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April to June 2019

Research and Statistical Bulletin

Provisional quarterly figures

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period April to June 2019 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 April to June 2019:
- There were 1,982 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 2% decrease on the same quarter last year (2,013). In total, 2,462 civil bills were disposed, a decrease of 1% on the number disposed during the same period in 2018 (2,496).
- 37 equity cases were received during April to June 2019, up by five cases compared to the 32 cases received during the period April to June 2018, while 32 equity cases were disposed, compared with 26 equity cases disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 287 ejectment cases were received, down 7% on the 307 cases received during April to June 2018, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 1%, from 262 in the same quarter last year to 265 this quarter.
- 2,824 small claims were received, up 4% on the 2,720 cases received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed decreased by 6% from 2,512 during April to June 2018 to 2,370 this quarter.
- Two criminal damage cases were received, compared to four received during the period April to June 2018. One criminal damage case was disposed during the quarter, compared with six during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 316 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, down 19% on the 388 granted during the same period last year.
- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,201 sitting days during the quarter, up 2% on the 1,180 sitting days recorded during the period April to June 2018. Some 55% of time was spent on criminal business with 25% spent on civil business and 20% on family business (compared to 56%, 25% and 19% respectively during April to June 2018).

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1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

The most common types of claim dealt with in the Small Claims Court are:

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

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

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data sources

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

2.2 Methodology for generating data

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

2.3 Baseline and Time period

Data contained within this bulletin relates to the current calendar year 2019. The time series for this information dates back to 2007 when ICOS was adopted as the source of County Court data, however, within this publication, comparisons of trends are viewed over a 10-year period.

2.4 Frequency of Publication

This bulletin is published on a quarterly basis. The next bulletin will cover the second quarter of 2019 and will be published on 15th November 2019.

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 potential problems which are circulated to each County Court venue as a validation report.

The NICTS statistics team then ensure that all validations relating to the reporting period are amended prior to publication. Once these amendments have been checked, SPSS syntax programming is then used to generate the tables in the publication. Data contained in this bulletin are currently provisional and will undergo further validation before being published in their final form within the relevant edition of Judicial Statistics (published in June of each year for the previous calendar year).

2.6 Counting rules

Receipts are counted from the date the case is entered onto ICOS and the fees are receipted. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to dealt with. On 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).

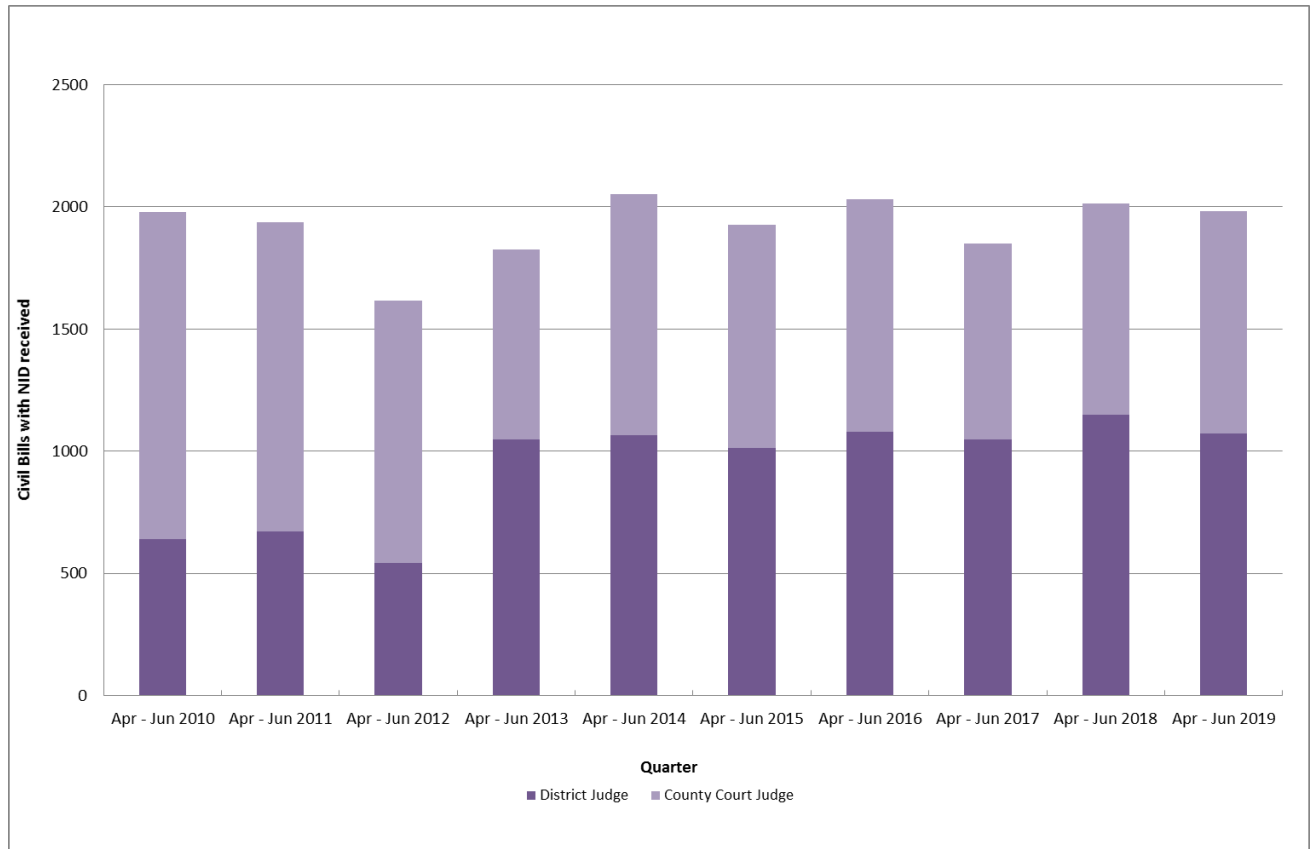
Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

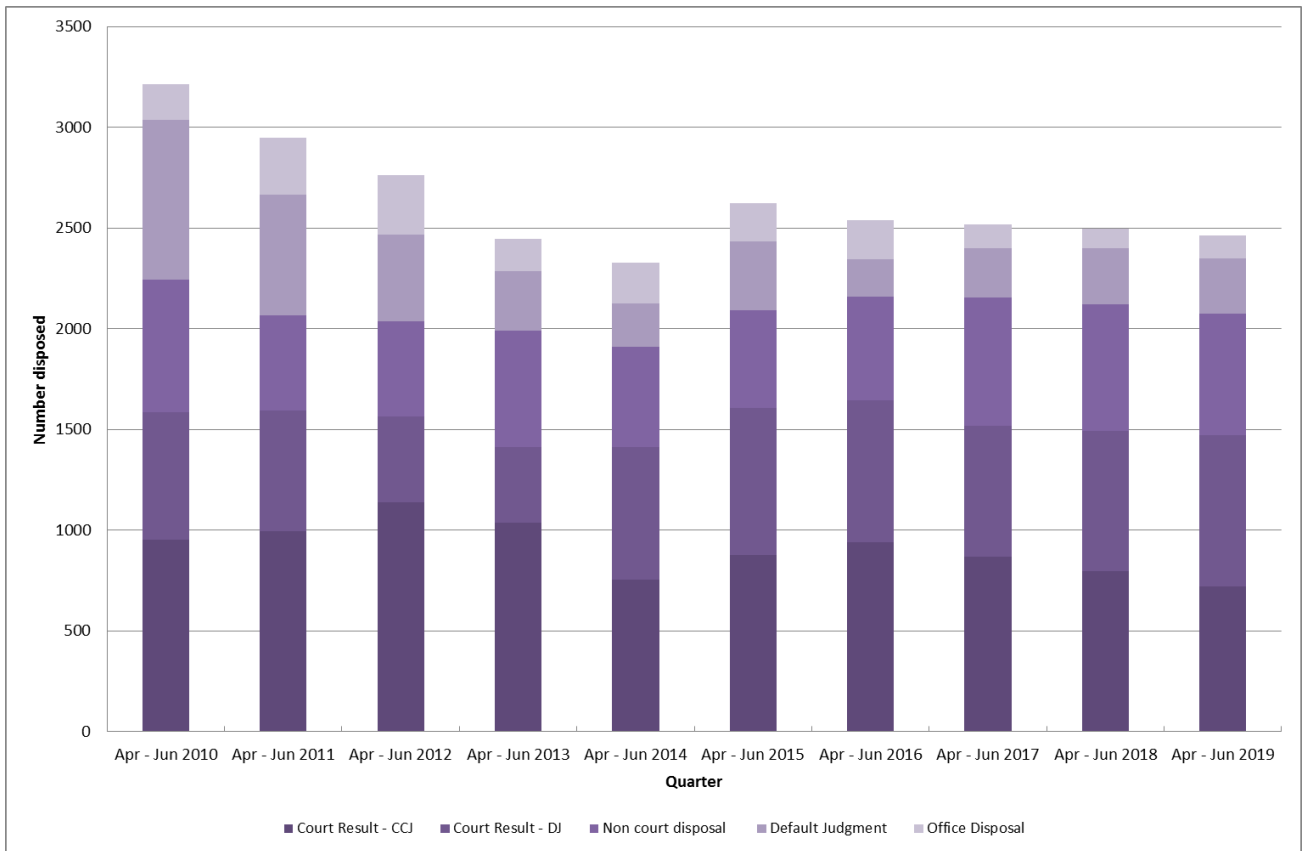
There were 1,982 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 2% decrease on the same quarter last year (2,013) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received – April to June 2010 to April to June 2019



In total, 2,462 civil bills were disposed, a 1% decrease on the 2,496 disposed during the same period in 2018 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal – April to June 2010 to April to June 2019



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 53 weeks, compared to the 61 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2018.

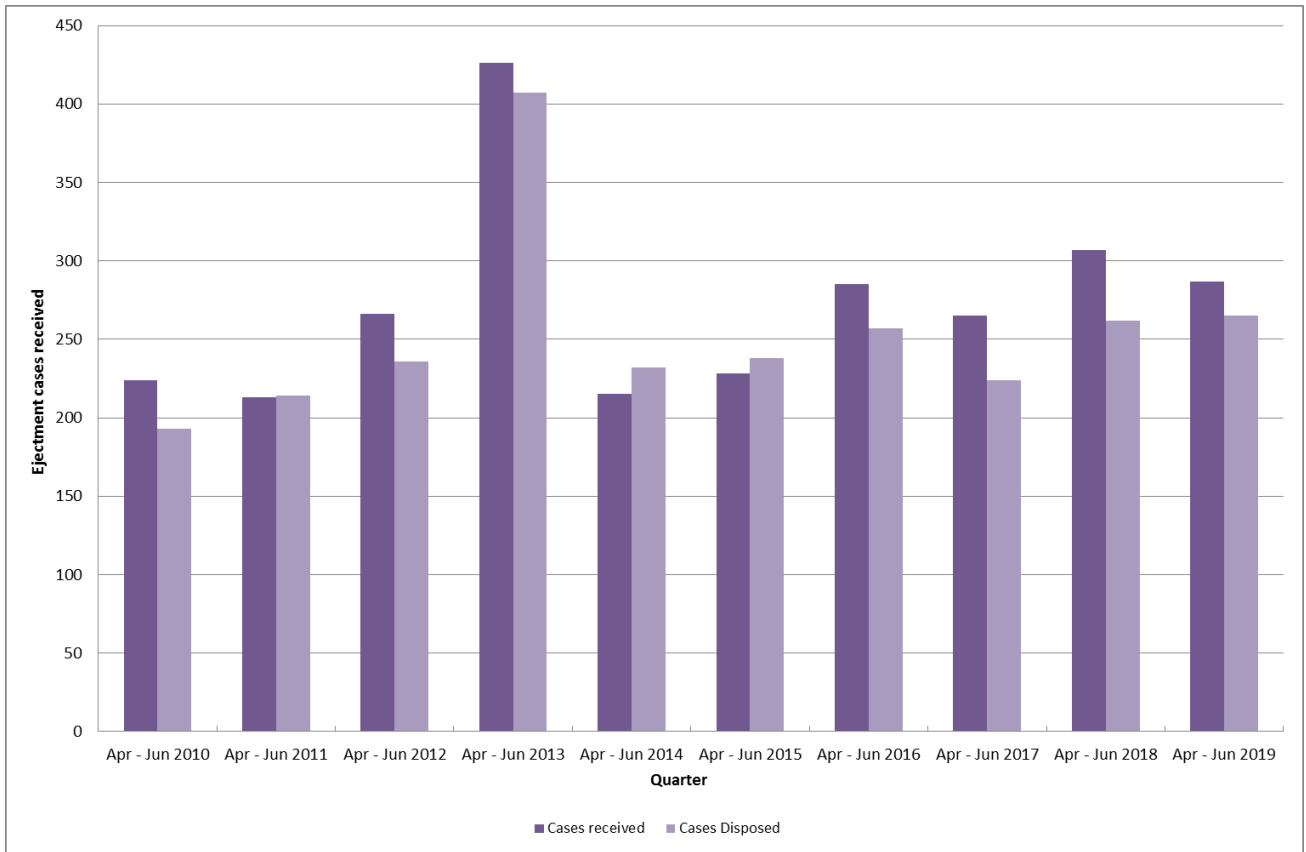
3.2 Equity

A total of 37 equity cases were received during April to June 2019, five more than the number received during the period April to June 2018 (32). The number of equity cases disposed increased from 26 during the period April to June 2018, to 32 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 92 weeks, up from 77 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 287 ejectment cases were received, down 7% on the 307 cases received during April to June 2018, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 1%, from 262 in the same quarter last year to 265 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed – April to June 2010 to April to June 2019

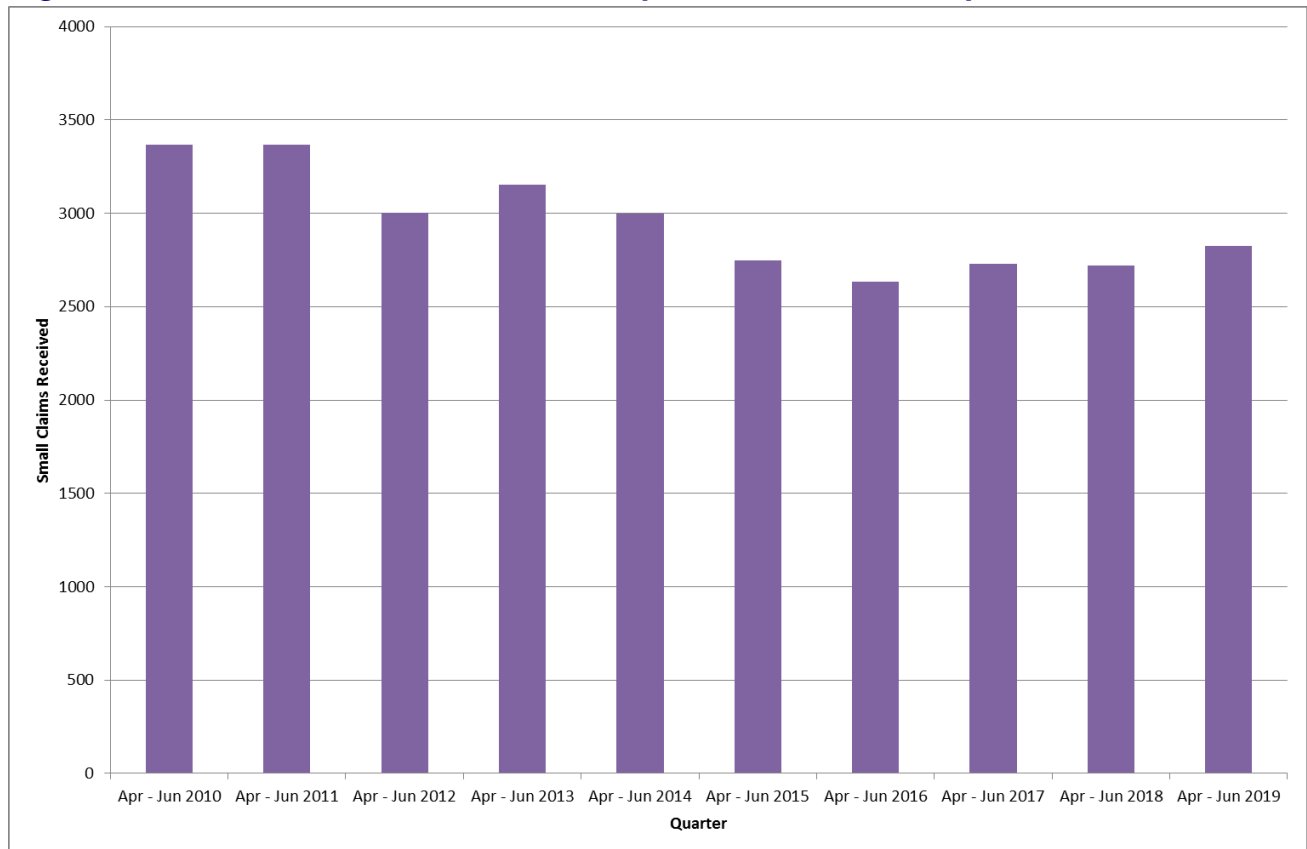


The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 22 weeks, the same as the average time taken during the April to June quarter in 2018.

3.4 Small claims

2,824 small claims were received, up 4% on the 2,720 received during the same quarter last year (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Small claims cases received – April to June 2010 to April to June 2019



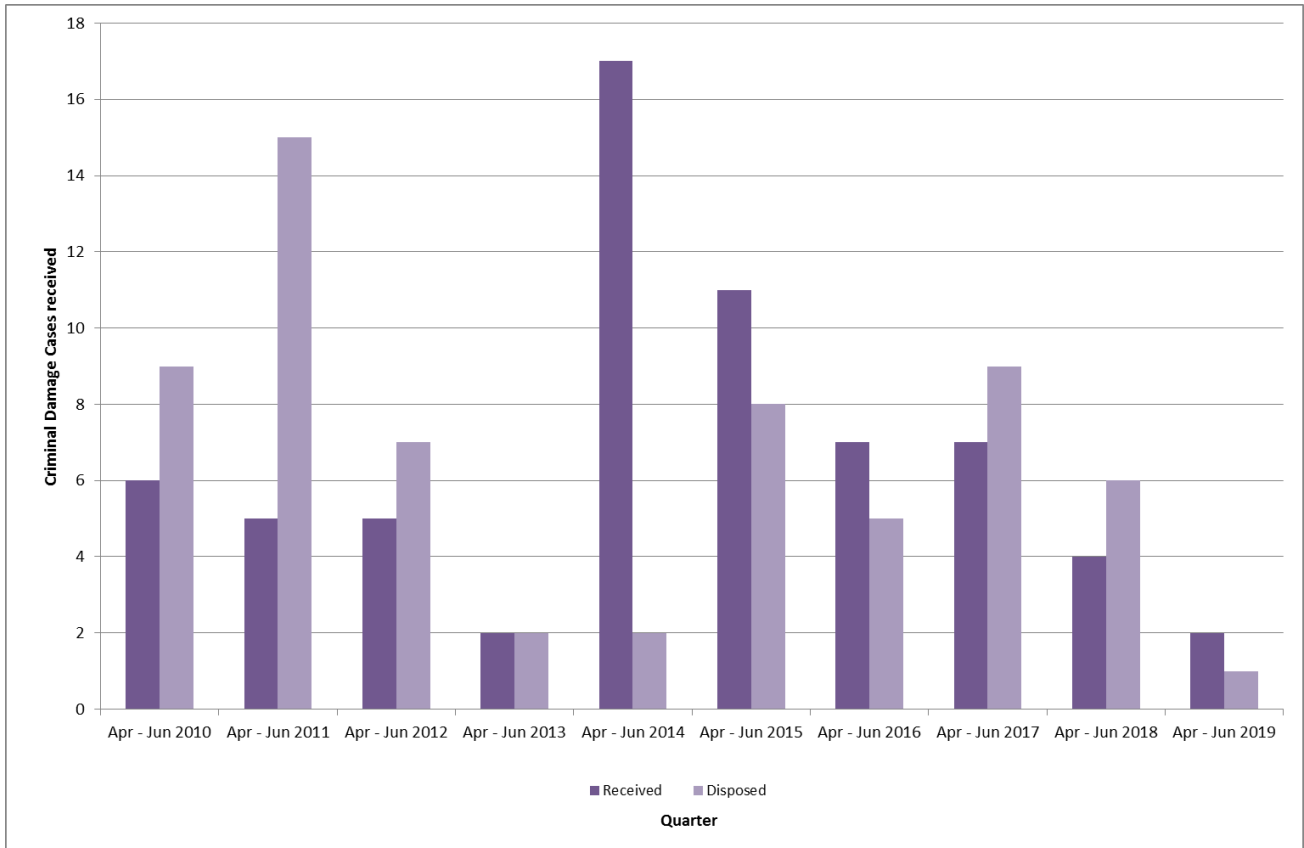
The number of small claims cases disposed decreased by 6% from 2,512 during April to June 2018 to 2,370 this quarter. Of the 2,370 small claims disposed during the quarter, the majority (63%) were disposed by way of default judgment.

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

3.5 Criminal Damage

Two criminal damage cases were received, with one disposed during the quarter. This compares with four cases received and six cases disposed during the same quarter in 2018 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed – April to June 2010 to April to June 2019



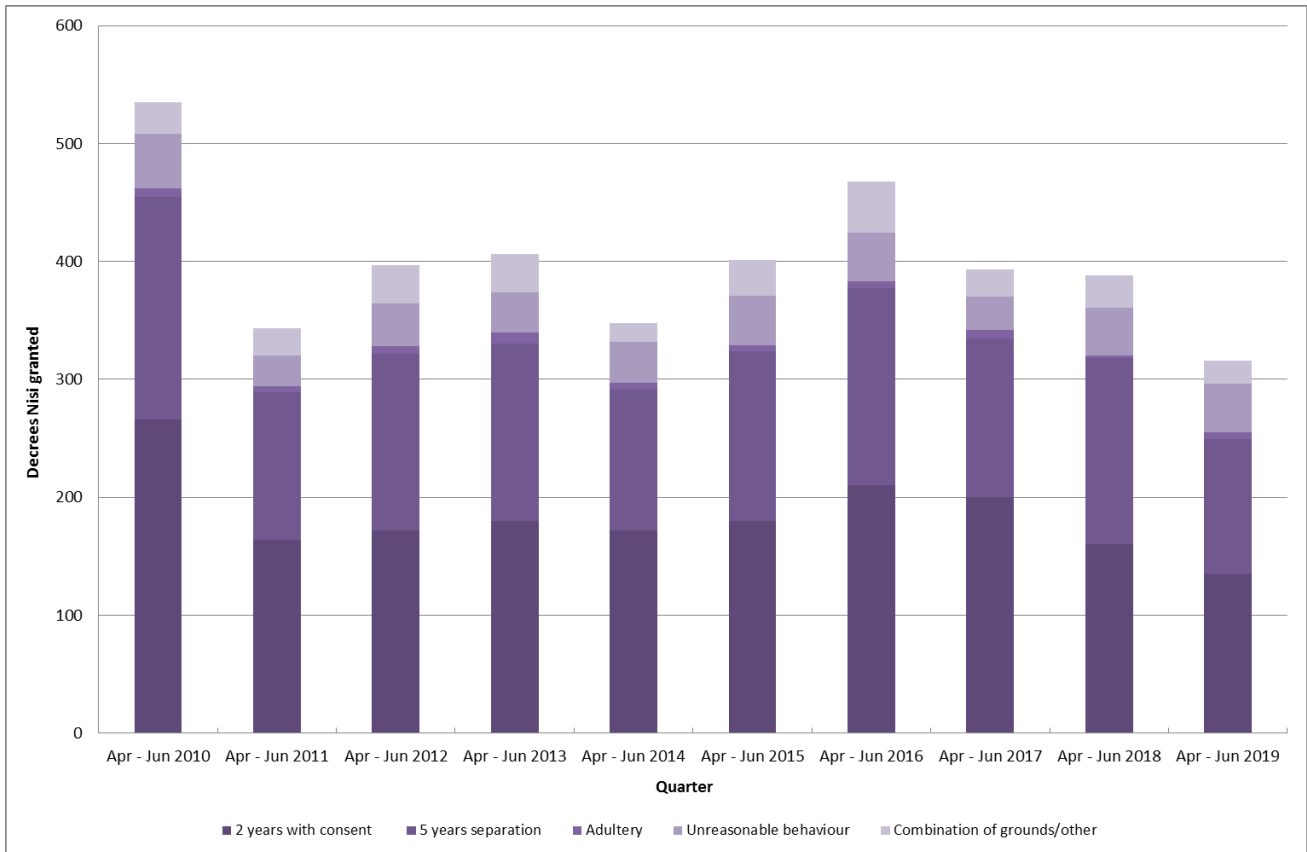
3.6 Divorces

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

A total of 316 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, down 19% on the 388 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 43% of decrees (135), followed by '5 years separation', accounting for 36% of decrees (114) (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type – April to June 2010 to April to June 2019



A total of 304 decrees absolute were issued in the County Court, an decrease of 5% on the 321 issued during the period April to June 2018. The most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 44% (133) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 35 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 33 weeks and eight weeks during the same period last year.

3.7 Licences

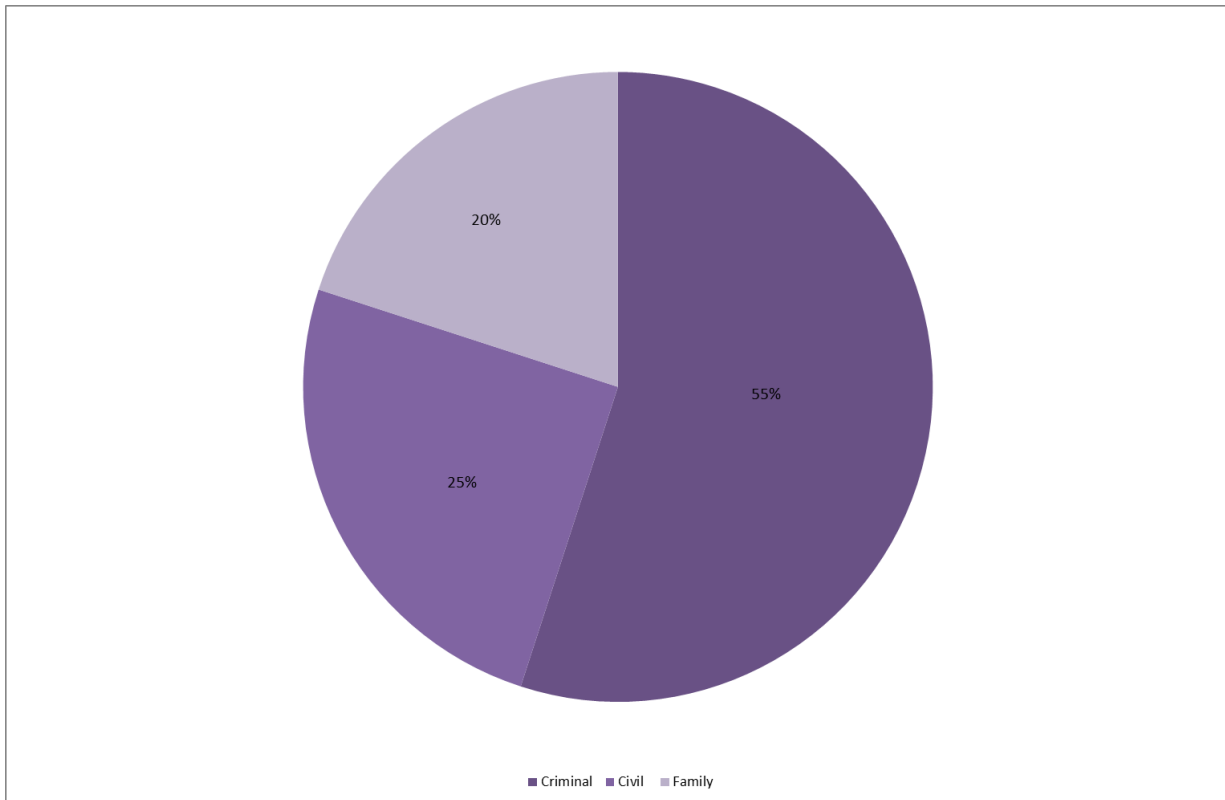
There were 90 licence applications received and 84 disposed, compared to the 85 received and 88 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,201 sitting days during the quarter, up 2% on the 1,180 sitting days recorded during the period April to June 2018.

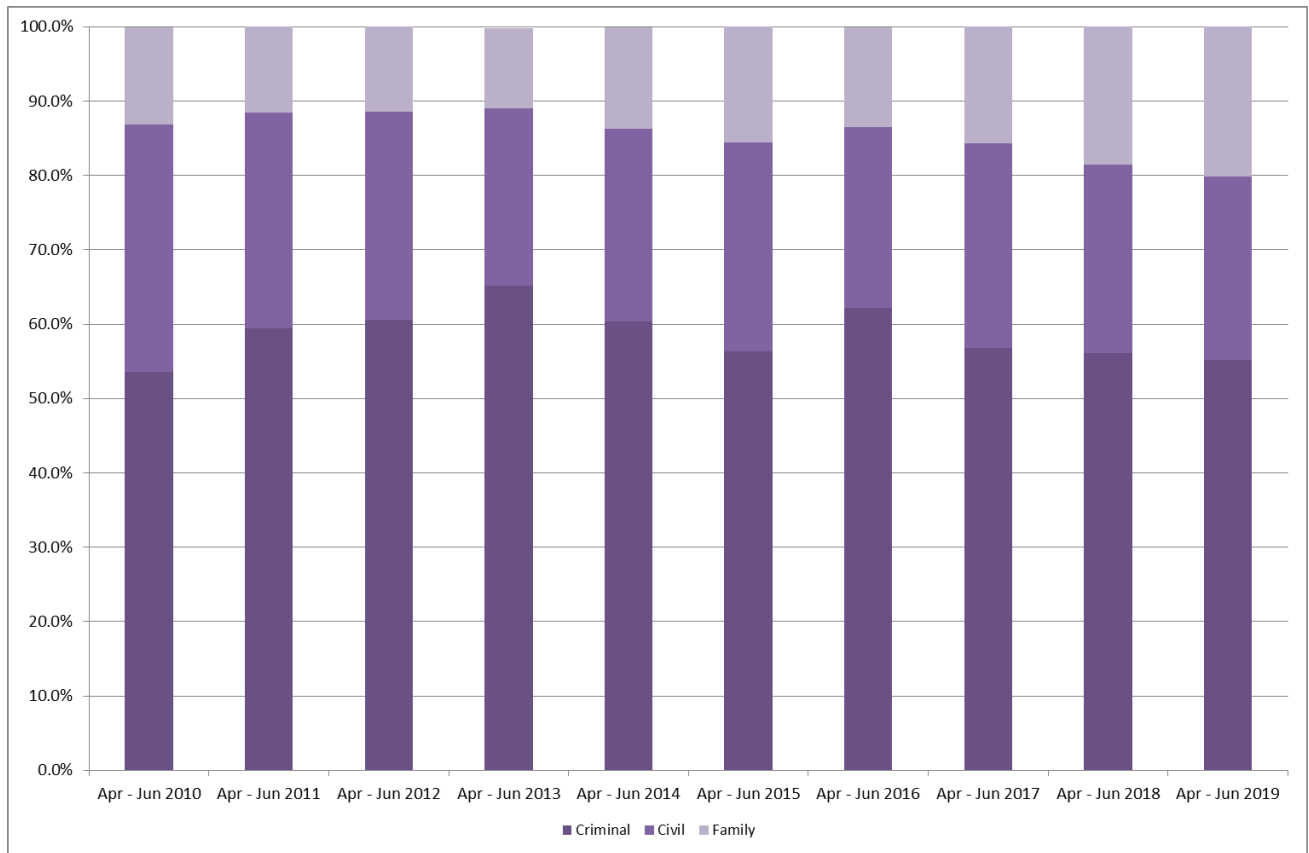
Within these 1,201 sitting days, 55% of time was spent on criminal business, 25% of time was spent on civil business and 20% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – April to June 2019



The proportion of time spent on criminal business has fluctuated during April to June quarter since 2007, peaking at 65% during the quarter April to June 2013. This is largely reflective of County Court Judges dealing with increased volumes of cases in the Crown Court over that particular period. The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 56% during April to June 2015, which was reflective of the action taken by a number of solicitors and counsel who withdrew their representation from a number of Crown Court cases in response to the introduction, in May 2015, of new rules in relation to legal aid remuneration. Following resolution of this dispute in February 2016, activity in the Crown Court increased, with the proportion of time spent by County Court Judges on criminal business increasing to 62% of sittings during April to June 2016, while the backlog of cases arising from the dispute was being addressed. Progress made in addressing the backlog has meant the proportion of time spent on criminal business decreased over the last three April to June quarters, with the proportion of time spent on criminal business falling to 55% this quarter.

Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – April to June 2010 to April to June 2019



APPENDIX 1 – TABLES

Civil Bills

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

Case	Laganside Courts	664
	Newtownards Court Office	147
	Downpatrick Court Office	76
	Craigavon Court Office	112
	Armagh Court Office	9
	Omagh Court Office	126
	Strabane Court Office	3
	Antrim Court Office	31
	Londonderry Court Office	95
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	121
	Newry Court Office	127
	Limavady Court Office	1
	Magherafelt Court Office	7
	Ballymena Court Office	28
	Lisburn Court Office	71
	Dungannon Court Office	21
	Civil Processing Centre	1183
	Total	2823
Application	Laganside Courts	385
	Newtownards Court Office	88
	Downpatrick Court Office	7
	Craigavon Court Office	77
	Armagh Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	67
	Antrim Court Office	11
	Londonderry Court Office	60
	Coleraine Court Office	53
	Newry Court Office	75
	Magherafelt Court Office	1
	Ballymena Court Office	15
	Lisburn Court Office	29
	Civil Processing Centre	335
Total	1207	

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

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Lagside Courts	355	422	777
Newtownards Court Office	130	7	137
Downpatrick Court Office	14	66	80
Craigavon Court Office	71	44	115
Armagh Court Office	4	6	10
Omagh Court Office	79	70	149
Strabane Court Office		4	4
Antrim Court Office	12	19	31
Londonderry Court Office	65	37	102
Enniskillen Court Office	1		1
Coleraine Court Office	79	52	131
Newry Court Office	81	51	132
Magherafelt Court Office	5	2	7
Ballymena Court Office	15	13	28
Lisburn Court Office	59	27	86
Dungannon Court Office	13	16	29
Civil Processing Centre	88	75	163
Total	1071	911	1982

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	393	259	271	11	42	976
	Newtownards Court Office	5	115	45	6	5	176
	Downpatrick Court Office	41	6	20	2	2	71
	Craigavon Court Office	25	26	30	2	2	85
	Armagh Court Office	7	9	3	1	1	21
	Omagh Court Office	56	99	42	5	10	212
	Strabane Court Office	1					1
	Antrim Court Office	2	2	7		2	13
	Londonderry Court Office	22	63	22		7	114
	Enniskillen Court Office	1	1	1		1	4
	Coleraine Court Office	77	68	44	3	5	197
	Newry Court Office	46	71	48	2	10	177
	Limavady Court Office		1				1
	Magherafelt Court Office	1	1	5			7
	Ballymena Court Office	6	5	4			15
	Lisburn Court Office	33	25	32	4	2	96
	Dungannon Court Office	3		2		1	6
	Civil Processing Centre		2	25	240	23	290
Total	719	753	601	276	113	2462	
Application	Laganside Courts	43	13	135			191
	Newtownards Court Office	6	1	11			18
	Downpatrick Court Office	1					1
	Craigavon Court Office	5	8	30			43
	Armagh Court Office			4			4
	Omagh Court Office	2	7	32			41
	Antrim Court Office	3		3			6
	Londonderry Court Office	5	9	22			36
	Coleraine Court Office	8	5	14			27
	Newry Court Office	9	6	16			31
	Magherafelt Court Office			1			1
	Ballymena Court Office	3	1	2			6
	Lisburn Court Office	2	1	7			10
	Civil Processing Centre			28			28
Total	87	51	305			443	

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	Processing Office	Laganside Courts	243	114	270	25		652
		Newtownards Court Office	23	42	54	1		120
		Downpatrick Court Office	7	6	30	4		47
		Craigavon Court Office	10	9	29	3		51
		Armagh Court Office	3	6	5	2		16
		Omagh Court Office	37	40	69	8	1	155
		Strabane Court Office			1			1
		Antrim Court Office		2	2			4
		Londonderry Court Office	25	21	34	5		85
		Enniskillen Court Office		1	1			2
		Coleraine Court Office	36	33	70	6		145
		Newry Court Office	28	38	44	7		117
		Limavady Court Office			1			1
		Magherafelt Court Office			2			2
		Ballymena Court Office		4	6	1		11
		Lisburn Court Office	16	10	28	4		58
		Dungannon Court Office	1	1	1			3
		Civil Processing Centre	2					2
Total			431	327	647	66	1	1472

Table 5: Outstanding civil bills with NID but no COR

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	832	1324	2156
Newtownards Court Office	143	14	157
Downpatrick Court Office	23	115	138
Craigavon Court Office	99	83	182
Armagh Court Office	7	11	18
Omagh Court Office	203	214	417
Strabane Court Office	2	4	6
Antrim Court Office	22	34	56
Londonderry Court Office	150	117	267
Enniskillen Court Office	4	2	6
Coleraine Court Office	136	133	269
Newry Court Office	117	92	209
Limavady Court Office	1		1
Magherafelt Court Office	7	5	12
Ballymena Court Office	29	30	59
Lisburn Court Office	89	62	151
Dungannon Court Office	11	19	30
Civil Processing Centre	149	113	262
Total	2024	2372	4396

Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	326	512	838
Newtownards Court Office	70	5	75
Downpatrick Court Office	4	24	28
Craigavon Court Office	49	26	75
Armagh Court Office	10	7	17
Omagh Court Office	64	67	131
Antrim Court Office	9	7	16
Londonderry Court Office	40	35	75
Enniskillen Court Office	1		1
Coleraine Court Office	67	57	124
Newry Court Office	48	61	109
Magherafelt Court Office	2	1	3
Ballymena Court Office	9	5	14
Lisburn Court Office	28	29	57
Dungannon Court Office	4	3	7
Civil Processing Centre	2	2	4
Total	733	841	1574

Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	58
	Newtownards Court Office	29
	Downpatrick Court Office	38
	Craigavon Court Office	44
	Armagh Court Office	65
	Omagh Court Office	61
	Strabane Court Office	57
	Antrim Court Office	40
	Londonderry Court Office	64
	Enniskillen Court Office	45
	Coleraine Court Office	58
	Newry Court Office	41
	Limavady Court Office	21
	Magherafelt Court Office	41
	Ballymena Court Office	36
	Lisburn Court Office	45
	Dungannon Court Office	68
	Civil Processing Centre	89
Total	53	

Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications

			Issue to disposal
Application	Processing Office	Laganside Courts	16
		Newtownards Court Office	7
		Downpatrick Court Office	14
		Craigavon Court Office	16
		Omagh Court Office	8
		Antrim Court Office	15
		Londonderry Court Office	7
		Coleraine Court Office	12
		Newry Court Office	10
		Ballymena Court Office	7
		Lisburn Court Office	11
		Total	

Equity

Table 9: Equity cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	8
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	11
	Strabane Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	4
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	6
	Total	37
Application	Laganside Courts	6
	Omagh Court Office	4
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	1
	Total	14

Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed

		Court result – CCJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	2	1	3
	Downpatrick Court Office	2	1	3
	Craigavon Court Office	1		1
	Omagh Court Office	5	1	6
	Londonderry Court Office	3	1	4
	Coleraine Court Office	9		9
	Newry Court Office	4		4
	Ballymena Court Office	1		1
	Lisburn Court Office	1		1
	Total	28	4	32
Application	Laganside Courts	1	2	3
	Omagh Court Office	2		2
	Londonderry Court Office		1	1
	Newry Court Office	3		3
	Lisburn Court Office	1		1
	Civil Processing Centre		1	1
	Total	7	4	11

Table 11: Outstanding equity cases

Case	Laganside Courts	32
	Newtownards Court Office	4
	Downpatrick Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	5
	Armagh Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	66
	Strabane Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	19
	Enniskillen Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	24
	Newry Court Office	31
	Ballymena Court Office	5
	Lisburn Court Office	7
	Dungannon Court Office	2
Civil Processing Centre	32	
Total	235	

Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	37
	Downpatrick Court Office	160
	Craigavon Court Office	26
	Omagh Court Office	134
	Londonderry Court Office	30
	Coleraine Court Office	76
	Newry Court Office	138
	Ballymena Court Office	34
	Lisburn Court Office	131
	Total	92
Application	Laganside Courts	0
	Omagh Court Office	4
	Newry Court Office	5
	Lisburn Court Office	30
	Total	8

Ejectment

Table 13: Ejectment cases received

Case	Laganside Courts	53
	Newtownards Court Office	18
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	9
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	9
	Coleraine Court Office	10
	Newry Court Office	10
	Ballymena Court Office	3
	Lisburn Court Office	16
	Civil Processing Centre	155
	Total	287

Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts		99	1	100
	Newtownards Court Office		39	1	40
	Downpatrick Court Office	3	2		5
	Craigavon Court Office		13		13
	Omagh Court Office		16	1	17
	Antrim Court Office		1		1
	Londonderry Court Office	1	24		25
	Coleraine Court Office		16		16
	Newry Court Office		15	1	16
	Magherafelt Court Office		1		1
	Ballymena Court Office		4		4
	Lisburn Court Office		26	1	27
	Total		4	256	5

Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

Case	Laganside Courts	18
	Newtownards Court Office	3
	Downpatrick Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	7
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	6
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	7
	Total	53

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	20
	Newtownards Court Office	20
	Downpatrick Court Office	17
	Craigavon Court Office	18
	Omagh Court Office	41
	Antrim Court Office	23
	Londonderry Court Office	24
	Coleraine Court Office	19
	Newry Court Office	12
	Magherafelt Court Office	55
	Ballymena Court Office	13
	Lisburn Court Office	29
	Total	22

Small Claims

Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	117
	Newtownards Court Office	26
	Downpatrick Court Office	5
	Craigavon Court Office	22
	Armagh Court Office	6
	Omagh Court Office	21
	Londonderry Court Office	22
	Enniskillen Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	21
	Newry Court Office	20
	Ballymena Court Office	6
	Lisburn Court Office	10
	Dungannon Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	2544
	Total	2824
Application	Laganside Courts	9
	Newtownards Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	2
	Londonderry Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	3
	Civil Processing Centre	5
	Total	25

Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Case	Laganside Courts	111
	Newtownards Court Office	31
	Downpatrick Court Office	5
	Craigavon Court Office	17
	Armagh Court Office	7
	Omagh Court Office	27
	Londonderry Court Office	25
	Enniskillen Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	24
	Newry Court Office	19
	Ballymena Court Office	9
	Lisburn Court Office	11
	Dungannon Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	15	
Total	305	

Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Non-court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	81	11	54	3	149
	Newtownards Court Office	35	5	9	1	50
	Downpatrick Court Office	2		1		3
	Craigavon Court Office	25	6			31
	Armagh Court Office	4		1		5
	Omagh Court Office	30	7	7	3	47
	Londonderry Court Office	18		2		20
	Enniskillen Court Office		2	1		3
	Coleraine Court Office	16	3	2	1	22
	Newry Court Office	8		4		12
	Ballymena Court Office	10				10
	Lisburn Court Office	9	4	1		14
	Dungannon Court Office	1				1
	Civil Processing Centre	3	3	515	1482	2003
	Total	242	41	597	1490	2370
Application	Laganside Courts	9	4			13
	Newtownards Court Office	1				1
	Craigavon Court Office	3				3
	Omagh Court Office	4				4
	Londonderry Court Office	1				1
	Coleraine Court Office	4				4
	Lisburn Court Office	2				2
	Total	24	4			28

Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD

Laganside Courts	175
Newtownards Court Office	19
Downpatrick Court Office	3
Craigavon Court Office	25
Armagh Court Office	9
Omagh Court Office	29
Londonderry Court Office	19
Enniskillen Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	38
Newry Court Office	33
Ballymena Court Office	9
Lisburn Court Office	7
Dungannon Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	25
Total	394

Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	23
	Newtownards Court Office	15
	Downpatrick Court Office	14
	Craigavon Court Office	19
	Armagh Court Office	18
	Omagh Court Office	27
	Londonderry Court Office	21
	Coleraine Court Office	24
	Newry Court Office	22
	Ballymena Court Office	16
	Lisburn Court Office	22
	Dungannon Court Office	20
	Total	21
Application	Laganside Courts	6
	Newtownards Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	10
	Omagh Court Office	9
	Londonderry Court Office	7
	Coleraine Court Office	7
	Lisburn Court Office	17
	Total	8

Criminal Damage

Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	1
	Omagh Court Office	1
	Total	2

Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	1
	Total	1

Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases

Laganside Courts	20
Newtownards Court Office	2
Armagh Court Office	1
Omagh Court Office	7
Coleraine Court Office	2
Newry Court Office	7
Ballymena Court Office	1
Dungannon Court Office	1
Total	41

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	34
	Total	34

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	35	38	2	4	1	80
Downpatrick Court Office	12	9	1	1	1	24
Craigavon Court Office	14	16	1	8	3	42
Omagh Court Office	11	13		1	1	26
Londonderry Court Office	12	10	1	11	6	40
Coleraine Court Office	33	22	1	11	4	71
Newry Court Office	18	6		5	4	33
Total	135	114	6	41	20	316

Table 27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	36	36	2	9	2	85
Downpatrick Court Office	17	10		3	2	32
Craigavon Court Office	18	14		4	3	39
Armagh Court Office				1		1
Omagh Court Office	8	11		5		24
Londonderry Court Office	12	15		6	9	42
Coleraine Court Office	25	17	2	3	5	52
Newry Court Office	16	6		1	4	27
Ballymena Court Office	1					1
Dungannon Court Office					1	1
Total	133	109	4	32	26	304

Table 28: Matrimonial applications received

	Combination of grounds/other	Ancillary relief	Total
Laganside Courts		6	6
Newtownards Court Office		2	2
Craigavon Court Office	1	6	7
Omagh Court Office	1	5	6
Londonderry Court Office		9	9
Coleraine Court Office	2	14	16
Newry Court Office	1	7	8
Ballymena Court Office		1	1
Dungannon Court Office		1	1
Total	5	51	56

Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed

	Combination of grounds/other	Ancillary relief	Total
Laganside Courts		3	3
Craigavon Court Office		3	3
Armagh Court Office		2	2
Omagh Court Office		3	3
Londonderry Court Office	1	13	14
Coleraine Court Office	2	8	10
Newry Court Office	1	8	9
Dungannon Court Office		2	2
Total	4	42	46

Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	30	8
Downpatrick Court Office	39	6
Craigavon Court Office	38	8
Omagh Court Office	63	8
Londonderry Court Office	36	8
Coleraine Court Office	26	7
Newry Court Office	32	6
Total	35	8

Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications

	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	38
Craigavon Court Office	33
Armagh Court Office	291
Omagh Court Office	44
Londonderry Court Office	78
Coleraine Court Office	33
Newry Court Office	20
Dungannon Court Office	25
Total	56

Excludes non-court disposals

Licences

Table 32: Licences received and disposed

Court Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	27	18
Newtownards	13	18
Newry	7	7
Laganside Courts	13	14
Craigavon	6	6
Omagh	17	14
Londonderry	7	7
Total	90	84

County Court 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			
Antrim	101	2:28:02	249:13:00	225:35:00	23:38:00	0:00:00
Ballymena	7	2:19:17	16:15:00	0:00:00	15:15:00	1:00:00
Laganside	451	3:17:12	1482:14:00	696:15:00	337:51:00	448:08:00
Armagh	34	2:34:00	87:16:00	2:00:00	84:35:00	0:41:00
Limavady	1	3:05:00	3:05:00	0:00:00	2:40:00	0:25:00
Lisburn	13	2:13:27	28:55:00	9:55:00	19:00:00	0:00:00
Magherafelt	5	0:45:00	3:45:00	0:00:00	3:40:00	0:05:00
Dungannon	115	3:13:31	370:55:00	265:01:00	24:44:00	81:10:00
Downpatrick	59	2:40:22	157:42:00	139:36:00	15:56:00	2:10:00
Craigavon	117	2:27:58	288:33:00	187:45:00	18:19:00	82:29:00
Strabane	9	2:57:26	26:37:00	0:45:00	25:29:00	0:23:00
Omagh	30	3:22:30	101:15:00	21:15:00	63:43:00	16:17:00
Enniskillen	6	3:05:50	18:35:00	2:00:00	15:41:00	0:54:00
Coleraine	27	3:30:55	94:55:00	14:10:00	73:15:00	7:30:00
Londonderry	126	2:10:39	274:22:00	191:26:00	38:12:00	43:44:00
Newtownards	38	1:48:17	68:35:00	7:55:00	60:10:00	0:30:00
Newry	62	2:25:05	149:56:00	124:18:00	19:51:00	5:47:00
Total	1201	2:50:57	3422:08:00	1887:56:00	841:59:00	691:13:00

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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