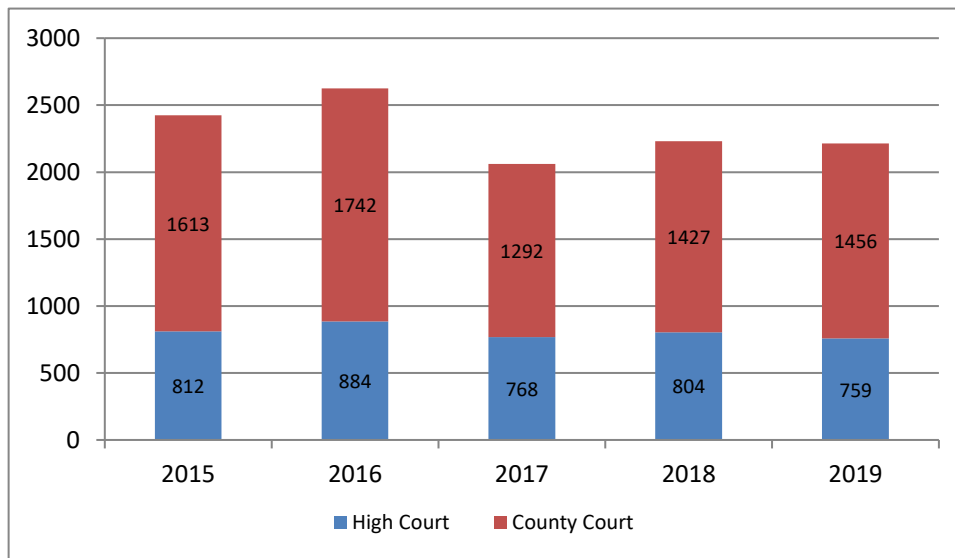
Summary Table 10: County court cases received 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Appeals from the magistrates' courts	3,647	3,623	3,444	3,701	3,857
Criminal damage cases	27	30	30	21	18
Licences	206	204	227	249	255
Ordinary civil bills	11,064	10,702	10,600	10,708	10,751
Equity	130	136	135	131	150
Ejectment	973	989	1,105	1,189	1,164
Small claims	11,002	10,073	11,720	10,180	9,744

Summary Table 11: County court cases disposed 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Appeals from the magistrates' courts	3,532	3,530	3,188	3,298	3,691
Criminal damage cases	22	20	14	23	16
Licences	185	214	217	231	233
Ordinary civil bills	9,193	9,172	9,885	9,322	9,156
Equity	106	91	104	101	116
Ejectment	834	750	797	988	936
Small claims	9,751	8,389	9,462	8,903	8,722
Divorce cases (decrees absolute)	1,479	1,691	1,318	1,322	1,520 ^[R]
Divorce cases (decrees granted)	1,613	1,742	1,292	1,427	1,456

^[R] Revised Figure.

Figure D.1: Decrees granted in the High Court and County Court from 2015 to 2019

Foot Note – Decrees granted– a provisional order for divorce, which may be made ‘absolute’ provided no reason is provided to the court to say otherwise.

County Court – 2019 Data

Section 1: Appeals from magistrates' courts

There were a total of 3,857 appeals received during 2019 (Table D.1) and 3,691 appeals disposed of in the county court during 2019 (Table D.2).

Table D.1: Appeals received in 2019

	Appeals received
Antrim	131
Armagh	68
Ballymena	282
Banbridge@Newry	-
Belfast	941
Coleraine	183
Craigavon	307
Downpatrick	29
Dungannon	409
Enniskillen	57
Limavady	36
Lisburn	462
Londonderry	355
Magherafelt	11
Newry	155
Newtownards	351
Omagh	46
Strabane	34
Total	3857

The number of appeals received in 2019 (3,857) increased from 3,701 in 2018 – an increase of 4%. The highest number of appeals received was in Belfast (941) which represented 24% of cases. In 2018, Belfast was also the highest and represented 21% of cases.

Table D.2: Appeals disposed of in 2019

	Appeals disposed
Antrim	120
Armagh	76
Ballymena	278
Banbridge@Newry	-
Belfast	803
Coleraine	174
Craigavon	348
Downpatrick	39
Dungannon	415
Enniskillen	55
Limavady	41
Lisburn	454
Londonderry	347
Magherafelt	4
Newry	146
Newtownards	300
Omagh	65
Strabane	26
Total	3691

The number of appeals disposed of in 2019 (3,691) increased from 3,298 in 2018 – an increase of 12%. The highest number of appeals disposed was in Belfast (803) which represented 22% of cases. In 2018, this office also disposed the highest number of cases (20%).

Tables D.3 to D.5 show the result of appeals against conviction and sentence, appeals against sentence only and civil appeals. The vast majority of appeals (99%) dealt with in court in 2019 were criminal cases, and 1% were civil cases, the same proportion as 2018. Of the criminal appeals, 78% were against sentence only and 22% were against conviction and sentence in 2019. These percentages were 76% and 24% respectively in 2018.

Table D.3: Number of magistrates' court appeals against conviction and sentence in 2019

	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied on Appeal	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Abandoned/ Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	4	14	20	-	38
Armagh	2	5	5	3	15
Ballymena	4	6	9	-	19
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	62	53	54	27	196
Coleraine	5	7	9	-	21
Craigavon	9	30	16	-	55
Downpatrick	6	6	4	2	18
Dungannon	9	55	26	1	91
Enniskillen	-	12	2	-	14
Limavady	2	7	3	-	12
Lisburn	14	63	26	5	108
Londonderry	5	28	46	-	79
Magherafelt	-	-	1	-	1
Newry	10	10	17	11	48
Newtownards	14	7	31	6	58
Omagh	-	8	6	-	14
Strabane	2	2	7	-	11
Total	148	313	282	55	798

The number of appeals against conviction and sentence increased by 2% from 2018 – 782 compared with 798.

The number of appeals against conviction and sentence in 2019 which resulted in the appeal being allowed and in an Order being varied was 313 – 39% of all appeals against conviction and sentence. This was the same proportion as in 2018.

Table D.4: Number of magistrates' court appeals against sentence only in 2019

	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied on Appeal	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Abandoned/ Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	-	32	50	-	82
Armagh	1	21	38	1	61
Ballymena	-	111	136	11	258
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	-	331	225	42	598
Coleraine	-	97	56	-	153
Craigavon	-	142	118	33	293
Downpatrick	8	3	10	-	21
Dungannon	2	244	70	5	321
Enniskillen	-	7	27	7	41
Limavady	-	25	4	-	29
Lisburn	2	178	162	4	346
Londonderry	-	105	135	25	265
Magherafelt	-	3	-	-	3
Newry	-	42	54	1	97
Newtownards	3	106	106	25	240
Omagh	1	38	11	-	50
Strabane	-	6	9	-	15
Total	17	1491	1211	154	2873

The number of appeals against sentence increased by 16% from 2018 – 2,873 compared with 2,484.

The number of appeals against sentence only in 2019 which resulted in the appeal being allowed and in an Order being varied was 1,491 – 52% of all appeals against sentence only. In 2018, the corresponding proportion was 47% (1,172 out of 2,484).

Table D.5: Number of magistrates' court civil appeals in 2019

	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-	-
Armagh	-	-	-	-	-
Ballymena	-	1	-	-	1
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	2	-	2	5	9
Coleraine	-	-	-	-	-
Craigavon	-	-	-	-	-
Downpatrick	-	-	-	-	-
Dungannon	3	-	-	-	3
Enniskillen	-	-	-	-	-
Limavady	-	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	-	-	-	-	-
Londonderry	2	1	-	-	3
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-	-
Newry	-	1	-	-	1
Newtownards	-	1	1	-	2
Omagh	1	-	-	-	1
Strabane	-	-	-	-	-
Total	8	4	3	5	20

The number of civil appeals in 2019 (20) decreased by 38% from the number of civil appeals in 2018 (32).

Section 2: Criminal damage cases

There were 18 criminal damage cases received during 2019, compared to 21 received in 2018. Belfast accounted for 39% of all cases received in 2019 (48% in 2018). Table D.7 shows that there were 16 criminal damage cases disposed of in 2019, compared with 23 disposed of in 2018.

Table D.6: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received in 2019

Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	7
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	4
	Craigavon	-
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	-
	Londonderry	2
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	-
	Newtownards	1
	Omagh	4
	Strabane	-
Total	18	
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	1
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	-
	Craigavon	-
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	-
	Londonderry	-
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	-
	Newtownards	-
	Omagh	-
	Strabane	-
Total	1	

Table D.7: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2019

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Total
Cases	Antrim	-	-	-
	Armagh	-	-	-
	Ballymena	-	-	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	10	-	10
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	-
	Coleraine	3	-	3
	Craigavon	-	-	-
	Downpatrick	-	-	-
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	-	-	-
	Londonderry	-	-	-
	Magherafelt	-	-	-
	Newry	-	-	-
	Newtownards	-	-	-
	Omagh	3	-	3
	Strabane	-	-	-
	Total	16	-	16
Applications	Antrim	-	-	-
	Armagh	-	-	-
	Ballymena	-	-	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	1	-	1
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	-
	Coleraine	-	-	-
	Craigavon	-	-	-
	Downpatrick	-	-	-
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	-	-	-
	Londonderry	-	-	-
	Magherafelt	-	-	-
	Newry	-	-	-
	Newtownards	-	-	-
	Omagh	-	-	-
	Strabane	-	-	-
	Total	1	-	1

The average time from issue to disposal for criminal damage cases was 134 weeks in 2019. The corresponding time interval was 102 weeks in 2018. Caution needs to be exercised in comparing these figures due to the small number of cases.

Table D.8: Time intervals in weeks (average) for criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2019

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	149
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	3
	Craigavon	-
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	-
	Londonderry	-
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	-
	Newtownards	-
	Omagh	218
	Strabane	-
	Total	134
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	1
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	-
	Craigavon	-
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	-
	Londonderry	-
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	-
	Newtownards	-
	Omagh	-
	Strabane	-
	Total	1

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals, and office disposals.

Section 3: Licences

There were 255 licence applications received in the county court in 2019, 2% more than were received in 2018 (249).

In 2019, 233 licence applications were disposed of, an increase of less than one percent from the previous year (231). Belfast accounted for 26% of licences received and 30% of licences disposed of in 2019, compared to 38% and 40% respectively in 2018.

Table D.9: Licences received and disposed of in 2019

	Licences received	Licences disposed of
Antrim	-	-
Armagh	-	-
Ballymena	-	-
Banbridge@Newry	-	-
Belfast	67	69
Civil Processing Centre	-	-
Coleraine	61	41
Craigavon	18	18
Downpatrick	-	-
Dungannon	-	-
Enniskillen	-	-
Limavady	-	-
Lisburn	-	-
Londonderry	22	19
Magherafelt	-	-
Newry	14	16
Newtownards	40	43
Omagh	33	27
Strabane	-	-
Total	255	233

Section 4: Ordinary civil bills

There were 10,751 ordinary civil bill cases received in 2019. There were also 4,866 applications received during the same period. In 2018 there were 10,708 cases received and 4,653 applications received. This represents an increase in the number of cases by less than one per cent and an increase of the number of applications by 5%.

Table D.10: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications received in 2019

Cases	Antrim	128
	Armagh	71
	Ballymena	164
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	3266
	Civil Processing Centre	3033
	Coleraine	461
	Craigavon	426
	Downpatrick	335
	Dungannon	85
	Enniskillen	26
	Limavady	4
	Lisburn	407
	Londonderry	420
	Magherafelt	45
	Newry	582
	Newtownards	651
	Omagh	635
	Strabane	12
Total	10751	
Applications	Antrim	28
	Armagh	25
	Ballymena	45
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	1364
	Civil Processing Centre	1676
	Coleraine	173
	Craigavon	279
	Downpatrick	54
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	131
	Londonderry	227
	Magherafelt	1
	Newry	281
	Newtownards	337
	Omagh	245
	Strabane	-
Total	4866	

The number of ordinary civil bill cases where Notices of Intention to Defend were received has increased from 7,216 in 2018 to 7,519 in 2019, representing an increase in business of 4% (Table D.11). The civil bills are assigned to each judge type based on the amount claimed, and the distribution of civil bills changed alongside the increase in the financial limit of the County Court to £30,000, in February 2013. At this point the upper threshold for a district judge case moved from £5,000 to £10,000 and as a result District Judges were assigned 56% of civil bills with an NID lodged in 2019, as opposed to 33% in 2012.

Table D.11: Number of ordinary civil bill cases with Notice of Intention to Defend by judicial level in 2019

	County court judge level	District judge level	Total
Antrim	58	65	123
Armagh	32	37	69
Ballymena	65	74	139
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
Belfast	1609	1538	3147
Civil Processing Centre	83	140	223
Coleraine	189	253	442
Craigavon	162	241	403
Downpatrick	270	48	318
Dungannon	34	45	79
Enniskillen	6	19	25
Limavady	1	3	4
Lisburn	124	256	380
Londonderry	124	267	391
Magherafelt	20	24	44
Newry	212	333	545
Newtownards	16	575	591
Omagh	261	324	585
Strabane	8	3	11
Total	3274	4245	7519

The number of cases disposed of decreased by 2%, from 9,322 cases in 2018 to 9,156 in 2019. Of the ordinary civil bill cases disposed of in 2019, 11% were default judgments. A further 30% were disposed of at district judge level and 28% were disposed of at county court judge level (Table D.12). Comparable figures for 2018 were 10%, 29% and 29% respectively.

Table D.12: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications disposed of in 2019

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Default judgment	Total
Cases	Antrim	20	12	42	-	74
	Armagh	20	30	28	-	78
	Ballymena	23	28	32	1	84
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	1491	1014	1069	9	3583
	Civil Processing Centre	1	5	152	970	1128
	Coleraine	173	193	225	4	595
	Craigavon	87	142	164	3	396
	Downpatrick	168	16	124	1	309
	Dungannon	11	9	15	-	35
	Enniskillen	2	4	9	-	15
	Limavady	1	1	2	-	4
	Lisburn	95	129	180	1	405
	Londonderry	84	188	135	3	410
	Magherafelt	4	4	14	-	22
	Newry	153	245	233	5	636
	Newtownards	22	391	224	1	638
	Omagh	199	338	200	4	741
	Strabane	1	1	1	-	3
	Total	2555	2750	2849	1002	9156
Applications	Antrim	8	-	6	-	14
	Armagh	3	-	11	-	14
	Ballymena	5	4	10	-	19
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	158	51	476	-	685
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	142	-	142
	Coleraine	24	16	53	-	93
	Craigavon	18	15	101	-	134
	Downpatrick	17	-	14	-	31
	Dungannon	-	-	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-	-	-
	Lisburn	13	2	20	-	35
	Londonderry	21	28	80	-	129
	Magherafelt	-	-	1	-	1
	Newry	29	21	73	-	123
	Newtownards	27	8	63	-	98
	Omagh	15	22	110	-	147
	Strabane	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	338	167	1160	-	1665

CCJ and DJ split based on the judicial level assigned to the final sitting date, i.e. CCJ will include DJ sitting as a DCCJ.

Table D.13 shows the amount awarded for ordinary civil bills during 2019. Of the civil bills with an amount awarded, 45% were awarded between £3,000-14,999.

Table D.13: Number of ordinary civil bill cases by amount awarded in 2019

		No Value	Less than £3000	£3000-14999	£15000-29999	£30000 and over	Total
Cases	Antrim	2	9	19	1	1	32
	Armagh	8	20	17	5	-	50
	Ballymena	6	20	22	3	-	51
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	909	447	1063	83	3	2505
	Civil Processing Centre	3	2	1	-	-	6
	Coleraine	81	97	175	13	-	366
	Craigavon	31	71	113	14	-	229
	Downpatrick	19	18	122	25	-	184
	Dungannon	3	5	11	1	-	20
	Enniskillen	1	2	3	-	-	6
	Limavady	-	-	1	1	-	2
	Lisburn	41	70	105	8	-	224
	Londonderry	86	73	101	11	1	272
	Magherafelt	1	1	6	-	-	8
	Newry	65	112	195	26	-	398
	Newtownards	67	149	194	3	-	413
	Omagh	108	145	261	19	4	537
	Strabane	-	1	1	-	-	2
Total		1431	1242	2410	213	9	5305

Excludes cases that were adjourned generally, withdrawn, dismissed, default judgments or had office disposals.

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount awarded recorded on ICOS. No amount awarded can arise when a case has been settled and the value was not notified to the court or the terms of the settlement do not include a monetary value.

On average, it took 53 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal for civil bill cases to progress through the county court in 2019 (Table D.14), compared to 58 weeks in the previous year.

Table D.14: Average time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases disposed of in 2019

	Issue to disposal
Cases	
Antrim	52
Armagh	53
Ballymena	43
Banbridge@Newry	-
Belfast	58
Civil Processing Centre	102
Coleraine	53
Craigavon	41
Downpatrick	40
Dungannon	131
Enniskillen	118
Limavady	38
Lisburn	44
Londonderry	59
Magherafelt	44
Newry	42
Newtownards	30
Omagh	60
Strabane	52
Total	53

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals and office disposals.

During 2018 a civil pilot continued in Armagh to target old outstanding cases from across NI in an effort to reduce backlogs and promote disposal of civil business. As a consequence, a number of very old cases were disposed during the period and this has therefore affected the average times. In the majority of these cases the case was struck out as it had been settled but the court was not informed.

The average time interval in weeks for civil bill applications disposed of in 2019 was 16 weeks, one week more than the length of time for applications disposed of in 2018, which was 15 weeks.

Table D.15: Average time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications disposed of in 2019

		Issue to disposal
Applications	Antrim	18
	Armagh	3
	Ballymena	22
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	20
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	13
	Craigavon	16
	Downpatrick	5
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	14
	Londonderry	14
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	10
	Newtownards	17
	Omagh	12
Strabane	-	
Total	16	

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals and office disposals.

Section 5: Equity

During 2019, there were 150 equity cases received, an increase of 15% from 2018 (131 equity cases). There were also 67 equity applications received during 2019, an increase of 16% from 2018 (58 equity applications).

Table D.16: Equity cases and applications received in 2019

Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	1
	Ballymena	3
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	40
	Civil Processing Centre	13
	Coleraine	15
	Craigavon	7
	Downpatrick	11
	Dungannon	2
	Enniskillen	2
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	3
	Londonderry	11
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	12
	Newtownards	2
	Omagh	27
	Strabane	1
	Total	150
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	14
	Civil Processing Centre	5
	Coleraine	1
	Craigavon	7
	Downpatrick	2
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	2
	Londonderry	6
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	8
	Newtownards	2
	Omagh	20
	Strabane	-
	Total	67

Table D.17 shows that there were 116 equity cases disposed of in 2019 which is 15% more than the 101 cases disposed of in 2018. During 2019 the majority of equity cases were disposed of in court (84%). 76% of cases were disposed of in court during 2018.

Table D.17: Equity cases and applications disposed of in 2019

		Court result	Non court disposals	Total
Cases	Antrim	-	-	-
	Armagh	-	-	-
	Ballymena	1	-	1
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	13	1	14
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	-
	Coleraine	21	1	22
	Craigavon	6	1	7
	Downpatrick	11	6	17
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	5	-	5
	Londonderry	6	2	8
	Magherafelt	-	-	-
	Newry	13	4	17
	Newtownards	-	-	-
	Omagh	21	4	25
	Strabane	-	-	-
	Total	97	19	116
Applications	Antrim	-	-	-
	Armagh	-	-	-
	Ballymena	-	-	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	4	6	10
	Civil Processing Centre	-	3	3
	Coleraine	-	-	-
	Craigavon	2	5	7
	Downpatrick	3	-	3
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	1	1	2
	Londonderry	-	3	3
	Magherafelt	-	-	-
	Newry	6	-	6
	Newtownards	2	-	2
	Omagh	12	6	18
	Strabane	-	-	-
	Total	30	24	54

Table D.18 shows the time intervals for equity cases and applications from date of issue to date of disposal for each county court division. On average, for cases disposed of during 2019, it took 95 weeks for an equity case to progress through the county courts. In 2018, the corresponding figure was 70 weeks.

Table D.18: Average time intervals in weeks for equity cases disposed of in 2019

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	34
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	44
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	66
	Craigavon	69
	Downpatrick	155
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	88
	Londonderry	48
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	103
	Newtownards	-
	Omagh	147
	Strabane	-
Total	95	
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	7
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	-
	Craigavon	30
	Downpatrick	6
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	30
	Londonderry	-
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	19
	Newtownards	6
	Omagh	6
	Strabane	-
Total	11	

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals, and office disposals.

Section 6: Ejectment

There were 1164 ejectment cases received during 2019 compared with 1189 in 2018 – a decrease of 2% (Table D.19).

37% of ejectment cases were received in Belfast in 2019, compared to 39% the previous year.

Table D.19: Ejectment cases received in 2019

Cases	Antrim	1
	Armagh	5
	Ballymena	15
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	435
	Civil Processing Centre	198
	Coleraine	45
	Craigavon	41
	Downpatrick	16
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	1
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	85
	Londonderry	75
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	64
	Newtownards	123
Omagh	60	
Strabane	-	
Total	1164	

In 2019, there were 936 ejection cases disposed of in the county court compared with 988 the previous year – a decrease of 5% (Table D.20). The majority of ejection cases were disposed of in court – 96% of cases in 2019, similar to 2018 (97%).

Table D.20: Ejection cases disposed of in 2019

		Court result	Non court disposals	Total
Cases	Antrim	1	-	1
	Armagh	2	1	3
	Ballymena	15	1	16
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	408	2	410
	Civil Processing Centre	1	1	2
	Coleraine	47	1	48
	Craigavon	31	15	46
	Downpatrick	11	-	11
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	95	11	106
	Londonderry	64	-	64
	Magherafelt	1	-	1
	Newry	49	3	52
	Newtownards	118	2	120
Omagh	54	2	56	
Strabane	-	-	-	
Total	897	39	936	

Table D.21 shows the average time in weeks for ejection cases to progress through the courts during 2019. On average, it took 22 weeks for a case from date of issue to date of disposal, the same number of weeks as in 2018.

Table D.21: Average time intervals in weeks for ejectment cases disposed of in 2019

	Issue to disposal
Cases	
Antrim	23
Armagh	15
Ballymena	14
Banbridge@Newry	-
Belfast	21
Civil Processing Centre	24
Coleraine	22
Craigavon	18
Downpatrick	25
Dungannon	-
Enniskillen	-
Limavady	-
Lisburn	27
Londonderry	23
Magherafelt	55
Newry	17
Newtownards	21
Omagh	32
Strabane	-
Total	22

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals, and office disposals.

Section 7: Small claims

Table D.22 shows that the number of small claims cases received was 9,744 in 2019, a decrease of 4% from 10,180 in 2018. There were 139 applications received in small claims during 2019 compared with 186 in 2018 – a decrease of 25%.

Table D.22: Number of small claims cases and applications received in 2019

Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	22
	Ballymena	34
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	481
	Civil Processing Centre	8593
	Coleraine	101
	Craigavon	83
	Downpatrick	13
	Dungannon	2
	Enniskillen	7
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	34
	Londonderry	82
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	77
	Newtownards	131
	Omagh	84
	Strabane	-
	Total	9744
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	1
	Ballymena	1
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	53
	Civil Processing Centre	21
	Coleraine	10
	Craigavon	6
	Downpatrick	1
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	4
	Londonderry	8
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	8
	Newtownards	13
	Omagh	13
	Strabane	-
	Total	139

In 2019, there were 1,074 small claims cases with a Notice of Dispute received which was a decrease of 11% from the previous year (1,204).

Table D.23: Number of small claims cases with a Notice of Dispute received in 2019

Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	22
	Ballymena	32
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	428
	Civil Processing Centre	17
	Coleraine	93
	Craigavon	78
	Downpatrick	13
	Dungannon	1
	Enniskillen	6
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	29
	Londonderry	77
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	69
Newtownards	125	
Omagh	84	
Strabane	-	
Total		1074

In total, 8,722 small claims cases were disposed of in 2019. This was a decrease of 2% on the 8,903 cases disposed of during 2018 (Table D.24).

Table D.24: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed of in 2019

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Default judgment	Total
Cases	Antrim	-	-	-	-
	Armagh	23	4	-	27
	Ballymena	25	6	1	32
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	296	206	12	514
	Civil Processing Centre	3	1810	5642	7455
	Coleraine	78	19	5	102
	Craigavon	73	40	-	113
	Downpatrick	8	2	-	10
	Dungannon	1	1	-	2
	Enniskillen	4	6	1	11
	Limavady	-	-	-	-
	Lisburn	26	17	1	44
	Londonderry	61	19	-	80
	Magherafelt	-	-	-	-
	Newry	55	12	1	68
	Newtownards	106	45	3	154
	Omagh	83	24	3	110
	Strabane	-	-	-	-
	Total	842	2211	5669	8722
Applications	Antrim	-	-	-	-
	Armagh	1	-	-	1
	Ballymena	-	1	-	1
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	45	7	-	52
	Civil Processing Centre	-	1	-	1
	Coleraine	7	-	-	7
	Craigavon	7	3	-	10
	Downpatrick	-	1	-	1
	Dungannon	-	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-	-
	Lisburn	3	1	-	4
	Londonderry	6	1	-	7
	Magherafelt	-	-	-	-
	Newry	5	1	-	6
	Newtownards	7	2	-	9
	Omagh	12	-	-	12
	Strabane	-	-	-	-
	Total	93	18	-	111

Table D.25 shows that during 2019, it took on average 22 weeks for a small claims case to progress from date of issue to date of disposal, less than in 2018 (23 weeks).

Table D.25: Average time intervals in weeks for small claims cases disposed of in 2019

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	19
	Ballymena	17
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	20
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	32
	Craigavon	26
	Downpatrick	14
	Dungannon	20
	Enniskillen	13
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	25
	Londonderry	23
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	21
	Newtownards	17
	Omagh	28
	Strabane	-
	Total	22
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	3
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	6
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	6
	Craigavon	12
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	15
	Londonderry	7
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	6
	Newtownards	5
	Omagh	9
Strabane	-	
Total	7	

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals and office disposals.

Section 8: Divorce cases

There were 1,456 decrees granted in undefended divorce cases in the county court in 2019 (Table D.26). The number of decrees granted has increased by 2% from 1,427 in 2018.

Table D.26: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted in 2019

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/ other	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-	-	-
Armagh	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ballymena	-	-	-	-	-	-
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	196	182	5	36	21	440
Coleraine	124	109	4	37	14	288
Craigavon	81	52	3	21	17	174
Downpatrick	70	52	1	10	8	141
Dungannon	-	2	-	-	-	2
Enniskillen	-	-	-	-	-	-
Limavady	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	1	-	-	-	-	1
Londonderry	55	51	4	30	21	161
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newry	58	35	1	15	13	122
Newtownards	-	-	-	-	-	-
Omagh	62	41	-	13	11	127
Strabane	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	647	524	18	162	105	1456

Table D.27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued in 2019^[R]

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/ other	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-	-	-
Armagh	5	-	-	4	-	9
Ballymena	1	1	-	-	-	2
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	196	199	6	30	25	456
Coleraine	121	105	2	31	19	278
Craigavon	92	61	4	29	18	204
Downpatrick	67	44	1	11	9	132
Dungannon	1	5	-	-	1	7
Enniskillen	-	-	-	-	-	-
Limavady	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	1	-	-	-	-	1
Londonderry	68	47	1	27	21	164
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newry	61	36	1	13	9	120
Newtownards	4	3	-	-	2	9
Omagh	65	50	-	13	10	138
Strabane	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	682	551	15	158	114	1520

^[R] Revised Figure.

In 2019, there were 1,520 decrees absolute issued compared with 1,322 the previous year – an increase of 15%.

Tables D.28 and D.29 show that there were 181 matrimonial applications received and 168 disposed of during 2019. Comparable figures in 2018 were 209 and 154 respectively.

Table D.28: Matrimonial applications received in 2019

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application	Other	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-
Armagh	1	-	-	1
Ballymena	2	-	-	2
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-
Belfast	29	4	-	33
Coleraine	41	1	3	45
Craigavon	18	1	3	22
Downpatrick	1	-	-	1
Dungannon	2	-	-	2
Enniskillen	-	-	-	-
Limavady	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	-	-	-	-
Londonderry	23	1	3	27
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-
Newry	27	1	2	30
Newtownards	2	-	2	4
Omagh	13	-	1	14
Strabane	-	-	-	-
Total	159	8	14	181

Table D.29: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2019

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application	Other	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-
Armagh	5	-	-	5
Ballymena	3	-	-	3
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-
Belfast	20	2	-	22
Coleraine	33	1	3	37
Craigavon	20	-	4	24
Downpatrick	1	-	-	1
Dungannon	3	-	-	3
Enniskillen	-	-	-	-
Limavady	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	-	-	-	-
Londonderry	29	-	2	31
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-
Newry	20	1	2	23
Newtownards	5	-	1	6
Omagh	12	-	1	13
Strabane	-	-	-	-
Total	151	4	13	168

County court divorce petitions took on average 33 weeks from date of issue to the date decree nisi granted in 2019, more than the 32 weeks taken in 2018. Matrimonial applications took on average 42 weeks to progress through the county courts during 2019 compared to 31 weeks in 2018.

Table D.30: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2019

	Issue to date decree nisi granted	Date decree nisi granted to date absolute issued
Antrim	-	-
Armagh	-	-
Ballymena	-	-
Banbridge@Newry	-	-
Belfast	29	10
Coleraine	31	11
Craigavon	35	10
Downpatrick	28	10
Dungannon	51	18
Enniskillen	-	-
Limavady	-	-
Lisburn	31	30
Londonderry	37	12
Magherafelt	-	-
Newry	34	13
Newtownards	-	-
Omagh	43	12
Strabane	-	-
Total	33	11

Table D.31: Average time intervals in weeks for matrimonial applications in 2019

	Issue to disposal
Antrim	-
Armagh	173
Ballymena	25
Banbridge@Newry	-
Belfast	40
Coleraine	39
Craigavon	25
Downpatrick	-
Dungannon	42
Enniskillen	-
Limavady	-
Lisburn	-
Londonderry	62
Magherafelt	-
Newry	19
Newtownards	24
Omagh	35
Strabane	-
Total	42

Section 9: Court sitting days and court sitting times

Table D.32 shows that there were 4,303 court sitting days in 2019. This is an increase of one per cent on the 4,243 court sitting days in 2018.

55% of the county court judges and district judges sitting time was spent on criminal cases, 27% of time was spent on civil cases and 19% of time was spent on family cases in 2019. In 2018, the proportion of time spent on each of these court areas was 54%, 27% and 19% respectively.

Table D.32: County court judge and district judge sitting days and court sitting times in 2019 (hrs : mins)

	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Total court time	Total court criminal time	Total court civil time	Total family time
Antrim	358	2:18	821:07	744:15	72:41	4:11
Armagh	121	2:33	307:50	5:07	300:03	2:40
Ballymena	29	2:37	76:05	-	68:05	8:00
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	1657	2:56	4854:59	2214:29	1267:33	1372:57
Coleraine	83	3:24	282:22	47:03	201:07	34:12
Craigavon	453	2:07	958:18	606:26	93:13	258:39
Downpatrick	241	2:30	601:36	525:21	64:50	11:25
Dungannon	337	3:28	1166:42	903:54	76:29	186:19
Enniskillen	23	3:18	75:45	3:30	68:06	4:09
Limavady	3	3:37	10:50	-	10:25	0:25
Lisburn	49	2:17	111:37	41:22	69:15	1:00
Londonderry	411	2:18	947:21	620:23	179:05	147:53
Magherafelt	14	1:07	15:40	-	15:10	0:30
Newry	227	2:07	479:05	376:48	85:27	16:50
Newtownards	136	1:51	252:14	47:42	203:47	0:45
Omagh	124	3:14	400:59	104:53	192:46	103:20
Royal Courts of Justice	4	1:00	3:59	3:59	-	-
Strabane	33	2:44	90:07	13:30	75:08	1:29
Total	4303	2:40	11456:36	6258:42	3043:10	2154:44

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.

Part E: The Magistrates' Court

There are twenty-one petty sessions' districts in Northern Ireland. A magistrates' court (other than a youth court or family proceedings court) is presided over by a district judge (magistrates' court) sitting alone. The present complement of district judges (magistrates' court) is twenty-one. The magistrates' court hears and determines less serious criminal cases, cases involving youth and some civil and domestic cases including family proceedings.

The vast majority of all criminal offences dealt with in Northern Ireland are tried summarily in a magistrates' court. Over half of these offences are offences against Road Traffic Orders, such as the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995 and the Road Traffic Offenders (NI) Order 1996, sometimes described as the 'penalty points' Order.

Magistrates' courts also deal with offences where the defendant can choose trial by jury but decides to have their case heard in the magistrates' court. If the defendant chooses trial by jury, the case will be passed on to the Crown Court. It is estimated that where the defendant has a choice between summary trial and trial on indictment, approximately three out of four cases are dealt with summarily. This is mainly because this mode of trial is much quicker and the sentencing powers of a District Judge (magistrates' court) are more restricted than those of a Crown Court Judge - the most serious punishment which a District Judge (magistrates' court) can impose is 12 months in prison, unless consecutive terms of imprisonment are imposed for more than one offence, when the limit is extended to 18 months.

The youth court deals with young people who have committed criminal offences, and who are aged between 10 and under 18. The youth court is part of the magistrates' court and cases are generally heard before a panel of three persons, a salaried District Judge (magistrates' court) and two specially-trained fee-paid lay magistrates. Although the youth court can deal with the full range of criminal offences (save for murder), if a young person is charged with a very serious offence, which in the case of an adult is punishable with 14 years' imprisonment or more, the youth court can commit them for trial at the Crown Court.

In addition to hearing criminal proceedings the youth court also hears proceedings relating to the care, protection and control of juveniles.

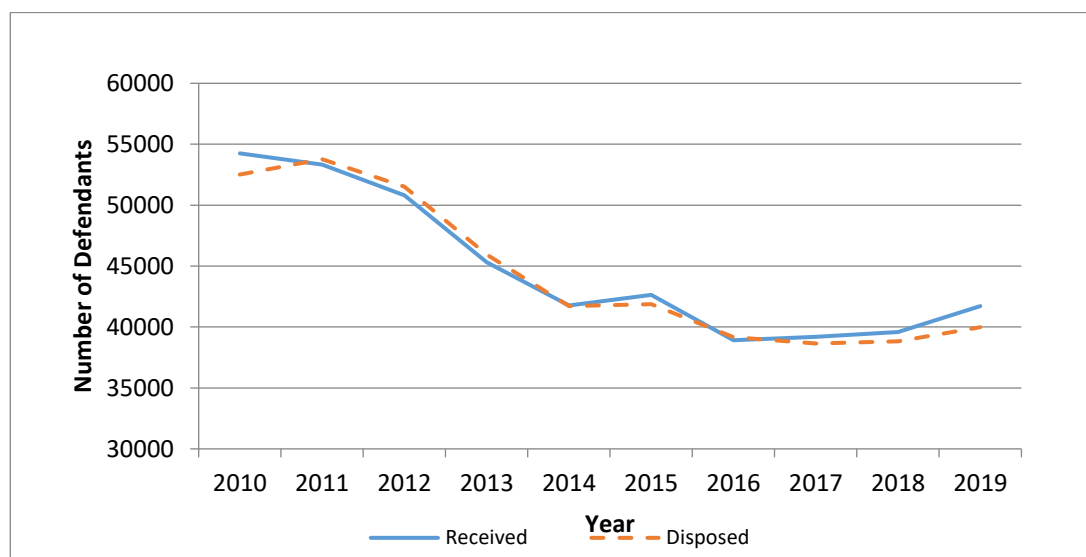
Magistrates' courts can deal with a limited number of civil cases as follows:-

- some civil debts, for example, arrears of income tax, national insurance contributions, VAT arrears, rates
- licences, for example, granting, renewing or taking away licences for pubs and clubs
- some matrimonial problems, for example, maintenance and removing a spouse from the matrimonial home
- welfare of children, for example, local authority care or supervision orders, adoption proceedings and residence orders.

Key Facts

- The number of adult criminal defendants received and disposed have generally decreased over the last 10 years (see Figure E.1).

Figure E.1: Criminal Adult Magistrates Defendants Received and Disposed from 2010 to 2019



- Adult and Youth criminal defendants received have decreased by 2% and 29% respectively between 2015 and 2019. The decreases since 2013 are partly a result of the introduction of Penalty Notices of Disorder which were introduced on 6th June 2012. These are new diversionary disposals aimed at dealing with minor offences as a direct alternative to a prosecution before the court. The number of defendants received is affected by crime rates, Police arrests and the decision by the PPS to prosecute. For more information on Police and PPS figures, please follow the links below:
<https://www.psnl.police.uk/inside-psni/statistics>
<https://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Statistics--Research-5021.html>
- Adult criminal disposals have decreased by 4% and Youth disposals have decreased by 33% between 2015 and 2019 with an increase of 3% and a decrease of 13% being observed respectively between 2018 and 2019.
- Average waiting times between a summons/charge and disposal in the Adult court increased by 11% and increased by 15% in Youth court between 2015 and 2019. Between 2018 and 2019, average waiting times remained the same at 11.7 weeks in the Adult court and increased by 5% in the Youth court.
- Civil & Family business received generally decreased annually between 2015 and 2019, with an overall decrease of 19% between 2015 and 2019. Disposals have followed the same pattern as the receipts, generally decreasing between 2015 and 2019 with an overall decrease of 16%.

Note: Received – number of defendants received into court by way of Summons or Police charge sheet.
 Disposed – number of defendants who have reached the end of the court process.

- Average waiting times between first hearing and disposal for Civil & Family business have fluctuated over the last five years, with an overall increase of 39% between 2015 and 2019.
- The link below provides comparative figures for 2018:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 12: Adult, youth and civil magistrates' courts 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Adult criminal defendants received	42,645	38,916	39,202	39,588	41,727
Adult criminal defendants disposed	41,868	39,162	38,649	38,837	39,992
Average waiting time between summons/charge and disposal – adults (wks)	10.5	11.1	11.2	11.7	11.7
Youth criminal defendants received	1,780	1,438	1,518	1,446	1,270
Youth criminal defendants disposed	1,874	1,398	1,532	1,443	1,256
Average waiting time between summons/charge and disposal – youths (wks)	14.3	14.0	15.0	15.6	16.4
Civil & Family business received	4,962	4,797	5,035	4,530	4,008
Civil & Family business disposed	4,478	4,371	4,537	3,999	3,773
Average civil and family waiting time between first hearing to disposal (wks)	6.2	7.0	6.6	7.0	8.6

Magistrates Court – 2019 Data

Section 1: Business volumes received in the magistrates' court

In 2019, there were 41,727 adult defendants received, which represents a 5% increase from the 39,588 received in 2018. In the youth court, there were 1,270 defendants received, a 12% decrease from the 1,446 received in 2018 (Table E.1).

Table E.1: Business volumes received in adult criminal, youth and civil courts in 2019

	Number of adult defendants	Number of youth defendants	Number of civil applications
Antrim	1533	30	92
Armagh	1069	1	91
Ballymena	2069	64	220
Banbridge@Newry	662	4	50
Belfast	13612	378	1470
Coleraine	1905	41	180
Craigavon	2839	89	99
Downpatrick	1306	16	111
Dungannon	1842	73	132
Enniskillen	1130	49	66
Limavady	603	-	17
Lisburn	2152	57	277
Londonderry	3037	112	346
Magherafelt	777	3	17
Newry	2441	98	263
Newtownards	3104	204	423
Omagh	974	37	57
Strabane	672	14	97
Total	41727	1270	4008

Section 2: Adult criminal business disposed of

There were 39,992 defendants disposed of in 2019 (Table E.2), a 3% increase from the 38,837 disposed of in 2018. Belfast accounted for 32% of the business, a similar proportion to the 31% in 2018.

Table E.2: Number of adult defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2019

	Number of adult defendants
Antrim	1485
Armagh	978
Ballymena	2093
Banbridge@Newry	665
Belfast	12711
Coleraine	1784
Craigavon	2750
Downpatrick	1242
Dungannon	1774
Enniskillen	1126
Limavady	582
Lisburn	2028
Londonderry	2992
Magherafelt	728
Newry	2391
Newtownards	3079
Omagh	909
Strabane	675
Total	39992

Table E.3 shows the types of charges disposed of in 2019. In total, there were 87,138 charges disposed of, which is an increase of 4% from 83,807 in 2018. PSNI/PPS prosecutions accounted for 87% of charges in 2019 (76,191), the same percentage as in 2018 (73,215).

Table E.3: Number and type of charges brought for defendants disposed of in 2019

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Penalty notice for Disorder	Total
Indictable charges	2799	124	-	-	2923
Hybrid charges	27570	1305	-	-	28875
Indictable triable summarily charges	10060	-	-	4	10064
Summary charges	33337	9004	189	15	42545
Other Summary charges	2425	306	-	-	2731
Total	76191	10739	189	19	87138

Figures are based on the number of charges disposed.

The class on ICOS is based on the police classification. Major & minor motoring charges have been counted in either summary, indictable, indictable triable summarily or hybrid.

Table E.4 shows the outcomes of defendants disposed of in 2019. 40% of defendants pleaded guilty on all charges, the same proportion of those making the same plea in 2018 (40%).

Table E.4: Outcomes of defendants disposed of in 2019

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Penalty notice for Disorder	Total
Committed to Crown Court	1730	19	-	-	1749
Plea of guilty on all charges	14623	1189	-	-	15812
All charges withdrawn	5319	3113	-	-	8432
Fixed Penalty default	-	-	189	-	189
Penalty Notice for Disorder Default	-	-	-	19	19
Plea not guilty – found guilty on at least one charge	7682	4213	-	-	11895
Plea not guilty – acquitted on all charges	1690	206	-	-	1896
Total	31044	8740	189	19	39992

Figures are based on the number of defendants disposed.

Table E.5 shows there were 114,883 final orders granted in the magistrates' adult court in 2019, an increase of 1% from 113,266 in 2018.

Table E.5: Types of disposals from the magistrates' adult court in 2019

	Northern Ireland
Community Orders	5808
Custodial Orders	13415
Monetary Orders	30424
Non-Custodial Orders	3633
Road Traffic Orders	18033
Withdrawn	24417
Other Final Orders	19153
Total	114883

Figures are based on the number of final orders.

Table E.6 shows the average waiting time in Northern Ireland for adult defendants disposed of in 2019 between the date of summons and the date of first hearing was 5 weeks (6 weeks in 2018). The average waiting time between the date of first hearing and disposal was 7 weeks. This was the 6 weeks in 2018.

Table E.6: Average waiting times in weeks for adult defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2019

	Summons/ charge to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)	Summons to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	5.4	4.5	5.1	10.5
Armagh	5.1	6.6	7.4	12.5
Ballymena	5.6	6.2	7.0	12.6
Banbridge@Newry	5.8	5.3	5.7	11.5
Belfast	5.4	5.9	6.8	12.3
Coleraine	4.9	5.8	6.6	11.5
Craigavon	4.7	4.1	4.8	9.5
Downpatrick	5.3	5.9	6.7	12.0
Dungannon	4.9	4.8	5.4	10.3
Enniskillen	4.8	5.8	6.6	11.4
Limavady	4.9	3.8	4.4	9.3
Lisburn	4.3	6.3	7.3	11.5
Londonderry	5.2	6.1	7.2	12.4
Magherafelt	5.5	6.4	7.2	12.7
Newry	5.0	5.5	5.8	10.8
Newtownards	5.0	6.8	7.7	12.7
Omagh	5.3	4.6	5.0	10.3
Strabane	5.8	5.3	5.8	11.7
Total	5.2	5.7	6.5	11.7

Arrest warrants, adjourned generally and deferred sentences are excluded.

Section 3: Youth criminal business disposed of

In 2019, there were 1,256 youth defendants disposed of (Table E.7), with 30% disposed of in Belfast. This represents a 13% decrease from the total disposed of in 2018 (1,443), when 29% were disposed of in Belfast.

Table E.7: Number of defendants disposed of in the youth court in 2019

	Number of youth defendants
Antrim	18
Armagh	1
Ballymena	64
Banbridge@Newry	2
Belfast	371
Coleraine	35
Craigavon	87
Downpatrick	17
Dungannon	78
Enniskillen	43
Limavady	-
Lisburn	66
Londonderry	125
Magherafelt	2
Newry	102
Newtownards	201
Omagh	31
Strabane	13
Total	1256

Table E.8 shows the types of charges disposed of in 2019 for youth defendants. In total, there were 2,771 charges disposed of in 2019. This represents a 17% decrease from 3,355 charges disposed in 2018.

Table E.8: Number and type of charges brought for youth defendants disposed of in 2019

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Indictable charges	118	-	-	118
Hybrid charges	1154	1	-	1155
Indictable triable summarily charges	449	-	-	449
Summary charges	990	17	-	1007
Other Summary charges	38	4	-	42
Total	2749	22	-	2771

Figures are based on the number of charges disposed.

The class on ICOS is based on the police classification. Major & minor motoring charges have been counted in either summary, indictable, indictable triable summarily or hybrid.

Table E.9 shows the outcomes for youth defendants disposed of in 2019. 49% of youth defendants pleaded guilty on all charges compared with 46% in 2018.

Table E.9: Outcomes for youth defendants disposed of in 2019

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Committed to the Crown Court	10	-	-	10
Plea of guilty on all charges	614	6	-	620
All charges withdrawn	350	3	-	353
Fixed Penalty default	-	-	-	-
Plea not guilty – found guilty on at least one charge	205	-	-	205
Plea not guilty – acquitted on all charges	68	-	-	68
Total	1247	9	-	1256

Figures are based on the number of defendants disposed.

Table E.10 shows there were 3,404 final orders granted in the magistrates' youth court in 2019. This represents an 15% decrease from 4,028 granted in 2018.

Table E.10: Types of disposals from the youth courts in 2019

	Northern Ireland
Community Orders	828
Custodial Orders	435
Monetary Orders	181
Non-Custodial Orders	309
Road Traffic Orders	249
Withdrawn	848
Other Final Orders	554
Total	3404

Figures are based on the number of final orders.

Table E.11 shows the average waiting time in Northern Ireland for youth defendants disposed of in the youth courts in 2019. The average waiting time between the date of summons to the date of first hearing in 2019 was 4 weeks (3 weeks in 2018). The average waiting time between the date of first hearing and finding was 9 weeks (8 weeks in 2018). The average waiting time from date of first hearing to date of disposal was 13 weeks (12 weeks in 2018).

Table E.11: Average waiting times in weeks for youth defendants disposed of in the youth courts in 2019

	Summons/ charge to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)	Summons to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	3.2	8.0	8.4	11.6
Armagh	-	-	-	-
Ballymena	3.8	10.9	14.2	18.0
Banbridge@Newry	2.1	3.1	3.1	5.1
Belfast	3.3	8.2	13.1	16.4
Coleraine	3.3	5.1	8.4	11.8
Craigavon	4.7	9.6	12.4	17.1
Downpatrick	1.3	13.8	17.0	18.3
Dungannon	4.1	7.3	11.7	15.8
Enniskillen	4.3	7.9	10.5	14.8
Limavady	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	4.0	14.8	19.8	23.8
Londonderry	3.0	7.4	12.9	15.9
Magherafelt	8.9	4.5	4.9	13.8
Newry	3.9	7.0	10.6	14.5
Newtownards	3.4	8.7	13.0	16.4
Omagh	4.3	6.0	9.0	13.3
Strabane	3.9	8.3	8.9	12.8
Total	3.6	8.6	12.8	16.4

Arrest warrants, adjourned generally, deferred sentences and youth monitored cases are excluded.

Section 4: Civil & Family business disposed of

There were 3,773 applications disposed of during 2019 (Table E.12). This represents a 6% decrease from 3,999 applications disposed of in 2018.

Table E.12: Number of civil & family applications disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2019

	Total
Antrim	88
Armagh	82
Ballymena	200
Banbridge@Newry	42
Belfast	1431
Coleraine	158
Craigavon	87
Downpatrick	108
Dungannon	95
Enniskillen	64
Limavady	15
Lisburn	263
Londonderry	303
Magherafelt	17
Newry	245
Newtownards	424
Omagh	52
Strabane	99
Total	3773

Table E.13 shows the average waiting time in Northern Ireland in the civil and family magistrates' court from the date of issue to first hearing was 2 weeks (also 2 weeks in 2018). The average waiting time from the date of first hearing to disposal was 9 weeks. This was 7 weeks in 2018. The average waiting time from date of issue to disposal was 11 weeks, compared to 9 weeks in 2018.

Table E.13: Average waiting times in weeks in the civil and family magistrates' courts in 2019

	Date of issue to first hearing (weeks)	Date of first hearing to disposal (weeks)	Date of issue to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	1.4	5.6	6.9
Armagh	1.7	6.9	8.4
Ballymena	1.3	8.1	9.4
Banbridge@Newry	1.2	3.4	4.6
Belfast	2.0	8.7	10.7
Coleraine	2.0	6.8	8.8
Craigavon	2.3	8.5	10.8
Downpatrick	2.0	15.4	17.4
Dungannon	1.6	3.6	5.2
Enniskillen	1.7	7.7	9.4
Limavady	1.6	3.0	4.5
Lisburn	1.2	7.6	8.8
Londonderry	2.9	11.9	14.8
Magherafelt	1.6	2.0	3.6
Newry	2.0	6.9	8.9
Newtownards	2.0	9.5	11.5
Omagh	2.2	14.0	16.3
Strabane	1.5	8.3	9.8
Total	1.9	8.6	10.6

There were 3,426 applications under the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Order disposed of in 2019 (Table E.14), a 10% decrease from the 3,798 disposed of in 2018. The majority of applications were granted (58%) in 2019 a similar proportion as the previous year (59%).

Table E.14: Outcome of applications under the Family Homes & Domestic Violence Order in 2019

	Granted	Dismissed or refused	Withdrawn	Vary discharge	Other	Total
Non molestation	1963	469	467	458	8	3365
Occupation	10	7	20	2	-	39
Vary / Discharge non- molestation	2	8	5	3	1	19
Other Family Homes & Domestic Violence	-	1	2	-	-	3
Total	1975	485	494	463	9	3426

Section 5: Court sittings and court sitting times

Tables E.15 and E.16 show the number of scheduled, additional and special court sittings and court sitting times in the magistrates' court in 2019. There were 3,873 scheduled and additional court sittings in the magistrates' court, a decrease of 1% from 3,903 scheduled and additional court sittings in 2018. The average court sitting time was 3 hours 39 minutes, a slightly lower sitting time than in 2018, which was 3 hours 42 minutes. There were 207 special criminal court sittings in 2019, with an average sitting time of 38 minutes, compared to 211 special sittings also with an average sitting time of 38 minutes in 2018.

Table E.15: Scheduled and additional sittings and average sitting times in the magistrates' courts by venue in 2019 (hrs: mins)

	Adult		Youth		Civil & Family		Total number of sittings	
	Number of sittings	Average sitting time	Number of sittings	Average sitting time	Number of sittings	Average sitting time	Number of sittings	Average sitting time
Antrim	72	4:30	11	4:09	19	3:27	102	4:16
Armagh	73	4:17	-	-	2	2:50	75	4:15
Ballymena	90	4:42	11	4:08	42	3:12	143	4:13
Banbridge@Newry	57	3:09	-	-	2	0:20	59	3:03
Belfast	806	3:18	101	3:13	247	3:50	1154	3:24
Coleraine	136	4:29	19	2:45	33	5:03	188	4:25
Craigavon	129	4:45	20	3:13	46	2:43	195	4:07
Downpatrick	98	3:35	-	-	-	-	98	3:35
Dungannon	139	4:13	17	4:05	30	4:21	186	4:14
Enniskillen	104	4:34	20	3:58	4	3:09	128	4:25
Limavady	51	3:10	-	-	-	-	51	3:10
Lisburn	149	4:12	21	2:13	63	3:29	233	3:49
Londonderry	257	3:37	9	3:18	108	3:24	374	3:33
Magherafelt	44	4:55	-	-	2	0:45	46	4:44
Newry	132	2:58	12	2:14	73	3:37	217	3:09
Newtownards	210	3:22	35	2:25	137	3:58	382	3:30
Omagh	86	3:24	12	0:48	35	1:44	133	2:43
Royal Courts of Justice	2	0:35	-	-	2	0:28	4	0:31
Strabane	95	3:07	9	2:59	1	4:00	105	3:07
Total	2730	3:43	297	3:03	846	3:36	3873	3:39

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. Days are classified based on the earliest scheduled sitting, except when the start time for two or more sittings is the same, in which case the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken.

Table E.16: Special sittings and average sitting times in the magistrates' courts by venue in 2019 (hrs: mins)

	Adult Criminal	
	Number of sittings	Average sitting time
Antrim	-	-
Armagh	-	-
Ballymena	41	0:26
Banbridge@Newry	-	-
Belfast	-	-
Coleraine	-	-
Craigavon	1	1:00
Downpatrick	-	-
Dungannon	-	-
Enniskillen	-	-
Limavady	-	-
Lisburn	35	0:35
Londonderry	35	0:42
Magherafelt	-	-
Newry	26	0:37
Newtownards	38	0:33
Omagh	31	1:03
Strabane	-	-
Total	207	0:38

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. Days are classified based on the earliest scheduled sitting, except when the start time for two or more sittings is the same, in which case the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken.

Part F: The Children Order

The primary aim of the Children Order is to promote the welfare of children. The Order creates a clear, practical and consistent code of law governing the care, protection and upbringing of children and the provision of services to them and their families. It confers concurrent jurisdiction on all three tiers of the courts (High Court, county courts and magistrates' courts) so that subject to certain limited exceptions, any court can make any of the orders available under the Order. Under the Order the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration. When dealing with children, courts try to ensure that delay is avoided, and may only make an order if to do so is better than making no order at all.

All Children Order matters are dealt with at Family Proceedings Courts (which are part of the magistrates' courts), at Family Care Centres (which are part of the county courts) or in the Family Division (Office of Care & Protection) of the High Court. Matters affecting children are split into public and private law applications;

Public Law applications: are those brought by local authorities and include matters such as care, supervision and emergency protection orders.

Private Law applications: are those brought by private individuals, generally in connection with divorce or the parents' separation. Order types include parental responsibility, residence, financial provision and article 8 contact applications.

Key facts

- Applications lodged increased by 4% between 2015 and 2017 before decreasing by 8% between 2017 and 2018, and a further 7% between 2018 and 2019. The applications lodged declined by 11% overall between 2015 and 2019.
- Applications disposed generally decreased between 2015 and 2019, apart from a small increase of 1% in 2018. Between 2015 and 2019 applications disposed decreased by 13%.
- The number of children involved also generally decreased between 2015 and 2019, with an overall decrease of 16%.
- **A change in the counting methodology for orders made was introduced in 2016, and therefore a comparison of figures in tables F.4, F.5 and F.6 with previous Judicial Statistics publications prior to 2015 should not be made. A back series of data based on the new counting methodology is available via the following link:**
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>
For more information please see details on page 18 or alternatively contact the statistician responsible for this publication.
- Own motion orders made decreased by 7% from 1,122 in 2018 to 1,047 in 2019. Interim orders increased by 1% from 9,198 in 2018 to 9,274 in 2019, and final orders decreased by 7% from 6,999 in 2018 to 6,532 in 2019. The increase in interim orders was mainly due to the increase in interim care orders made.
- The number of court sitting days increased each year between 2015 and 2018, before decreasing by 4% in 2019. There was an overall increase of 4% between 2015 and 2019.
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2018:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 13: Children Order 2015 to 2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Applications lodged	5,223	5,332	5,443	5,000	4,654
Applications disposed	5,140	4,954	4,702	4,770	4,472
Children involved ^[1]	7,686	7,349	6,935	7,174	6,418
Number of court sitting days	1,936	1,953	1,970	2,110	2,019

^[1] In 2012, there was a change in measurement of children involved to include children entered as 'respondent child' on ICOS. In 2015 this accounted for 815 children, in 2016 this accounted for 765 children of the total, in 2017 this accounted for 734 children of the total, in 2018 this accounted for 854 children of the total and in 2019 this accounted for 740 children of the total.

Children Order – 2019 Data

Section 1: Applications entered and disposed of

Tables F.1 and F.2, show that a total of 4,654 applications were received in designated courts in 2019. This was a decrease of 7% from 5,000 in 2018. The majority of business (89%) was lodged in family proceedings courts, with 4% lodged in the High Court and 6% lodged in family care centres. In 2018, 91% of business was lodged in family proceedings courts, 3% in the High Court and 5% lodged in family care centres.

Of the 4,472 applications disposed of in 2019, the family proceedings court accounted for 80% of all business dealt with, the High Court accounted for 4% and family care centres accounted for 15%. In 2018, 81% of business was dealt with in the family proceedings court, while the High Court accounted for 4% and family care centres accounted for 16%. The total number of applications disposed of in 2019 decreased by 6% compared with 2018 (4,770).

Table F.1: Applications received and disposed of in 2019

		Number of applications received	Number of disposals
Public Law^[1]	Family Proceedings Court	687	384
	Family Care Centre	93	229
	High Court	39	107
	Total	819	720
Private Law^[2]	Family Proceedings Court	3473	3212
	Family Care Centre	208	452
	High Court	154	88
	Total	3835	3752

^[1]Public law = care, supervision, child assessment, education supervision, emergency protection orders, extensions, contact with children in care, secure accommodation.

^[2]Private law = residence, contact, specific issues, prohibited steps, parental responsibility, financial contribution, guardianship, family assistance, non-molestation and occupation orders.

Table F.2: Applications received and disposed of by venue in 2019

		Public Law ^[1]		Private Law ^[2]	
		Number of applications entered	Number of disposals	Number of applications entered	Number of disposals
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	12	6	41	33
	Armagh	-	-	5	4
	Ballymena	54	20	271	259
	Belfast	169	100	988	1050
	Coleraine	15	6	85	67
	Craigavon	45	34	166	132
	Downpatrick	-	-	1	-
	Dungannon	36	20	116	69
	Enniskillen	-	-	9	4
	Limavady	-	-	3	2
	Lisburn	53	23	348	274
	Londonderry	70	44	327	294
	Magherafelt	-	-	2	1
	Newry	52	41	358	344
	Newtownards	118	59	631	606
	Omagh	63	31	119	72
	Strabane	-	-	3	1
	Venue total	687	384	3473	3212
Family Care Centre	Belfast	66	129	117	278
	Coleraine	-	-	-	-
	Craigavon	21	53	77	83
	Dungannon	2	20	7	52
	Londonderry	4	27	7	39
	Venue total	93	229	208	452
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	39	107	154	88
	Venue total	39	107	154	88
Northern Ireland		819	720	3835	3752

^[1] Public law = care, supervision, child assessment, education supervision, emergency protection orders, extensions, contact with children in care, secure accommodation.

^[2] Private law = residence, contact, specific issues, prohibited steps, parental responsibility, financial contribution, guardianship, family assistance, non-molestation and occupation orders.

Section 2: Reasons for transfer

Complexity accounted for 73% of the reasons quoted for the transfer of cases between courts in 2019 (Table F.3) – the same as in 2018 when 680 out of 927 transfers were recorded.

Table F.3: Reasons for transfer in 2019

	Complexity	Consolidation	Convenience	Gravity	Jurisdiction	Returned to Lower Court	Separate Representation for Child	Urgency	Point of Law	Public Interest	Other	Total
Family Proceedings	475	59	18	14	73	-	-	5	2	-	-	646
Family Care Centre	97	10	1	-	17	5	-	-	3	-	-	133
High Court	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Northern Ireland	572	69	19	14	90	9	-	5	5	-	-	783

Where a court tier / venue is omitted, this indicates a nil return for the period to date.

There may be more than one reason for each case.

From April 2009 data collection methods for transfers changed to incorporate a wider range of reasons.

Section 3: Own motion orders and interim orders

There were 1,047 own motion orders granted in 2019 based on the new methodology of counting orders at the application level. This was a decrease of 7% when comparing with figures for 2018 (based on the new methodology) when 1,122 own motion orders were granted at the application level. To view the back series of orders data using the new methodology please click on the link below Table F.4. Appointment of Guardian ad Litem accounted for 26% and care orders accounted for 15% of orders made while Article 8 Contact orders accounted for 15% and residence orders counted for 12% of own motion orders in 2019 (Table F.4).

Table F.4: Own motion orders granted in 2019 (application level)

	Own motion orders
Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	277
Article 8 Contact	162
Care	162
Child Assessment	10
Contact with a child in care	-
Declaration of Parentage	-
Education Supervision	2
Emergency Protection	6
Extension of Emergency Protection Order	-
Family Assistance	-
Non-Molestation Order	-
Occupation Articles	-
Other orders, applications etc	200
Parental Responsibility	8
Prohibited Steps	37
Recovery	2
Residence	130
Secure Accommodation	8
Specific Issues	38
Supervision	5
Total	1047

These figures may also include some interim orders.

Please note that a new methodology to count orders at the **application level** was introduced. For more information please see page 18 of this publication. Comparisons with previous Judicial Statistics Publications should not be made. A back series of data using the new counting methodology is available at the following location:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

There were 9,274 interim orders made during 2019, which was an increase of less than one per cent on the previous year (9,198) based on the new methodology of counting orders at the application level, 55% were interim care orders and 36% were interim/short term Article 8 Contact orders (Table F.5). To view the back series of orders data using the new methodology please click on the link below Table F.5.

Table F.5: Interim orders granted in 2019 (application level)

	Interim orders
Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	-
Article 8 Contact	3382
Care	5087
Child Assessment	-
Contact with a child in care	-
Contact with a child in care - refusal	-
Contribution and other Financial	-
Education Supervision	-
Emergency Protection	-
Extension of Emergency Protection Order	-
Family Assistance	-
Financial Provision	-
Non-Molestation Order	1
Occupation Articles	-
Other orders, applications etc	-
Parental Responsibility	5
Prohibited Steps	124
Recovery	-
Residence	427
Secure Accommodation	155
Specific Issues	18
Supervision	75
Total	9274

Please note that a new methodology to count orders at the **application level** was introduced. For more information please see page 18 of this publication. Comparisons with previous Judicial Statistics Publications should not be made. A back series of data using the new counting methodology is available at the following location:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

Section 4: Final Orders Made

There were 6,532 final orders made in 2019, a decrease of 7% from 6,999 in 2018 based on the new methodology of counting orders at the application level (Table F.6). In 2019, Article 8 Contact orders accounted for 23% and residence orders 13%. To view the back series of orders data using the new methodology please click on the link below Table F.6.

Table F.6: Final Orders Made – 2019 (application level)

Adjourn Generally	10
Article 3 Legal Aid granted	520
Article 8 Contact	1527
Care Order	304
Contact with a child in care	32
Contact with a child in care - refusal	1
Declaration of Parentage	25
Discharge Emergency Protection Order	1
Discharge of a Care Order	44
Discharge of a Contact Order	34
Discharge Interim Contact Order	31
Discharge Prohibited Steps Order	13
Discharge Residence Order	16
Dismissed	282
Education Supervision	22
Emergency Protection Order	59
Emergency Protection Order – out of hours	4
Extension of an Emergency Protection Order	17
Family Assistance Order	10
Financial Provision	9
Leave to assist/arrange for child to live abroad	13
Leave to change surname by which the child is known	6
Non-molestation order	3
Order of No Order (Final Order)	59
Other Order	1033
Parental Responsibility Order	118
Prohibited steps	126
Recovery of a child	7
Refusal of Article 3 Legal Aid Certificate	17
Residence Order	863
Residence and Contact Order	9
Secure Accommodation Order	27
Specific Issues	242
Strike Out Order	94
Supervision Order	87
Terminating Appointment of Guardian Ad Litem	312
Withdrawn	555
Total	6532

NB C18 Final Orders were removed as an order on ICOS in September 2009.

Please note that a new methodology to count orders at the **application level** was introduced. For more information please see page 18 of this publication. Comparisons with previous Judicial Statistics Publications should not be made. A back series of data using the new counting methodology is available at the following location:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

Section 5: Age and gender of children

There were a total of 6,418 children involved in Children Order cases during 2019. In total, 34% of these were aged 0-4 and 31% were aged 5-8 (Table F.7).

Table F.7: Age and gender of children in applications disposed of in 2019

	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	Total
Male	1095	969	789	370	3223
Female	1075	988	715	394	3172
Unknown	16	2	3	2	23
Total ^[1]	2186	1959	1507	766	6418

^[1] In 2012, there was a change in measurement of children involved to include children entered as 'respondent child' on ICOS. In 2019 this accounted for 740 children of the total.

Section 6: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue

The average disposal times for private law cases in 2019 was 39 weeks in the High Court, 59 weeks in the family care centres and 21 weeks in the family proceedings courts. In 2018, the corresponding average disposal times were 33 weeks in the High Court, 53 weeks in family care centres and 22 weeks in the family proceedings courts. Disposal times of cases in the High Court and the family care centres will include the time spent at the lower courts if cases were transferred (Table F.8).

Table F.8: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue in 2019

		Public law		Private law	
		Average time weeks	Number of cases	Average time weeks	Number of cases
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	12.2	6	26.2	33
	Armagh	-	-	2.6	4
	Ballymena	49.9	20	25.9	259
	Belfast	26.6	100	20.2	1050
	Coleraine	51.9	6	41.4	67
	Craigavon	33.5	34	18.5	132
	Downpatrick	-	-	-	-
	Dungannon	18.7	20	14.1	69
	Enniskillen	-	-	0.0	4
	Limavady	-	-	0.0	2
	Lisburn	27.2	23	18.3	274
	Londonderry	26.6	44	20.6	294
	Magherafelt	-	-	0.0	1
	Newry	28.6	41	17.4	344
	Newtownards	30.8	59	23.0	606
	Omagh	22.6	31	13.8	72
	Strabane	-	-	0.0	1
Total	28.8	384	20.8	3212	
Family Care Centre	Belfast	64.6	129	61.6	278
	Coleraine	-	-	-	-
	Craigavon	63.5	53	49.1	83
	Dungannon	54.3	20	54.3	52
	Londonderry	57.3	27	62.1	39
	Total	62.6	229	58.5	452
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	82.1	107	39.2	88
	Total	82.1	107	39.2	88
Northern Ireland		47.5	720	25.8	3752

The time shown will include the time taken at the first court tier.

Section 7: Court sittings and court sitting times

Table F.9 shows the number of sittings where any Children Order business was heard in court. During 2019, the family proceedings courts sat for over 2,899 hours, a decrease of 3% on the 3,000 hours in 2018. This was 53% of the total court sitting time for the Children Order in 2019 (53% in 2018).

Table F.9: Court sittings and court sitting times in 2019 (hrs : mins)

		Total court sitting time	Average Children Order court sitting time	Number of court sittings
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	81:12	3:00	27
	Ballymena	131:17	2:34	51
	Banbridge@Newry	0:30	0:30	1
	Belfast	814:00	3:47	215
	Coleraine	206:10	4:55	42
	Craigavon	139:24	3:02	46
	Downpatrick	-	-	-
	Dungannon	159:14	3:47	42
	Enniskillen	0:55	0:11	5
	Limavady	0:20	0:10	2
	Lisburn	196:38	3:27	57
	Londonderry	355:42	3:25	104
	Newry	247:09	3:32	70
	Newtownards	505:55	3:47	134
	Omagh	60:40	1:44	35
	Strabane	0:05	0:05	1
Venue total	2899:11	3:29	832	
Family Care Centre	Belfast	1287:27	3:29	369
	Coleraine	2:17	2:17	1
	Craigavon	216:38	2:17	95
	Dungannon	106:52	2:53	37
	Londonderry	115:12	2:16	51
	Newry	4:10	4:10	1
	Omagh	82:15	4:07	20
	Venue total	1814:51	3:10	574
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	714:09	1:10	613
	Venue total	714:09	1:10	613
Northern Ireland		5428:11	2:41	2019

A court sitting 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.

Children Order sittings refer to a sitting where any Children Order business is heard. Total Children Order time includes all time spent on Children Order business.

High Court Judges, county court judges and district judges (magistrates' court) sit on Children Order business.

Part G: Miscellaneous

The Enforcement of Judgments Office

The Enforcement of Judgments Office (EJO) is essentially a centralised unit for enforcing judgments of the courts. The EJO's powers and procedures are contained in the Judgments Enforcement (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, and Judgment Enforcement Rules (Northern Ireland) 1981. The EJO also enforces other types of civil judgments such as those that are connected with the possession of land and property.

Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners

Social Security Commissioners hear appeals from Appeal Tribunals in relation to matters arising under the social security system. Child Support Commissioners hear appeals from Child Support Appeal Tribunals.

Pensions Appeal Tribunal

This Tribunal hears appeals from ex-servicemen or women who have had their claims for a War Pension rejected by the Secretary of State for Defence. Its jurisdiction covers Northern Ireland. The Tribunal is independent from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency. Hearings have been in existence, as part of the Lord Chancellor's responsibility, since the War Pensions Act 1919.

The War Pensions Scheme started in 1918 and continues in respect of injuries that occurred before 5 April 2005. For injuries after 5 April 2005 a new Scheme, the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme applies. The Tribunal deals with appeals for both Schemes.

The War Pensions Scheme

- Whether a person is entitled to a War Pension;
- The percentage at which the War Pensions Agency has assessed a person's disablement; or
- Whether a person is entitled to an allowance e.g. for mobility needs.

Or

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

- Whether a person is entitled to an award; or
- The amount of the award.

These Tribunals deal with appeals against certain decisions the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency have made on War Disablement Pensions. A Tribunal normally consists of three members – a qualified lawyer, a qualified medical practitioner and a member who served in the armed forces. **It is independent of the Government and, in particular, the Ministry of Defence.** The law about rights to appeal is set out in the Pensions Appeal Tribunals Acts 1943 and 1949 (as amended), known as 'the Acts' and in the Armed Forces (Pensions and Compensation) Act 2004. You can appeal to the Tribunal against certain decisions taken by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency. The decisions you can appeal against are set out in the Acts.

In general terms, Pensions Appeal Tribunals hear appeals under both the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and the War Pensions Scheme. The War Pensions Scheme has three main types of appeals- “entitlement appeals”, “assessment appeals” and “specified decision appeals”.

What is an entitlement appeal?

An entitlement appeal is concerned with whether a person qualifies for a pension. For example, an entitlement appeal might decide whether or not your (or your late husband’s or wife’s) medical condition was caused, or made worse, by service in the armed forces or the merchant navy.

What is an assessment appeal?

An assessment appeal is about the percentage of disablement caused or made worse by service. This affects the amount, if any, of War Disablement Pension which might be paid but the Pensions Appeal Tribunal does not itself make decisions about the amount of money to be paid.

What is a specified decision appeal?

A specified decision appeal is concerned with entitlement to various allowances, supplements, extra pensions, awards, expenses, maintenance, deductions and payments. In this publication we cannot set out every specified decision, but a complete list is given in the Pensions Appeal Tribunals (Additional Rights of Appeal) Regulations 2001 (S.I.2001 No. 1031).

Coroners

Coroners are independent judicial officers who are available to deal with matters relating to deaths that may require further investigation to establish the cause of death.

Coroners in Northern Ireland can either be barristers or solicitors and are appointed by the Lord Chancellor.

What do Coroners do?

Coroners inquire into deaths reported to them that appear to be:

- unexpected or unexplained,
- as a result of violence,
- an accident,
- as a result of negligence,
- from any cause other than natural illness or disease, or
- in circumstances that require investigation.

The Coroner will seek to establish the cause of death and will make whatever inquiries are necessary to do this e.g. ordering a postmortem examination, obtaining witness statements and medical records, or holding an inquest.

The Coroners Service is headed by a High Court Judge and there are three Coroners. In addition, there are twelve salaried judges who hold the role of coroner concurrently with their other judicial post.

Key facts

- The number of notices of intention to enforce lodged and the number of applications for enforcement accepted both decreased over the last 5 years. Between 2015 and 2016, notices of intention to enforce lodged decreased by 25% before increasing by 29% between 2016 and 2018. The number of notices of intention to enforce lodged between 2018 and 2019 then decreased by 27%. Applications for enforcement accepted decreased by 45% between 2015 and 2016, before increasing by 8% between 2016 and 2019. Across the five years notices of intention to enforce lodged and applications for enforcement accepted, decreased by 29% and 40% respectively.
- The number of applications for leave to appeal to the Social Security Commissioners lodged and the number cleared have generally decreased over the last five years. The number lodged decreased by 31% overall between 2015 and 2019 and the number cleared decreased by 16% overall.
- The number of appeals to Social Security Commissioners lodged increased by 5% and the number cleared increased by 17% in the last five years, with appeals lodged at their highest levels in 2019 and appeals cleared peaking in 2016.
- The number of inquests held relating to the Coroners Service for Northern Ireland fluctuated between 2015 and 2019, with an overall increase of 11%, between 2015 and 2019.

Summary Table 14: Enforcement of Judgments Office, Social Security Commissioners, Pension Appeal Tribunals and Coroners 2015 to 2019

		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EJO	Notices of Intention to enforce lodged	10,184	7,682	11,205	9,933	7,260
	Applications for enforcement accepted	6,623	3,675	5,987	4,952	3,961
	Repossessions Completed ^[1]	646	465	337	353	350
Social Security Commissioners	Leave to appeal to Commissioners lodged	163	132	126	137	112
	Leave to appeal to Commissioners cleared	152	165	126	103	127
	Appeals to Commissioners lodged	79	81	76	77	83
	Appeals to Commissioners cleared	77	92	79	66	90
Pension Appeal Tribunals^[2]	Entitlement Appeals lodged	49	46	39	57	43
	Entitlement Appeals cleared	33	47	46	41	51
	Assessment Appeals lodged	50	64	56	72	37
	Assessment Appeals cleared	47	52	59	58	46
	Specified Decision Appeals lodged	9	12	3	6	8
	Specified Decision Appeals cleared	8	9	8	5	7
	Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Appeals lodged	14	21	16	20	38
	Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Appeals cleared	8	6	16	20	25
Coroners	Number of deaths reported	3,954	4,025	4,089	4,119	4,433
	Number of inquests held	93	120	130	100	103
	No inquest with post mortem	1,171	1,011	1,081	1,116	1,142
	No inquest and no post mortem	2,004	2,297	2,311	2,386	2,542
	Other disposals of registered entries	669	555	594	489	461

^[1]Figures for Repossessions Completed from 2007 to 2012 have been revised due to the removal of duplicate records identified within the dataset. The changes to the figures have been slight and in accordance with our revisions policy these have been updated and marked as having been revised. (Repossessions were previously referred to as evictions).

For more information on our revisions policy click here:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-statistics-and-research-useful-documents>

A back series of revised figures can be viewed by clicking here:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

^[2]NICTS took over responsibility for Pension Appeal Tribunals in 2007.

Miscellaneous – 2019 Data

Section 1: Enforcement of Judgments Office

Since the early 1970s, the task of enforcing civil judgments in Northern Ireland has been simplified by the creation of the Enforcement of Judgments Office (EJO), which operates under the supervision of the Master (Enforcement of Judgments), assisted by the Chief Enforcement Officer. In 2019, 7,260 notices of intention to enforce were lodged and 3,961 applications for enforcement were accepted (Table G.1), a decrease of 27% from 9,933 and a decrease of 20% from 4,952 respectively in 2018.

Table G.1: Enforcement orders made and applications for enforcement in 2019

Method of search	
By EJO staff	191
On-line (by customers)	71338
Notices of intention:	
Notices Issued	7260
Applications for enforcement:	
Applications accepted	3961
Types of application	
Article 23 discovery	157
Money judgment	3200
Possession judgment	577
Possession of Goods	27
Total	3961

Table G.2 shows the 'Debt Ratio' which is the amount of debt recovered for every £1 paid in enforcement fees. In 2019, this was £10.47 whereas in 2018 this was £6.08.

Table G.2: Money judgments and debt ratio in 2019

Original debt lodged	£7,418,875.25
EJO fees paid	£884,053.88
Total debt registered	£8,302,929.13
Total debt recovered^[1]	£9,255,959.36
% of debt recovered	111%
Debt ratio	£10.47

^[1]Creditors by law have to inform the EJO of any payments made by debtors on account or in satisfaction of a debt. EJO record the amount of debt that has been reduced by the enforcement process including payments received direct from debtors. The variance between the amount recovered in 2019 compared to 2018 is primarily due to work ongoing with Land and Property Services to update EJO of payments made to them by debtors during the year.

A possession file is deemed 'completed' when –

- A repossession takes place.
- The creditor withdraws their application.
- An official arrangement between the creditor and debtor is made (these cases may be re-activated if the arrangement breaks down).

Table G.3 shows that during 2019, 579 cases were completed. This represents a decrease of 7% from the 2018 figure of 621, with repossessions decreasing by less than one per cent over the last year, from 353 in 2018 to 350 in 2019.

Table G.3 Possession judgments in 2019

Repossessions completed^[2]	350
Cases withdrawn	60
Arrangement in place (case held)	169
Total	579

^[2] Repossessions completed were previously referred to as evictions completed

Section 2: Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners and Pension Appeals Tribunals

There were 112 applications for leave to appeal to the Social Security Commissioners lodged during 2019, 25 less than the 137 lodged during 2018. There were 127 applications for leave cleared in 2019 compared with 103 cleared during 2018 (Table G.4).

Table G.4: Social Security Commissioners' applications for leave to appeal to the Commissioners in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	112	1	126	127

The number of appeals to the Commissioners lodged increased from 77 in 2018 to 83 in 2019. In total, 90 were cleared in 2019 compared with 66 in 2018 (Table G.5).

Table G.5: Social Security Commissioners' appeals to the Commissioners in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	83	20	70	90

Table G.6 shows the number of applications to the Commissioners for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 2019.

Table G.6: Social Security Commissioners' Applications to the Commissioners for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	-	-	-	-

Tables G.7 to G.13 show the caseload of Pensions Appeal Tribunals in 2019. 51 entitlement appeals and 46 assessment appeals were dealt with in 2019. Corresponding figures for 2018 were 41 and 58 respectively. The majority of assessment appeals (80%) were dealt with after a hearing, compared to 72% in 2018.

Table G.7: Pensions Appeal Tribunals entitlement appeals in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	43	33	18	51

Table G.8: Pensions Appeal Tribunals assessment appeals in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	37	37	9	46

Table G.9: Pensions Appeal Tribunals specified decision appeals in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	8	5	2	7

Table G.10: Pensions Appeal Tribunals armed forces compensation scheme appeals in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	38	7	18	25

Table G.11: Pensions Appeal Tribunals late appeals in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	5	-	1	1

Table G.12: Pensions Appeal Tribunals jurisdiction appeals in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	2	1	1	2

Table G.13: Pensions Appeal Tribunals leave to appeal applications in 2019

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2019	-	-	-	-

Section 3: Coroners Service for Northern Ireland

Table G.14 shows the Coroners' caseload for 2019. There was an increase of 8% in the number of deaths reported to the Coroner between 2018 and 2019 (4,433 in 2019 compared to 4,119 in 2018). The number of inquests increased from 100 in 2018 to 103 in 2019.

Table G.14: Coroners' caseload in 2019

Number of deaths reported	4433
Number of inquests held	103
No inquest with post mortem	1142
No inquest and no post mortem	2542
Other disposals of registered entries	461

Appendix 1: Judge court sitting days

Judge type	Business area ^[1]	Sitting days
High Court Judge	Crown	155
	Queen's Bench	445
	Children Order	297
	Other Family	71
	Appeals	21
	Chancery	225
	Bails	346
	Callover	-
	Judicial Reviews	228
	Court of Appeal - Civil	136
	Court of Appeal - Criminal	89
Total		2013
County Court Judge	Crown Court	2148
	County court judge day	1246
District Judge	County court judge day	210
	District judge day	557
Deputy District Judge	District judge day	17
Deputy County Court Judge	County court judge day	125 ^[2]
Total		4303
District Judge (Magistrates' Court)	Criminal	2937
	Youth	297
	Civil/Family	846
Total		4080
Social Security Commissioners	Oral hearings	16
Total		16
Total number of sitting days		10412

^[1]Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken, except for the Magistrates' court. In the Magistrates' court, days are classified based on the earliest scheduled sitting, except when the start time for two or more sittings is the same, in which case the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken.

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.

^[2]Includes 80 days when a Deputy County Court Judge sat on Crown Court Business.

Glossary of terms

Adjourn Generally

A putting off or postponing of proceedings.

Acquittal

A judgement or verdict that a person is not guilty of the crime with which they have been charged.

Additional sitting

These are additional court sittings, not included within the regular court calendar, but planned in advance of the date of the sitting.

Adult Magistrates' Business

Magistrates' court criminal business in which the defendant is aged 18 years or over on the date on which they committed the offence.

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.

Ancillary application

An additional application made in existing proceedings.

Ancillary relief application

During or after a divorce, the annulment of a marriage (nullity) or judicial separation, there may still be a need for the court to settle disputes over money or property. The court can make a financial order. This is known as ancillary relief and may deal with the sale or transfer of property, maintenance payments (for example weekly or monthly maintenance), a lump sum payment and/or a pension sharing or attachment order.

Application

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

Application for leave to apply for judicial review

The first step in the judicial review procedure involves the mandatory 'leave stage'. At this stage an application for leave to bring judicial review proceedings must first be made. The leave stage is used to identify and filter out, at an early stage, claims which may be trivial or without merit.

Appointment of Guardian ad Litem

Appointment of a guardian by the court - The High Court or a county court may appoint an individual to be a child's guardian if the child has no parent with parental responsibility for him or a residence order has been made with respect to the child in favour of a parent or guardian of his who has died while the order was in force. A person appointed as a guardian under this Article shall have parental responsibility for the child.

Arraignment

The procedure by which the defendant has criminal charges formally put to him before the judge at the Crown Court and he enters his plea of guilty or not guilty.

Article 53 Contact with a child in care

Where a child is in care of an authority, the authority shall (subject to the provisions of this article) allow the child reasonable contact with: (a) parents; (b) any guardian; (c) persons named in residence orders made immediately prior to the child being placed in care; and (d) persons who had care of the child by virtue of an order made in the exercise of the High Court's inherent jurisdiction immediately before the care order was made.

Article 8 Contact

Relates to Article 8 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. A 'contact order' means an order requiring the person with whom a person lives, or is to live, to allow the child to visit or stay with a person named in the order, or for that person and the child to have contact with each other.

Bail variation

A change in the conditions of bail.

Call-over

An occasion in court where dates for all the cases in the next few months are fixed. It is important for the parties or their lawyers to attend the call-over.

Care Order

A care order places a child in the care of a designated authority. A court may only make a care order if it is satisfied the child is suffering or at risk of harm etc.

Case

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

Child Assessment

Application by an authority to request an order to authorise an assessment of a child's circumstances.

Certificate of automatic discharge (Bankruptcy)

A document certifying the period of bankruptcy is at an end

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 cases is ready to heard and can therefore be listed by the court for hearing.

Charge sheet

A charge sheet is a method by which PSNI can put charge(s) to a defendant and on which they will either release the defendant on police bail to appear at court within 28 days of the charging or they can detain the defendant in custody to produce them before a court at the earliest opportunity.

Civil and Family application

These are applications in relation to Children Order, domestic and family homes and domestic violence proceedings.

Commercial actions

The definition of 'commercial action' is broad and so a wide range of cases may be dealt with under those arrangements. Broadly speaking, they include any transaction or dispute of a commercial or business nature.

Committal

The procedure by which a person is returned for trial to the Crown Court by the magistrates' court, if the magistrates' court is satisfied that there is a case to answer.

Compassionate bail application

An application for bail, usually for a short period of time, for personal reasons, such as to attend a family funeral.

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 a Judge.

Court order

The enforceable decision of the court.

Creditor

A person who is owed money by a debtor.

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.

Day sat

This is a day on which a judge sat to hear court business. The information is organised into the various types of court business that a judge hears. The judge's day may consist of one or more sittings, at one or more court venues.

Declaration of Parentage order

Order made to determine parentage on foot of an application for maintenance in respect of a person who denies that he/she is a parent of the child.

Debtor

A person who owes money to a creditor.

Decree Absolute

The decree absolute is the legal document that ends your marriage. You need to wait at least 6 weeks after the date of the decree nisi before you can apply for a decree absolute.

Decree Nisi

A document that says that the court doesn't see any reason why you can't divorce.

If your husband or wife doesn't agree to the divorce, you can still apply for a decree nisi. However, you'll have to go to a hearing at the court to discuss the case, where a judge will decide whether to grant you a decree nisi.

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.

Departmental prosecution

Departmental prosecutions are for criminal offences which are investigated by a department or other non-police body and prosecuted by either the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) or a separate prosecutorial body (e.g. motor tax evasion which is prosecuted by the Department of the Environment).

Disposed

The date the 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.

Domestic proceeding (including FHDV orders, Non molestation, Occupation, Vary discharge)

These are orders made in respect of applications made under the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. These orders include non-molestation and/or occupation orders. A non-molestation order is made for the protection of the applicant and may prohibit the respondent from carrying out particular actions or behaviours and may include an exclusion zone. Occupation orders provide for the rights of the application to peacefully occupy a particular property without interference from the respondent. These orders may be varied to add or remove particular requirements and the order can also be discharged by the court bring the terms of the order to an end.

Education Supervision order

Puts the child under the supervision of a designated education and library board. The education and library board may make an application in respect of a child of compulsory school age who is not being educated properly.

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.

Emergency Protection order

Gives the applicant parental responsibility for a child under the age of 18. It authorises the removal of the child at any time to accommodation provided by or on behalf of the applicant, and being kept there. The court may make 'an emergency protection order' if it is satisfied that there is reasonable cause to believe that the child is likely to suffer significant harm.

EPA applications

Application to register an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA).

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.

Ex-parte application

An application made to a judge by a party to a case without the other parties being required to be there.

Family Assistance order

This is a short term order made by agreement, under which an authority is required to make available a suitably qualified person to advise, assist and (where appropriate) befriend any person named in the order.

Family Business

Non-criminal court proceedings generally relating to matters between a husband and wife, common-law partners, or children.

Family Care Centre

A county court which generally hears appeals from Family Proceedings Courts, or family cases which are more complex in nature.

Family Proceedings Court

A court of summary jurisdiction (constituted as a Youth Magistrates Court) which hears proceedings under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 e.g. residence, contact with children.

Family Magistrates' Business

Family business in the Magistrate's Court (the Family Proceedings Court) covers applications brought in respect of the care and welfare of children, domestic proceedings and applications for non-molestation and/or occupation orders.

Financial Provision order

An order requiring either or both parents to make periodical payments or a lump sum payment to the applicant (the person with whom the child resides) for the benefit of the child.

Finding

This is the date on which a defendant is either found guilty or not guilty of having committed the offence alleged in either the summons or charge sheet.

First hearing

This is the date on which a case first appears in court.

First listing

The date of first hearing of a case.

Fixed penalty default

This is a fixed penalty which has been issued for a minor motoring offence and which has not been paid by the payment due date and has therefore gone into default. At this stage a summons is issued to bring the matter before the court to have a Judge set the default terms for non-payment.

Foreign judgement

An Act to make provision for the enforcement in the United Kingdom of judgments given in foreign countries, which accord reciprocal treatment to judgments given in the United Kingdom, and vice versa.

Hearing

The trial of a case or preliminary issue in court.

High Court Judge (HCJ)

A judge who sits in the High Court and Crown Court to hear and determine civil, family and criminal business.

Hybrid charge

This is also referred to as a 'triable-either-way' offence. A criminal offence that may be prosecuted either summarily (in the magistrates' court) or on indictment (in the Crown Court). In the majority of cases, the prosecution decides how the offence is tried depending on the seriousness of the offence.

Indictable charge

A serious criminal offence where the defendant is usually tried in the Crown Court.

Indictable triable summarily charge

A serious criminal offence where a defendant can be tried in the Crown Court but may in some instances be tried in a magistrates' court.

Injunction

A legal order which stops someone from doing or continuing to do something, or which requires them to take certain positive action.

Interlocutory application

An application made at any time after proceedings have issued and before the final hearing. For example, a challenge to one party's refusal to give discovery, or an application for substituted service are interlocutory applications.

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'.

Judicial Review

A procedure by which someone can challenge in the High Court, the decisions or actions of:-

- A Government Department
- A public body
- The Magistrates' Court
- The County Court
- Certain tribunals

Judicial Review is only available if there is no other legal remedy.

Judicial separation

An alternative to divorce is a decree of judicial separation. This does not dissolve the marriage but absolves the parties from the obligation to live together. This procedure might, for instance, be used if religious beliefs forbid or discourage divorce.

Justice & Security Act 2007

Legislation which replaced the Terrorism Act 2000 which makes provision for non-jury trials.

Leave to change surname by which child is known

An application for leave (permission) to change a child's name without a parent's consent. The court will give permission if it believes it is in the child's best interests to allow the name change.

Licences

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

Lodge documents

Send documents to the court office.

Master

A judicial post, where the individual must have been a legal practitioner for at least 10 years. The Master determines a range of court proceedings in the High Court, and manages procedural elements of more complex cases before they are heard by a High Court judge.

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.

Monies due

Financial compensation or money owed.

Negligence

Conduct that falls below the standards of behaviour established by law for the protection of others against unreasonable risk of harm. A person has acted negligently if he or she has departed from the conduct expected of a reasonably prudent person acting under similar circumstances.

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.

Non molestation order

This order prevents a person from molesting another person with whom they have had a relationship or they are related to.

Molestation encompasses any form of serious pestering or harassment and applies to any conduct which could properly be regarded as such a degree of harassment as to call for the intervention of the court. A 'non-molestation' order may contain one or both of the following:

- (a) A provision prohibiting a person from molesting another person.
- (b) A provision prohibiting the respondent from molesting a child.

Notice of appointment

The notification of a date, time and location for a court hearing.

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 go to the court for resolution.

Notice of motion

A notification issued to one or more parties by the individual or company that has filed a motion before a court, with a date for hearing which will take place on the date stated on the notice.

No Value

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount awarded recorded on ICOS. No amount awarded can arise when a case has been settled and the value was not notified to the court or the terms of the settlement do not include a monetary value.

Nullity

A Decree of Nullity of Marriage is granted where the petitioner proves that the marriage is either void or voidable. A void marriage is one which should never have been celebrated (by reason of the relationship or incapacity of the parties and which therefore never had legal status). A voidable marriage is one which is legal but may be nullified by order of the court.

Occupation order

Occupation orders declare, confer or regulate occupation (not ownership) rights in the family home between those in certain family or domestic relationships. These orders, if combined with a non-molestation order, may be used for protective purposes. Alternatively, they may be used to declare or regulate the right of occupation in the home in cases where protection is not an issue. An occupation order is available between parties who have had a relationship or are related.

Office disposal

See 'Non court disposal'.

Order 53 Statement

The document which starts a judicial review case. It is named after Order 53 of the Rules of the Court of Judicature, which states what must be in an Order 53 Statement.

Ordinary application

See 'Application'.

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.

Originating application

The first, provisional, or primary application in a legal process.

Originating motion

A document which starts some kinds of High Court cases, described in Rules of the Court of Judicature Order 5, rule 5 and Order 8.

Originating summons

A document which starts some kinds of High Court cases, described in Rules of the Court of Judicature Order 5, rule 3 and Order 8.

Outstanding case

A case that is currently active, for example, live cases not yet disposed.

Parental Responsibility order

Outlines the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his / her property. It may also include certain rights which a guardian may exercise.

Party

The plaintiff, defendant or third or other party in a court case.

Petition

The document which starts a divorce or civil partnership dissolution case, and some other kinds of cases, described in Rules of the Court of Judicature, Order 9 and the Family Proceedings Rules.

Penalty Notice for Disorder

These are diversionary disposals aimed at dealing with minor offences, such as non-motoring offences, as a direct alternative to a prosecution before the court.

Penalty Notice for Disorder Default

This is a penalty notice for disorder which has been issued for a defined offence and which has not been paid by the payment due date and has therefore gone into default. At this stage a summons is issued to bring the matter before the court to have a Judge set the default terms for non-payment.

Plea

The response a defendant gives after criminal charges have been put to him e.g. "guilty" or "not guilty."

Proceedings

A shorthand term for all the court procedures and documents before the final court order.

Prohibited steps order

An order which prevents a parent from taking specific actions as part of their normal parental responsibilities to a child.

PSNI/PPS prosecution

These are prosecutions for criminal offences which were investigated by Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and prosecuted by Public Prosecution Service (PPS).

Received

The date papers are lodged with the court.

Recovery order

An order which generally directs the return of a child who has been taken away unlawfully; has run away or is missing. The order may permit certain actions to be taken (like entering property) to enable it to be carried out.

Remittal

The process of transferring a case to a lower court e.g. transferring a case from the High Court to the County Court.

Removal

The process of transferring a case to a higher court e.g. transferring a case from the County Court to the High Court.

Residence order

An order detailing with whom a child shall live. This is generally following the breakdown of a relationship, but can arise in other circumstances e.g. if the child's parents have died.

Revoke

To invalidate or cause to no longer be in effect, as by voiding or canceling.

Scheduled

A scheduled offence is one which is listed in Schedule 9 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and which, if it is tried on indictment, will be heard by a judge sitting without a jury. This has been replaced by the Justice and Security Act 2007.

Scheduled sitting

This is a regular court sitting that is included within the court calendar.

Secure Accommodation order

Accommodation provided for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, designed to restrict liberty.

Setting down

Telling the court office a case is ready for hearing.

Sitting

This is a period of work by a judge in a single courtroom on a single day. Several types of business may be heard at one sitting. Business heard in different courtrooms, whether at the same venue or elsewhere, is counted as separate sittings.

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. It is based in the first instance, on the earliest scheduled sitting and where the start time for 2 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.

Special sitting

These are additional unplanned court sittings, not included within the regular court calendar, that are required to hear unforeseen business, such as dealing with a defendant on a weekend or public holiday.

Specific issue order

An order which addresses a specific matter that has arisen relating to the parental responsibility of a child e.g. which school shall they attend; what religion shall they be brought up in.

Strike out order

Striking out means the court ordering written material to be deleted so that it may no longer be relied upon.

Summary charge

This is an offence which is triable in a magistrates' court.

Summons (civil)

A summons is served on a person involved in a legal proceeding and it indicates legal action may be in progress against the person, or the person's presence as witness may be required.

The summons usually announces a date by which the person or persons summoned must either appear in court, or respond in writing to the court or the opposing party or parties.

Summons (criminal)

This is the method by which a complaint is made to require a defendant to appear before a court in respect of particular charge(s). The details of the charge(s) will be contained on the summons as well as the first date and place at which the defendant is to attend court.

Supervision Order

Puts a child under the supervision of a designated authority. A supervision order may require a child:

- (i) To comply with direction given by a supervisor as regards residence, reporting and participating in activities.
- (ii) To keep the supervisor informed of any change in address and allow the supervisor to visit at the place where he is living.

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.

Unliquidated

An unliquidated sum is one for which the precise amount owed cannot be determined from the terms of the contractual agreement or another standard.

Winding up petition

An application to court seeking the liquidation of a company.

Withdrawn

An order which removes a case from court, for a variety of reasons. The court action then ceases.

Writ

A document which starts a case in the Queen's Bench Division.

Youth Magistrates' Business

Magistrates' court criminal business in which the defendant is aged between 10 and 18 years on the date on which they committed the offence.



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