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April to June 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period April to June 2017 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2007. On 31st October 2016, a single County Court Division called “The County Court of Northern Ireland” replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court Bulletin is now disaggregated by Court Office (Processing Office). During the period April to June 2017:
- There were 1,849 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 9% decrease on the same quarter last year (2,030). In total, 2,517 civil bills were disposed, a decrease of 1% on the number disposed during the same period in 2016 (2,539).
- 39 equity cases were received during April to June 2017, down 13% on the 45 cases received during the period April to June 2016, while 51 equity cases were disposed, an increase of 76% on the 29 disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 265 ejectment cases were received, down 7% on the 285 cases received during April to June 2016, with the number of ejectment cases disposed decreasing by 13%, from 257 in the same quarter last year to 224 this quarter.
- 2,727 small claims were received, up 4% on the 2,632 received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 11% from 2,160 during April to June 2016 to 2,398 this quarter.
- Seven criminal damage cases were received, the same number as that received during the period April to June 2016. Nine criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, compared to five in the same quarter last year.
- A total of 393 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, a 16% decrease on the 468 granted during the same period last year.
- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,131 sitting days during the quarter, down 14% on the 1,316 sitting days recorded during the period April to June 2016. Some 57% of time was spent on criminal business with 27% spent on civil business and 16% on family business (compared to 62%, 24% and 14% respectively during April to June 2016). The decrease in both the number of sitting days, and the proportion of time spent on criminal business is reflective of increased activity in the Crown Court during the same period last year, which aimed at addressing a backlog of cases arising from the legal aid dispute that commenced during May 2015 and was resolved in February 2016.

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1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data sources

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

2.2 Methodology for generating data

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

2.3 Baseline and Time period

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

2.4 Frequency of Publication

This bulletin is published on a quarterly basis. The next bulletin will cover the third quarter of 2017 and will be published on 10th November 2017.

2.5 Data quality and validation

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

2.6 Counting rules

Receipts are counted from the date the case is entered onto ICOS and the fees are receipted. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to dealt with. On 31st October 2016, a single County Court Division called “The County Court of Northern Ireland” will replace 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).

2.6 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.

2.7 Revisions

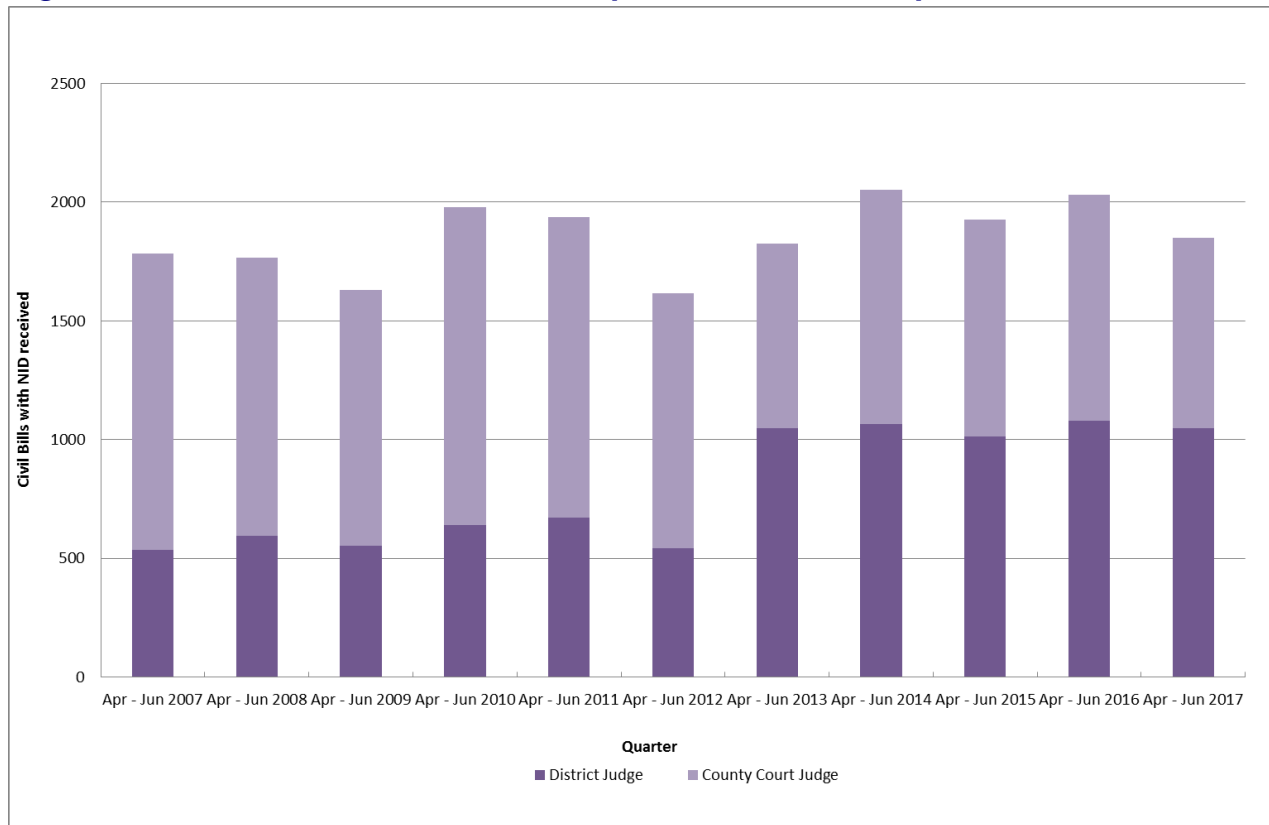
Any revision to data will be applied in light of the ASG (NICTS) Statistical Note ‘Policy Statement on Revisions’ which can be found on the Statistics and Research page of the Services section on the NICTS website (www.courtsni.gov.uk). Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published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

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

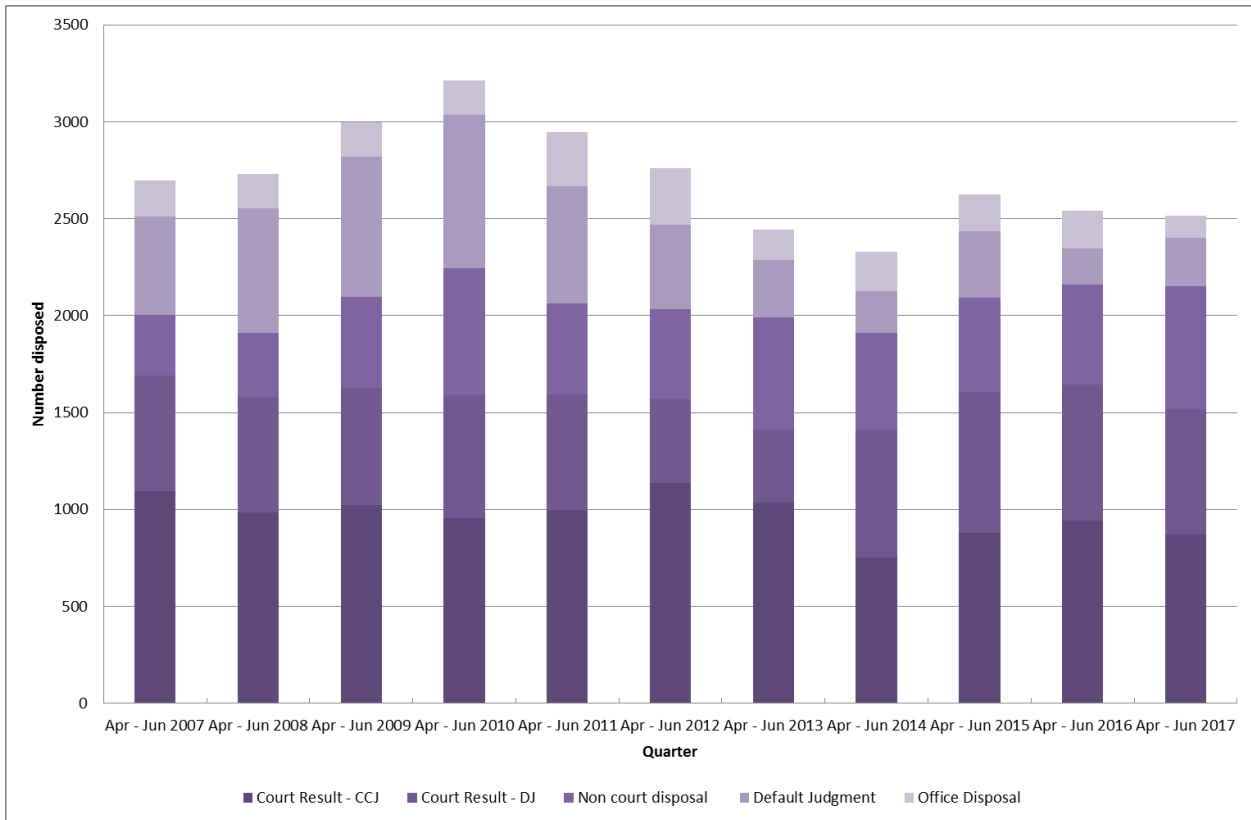
There were 1,849 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 9% decrease on the same quarter last year (2,030) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received: April - June 2007 to April - June 2017



In total, 2,517 civil bills were disposed, a decrease of 1% on the 2,539 disposed during the same period in 2016 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal: April - June 2007 to April - June 2017



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 63 weeks, compared to the 57 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2016.

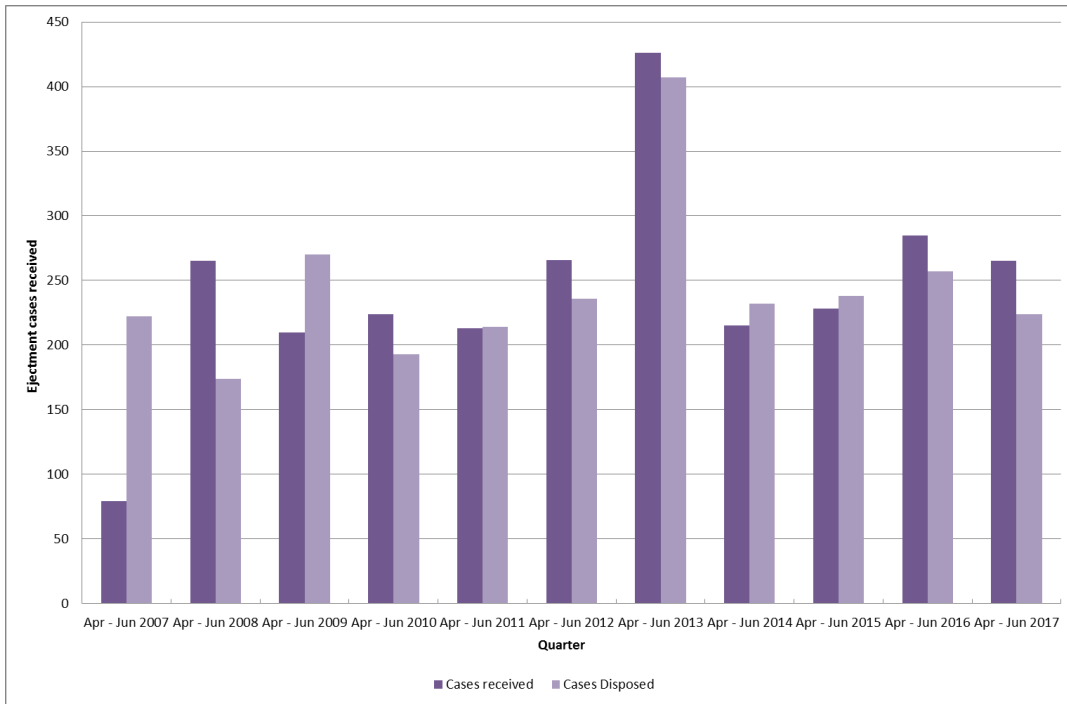
3.2 Equity

A total of 39 equity cases were received during April to June 2017, a 13% decrease on the number received during the period April to June 2016 (45), while the number of equity cases disposed increased from 29 during the period April to June 2016, to 51 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 89 weeks, up from 58 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 265 ejectment cases were received, down 7% on the 285 cases received during April to June 2016, with the number of ejectment cases disposed decreasing by 13%, from 257 in the same quarter last year to 224 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed: April - June 2007 to April - June 2017



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

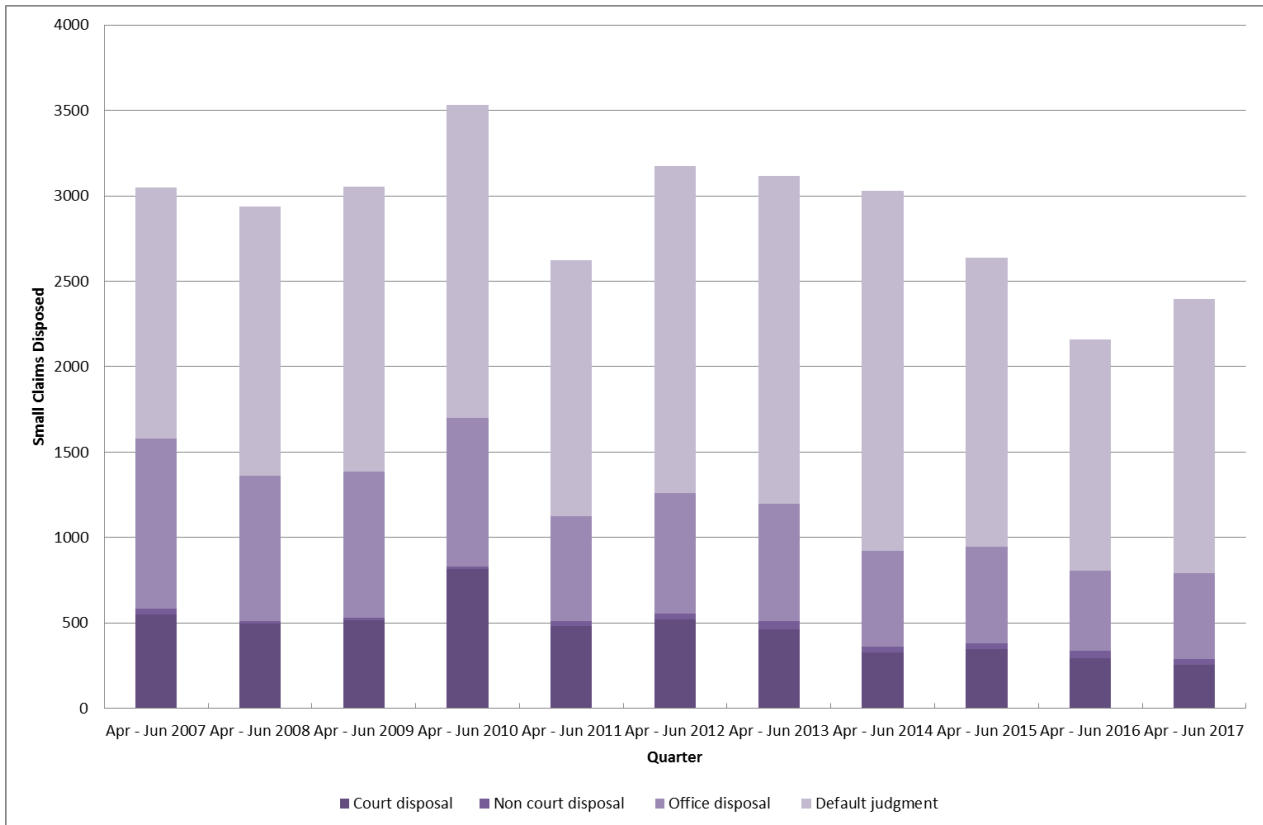
3.4 Small claims

2,727 small claims were received, up 4% on the 2,632, received during the same quarter last year.

The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 11% from 2,160 during April to June 2016 to 2,398 this quarter.

Of the 2,398 small claims disposed during the quarter, the majority (67%) were disposed by way of default judgment, the highest level observed since the beginning of the time series in 2007 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Small claims cases disposed, by type of disposal: April - June 2007 to April - June 2017

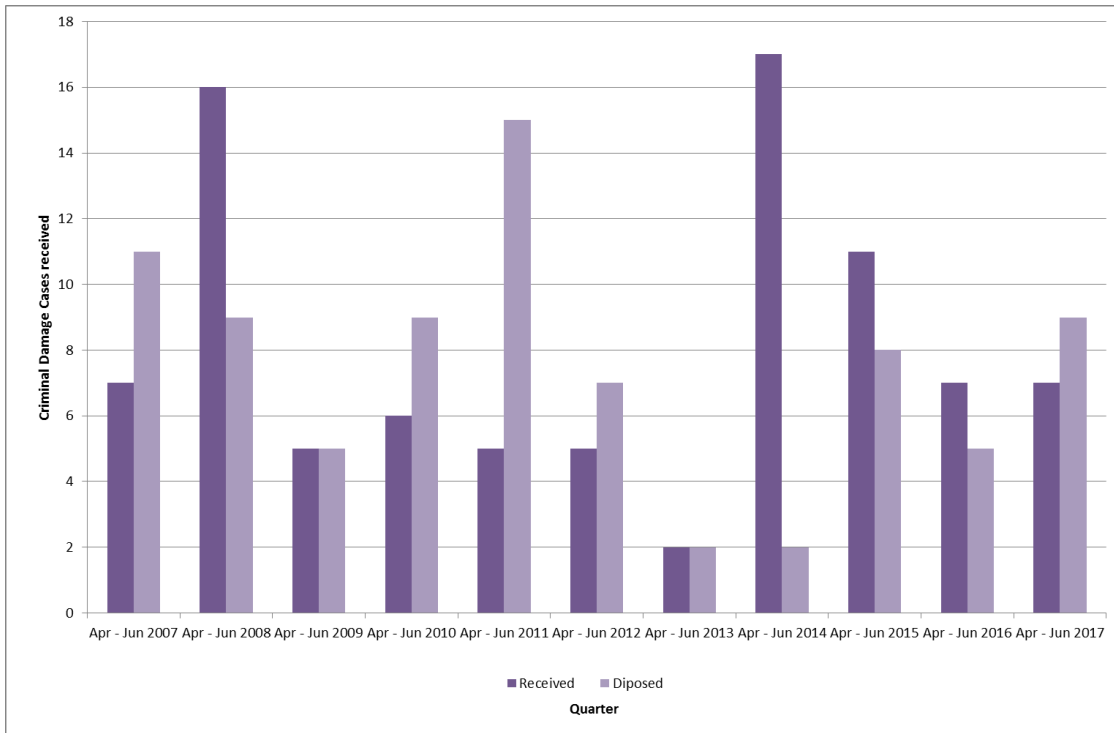


The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 28 weeks, compared to 22 weeks during the corresponding quarter last year.

3.5 Criminal Damage

Seven criminal damage cases were received, with nine disposed during the quarter. This compares with seven cases received and five cases disposed during the same quarter in 2016 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed: April - June 2007 to April - June 2017



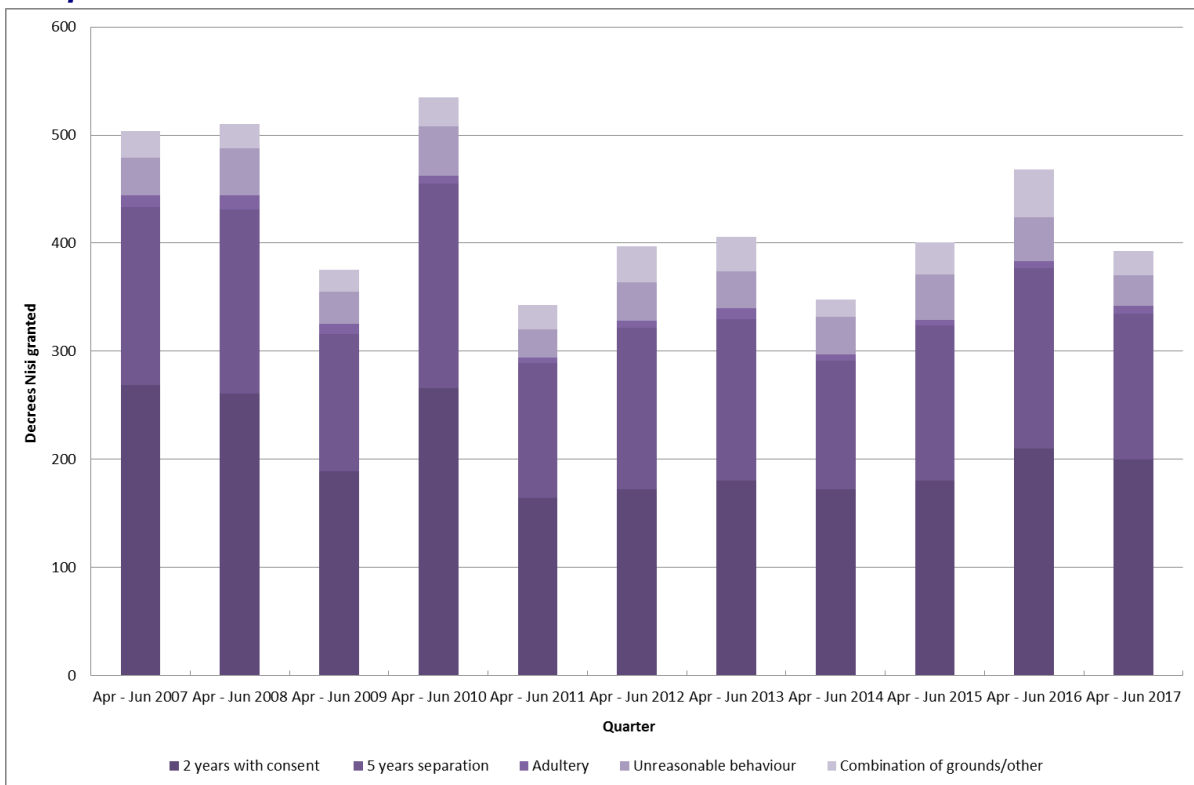
3.6 Divorces

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

A total of 393 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, down 16% on the 468 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 51% of decrees (200), followed by '5 years separation', 34% (135) of decrees (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type: April - June 2007 to April – June 2017



A total of 298 decrees absolute were issued in the county court, a decrease of 39% on the 488 issued during the period April to June 2016. Again the most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 49% (146) 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 31 weeks and eight weeks during the same period last year.

3.7 Licences

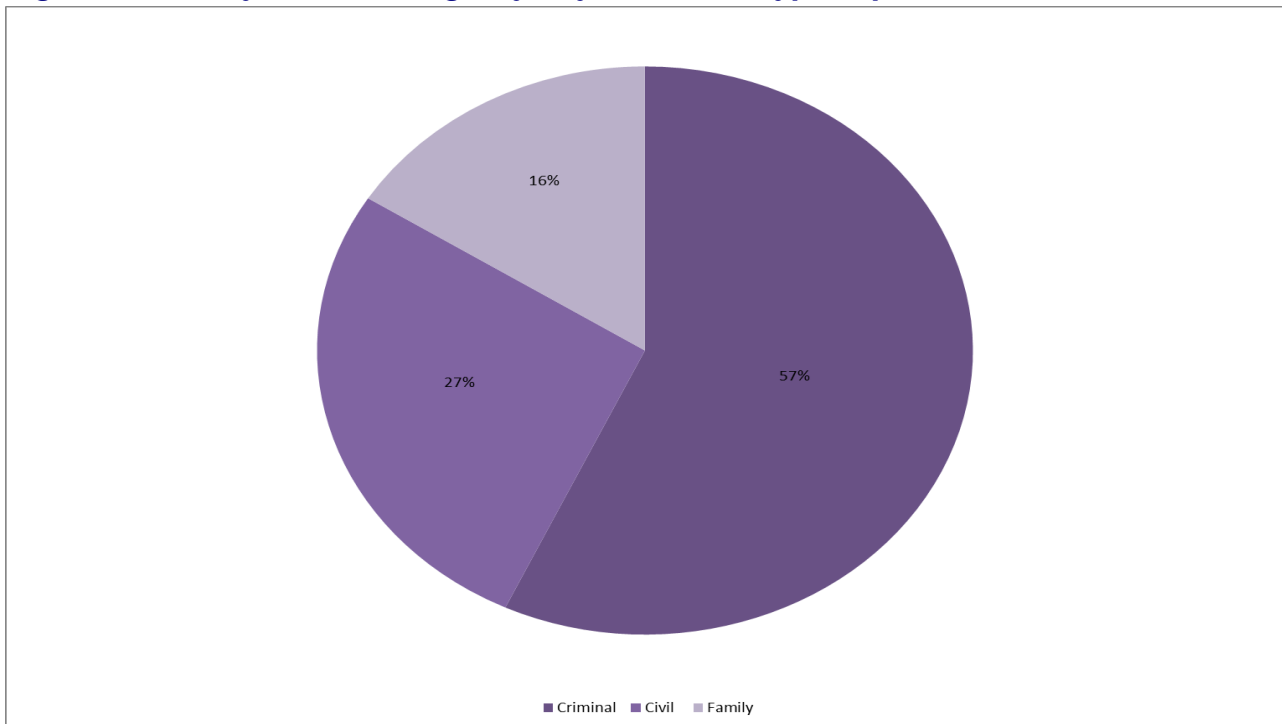
There were 74 licence applications received and 64 disposed, compared to the 67 received and 62 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,131 sitting days during the quarter, down 14% on the 1,316 sitting days recorded during the period April to June 2016.

Within these 1,131 sitting days, 57% of time was spent on criminal business, 27% of time was spent on civil business and 16% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

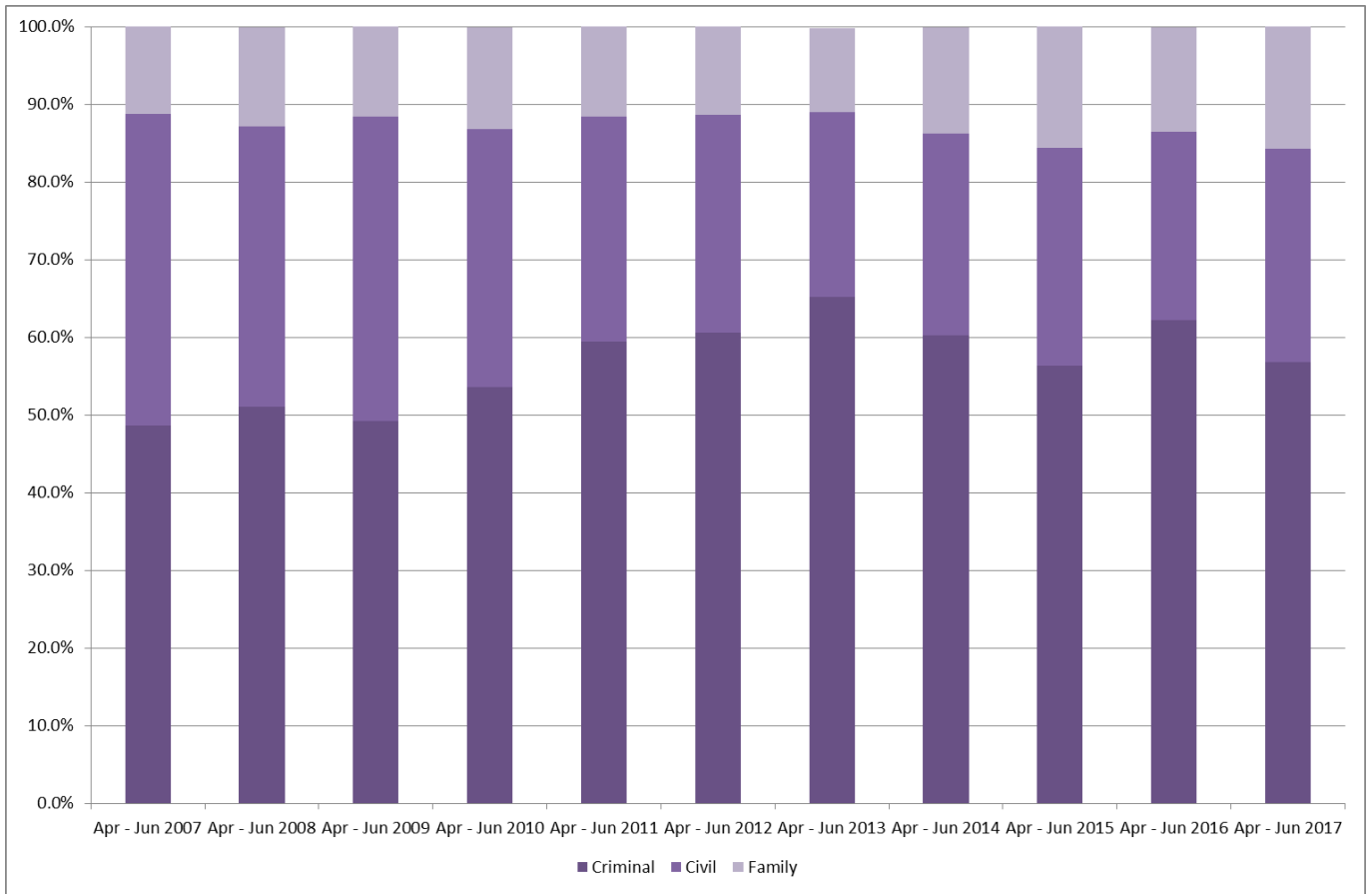
Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: April - June 2017



The proportion of time spent on criminal business 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 the period.

The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 56% during April to June 2015. This decrease was reflective of the action taken by a number of solicitors and counsel who withdrew their representation from a number of Crown Court cases in response to the introduction, in May 2015, of new rules in relation to legal aid remuneration. Following resolution of this dispute in February 2016, activity in the Crown Court increased, with the proportion of time spent by County Court Judges on criminal business increasing to 62% of sittings during April to June 2016, while the backlog of cases arising from the dispute was addressed. Progress made in addressing the backlog has meant that both the number of sittings and the proportion of time spent on criminal business decreased this quarter, compared to the same period last year, with the proportion of time spent on criminal business falling to 57%.

Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: April - June 2007 to April - June 2017



APPENDIX 1

Civil Bills

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

Case	Laganside Courts	2053
	Newtownards Court Office	188
	Downpatrick Court Office	5
	Craigavon Court Office	104
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	109
	Londonderry Court Office	88
	Coleraine Court Office	151
	Newry Court Office	124
	Ballymena Court Office	2
	Lisburn Court Office	32
	Total	2857
	Application	Laganside Courts
Newtownards Court Office		103
Downpatrick Court Office		11
Craigavon Court Office		61
Armagh Court Office		6
Omagh Court Office		102
Antrim Court Office		7
Londonderry Court Office		52
Coleraine Court Office		57
Newry Court Office		77
Magherafelt Court Office		1
Ballymena Court Office		8
Lisburn Court Office		61
Total	1237	

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

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	449	485	934
Newtownards Court Office	151	55	206
Downpatrick Court Office	1		1
Craigavon Court Office	69	44	113
Armagh Court Office		1	1
Omagh Court Office	88	53	141
Antrim Court Office		1	1
Londonderry Court Office	66	40	106
Coleraine Court Office	93	59	152
Newry Court Office	90	47	137
Ballymena Court Office	2		2
Lisburn Court Office	39	16	55
Total	1048	801	1849

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	499	226	193	9	28	955
	Newtownards Court Office	51	122	65	3	7	248
	Downpatrick Court Office	8	1	1			10
	Craigavon Court Office	67	9	73		12	161
	Armagh Court Office	11	4	11		3	29
	Omagh Court Office	60	69	67	3	7	206
	Antrim Court Office	2	5	1			8
	Londonderry Court Office	21	56	30	2	9	118
	Enniskillen Court Office	7	1			1	9
	Coleraine Court Office	53	71	66	4	10	204
	Newry Court Office	47	75	50	2	12	186
	Magherafelt Court Office		1				1
	Ballymena Court Office	2	1	2	1		6
	Lisburn Court Office	17	1	26		7	51
	Dungannon Court Office	20	1	6		1	28
	Civil Processing Centre	5	5	44	224	19	297
	Total	870	648	635	248	116	2517
Application	Laganside Courts	70	11	142			223
	Newtownards Court Office	6	5	26			37
	Downpatrick Court Office	4	1	2			7
	Craigavon Court Office	4		20			24
	Armagh Court Office			1			1
	Omagh Court Office	6	7	30			43
	Antrim Court Office	4	2	5			11
	Londonderry Court Office	1	4	28			33
	Coleraine Court Office	16	14	20			50
	Newry Court Office	13	9	14			36
	Ballymena Court Office	3		2			5
	Lisburn Court Office	7		7			14
	Civil Processing Centre			30			30
Total	134	53	327			514	

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

		No value	Less than £3000	£3000-14999	£15000-29999	£30000 and over	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	382	133	204	15	1	735
	Newtownards Court Office	25	47	92	8	1	173
	Downpatrick Court Office	4		5			9
	Craigavon Court Office	17	26	32	1		76
	Armagh Court Office	12	1	2			15
	Omagh Court Office	51	25	49	4		129
	Antrim Court Office	2	3	2			7
	Londonderry Court Office	33	20	23	1		77
	Enniskillen Court Office	4		4			8
	Coleraine Court Office	25	35	59	5		124
	Newry Court Office	35	36	47	4		122
	Magherafelt Court Office		1				1
	Ballymena Court Office	3					3
	Lisburn Court Office	6	3	8	1		18
	Dungannon Court Office	14	3	3	1		21
Total	613	333	530	40	2	1518	

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	1021	1570	2591
Newtownards Court Office	209	103	312
Downpatrick Court Office	3	1	4
Craigavon Court Office	138	90	228
Armagh Court Office	14	11	25
Omagh Court Office	227	222	449
Strabane Court Office	1	1	2
Antrim Court Office	8	3	11
Londonderry Court Office	157	142	299
Enniskillen Court Office	1		1
Coleraine Court Office	142	171	313
Newry Court Office	132	112	244
Ballymena Court Office	8	3	11
Lisburn Court Office	55	44	99
Dungannon Court Office	4		4
Total	2120	2473	4593

Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR

	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	357	610	967
Newtownards Court Office	71	18	89
Downpatrick Court Office		1	1
Craigavon Court Office	80	46	126
Armagh Court Office	8	10	18
Omagh Court Office	92	94	186
Strabane Court Office		2	2
Antrim Court Office	4	2	6
Londonderry Court Office	49	31	80
Enniskillen Court Office		2	2
Coleraine Court Office	87	59	146
Newry Court Office	54	68	122
Limavady Court Office		1	1
Magherafelt Court Office	1		1
Ballymena Court Office	2	3	5
Lisburn Court Office	49	29	78
Dungannon Court Office	4	3	7
Total	858	979	1837

Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases

Case	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	63
Newtownards Court Office	28
Downpatrick Court Office	13
Craigavon Court Office	47
Armagh Court Office	73
Omagh Court Office	81
Antrim Court Office	78
Londonderry Court Office	45
Enniskillen Court Office	333
Coleraine Court Office	50
Newry Court Office	60
Magherafelt Court Office	27
Ballymena Court Office	184
Lisburn Court Office	76
Dungannon Court Office	361
Total	63

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications

			Issue to disposal
Application	Processing Office	Laganside Courts	13
		Newtownards Court Office	8
		Downpatrick Court Office	5
		Craigavon Court Office	87
		Omagh Court Office	9
		Antrim Court Office	13
		Londonderry Court Office	8
		Coleraine Court Office	11
		Newry Court Office	19
		Ballymena Court Office	29
		Lisburn Court Office	4
	Total		14

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Equity

Table 9: Equity cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	11
	Newtownards Court Office	5
	Craigavon Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	8
	Londonderry Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	4
	Newry Court Office	5
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Total	39
Application	Laganside Courts	2
	Omagh Court Office	8
	Londonderry Court Office	4
	Newry Court Office	2
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Total	17

Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	5		2	7
	Newtownards Court Office	3		1	4
	Craigavon Court Office	2		2	4
	Armagh Court Office	1			1
	Omagh Court Office	12	1	5	18
	Londonderry Court Office	3	1		4
	Coleraine Court Office	4	3		7
	Newry Court Office	2		1	3
	Ballymena Court Office			2	2
	Dungannon Court Office			1	1
	Total	32	5	14	51
Application	Laganside Courts			2	2
	Newtownards Court Office	1			1
	Omagh Court Office	1		1	2
	Londonderry Court Office	2		2	4
	Coleraine Court Office	1		1	2
	Newry Court Office	1		1	2
	Lisburn Court Office			1	1
	Total	6		8	14

Table 11: Outstanding equity cases

Case	Laganside Courts	56
	Newtownards Court Office	17
	Downpatrick Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	13
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	53
	Londonderry Court Office	14
	Coleraine Court Office	26
	Newry Court Office	29
	Ballymena Court Office	2
	Lisburn Court Office	1
Total	215	

Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	52
	Newtownards Court Office	42
	Craigavon Court Office	82
	Armagh Court Office	25
	Omagh Court Office	129
	Londonderry Court Office	92
	Coleraine Court Office	58
	Newry Court Office	137
	Total	89
Application	Newtownards Court Office	8
	Omagh Court Office	2
	Londonderry Court Office	61
	Coleraine Court Office	14
	Newry Court Office	4
	Total	25

Ejectment

Table 13: Ejectment cases received

Case	Laganside Courts	187
	Newtownards Court Office	25
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	10
	Londonderry Court Office	6
	Coleraine Court Office	10
	Newry Court Office	8
	Lisburn Court Office	15
	Total	265

Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts		79	2	81
	Newtownards Court Office	1	54		55
	Downpatrick Court Office		3		3
	Craigavon Court Office		12	1	13
	Armagh Court Office		1		1
	Omagh Court Office		19	4	23
	Londonderry Court Office		11		11
	Coleraine Court Office		11		11
	Newry Court Office	1	9		10
	Ballymena Court Office		1		1
	Lisburn Court Office		14	1	15
	Total		2	214	8

Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

Case	Laganside Courts	20
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	8
	Londonderry Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	7
Total		41

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	24
	Newtownards Court Office	18
	Downpatrick Court Office	16
	Craigavon Court Office	35
	Armagh Court Office	70
	Omagh Court Office	27
	Londonderry Court Office	14
	Coleraine Court Office	19
	Newry Court Office	16
	Ballymena Court Office	17
	Lisburn Court Office	19
	Total	

Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Small Claims

Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	2578
	Newtownards Court Office	30
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	15
	Armagh Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	21
	Antrim Court Office	2
	Londonderry Court Office	12
	Enniskillen Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	21
	Newry Court Office	21
	Limavady Court Office	1
	Magherafelt Court Office	1
	Ballymena Court Office	9
	Lisburn Court Office	8
	Dungannon Court Office	1
	Total	2727
Application	Laganside Courts	41
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	5
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	8
	Newry Court Office	4
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Total	62

Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Case	Laganside Courts	117
	Newtownards Court Office	32
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	26
	Armagh Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	19
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	20
	Enniskillen Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	24
	Newry Court Office	20
	Limavady Court Office	1
	Magherafelt Court Office	1
	Ballymena Court Office	6
	Lisburn Court Office	10
Dungannon Court Office	1	
Total	285	

Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	74	8	43	9	134
	Newtownards Court Office	41	5	9	2	57
	Downpatrick Court Office	4	1			5
	Craigavon Court Office	16	4	3		23
	Armagh Court Office	3	2	2		7
	Omagh Court Office	12		7	3	22
	Londonderry Court Office	22	1	4	2	29
	Enniskillen Court Office	4		1		5
	Coleraine Court Office	37	3	1	1	42
	Newry Court Office	28	4	3		35
	Magherafelt Court Office	1				1
	Ballymena Court Office	6		3		9
	Lisburn Court Office	8	1	1	1	11
	Civil Processing Centre	1	3	426	1588	2018
Total	257	32	503	1606	2398	
Application	Laganside Courts	15	6			21
	Newtownards Court Office	4	2			6
	Craigavon Court Office	3				3
	Omagh Court Office	2				2
	Coleraine Court Office	2	2			4
	Newry Court Office	2	1			3
	Civil Processing Centre		3			3
	Total	28	14			42

Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD

Laganside Courts	203
Newtownards Court Office	22
Downpatrick Court Office	1
Craigavon Court Office	30
Armagh Court Office	4
Omagh Court Office	22
Antrim Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	35
Enniskillen Court Office	6
Coleraine Court Office	41
Newry Court Office	21
Limavady Court Office	2
Magherafelt Court Office	1
Ballymena Court Office	10
Lisburn Court Office	7
Dungannon Court Office	1
Total	407

Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims³

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	23
	Newtownards Court Office	58
	Downpatrick Court Office	19
	Craigavon Court Office	28
	Armagh Court Office	30
	Omagh Court Office	23
	Londonderry Court Office	16
	Enniskillen Court Office	19
	Coleraine Court Office	26
	Newry Court Office	18
	Magherafelt Court Office	6
	Ballymena Court Office	17
	Lisburn Court Office	12
	Total	28
	Application	Laganside Courts
Newtownards Court Office		9
Craigavon Court Office		10
Omagh Court Office		6
Coleraine Court Office		3
Newry Court Office		18
Total		7

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

Criminal Damage

Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	5
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Dungannon Court Office	1
	Total	7

Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	3		3
	Omagh Court Office	3		3
	Londonderry Court Office		1	1
	Coleraine Court Office		2	2
	Total	6	3	9

Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases

Laganside Courts	28
Newtownards Court Office	2
Craigavon Court Office	4
Armagh Court Office	3
Omagh Court Office	12
Londonderry Court Office	3
Coleraine Court Office	1
Newry Court Office	3
Dungannon Court Office	2
Total	58

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage cases²

Laganside Courts	65
Omagh Court Office	158
Total	112

²Excludes 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	61	46	1	9	6	123
Newtownards Court Office	21	12		2	3	38
Downpatrick Court Office	15	13	1	1		30
Craigavon Court Office	27	16	1	3	3	50
Armagh Court Office	1	1	1		2	5
Omagh Court Office	24	13	1			38
Londonderry Court Office	11	18		2	2	33
Coleraine Court Office	28	11	1	8	4	52
Newry Court Office	10	4	1	3	1	19
Dungannon Court Office	2	1			2	5
Total	200	135	7	28	23	393

Table 27: Divorce petitions by number of absolutes issued

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	43	30		5	3	81
Newtownards Court Office	25	18		4	2	49
Craigavon Court Office	13	13		3	2	31
Armagh Court Office	13	10	1	1	3	28
Omagh Court Office	3	5	1	1	2	12
Londonderry Court Office	16	15			2	33
Coleraine Court Office	28	14		7	4	53
Newry Court Office					1	1
Ballymena Court Office	1	1				2
Lisburn Court Office	1					1
Dungannon Court Office	3	3			1	7
Total	146	109	2	21	20	298

Table 28: Matrimonial applications received

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	4			4
Newtownards Court Office	4			4
Craigavon Court Office	5		1	6
Omagh Court Office	5			5
Londonderry Court Office	4			4
Coleraine Court Office	6		1	8
Newry Court Office	9			9
Ballymena Court Office	4			4
Dungannon Court Office	1			1
Total	42	1	2	45

Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	8			8
Newtownards Court Office	4			4
Craigavon Court Office	6		1	7
Armagh Court Office	5			5
Omagh Court Office	3			3
Londonderry Court Office	6	1	1	8
Coleraine Court Office	8			8
Newry Court Office	2			2
Ballymena Court Office	2			2
Lisburn Court Office	4			4
Dungannon Court Office	6			6
Total	54	1	2	57

Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	33	8
Newtownards Court Office	40	8
Downpatrick Court Office	25	6
Craigavon Court Office	28	8
Armagh Court Office	34	8
Omagh Court Office	37	9
Londonderry Court Office	26	8
Coleraine Court Office	26	8
Newry Court Office	32	8
Dungannon Court Office	25	8
Total	31	8

Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications

	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	135
Newtownards Court Office	18
Craigavon Court Office	7
Armagh Court Office	69
Omagh Court Office	2
Londonderry Court Office	42
Coleraine Court Office	27
Newry Court Office	43
Ballymena Court Office	12
Lisburn Court Office	54
Dungannon Court Office	74
Total	51

Excludes non-court disposals

Licences

Table 32: Licences received and disposed

Court Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	12	11
Newtownards	7	9
Newry	8	6
Laganside Courts	33	27
Craigavon	1	1
Omagh	8	7
Londonderry	5	3
Total	74	64

County Court Judge and District Judge Sitting Days

Table 33: County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days

	Total time			Total criminal time	Total civil time	Total family time
	Number of sitting days	Average sitting	Total time			
Antrim	92	1:42:20	156:56:00	147:49:00	8:22:00	0:45:00
Ballymena	7	3:40:00	25:40:00	0:00:00	25:10:00	0:30:00
Laganside	413	2:53:26	1193:53:00	559:43:00	342:27:00	291:43:00
Armagh	26	2:39:48	69:15:00	5:15:00	63:35:00	0:25:00
Banbridge@Newry	3	0:05:40	0:17:00	0:17:00	0:00:00	0:00:00
Limavady	3	2:48:20	8:25:00	1:30:00	6:45:00	0:10:00
Lisburn	10	3:27:00	34:30:00	4:25:00	21:45:00	8:20:00
Magherafelt	2	4:30:00	9:00:00	0:00:00	8:30:00	0:30:00
Dungannon	104	3:33:43	370:28:00	311:29:00	26:02:00	32:57:00
Downpatrick	61	1:55:06	117:02:00	96:04:00	13:03:00	7:55:00
Craigavon	112	2:45:34	309:04:00	225:01:00	35:57:00	48:06:00
Strabane	4	2:39:00	10:36:00	1:15:00	8:45:00	0:36:00
Omagh	13	2:06:32	27:25:00	2:35:00	19:05:00	5:45:00
Enniskillen	7	4:04:00	28:28:00	0:00:00	26:20:00	2:08:00
Coleraine	26	2:49:13	73:20:00	19:00:00	47:20:00	7:00:00
Londonderry	115	2:18:13	264:55:00	139:45:00	60:20:00	64:50:00
Newtownards	33	2:38:01	86:55:00	5:05:00	79:30:00	2:20:00
Newry	100	2:27:28	245:48:00	201:30:00	41:21:00	2:57:00
Total	1131	2:40:50	3031:57:00	1720:43:00	834:17:00	476:57:00

⁵ 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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