

# Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Provisional Figures

April to June 2022

C Darragh, R Martin & P McLarnon  
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Produced by Analytical Services Group, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, Department of Justice.

For further information contact:

Statistics and Research Branch,  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Laganside House,  
23-27 Oxford Street,  
Belfast BT1 3LA.

**Email:** [richard.martin2@courtsni.gov.uk](mailto:richard.martin2@courtsni.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9072 8920

This bulletin is available on: [www.justice-ni.gov.uk](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk)

Feedback on this publication can be provided directly to Analytical Services Group at the email address listed above.

# 1

## Key Findings

This report provides an overview of Children Order and County, Crown, High and Magistrates' Courts business during April to June 2022 and how it compares with the comparative figures for the same quarter in the previous year. The headline findings are summarised below -

- During the quarter there were 509 Children Order sittings (1,659 total hours sat), 1,022 Children Order Applications received and 1,192 disposed. In terms of orders made, 373 were own motion, 2,295 were interim and 1,643 were final orders.
  - County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,254 days within the County Court. In terms of cases 45 equity, 149 ejectment, 2,104 small claims and one criminal damage case were received; 37 equity, 127 ejectment, 1,623 small claims and 3 criminal damage cases were disposed.
  - In terms of Crown Court business there were 748 sittings with 323 cases and 394 defendants received and 449 cases and 559 defendants disposed.
- There were 573 High Court sitting days. The highest proportion of these was spent on both Bails and Queen's Bench business (15%) with 1,047 writs and originating summons received and 532 disposed.
  - Within the 1,049 Magistrates' sitting days during the quarter, 72% were adult criminal, 6% youth criminal and 22% civil and family days. There were 953 civil and family applications and 9,373 adult and 223 youth defendants received. Corresponding figures for disposals were 887 civil and family, 9,228 adult and 229 youth defendants.

## 2 | Introduction

### About this report

This bulletin is produced in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. It presents the following statistics for the Northern Ireland Court and Tribunals Service for the quarter April to June 2022 –

- The number of Children Order applications received and disposed at Family Proceedings Courts, Family Care Centres and the High Court, together with waiting times from lodgment to disposal (section 3);
- Civil and family business received and disposed, waiting times and sitting days in County Courts (section 4);
- The number of cases and defendants received and disposed, waiting times, pleas and findings and sittings at the Crown Court (section 5);
- Business received and disposed, waiting times and sitting days in the Chancery, Queen’s Bench and Family Divisions of the High Court (section 6); and
- The number of youth and adult defendants received and disposed, charges and outcomes, sittings, civil applications received and disposed and waiting times at Magistrates’ Courts (section 7).

Comparative information for the same quarter in the previous year is also provided, along with an indication of whether any change is higher or lower.

Background information about the Children Order and the County, Crown, High and Magistrates’ Courts along with methodological information and a glossary is available in the accompanying user guide. Data in the bulletin, along with trend information, are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.

The next update covering the quarter to 30 September 2022 will be published in November 2022. A full [publication schedule](#) is available on the DoJ website.

## 2 | Introduction

It is important to note court activity during the quarter covered in this report has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the courts continue to make more use of remote audio and video technology, the impact of COVID-19 can be seen in the figures. It is expected that the limited operation of the courts during the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have an impact on many of the published figures in this and future releases.

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 (Integrated Court Operations System known as ICOS), and therefore is not reflected within the sittings times published within this report.

# 3

## Children Order

### Children Order Quarterly Business

- Table 1 on the following page shows that during the quarter there were 509 sittings (1,659 hours), 1,022 Children Order Applications received and 1,192 disposed.
  - A total of 1,760 children were involved in the applications disposed. Gender and age breakdowns of the children were 50:50 male:female and 34% 0-4 years, 28% 5-8 years, 23% 9-12 years and 15% 13-16 years.
  - Like each of the last five years, the most common reason for transferring Children Order applications during the quarter was Complexity (72%, 127 of 176 reasons). This was followed by Consolidation (25), Jurisdiction (13), Returned to Lower Court (10) and Convenience (1).
- In terms of orders made –
    - 373 were own motion orders.
    - 2,295 were interim orders.
    - 1,643 were final orders.
  - The average waiting time for applications disposed was 58.2 weeks for public and 37.9 weeks for private law.
  - Table 1 shows that applications received and applications disposed both decreased. The waiting times for disposal for public law were lower and private law were higher than the comparative figures for the same quarter in the previous year.

## 3

## Children Order

Table 1: Children Order Business – April to June 2022 compared with April to June 2021

	Quarter 2022	Quarter 2021	% change from 2021
Sittings	509	610	17% ↓
Hours sat	1,659	1,798	8% ↓
Applications received	1,022	1,265	19% ↓
Applications disposed	1,192	1,342	11% ↓
Number of children involved in applications disposed	1,760	1,959	10% ↓
Own motion orders made	373	392	5% ↓
Interim orders made	2,295	2,442	6% ↓
Final orders made	1,643	1,827	10% ↓
Average waiting time for disposal for public law (weeks)	58.2	63.1	8% ↓
Average waiting time for disposal for private law (weeks)	37.9	36.9	3% ↑

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.

# 4 | County Court

## County Court Quarterly Business

- Table 2 on the following pages shows that County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,254 sitting days during the quarter. Within those days 56% of time was spent on criminal business, 19% on civil business and 25% on family business.
- During the quarter –
  - 1,575 Civil bills with notice of intention to defend (NID) were received and 2,772 disposed.
  - In terms of cases 45 equity, 149 ejectment, 2,104 small claims and one criminal damage case were received; 37 equity, 127 ejectment, 1,623 small claims and 3 criminal damage cases were disposed.
  - 383 divorce decrees were granted, 524 decrees absolute issued.
  - 83 licence applications were received and 87 disposed.
- Table 2 shows that there was a general increase in the number of cases received and disposed across most business areas and a general decrease in time taken to disposal compared with figures for the same quarter in the previous year. The decrease in the average time from issue to disposal of small claims cases is due to the resumption of cases being dealt with in the courts.



# 4 | County Court

Table 2: County Court Business – April to June 2022 compared with April to June 2021

	Quarter 2022	Quarter 2021	% change from 2021
Sitting days	1,254	1,214	3%↑
Civil bills with NID received	1,575	1,660	5%↓
Civil bills disposed	2,365	2,358	-
Average time taken from issue to disposal of civil bill (weeks)	69	67	3%↑
Equity cases received	45	43	5%↑
Equity cases disposed	37	27	37%↑
Average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases (weeks)	93	107	13%↓
Ejectment cases received	149	51	192%↑
Ejectment cases disposed	127	93	37%↑
Average time taken from issue to disposal of ejectment cases (weeks)	39	51	24%↓

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.

# 4 | County Court

Table 2 continued: County Court Business – April to June 2022 compared with April to June 2021

	Quarter 2022	Quarter 2021	% change from 2021
Small claims received	2,104	1,127	87%↑
Small claims disposed	1,623	1,294	25%↑
Average time taken from issue to disposal of small claims cases (weeks)	28	56	50%↓
Criminal damage cases received	1	2	50%↓
Criminal damage cases disposed	3	1	200%↑
Divorce decrees granted	383	424	10%↓
Decree absolute issued	524	333	57%↑
Average time taken from issue to date divorce decree granted (weeks)	43	38	13%↑
Licences applications received	83	151	45%↓
Licences applications disposed	87	142	39%↓

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.

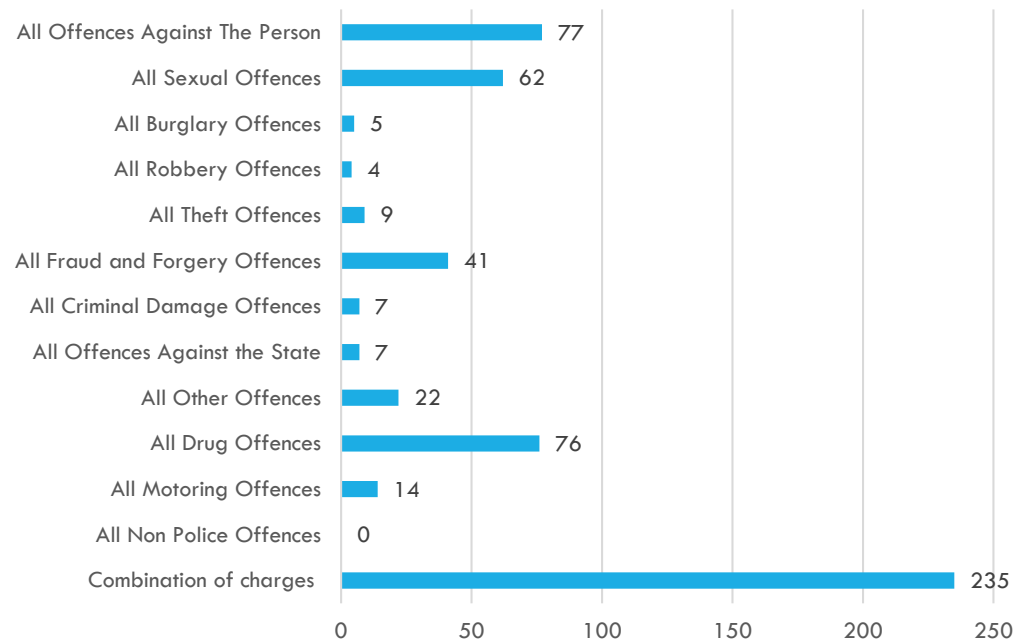
# 5

## Crown Court

### Crown Court Quarterly Business

- Table 3 on the following page shows that during the quarter there were 748 sittings (1,814 hours sat). County Court Judges disposed of 98% of defendants (548), a figure that has remained relatively stable over the last five years (98-99%).
- There were 323 cases and 394 defendants received during the quarter; 449 cases and 559 defendants were disposed.
- Average time from committal to hearing was 154 days and from conviction to disposal was 82 days.
- In comparison to the same quarter in the previous year the number of cases and defendants received decreased while the numbers disposed increased.
- Figure 1 shows that the majority of defendants disposed were charged with a combination of offences, a similar pattern seen in each of the last five years. Average time from committal to hearing and from conviction to disposal both increased. These figures will be affected by the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Crown Court defendants disposed by charge type April to June 2022



## 5

## Crown Court

Table 3: Crown Court Business – April to June 2022 compared with April to June 2021

	Quarter 2022	Quarter 2021	% change from 2021
Sittings	748	638	17%↑
Hours sat	1,814	1,482	22%↑
Cases received	323	455	29%↓
Cases disposed	449	363	24%↑
Defendants received	394	562	30%↓
Defendants disposed	559	442	26%↑
Defendants pleading guilty to all charges	138	133	4%↑
Defendants pleading guilty or found guilty of at least one charge	360	255	41%↑
Average time from committal to hearing (days)	154	134	15%↑
Average time from conviction to disposal (days)	82	57	44%↑

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.

# 6 High Court

## High Court Quarterly Business

- Table 4 on the following pages show that there were 573 High Court sitting days during the quarter, the highest proportion of which was spent on both Bails and Queen's Bench business (15%).
- Queen's Bench business included:
  - 1,047 writs and originating summonses were received, 532 were disposed.
  - 67 applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review, 27 applications for Judicial Review and no ancillary applications were received.
- Chancery Division business included:
  - Receipt of 295 (71% which were Chancery, 15% bankruptcy and 14% companies cases) and disposal of 294 cases; and
  - 1,816 grants issued in the Probate office.
- Family Division business included –
  - 27 adoption cases and applications received and 26 disposed;
  - 655 divorce petitions received, 183 decrees granted (mainly '2 years with consent' (70, 38%) and 'combination of grounds or other' (46, 25%)) and 230 decrees absolute issued;
  - 511 new referrals in the Patients section; and
  - 36 Official Solicitor's Office cases received, 37 disposed and a current caseload of 376 cases at the end of the quarter.

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.

## 6

## High Court

Table 4: High Court Business - April to June 2022 compared with April to June 2021

	Quarter 2022	Quarter 2021	% change from 2021
Sitting days	573	592	3%↓
Writs & originating summonses received	1,047	998	5%↑
Writs & originating summonses disposed	532	483	10%↑
Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review received	67	69	3%↓
Applications for Judicial Review received	27	29	7%↓
Ancillary applications received	0	0	-
Chancery cases received	295	304	3%↓
Chancery cases disposed	294	203	45%↑
Grants issued in the Probate office	1,816	1,879	3%↓

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.

# 6 | High Court

Table 4 continued: High Court Business - April to June 2022 compared with April to June 2021

	Quarter 2022	Quarter 2021	% change from 2021
Adoption cases & applications received	27	10	170%↑
Adoption cases & applications disposed	26	22	18%↑
Average time taken from issue to disposal for adoption case/application (weeks)	22	43	49%↓
Divorce petitions received	655	647	1%↑
Decrees granted in High Court	183	188	3%↑
Decrees absolute issued	230	185	24%↑
Average time taken from issue of divorce petition to date decree granted (weeks)	56	48	17%↑
Patients section referrals received	511	517	1%↓
Official Solicitors Office cases received	36	31	16%↑
Official Solicitors Office cases disposed	37	6	517%↑
Official Solicitors Office caseload at end of quarter	376	317	19%↑

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.

# 7 Magistrates' Court

## Magistrates' Court Quarterly Business

- During the quarter there were 994 scheduled, 20 additional and 35 special Magistrates' sitting days (Table 5).
- Within the 1,049 total, 72% were adult criminal, 6% were youth criminal and 22% were civil and family days.

Table 5: Magistrates' Court Sitting Days - April to June 2022 compared with April to June 2021

	Adult	Youth	Civil & Family	Total Quarter 2022	Total Quarter 2021	% change from 2021
Scheduled	707	64	223	994	1,017	2%↓
Additional	13	0	7	20	32	37%↓
Special	35	0	0	35	36	3%↓
Total	755	64	230	1,049	1,085	3%↓

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.



## 7 | Magistrates' Court

- There were 953 new civil and family applications and 9,373 new adult and 223 new youth defendants received; corresponding disposals were 887, 9,228 and 229 respectively.
- The average waiting times from first hearing to disposal in the adult and youth criminal courts were 11 weeks and 17 weeks respectively. For civil and family applications it was 47 and 10 weeks respectively from date of receipt to disposal.
- All parameters except the average waiting time for the disposal of civil and family applications were lower than the comparative figures for the same quarter in the previous year.

Table 6: Magistrates' Court Business - April to June 2022 compared with April to June 2021

	Adult Q2 2022	Adult Q2 2021	% change from 2021	Youth Q2 2022	Youth Q2 2021	% change from 2021	Civil Q2 2022	Civil Q2 2021	% change from 2021	Family Q2 2022	Family Q2 2021	% change from 2021
Defendants or applications received	9,373	9,903	5%↓	223	242	8%↓	78	91	14%↓	875	1,233	29%↓
Defendants or applications disposed	9,228	9,505	3%↓	229	298	23%↓	67	57	28%↑	820	1,071	23%↓
Average waiting time (weeks)	11	12	8%↓	17	19	11%↓	47	51	8%↓	10	9	11%↓

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying spreadsheet.

# 8

## Appendix 1 - Methodology

### Data Source and Coverage

The statistics are produced using administrative data sourced from the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS). 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.

Full details of data relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, coherence, user need, cost and confidentiality is available in the accompanying background quality report. Details of the data quality checks and processes that DoJ has in place are available in the Quality Assurance of Administrative Data (QAAD) document on the DoJ website.

### Counting Rules

- Children Order

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

- County Court

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'.

# 8

## Appendix 1 - Methodology

- Crown Court

Receipts are counted from the date the case is committed to the Crown Court from the Magistrates court. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to 'dealt with.'

- High Court

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, or the date an applicant withdraws or discontinues their application prior to the hearing, changing the case status to 'dealt with'.

- Magistrates' Court

Receipts are counted from the date a served summons or a charge sheet is received by the Magistrates' Court office. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to 'dealt with'.