

Analytical Services Group
County Court Bulletin

October to December 2019

Research and Statistical Bulletin

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period October to December 2019 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2010. 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 2019:
- There were 1,757 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 3 % decrease on the same quarter last year (1,820). In total, 2,521 civil bills were disposed, a 1% decrease on the same period in 2018 (2,538).
- A total of 34 equity cases were received, down by four cases from October to December 2018 (38). While 23 equity cases were disposed, this was lower than the figure during the same period last year (29).
- A total of 280 ejectment cases were received, up 4% on the 270 cases received during October to December 2018, with the number of ejectment cases disposed decreasing by 6%, from 243 in the same quarter last year to 228 this quarter.
- At 1,916 the number of small claims received was down 8% on the 2,081 cases received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 11% from 1,937 during October to December 2018 to 2,144 this quarter.
- Five criminal damage cases were received the same as the number received during the period October to December 2018. Seven criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, compared with four during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 412 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, down 8% on the 450 granted during the same period last year.
- County Court and District Judges sat on a total of 1207 sitting days during the quarter, slightly down on the 1213 days recorded during the period October to December 2018. Some 54% of time was spent on criminal business with 25% spent on civil business and 20% on family business (compared to 53%, 25% and 22% respectively during October to December 2018).

CONTENTS

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	2
3. Findings	4
3.1 Ordinary civil bills	
3.2 Equity	
3.3 Ejectment	
3.4 Small claims	
3.5 Criminal damage	
3.6 Divorces	
3.7 Licences	
3.8 Sitting Days	
Appendix 1 – Tables	12
Appendix 2 – Explanatory Notes	28

Figure	Page
Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received: Oct to Dec 2010 to Oct to Dec 2019	4
Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal: Oct to Dec 2010 to Oct to Dec 2019	5
Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed: Oct to Dec 2010 to Oct to Dec 2019	6
Figure 4: Small claims cases received: Oct to Dec 2010 to Oct to Dec 2019	7
Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed: Oct to Dec 2010 to Oct to Dec 2019	8
Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type: Oct to Dec 2010 to Oct to Dec 2019	9
Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: Oct to Dec 2019	10
Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: Oct to Dec 2010 to Oct to Dec 2019	11

Table	Page
Table 1: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications received	12
Table 2: Number of ordinary civil bill cases with NID received by Judicial Level	13
Table 3: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications disposed	14
Table 4: Number of ordinary civil bill cases by amount awarded	15
Table 5: Outstanding civil bills with NID but no COR	15
Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR	16
Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases	16
Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications	17
Table 9: Equity cases and applications received	17

<u>Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed</u>	18
<u>Table 11: Outstanding equity cases</u>	18
<u>Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity</u>	19
<u>Table 13: Ejectment cases received</u>	19
<u>Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed</u>	20
<u>Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID</u>	20
<u>Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment</u>	20
<u>Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received</u>	21
<u>Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NOD received</u>	21
<u>Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed</u>	22
<u>Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD</u>	22
<u>Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims</u>	23
<u>Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received</u>	23
<u>Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed</u>	23
<u>Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases</u>	24
<u>Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage</u>	24
<u>Table 26: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted</u>	24
<u>Table 27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued</u>	25
<u>Table 28: Matrimonial applications received</u>	25
<u>Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed</u>	26
<u>Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions</u>	26
<u>Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications</u>	26
<u>Table 32: Licences received and disposed</u>	27
<u>Table 33: County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days</u>	27

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 final quarter of 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 first quarter of 2020 and will be published on 15th May 2020.

2.5 Data quality and validation

ASG statisticians based in the NICTS have invested significant time and effort creating an 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).

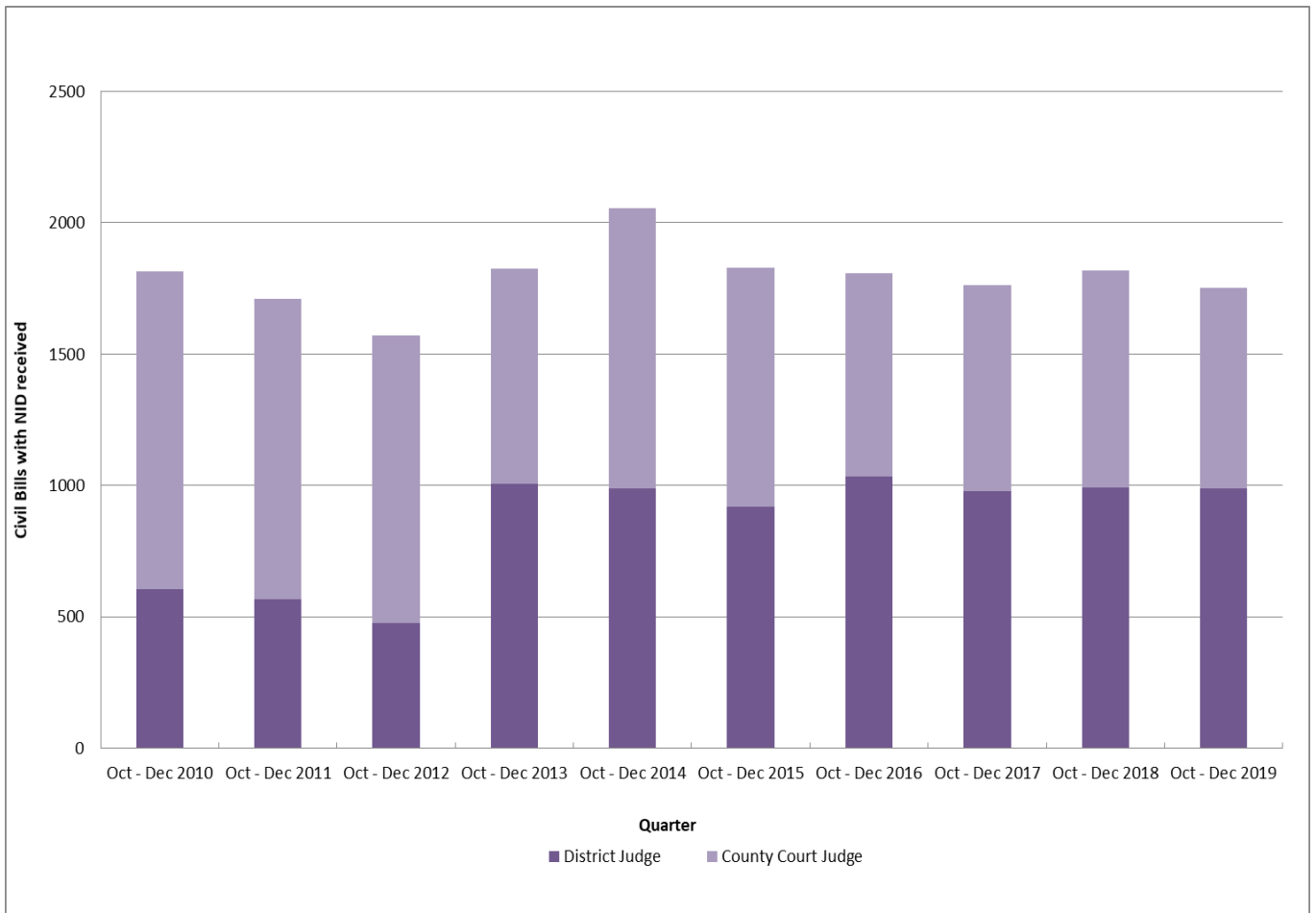
Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

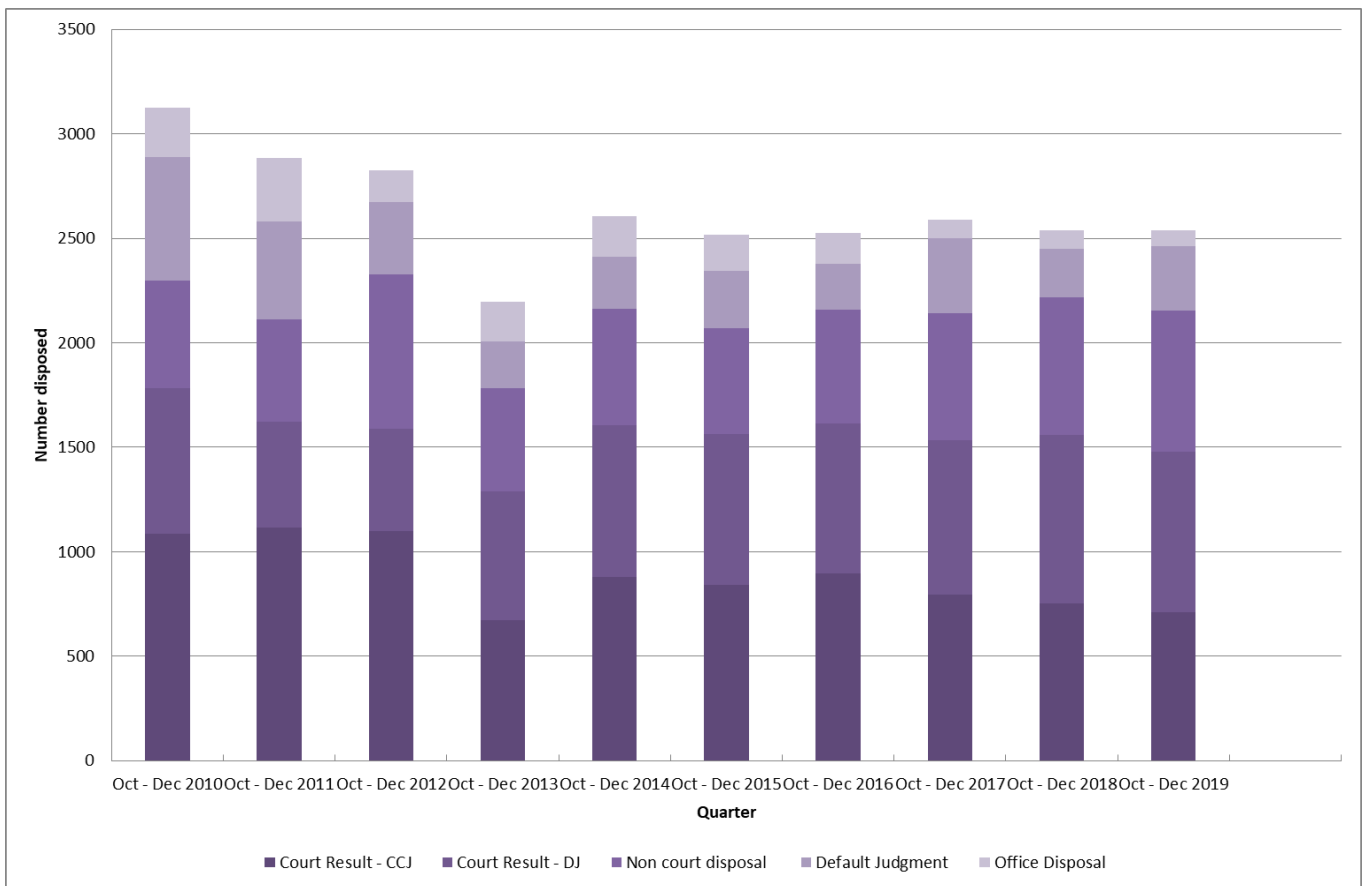
There were 1,757 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 3% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,820) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received – October to December 2010 to October to December 2019



In total, 2,521 civil bills were disposed, a 1% decrease on the 2,538 disposed during the same period in 2018 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal – October to December 2010 to October to December 2019



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 53 weeks, compared to the 54 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2018.

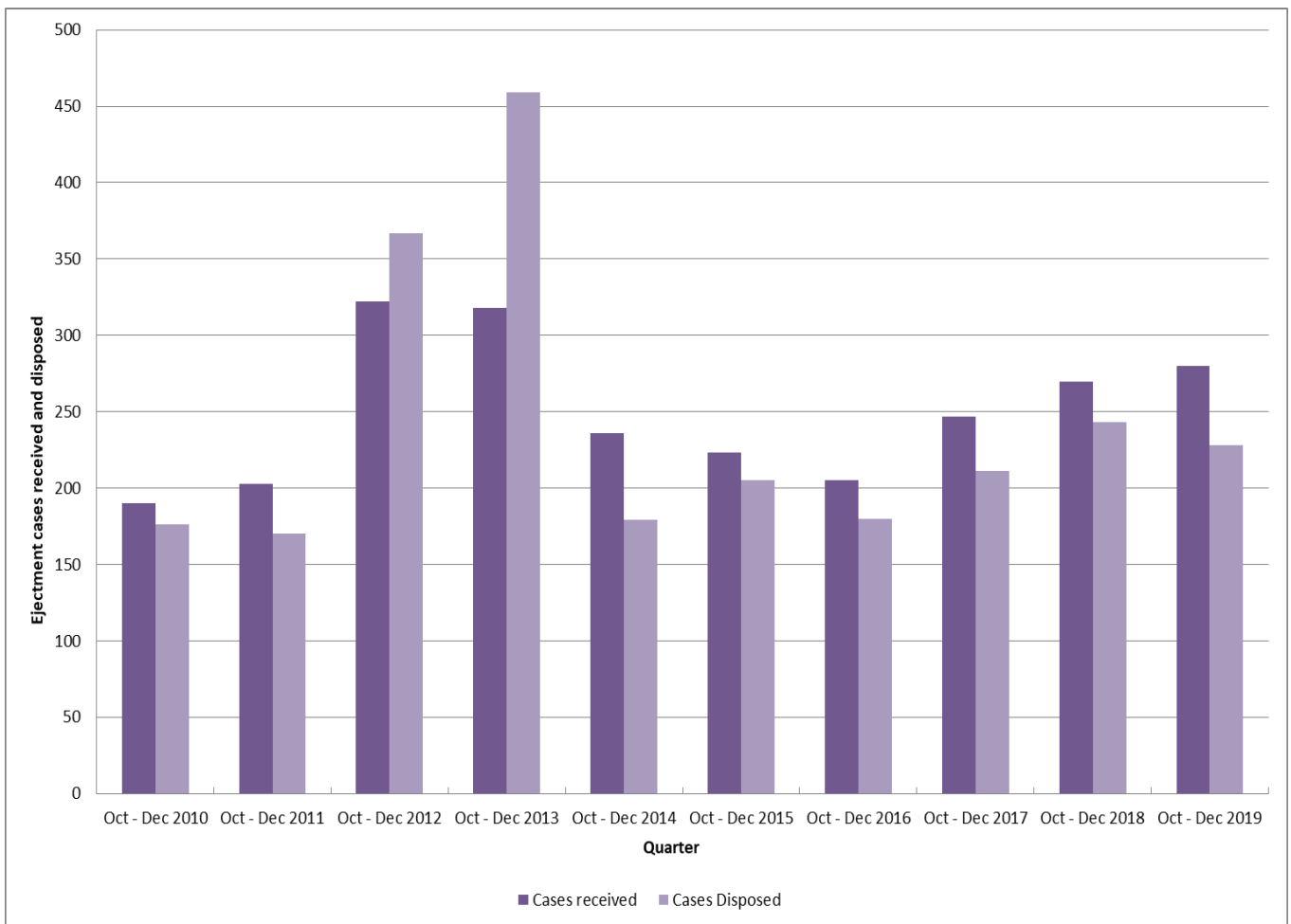
3.2 Equity

A total of 34 equity cases were received during October to December 2019, four less than the number received during the period October to December 2018 (38). The number of equity cases disposed decreased from 29 during the period October to December 2018, to 23 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 60 weeks, down from 70 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 280 ejectment cases were received, up 4% on the 270 cases received during October to December 2018, with the number of ejectment cases disposed decreasing by 6%, from 243 in the same quarter last year to 228 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed – October to December 2010 to October to December 2019

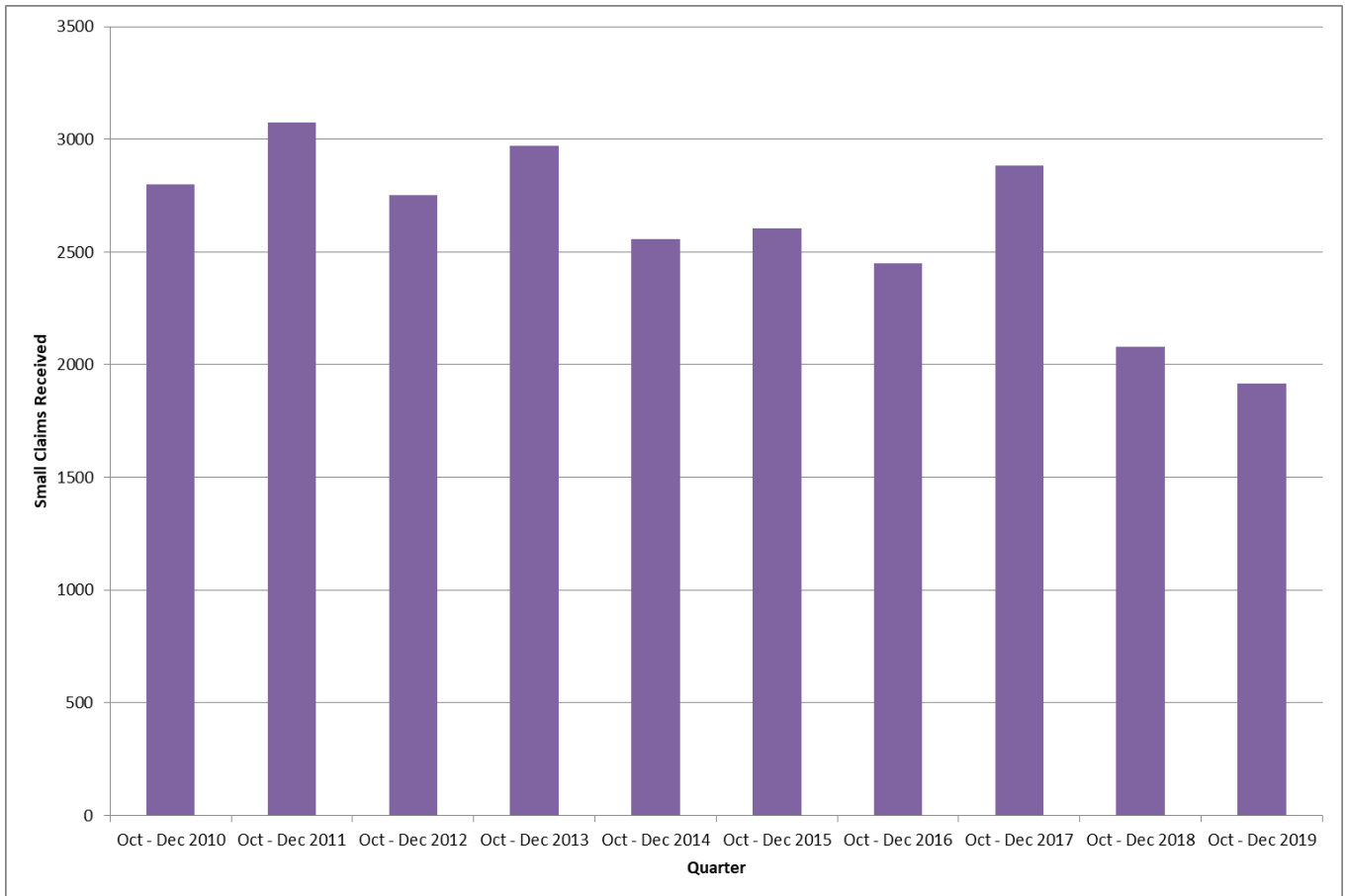


The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 21 weeks, a decrease on the 24 weeks taken during the October to December quarter in 2018.

3.4 Small claims

1,916 small claims were received, down 8% on the 2,081 received during the same quarter last year (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Small claims cases received – October to December 2010 to October to December 2019



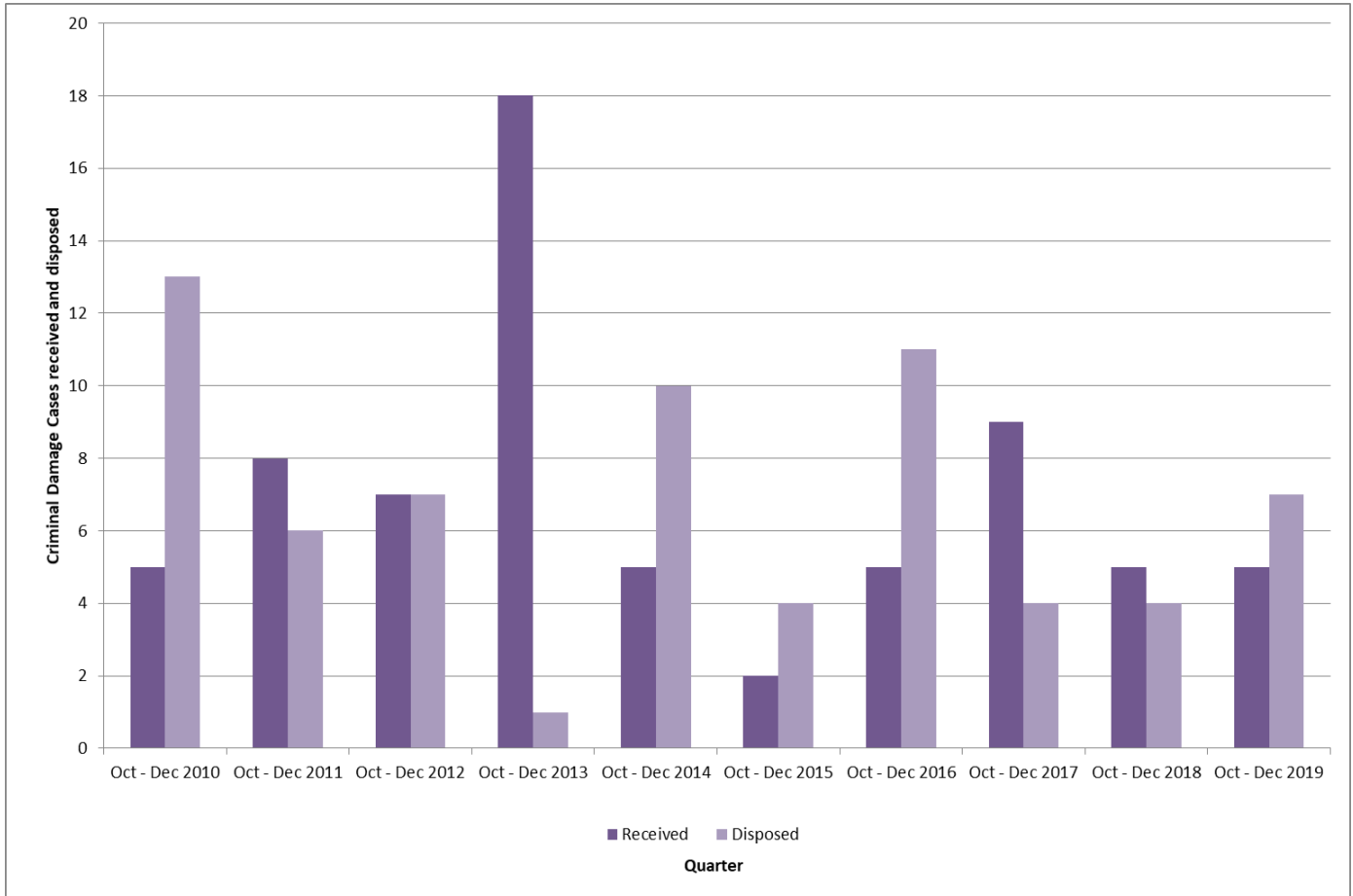
The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 11% from 1,937 during October to December 2018 to 2,144 this quarter. Of the 2,144 small claims disposed during the quarter, the majority (69%) were disposed by way of default judgment.

The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 21 weeks, a decrease on the 24 weeks taken in the corresponding quarter last year.

3.5 Criminal Damage

Five criminal damage cases were received, with seven disposed during the quarter. This compares with five cases received and four cases disposed during the same quarter in 2018 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed – October to December 2010 to October to December 2019



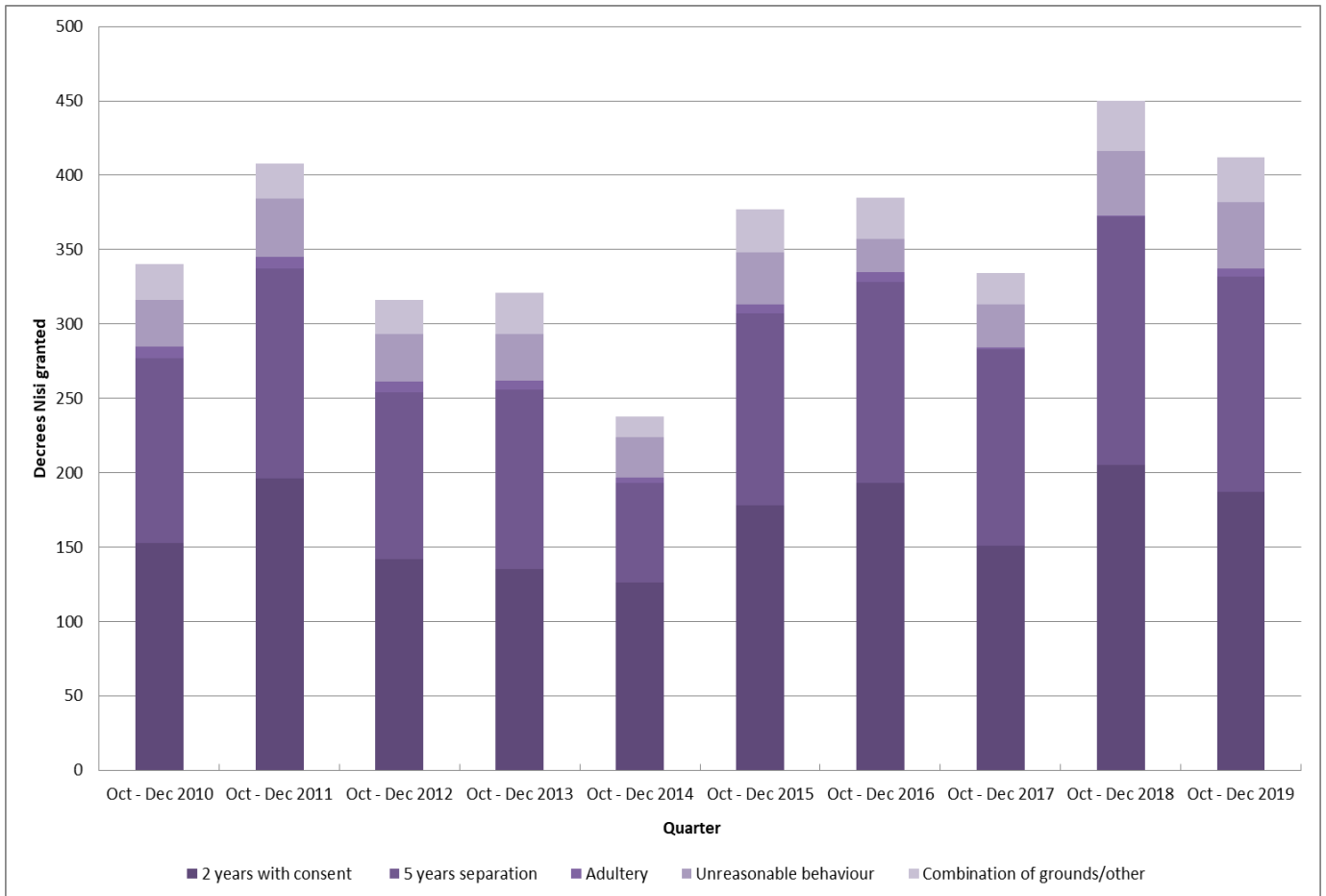
3.6 Divorces

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 412 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, down 8% on the 450 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 45% of decrees (187), followed by '5 years separation', accounting for 35% of decrees (145) (Figure 6).

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



A total of 476 decrees absolute were issued in the County Court, an increase of 37% on the 347 issued during the period October to December 2018. The most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 47% (222) 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 32 weeks and eight weeks during the same period last year.

3.7 Licences

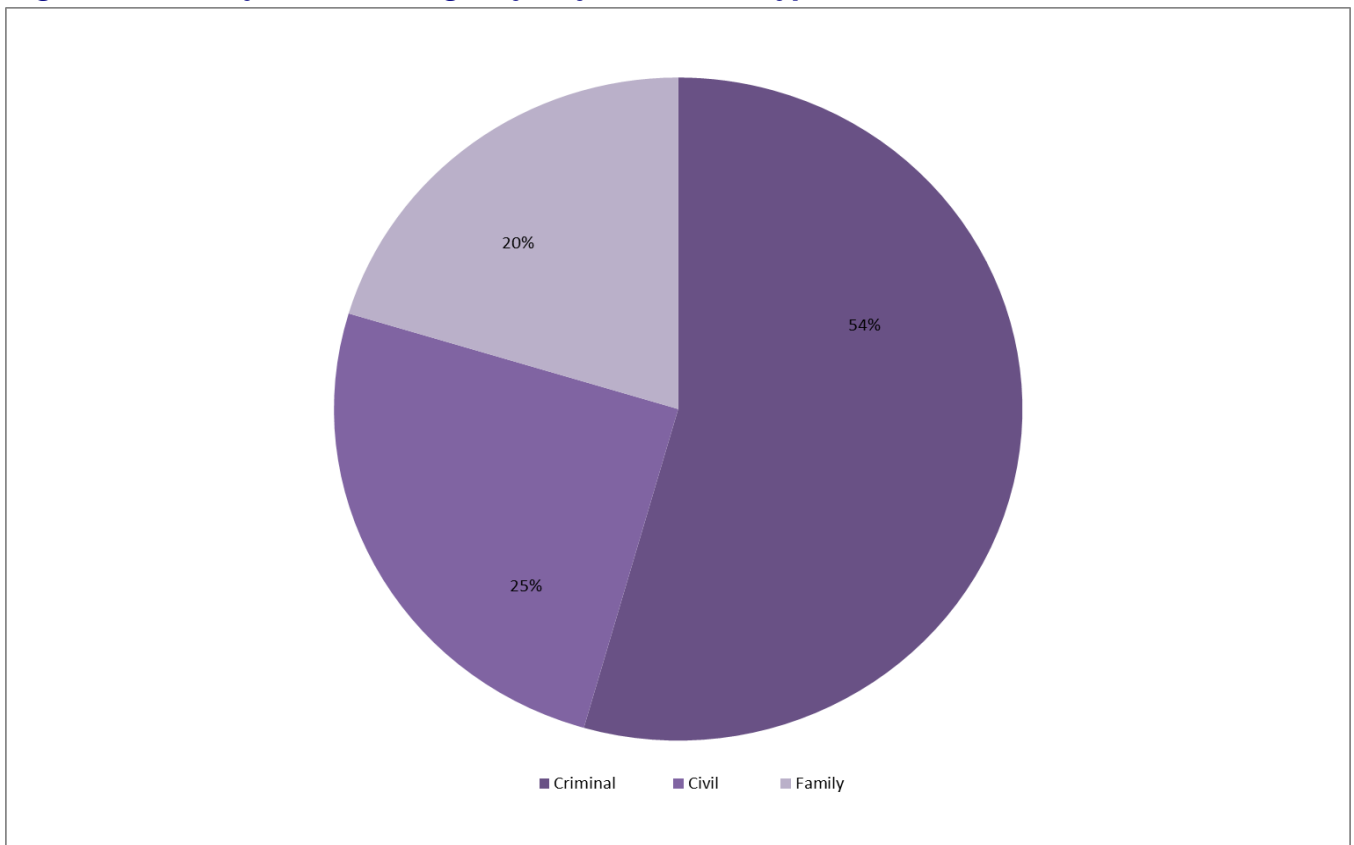
There were 67 licence applications received and 77 disposed, compared to the 87 received and 72 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1207 sitting days during the quarter, similar to the 1213 sitting days recorded during the period October to December 2018.

Within these 1207 sitting days, 54% 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 – October to December 2019

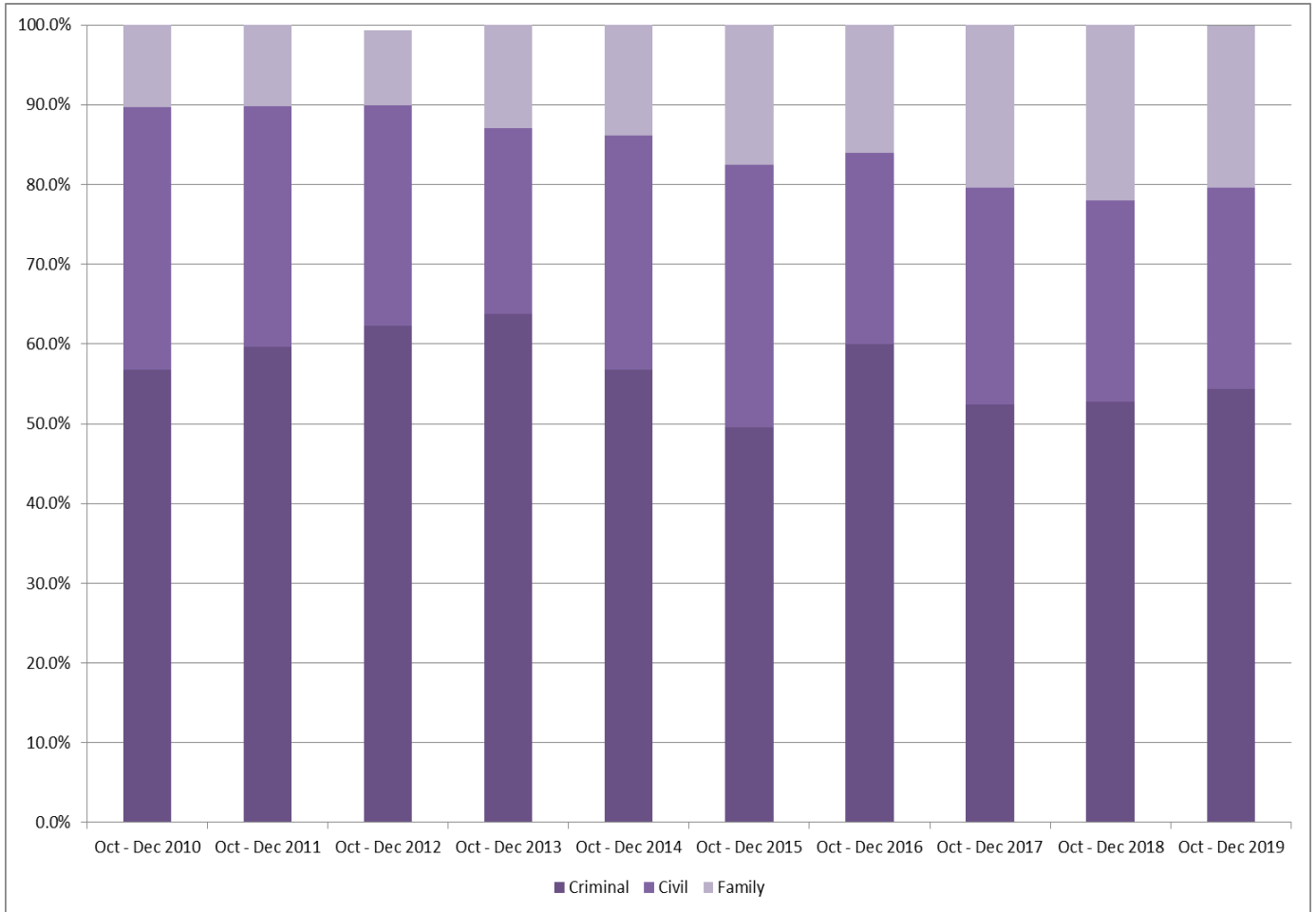


Due to rounding, the percentages may not add up to 100%

The proportion of time spent on criminal business has 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 that particular period. The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 49.5% during October to December 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 has fluctuated slightly with the proportion of time spent by County Court Judges on criminal business increasing to 60% of sittings during October to December 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 was circa 52% in both 2017 and 2018, with the proportion of time spent on criminal business rising to 54% this quarter.

Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – October to December 2010 to October to December 2019



APPENDIX 1 – TABLES

Civil Bills

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

Case	Laganside Courts	624
	Newtownards Court Office	133
	Downpatrick Court Office	62
	Craigavon Court Office	98
	Armagh Court Office	12
	Omagh Court Office	118
	Antrim Court Office	28
	Londonderry Court Office	65
	Enniskillen Court Office	7
	Coleraine Court Office	61
	Newry Court Office	93
	Limavady Court Office	2
	Magherafelt Court Office	10
	Ballymena Court Office	40
	Lisburn Court Office	76
	Dungannon Court Office	9
Civil Processing Centre	847	
Total	2285	
Application	Laganside Courts	260
	Newtownards Court Office	81
	Downpatrick Court Office	20
	Craigavon Court Office	61
	Armagh Court Office	7
	Omagh Court Office	43
	Antrim Court Office	5
	Londonderry Court Office	65
	Coleraine Court Office	23
	Newry Court Office	68
	Ballymena Court Office	10
	Lisburn Court Office	26
	Civil Processing Centre	502
	Total	1171

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

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	372	349	721
Newtownards Court Office	141	20	161
Downpatrick Court Office	9	52	61
Craigavon Court Office	59	42	101
Armagh Court Office	10	11	21
Omagh Court Office	65	59	124
Antrim Court Office	13	17	30
Londonderry Court Office	52	22	74
Enniskillen Court Office	4	3	7
Coleraine Court Office	43	40	83
Newry Court Office	73	52	125
Limavady Court Office	1	1	2
Magherafelt Court Office	7	3	10
Ballymena Court Office	27	14	41
Lisburn Court Office	48	38	86
Dungannon Court Office	14	7	21
Civil Processing Centre	53	36	89
Total	991	766	1757

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	428	270	244	2	32	976
	Newtownards Court Office	9	93	55	2	1	160
	Dowpatrick Court Office	47	4	43		3	97
	Craigavon Court Office	20	53	37	1	3	114
	Armagh Court Office	3	5	9		1	18
	Omagh Court Office	54	97	46	5	4	206
	Strabane Court Office		1				1
	Antrim Court Office	9	6	16		1	32
	Londonderry Court Office	19	41	36	1	2	99
	Enniskillen Court Office		2	1			3
	Coleraine Court Office	43	55	45	3	1	147
	Newry Court Office	30	75	49	1	7	162
	Limavady Court Office					1	1
	Magherafelt Court Office	1	2	3			6
	Ballymena Court Office	9	11	10		4	34
	Lisburn Court Office	28	37	54	2	4	125
	Dungannon Court Office	4	6	4			14
	Civil Processing Centre	1	2	25	286	12	326
Total	705	760	677	303	76	2521	
Application	Laganside Courts	41	17	126			184
	Newtownards Court Office	11	3	17			31
	Dowpatrick Court Office	5		10			15
	Craigavon Court Office	6	2	33			41
	Armagh Court Office	1		3			4
	Omagh Court Office	6	4	17			27
	Antrim Court Office	2		1			3
	Londonderry Court Office	3	11	24			38
	Coleraine Court Office	7	2	13			22
	Newry Court Office	8	4	25			37
	Ballymena Court Office	1	3	4			8
	Lisburn Court Office	2		9			11
	Civil Processing Centre			30			30
	Total	93	46	312			451

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	244	132	297	25		698
		Newtownards Court Office	21	38	43			102
		Downpatrick Court Office	6	4	35	6		51
		Craigavon Court Office	8	26	36	3		73
		Armagh Court Office	2	3	2	1		8
		Omagh Court Office	32	40	75	3	1	151
		Strabane Court Office		1				1
		Antrim Court Office	1	4	9	1		15
		Londonderry Court Office	24	14	18	4		60
		Enniskillen Court Office			2			2
		Coleraine Court Office	18	29	48	3		98
		Newry Court Office	9	29	61	6		105
		Magherafelt Court Office	1		2			3
		Ballymena Court Office	4	5	9	2		20
		Lisburn Court Office	10	22	32	1		65
		Dungannon Court Office		3	7			10
		Civil Processing Centre	1	2				3
		Total			381	352	676	55

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

Table 5: Outstanding civil bills with NID but no COR

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	886	1252	2138
Newtownards Court Office	214	36	250
Downpatrick Court Office	15	113	128
Craigavon Court Office	98	94	192
Armagh Court Office	16	19	35
Omagh Court Office	174	229	403
Strabane Court Office	1	3	4
Antrim Court Office	34	51	85
Londonderry Court Office	161	109	270
Enniskillen Court Office	6	3	9
Coleraine Court Office	135	132	267
Newry Court Office	112	108	220
Limavady Court Office	1	1	2
Magherafelt Court Office	12	6	18
Ballymena Court Office	59	39	98
Lisburn Court Office	84	70	154
Dungannon Court Office	23	27	50
Central Office		1	1
Civil Processing Centre	137	113	250
Total	2168	2406	4574

Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	302	477	779
Newtownards Court Office	68	9	77
Downpatrick Court Office	1	36	37
Craigavon Court Office	48	31	79
Armagh Court Office	5	9	14
Omagh Court Office	66	64	130
Strabane Court Office		4	4
Antrim Court Office	9	6	15
Londonderry Court Office	56	50	106
Enniskillen Court Office	5	1	6
Coleraine Court Office	42	41	83
Newry Court Office	52	60	112
Limavady Court Office	1		1
Magherafelt Court Office	8	7	15
Ballymena Court Office	12	12	24
Lisburn Court Office	41	31	72
Dungannon Court Office	11	4	15
Civil Processing Centre	4	1	5
Total	731	843	1574

Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases

Case	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	60
Newtownards Court Office	27
Downpatrick Court Office	35
Craigavon Court Office	40
Armagh Court Office	49
Omagh Court Office	59
Strabane Court Office	47
Antrim Court Office	63
Londonderry Court Office	65
Enniskillen Court Office	50
Coleraine Court Office	52
Newry Court Office	41
Magherafelt Court Office	48
Ballymena Court Office	48
Lisburn Court Office	44
Dungannon Court Office	30
Civil Processing Centre	140
Total	53

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications

			Issue to disposal
Application	Processing Office	Laganside Courts	18
		Newtownards Court Office	16
		Downpatrick Court Office	12
		Craigavon Court Office	7
		Armagh Court Office	10
		Omagh Court Office	18
		Antrim Court Office	17
		Londonderry Court Office	29
		Coleraine Court Office	27
		Newry Court Office	11
		Ballymena Court Office	40
		Lisburn Court Office	15
		Total	

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Equity

Table 9: Equity cases and applications received

		Total
Case	Laganside Courts	13
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Downpatrick Court Office	6
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	3
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	2
	Total	34
Application	Laganside Courts	5
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	6
	Lisburn Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	2
	Total	17

Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	4			4
	Downpatrick Court Office	1			1
	Omagh Court Office	6		1	7
	Londonderry Court Office	1			1
	Coleraine Court Office	4	1		5
	Newry Court Office	3			3
	Lisburn Court Office	2			2
	Total	21	1	1	23
Application	Laganside Courts	3		2	5
	Downpatrick Court Office	1			1
	Craigavon Court Office	1	1		2
	Omagh Court Office	7		1	8
	Londonderry Court Office			1	1
	Newry Court Office	2			2
	Civil Processing Centre			1	1
	Total	14	1	5	20

Table 11: Outstanding equity cases

		Total
Case	Laganside Courts	44
	Newtownards Court Office	5
	Downpatrick Court Office	12
	Craigavon Court Office	9
	Armagh Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	61
	Strabane Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	24
	Enniskillen Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	21
	Newry Court Office	30
	Ballymena Court Office	6
	Lisburn Court Office	5
	Dungannon Court Office	4
	Civil Processing Centre	23
Total	249	

Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	57
	Downpatrick Court Office	28
	Omagh Court Office	72
	Londonderry Court Office	40
	Coleraine Court Office	49
	Newry Court Office	67
	Lisburn Court Office	74
	Total	60
Application	Laganside Courts	9
	Downpatrick Court Office	9
	Craigavon Court Office	30
	Omagh Court Office	5
	Newry Court Office	40
	Total	14

Ejectment

Table 13: Ejectment cases received

		Total
Case	Laganside Courts	65
	Newtownards Court Office	16
	Downpatrick Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	12
	Londonderry Court Office	16
	Coleraine Court Office	3
	Newry Court Office	8
	Lisburn Court Office	11
	Civil Processing Centre	144
	Total	280

Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	1	90		91
	Newtownards Court Office		24	1	25
	Downpatrick Court Office	5			5
	Craigavon Court Office		12	14	26
	Armagh Court Office			1	1
	Omagh Court Office		9		9
	Londonderry Court Office		13		13
	Coleraine Court Office	2	6		8
	Newry Court Office		13	1	14
	Ballymena Court Office		8		8
	Lisburn Court Office		18	10	28
	Total	8	193	27	228

Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

		Total
Case	Laganside Courts	14
	Downpatrick Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	6
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	6
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	3
	Newry Court Office	6
	Civil Processing Centre	8
Total	49	

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	23
	Newtownards Court Office	18
	Downpatrick Court Office	33
	Craigavon Court Office	17
	Omagh Court Office	33
	Londonderry Court Office	17
	Coleraine Court Office	21
	Newry Court Office	15
	Ballymena Court Office	12
	Lisburn Court Office	21
	Total	21

Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Small Claims

Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	90
	Newtownards Court Office	25
	Downpatrick Court Office	5
	Craigavon Court Office	23
	Armagh Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	12
	Londonderry Court Office	21
	Enniskillen Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	23
	Newry Court Office	22
	Ballymena Court Office	8
	Lisburn Court Office	5
	Dungannon Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	1675
Total	1916	
Application	Laganside Courts	18
	Newtownards Court Office	4
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	2
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	2
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	5
	Total	37

Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Case	Laganside Courts	103
	Newtownards Court Office	35
	Downpatrick Court Office	4
	Craigavon Court Office	24
	Armagh Court Office	5
	Omagh Court Office	15
	Londonderry Court Office	23
	Enniskillen Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	32
	Newry Court Office	22
	Ballymena Court Office	6
	Lisburn Court Office	7
	Civil Processing Centre	4
Total	282	

Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	86	8	41	4	139
	Newtownards Court Office	19	5	3	2	29
	Craigavon Court Office	17	5	3		25
	Armagh Court Office	8		2		10
	Omagh Court Office	28	1	2		31
	Londonderry Court Office	13	3	3		19
	Enniskillen Court Office				1	1
	Coleraine Court Office	29		2		31
	Newry Court Office	24	1	1	3	29
	Ballymena Court Office	5	1	1	1	8
	Lisburn Court Office	6	3			9
	Civil Processing Centre			348	1465	1813
	Total	235	27	406	1476	2144
Application	Laganside Courts	11	1			12
	Newtownards Court Office	2	1			3
	Armagh Court Office	1				1
	Omagh Court Office	1				1
	Londonderry Court Office	4				4
	Coleraine Court Office	2				2
	Newry Court Office	2				2
	Lisburn Court Office	1				1
	Total	24	2			26

Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD

	Total
Laganside Courts	170
Newtownards Court Office	27
Downpatrick Court Office	4
Craigavon Court Office	25
Armagh Court Office	6
Omagh Court Office	22
Londonderry Court Office	24
Enniskillen Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	53
Newry Court Office	26
Ballymena Court Office	13
Lisburn Court Office	7
Civil Processing Centre	18
Total	397

Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	18
	Newtownards Court Office	11
	Craigavon Court Office	20
	Armagh Court Office	19
	Omagh Court Office	31
	Londonderry Court Office	24
	Coleraine Court Office	27
	Newry Court Office	21
	Ballymena Court Office	19
	Lisburn Court Office	25
	Total	21
Application	Laganside Courts	5
	Newtownards Court Office	7
	Armagh Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	20
	Londonderry Court Office	6
	Coleraine Court Office	6
	Newry Court Office	8
	Lisburn Court Office	9
	Total	7

Criminal Damage

Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received

		Total
Case	Laganside Courts	1
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	3
	Total	5

Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	2	2
	Omagh Court Office	2	2
	Coleraine Court Office	3	3
	Total	7	7

Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases

Laganside Courts	17
Newtownards Court Office	2
Omagh Court Office	9
Londonderry Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	2
Newry Court Office	6
Ballymena Court Office	1
Total	39

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	252
	Omagh Court Office	248
	Coleraine Court Office	3
	Total	144

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	43	34	1	9	3	90
Downpatrick Court Office	32	25		6	5	68
Craigavon Court Office	25	16	1	3	4	49
Omagh Court Office	20	7		4	6	37
Londonderry Court Office	13	17	2	4	5	41
Coleraine Court Office	42	35		14	4	95
Newry Court Office	11	10	1	5	3	30
Lisburn Court Office	1					1
Dungannon Court Office		1				1
Total	187	145	5	45	30	412

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	69	65	1	8	12	155
Newtownards Court Office	1					1
Downpatrick Court Office	13	16		1	4	34
Craigavon Court Office	33	11	2	7	7	60
Armagh Court Office	1			2		3
Omagh Court Office	26	15		1	3	45
Londonderry Court Office	21	12		6	5	44
Coleraine Court Office	37	35		11	4	87
Newry Court Office	20	17	1	3	3	44
Dungannon Court Office	1	2				3
Total	222	173	4	39	38	476

Table 28: Matrimonial applications received

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	11	2		13
Newtownards Court Office			1	1
Downpatrick Court Office	1			1
Craigavon Court Office	3	1	1	5
Omagh Court Office	4			4
Londonderry Court Office	6		1	7
Coleraine Court Office	8		1	9
Newry Court Office	7	1	1	9
Total	40	4	5	49

Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	8	1		9
Downpatrick Court Office	1			1
Craigavon Court Office	4		1	5
Armagh Court Office	1			1
Omagh Court Office	4		1	5
Londonderry Court Office	9		1	10
Coleraine Court Office	15			15
Newry Court Office	4	1	1	6
Total	46	2	4	52

Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	28	8
Downpatrick Court Office	25	10
Craigavon Court Office	27	8
Omagh Court Office	35	9
Londonderry Court Office	34	9
Coleraine Court Office	32	9
Newry Court Office	37	8
Lisburn Court Office	31	
Dungannon Court Office	32	
Total	30	9

Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications

	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	63
Craigavon Court Office	30
Armagh Court Office	148
Omagh Court Office	33
Londonderry Court Office	59
Coleraine Court Office	44
Newry Court Office	11
Total	45

Excludes non-court disposals

Licences

Table 32: Licences received and disposed

Court Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	15	12
Newtownards	9	16
Newry	2	4
Laganside Courts	31	34
Craigavon	4	4
Omagh		
Londonderry	6	7
Total	67	77

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	96	1:49:22	175:00:00	152:15:00	20:54:00	1:51:00
Ballymena	7	2:21:25	16:30:00	0:00:00	16:10:00	0:20:00
Laganside	455	2:49:53	1288:24:00	605:42:00	298:32:00	384:10:00
Armagh	30	2:27:36	73:48:00	0:00:00	71:54:00	1:54:00
Limavady	2	3:52:30	7:45:00	0:00:00	7:45:00	0:00:00
Lisburn	11	2:15:05	24:46:00	8:46:00	15:35:00	0:25:00
Magherafelt	4	1:11:15	4:45:00	0:00:00	4:35:00	0:10:00
Dungannon	99	3:25:23	338:53:00	274:01:00	23:30:00	41:22:00
Royal Courts Of Justice	3	1:13:40	3:41:00	3:41:00	0:00:00	0:00:00
Downpatrick	86	2:14:51	193:18:00	161:25:00	26:23:00	5:30:00
Craigavon	139	2:06:34	293:13:00	167:14:00	29:06:00	96:53:00
Strabane	6	2:42:00	16:12:00	3:00:00	13:00:00	0:12:00
Omagh	33	2:55:23	96:28:00	11:52:00	52:50:00	31:46:00
Enniskillen	5	4:07:00	20:35:00	0:00:00	19:45:00	0:50:00
Coleraine	22	3:45:24	82:39:00	13:39:00	54:13:00	14:47:00
Londonderry	114	2:27:34	280:24:00	180:02:00	53:56:00	46:26:00
Newtownards	30	2:03:24	61:42:00	8:05:00	53:37:00	0:00:00
Newry	65	2:12:06	143:07:00	109:33:00	29:57:00	3:37:00
Total	1207	2:35:09	3121:10:00	1699:15:00	791:42:00	630:13:00

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, ejection 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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