

**Analytical Services Group**

# **County Court Bulletin**

**July to September 2017**

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**Provisional quarterly figures**

**R Redmond**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period July to September 2017 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2007. On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016, a single County Court Division called “The County Court of Northern Ireland” replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court Bulletin is now disaggregated by Court Office (Processing Office). During the period July to September 2017:
- There were 1,784 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 6% increase on the same quarter last year (1,685). In total, 2,304 civil bills were disposed, an increase of 21% on the number disposed during the same period in 2016 (1,911).
- 26 equity cases were received during July to September 2017, down 10% on the 29 cases received during the period July to September 2016, while 19 equity cases were disposed, a decrease of 30% on the 27 disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 289 ejectment cases were received, up 24% on the 233 cases received during July to September 2016, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 5%, from 157 in the same quarter last year to 165 this quarter.
- 3,322 small claims were received, up 33% on the 2,496 received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 5% from 2,020 during July to September 2016 to 2,130 this quarter.
- Four criminal damage cases were received, compared to eight received during the period July to September 2016. One criminal damage case was disposed during the quarter, compared to three in the same quarter last year.
- A total of 298 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, a 25% decrease on the 395 granted during the same period last year.
- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 675 sitting days during the quarter, down 13% on the 774 sitting days recorded during the period July to September 2016. Some 48% of time was spent on criminal business with 31% spent on civil business and 21% on family business (compared to 53%, 29% and 18% respectively during July to September 2016). The decrease in both the number of sitting days, and the proportion of time spent on criminal business is reflective of increased activity in the Crown Court during the same period last year, which aimed at addressing a backlog of cases arising from the legal aid dispute that commenced during May 2015 and was resolved in February 2016.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

The most common types of claim dealt with in the small claims court are:

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

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

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Data sources**

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

### **2.2 Methodology for generating data**

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

### **2.3 Baseline and Time period**

Data contained within this bulletin relate to the time series 2007, when ICOS was adopted as the source of county court data, to the current calendar year 2017.

### **2.4 Frequency of Publication**

This bulletin is published on a quarterly basis. The next bulletin will cover the fourth quarter of 2017 and will be published on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

## **2.5 Data quality and validation**

ASG statisticians based in the NICTS have invested significant time and effort creating and extensive computer programme within SPSS to validate the information downloaded from ICOS. The programme includes over 100 checks against downloaded court data to: (i) check consistency over time and between variables; (ii) assess the reliability of data using logic checks; (iii) check that variables fall within accepted ranges; and (iv) check with the ICOS Support Team in the event of any major discrepancies that have occurred since the last download. The validation program produces user friendly tables highlighting the potential problems which are circulated to each county court venue as a validation report. The NICTS statistics team then ensure that all validations relating to the reporting period are amended prior to publication. Once these amendments have been checked, SPSS syntax programming is then used to generate the tables in the publication. Data contained in this bulletin are currently provisional and will undergo further validation before being published in their final form in the 2017 edition of Judicial Statistics (published on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018).

## **2.6 Counting rules**

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

## **2.7 Interpreting trends**

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

## **2.8 Revisions**

Any revision to data will be applied in light of the ASG (NICTS) Statistical Note ‘Policy Statement on Revisions’ which can be found on the Statistics and Research page of the Services section on the NICTS website ([www.courtsni.gov.uk](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk)). Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

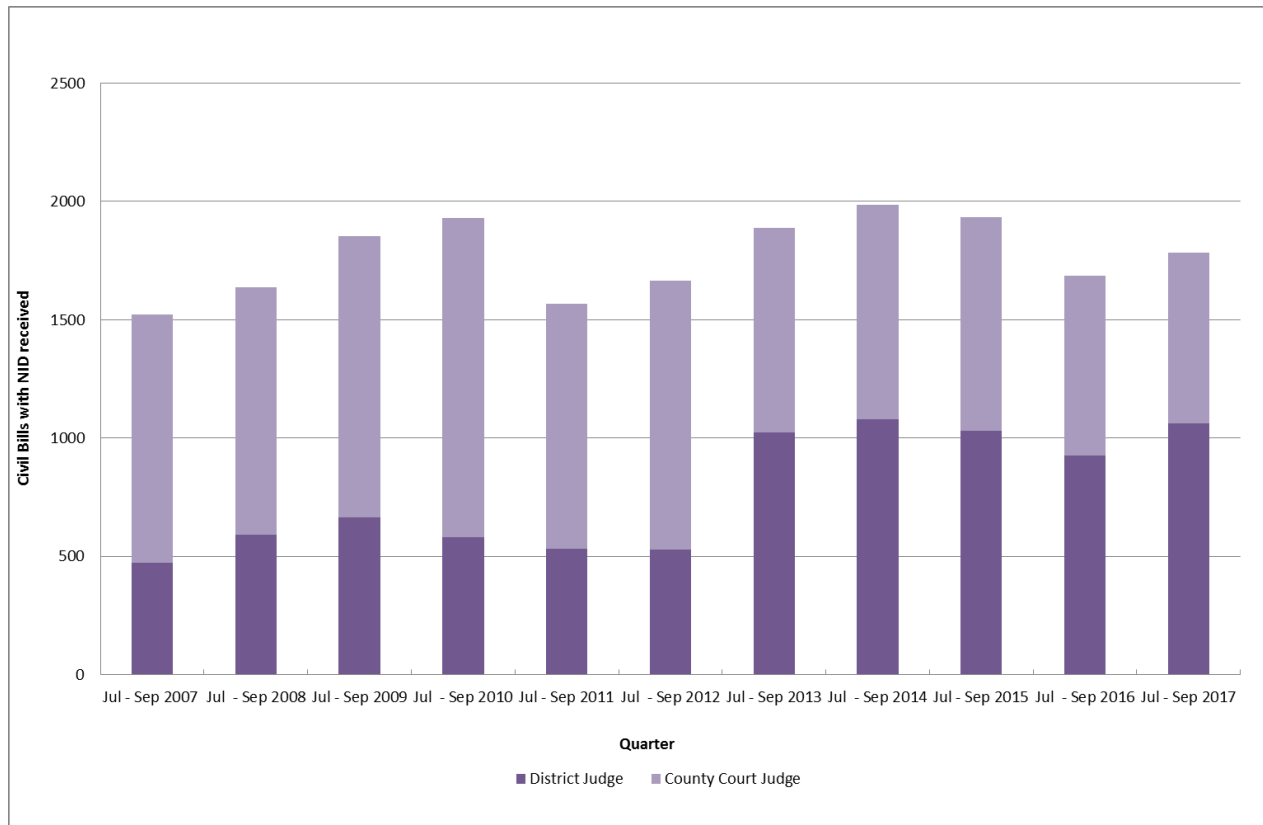


### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Ordinary civil bills

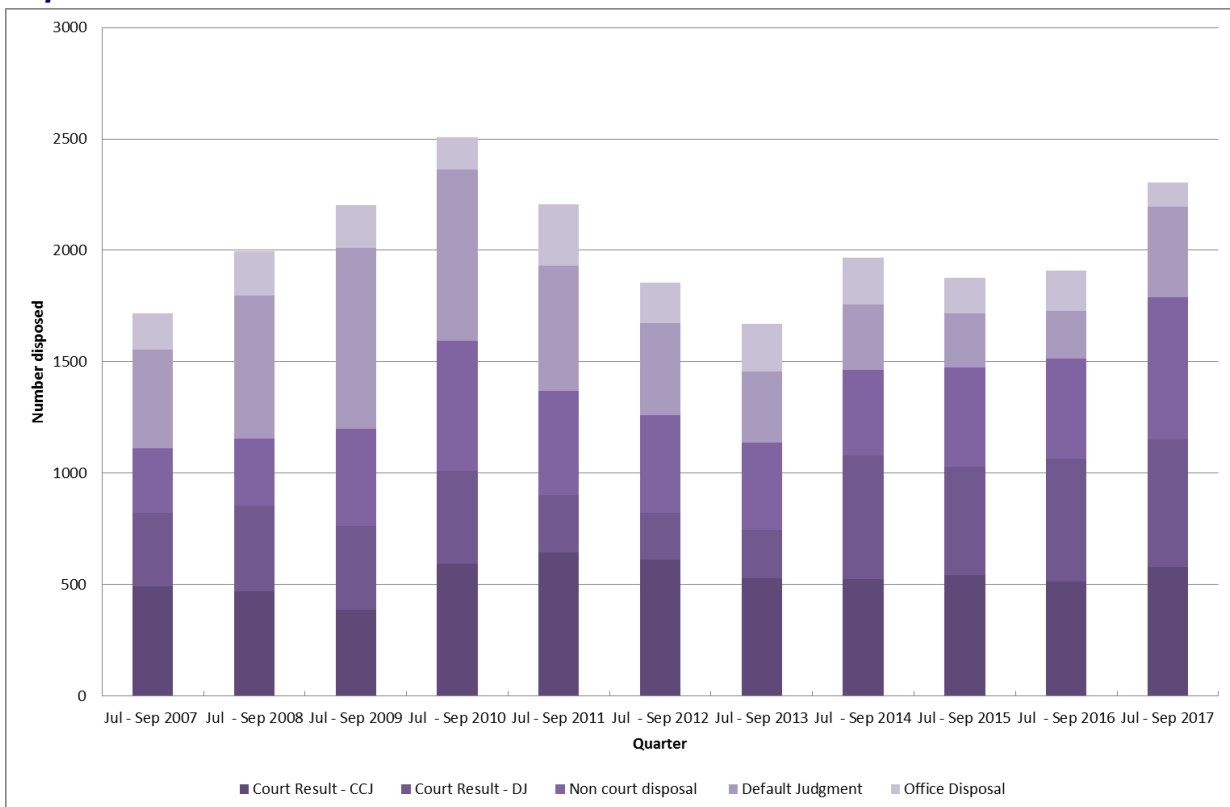
There were 1,784 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 6% increase on the same quarter last year (1,685) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received: July - September 2007 to July - September 2017**



In total, 2,304 civil bills were disposed, an increase of 21% on the 1,911 disposed during the same period in 2016 (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal: July - September 2007 to July - September 2017**



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 58 weeks, compared to the 55 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2016.

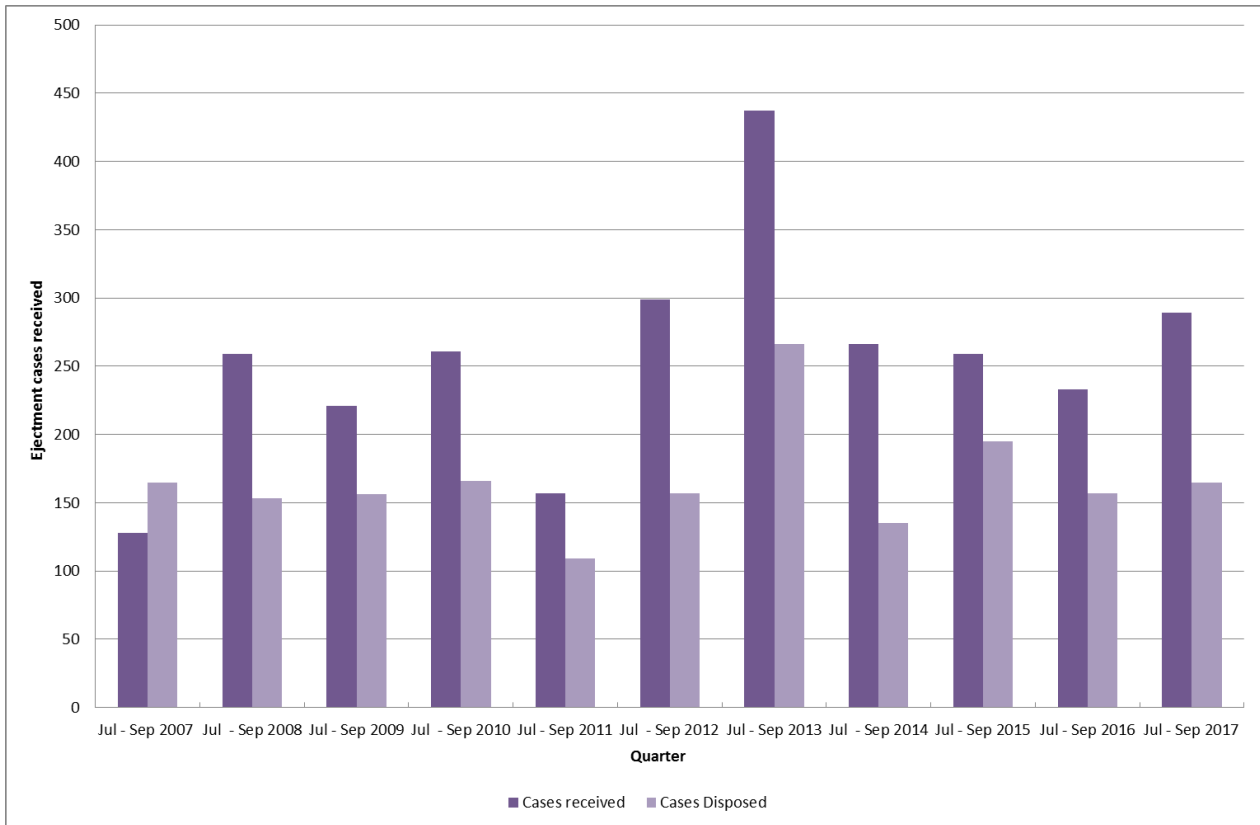
### 3.2 Equity

A total of 26 equity cases were received during July to September 2017, a 10% decrease on the number received during the period July to September 2016 (29), while the number of equity cases disposed decreased from 27 during the period July to September 2016, to 19 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 92 weeks up from 52 weeks during the same period last year. The relatively small number of equity cases disposed each quarter can lead to significant changes in average times observed from issue to disposal.

### 3.3 Ejectment

A total of 289 ejectment cases were received, up 24% on the 233 cases received during July to September 2016, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 5%, from 157 in the same quarter last year to 165 this quarter (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed: July - September 2007 to July - September 2017**



The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 22 weeks, compared to 18 weeks during the July to September quarter in 2016.

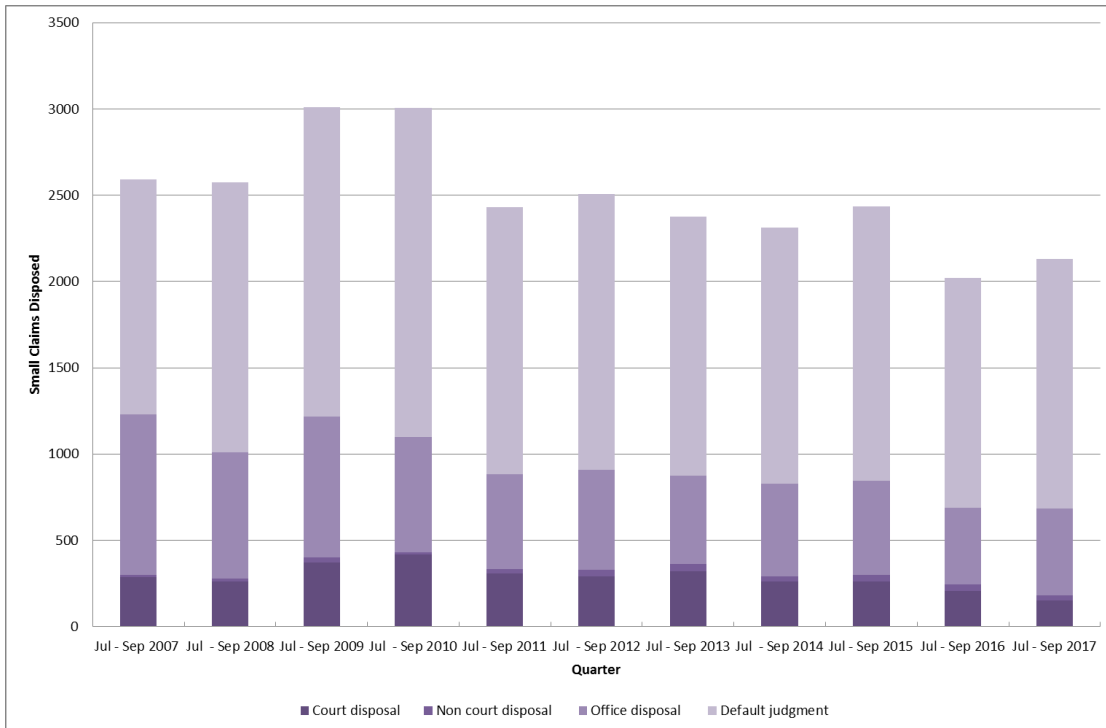
### 3.4 Small claims

3,322 small claims were received, up 33% on the 2,496, received during the same quarter last year.

The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 5% from 2,020 during July to September 2016 to 2,130 this quarter.

Of the 2,130 small claims disposed during the quarter, the majority (68%) were disposed by way of default judgment, the highest level observed since the beginning of the time series in 2007 (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Small claims cases disposed, by type of disposal: July - September 2007 to July - September 2017**

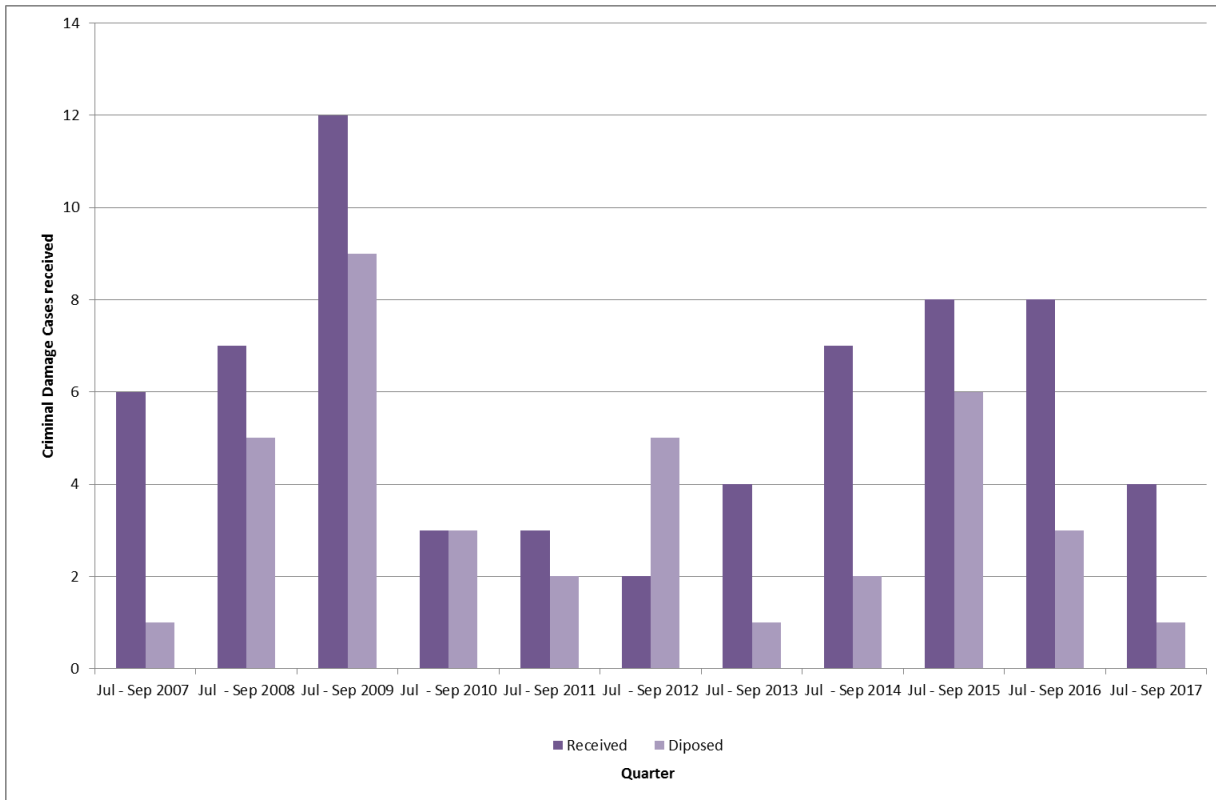


The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 23 weeks, compared to 22 weeks during the corresponding quarter last year.

### 3.5 Criminal Damage

Four criminal damage cases were received, with one disposed during the quarter. This compares with eight cases received and three cases disposed during the same quarter in 2016 (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed: July - September 2007 to July - September 2017**



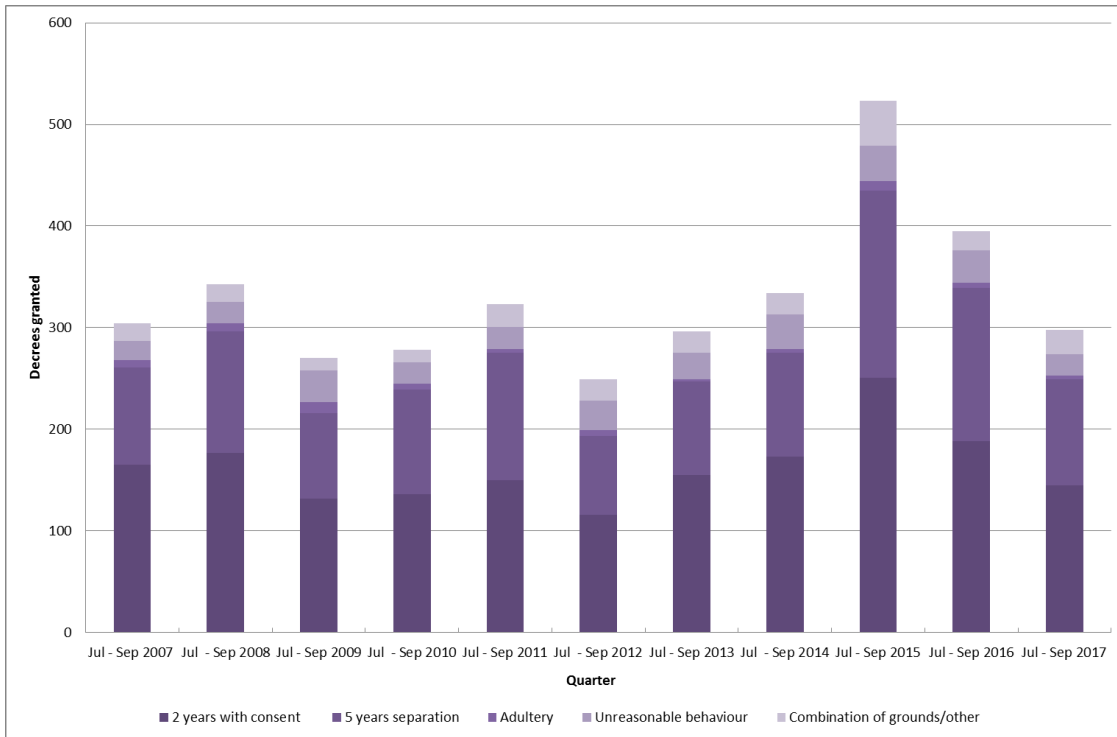
### 3.6 Divorces

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

A total of 298 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, down 25% on the 395 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 49% of decrees (145), followed by '5 years separation', 35% (104) of decrees (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type: July - September 2007 to July - September 2017**



A total of 358 decrees absolute were issued in the county court, a decrease of 7% on the 385 issued during the period July to September 2016. Again the most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 50% (180) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 31 weeks, with an average of eight weeks from the date the decree was granted until the date the decree absolute was issued. This compares to 27 weeks and eight weeks during the same period last year.

### 3.7 Licences

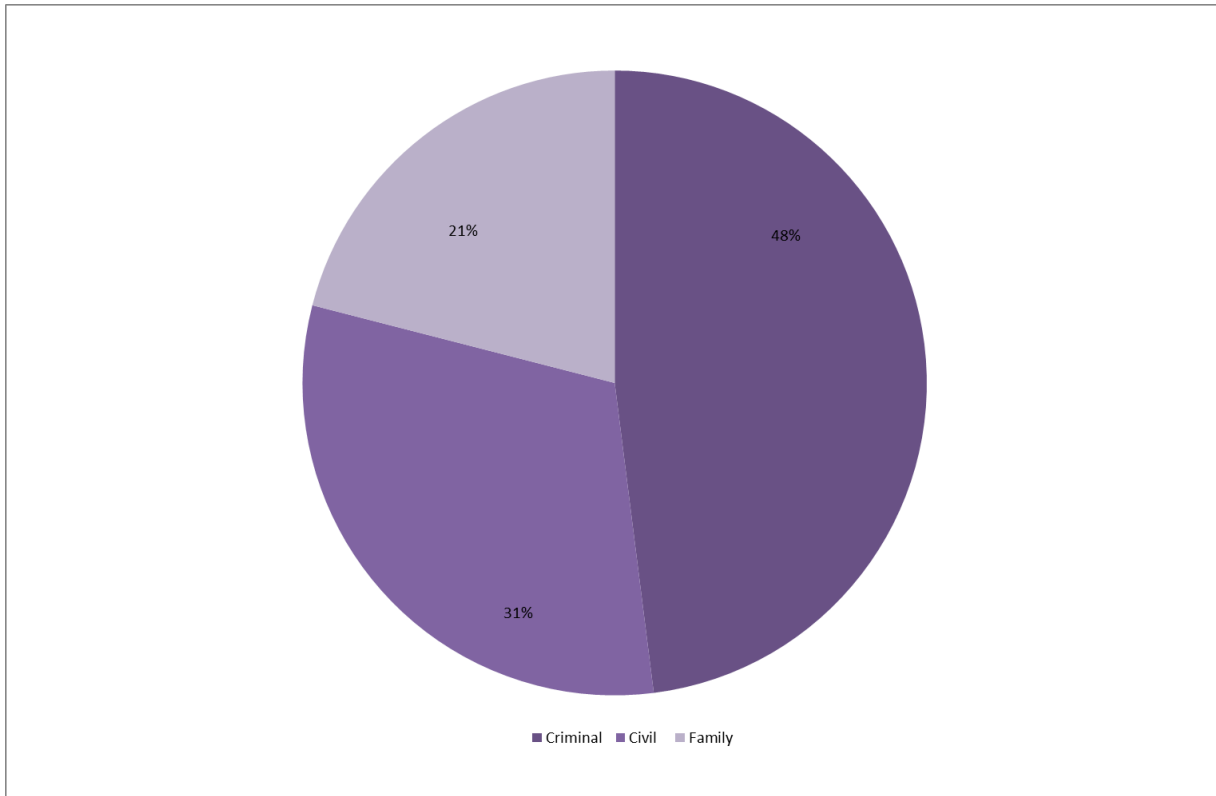
There were 48 licence applications received and 39 disposed, compared to the 33 received and 32 disposed during the same quarter last year.

### 3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 675 sitting days during the quarter, down 13% on the 774 sitting days recorded during the period July to September 2016.

Within these 675 sitting days, 48% of time was spent on criminal business, 31% of time was spent on civil business and 21% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

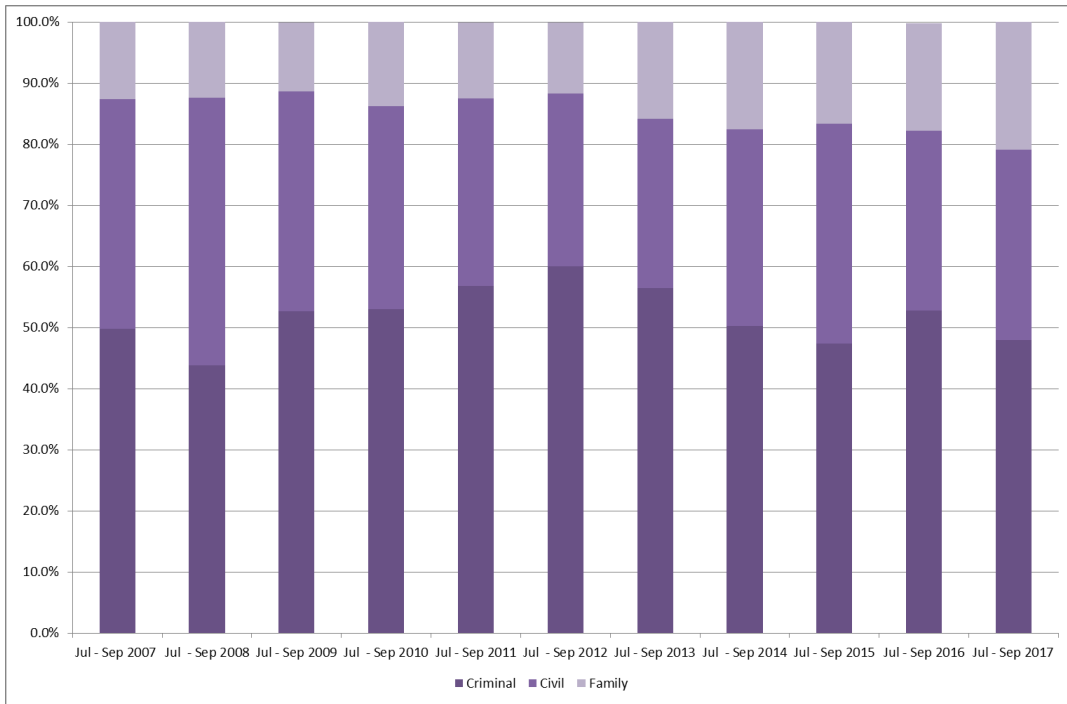
**Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: July - September 2017**



The proportion of time spent on criminal business fluctuated during July to September quarter since 2007, peaking at 60% during the quarter July to September 2012. This is largely reflective of County Court Judges dealing with increased volumes of cases in the Crown Court over the period.

The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 47% during July to September 2015. This decrease was reflective of the action taken by a number of solicitors and counsel who withdrew their representation from a number of Crown Court cases in response to the introduction, in May 2015, of new rules in relation to legal aid remuneration. Following resolution of this dispute in February 2016, activity in the Crown Court increased, with the proportion of time spent by County Court Judges on criminal business increasing to 53% of sittings during July to September 2016, while the backlog of cases arising from the dispute was addressed. Progress made in addressing the backlog has meant that both the number of sittings and the proportion of time spent on criminal business decreased this quarter, compared to the same period last year, with the proportion of time spent on criminal business falling to 48%.

**Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: July - September 2007 to July - September 2017**





## APPENDIX 1

### Civil Bills

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

<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	601
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	157
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	13
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	92
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	3
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	131
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	3
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	83
	<b>Enniskillen Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	146
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	113
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	2
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	27
	<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	3
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	1062
	<b>Total</b>	2437
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	313
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	80
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	11
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	66
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	3
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	61
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	6
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	53
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	35
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	53
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	11
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	36
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	421
	<b>Total</b>	1149

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

	<b>County court judge</b>	<b>District judge</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Laganside Courts</b>	373	349	722
<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	64	139	203
<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	1	2	3
<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	21	65	86
<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	0	1	1
<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	60	101	161
<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	26	66	92
<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	69	108	177
<b>Newry Court Office</b>	38	96	134
<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	0	1	1
<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	12	35	47
<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	57	100	157
<b>Total</b>	721	1063	1784

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

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Default judgement	Office disposal	Total
<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	346	232	254	5	47	884
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	19	103	72	4	6	204
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	1	0	1	2	0	4
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	67	6	42	4	3	122
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	9	3	3	0	3	18
	<b>Banbridge Court Office</b>	0	0	1	0	0	1
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	43	67	43	4	4	161
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	1	0	2	0	0	3
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	24	50	28	0	5	107
	<b>Enniskillen Court Office</b>	0	0	0	0	1	1
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	17	53	66	2	8	146
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	22	55	59	3	7	146
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	2	0	0	0	0	2
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	27	2	29	1	1	60
	<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	1	2	0	0	1	4
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	0	1	36	383	21	441
	<b>Total</b>	579	574	636	408	107	2304
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	36	10	133	0	0	179
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	4	4	21	0	0	29
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	8	0	2	0	0	10
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	9	2	17	0	0	28
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	1	0	1	0	0	2
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	2	9	23	0	0	34
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	0	1	0	0	0	1
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	5	6	20	0	0	31
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	9	1	11	0	0	21
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	8	4	14	0	0	26
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	2	1	1	0	0	4
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	1	0	12	0	0	13
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	0	0	34	0	0	34
	<b>Total</b>	85	38	289	0	0	412

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

		No value	Less than £3000	£3000-14999	£15000-29999	£30000 and over	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	246	130	194	9	0	578
	Newtownards Court Office	31	32	57	2	0	122
	Downpatrick Court Office	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Craigavon Court Office	16	25	31	1	0	73
	Armagh Court Office	8	0	4	0	0	12
	Omagh Court Office	39	26	41	4	0	110
	Antrim Court Office	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Londonderry Court Office	25	20	27	2	0	74
	Coleraine Court Office	19	18	31	2	0	70
	Newry Court Office	22	28	27	0	0	77
	Ballymena Court Office	1	0	1	0	0	2
	Lisburn Court Office	13	6	10	0	0	29
	Dungannon Court Office	0	2	1	0	0	3
	<b>Total</b>	420	287	425	21	0	1153

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

**Table 5: Outstanding civil bills with NID but no COR**

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	1331	842	2173
Newtownards Court Office	114	204	318
Downpatrick Court Office	1	3	4
Craigavon Court Office	82	142	224
Armagh Court Office	7	4	11
Omagh Court Office	208	246	454
Strabane Court Office	1	1	2
Antrim Court Office	3	7	10
Londonderry Court Office	131	163	294
Coleraine Court Office	202	167	369
Newry Court Office	110	145	255
Ballymena Court Office	0	6	6
Lisburn Court Office	35	59	94
Dungannon Court Office	1	4	5
Civil Processing Centre	174	179	353
<b>Total</b>	2400	2172	4572

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

	County court judge	District judge	Total
<b>Laganside Courts</b>	650	372	1022
<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	29	92	121
<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	0	3	3
<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	46	54	100
<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	12	14	26
<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	118	102	220
<b>Strabane Court Office</b>	2	0	2
<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	2	3	5
<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	36	53	89
<b>Enniskillen Court Office</b>	1	0	1
<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	67	106	173
<b>Newry Court Office</b>	76	69	145
<b>Limavady Court Office</b>	1	0	1
<b>Magherafelt Court Office</b>	0	1	1
<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	3	5	8
<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	44	58	102
<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	3	2	5
<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	5	5	10
<b>Total</b>	1095	939	2034

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

Case	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	62
Newtownards Court Office	32
Downpatrick Court Office	30
Craigavon Court Office	65
Armagh Court Office	62
Omagh Court Office	67
Antrim Court Office	55
Londonderry Court Office	48
Coleraine Court Office	40
Newry Court Office	48
Ballymena Court Office	210
Lisburn Court Office	95
Dungannon Court Office	40
Civil Processing Centre	39
<b>Total</b>	58

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

**Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications**

		Issue to disposal
Application	Laganside Courts	16
	Newtownards Court Office	5
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	18
	Armagh Court Office	22
	Omagh Court Office	16
	Antrim Court Office	7
	Londonderry Court Office	17
	Coleraine Court Office	40
	Newry Court Office	9
	Ballymena Court Office	5
	Lisburn Court Office	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

## **Equity**

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

Case	Laganside Courts	4
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	3
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	12
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>
Application	Laganside Courts	1
	Newtownards Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	5
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

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

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	2	0	1	3
	Craigavon Court Office	1	0	0	1
	Omagh Court Office	4	1	1	6
	Londonderry Court Office	2	0	0	2
	Coleraine Court Office	0	1	0	1
	Newry Court Office	1	0	4	5
	Ballymena Court Office	1	0	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Application</b>	Newtownards Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Omagh Court Office	1	0	1	2
	Londonderry Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Newry Court Office	2	0	0	2
	Lisburn Court Office	2	0	0	2
	Civil Processing Centre	0	0	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>

**Table 11: Outstanding equity cases**

<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	32
	Newtownards Court Office	14
	Downpatrick Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	13
	Armagh Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	53
	Londonderry Court Office	14
	Coleraine Court Office	27
	Newry Court Office	27
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	3
Civil Processing Centre	28	
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	

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

		Issue to disposal
<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	42
	Craigavon Court Office	72
	Omagh Court Office	69
	Londonderry Court Office	64
	Coleraine Court Office	5
	Newry Court Office	71
	Ballymena Court Office	488
	<b>Total</b>	92
<b>Application</b>	Omagh Court Office	5
	Newry Court Office	51
	Lisburn Court Office	252
	<b>Total</b>	122

## **Ejectment**

**Table 13: Ejectment cases received**

<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	99
	Newtownards Court Office	21
	Craigavon Court Office	12
	Omagh Court Office	6
	Londonderry Court Office	10
	Coleraine Court Office	9
	Newry Court Office	4
	Lisburn Court Office	6
	Civil Processing Office	122
	<b>Total</b>	289



**Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed**

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	0	74	1	75
	Newtownards Court Office	11	13	0	24
	Craigavon Court Office	1	6	0	7
	Omagh Court Office	0	13	0	13
	Londonderry Court Office	0	5	0	5
	Coleraine Court Office	0	13	0	13
	Newry Court Office	0	7	1	8
	Lisburn Court Office	2	18	0	20
<b>Total</b>		14	149	2	165

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

Case	Laganside Courts	17
	Newtownards Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	10
	Londonderry Court Office	4
	Coleraine Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	8
	Civil Processing Centre	3
<b>Total</b>		48

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

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	20
	Newtownards Court Office	18
	Craigavon Court Office	41
	Omagh Court Office	29
	Londonderry Court Office	16
	Coleraine Court Office	20
	Newry Court Office	12
	Lisburn Court Office	32
	<b>Total</b>	

Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

## Small Claims

**Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received**

<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	128
	Newtownards Court Office	44
	Downpatrick Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	23
	Armagh Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	25
	Londonderry Court Office	29
	Enniskillen Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	43
	Newry Court Office	14
	Ballymena Court Office	5
	Lisburn Court Office	7
	Civil Processing Centre	2995
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3322</b>
<b>Application</b>	Laganside Courts	23
	Newtownards Court Office	7
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	4
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	8
	Newry Court Office	4
	Lisburn Court Office	3
	Civil Processing Centre	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>

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

<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	123
	Newtownards Court Office	35
	Craigavon Court Office	26
	Armagh Court Office	6
	Omagh Court Office	23
	Antrim Court Office	2
	Londonderry Court Office	25
	Enniskillen Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	32
	Newry Court Office	13
	Ballymena Court Office	8
	Lisburn Court Office	9
	Civil Processing Centre	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>313</b>	

**Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed**

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	50	12	25	4	91
	Newtownards Court Office	22	2	6	2	32
	Craigavon Court Office	11	5	6	0	22
	Armagh Court Office	3	0	1	0	4
	Omagh Court Office	11	0	3	1	15
	Antrim Court Office	2	0	0	0	2
	Londonderry Court Office	9	2	2	0	13
	Enniskillen Court Office	3	0	1	0	4
	Coleraine Court Office	18	5	4	1	28
	Newry Court Office	12	0	4	1	17
	Lisburn Court Office	10	1	1	0	12
	Civil Processing Centre	0	3	448	1439	1890
	<b>Total</b>	151	30	501	1448	2130
<b>Application</b>	Laganside Courts	9	7	0	0	16
	Newtownards Court Office	4	2	0	0	6
	Omagh Court Office	2	0	0	0	2
	Coleraine Court Office	3	0	0	0	3
	Newry Court Office	4	1	0	0	5
	Lisburn Court Centre	3	1	0	0	4
	<b>Total</b>	25	11	0	0	36

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

Laganside Courts	248
Newtownards Court Office	31
Downpatrick Court Office	1
Craigavon Court Office	39
Armagh Court Office	5
Omagh Court Office	35
Antrim Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	46
Enniskillen Court Office	5
Coleraine Court Office	55
Newry Court Office	20
Limavady Court Office	2
Ballymena Court Office	17
Lisburn Court Office	8
Dungannon Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>

**Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims<sup>3</sup>**

		<b>Issue to disposal</b>
<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	21
	Newtownards Court Office	16
	Craigavon Court Office	36
	Armagh Court Office	16
	Omagh Court Office	17
	Antrim Court Office	17
	Londonderry Court Office	13
	Enniskillen Court Office	35
	Coleraine Court Office	34
	Newry Court Office	16
	Lisburn Court Office	37
	<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>Application</b>	Laganside Courts
Newtownards Court Office		4
Omagh Court Office		13
Coleraine Court Office		7
Newry Court Office		6
Lisburn Court Office		10
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>

<sup>3</sup>Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

## **Criminal Damage**

**Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received**

<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	1
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Total</b>	4
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	1
	<b>Total</b>	1

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

		<b>Court disposal</b>	<b>Non court disposal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	1	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	1	0	1
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	0	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	0	1	1

**Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases**

<b>Laganside Courts</b>	27
<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	3
<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	5
<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	2
<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	10
<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	4
<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	1
<b>Newry Court Office</b>	3
<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	57

**Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage cases<sup>2</sup>**

	<b>Issue to disposal</b>
<b>Laganside Courts</b>	103
<b>Total</b>	103

<sup>2</sup>Excludes default judgements, non court disposals and office disposals

## Divorces

Table 26: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	36	23	1	5	3	68
Newtownards Court Office	1	1	0	0	0	2
Downpatrick Court Office	14	12	0	0	4	30
Craigavon Court Office	26	21	2	2	3	54
Omagh Court Office	12	12	0	3	2	29
Londonderry Court Office	15	9	0	1	4	29
Coleraine Court Office	26	17	1	9	4	57
Newry Court Office	15	9	0	1	3	28
Dungannon Court Office	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>298</b>

Table 27: Divorce petitions by number of absolutes issued

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	45	38	0	6	3	92
Newtownards Court Office	5	3	0	0	1	9
Downpatrick Court Office	22	12	1	1	0	36
Craigavon Court Office	27	22	0	3	3	55
Armagh Court Office	3	4	0	0	1	8
Omagh Court Office	23	16	0	1	0	40
Londonderry Court Office	11	10	0	5	2	28
Coleraine Court Office	26	15	1	8	6	56
Newry Court Office	12	6	0	1	2	21
Ballymena Court Office	2	0	0	1	0	3
Lisburn Court Office	2	0	0	0	0	2
Dungannon Court Office	2	1	0	2	3	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>358</b>

**Table 28: Matrimonial applications received**

	Ancillary relief	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	8	0	8
Newtownards Court Office	2	0	2
Craigavon Court Office	6	0	6
Omagh Court Office	3	0	3
Londonderry Court Office	8	2	10
Coleraine Court Office	8	1	9
Newry Court Office	4	1	5
Ballymena Court Office	2	1	3
Dungannon Court Office	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>47</b>

**Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed**

	Ancillary relief	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	3	0	3
Newtownards Court Office	2	0	2
Craigavon Court Office	4	0	4
Armagh Court Office	3	0	3
Omagh Court Office	2	0	2
Londonderry Court Office	4	2	6
Coleraine Court Office	7	0	7
Newry Court Office	2	0	2
Ballymena Court Office	6	1	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>36</b>

**Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions**

	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	37	8
Newtownards Court Office	17	0
Downpatrick Court Office	21	7
Craigavon Court Office	30	7
Omagh Court Office	27	9
Londonderry Court Office	46	8
Coleraine Court Office	27	7
Newry Court Office	26	9
Dungannon Court Office	41	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>

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

	<b>Issue to disposal</b>
<b>Laganside Courts</b>	48
<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	3
<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	15
<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	117
<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	4
<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	9
<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	32
<b>Newry Court Office</b>	27
<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	32
<b>Total</b>	32

Excludes non-court disposals

## **Licences**

**Table 32: Licences received and disposed**

<b>Court Office</b>	<b>Licences Received</b>	<b>Licences Disposed</b>
<b>Coleraine</b>	1	1
<b>Newtownards</b>	14	7
<b>Newry</b>	3	2
<b>Laganside Courts</b>	17	20
<b>Craigavon</b>	7	7
<b>Omagh</b>	1	1
<b>Londonderry</b>	5	1
<b>Total</b>	48	39



## County Court Judge and District Judge Sitting Days

Table 33: County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days

	Total time			Total criminal time	Total civil time	Total family time
	Number of sitting days	Average sitting	Total time			
<b>Antrim</b>	29	2:30:18	72:39:00	66:49:00	4:10:00	1:40:00
<b>Ballymena</b>	3	3:05:00	9:15:00	0:00:00	4:45:00	4:30:00
<b>Laganside</b>	290	2:39:37	771:32:24	291:11:24	246:08:00	234:13:00
<b>Armagh</b>	14	2:30:17	35:04:00	0:00:00	34:02:00	1:02:00
<b>Lisburn</b>	9	2:51:26	25:43:00	10:18:00	15:25:00	0:00:00
<b>Magherafelt</b>	4	2:21:15	9:25:00	0:00:00	8:50:00	0:35:00
<b>Dungannon</b>	42	2:51:32	120:05:00	94:47:00	14:20:00	10:58:00
<b>Downpatrick</b>	29	2:30:41	72:50:00	66:30:00	4:05:00	2:15:00
<b>Craigavon</b>	67	2:30:08	167:39:00	93:11:00	26:40:00	47:48:00
<b>Strabane</b>	2	3:07:30	6:15:00	1:55:00	4:20:00	0:00:00
<b>Omagh</b>	25	2:58:48	74:30:00	42:37:00	25:10:00	6:43:00
<b>Enniskillen</b>	5	2:23:00	11:55:00	0:10:00	11:05:00	0:40:00
<b>Coleraine</b>	9	3:19:26	29:55:00	0:00:00	17:45:00	12:10:00
<b>Londonderry</b>	66	2:28:55	163:49:00	75:37:00	48:43:00	39:29:00
<b>Newtownards</b>	25	2:16:00	56:40:00	2:00:00	50:05:00	4:35:00
<b>Newry</b>	56	2:23:52	134:17:00	100:04:00	32:51:00	1:22:00
<b>Total</b>	675	2:36:34	1761:33:24	845:09:24	548:24:00	368:00:00

<sup>5</sup>A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

## **APPENDIX 2 - EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **Amount awarded**

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

### **Application**

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

### **Case**

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

### **Certificate of Readiness (COR)**

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

### **County Court Judge (CCJ)**

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

### **Court Disposal**

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

### **Criminal Damage**

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

### **Default Judgment**

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

## **Disposed**

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

## **District Judge (DJ)**

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

## **Divorces**

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

## **Equity**

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

## **Ejectment**

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

## **Issue**

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

## **Licences**

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

### **Matrimonial Application**

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

### **Notice of Dispute (NOD)**

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

### **Non court disposal**

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

### **Notice of Intention to Defend (NID)**

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

### **Ordinary civil bills**

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

### **Outstanding case**

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

### **Received**

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

## **Sitting Days**

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It is a period of work by a judge on a single day. Multiple sittings on one calendar date will be aggregated into one sitting day based on the Judicial officer, venue and sitting date. Several types of business may be heard within one sitting day. Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken, except for the Magistrates court, when it is based in the first instance, on the earliest scheduled sitting. Where the start time for two or more sittings is the same, the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

## **Small claims**

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

## **Time intervals**

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

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