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Research and Statistical Bulletin

Provisional Figures

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[Northern Ireland Court Service Statistical Publications](#)

Executive Summary

This report covers data from April to June 2021, so court activity during this period has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Figures published show that although courts continue to carry out urgent business and make more use of remote audio and video technology, the impact of COVID-19 is evident. It is expected that the limited operation of the county courts during the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have an impact on many of the published figures in this and future releases.

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period April to June 2021 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2012. 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 2021:
- There were 1,660 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 41% increase on the same quarter last year (1,177). In total, 2,358 civil bills were disposed, an over three fold increase on the number disposed during the same period in 2020 (663).
- 43 equity cases were received during April to June 2021, up by twelve cases compared to the 31 cases received during the period April to June 2020, while 27 equity cases were disposed, compared with 4 equity cases disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 51 ejectment cases were received, almost three times the number received during April to June 2020 (18), with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing from one in the same quarter last year to 93 this quarter.
- 1,127 small claims were received, well over double the 406 cases received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed increased from 525 during April to June 2020 to 1,294 this quarter.
- Two criminal damage cases were received, the same as the period April to June 2020. One criminal damage case was disposed during the quarter, an increase on zero disposed during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 424 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, up 80% on the 235 granted during the same period last year.

- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,214 sitting days during the quarter, a fourfold increase on the number that was recorded during the period April to June 2020 (269). Some 44% of time was spent on criminal business with 27% spent on civil business and 29% on family business (compared to 44%, 3% and 53% respectively during April to June 2020).

[Note 1] Administrative case management reviews were introduced by the Lord Chief Justice as part of the coronavirus contingency arrangements. This has resulted in Judges investing significant time reviewing cases and making directions or orders administratively (where appropriate), and this has continued even as courts have resumed to support business recovery. This extra time is not recorded on the courts operating system (ICOS), and therefore is not reflected within the sittings times published within this report.

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1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data sources

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

2.2 Methodology for generating data

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

2.3 Baseline and Time period

Data contained within this bulletin relates to the current calendar year 2021. 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 2021 and will be published on 12th November 2021.

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, [Northern Ireland Court Service Statistical Publications](#)

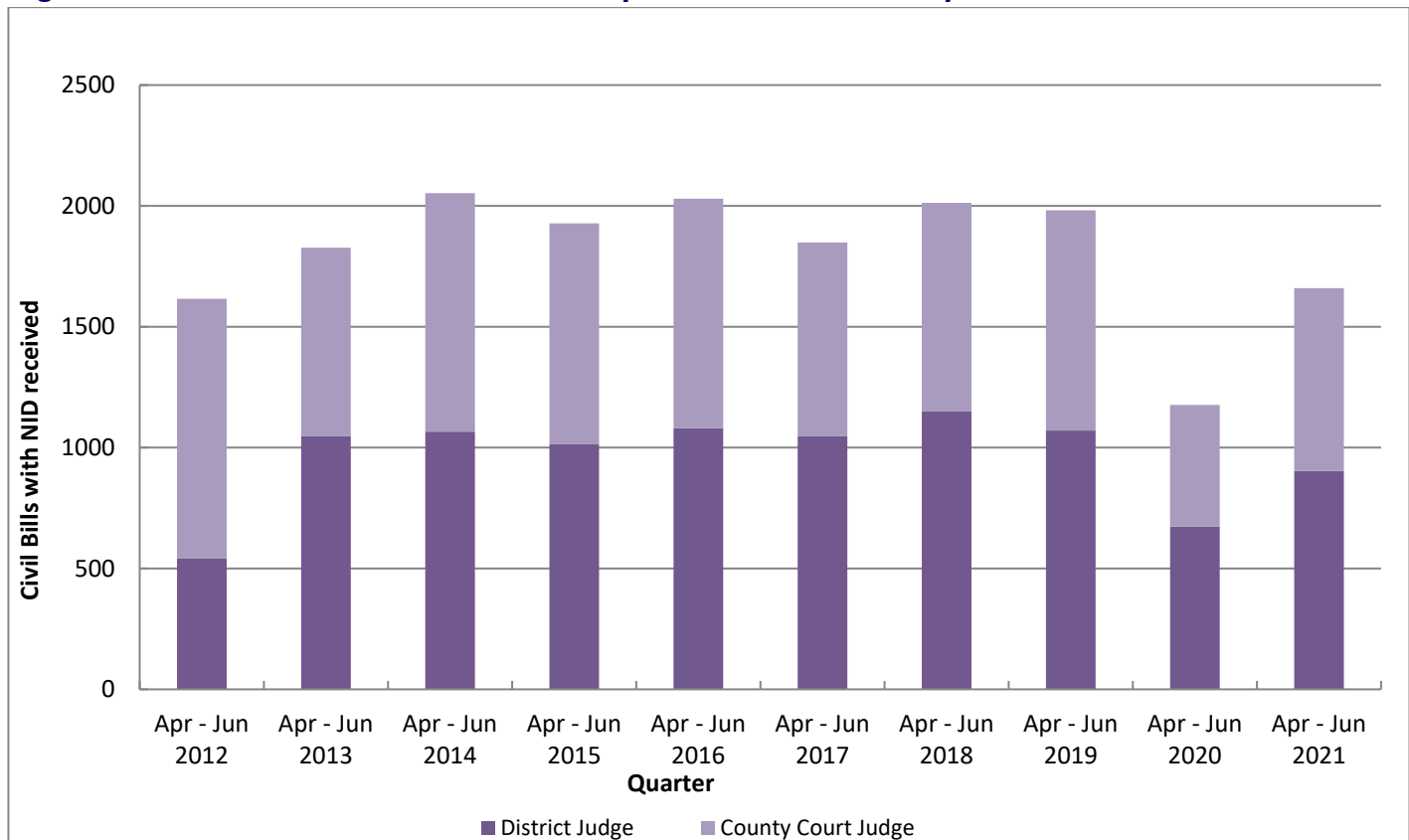
Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

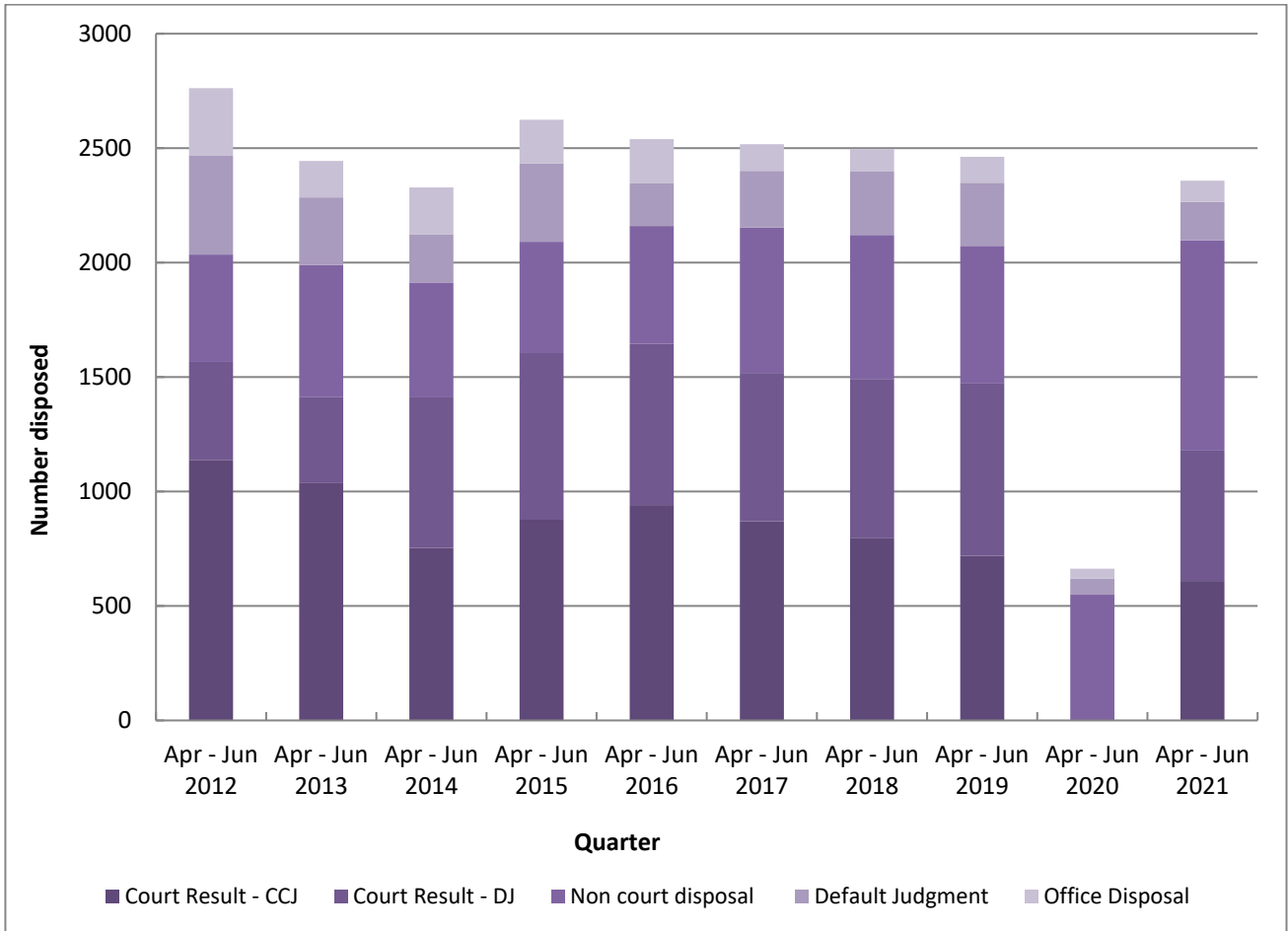
There were 1,660 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 41% increase on the same quarter last year (1,177) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received – April to June 2012 to April to June 2021



In total, 2,358 civil bills were disposed, an over three fold increase on the number disposed during the same period in 2020 (663) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal – April to June 2012 to April to June 2021



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 67 weeks; no data was produced for the same quarter in 2020.

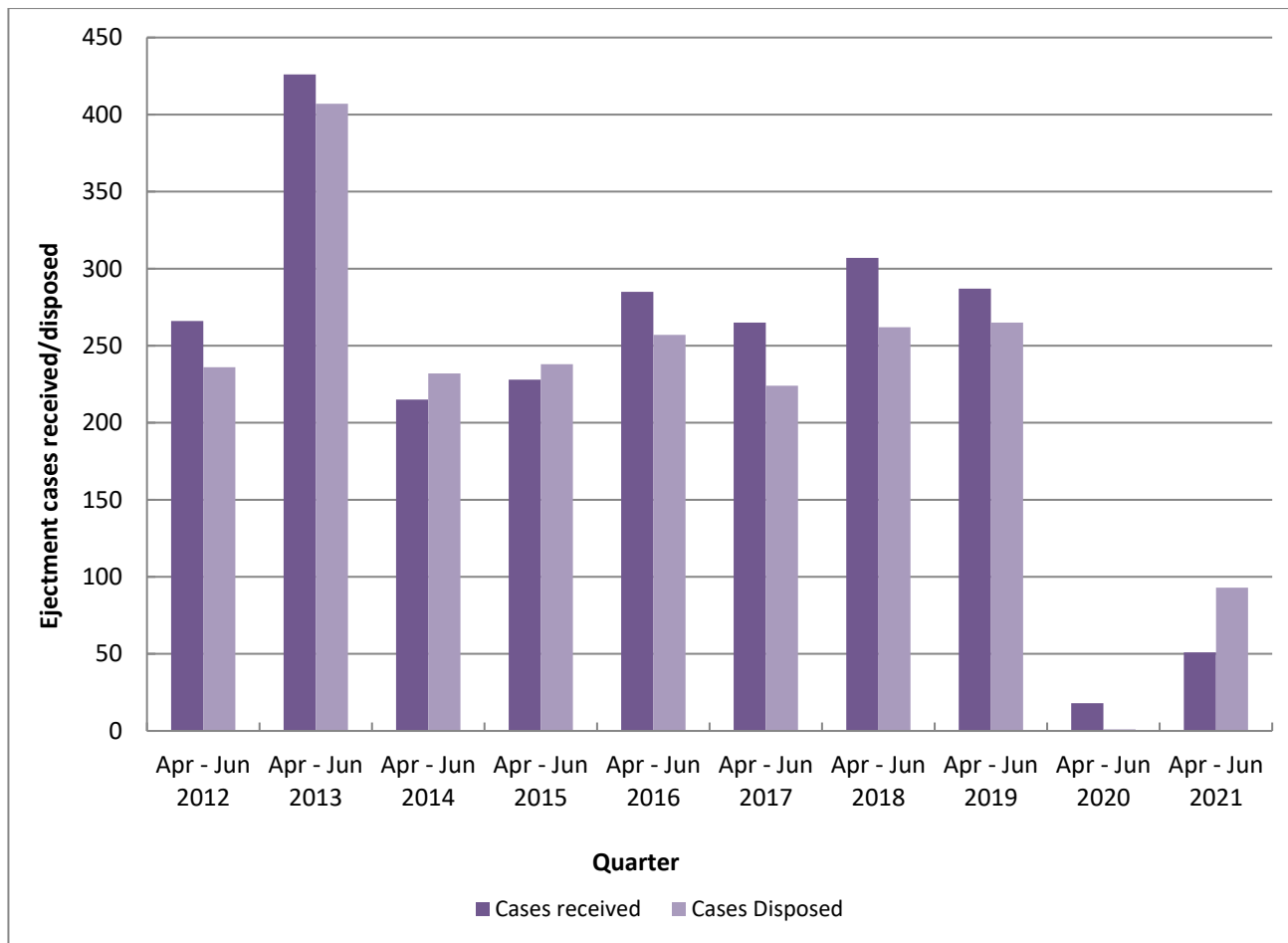
3.2 Equity

A total of 43 equity cases were received during April to June 2021, twelve more than the number received during the period April to June 2020 (31). The number of equity cases disposed increased from four during the period April to June 2020, to 27 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 107 weeks; no data was produced 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 51 ejectment cases were received, nearly three times the number received during April to June 2020 (54), with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing, from one in the same quarter last year to 93 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejection cases received and disposed – April to June 2012 to April to June 2021

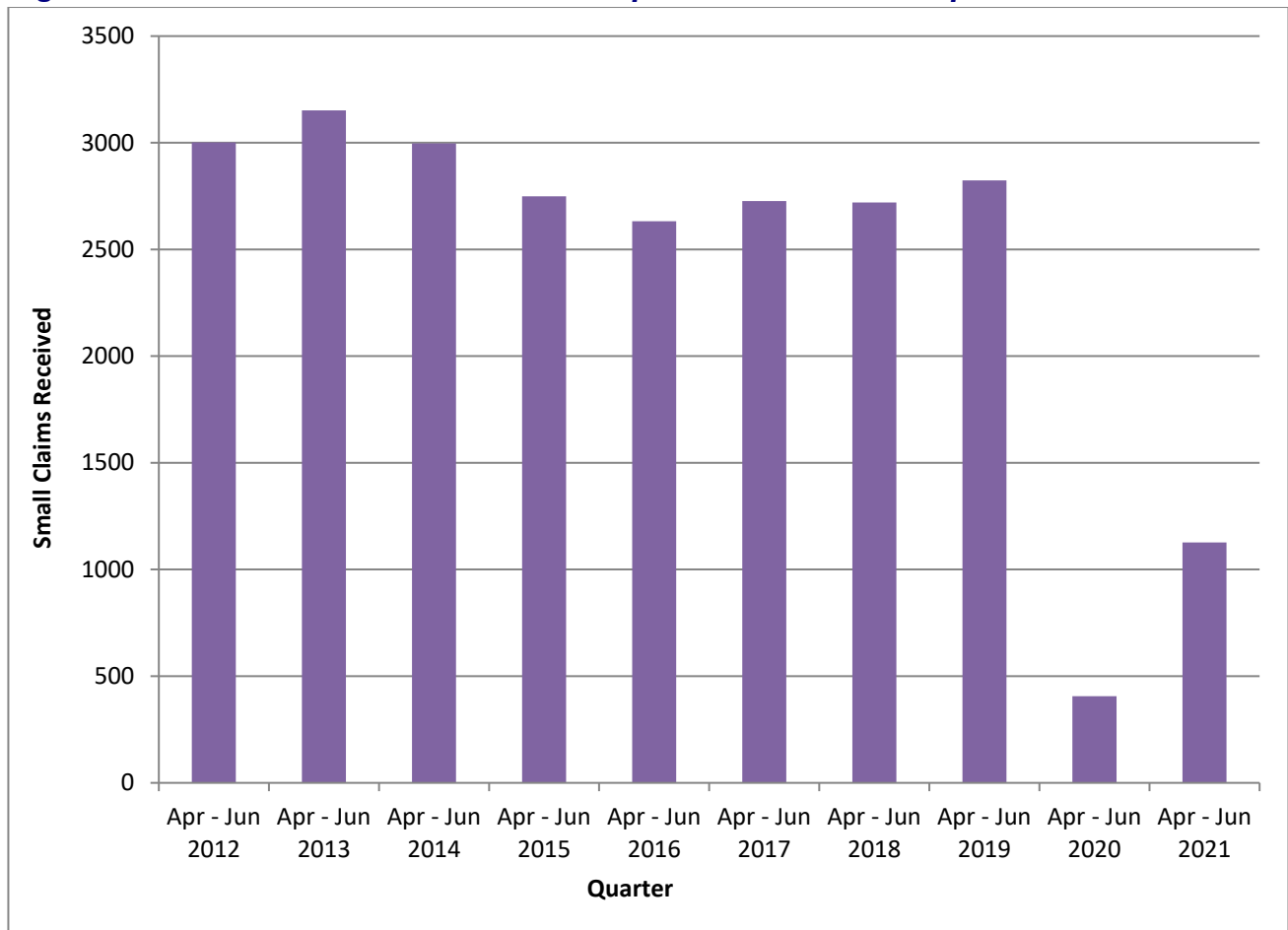


The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejection cases was 51 weeks; no data was produced for the April to June quarter in 2020.

3.4 Small claims

1,127 small claims were received, well over double the 406 received during the same quarter last year (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Small claims cases received – April to June 2012 to April to June 2021



The number of small claims cases disposed increased from 525 during April to June 2020 to 1,294 this quarter. Of the 1,294 small claims disposed during the quarter, 48% were disposed by way of default judgment.

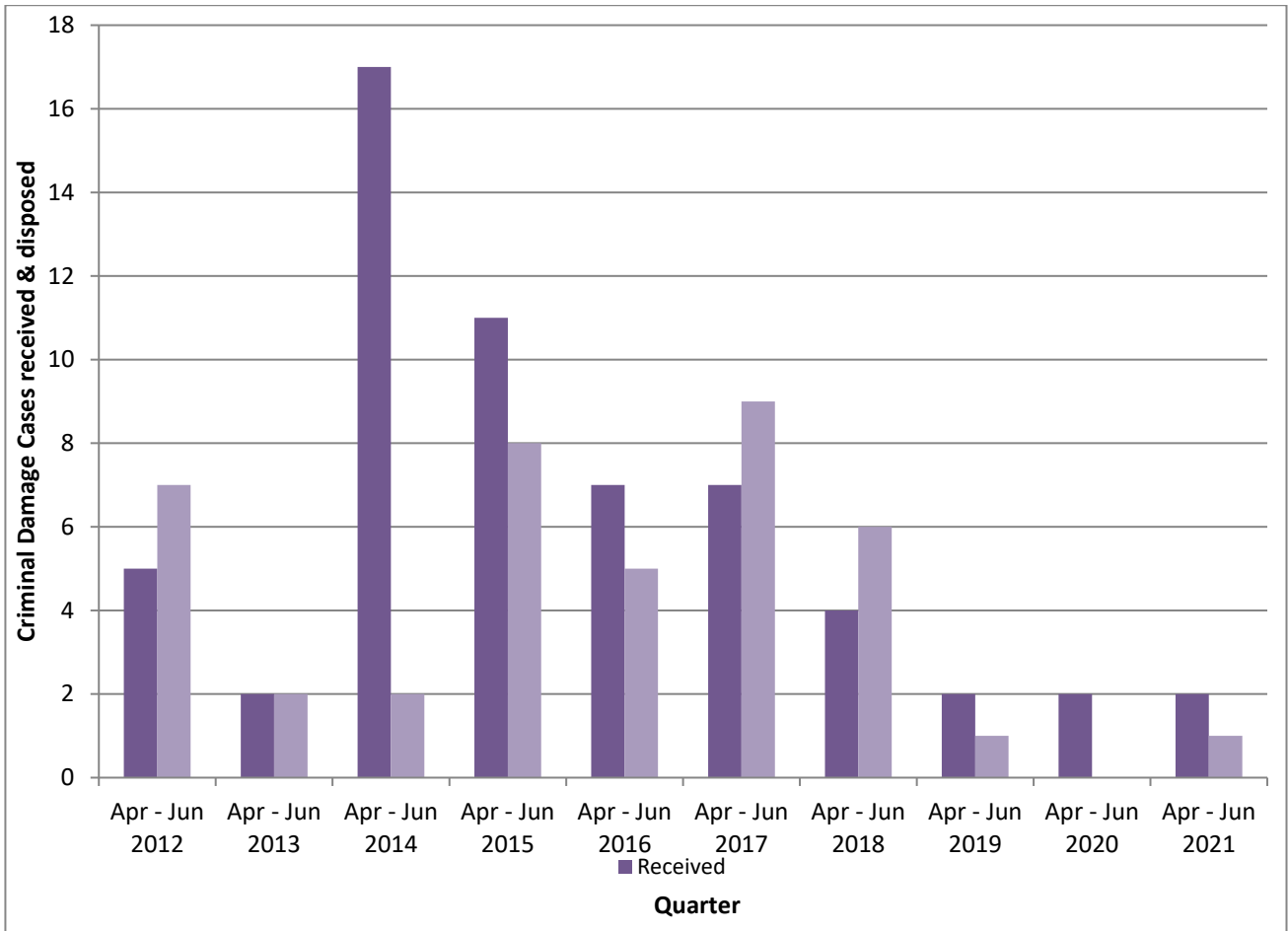
The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 56 weeks; no data was produced in the corresponding quarter last year.

There were 186 small claims court disposals during the period April to June 2021.

3.5 Criminal Damage

Two criminal damage cases were received with one disposed during the quarter. This compares with two cases received and no cases disposed during the same quarter in 2020 (Figure 5)

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed – April to June 2012 to April to June 2021



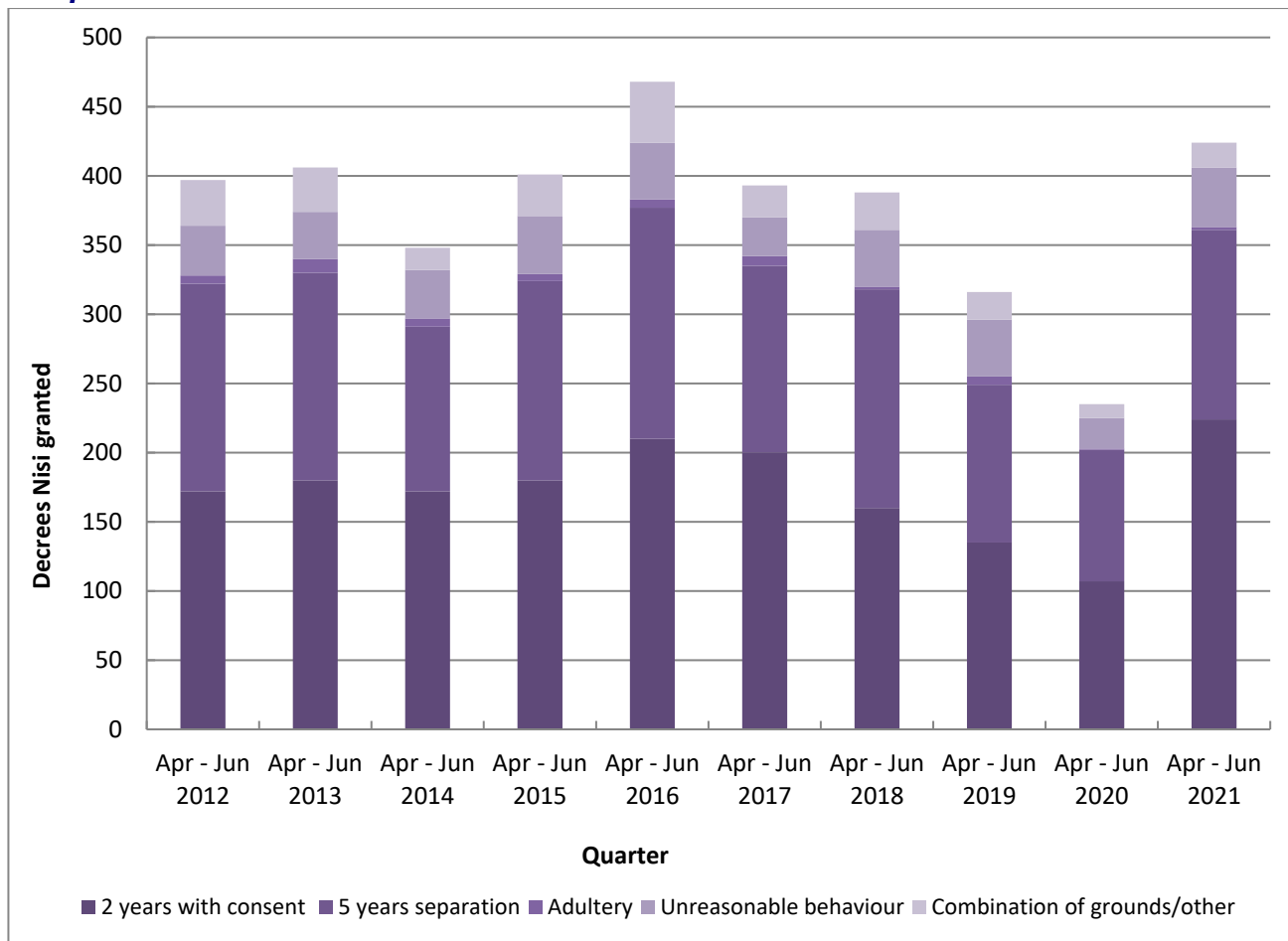
3.6 Divorces

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 424 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, up 80% on the 235 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 53% of decrees (224), followed by '5 years separation', accounting for 32% of decrees (137) (Figure 6)

Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type – April to June 2012 to April to June 2021



A total of 333 decrees absolute were issued in the County Court, over double the 130 issued during the period April to June 2020. The most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 47% (155) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 38 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 40 weeks and six weeks during the same period last year.

3.7 Licences

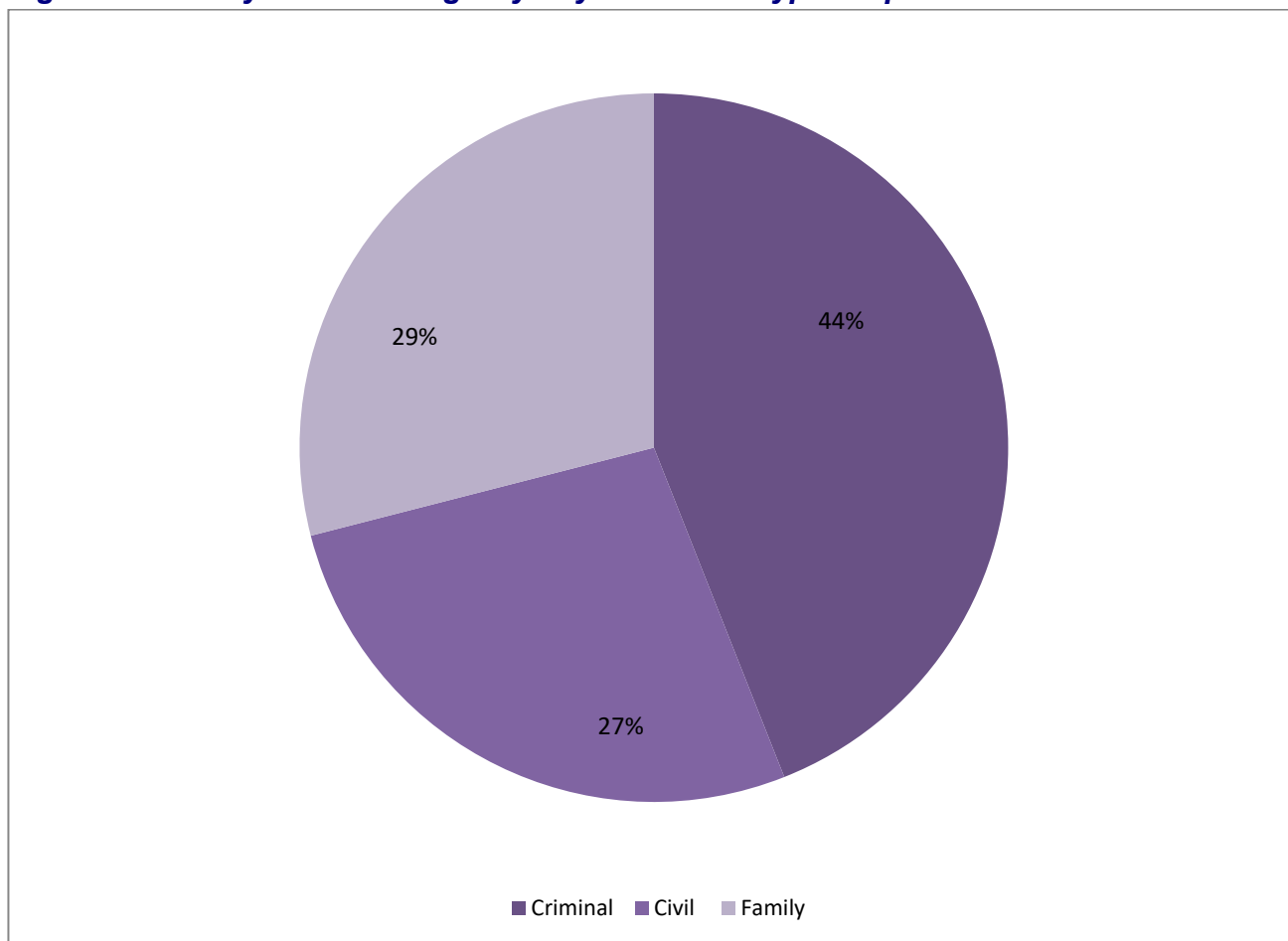
There were 151 licence applications received and 142 disposed, compared to the 6 received and 5 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,214 sitting days during the quarter, an over four fold increase on the number of sitting days recorded during the period April to June 2020.

Within these 1,214 sitting days, 44% of time was spent on criminal business, 27% of time was spent on civil business and 29% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – April to June 2021

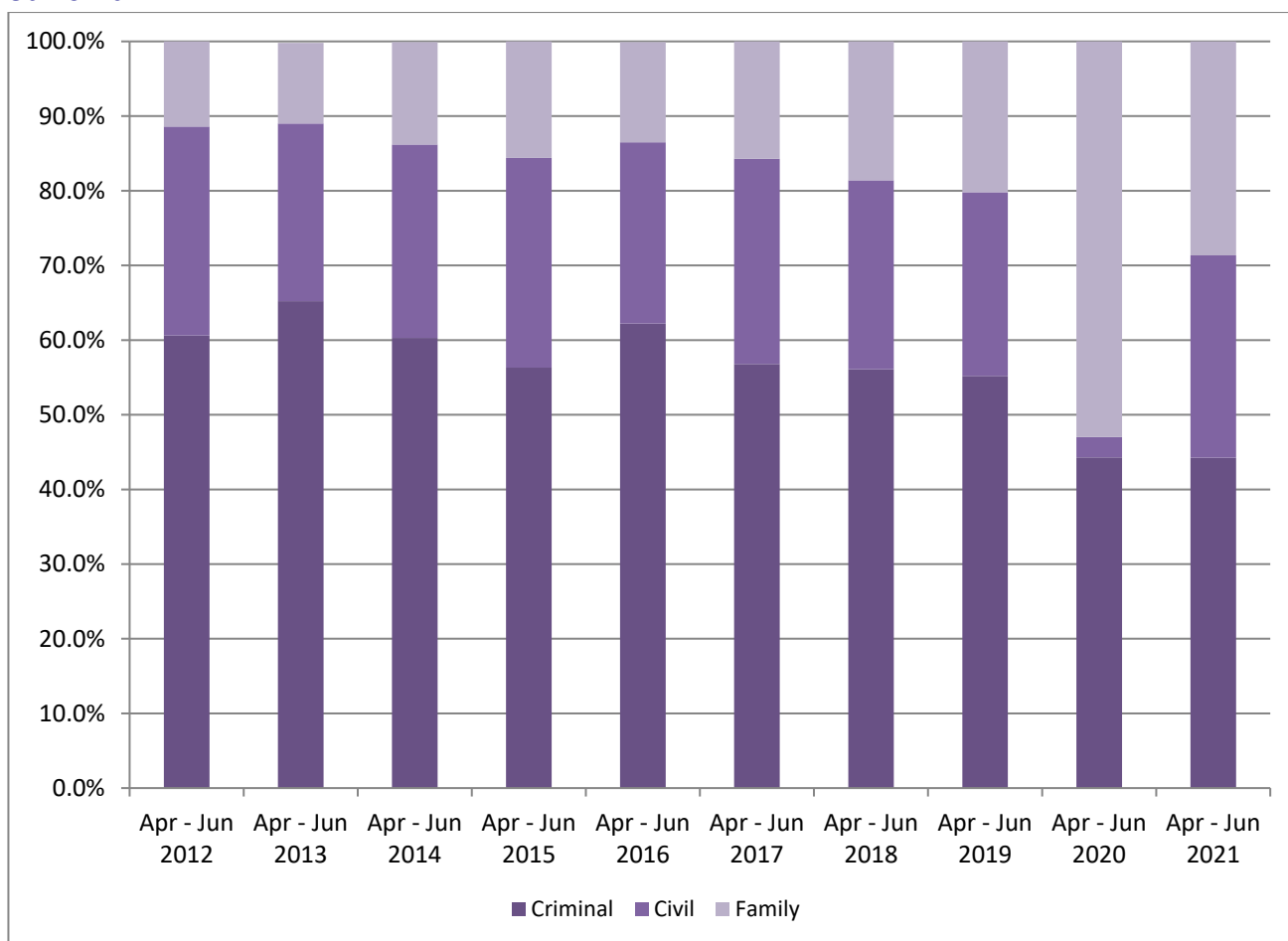


[6] Due to rounding, the percentages may not add up to 100%

The proportion of time spent on criminal business has fluctuated during April to June quarter since 2007, peaking at 66% during the quarter April to June 2013. This is largely reflective of County Court Judges dealing with increased volumes of cases in the Crown Court over that particular period. The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 50% during April to June 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 April to June 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 fell to the mid-fifties percentages in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The proportion of time spent on criminal business (44%) this quarter, is the same as the April to June 2020 quarter, then the lowest percentage since the time series began.

Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – April to June 2012 to April to June 2021



APPENDIX 1 – TABLES.

Civil Bills

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

Type	Processing office	Total	
Case	Laganside Courts	412	
	Newtownards Court Office	80	
	Downpatrick Court Office	53	
	Craigavon Court Office	48	
	Armagh Court Office	36	
	Omagh Court Office	47	
	Antrim Court Office	23	
	Londonderry Court Office	61	
	Enniskillen Court Office	4	
	Coleraine Court Office	58	
	Newry Court Office	80	
	Magherafelt Court Office	8	
	Ballymena Court Office	20	
	Lisburn Court Office	40	
	Dungannon Court Office	55	
	Civil Processing Centre	1208	
	Total	2233	
	Application	Laganside Courts	194
		Newtownards Court Office	76
		Downpatrick Court Office	9
Craigavon Court Office		6	
Armagh Court Office		105	
Banbridge Court Office		1	
Omagh Court Office		42	
Londonderry Court Office		57	
Coleraine Court Office		58	
Newry Court Office		9	
Ballymena Court Office		2	
Lisburn Court Office		18	
Civil Processing Centre		565	
Total		1142	

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

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	300	291	591
Newtownards Court Office	109	9	118
Downpatrick Court Office	6	69	75
Craigavon Court Office	41	31	72
Armagh Court Office	21	25	46
Banbridge Court Office	–	1	1
Omagh Court Office	39	34	73
Antrim Court Office	17	15	32
Londonderry Court Office	44	36	80
Enniskillen Court Office	2	7	9
Coleraine Court Office	55	23	78
Newry Court Office	75	44	119
Magherafelt Court Office	4	8	12
Ballymena Court Office	14	14	28
Lisburn Court Office	33	28	61
Dungannon Court Office	35	44	79
Civil Processing Centre	109	77	186
Total	904	756	1660

Table 3: Number of ordinary civil bills cases and applications disposed

Type	Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Default judgement	Office disposal	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	245	238	477	8	36	1004
	Newtownards Court Office	6	76	65	2	5	154
	Downpatrick Court Office	41	1	36	1	3	82
	Craigavon Court Office	22	29	34	1	2	88
	Armagh Court Office	18	14	15	1	1	49
	Banbridge Court Office	-	1	-	-	1	2
	Omagh Court Office	63	55	41	2	2	163
	Strabane Court Office	1	-	2	-	-	3
	Antrim Court Office	19	6	25	-	1	51
	Londonderry Court Office	27	47	36	1	7	118
	Enniskillen Court Office	4	-	2	-	1	7
	Coleraine Court Office	33	20	32	1	8	94
	Newry Court Office	75	35	45	-	6	161
	Magherafelt Court Office	6	3	4	-	-	13
	Ballymena Court Office	19	10	14	-	3	46
	Lisburn Court Office	21	29	40	-	1	91
	Dungannon Court Office	9	6	9	-	1	25
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	41	151	15	207
	Total	609	570	918	168	93	2358
Application	Laganside Courts	40	8	107	-	-	155
	Newtownards Court Office	22	4	19	-	-	45
	Downpatrick Court Office	6	-	9	-	-	15
	Craigavon Court Office	1	1	5	-	-	7
	Armagh Court Office	6	1	24	-	-	31
	Banbridge Court Office	-	-	1	-	-	1
	Omagh Court Office	2	3	26	-	-	31
	Londonderry Court Office	5	3	16	-	-	24
	Coleraine Court Office	18	2	27	-	-	47
	Newry Court Office	4	-	6	-	-	10
	Ballymena Court Office	1	-	1	-	-	2
	Lisburn Court Office	1	-	17	-	-	18
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	34	-	-	34
	Total	106	22	292	-	-	420

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

Processing Office	No value	Less than £3000	£3000-14999	£15000-29999	£30000 and over	Total
Laganside Courts	143	103	217	20	-	483
Newtownards Court Office	20	25	36	1	-	82
Downpatrick Court Office	8	1	27	6	-	42
Craigavon Court Office	9	8	32	2	-	51
Armagh Court Office	5	9	17	1	-	32
Banbridge Court Office	-	-	1	-	-	1
Omagh Court Office	30	19	64	5	-	118
Strabane Court Office	-	-	-	-	1	1
Antrim Court Office	3	7	14	1	-	25
Londonderry Court Office	30	13	29	1	1	74
Enniskillen Court Office	2	-	2	-	-	4
Coleraine Court Office	12	6	29	6	-	53
Newry Court Office	14	33	57	6	-	110
Magherafelt Court Office	1	1	6	1	-	9
Ballymena Court Office	4	11	13	1	-	29
Lisburn Court Office	5	12	30	3	-	50
Dungannon Court Office	1	5	8	1	-	15
Total	287	253	582	55	2	1179

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

Table 5: Outstanding civil bills with NID but no COR

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	1033	1829	2862
Newtownards Court Office	128	15	143
Downpatrick Court Office	10	186	196
Craigavon Court Office	86	89	175
Armagh Court Office	34	62	96
Banbridge Court Office	1	-	1
Omagh Court Office	148	161	309
Strabane Court Office	1	2	3
Antrim Court Office	31	60	91
Londonderry Court Office	136	123	259
Enniskillen Court Office	9	11	20
Coleraine Court Office	94	96	190
Newry Court Office	124	130	254
Limavady Court Office	1	-	1
Magherafelt Court Office	9	13	22
Ballymena Court Office	34	64	98
Lisburn Court Office	91	69	160
Dungannon Court Office	52	117	169
Civil Processing Centre	193	181	374
Total	2215	3208	5423

Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	364	505	869
Newtownards Court Office	70	2	72
Downpatrick Court Office	1	86	87
Craigavon Court Office	24	24	48
Armagh Court Office	13	19	32
Banbridge Court Office	1	1	2
Omagh Court Office	51	70	121
Strabane Court Office	2	3	5
Antrim Court Office	12	22	34
Londonderry Court Office	42	37	79
Enniskillen Court Office	3	3	6
Coleraine Court Office	42	53	95
Newry Court Office	43	52	95
Magherafelt Court Office	7	5	12
Ballymena Court Office	4	23	27
Lisburn Court Office	22	22	44
Dungannon Court Office	6	18	24
Civil Processing Centre	12	9	21
Total	719	954	1673

Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	78
Newtownards Court Office	42
Downpatrick Court Office	60
Craigavon Court Office	50
Armagh Court Office	60
Banbridge Court Office	17
Omagh Court Office	79
Strabane Court Office	93
Antrim Court Office	52
Londonderry Court Office	69
Enniskillen Court Office	75
Coleraine Court Office	75
Newry Court Office	49
Magherafelt Court Office	24
Ballymena Court Office	72
Lisburn Court Office	44
Dungannon Court Office	51
Total	67

[3] Excludes-default-judgements-and-office-disposals

Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	18
Newtownards Court Office	12
Downpatrick Court Office	14
Craigavon Court Office	12
Armagh Court Office	10
Omagh Court Office	19
Londonderry Court Office	5
Coleraine Court Office	18
Newry Court Office	17
Ballymena Court Office	43
Lisburn Court Office	60
Total	16

[3] Excludes-default-judgements-and-office-disposals

Equity

Table 9: Equity cases and applications received

Type	Processing Office	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	4
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Downpatrick Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Armagh Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	13
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	6
	Dungannon Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	9
	Total	43
	Application	Laganside Courts
Craigavon Court Office		1
Omagh Court Office		5
Londonderry Court Office		1
Coleraine Court Office		2
Newry Court Office		5
Total		17

Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed

Type	Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	1	1	2
	Downpatrick Court Office	2	1	3
	Armagh Court Office	1	-	1
	Omagh Court Office	6	-	6
	Londonderry Court Office	-	1	1
	Coleraine Court Office	5	1	6
	Newry Court Office	5	1	6
	Lisburn Court Office	-	1	1
	Dungannon Court Office	1	-	1
	Total	21	6	27
Application	Laganside Courts	1	1	2
	Downpatrick Court Office	1	-	1
	Craigavon Court Office	-	1	1
	Omagh Court Office	3	-	3
	Londonderry Court Office	-	1	1
	Coleraine Court Office	-	3	3
	Newry Court Office	1	2	3
	Total	6	8	14

Table 11: Outstanding equity cases

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	56
Newtownards Court Office	3
Downpatrick Court Office	26
Craigavon Court Office	15
Armagh Court Office	5
Omagh Court Office	66
Strabane Court Office	1
Antrim Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	22
Enniskillen Court Office	1
Coleraine Court Office	15
Newry Court Office	34
Ballymena Court Office	3
Lisburn Court Office	4
Dungannon Court Office	11
Civil Processing Centre	26
Total	289

Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity

Type	Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	36
	Downpatrick Court Office	100
	Armagh Court Office	5
	Omagh Court Office	91
	Coleraine Court Office	234
	Newry Court Office	52
	Dungannon Court Office	29
	Total	107
	Application	Laganside Courts
Downpatrick Court Office		26
Omagh Court Office		9
Newry Court Office		3
Total		10

Ejectment

Table 13: Ejectment cases received

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	6
Armagh Court Office	1
Omagh Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	4
Newry Court Office	2
Civil Processing Centre	35
Total	51

Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed

Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Laganside Courts	5	34	-	39
Newtownards Court Office	-	11	-	11
Downpatrick Court Office	2	-	1	3
Craigavon Court Office	-	7	-	7
Armagh Court Office	1	1	-	2
Omagh Court Office	-	11	1	12
Londonderry Court Office	-	5	-	5
Enniskillen Court Office	-	1	-	1
Coleraine Court Office	5	-	-	5
Newry Court Office	4	2	-	6
Lisburn Court Office	-	2	-	2
Total	17	74	2	93

Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	16
Downpatrick Court Office	3
Craigavon Court Office	3
Armagh Court Office	1
Omagh Court Office	4
Strabane Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	4
Coleraine Court Office	4
Newry Court Office	4
Ballymena Court Office	1
Lisburn Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	3
Total	45

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	53
Newtownards Court Office	43
Downpatrick Court Office	61
Craigavon Court Office	50
Armagh Court Office	41
Omagh Court Office	44
Londonderry Court Office	76
Enniskillen Court Office	117
Coleraine Court Office	40
Newry Court Office	44
Lisburn Court Office	42
Total	51

[4] Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Small-Claims

Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received

Type	Processing Office	Total	
Case	Laganside Courts	62	
	Newtownards Court Office	5	
	Downpatrick Court Office	7	
	Craigavon Court Office	6	
	Armagh Court Office	7	
	Omagh Court Office	18	
	Londonderry Court Office	12	
	Coleraine Court Office	12	
	Newry Court Office	7	
	Ballymena Court Office	2	
	Lisburn Court Office	4	
	Dungannon Court Office	1	
	Civil Processing Centre	984	
	Total	1127	
	Application	Laganside Courts	10
		Newtownards Court Office	2
Downpatrick Court Office		2	
Armagh Court Office		1	
Omagh Court Office		2	
Coleraine Court Office		1	
Civil Processing Centre		13	
Total		31	

Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	82
Newtownards Court Office	3
Downpatrick Court Office	14
Craigavon Court Office	7
Armagh Court Office	7
Omagh Court Office	25
Londonderry Court Office	10
Enniskillen Court Office	1
Coleraine Court Office	16
Newry Court Office	10
Lisburn Court Office	5
Dungannon Court Office	2
Civil Processing Centre	14
Total	196

Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

Type	Processing Office	Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	119	5	89	4	217
	Newtownards Court Office	1	1	1	-	3
	Downpatrick Court Office	65	9	16	1	91
	Craigavon Court Office	-	-	1	-	1
	Armagh Court Office	-	-	4	1	5
	Omagh Court Office	-	2	2	-	4
	Antrim Court Office	-	1	1	-	2
	Londonderry Court Office	-	3	2	-	5
	Coleraine Court Office	1	4	3	-	8
	Newry Court Office	-	-	11	-	11
	Ballymena Court Office	-	2	-	-	2
	Dungannon Court Office	-	3	-	-	3
	Civil Processing Centre	-	5	322	615	942
	Total	186	35	452	621	1294
Application	Laganside Courts	14	4	-	-	18
	Downpatrick Court Office	1	1	-	-	2
	Armagh Court Office	-	1	-	-	1
	Omagh Court Office	1	5	-	-	6
	Lisburn Court Office	-	1	-	-	1
	Civil Processing Centre	-	2	-	-	2
	Total	16	14	-	-	30

Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	203
Newtownards Court Office	6
Downpatrick Court Office	47
Craigavon Court Office	43
Armagh Court Office	22
Omagh Court Office	80
Antrim Court Office	5
Londonderry Court Office	57
Enniskillen Court Office	8
Coleraine Court Office	105
Newry Court Office	58
Ballymena Court Office	10
Lisburn Court Office	62
Dungannon Court Office	3
Civil Processing Centre	57
Total	766

Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims

Type	Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	59
	Newtownards Court Office	74
	Downpatrick Court Office	53
	Coleraine Court Office	46
	Total	56
Application	Laganside Courts	40
	Downpatrick Court Office	66
	Omagh Court Office	11
	Total	40

[4] Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Criminal-Damage

Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received

Processing Office	Total
Coleraine Court Office	1
Newry Court Office	1
Total	2

Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

Processing Office	Non court disposal	Total
Laganside Courts	1	1
Total	1	1

Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	12
Newtownards Court Office	1
Omagh Court Office	8
Londonderry Court Office	4
Coleraine Court Office	1
Newry Court Office	2
Dungannon Court Office	1
Total	29

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage

Due to COVID-19 there have been no court disposals during the period and therefore it has not been possible to produce the time interval calculations as they are based on court disposals and DJ and non-court disposals are excluded.

Divorces

Table 26: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted

Processing Office	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	70	35	-	11	5	121
Downpatrick Court Office	17	12	-	1	-	30
Craigavon Court Office	15	11	1	9	3	39
Omagh Court Office	31	20	-	6	-	57
Londonderry Court Office	26	24	-	2	2	54
Coleraine Court Office	44	22	1	11	4	82
Newry Court Office	21	13	-	3	4	41
Total	224	137	2	43	18	424

Table 27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued

Processing Office	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	42	37	1	4	6	90
Downpatrick Court Office	17	13	-	4	1	35
Craigavon Court Office	20	12	-	9	4	45
Armagh Court Office	1	-	-	1	-	2
Omagh Court Office	16	13	-	2	3	34
Londonderry Court Office	17	19	-	-	2	38
Coleraine Court Office	17	20	-	6	5	48
Newry Court Office	23	10	-	2	3	38
Lisburn Court Office	1	-	-	-	-	1
Dungannon Court Office	1	1	-	-	-	2
Total	155	125	1	28	24	333

Table 28: Matrimonial applications received

Processing Office	Ancillary relief	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	1	1	2
Newtownards Court Office	2	-	2
Armagh Court Office	7	-	7
Omagh Court Office	7	1	8
Londonderry Court Office	4	1	5
Coleraine Court Office	4	-	4
Total	25	3	28

Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed

Processing Office	Ancillary relief	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	6	1	7
Newtownards Court Office	1	-	1
Armagh Court Office	3	-	3
Omagh Court Office	3	-	3
Londonderry Court Office	7	1	8
Coleraine Court Office	10	1	11
Newry Court Office	2	-	2
Total	32	3	35

Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

Processing Office	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	33	7
Downpatrick Court Office	36	7
Craigavon Court Office	42	8
Omagh Court Office	44	8
Londonderry Court Office	39	8
Coleraine Court Office	33	8
Newry Court Office	43	7
Total	38	8

Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	28
Newtownards Court Office	41
Armagh Court Office	45
Omagh Court Office	15
Londonderry Court Office	40
Coleraine Court Office	40
Newry Court Office	130
Total	42

[5] Excludes non court disposals

Licenses

Table 32: Licences received and disposed

Processing Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	21	16
Newtownards	20	18
Newry	14	13
Laganside Courts	39	39
Craigavon	0	2
Omagh	28	33
Londonderry	29	21
Total	151	142

County-Court-and-District-Judge-Sitting-Days

Table 33: County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days

Processing Office	Number of sitting days	Average sitting	Total time	Total criminal time	Total civil time	Total family time
Antrim	109	2:25:44	264:46:00	263:01:00	0:01:00	1:44:00
Laganside	455	2:44:43	1249:13:00	439:04:00	306:08:00	504:01:00
Armagh	134	2:48:44	376:52:00	0:50:00	156:43:00	219:19:00
Lisburn	19	1:34:15	29:51:00	0:00:00	29:46:00	0:05:00
Dungannon	55	3:16:08	179:48:00	162:30:00	4:45:00	12:33:00
Downpatrick	30	2:53:00	86:30:00	0:00:00	80:55:00	5:35:00
Craigavon	57	3:13:36	183:56:00	179:56:00	0:00:00	4:00:00
Omagh	71	3:27:16	245:17:00	15:05:00	129:27:00	100:45:00
Coleraine	34	2:26:37	83:05:00	0:00:00	72:35:00	10:30:00
Londonderry	120	2:40:06	320:12:00	171:53:00	70:52:00	77:27:00
Newtownards	34	1:05:44	37:15:00	0:00:00	35:35:00	1:40:00
Newry	96	2:22:51	228:35:00	221:30:00	3:40:00	3:25:00
Total	1214	2:42:22	3285:20:00	1453:49:00	890:27:00	941:04:00

[1] Administrative case management reviews were introduced by the Lord Chief Justice as part of the [coronavirus contingency](#) arrangements. This has resulted in Judges investing significant time reviewing cases and making directions or orders administratively (where appropriate), and this has continued even as courts have resumed to support business recovery. This extra time is not recorded on the courts operating system (ICOS), and therefore is not reflected within the sittings times published within this report.

[7] 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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