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County Court Bulletin

January to March 2020

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 January to March 2020 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2011. 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 January to March 2020:
- There were 1,856 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 1 % decrease on the same quarter last year (1,872). In total, 2,197 civil bills were disposed, an 11% decrease on the same period in 2019 (2,462).
- A total of 25 equity cases were received, down by eleven cases from January to March 2019 (36). While 26 equity cases were disposed, this was double the figure for the same period last year (13).
- A total of 325 ejectment cases were received, down 4% on the 337 cases received during January to March 2019, with the number of ejectment cases disposed decreasing by 7%, from 234 in the same quarter last year to 217 this quarter.
- At 2,385 the number of small claims received was down 10% on the 2,662 cases received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed decreased by 3% from 1,988 during January to March 2019 to 1,928 this quarter.
- Two criminal damage cases were received one less than the number received (3) during the period January to March 2019. Four criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, compared with seven during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 324 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, down 1% on the 327 granted during the same period last year.
- County Court and District Judges sat on a total of 1115 sitting days during the quarter, down 8% on the 1210 days recorded during the period January to March 2019. Some 56% of time was spent on criminal business with 25% spent on civil business and 19% on family business (compared to 55%, 28% and 17% respectively during January to March 2019).

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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 first quarter of 2020. 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 2020 and will be published on 14th August 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).

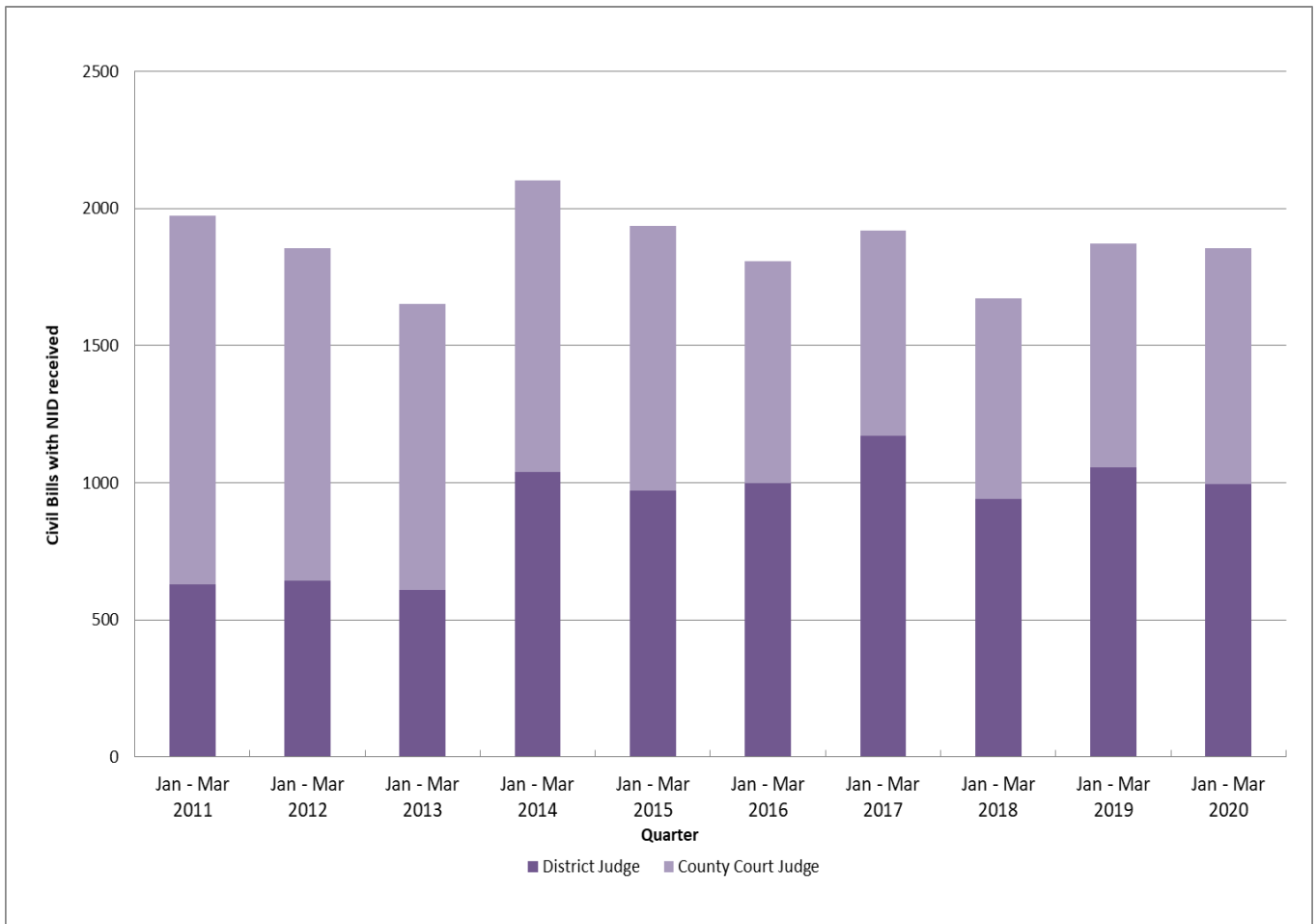
Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

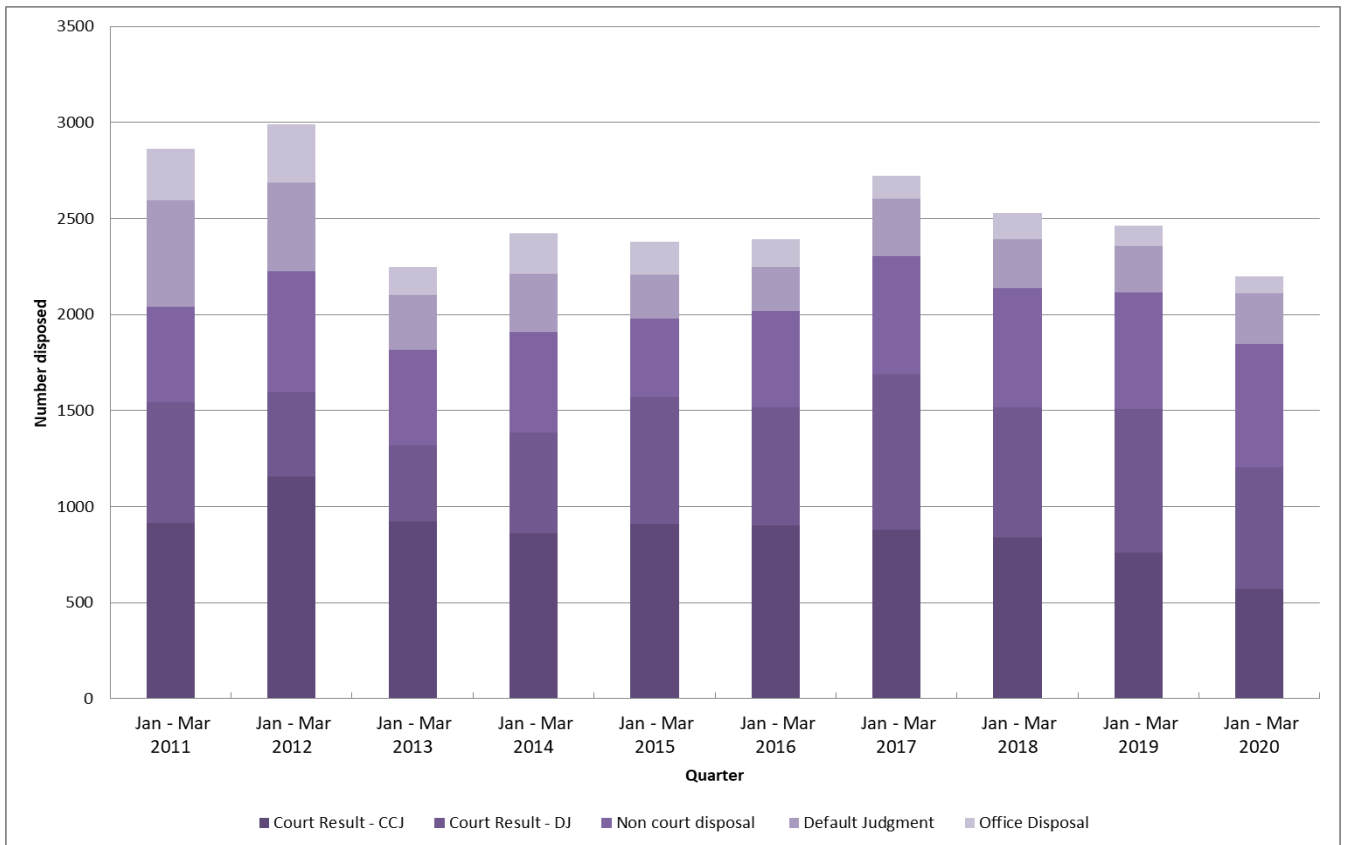
There were 1,856 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 1% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,872) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received – January to March 2011 to January to March 2020



In total, 2,197 civil bills were disposed, a 11% decrease on the 2,462 disposed during the same period in 2019 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal – January to March 2011 to January to March 2020



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 51 weeks, compared to the 53 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2019.

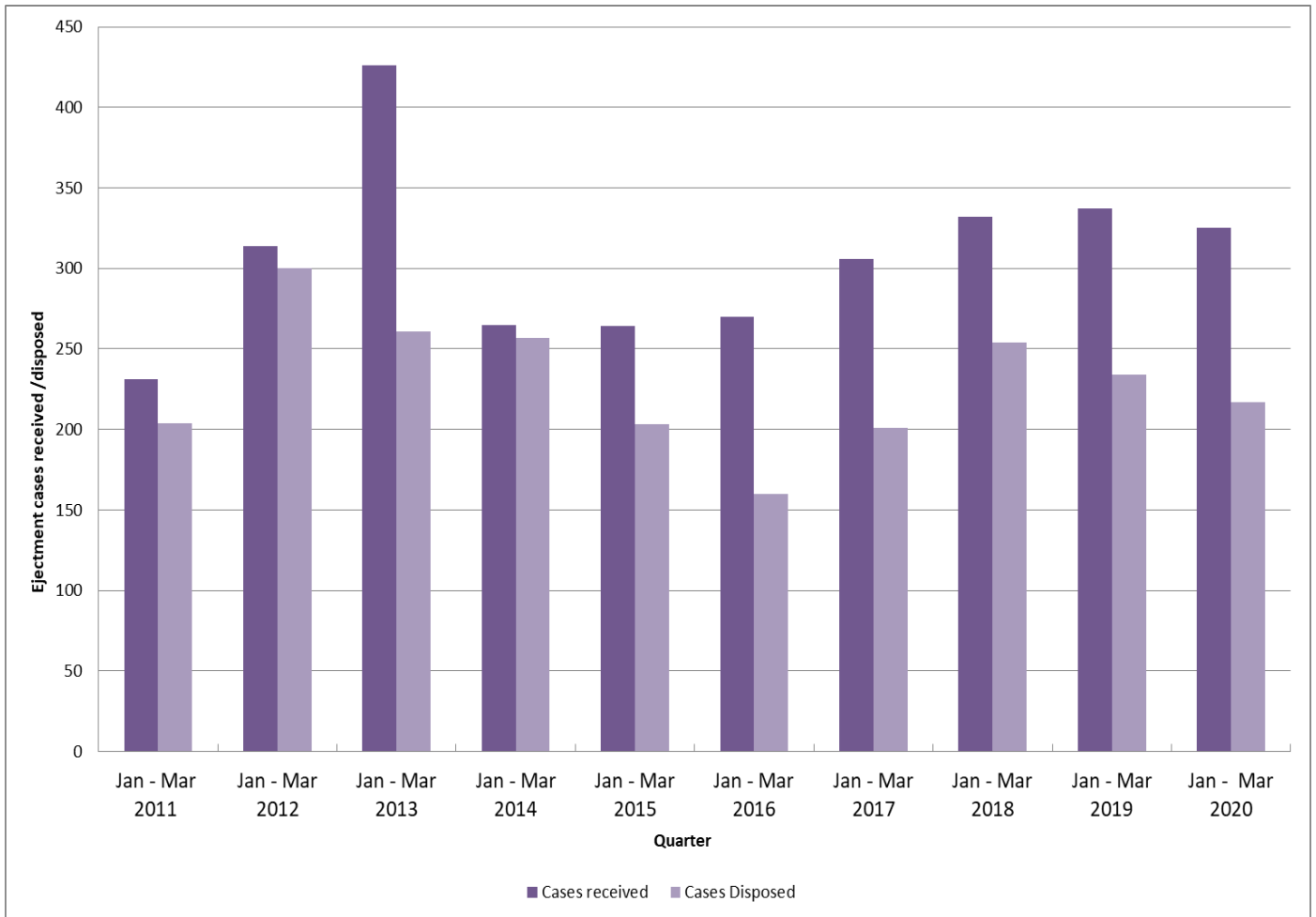
3.2 Equity

A total of 25 equity cases were received during January to March 2020, eleven less than the number received during the period January to March 2019 (36). The number of equity cases disposed doubled from 13 during the period January to March 2019, to 26 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 70 weeks, down from 122 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 325 ejectment cases were received, down 4% on the 337 cases received during January to March 2019, with the number of ejectment cases disposed decreasing by 7%, from 234 in the same quarter last year to 217 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed – January to March 2011 to January to March 2020

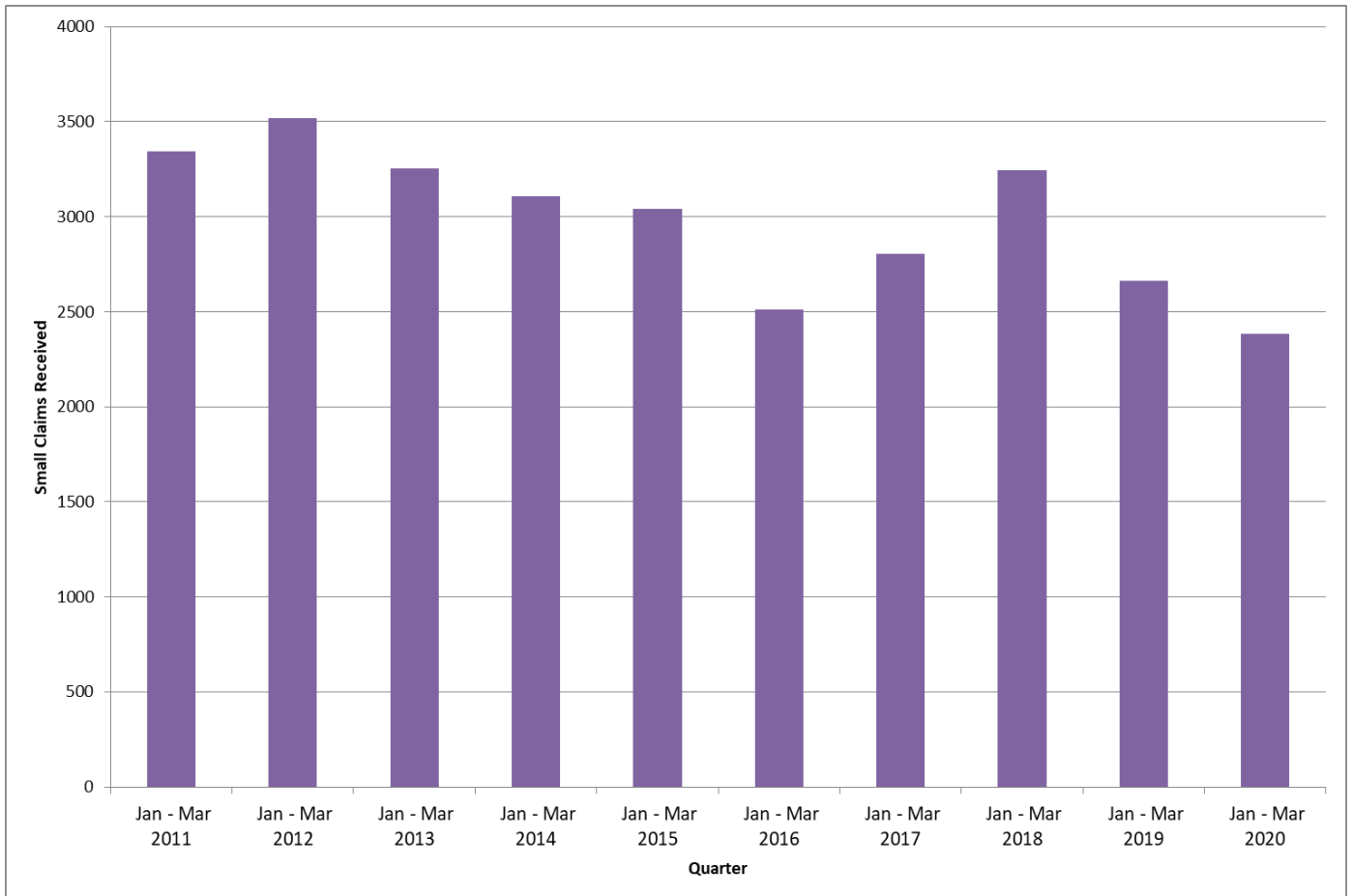


The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 23 weeks, the same as the January to March quarter in 2019.

3.4 Small claims

2,385 small claims were received, down 10% on the 2,662 received during the same quarter last year (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Small claims cases received – January to March 2011 to January to March 2020



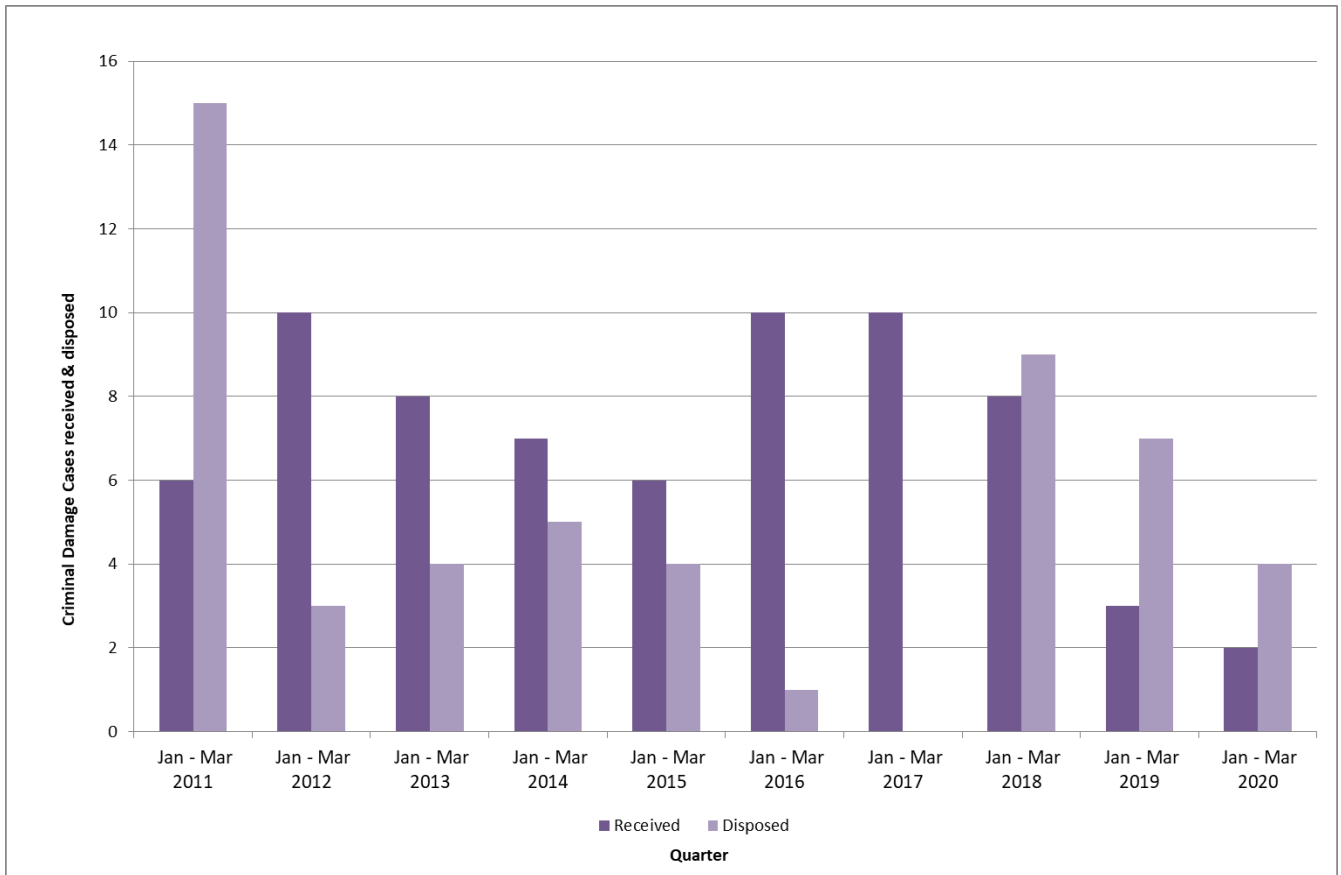
The number of small claims cases disposed decreased by 3% from 1,988 during January to March 2019 to 1,928 this quarter. Of the 1,928 small claims disposed during the quarter, the majority (66%) were disposed by way of default judgment.

The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 19 weeks, a decrease on the 23 weeks taken in the corresponding quarter last year.

3.5 Criminal Damage

Two criminal damage cases were received, with four disposed during the quarter. This compares with three cases received and seven cases disposed during the same quarter in 2019 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed – January to March 2011 to January to March 2020



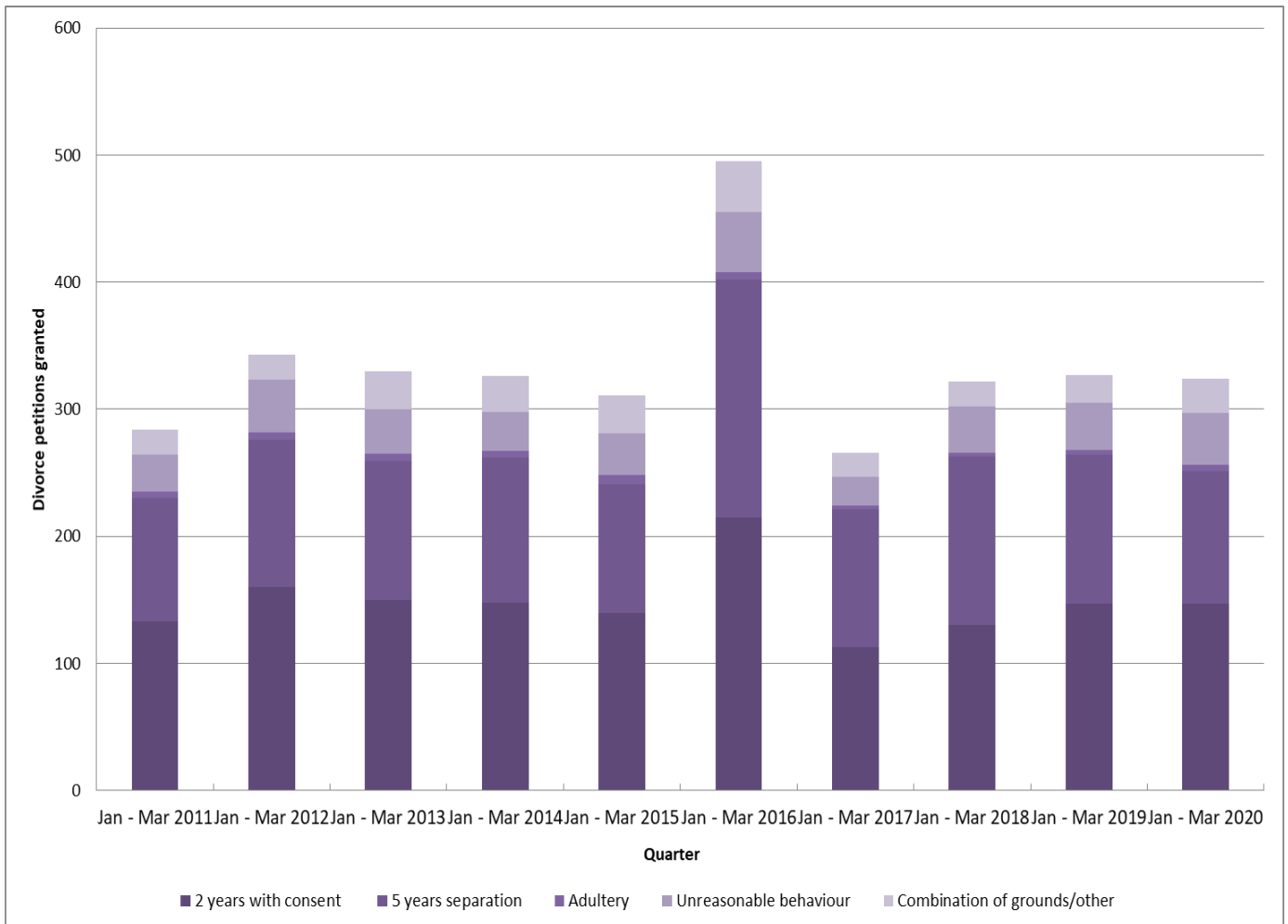
3.6 Divorces

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 324 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, similar to the 327 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 45% of decrees (147), followed by '5 years separation', accounting for 32% of decrees (104) (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type – January to March 2011 to January to March 2020



A total of 371 decrees absolute were issued in the County Court, an decrease of 15% on the 434 issued during the period January to March 2019. The most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 44% (164) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 31 weeks, with an average of eight weeks from the date the decree was granted until the date the decree absolute was issued. This compares to 32 weeks and eight weeks during the same period last year.

3.7 Licences

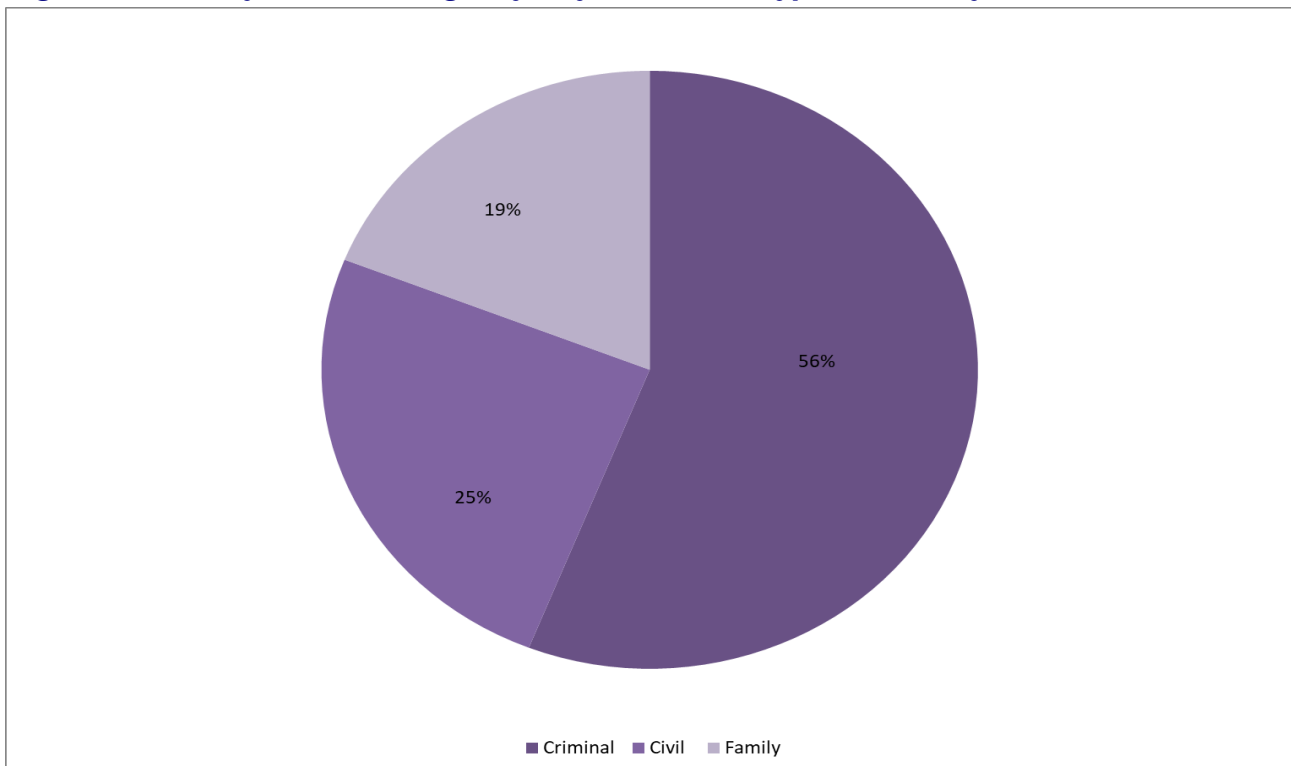
There were 49 licence applications received and 38 disposed, compared to the 53 received and 42 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,115 sitting days during the quarter, an 8% decrease on the 1,213 sitting days recorded during the period January to March 2019.

Within these 1,115 sitting days, 56% of time was spent on criminal business, 25% of time was spent on civil business and 19% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – January to March 2020

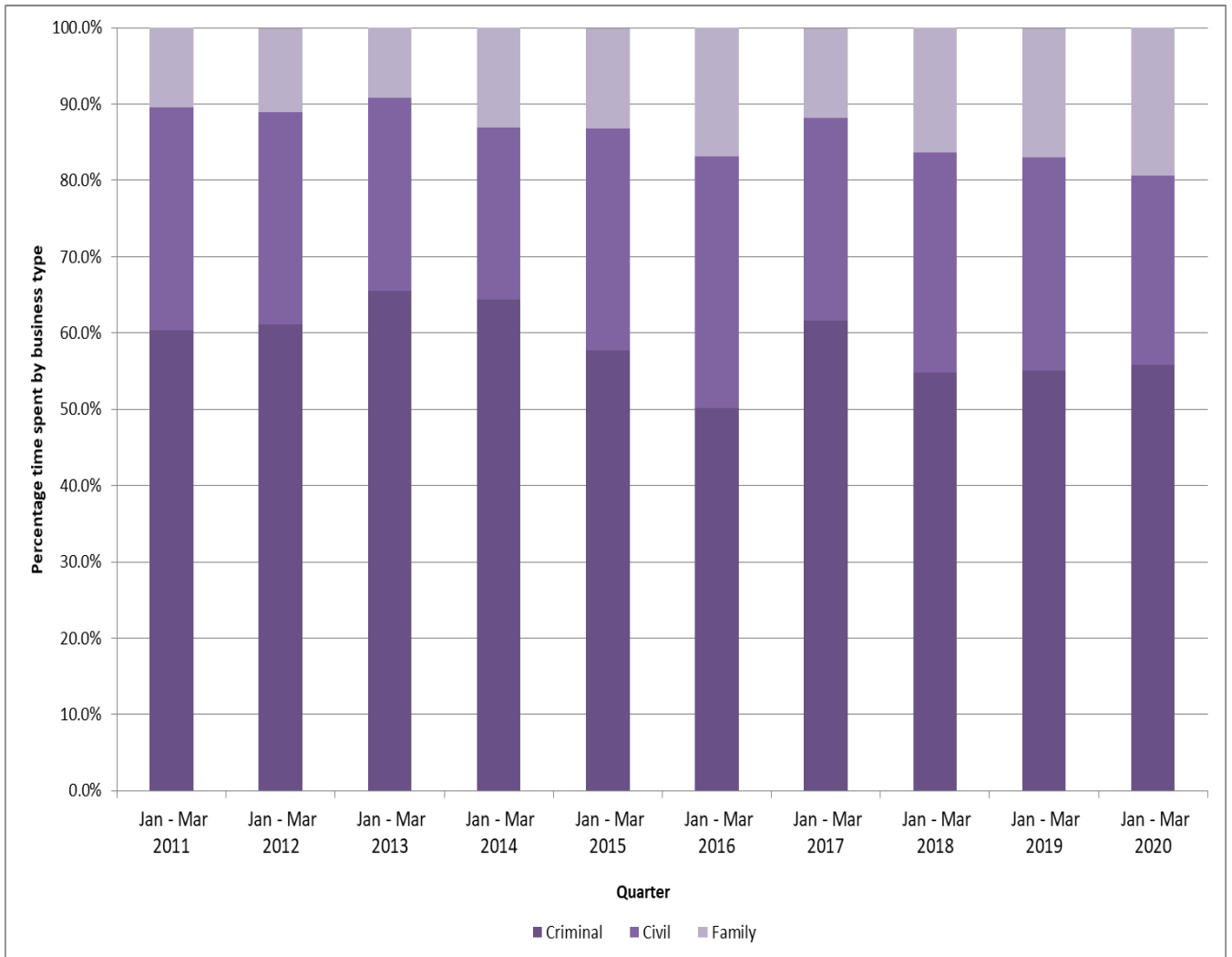


Due to rounding, the percentages may not add up to 100%

The proportion of time spent on criminal business has fluctuated during January to March quarter since 2007, peaking at 66% during the quarter January to March 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 50.0% during January to March 2016, 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 62% of sittings during January to March 2017, 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 55% in both 2018 and 2019, with the proportion of time spent on criminal business rising slightly to 56% this quarter.

Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – January to March 2011 to January to March 2020



APPENDIX 1 – TABLES

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

Case	Laganside Courts	798
	Newtownards Court Office	119
	Downpatrick Court Office	59
	Craigavon Court Office	91
	Armagh Court Office	23
	Omagh Court Office	80
	Strabane Court Office	2
	Antrim Court Office	42
	Londonderry Court Office	88
	Enniskillen Court Office	16
	Coleraine Court Office	85
	Newry Court Office	127
	Limavady Court Office	3
	Magherafelt Court Office	14
	Ballymena Court Office	50
	Lisburn Court Office	58
Dungannon Court Office	38	
Civil Processing Centre	989	
Total	2682	
Application	Laganside Courts	351
	Newtownards Court Office	95
	Downpatrick Court Office	18
	Craigavon Court Office	46
	Armagh Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	51
	Antrim Court Office	7
	Londonderry Court Office	57
	Coleraine Court Office	29
	Newry Court Office	76
	Ballymena Court Office	16
	Lisburn Court Office	17
	Civil Processing Centre	508
	Total	1275

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

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	377	449	826
Newtownards Court Office	92	29	121
Downpatrick Court Office	14	38	52
Craigavon Court Office	55	39	94
Armagh Court Office	13	11	24
Omagh Court Office	67	48	115
Strabane Court Office	2	1	3
Antrim Court Office	20	21	41
Londonderry Court Office	64	33	97
Enniskillen Court Office	13	3	16
Coleraine Court Office	56	36	92
Newry Court Office	70	58	128
Limavady Court Office	3		3
Magherafelt Court Office	9	4	13
Ballymena Court Office	37	26	63
Lisburn Court Office	53	20	73
Dungannon Court Office	18	15	33
Civil Processing Centre	32	30	62
Total	995	861	1856

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	328	216	238	2	26	810
	Newtownards Court Office	10	93	66		1	170
	Downpatrick Court Office	30		20		2	52
	Craigavon Court Office	32	47	43	1	3	126
	Armagh Court Office	1	4	5		2	12
	Omagh Court Office	32	44	42	2	5	125
	Strabane Court Office	1					1
	Antrim Court Office	6	7	8			21
	Londonderry Court Office	33	62	38		4	137
	Enniskillen Court Office		3	1			4
	Coleraine Court Office	26	41	49	2	13	131
	Newry Court Office	26	54	41	1	4	126
	Limavady Court Office		2				2
	Magherafelt Court Office	5	8	6			19
	Ballymena Court Office	11	12	12			35
	Lisburn Court Office	22	33	48		2	105
	Dungannon Court Office	5	7	6			18
	Civil Processing Centre	3	1	19	255	25	303
	Total	571	634	642	263	87	2197
Application	Laganside Courts	50	25	105			180
	Newtownards Court Office	5	3	30			38
	Downpatrick Court Office	6		4			10
	Craigavon Court Office	7	1	16			24
	Omagh Court Office	1	3	30			34
	Antrim Court Office	3					3
	Londonderry Court Office		5	25			30
	Coleraine Court Office	9	3	21			33
	Newry Court Office	7	4	22			33
	Ballymena Court Office			8			8
	Lisburn Court Office			3			3
	Civil Processing Centre			48			48
	Total	88	44	312			444

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	201	106	227	10		544
		Newtownards Court Office	12	45	39	6	1	103
		Downpatrick Court Office	8	3	17	2		30
		Craigavon Court Office	11	26	41	1		79
		Armagh Court Office	1	1	3			5
		Omagh Court Office	20	21	30	4	1	76
		Strabane Court Office			1			1
		Antrim Court Office	1	5	7			13
		Londonderry Court Office	19	34	31	11		95
		Enniskillen Court Office			3			3
		Coleraine Court Office	18	11	36	2		67
		Newry Court Office	20	25	33	2		80
		Limavady Court Office	1		1			2
		Magherafelt Court Office	1	4	6	2		13
		Ballymena Court Office	4	5	13	1		23
		Lisburn Court Office	11	20	22	2		55
		Dungannon Court Office	2	2	7	1		12
		Civil Processing Centre	2		2			4
Total			332	308	519	44	2	1205

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	906	1363	2269
Newtownards Court Office	148	30	178
Downpatrick Court Office	18	132	150
Craigavon Court Office	96	99	195
Armagh Court Office	21	27	48
Omagh Court Office	190	201	391
Strabane Court Office	2	2	4
Antrim Court Office	46	56	102
Londonderry Court Office	150	107	257
Enniskillen Court Office	17	6	23
Coleraine Court Office	124	139	263
Newry Court Office	113	124	237
Limavady Court Office	3		3
Magherafelt Court Office	14	6	20
Ballymena Court Office	67	51	118
Lisburn Court Office	100	65	165
Dungannon Court Office	37	32	69
Civil Processing Centre	127	115	242
Total	2179	2555	4734

Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	291	438	729
Newtownards Court Office	73	8	81
Downpatrick Court Office	2	43	45
Craigavon Court Office	30	24	54
Armagh Court Office	6	9	15
Omagh Court Office	73	87	160
Strabane Court Office	1	6	7
Antrim Court Office	5	10	15
Londonderry Court Office	55	36	91
Enniskillen Court Office	4	1	5
Coleraine Court Office	44	39	83
Newry Court Office	43	64	107
Limavady Court Office		1	1
Magherafelt Court Office	3	4	7
Ballymena Court Office	19	12	31
Lisburn Court Office	25	23	48
Dungannon Court Office	6	2	8
Civil Processing Centre	6	6	12
Total	686	813	1499

Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases

Case	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	59
Newtownards Court Office	33
Downpatrick Court Office	48
Craigavon Court Office	40
Armagh Court Office	40
Omagh Court Office	63
Strabane Court Office	39
Antrim Court Office	41
Londonderry Court Office	56
Enniskillen Court Office	22
Coleraine Court Office	44
Newry Court Office	41
Limavady Court Office	23
Magherafelt Court Office	30
Ballymena Court Office	32
Lisburn Court Office	38
Dungannon Court Office	31
Civil Processing Centre	48
Total	51

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications

			Issue to disposal
Application	Processing Office	Laganside Courts	17
		Newtownards Court Office	12
		Downpatrick Court Office	15
		Craigavon Court Office	16
		Omagh Court Office	6
		Antrim Court Office	16
		Londonderry Court Office	3
		Coleraine Court Office	14
		Newry Court Office	10
		Total	15

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Equity

Table 9: Equity cases and applications received

		Total
Case	Laganside Courts	6
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	2
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	2
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Dungannon Court Office	3
	Civil Processing Centre	4
	Total	25
	Application	Laganside Courts
Newtownards Court Office		1
Omagh Court Office		5
Londonderry Court Office		1
Newry Court Office		1
Ballymena Court Office		1
Lisburn 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	6			6
	Downpatrick Court Office	1			1
	Craigavon Court Office	2			2
	Omagh Court Office	5		1	6
	Londonderry Court Office		1		1
	Coleraine Court Office	3			3
	Newry Court Office	3		2	5
	Lisburn Court Office			1	1
	Dungannon Court Office		1		1
	Total	20	2	4	26
Application	Laganside Courts			1	1
	Downpatrick Court Office	1			1
	Omagh Court Office	4			4
	Londonderry Court Office	1			1
	Newry Court Office	2			2
	Lisburn Court Office	3			3
	Civil Processing Centre			1	1
	Total	11		2	13

Table 11: Outstanding equity cases

		Total
Case	Laganside Courts	42
	Newtownards Court Office	3
	Downpatrick Court Office	14
	Craigavon Court Office	8
	Armagh Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	57
	Strabane Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	27
	Enniskillen Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	17
	Newry Court Office	26
	Ballymena Court Office	7
	Lisburn Court Office	5
	Dungannon Court Office	5
Civil Processing Centre	23	
Total	241	

Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	49
	Downpatrick Court Office	14
	Craigavon Court Office	28
	Omagh Court Office	56
	Londonderry Court Office	167
	Coleraine Court Office	125
	Newry Court Office	98
	Dungannon Court Office	56
	Total	70
Application	Downpatrick Court Office	11
	Omagh Court Office	10
	Londonderry Court Office	0
	Newry Court Office	51
	Lisburn Court Office	2
	Total	15

Ejectment

Table 13: Ejectment cases received

Case	Laganside Courts	47
	Newtownards Court Office	15
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	3
	Londonderry Court Office	10
	Coleraine Court Office	3
	Newry Court Office	8
	Lisburn Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	232
	Total	325

Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts		85	1	86
	Newtownards Court Office	8	27	2	37
	Downpatrick Court Office	1	3		4
	Craigavon Court Office		4		4
	Omagh Court Office		16	2	18
	Londonderry Court Office	2	16	1	19
	Coleraine Court Office	2	6		8
	Newry Court Office	7	11		18
	Lisburn Court Office	4	19		23
	Total	24	187	6	217

Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

Case	Laganside Courts	15
	Downpatrick Court Office	4
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	6
	Londonderry Court Office	4
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	4
	Civil Processing Centre	5
Total	42	

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	23
	Newtownards Court Office	31
	Downpatrick Court Office	38
	Craigavon Court Office	14
	Omagh Court Office	18
	Londonderry Court Office	19
	Coleraine Court Office	15
	Newry Court Office	16
	Lisburn Court Office	28
	Total	23

Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Small Claims

Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	86
	Newtownards Court Office	22
	Downpatrick Court Office	4
	Craigavon Court Office	7
	Armagh Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	16
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	5
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	12
	Newry Court Office	16
	Ballymena Court Office	3
	Lisburn Court Office	10
	Civil Processing Centre	2198
	Total	2385
Application	Laganside Courts	18
	Newtownards Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	2
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	4
	Lisburn Court Office	3
	Civil Processing Centre	8
	Total	42

Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Case	Laganside Courts	77
	Newtownards Court Office	20
	Downpatrick Court Office	4
	Craigavon Court Office	10
	Armagh Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	15
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	8
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	13
	Newry Court Office	20
	Ballymena Court Office	3
	Lisburn Court Office	10
	Dungannon Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	17
Total	203	

Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	61	8	24	2	95
	Newtownards Court Office	15	1	11		27
	Downpatrick Court Office			3		3
	Craigavon Court Office	16	3	1		20
	Armagh Court Office	2		1		3
	Omagh Court Office	16	6	1		23
	Londonderry Court Office	15	1	2		18
	Enniskillen Court Office			1		1
	Coleraine Court Office	32	4	5		41
	Newry Court Office	15	1	6		22
	Ballymena Court Office	9	2	1		12
	Lisburn Court Office	4			1	5
	Dungannon Court Office	1				1
	Civil Processing Centre	6	5	381	1265	1657
	Total	192	31	437	1268	1928
Application	Laganside Courts	11	1			12
	Newtownards Court Office	1	2			3
	Omagh Court Office	2				2
	Londonderry Court Office	1				1
	Coleraine Court Office	2				2
	Newry Court Office	1	1			2
	Ballymena Court Office	1				1
	Total	19	4			23

Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD

Laganside Courts	154
Newtownards Court Office	22
Downpatrick Court Office	6
Craigavon Court Office	14
Armagh Court Office	6
Omagh Court Office	17
Antrim Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	16
Enniskillen Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	23
Newry Court Office	25
Ballymena Court Office	3
Lisburn Court Office	12
Civil Processing Centre	23
Total	324

Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	15
	Newtownards Court Office	14
	Craigavon Court Office	17
	Armagh Court Office	14
	Omagh Court Office	27
	Londonderry Court Office	28
	Coleraine Court Office	25
	Newry Court Office	16
	Ballymena Court Office	18
	Lisburn Court Office	27
	Dungannon Court Office	13
	Total	19
Application	Laganside Courts	6
	Newtownards Court Office	9
	Omagh Court Office	14
	Londonderry Court Office	11
	Coleraine Court Office	4
	Newry Court Office	5
	Ballymena Court Office	9
	Total	7

Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Criminal Damage

Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	2
	Total	2

Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	2	2
	Omagh Court Office	1	1
	Coleraine Court Office	1	1
	Total	4	4

Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases

Laganside Courts	17
Newtownards Court Office	1
Omagh Court Office	8
Londonderry Court Office	3
Coleraine Court Office	1
Newry Court Office	3
Dungannon Court Office	1
Total	34

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	145
	Omagh Court Office	31
	Coleraine Court Office	40
	Total	90

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	38	28	1	10	6	83
Dow npatrick Court Office	17	11		2	3	33
Craigavon Court Office	15	9		8	1	33
Omagh Court Office	18	18	1	6	5	48
Londonderry Court Office	17	12		3	5	37
Coleraine Court Office	26	19	3	11	6	65
Newry Court Office	16	7		1	1	25
Total	147	104	5	41	27	324

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	38	41	1	9	6	95
Dow npatrick Court Office	23	18		4	2	47
Craigavon Court Office	20	14		3	1	38
Om agh Court Office	21	12		5	5	43
Londonderry Court Office	17	18	2	9	5	51
Coleraine Court Office	31	21	1	10	2	65
Newry Court Office	13	10		4	3	30
Dungannon Court Office	1	1				2
Total	164	135	4	44	24	371

Table 28: Matrimonial applications received

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	3	1		4
Craigavon Court Office	2		2	4
Armagh Court Office	1			1
Om agh Court Office	6			6
Londonderry Court Office	4	1	4	9
Coleraine Court Office	10		1	11
Newry Court Office	4			4
Ballymena Court Office			1	1
Dungannon Court Office	1			1
Total	31	2	8	41

Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	4	1		5
Craigavon Court Office	4			4
Omagh Court Office	5			5
Londonderry Court Office	10	1	4	15
Coleraine Court Office	11			11
Newry Court Office	10			10
Total	44	2	4	50

Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	29	8
Downpatrick Court Office	31	6
Craigavon Court Office	23	8
Omagh Court Office	36	8
Londonderry Court Office	33	7
Coleraine Court Office	30	8
Newry Court Office	39	5
Total	31	8

Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications

	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	33
Craigavon Court Office	25
Omagh Court Office	33
Londonderry Court Office	32
Coleraine Court Office	25
Newry Court Office	53
Total	34

Excludes non-court disposals

Licences

Table 32: Licences received and disposed

Court Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	18	5
Newtownards	9	4
Newry	5	3
Laganside Courts	10	10
Craigavon	3	3
Omagh	1	8
Londonderry	3	5
Total	49	38

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	93	2:06:17	195:45:00	161:06:00	24:58:00	9:41:00
Ballymena	12	3:20:10	40:02:00	0:35:00	39:27:00	0:00:00
Laganside	414	2:39:18	1099:16:00	532:11:00	260:00:00	307:05:00
Armagh	29	2:19:31	67:26:00	0:31:00	66:34:00	0:21:00
Limavady	1	1:50:00	1:50:00	0:00:00	1:50:00	0:00:00
Lisburn	14	1:52:55	26:21:00	7:43:00	18:38:00	0:00:00
Magherafelt	4	2:15:00	9:00:00	3:10:00	5:50:00	0:00:00
Dungannon	80	2:56:28	235:18:00	186:22:00	19:45:00	29:11:00
Royal Courts Of Justice	1	0:11:00	0:11:00	0:11:00	0:00:00	0:00:00
Downpatrick	84	2:01:40	170:21:00	150:43:00	16:13:00	3:25:00
Craigavon	109	2:22:42	259:15:00	132:54:00	29:48:00	96:33:00
Strabane	6	1:37:30	9:45:00	2:20:00	7:25:00	0:00:00
Omagh	43	2:46:57	119:39:00	44:34:00	29:20:00	45:45:00
Enniskillen	7	2:10:17	15:12:00	4:05:00	10:45:00	0:22:00
Coleraine	16	2:51:30	45:44:00	6:04:00	32:05:00	7:35:00
Londonderry	113	2:32:38	287:29:00	200:07:00	56:30:00	30:42:00
Newtownards	29	1:38:47	47:45:00	3:00:00	44:20:00	0:25:00
Newry	60	2:14:30	134:30:00	107:42:00	20:58:00	5:50:00
Total	1115	2:28:46	2764:49:00	1543:18:00	684:26:00	536:55:00

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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