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R Redmond

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For further information write to:

**Analytical Services Group,
NI Courts and Tribunals Service,
4th Floor, Laganside House,
23-27 Oxford Street,
Belfast BT1 3LA**

Telephone: 028 9072 8920

Email: rodney.redmond@courtsni.gov.uk

This bulletin is available on the Internet at:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period October to December 2017 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2007. On 31st October 2016, a single County Court Division called “The County Court of Northern Ireland” replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court Bulletin is now disaggregated by Court Office (Processing Office). During the period October to December 2017:
- There were 1,763 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 3% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,808). In total, 2,587 civil bills were disposed, an increase of 2% on the number disposed during the same period in 2016 (2,527).
- 32 equity cases were received during October to December 2017, down 6% on the 34 cases received during the period October to December 2016, while 21 equity cases were disposed, a decrease of 28% on the 29 disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 247 ejectment cases were received, up 20% on the 205 cases received during October to December 2016, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 17%, from 180 in the same quarter last year to 211 this quarter.
- 2,884 small claims were received, up 18% on the 2,450 received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 28% from 2,160 during October to December 2016 to 2,755 this quarter.
- Nine criminal damage cases were received, compared to five received during the period October to December 2016. Four criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, compared to eleven in the same quarter last year.
- A total of 334 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, a 13% decrease on the 385 granted during the same period last year.
- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,157 sitting days during the quarter, down 1% on the 1,169 sitting days recorded during the period October to December 2016. Some 53% of time was spent on criminal business with 27% spent on civil business and 20% on family business (compared to 60%, 24% and 16% respectively during October to December 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 calendar year 2017.

2.4 Frequency of Publication

This bulletin is published on a quarterly basis. The next bulletin will cover the first quarter of 2018 and will be published on 11th May 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 29th 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 31st October 2016, a single County Court Division called “The County Court of Northern Ireland” replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court Bulletin is now disaggregated by Court Office (Processing Office) as at the time of data download.

2.7 Interpreting trends

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

2.8 Revisions

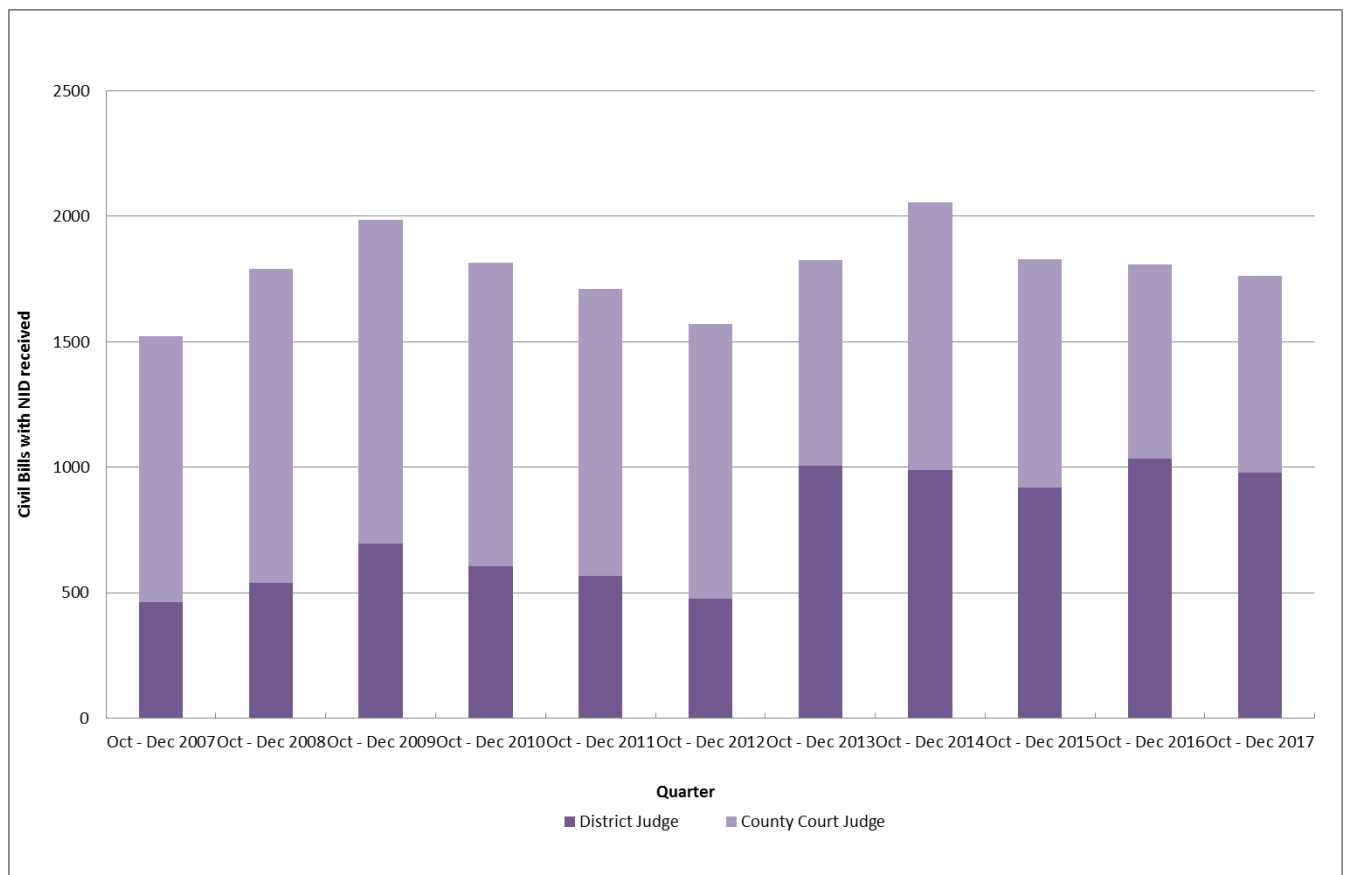
Any revision to data will be applied in light of the ASG (NICTS) Statistical Note ‘Policy Statement on Revisions’ which can be found at (www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/p_pd_stats_PolicyStatementRevisions.pdf). Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

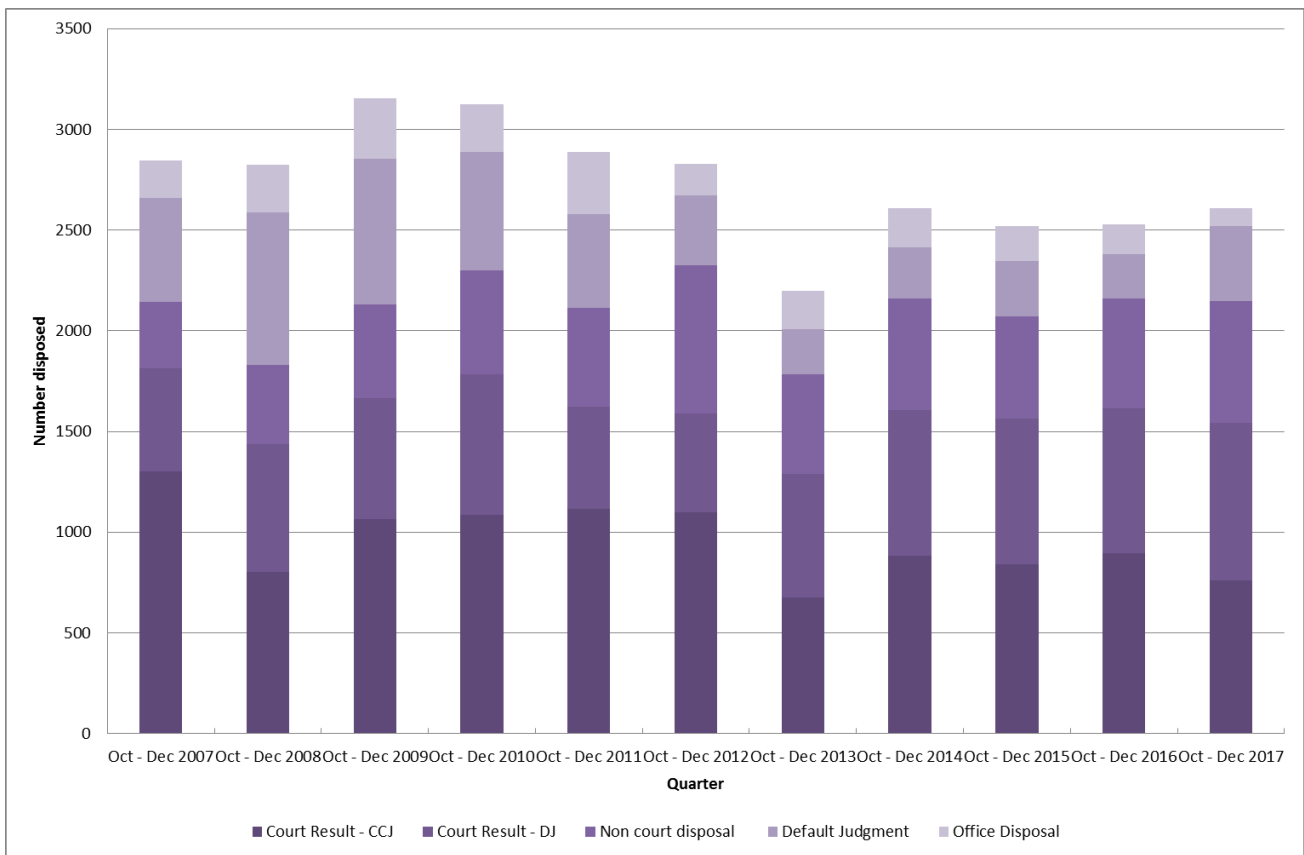
There were 1,763 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 3% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,808) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received: October - December 2007 to October - December 2017



In total, 2,587 civil bills were disposed, an increase of 2% on the 2,527 disposed during the same period in 2016 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal: October - December 2007 to October - December 2017



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 55 weeks, compared to the 59 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2016.

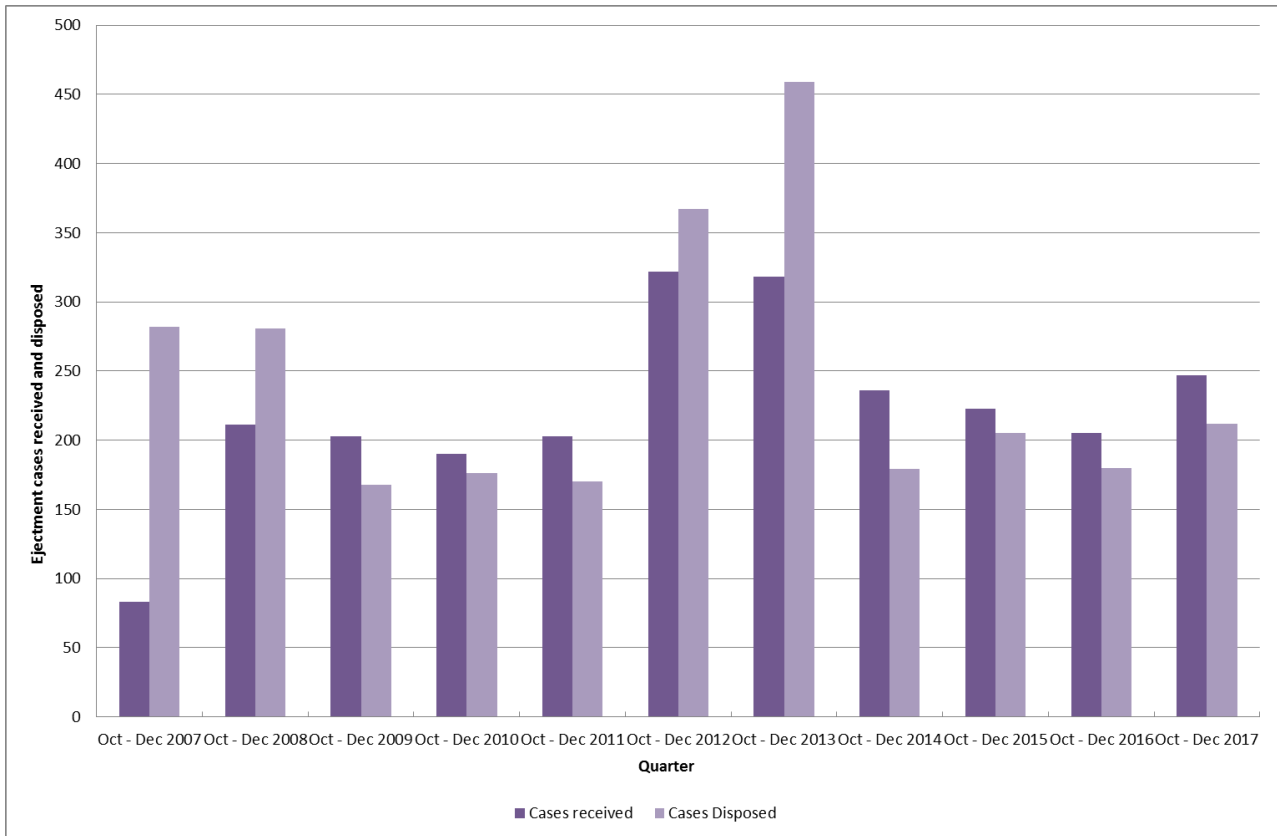
3.2 Equity

A total of 32 equity cases were received during October to December 2017, a 6% decrease on the number received during the period July to September 2016 (34), while the number of equity cases disposed decreased from 29 during the period October to December 2016, to 21 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 59 weeks down from 76 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 247 ejectment cases were received, up 20% on the 205 cases received during October to December 2016, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 17%, from 180 in the same quarter last year to 211 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed: October - December 2007 to October - December 2017



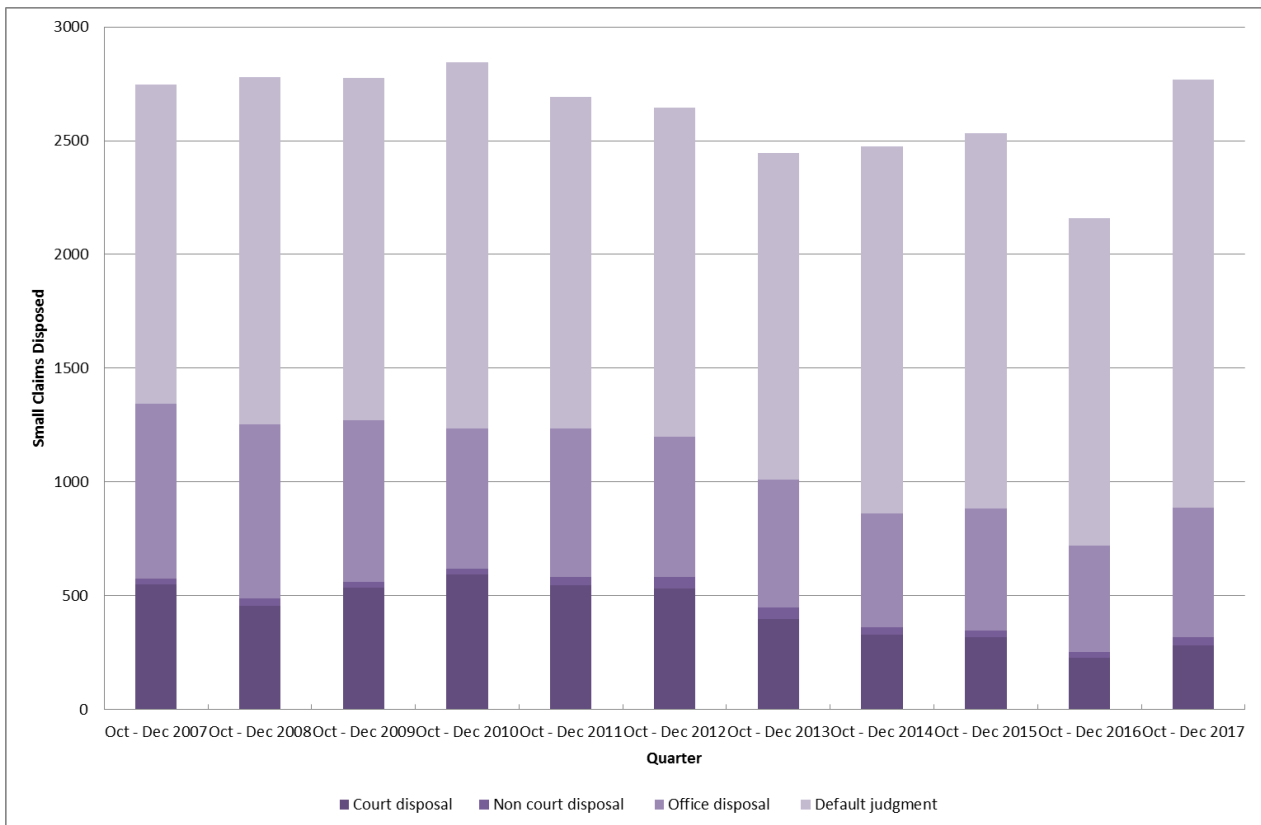
The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 25 weeks, compared to 21 weeks during the October to December quarter in 2016.

3.4 Small claims

2,884 small claims were received, up 18% on the 2,450 received during the same quarter last year.

The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 28% from 2,160 during October to December 2016 to 2,755 this quarter. Of the 2,755 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: October - December 2007 to October - December 2017

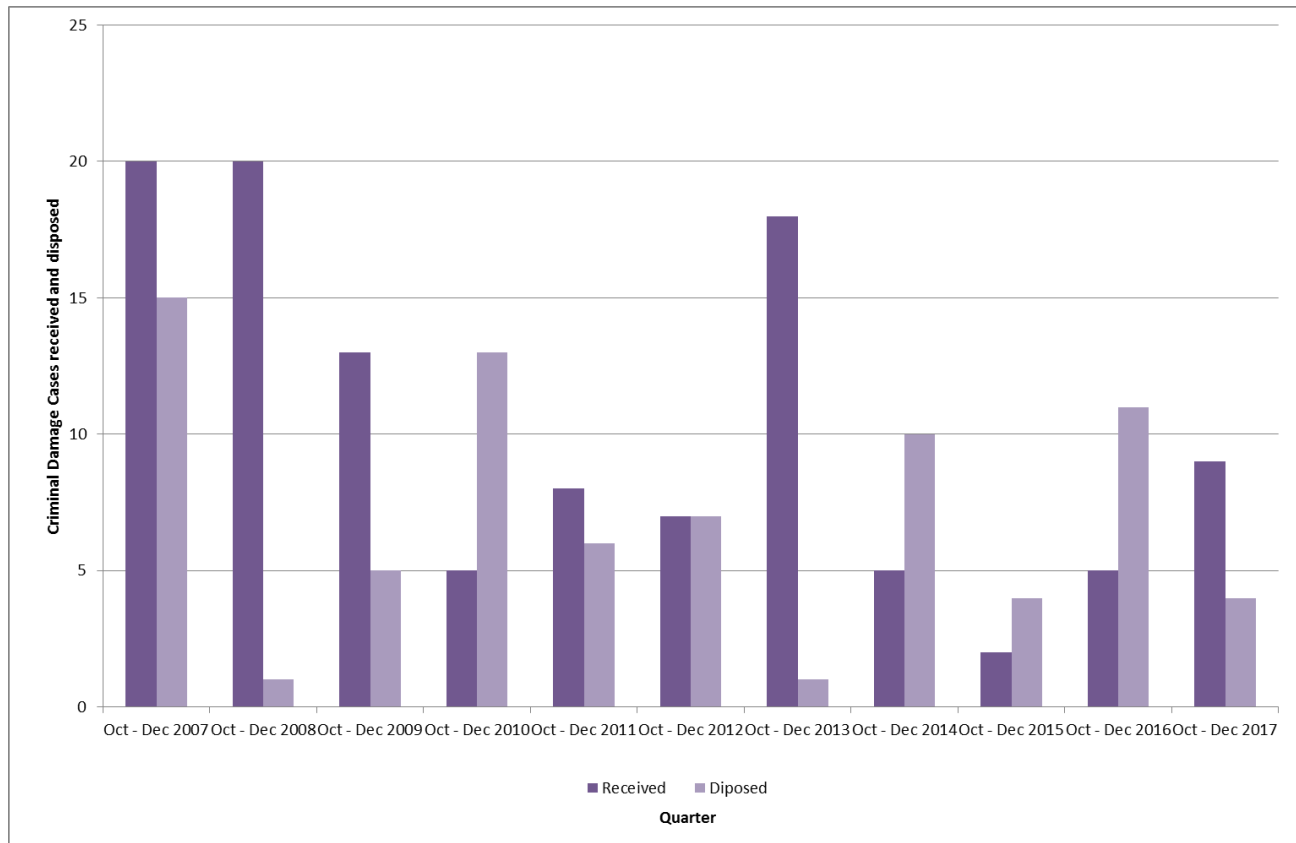


The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 21 weeks, compared to 18 weeks during the corresponding quarter last year.

3.5 Criminal Damage

Nine criminal damage cases were received, with four disposed during the quarter. This compares with five cases received and eleven cases disposed during the same quarter in 2016 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed: October - December 2007 to October - December 2017



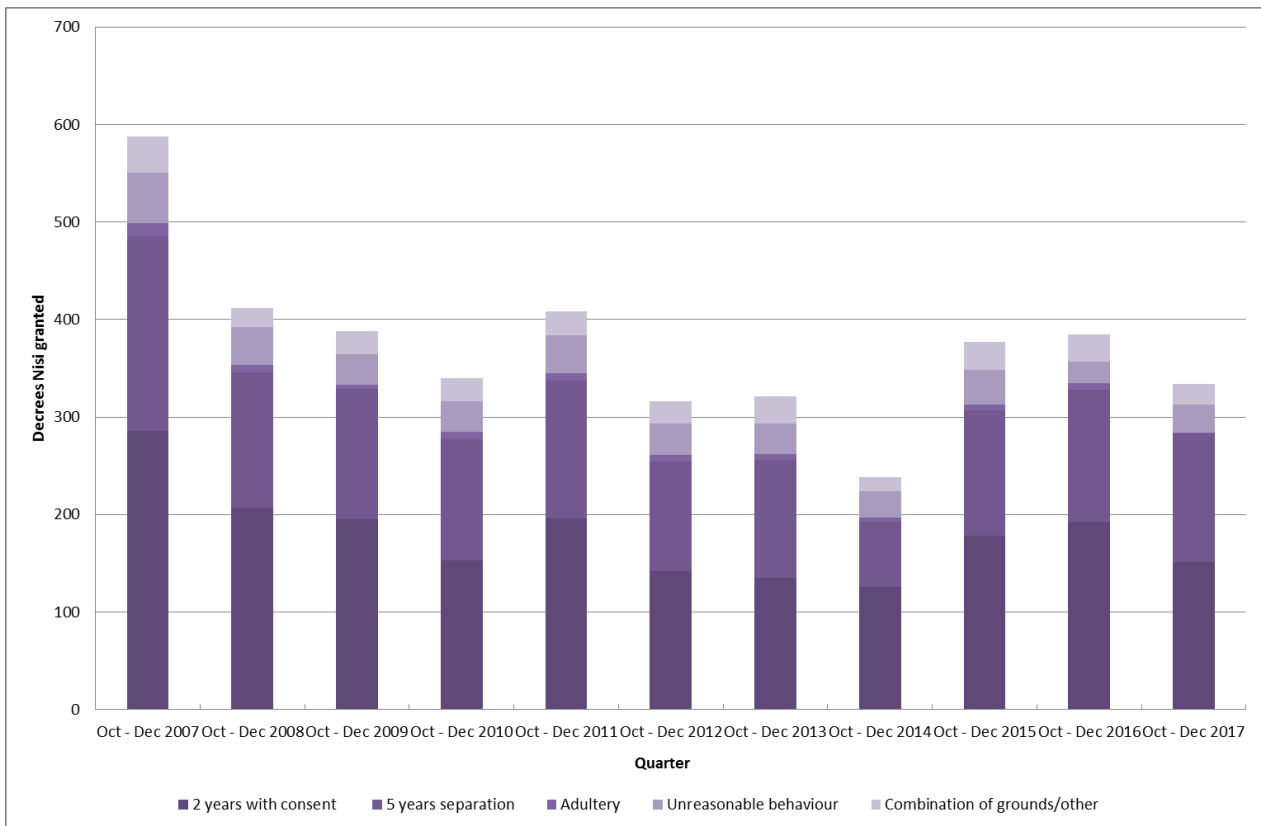
3.6 Divorces

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 334 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, down 13% on the 385 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was ‘2 years with consent’ accounting for 45% of decrees (151), followed by ‘5 years separation’, 40% (132) of decrees (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type: October - December 2007 to October - December 2017



A total of 315 decrees absolute were issued in the county court, a decrease of 20% on the 393 issued during the period October to December 2016. Again the most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 47% (147) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 30 weeks, with an average of nine weeks from the date the decree was granted until the date the decree absolute was issued. This compares to 27 weeks and nine weeks during the same period last year.

3.7 Licences

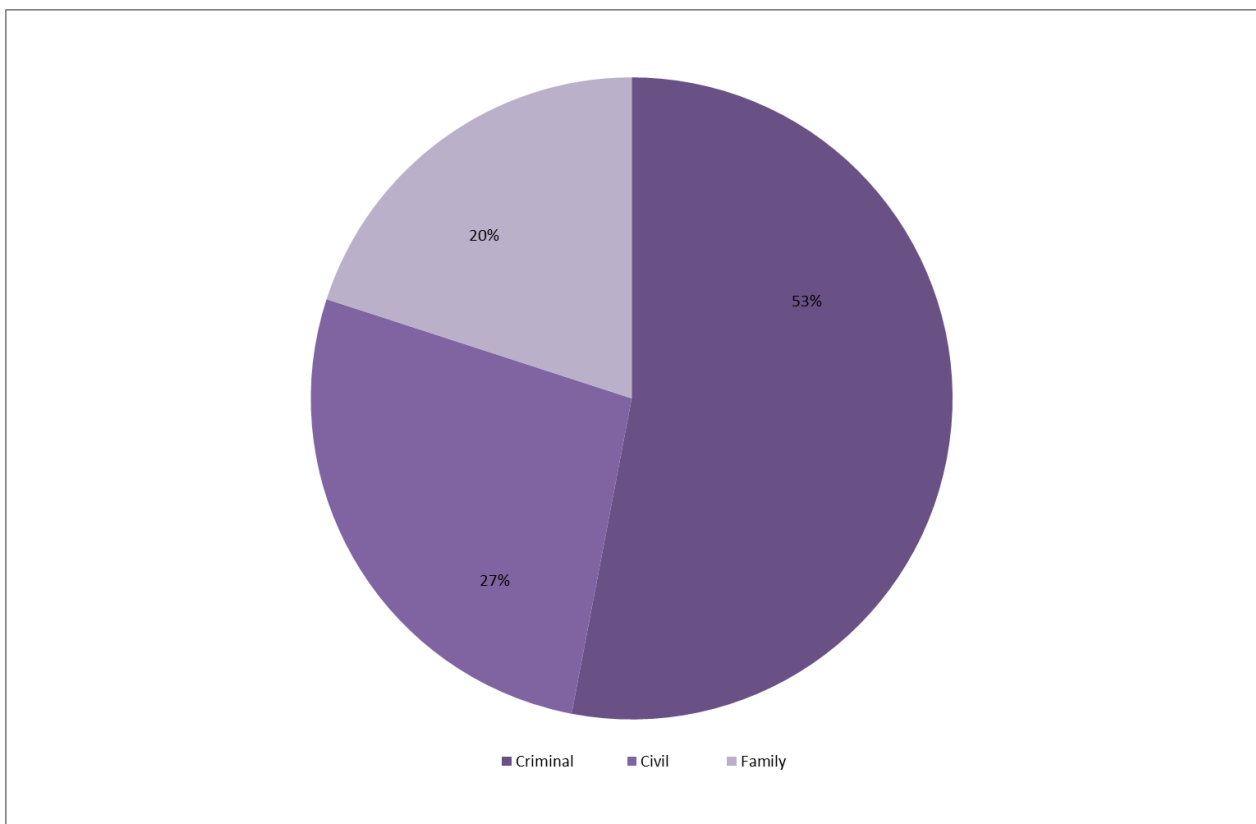
There were 62 licence applications received and 69 disposed, compared to the 59 received and 70 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,157 sitting days during the quarter, down 1% on the 1,169 sitting days recorded during the period October to December 2016.

Within these 1,157 sitting days, 53% of time was spent on criminal business, 27% of time was spent on civil business and 20% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

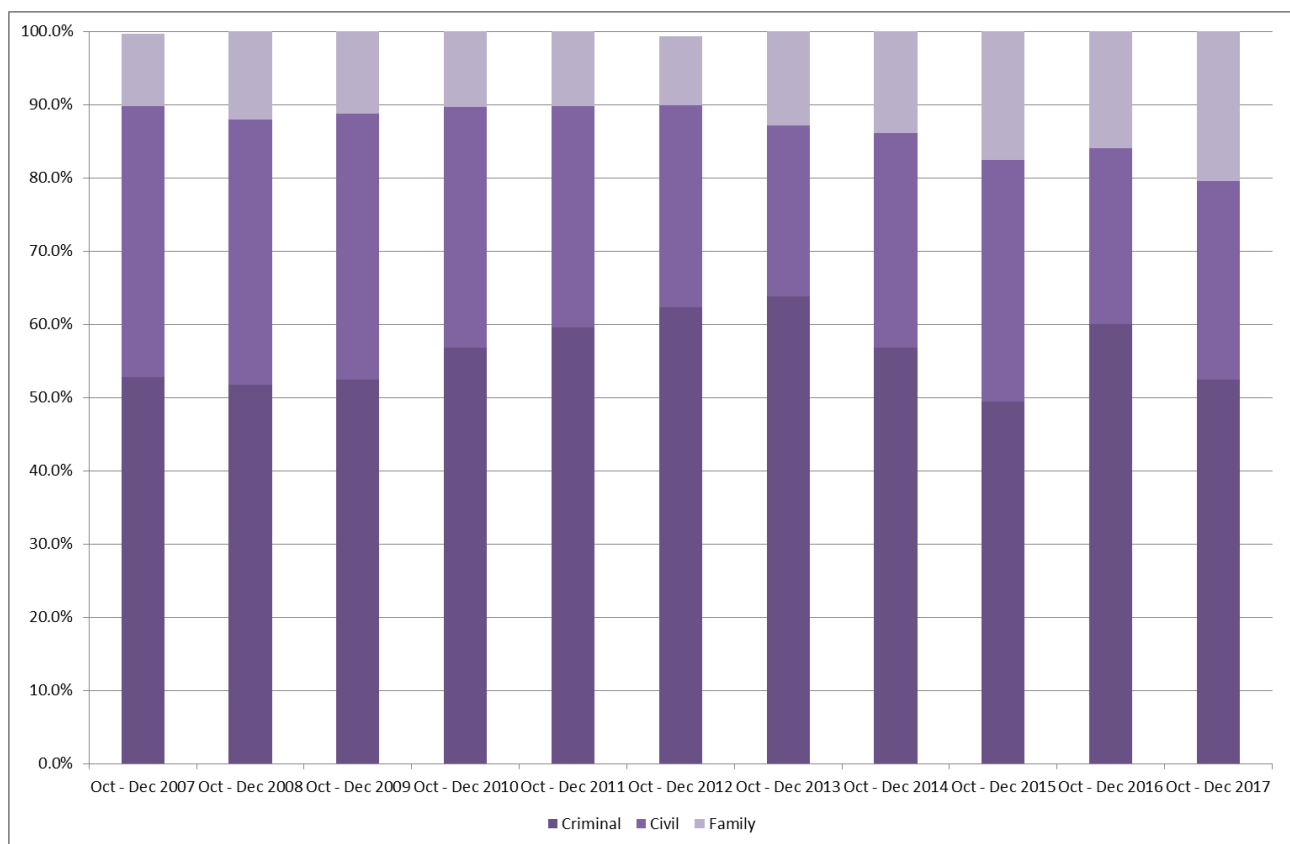
Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: October - December 2017



The proportion of time spent on criminal business fluctuated during October to December quarter since 2007, peaking at 64% during the quarter October to December 2013. This is largely reflective of County Court Judges dealing with increased volumes of cases in the Crown Court over the period.

The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 50% during October to December 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 60% of sittings during October to December 2017, while the backlog of cases arising from the dispute was addressed. Progress made in addressing the backlog has meant 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 53%.

Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: October - December 2007 to October - December 2017



APPENDIX 1

Civil Bills

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

Case	Laganside Courts	679
	Newtownards Court Office	154
	Downpatrick Court Office	16
	Craigavon Court Office	82
	Armagh Court Office	13
	Omagh Court Office	119
	Antrim Court Office	15
	Londonderry Court Office	73
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	102
	Newry Court Office	101
	Magherafelt Court Office	5
	Ballymena Court Office	10
	Lisburn Court Office	24
	Dungannon Court Office	5
Civil Processing Centre	959	
Total	2358	
Application	Laganside Courts	338
	Newtownards Court Office	107
	Downpatrick Court Office	7
	Craigavon Court Office	49
	Armagh Court Office	8
	Omagh Court Office	93
	Antrim Court Office	7
	Londonderry Court Office	53
	Coleraine Court Office	50
	Newry Court Office	58
	Ballymena Court Office	16
	Lisburn Court Office	16
	Dungannon Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	356
	Total	1159

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

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	445	359	804
Newtownards Court Office	44	123	167
Downpatrick Court Office	7	12	19
Craigavon Court Office	38	83	121
Armagh Court Office	7	8	15
Omagh Court Office	51	105	156
Antrim Court Office	6	10	16
Londonderry Court Office	27	69	96
Coleraine Court Office	60	68	128
Newry Court Office	47	74	121
Magherafelt Court Office	4	1	5
Ballymena Court Office	4	7	11
Lisburn Court Office	10	14	24
Dungannon Court Office	1	5	6
Civil Processing Centre	33	41	74
Total	784	979	1763

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
Case	Laganside Courts	405	328	231	6	26	996
	Newtownards Court Office	91	71	69	6	2	239
	Downpatrick Court Office	6	3	3	0	1	13
	Craigavon Court Office	39	33	41	4	5	122
	Armagh Court Office	6	7	3	1	0	17
	Omagh Court Office	57	83	52	2	13	207
	Antrim Court Office	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Londonderry Court Office	32	52	28	5	7	124
	Coleraine Court Office	53	69	74	1	5	202
	Newry Court Office	56	74	47	1	8	186
	Magherafelt Court Office	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Ballymena Court Office	1	3	2	1	0	7
	Lisburn Court Office	48	14	24	2	4	92
	Dungannon Court Office	1	0	1	0	0	2
	Civil Processing Centre	0	0	34	327	17	378
Total	796	738	609	356	88	2587	
Application	Laganside Courts	65	13	109	0	0	187
	Newtownards Court Office	16	3	27	0	0	46
	Downpatrick Court Office	2	0	1	0	0	3
	Craigavon Court Office	9	4	20	0	0	33
	Armagh Court Office	1	0	3	0	0	4
	Omagh Court Office	6	7	37	0	0	50
	Antrim Court Office	4	0	2	0	0	6
	Londonderry Court Office	7	5	15	0	0	27
	Coleraine Court Office	7	4	14	0	0	25
	Newry Court Office	10	5	20	0	0	35
	Ballymena Court Office	4	1	5	0	0	10
	Lisburn Court Office	2	1	2	0	0	5
	Civil Processing Centre	0	0	48	0	0	48
Total	133	43	303	0	0	479	

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	320	169	238	6	0	733
	Newtownards Court Office	45	40	72	5	0	162
	Downpatrick Court Office	5	2	2	0	0	9
	Craigavon Court Office	20	24	26	2	0	72
	Armagh Court Office	8	0	5	0	0	13
	Omagh Court Office	38	34	62	6	0	140
	Antrim Court Office	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Londonderry Court Office	22	22	36	4	0	84
	Coleraine Court Office	28	29	60	5	0	122
	Newry Court Office	25	45	56	4	0	130
	Magherafelt Court Office	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Ballymena Court Office	0	3	1	0	0	4
	Lisburn Court Office	9	25	23	5	0	62
	Dungannon Court Office	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Total	521	393	582	38	0	1534

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	1381	816	2197
Newtownards Court Office	105	208	313
Downpatrick Court Office	8	10	18
Craigavon Court Office	89	148	237
Armagh Court Office	17	8	25
Omagh Court Office	208	273	481
Strabane Court Office	0	1	1
Antrim Court Office	8	15	23
Londonderry Court Office	113	184	297
Coleraine Court Office	187	156	343
Newry Court Office	108	134	242
Magherafelt Court office	4	1	5
Ballymena Court Office	4	10	14
Lisburn Court Office	33	46	79
Dungannon Court Office	2	4	6
Civil Processing Centre	140	121	261
Total	2407	2135	4542

Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	623	344	967
Newtownards Court Office	34	64	98
Downpatrick Court Office	0	2	2
Craigavon Court Office	47	57	104
Armagh Court Office	6	10	16
Omagh Court Office	107	110	217
Strabane Court Office	2	0	2
Antrim Court Office	2	4	6
Londonderry Court Office	41	48	89
Enniskillen Court Office	1	0	1
Coleraine Court Office	61	104	165
Newry Court Office	63	56	119
Limavady Court Office	1	0	1
Magherafelt Court Office	1	0	1
Ballymena Court Office	2	3	5
Lisburn Court Office	30	39	69
Dungannon Court Office	2	2	4
Civil Processing Centre	6	3	9
Total	1029	846	1875

Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases

Case	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	63
Newtownards Court Office	34
Downpatrick Court Office	31
Craigavon Court Office	42
Armagh Court Office	84
Omagh Court Office	60
Antrim Court Office	6
Londonderry Court Office	46
Coleraine Court Office	46
Newry Court Office	48
Magherafelt Court Office	47
Ballymena Court Office	50
Lisburn Court Office	57
Dungannon Court Office	89
Civil Processing Centre	89
Total	55

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications¹

		Issue to disposal
Application	Laganside Courts	10
	Newtownards Court Office	7
	Downpatrick Court Office	20
	Craigavon Court Office	7
	Armagh Court Office	0
	Omagh Court Office	14
	Antrim Court Office	15
	Londonderry Court Office	9
	Coleraine Court Office	13
	Newry Court Office	19
	Ballymena Court Office	9
	Lisburn Court Office	27
	Total	11

¹Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Equity

Table 9: Equity cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	2
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	12
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	6
	Ballymena Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	5
	Total	32
Application	Laganside Courts	2
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	8
	Newry Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	1
	Total	13

Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result – DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	3	0	0	3
	Newtownards Court Office	4	0	0	4
	Craigavon Court Office	3	0	0	3
	Omagh Court Office	5	0	1	6
	Coleraine Court Office	1	0	0	1
	Newry Court Office	1	1	0	2
	Lisburn Court Office	2	0	0	2
	Total	19	1	1	21
Application	Laganside Courts	1	0	1	2
	Newtownards Court Office	2	0	0	2
	Omagh Court Office	5	0	1	6
	Coleraine Court Office	1	0		1
	Total	9	0	2	11

Table 11: Outstanding equity cases

Case	Laganside Courts	27
	Newtownards Court Office	10
	Downpatrick Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	11
	Armagh Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	57
	Londonderry Court Office	14
	Coleraine Court Office	32
	Newry Court Office	31
	Ballymena Court Office	3
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	30
Total	221	

Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	56
	Newtownards Court Office	44
	Craigavon Court Office	35
	Omagh Court Office	101
	Coleraine Court Office	39
	Newry Court Office	72
	Lisburn Court Office	26
	Total	59
Application	Laganside Courts	41
	Newtownards Court Office	18
	Omagh Court Office	5
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Total	11

Ejectment

Table 13: Ejectment cases received

Case	Laganside Courts	64
	Newtownards Court Office	27
	Downpatrick Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	14
	Omagh Court Office	15
	Londonderry Court Office	16
	Coleraine Court Office	10
	Newry Court Office	5
	Lisburn Court Office	15
	Civil Processing Office	79
	Total	247

Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	0	99	99
	Newtownards Court Office	0	18	18
	Downpatrick Court Office	0	2	2
	Craigavon Court Office	1	6	7
	Omagh Court Office	0	7	7
	Londonderry Court Office	2	18	20
	Coleraine Court Office	0	20	20
	Newry Court Office	0	12	12
	Lisburn Court Office	1	25	26
Total		4	207	211

Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

Case	Laganside Courts	15
	Newtownards Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	11
	Londonderry Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	6
	Civil Processing Centre	4
Total		44

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment²

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	23
	Newtownards Court Office	24
	Downpatrick Court Office	12
	Craigavon Court Office	33
	Omagh Court Office	25
	Londonderry Court Office	33
	Coleraine Court Office	21
	Newry Court Office	25
	Lisburn Court Office	29
	Total	25

²Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Small Claims

Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	133
	Newtownards Court Office	28
	Downpatrick Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	25
	Armagh Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	37
	Londonderry Court Office	11
	Coleraine Court Office	22
	Newry Court Office	20
	Ballymena Court Office	4
	Lisburn Court Office	11
	Civil Processing Centre	2586
	Total	2884
Application	Laganside Courts	14
	Newtownards Court Office	7
	Craigavon Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	6
	Londonderry Court Office	5
	Coleraine Court Office	9
	Newry Court Office	6
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	5
	Total	56

Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Case	Laganside Courts	145
	Newtownards Court Office	38
	Downpatrick Court Office	5
	Craigavon Court Office	26
	Armagh Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	39
	Londonderry Court Office	15
	Enniskillen Court Office	4
	Coleraine Court Office	29
	Newry Court Office	22
	Ballymena Court Office	5
	Lisburn Court Office	9
	Civil Processing Centre	5
Total	345	

Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	97	16	38	6	157
	Newtownards Court Office	28	3	14	1	46
	Downpatrick Court Office	2	0	1	0	3
	Craigavon Court Office	24	6	2	3	35
	Armagh Court Office	4	0	0	0	4
	Omagh Court Office	25	0	9	2	36
	Antrim Court Office	1	0	0	0	1
	Londonderry Court Office	27	1	7	0	35
	Enniskillen Court Office	2	0	2	0	4
	Coleraine Court Office	32	4	7	3	46
	Newry Court Office	18	1	2	4	25
	Limavady Court Office	2	0	0	0	2
	Ballymena Court Office	8	0	1	0	9
	Lisburn Court Office	9	3	0	1	13
	Civil Processing Centre	1	4	483	1851	2339
Total	280	38	566	1871	2755	
Application	Laganside Courts	14	3	0	0	17
	Newtownards Court Office	3	3	0	0	6
	Craigavon Court Office	2	0	0	0	2
	Omagh Court Office	6	1	0	0	7
	Londonderry Court Office	3	0	0	0	3
	Coleraine Court Office	3	2	0	0	5
	Newry Court Office	3	1	0	0	4
	Lisburn Court Centre	2	0	0	0	2
	Civil Processing Centre	0	1	0	0	1
	Total	36	11	0	0	47

Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD

Laganside Courts	260
Newtownards Court Office	31
Downpatrick Court Office	4
Craigavon Court Office	36
Armagh Court Office	5
Omagh Court Office	37
Londonderry Court Office	31
Enniskillen Court Office	6
Coleraine Court Office	53
Newry Court Office	30
Ballymena Court Office	12
Lisburn Court Office	8
Dungannon Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	16
Total	530

Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims³

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	20
	Newtownards Court Office	14
	Downpatrick Court Office	6
	Craigavon Court Office	42
	Armagh Court Office	20
	Omagh Court Office	18
	Antrim Court Office	21
	Londonderry Court Office	22
	Enniskillen Court Office	17
	Coleraine Court Office	18
	Newry Court Office	21
	Limavady Court Office	33
	Ballymena Court Office	31
	Lisburn Court Office	21
	Total	21
Application	Laganside Courts	8
	Newtownards Court Office	6
	Craigavon Court Office	21
	Omagh Court Office	22
	Londonderry Court Office	8
	Coleraine Court Office	14
	Newry Court Office	14
	Lisburn Court Office	8
Total	12	

³Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Criminal Damage

Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received

Case		
	Laganside Courts	2
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	3
	Total	9

Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

Case		Court disposal	Total
	Laganside Courts	2	2
	Londonderry Court Office	2	2
	Total	4	4

Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases

Laganside Courts	27
Newtownards Court Office	3
Craigavon Court Office	4
Armagh Court Office	2
Omagh Court Office	10
Londonderry Court Office	4
Coleraine Court Office	2
Newry Court Office	5
Ballymena Court Office	1
Dungannon Court Office	2
Total	60

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage cases³

	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	177
Londonderry Court Office	58
Total	117

³Excludes 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	59	47	0	6	11	123
Downpatrick Court Office	21	6	0	5	1	33
Craigavon Court Office	20	14	0	2	1	37
Omagh Court Office	7	16	0	5	1	29
Londonderry Court Office	13	16	0	3	0	32
Coleraine Court Office	24	27	1	7	6	65
Newry Court Office	6	6	0	1	1	14
Dungannon Court Office	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	151	132	1	29	21	334

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	44	37	1	5	6	93
Newtownards Court Office	1	0	1	0	0	2
Downpatrick Court Office	20	12	0	3	4	39
Craigavon Court Office	26	15	2	3	3	49
Armagh Court Office	3	1	0	0	2	6
Omagh Court Office	6	7	1	3	3	20
Londonderry Court Office	15	13	1	0	1	30
Coleraine Court Office	19	19	1	7	4	50
Newry Court Office	12	6	1	2	1	22
Lisburn Court Office	0	0	0	1	0	1
Dungannon Court Office	1	2	0	0	0	3
Total	147	112	8	24	24	315

Table 28: Matrimonial applications received

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	6	0	0	6
Newtownards Court Office	2	0	0	2
Craigavon Court Office	5	0	0	5
Armagh Court Office	1	0	0	1
Omagh Court Office	5	1	0	6
Londonderry Court Office	6	0	1	7
Coleraine Court Office	10	1	1	12
Newry Court Office	5	0	1	6
Ballymena Court Office	3	0	0	3
Lisburn Court Office	1	0	0	1
Total	44	2	3	49

Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	5	0	0	5
Newtownards Court Office	3	0	0	3
Craigavon Court Office	1	0	0	1
Armagh Court Office	3	0	0	3
Omagh Court Office	1	1	0	2
Londonderry Court Office	4	0	1	5
Coleraine Court Office	11	1	1	13
Newry Court Office	6	0	2	8
Lisburn Court Office	1	0	0	1
Total	35	2	4	41

Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	34	9
Downpatrick Court Office	24	9
Craigavon Court Office	20	8
Omagh Court Office	35	9
Londonderry Court Office	43	9
Coleraine Court Office	25	9
Newry Court Office	19	8
Dungannon Court Office	76	0
Total	30	9

Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications⁴

	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	24
Newtownards Court Office	26
Craigavon Court Office	2
Armagh Court Office	84
Omagh Court Office	5
Londonderry Court Office	36
Coleraine Court Office	47
Newry Court Office	20
Lisburn Court Office	84
Total	38

⁴Excludes non-court disposals

Licences

Table 32: Licences received and disposed

Court Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	17	14
Newtownards	9	11
Newry	5	6
Laganside Courts	17	22
Craigavon	7	7
Omagh	3	3
Londonderry	4	6
Total	62	69

County Court Judge and District Judge Sitting Days

Table 33: County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days⁵

	Total time			Total criminal time	Total civil time	Total family time
	Number of sitting days	Average sitting	Total time			
Antrim	79	2:16:12	179:21:00	153:09:00	19:17:00	6:55:00
Ballymena	5	5:03:00	25:15:00	0:00:00	24:20:00	0:55:00
Laganside	413	2:55:46	1209:57:00	534:22:00	314:03:00	361:32:00
Armagh	22	2:29:46	54:55:00	3:15:00	51:37:00	0:03:00
Banbridge@Newry	1	3:05:00	3:05:00	3:05:00	0:00:00	0:00:00
Limavady	2	3:37:30	7:15:00	0:00:00	4:15:00	3:00:00
Lisburn	13	3:17:13	42:44:00	5:19:00	37:25:00	0:00:00
Magherafelt	4	2:12:30	8:50:00	0:00:00	8:10:00	0:40:00
Dungannon	101	3:43:28	376:11:00	294:56:00	36:41:00	44:34:00
Downpatrick	66	1:57:06	128:49:00	111:22:00	14:22:00	3:05:00
Craigavon	120	2:40:08	320:16:00	187:01:00	41:10:00	92:05:00
Strabane	8	2:13:30	17:48:00	0:05:00	15:50:00	1:53:00
Omagh	33	3:40:01	121:01:00	8:00:00	57:20:00	55:41:00
Enniskillen	9	3:51:40	34:45:00	14:05:00	20:00:00	0:40:00
Coleraine	26	3:29:13	90:40:00	21:15:00	50:30:00	18:55:00
Londonderry	107	2:31:57	270:59:00	151:07:00	57:02:00	62:50:00
Newtownards	33	2:33:29	84:25:00	5:40:00	75:05:00	3:40:00
Newry	115	2:16:24	261:27:00	203:26:00	54:27:00	3:34:00
Total	1157	2:47:54	3237:43:00	1696:07:00	881:34:00	660:02:00

⁵A 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.

Analytical Services Group,
Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service,
Department of Justice
4th Floor, Laganside House
23-27 Oxford Street,
Belfast BT1 3LA
Email: Rodney.redmond@courtsni.gov.uk
Telephone: 028 9072 8920

www.justice-ni.gov.uk/courts-and-tribunals