

Legal Aid in Northern Ireland: Annual Statistics to March 2023

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Key Findings:

- In 2022/23, a total of 63,976 cases were granted legal aid. Of these, over two-thirds (68%; 43,790) were criminal cases with 32% (20,186) representing civil cases granted by the Agency. This represents a decrease of 7% on the previous year (2021/22; 68,962).
- At 63,976, the number of legal aid cases granted in 2022/23 is the lowest since LAMS was introduced in 2019/20 and reflects more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the financial eligibility test associated with applications for civil legal services.
- A total of £101,767,269 was authorised from the legal aid fund in 2022/23, an increase of 7% from the previous year (2021/22) when authorised expenditure totalled £95,287,337.
- While the majority of legal aid cases granted in 2022/23 were criminal (68%, compared with 32% for civil), the split in expenditure between criminal and civil cases was almost equal, with criminal authorisations accounting for 49.8% of total expenditure and civil 50.2%.
- During 2022/23, the legal aid grant rate per 1,000 population was almost three times higher for males (49.2 grants per 1,000 population) than females (18.2 per 1,000 population). Despite displaying similar grant rates for civil cases (10.9 and 10.2 respectively), males were almost five times more likely to be the recipient of legal aid in criminal cases (38.3 v 8.0).
- In 2022/23, a total of 459 solicitor firms registered on LAMS to provide legal aid services in Northern Ireland. This equates to a rate of 24 firms per 100,000 population. At 621 registrations, the equivalent rate for barristers was 33 per 100,000 population.
- Focusing on profit costs alone (excluding VAT and disbursements), solicitors received a higher proportion of total authorised expenditure in 2022/23 (53%) than barristers (46%).



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User Engagement

We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics, particularly as this is the inaugural Official Statistics release. If you would like to forward your views or be added to our mailing list to be informed about future publications, please use the contact details on the cover page.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This official statistics publication is the first such report to be released by the Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI). With an immediate focus on the last year (2022/23), comparisons will be made where possible back to 2019/20 - the year in which LSANI launched its new digital case management system (LAMS) as part of an extensive transformation program. While LAMS went live on 1 July 2019, information covering the first quarter (April to June 2019) has been compiled to complete the 2019/20 year in terms of applications granted.

During April to June 2019, the previous case management system (Phoenix) supplemented information held on paper files, thus the availability and extent of data is more limited for those months. This dual system approach has presented complexities in reconciling detailed expenditure information for the full financial year meaning that, at the time of release, expenditure figures for the complete 2019/20 period are not available at the level of granularity required. Headline expenditure figures have however been presented in the Agency's [Annual Report and Accounts](#).

To address this issue, certain information is presented on a quarterly basis to facilitate inclusion of the final three quarters of 2019/20.

As this four-year timeframe also incorporates the COVID-19 pandemic, looking at key information on a quarterly basis demonstrates the extent and unique impact that it, along with the subsequent measures that were implemented to control and “flatten the curve”, had on the uptake and progression of legal services during these months.

1.1 About the Legal Services Agency NI

As an executive agency of the Department of Justice (DoJ), the core function of LSANI, as an operational arm of the Department, is to administer publicly funded legal services in Northern Ireland through the:

- processing of applications for civil legal services and authorising of independent legal representation for litigants;
- assessing and payment of bills for the provision of civil legal services and criminal legal aid; and
- provision of a sound evidence base to provide assurances to the Agency's governance arrangements while supporting wider Departmental policy-led reform projects.

Within Northern Ireland, legal aid is administered and operates across five levels of services: Criminal, Advice and Assistance, Exceptional Funding, Representation Lower and Representation Higher (with the court tier determining the distinction).

Each of these levels of service consists of a range of [natures and matters](#) that are used to distinguish between cases. Throughout this report, these natures and matters have further been used to break civil cases into family and non-family cases, with further differentiation of family cases into matrimonial and non-matrimonial cases.

They have also been used to partition Advice and Assistance into criminal advice (PACE) and civil advice (non-PACE).

1.2 Definitions

There are different metrics by which to measure trends in legal services over time, both in terms of caseload and cost. These will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

1.2.1 Caseload

Caseload can be quantified in terms of the number of applications **received** by the Agency in a given time period, or equally by the number of applications **granted**, or cases that have progressed to conclusion and have been subsequently **closed**. The caseload statistics contained in this report focus on grants of legal services as this best represents current and future demands on both the Agency itself and the public legal aid fund.

While the Agency is responsible for adjudicating on applications for civil services, the grant of criminal legal aid is a judicial function. This is further detailed in Section 3.1.

It is worth noting that civil applications that are initially rejected and fall outside the scope of this definition are open to a review process, both internally and via an independent appeals panel. Therefore, a small number of these cases may subsequently be granted on appeal, potentially within a different reporting year, following the provision of additional and more complete information.

1.2.2 Expenditure (Authorised Payments)

There are several ways to consider legal aid expenditure, each with subtle differences suited to particular purposes.

Authorised payment expenditure is the measure used to represent expenditure figures throughout these statistics. It represents the total value of payments assessed and approved for payment to legal aid providers in accordance with remuneration legislation for blocks of work that have been completed within a particular reporting timeframe. While this measure is broadly comparable to volumes of work to which it relates and allows for expenditure to be broken down into more granular areas of legal aid, there can be multiple authorisations relating to a single legal aid case. For example, there can be more than one bill from a single registered supplier (e.g. an Interim bill, a Report on Case, and/or an Additional Payment) as well as bills from more than one provider attached to the case (e.g. a Solicitor, Counsel and Third Party) within the respective timeframe.

An alternative measure is **closed case expenditure**. This approach takes account of all bills from all suppliers, including any subsequent recoupments or adjustments, across multiple years spanning the duration of the case. This measure is appropriate when considering the real average cost of a legal aid case and is fundamental to financial provisions modelling within the Agency.

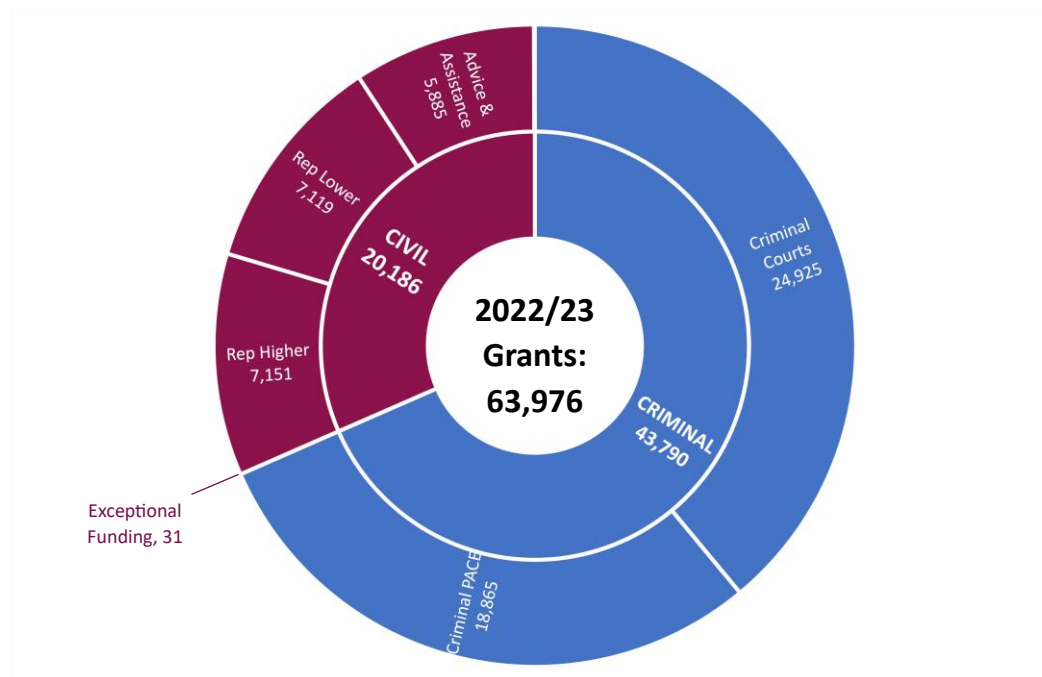
A third measure, **RDEL (Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits) expenditure** is how annual legal aid spend is formally reported through Account NI, the Agency's financial reporting system. This measure factors in a very small degree of legal aid expenditure that isn't captured via the authorised payment expenditure measure. This will account for any nominal variance between expenditure figures quoted in these statistics and the applicable legal aid expenditure figures quoted in the annual accounts.

2. OVERVIEW OF CASELOAD AND EXPENDITURE, 2019/20 TO 2022/23

2.1 Applications Granted

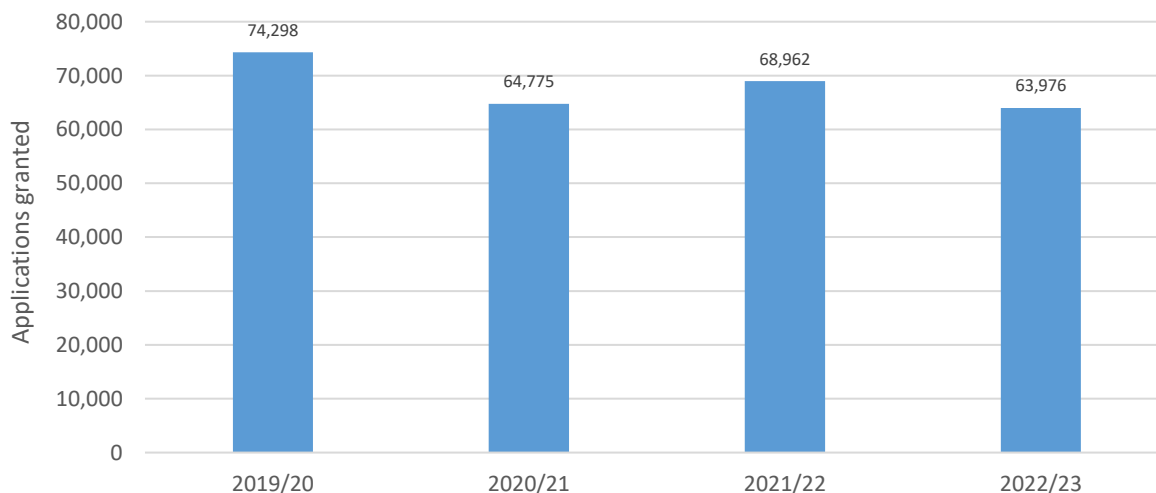
A total of **63,976** legal aid applications were granted in 2022/23. Of these, over two-thirds (68%; 43,790) were criminal cases with 32% (20,186) representing civil cases granted by the Agency (Figure 2.1; Table A1).

Figure 2.1: Breakdown of legal aid applications granted in 2022/23



The number of legal aid cases granted in 2022/23 is the lowest since LAMS was introduced in 2019/20. This latest figure is 7% down on the previous year (2021/22; 68,962) and is still 1% lower than 2020/21 (64,775) when the global COVID-19 pandemic and associated national lockdowns were at their peak (Figure 2.2; Table A1).

Figure 2.2: Annual applications granted, 2019/20 to 2022/23



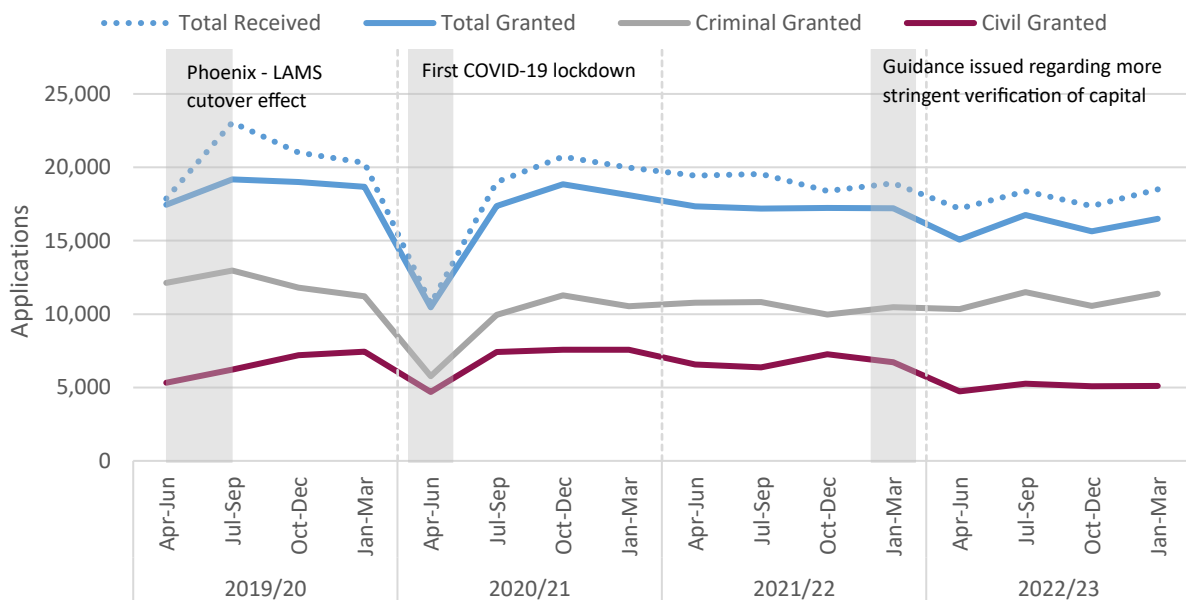
The trends in granted applications since 2019/20 closely mirror the trends in the volume of applications being submitted (Figure 2.3).

Firstly, the apparent surge in applications received between the first two quarters of 2019/20 is the direct impact of changing case management system during the year. During quarter one, the old case management system (Phoenix) was closed for a three-week period in June 2019 to enable a data migration exercise to be undertaken for cases that would continue to be administered in the new digital system (LAMS) once it went live in July 2019. During this three-week cutover period, suppliers were unable to submit new applications for legal services except for emergencies when an offline system operated temporarily. This cutover suppressed the number of applications being received in quarter one, before inflating the volume of applications in quarter two when a backlog of requests were submitted alongside business as usual volumes. Taking an average of these two quarters suggests a quarterly intake of just under 20,500 applications, which aligns with the average of the final two quarters in 2019/20.

While both criminal and civil applications granted saw a decline over the quarter to Q1 2020/21, the decline was greater for the criminal category, with criminal applications accounting for two thirds (66%) of the overall quarterly decline. This decrease coincides with the introduction of various restrictions and social distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had an impact on recorded crime levels and therefore the demand for legal aid services.

The recent declining trend in overall applications granted has been largely driven by civil applications and coincides with the enforcing of more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the financial eligibility test associated with applications for civil legal services. This concept, together with its impact, will be explored and presented further in Sections 3 (Criminal) and 4 (Civil).

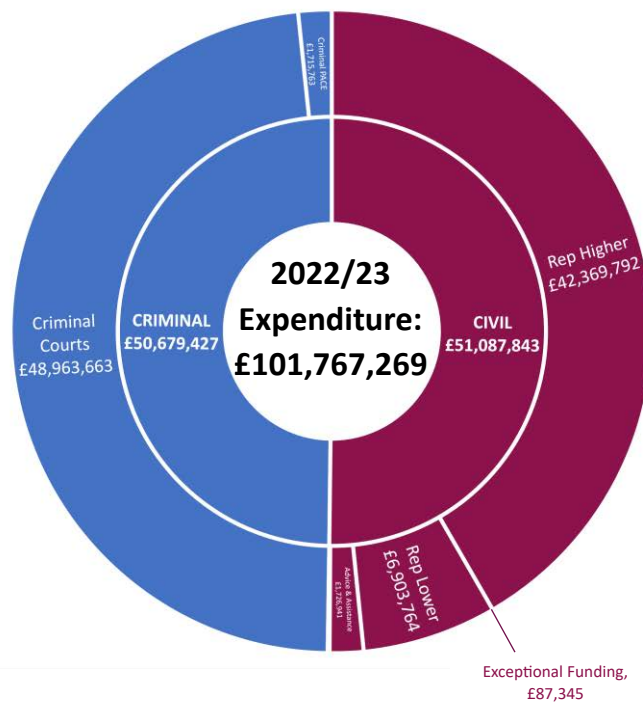
Figure 2.3: Applications received and granted, by Quarter, 2019/20 to 2022/23



2.2 Authorised Expenditure

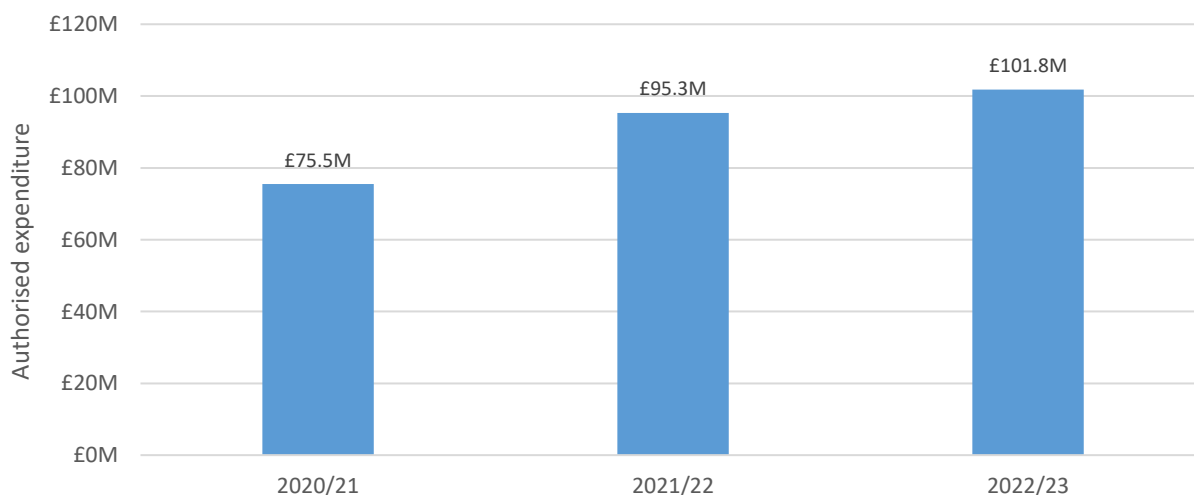
In terms of expenditure, a total of **£101,767,269** was authorised in 2022/23. While the majority of legal aid cases granted in 2022/23 were criminal (Figure 2.1), the split in expenditure between criminal and civil cases was almost equal, with criminal authorisations totalling £50.7m (49.8%) and civil totalling £51.1m (50.2%; Figure 2.4; Table A4).

Figure 2.4: Breakdown of legal aid expenditure in 2022/23



Overall expenditure in 2022/23 increased by 7% (£6,479,932) from the previous year (2021/22; £95,287,337) and is 35% (£26,302,904) higher than in 2020/21 (Figure 2.5).

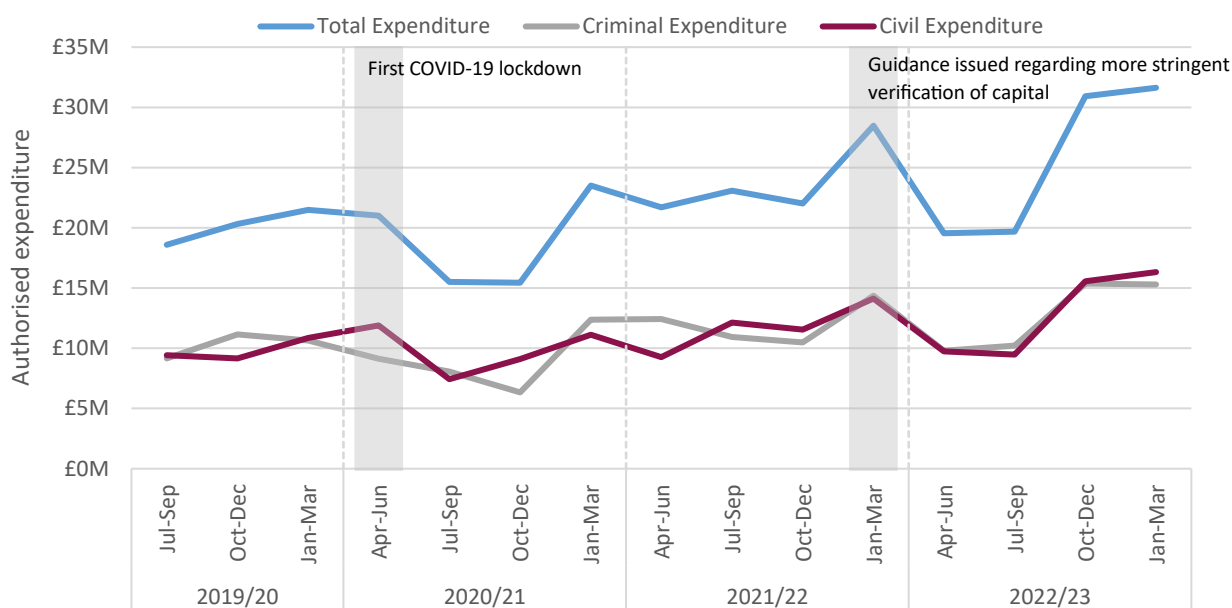
Figure 2.5: Annual authorised expenditure, 2020/21 to 2022/23



Expenditure authorised in the latest quarter is the highest in the series (£31,626,042; Q4 2022/23) and is 11% (£3,138,823) higher than the same quarter in the previous year (£28,487,219; Q4 2021/22) (Figure 2.6). It should be noted that the quarterly fluctuation in legal aid expenditure apparent in Figure 2.6 is a direct result of budget availability at each particular timepoint. During the year, additional budget may be made available to the legal aid fund that directly influences the Agency’s ability to pay bills at certain points in the year. This explains why authorised expenditure tends to peak in the final quarter of each financial year, before dropping back to default budget levels at the beginning of the next.

Quarterly expenditure has followed very similar trends for both criminal and civil cases since July 2019.

Figure 2.6: Authorised expenditure, by Quarter, Q2 2019/20 to Q4 2022/23



While the volume of new bills received by the Agency fell during the COVID-19 lockdown, expenditure levels were not immediately impacted. The Agency had a backlog of unpaid bills and, as an essential service, was working to assess and authorise payments during this period. In addition, the Agency also launched a temporary COVID-19 Interim Payment Scheme to boost the provider’s cashflow. The net result was that, as less new bills were being paid, the unassessed backlog reduced.

2.3 Applications Granted versus Authorised Expenditure

Criminal Courts cases accounted for both the largest proportion of granted applications (39%; 24,925) and the largest proportion of legal aid expenditure (48%; £48,963,663) in 2022/23 (Figure 2.7).

While Criminal PACE cases represented 29% (18,865) of all legal aid applications granted in 2022/23, they accounted for a much smaller proportion of the expenditure, at 2% (£1,715,763) of the total 2022/23 legal aid expenditure.

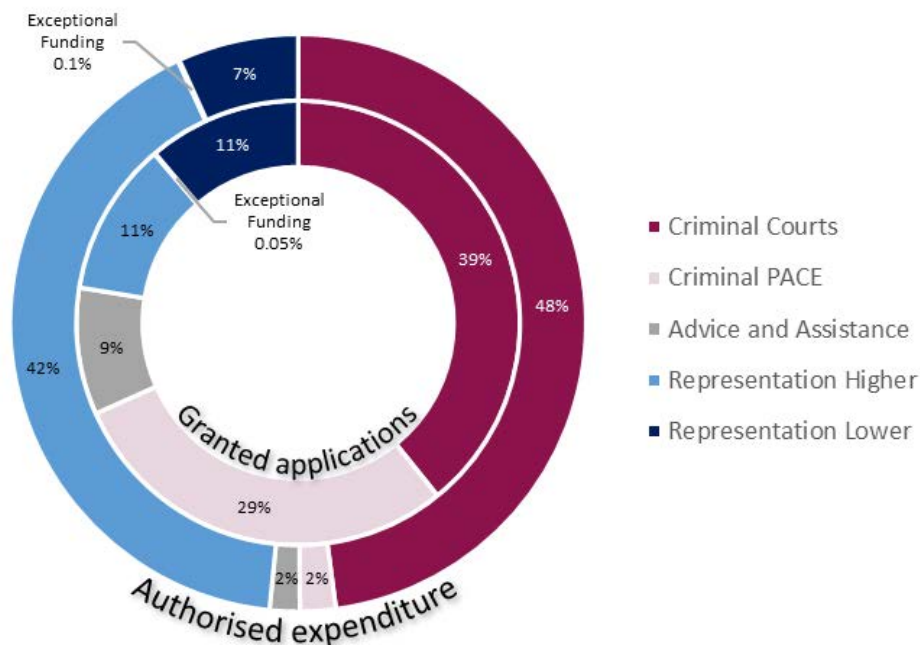
Civil Advice and Assistance cases accounted for just under a tenth (9%; 5,885) of legal aid applications granted in 2022/23, and represented an even smaller proportion of the total legal aid expenditure in 2022/23 at 2% (£1,726,941).

While Representation Higher cases accounted for around a tenth (11%; 7,151) of the total number of applications granted in 2022/23, they accounted for a much larger proportion of the expenditure, at 42% (£42,369,792) of the 2022/23 authorised expenditure.

Representation Lower cases accounted for similar proportions of granted applications and authorised expenditure in 2022/23, representing 11% (7,119) of the total applications granted and 7% (£6,903,764) of the total authorised expenditure.

Exceptional Funding cases accounted for both the smallest proportion of granted applications (0.05%; 31) and the smallest proportion of the total legal aid expenditure in 2022/23 (0.1%; £87,345).

Figure 2.7: Proportions of total granted applications and authorised expenditure by category of service, 2022/23



3. CRIMINAL LEGAL AID, 2019/20 TO 2022/23

This section looks specifically at criminal legal aid, both in terms of the volume of cases granted as well as the respective expenditure from the legal aid fund authorised to criminal cases, the latter of which may partly relate to cases granted in previous years. This section incorporates criminal advice that is administered as part of the wider Advice and Assistance category of service.

3.1 Criminal grants of legal aid

The grant of criminal legal aid is a judicial function. The statistics in relation to criminal legal aid contained within this bulletin refer to criminal cases in which the Legal Services Agency NI (LSANI) has been advised by the courts that legal aid has been granted.

As criminal legal aid has already been granted (by the judiciary) by the time LSANI are first aware of the case, these statistics consider the date at which the case enters the LAMS system and a legal aid certificate is issued to the respective solicitor firm, as the date that legal aid has been granted. In the majority of cases, this will simply be the next working day.

While criminal legal aid is administered as a distinct category of service within LSANI, there is also an element of Advice and Assistance (a separate category of service) that is considered criminal. Advice and Assistance consists of a range of natures and matters that are used to distinguish between criminal and civil cases. Essentially, legal advice and representation given to those in custody at a police station (under the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984)*; PACE) constitutes the criminal side of advice and assistance, with the remaining natures and matters representing civil cases.

3.1.1 Criminal Courts

Legal aid for **Criminal Court** cases allows representation in a criminal case. These cases usually take place in the Magistrates' Courts or Crown Court.

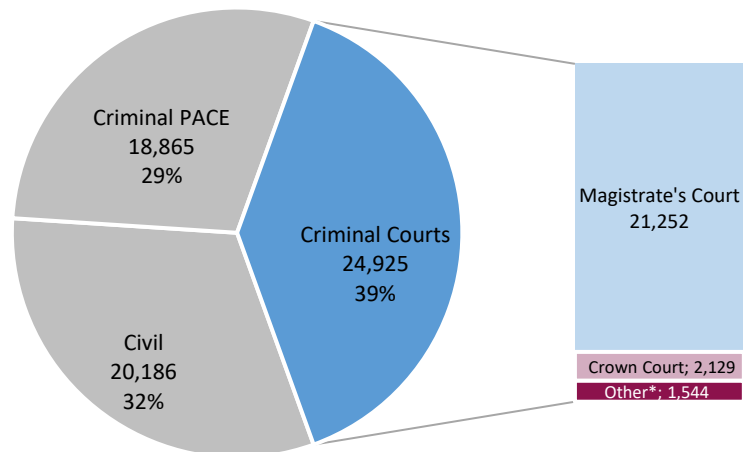
For presentational purposes, County Court of Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal have been grouped together in an 'Other' category within the following sections. A full breakdown of criminal court applications granted by court tier can be found in Tables A1 and A2.

Criminal Courts applications represented the largest proportion (**39%; 24,925**) of all legal aid applications granted in 2022/23 (Figure 3.1; Table A1).

The majority of these applications were in relation to Magistrate's Court cases (85%; 21,252). In contrast, under one in ten (9%; 2,129) criminal cases awarded legal aid took place in the Crown Court; while 6% (1,544) took place in Other* courts.

*Includes County Court Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

Figure 3.1: Legal aid applications granted by case type and Criminal Courts tier, 2022/23

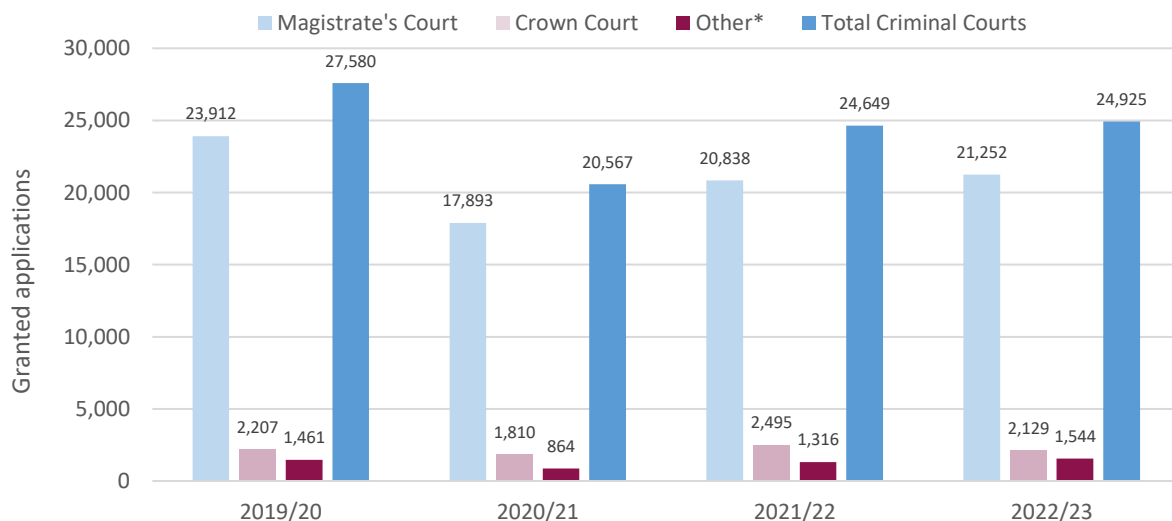


Annual Criminal Courts Applications Granted

Following a 25% (7,013) decline in Criminal Courts applications granted between 2019/20 and 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Criminal Courts applications granted has seen two consecutive years of increase since 2020/21 (Figure 3.2; Table A1). While the increase between 2020/21 and 2021/22 was considerable at 20% (4,082) as part of the post-COVID recovery, the increase between 2021/22 and 2022/23 was small at 1% (276).

Whilst the number of applications granted in relation to criminal cases in the Magistrate's Court and Other* courts have also been on an increasing trend since 2020/21, the number of applications granted in relation to Crown Court cases has decreased by 15% (366) over the year to 2022/23.

Figure 3.2: Annual Criminal Courts applications granted, 2019/20 – 2022/23



*Includes County Court Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

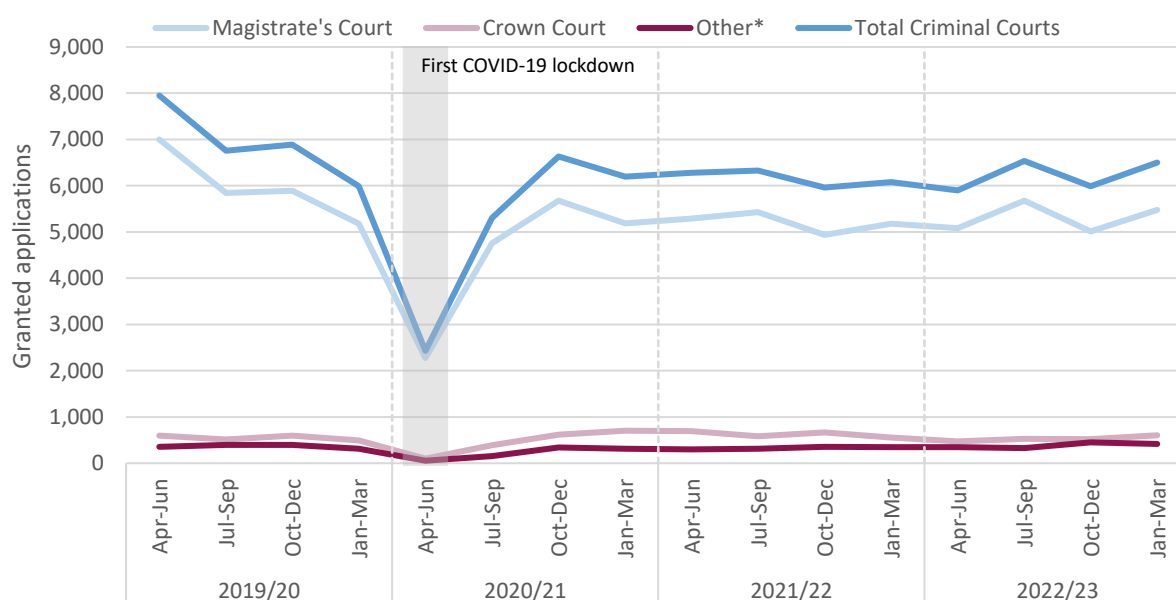
Quarterly Criminal Courts Applications Granted

Criminal Courts applications granted reached a series low in Q1 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, but had returned to pre-pandemic levels by Q3 2020/21 and have been on a relatively consistent trend since this point (Figure 3.3; Table A2).

There has been an increase of 9% (511) in Criminal Courts applications over the quarter to Q4 2022/23, and the number recorded in this most recent quarter is 7% (420) higher than that recorded in Q4 2021/22.

As Criminal Courts applications granted are heavily dominated by Magistrate’s Court cases, the overall Criminal Courts trend closely follows that of the Magistrate’s Court. Applications granted in relation to Crown and Other* courts have remained on a relatively consistent trend since the post-COVID recovery in Q3 2020/21.

Figure 3.3: Quarterly Criminal Courts applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



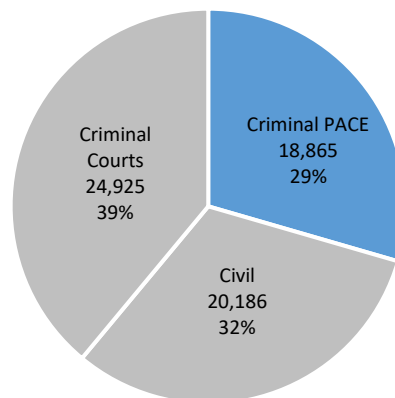
*Includes County Court Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

3.1.2 Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)

Legal advice and representation given to those in custody at a police station (under the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984)*; PACE) constitutes the criminal side of Advice and Assistance.

Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications accounted for **29% (18,865)** of all legal aid applications granted in 2022/23 (Figure 3.4; Table A1).

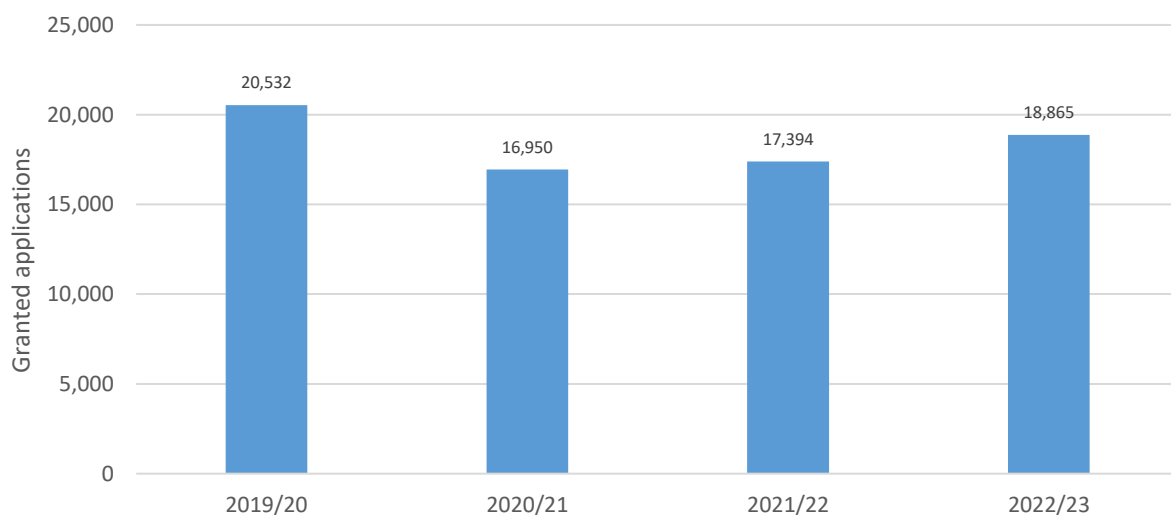
Figure 3.4: Legal aid applications granted by case type, 2022/23



Annual Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) Applications Granted

Following a considerable decline of 17% (3,582) in Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications granted in 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, PACE applications have been on a steadily increasing trend since 2020/21 (Figure 3.5; Table A1). PACE applications granted increased by 3% (444) over the year to 2021/22; and by a further 8% (1,471) to 2022/23.

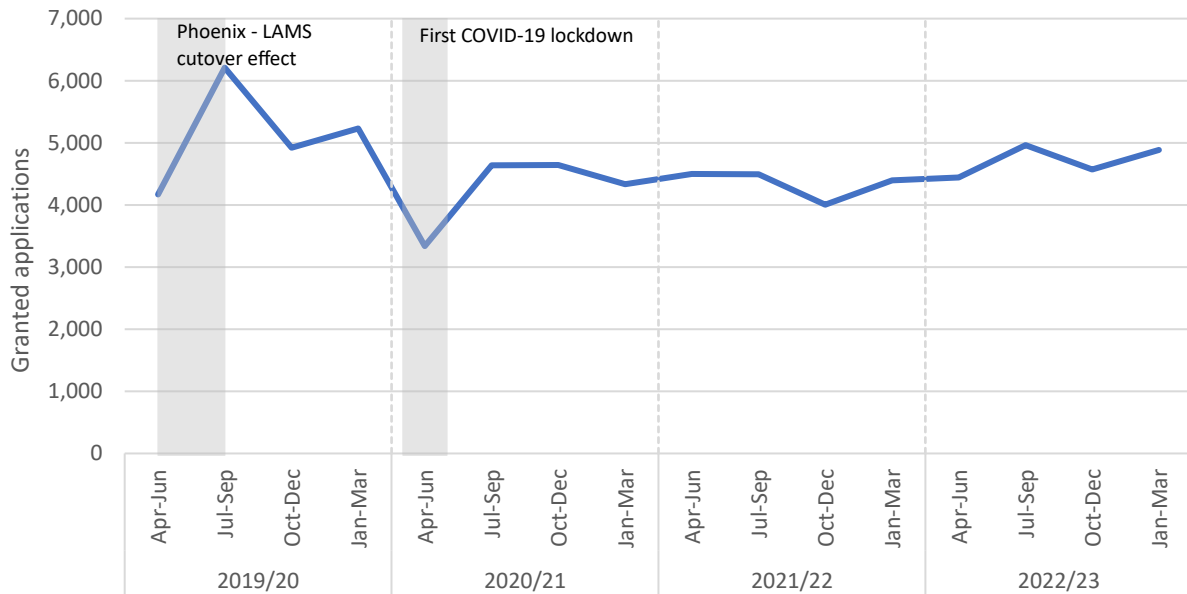
Figure 3.5: Annual Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications granted, 2019/20 – 2022/23



Quarterly Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) Applications Granted

Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications granted reached a series low in Q1 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 3.6; Table A2), but saw a considerable increase (39%; 1,301) to Q2 2020/21 and have remained on a relatively consistent trend since this point. PACE applications granted increased by 7% (316) over the quarter to Q4 2022/23, with a total of 4,886 applications granted in this latest quarter.

Figure 3.6: Quarterly Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



3.2 Criminal Authorised Expenditure

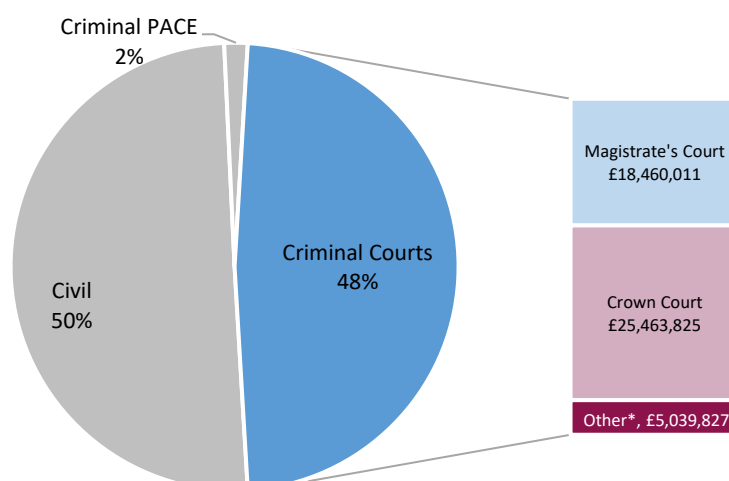
3.2.1 Criminal Courts

For presentational purposes, County Court of Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal have been grouped together in an 'Other' category within the following sections. A full breakdown of criminal court expenditure by court tier can be found in Tables A4 and A5.

While Criminal Courts cases accounted for 39% of all legal aid applications granted in 2022/23 (Section 3.1.1), they accounted for a larger proportion of the legal aid expenditure in 2022/23, at almost half (**48%; £48,963,663**) of the total authorised expenditure (Figure 3.7; Table A4).

While the majority (85%) of Criminal Courts applications granted in 2022/23 were in relation to cases heard in the Magistrate's Court (Section 3.1.1), the largest proportion of Criminal Courts expenditure in 2022/23 was in relation to Crown Court cases (52%; £25,463,825). Magistrate's Court cases accounted for 38% (£18,460,011) of Criminal Courts expenditure in 2022/23, with cases heard in Other* courts accounting for one tenth (10%; £5,039,827) of Criminal Courts expenditure.

Figure 3.7: Authorised expenditure by case type and Criminal Courts tier, 2022/23



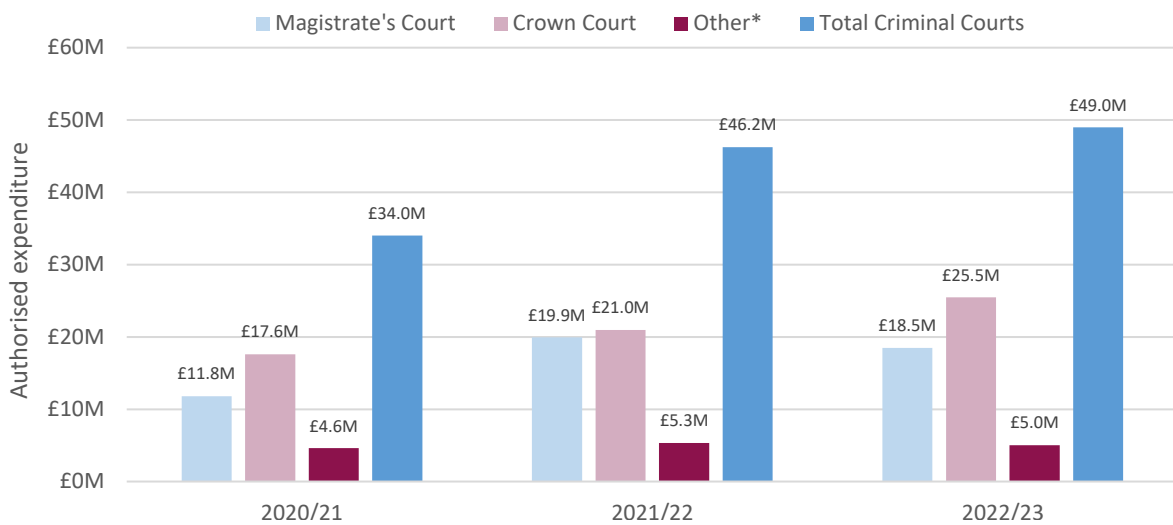
Annual Criminal Courts Authorised Expenditure

Legal aid expenditure on Criminal Courts cases has seen two consecutive years of increase between 2020/21 and 2022/23 (Figure 3.8; Table A4). The increase over the year to 2021/22 was larger at 36% (£12,229,452), while Criminal Courts expenditure increased by 6% (£2,727,403) between 2021/22 and 2022/23. Expenditure on Crown Court cases has also been on an increasing trend between 2020/21 and 2022/23, with the expenditure in 2022/23 representing an increase of 45% (£7,848,930) in comparison with 2020/21.

Following a 69% (£8,141,278) increase in expenditure on Magistrates Court cases between 2020/21 and 2021/22, expenditure on these case types decreased by 7% (£1,471,544) between 2021/22 and 2022/23. Expenditure on cases heard in Other* courts has remained relatively consistent between 2020/21 and 2022/23, ranging between £4.6 million and £5.3 million.

*Includes County Court Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

Figure 3.8: Annual Criminal Courts legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2022/23

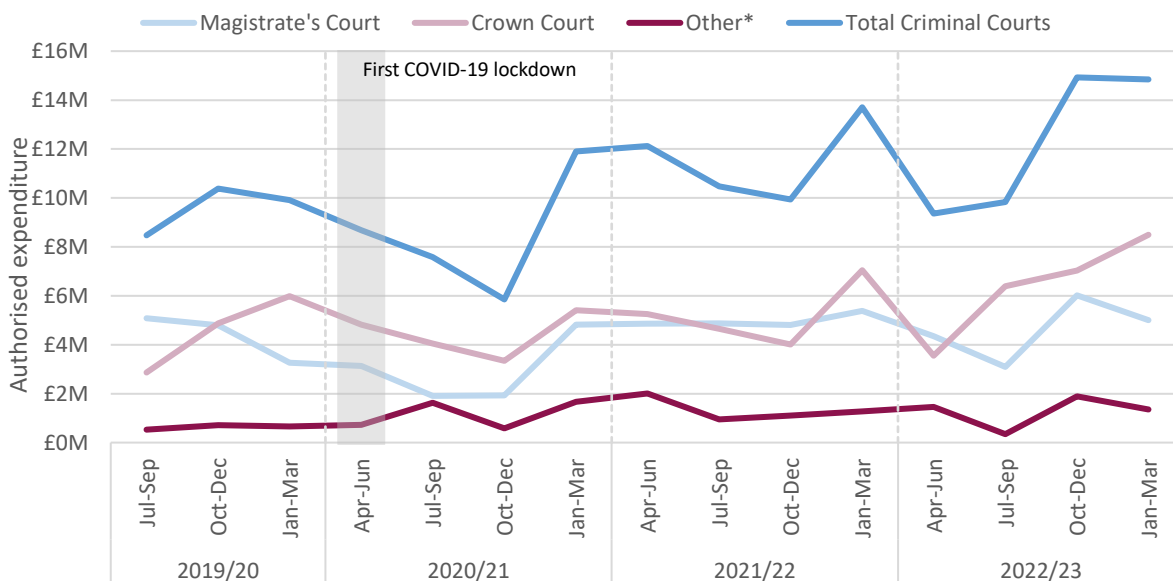


Quarterly Criminal Courts Authorised Expenditure

Total expenditure on Criminal Courts cases experienced four consecutive quarters of decline from Q3 2019/20 to Q3 2020/21; with a decrease of 44% (£4,531,766) between these quarters (Figure 3.9; Table A5). This can be largely explained by the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic, when court sittings were limited and many court cases were delayed. Expenditure on Criminal Courts cases had surpassed pre-pandemic levels by Q4 2020/21, with a large increase of 103% (£6,044,684) between Q3 and Q4 2020/21 as part of the COVID-19 recovery.

Expenditure on Crown Court cases reached a series high in the latest quarter (£8,494,343; Q4 2022/23). Expenditure on both Magistrate's Court and Other* courts cases decreased over the quarter to Q4 2022/23, driving the slight overall decrease in Criminal Courts expenditure in this latest quarter (-1%; -£83,982).

Figure 3.9: Quarterly Criminal Courts legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23

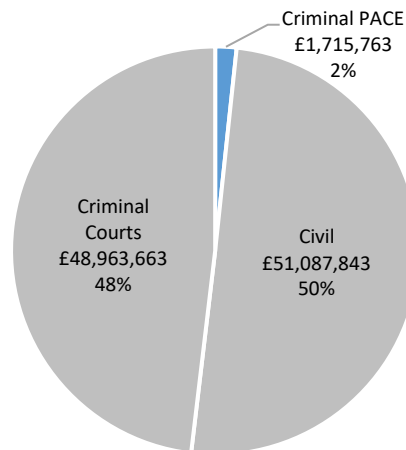


* Includes County Court Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

3.2.2 Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)

While Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications accounted for 29% of all legal aid applications granted in 2022/23 (Section 3.1.2), PACE cases accounted for **2% (£1,715,763)** of the total legal aid expenditure in 2022/23 (Figure 3.10; Table A4).

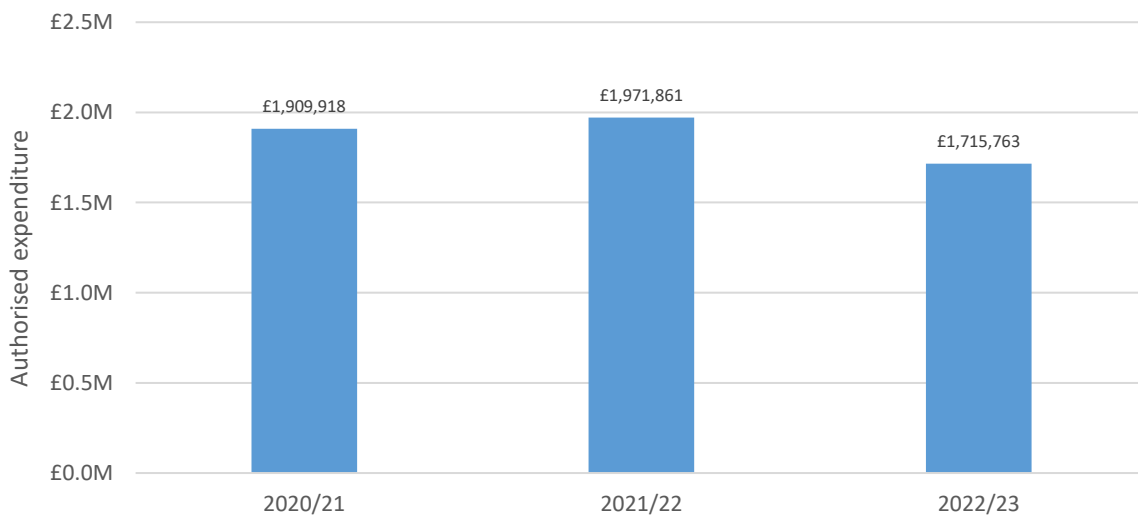
Figure 3.10: Authorised expenditure by case type, 2022/23



Annual Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) Authorised Expenditure

While legal aid expenditure on PACE cases remained relatively consistent between 2020/21 and 2021/22; PACE expenditure decreased by 13% (£256,098) between 2021/22 and 2022/23 (Figure 3.11; Table A4).

Figure 3.11: Annual Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2022/23

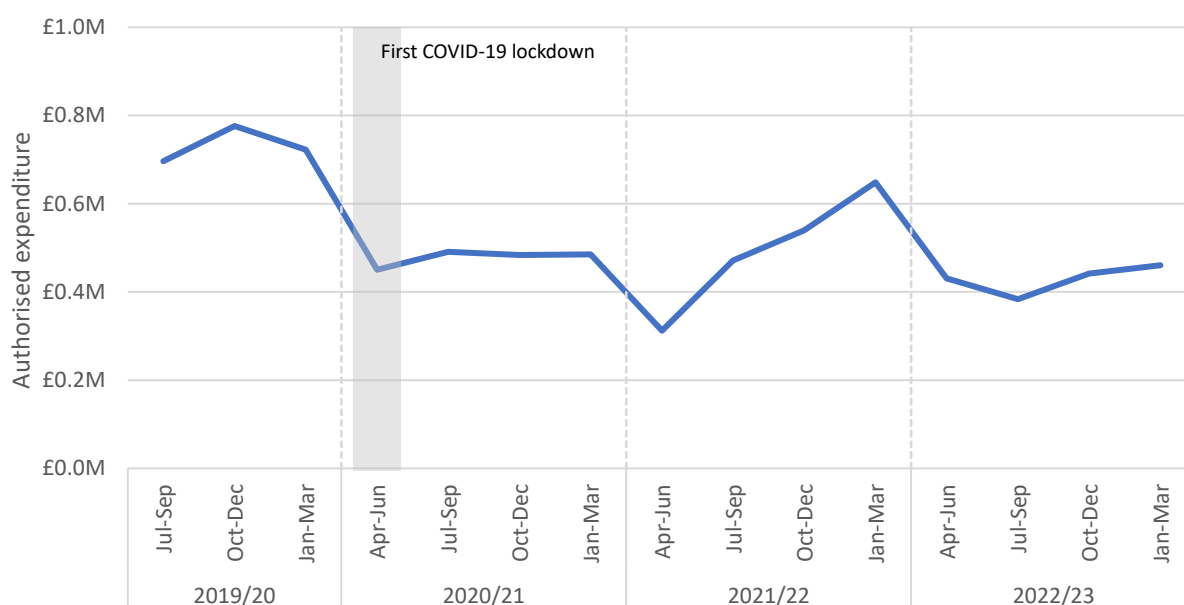


Quarterly Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) Authorised Expenditure

Quarterly expenditure on PACE cases reached a series high of £776,283 in Q3 2019/20 (Figure 3.12; Table A5). This was followed by two consecutive quarters of decline, with PACE expenditure decreasing by 42% (£326,177) between Q3 2019/20 and Q1 2020/21. This can largely be explained by the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic; however, the quarterly trend does show that PACE expenditure usually tends to decrease in quarter one as a direct result of budget capacity.

Unlike trends seen in Criminal Courts (Figure 3.9), post-COVID levels of expenditure on PACE have not returned to pre-COVID levels. This may be due to initiatives introduced during the pandemic to comply with social distancing measures, for example video conferencing, that have remained in place while indirectly reducing costs.

Figure 3.12: Quarterly Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



4. CIVIL LEGAL AID, 2019/20 TO 2022/23

This section looks specifically at civil legal aid, both in terms of the volume of cases granted as well as the respective expenditure from the legal aid fund authorised to civil cases, the latter of which may partly relate to cases granted in previous years.

4.1 Civil grants of legal aid (family vs non-family)

4.1.1 Advice and Assistance

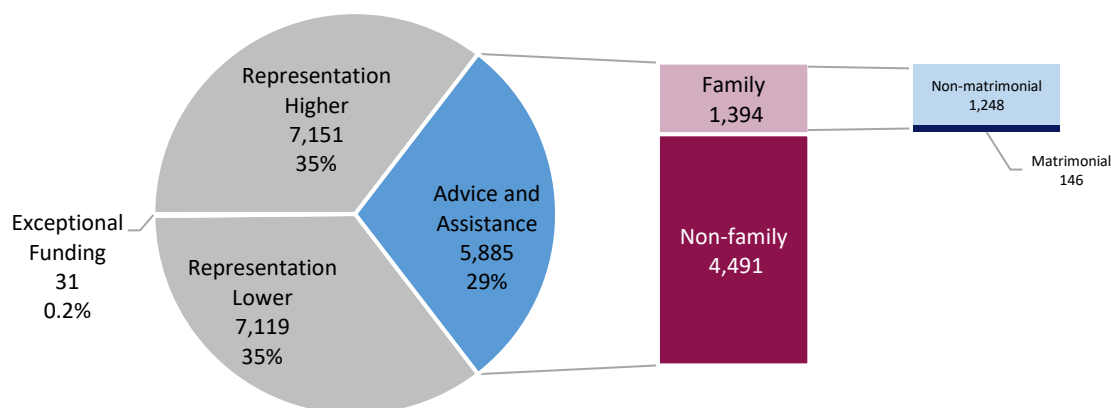
Advice and Assistance allows advice from a solicitor on any point of Northern Ireland law. It can cover many legal problems such as personal injury, divorce, disputes over children, employment matters and housing. Civil advice and assistance **excludes** criminal PACE.

Advice and Assistance applications accounted for **29% (5,885)** of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2022/23 (Figure 4.1; Table A1).

Advice and Assistance non-family matters made up the majority (76%; 4,491) of the total Advice and Assistance applications granted in 2022/23.

Applications granted in relation to Advice and Assistance on family matters represented almost one quarter (24%; 1,394) of the total Advice and Assistance applications granted in 2022/23. Of these family applications, one tenth (10%; 146) were in relation to matrimonial matters.

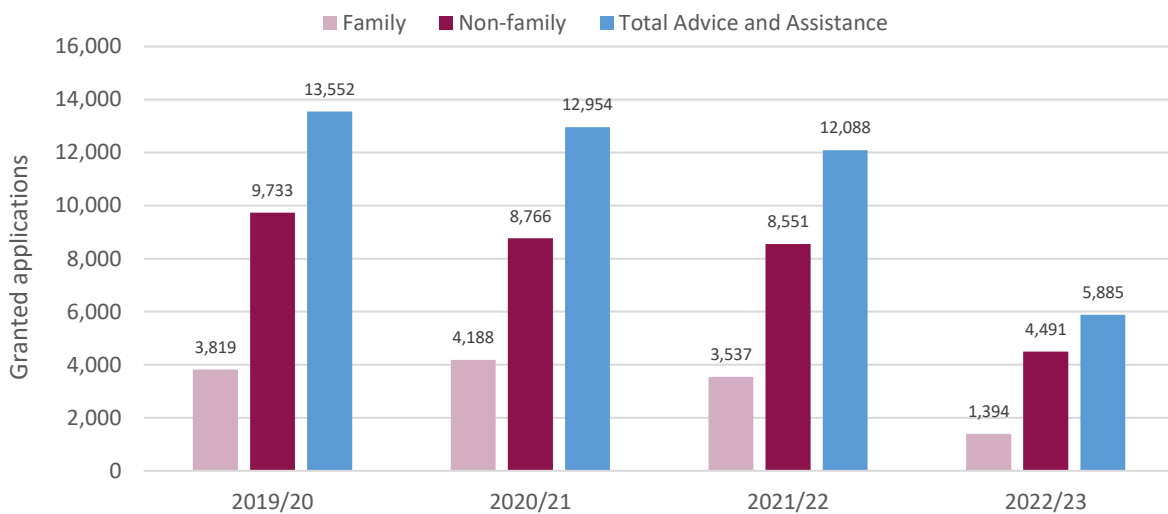
Figure 4.1: Civil legal aid applications granted by Category of Service, 2022/23



Annual Advice and Assistance Applications Granted

Advice and Assistance applications granted have seen year-on-year decreases from 2019/20 to 2022/2023 (Figure 4.2; Table A1). The largest decrease can be seen between 2021/22 and 2022/23, with Advice and Assistance applications granted decreasing by 51% (6,203) over this period. This decrease coincided with [new guidance](#) issued with effect from 21st February 2022 in respect of more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the Advice and Assistance financial eligibility test, which has led to a reduction in Advice and Assistance applications. Both family and non-family matters have seen decreases in the numbers of applications granted over the year to 2022/23, but the decrease was more pronounced within family matters (-61%) than non-family matters (-47%).

Figure 4.2: Annual Advice and Assistance applications granted, 2019/20 – 2022/23

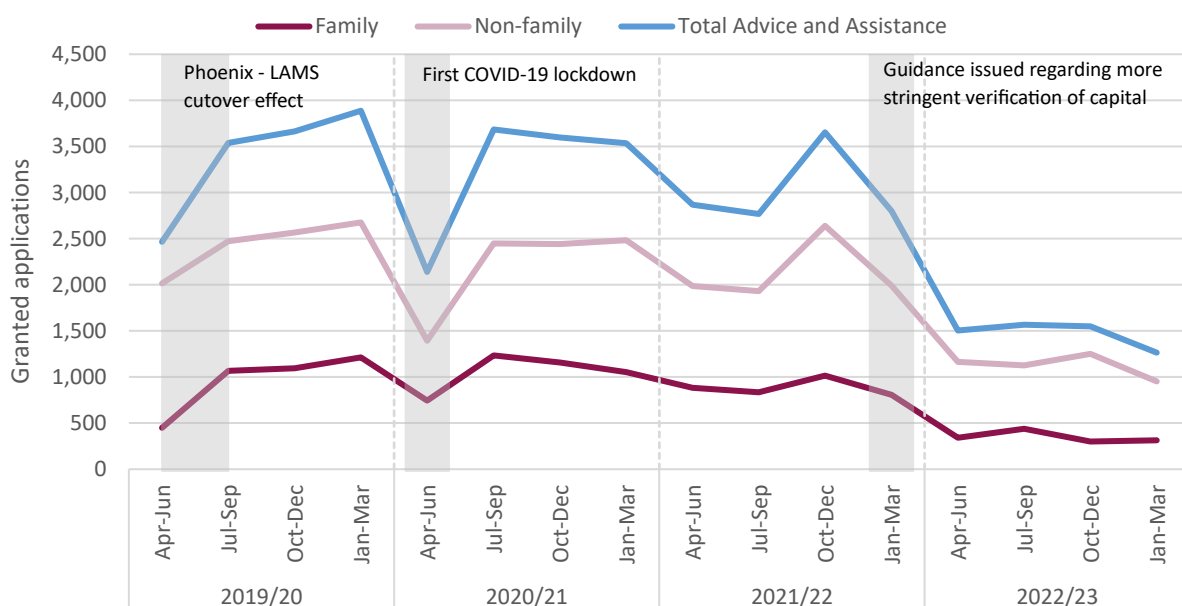


Quarterly Advice and Assistance Applications Granted

Advice and Assistance applications granted reached a series high in Q4 2019/20 (3,887) but decreased by 45% (1,749) over the quarter to Q1 2020/21 as a result of a restriction on services in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 4.3; Table A2). Advice and Assistance applications granted had almost returned to pre-COVID levels by Q2 2020/21 (3,683) but recorded a number of quarterly declines in the latter half of the time period, reaching a series low in the latest quarter (1,264; Q4 2022/23). The declines since Q3 2021/22 coincide with [new guidance](#) issued with effect from 21st February 2022 in respect of more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the Advice and Assistance financial eligibility test.

While non-family matters account for a higher proportion of the total Advice and Applications granted, non-family and family matters have followed a very similar trend throughout 2019-2023.

Figure 4.3: Quarterly Advice and Assistance applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



Advice and Assistance Applications Granted by Primary Nature

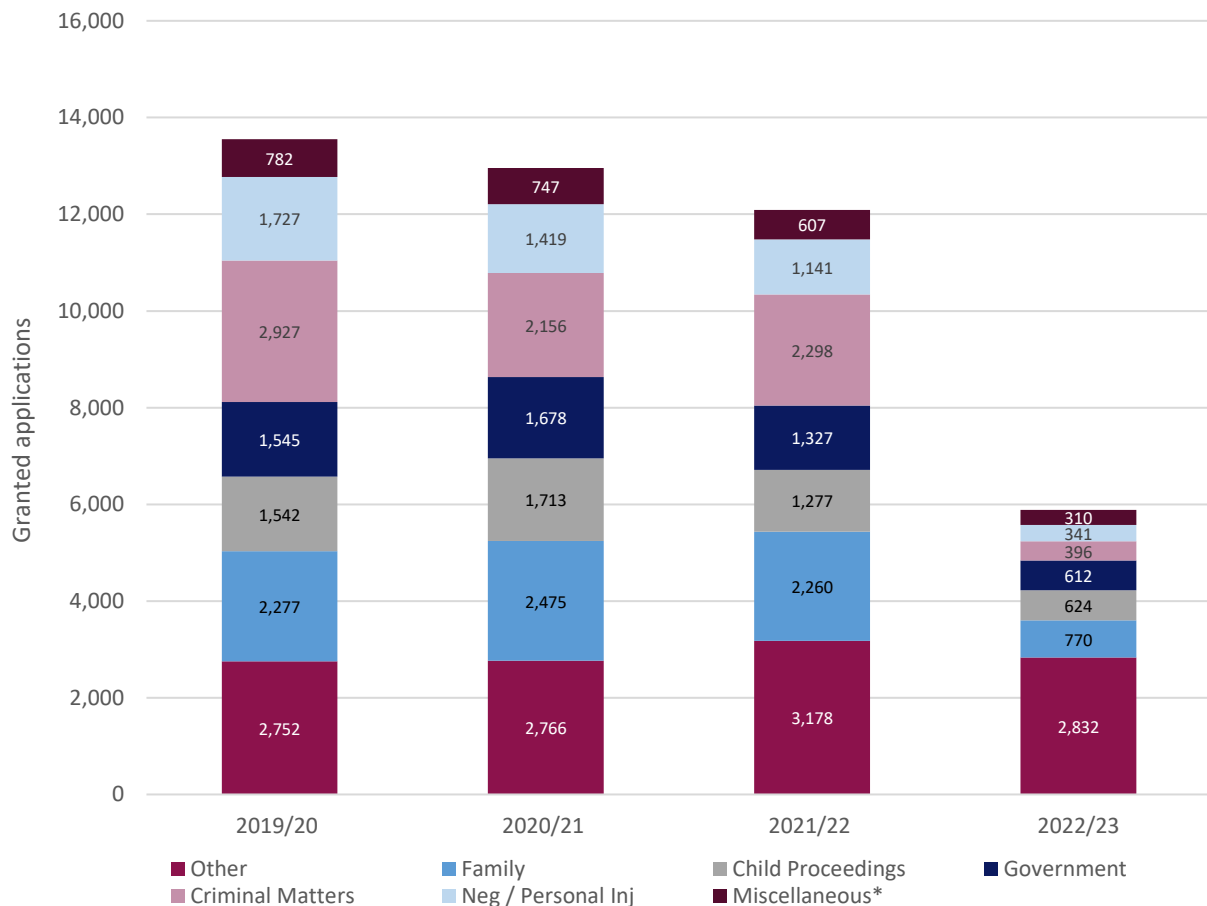
For presentational purposes, two primary natures (Parole Matters and Housing & Debt) with small numbers of applications granted have been grouped into a 'Miscellaneous' category in the following section. A full breakdown of applications granted by primary natures is available in Table A3.

The impacts of the more stringent financial eligibility testing on the number of Advice and Applications granted can be seen throughout all primary natures, with all natures experiencing decreases in grants between 2021/22 and 2022/23 (Figure 4.4; Table A3).

The impact was less in the 'Other' nature (-11%; -346), within which the largest matter is Immigration (79% of 'Other' Advice and Assistance applications granted in 2022/23). Applications granted in relation to Immigration actually recorded an increase in applications between 2021/22 and 2022/23 (+12%; +240) and have been on an upward trend since 2020/21.

The impacts over the year to 2022/23 were largest within Criminal Matters (-83%; -1,902); Negligence/Personal Injury (-70%; -800); and Family (-66%; -1,490).

Figure 4.4: Advice and Assistance applications granted by Primary Nature, 2019/20 – 2022/23



*Includes Parole Matters and Housing & Debt

4.1.2 Representation Lower

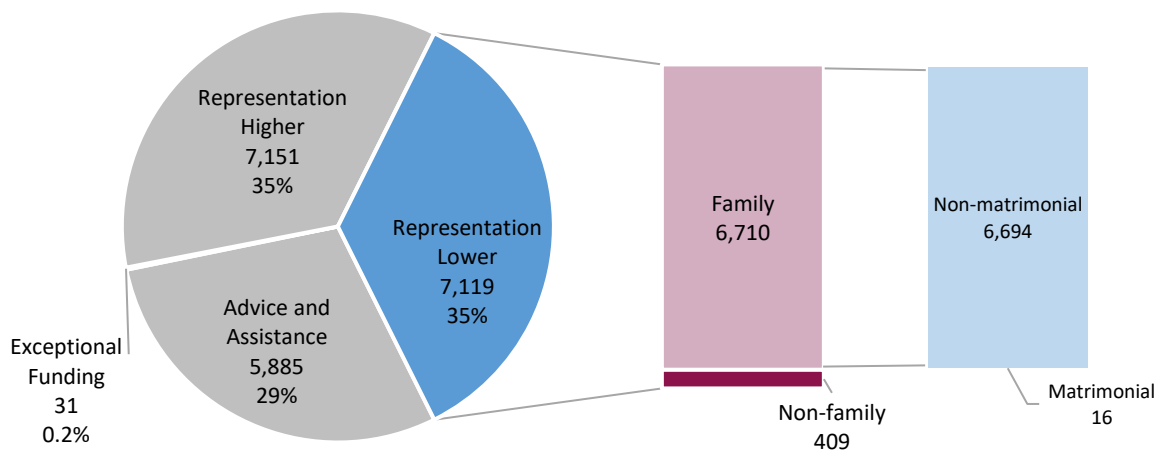
Representation Lower means representation in proceedings in the lower courts, usually the Magistrate’s Court. The types of cases heard in the Magistrates’ Courts include separation, maintenance, cases involving children, protection orders like a Non-molestation Order and paternity cases.

Representation Lower applications accounted for **35% (7,119)** of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2022/23 (Figure 4.5; Table A1).

The vast majority (94%; 6,710) of Representation Lower applications granted in 2022/23 were in relation to family matters. Of these family applications, only 0.2% (16) were in relation to matrimonial matters.

Non-family matters made up 6% (409) of all Representation Lower applications granted in 2022/23.

Figure 4.5: Civil legal aid applications granted by Category of Service, 2022/23

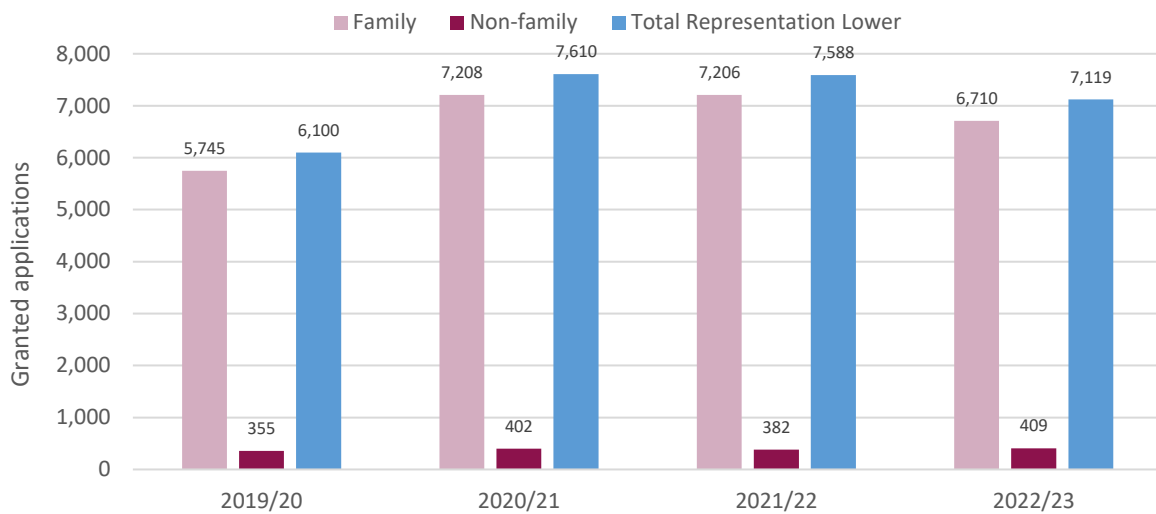


Annual Representation Lower Applications Granted

While the guidance around verification of capital that impacted upon Advice and Assistance applications also applied to Representation Lower applications, its impact on Representation Lower applications appears to be much less. While the number of Advice and Assistance applications granted decreased by 51% (6,203) between 2021/22 and 2022/23 (Section 4.1.1), the number of Representation Lower applications granted decreased by 6% (469) during this period (Figure 4.6). This decrease was driven by Representation Lower family matters, which experienced a decrease of 7% (496) in applications granted over the year to 2022/23. Conversely, applications granted for Representation Lower non-family matters increased by 7% (27) over this period.

While the number of Representation Lower applications granted decreased from 2021/22 to 2022/23; the number granted in 2022/23 is 17% (1,019) higher than in 2019/20. Family cases have comprised between 94-95% of the total annual Representation Lower applications granted between 2019 and 2023.

Figure 4.6: Annual Representation Lower applications granted, 2019/20 – 2022/23

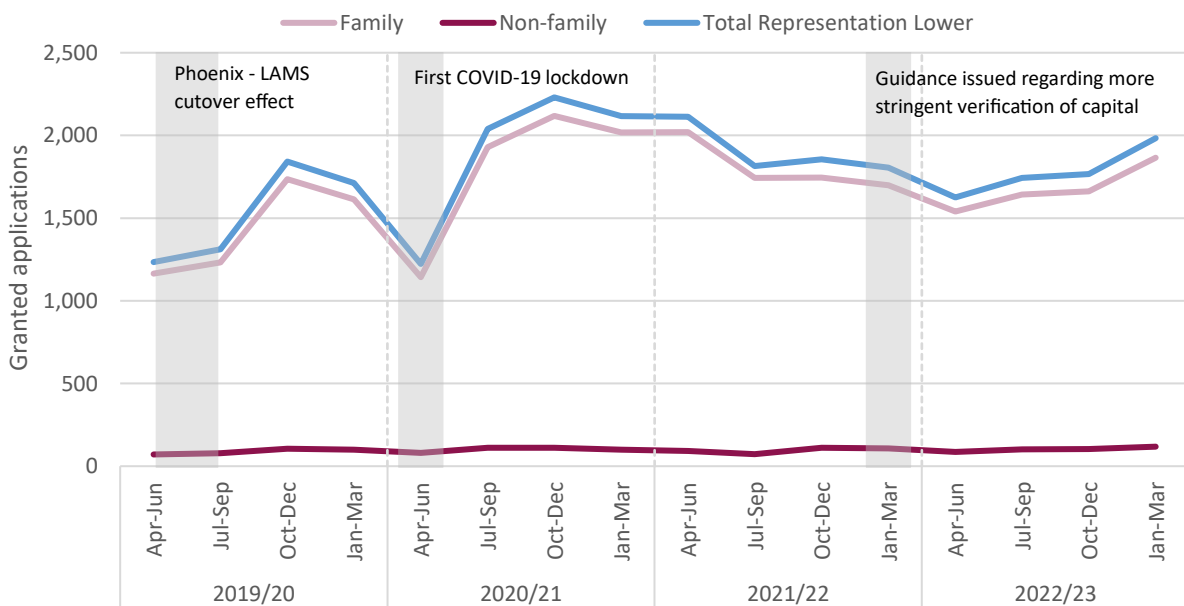


Quarterly Representation Lower Applications Granted

Similar to trends seen in the total number of legal aid applications (Figure 2.3), Representation Lower applications granted reached a series low in Q1 2020/21 as a result of a restriction on services in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Representation Lower applications granted had surpassed pre-COVID levels by Q2 2020/21, and reached a series high in Q3 2020/21 (2,230).

While Advice and Assistance applications granted reached a series low in Q4 2022/23 (Figure 4.3) following new guidance around verification of capital which also impacted Representation Lower applications, the number of Representation Lower applications granted has seen quarter on quarter increases between Q1 and Q4 2022/23 (Figure 4.7; Table A2). The number of Representation Lower applications granted in Q4 2022/23 is 22% (358) higher than in Q1 2022/23. This has been largely driven by an increase in Representation Lower family applications granted, particularly in relation to applications for Children Order Articles 44 – 58 (+40%; +141) and Children Order Articles 7 – 41 (+21%; +137).

Figure 4.7: Quarterly Representation Lower applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



Representation Lower Applications Granted by Primary Nature

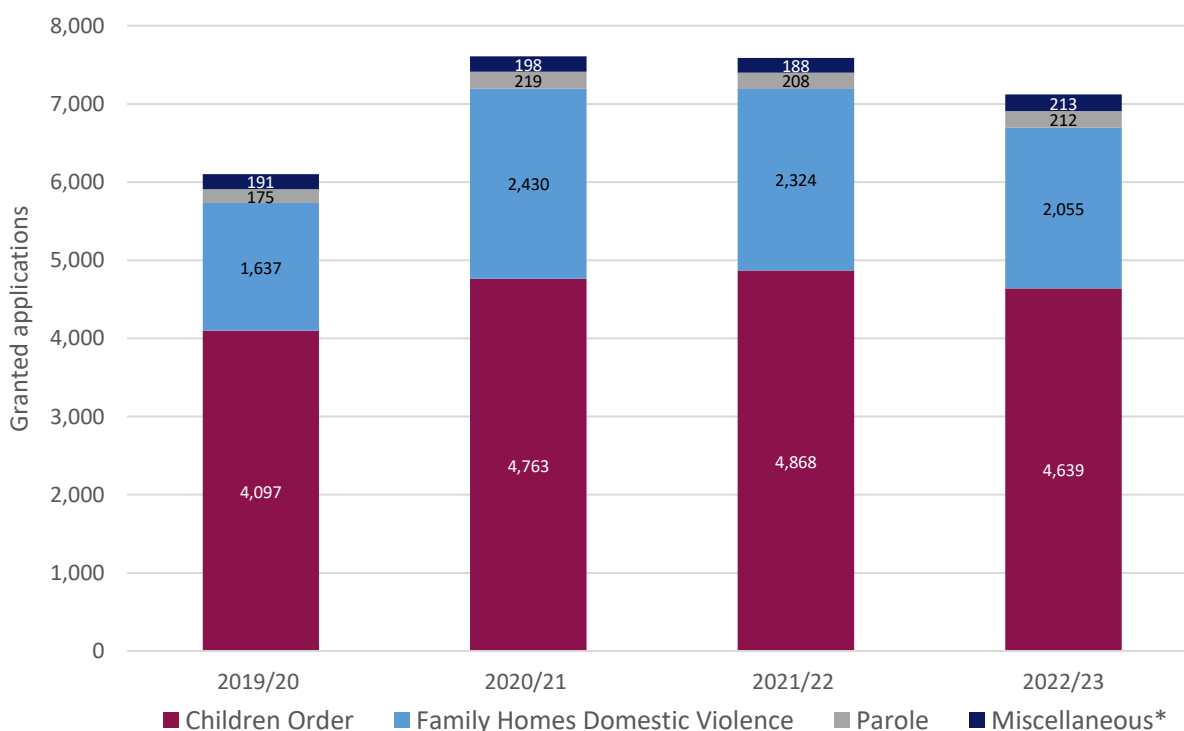
For presentational purposes, the four Representation Lower Children Order primary natures have been grouped into one category, and three primary natures (Tribunal, Quasi criminal and Maintenance) with small numbers of applications granted have been grouped into a 'Miscellaneous' category in the following section. A full breakdown of applications granted by primary natures is available in Table A3.

Applications granted in relation to Children Order matters typically comprised around two thirds of Representation Lower applications granted between 2019/20 and 2022/2023 (Figure 4.8). Applications granted in relation to Representation Lower Children Order matters increased by 13% (542) between 2019/20 and 2022/23; however they have decreased by 5% (229) between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Applications granted in relation to Representation Lower Family Homes Domestic Violence matters comprised between 27% and 32% of Representation Lower applications granted between 2019/20 and 2022/23. While the number of Representation Lower Family Homes Domestic Violence applications granted decreased by 12% (269) between 2021/22 and 2022/23, the number of applications granted in relation to these matters increased by over a quarter (26%; 418) between 2019/20 and 2022/23.

Parole matters comprised 3% of Representation Lower applications granted in each year between 2019/20 and 2022/23. Miscellaneous* natures comprised between 2% and 3% of Representation Lower applications granted between 2019/20 and 2022/23.

Figure 4.8: Representation Lower applications granted by Primary Nature, 2019/20 – 2022/23



*Includes: Tribunal, Quasi criminal and Maintenance

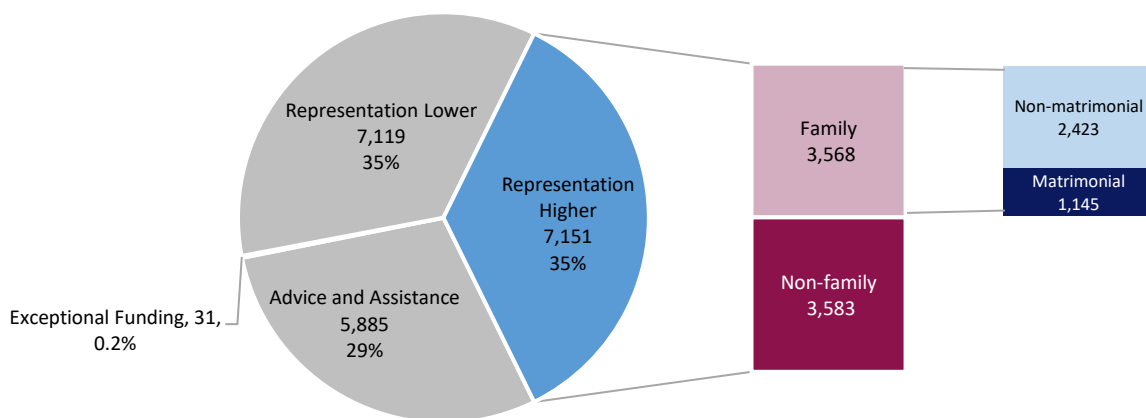
4.1.3 Representation Higher

Representation Higher means representation in proceedings in the higher courts like the County Court, High Court and Supreme Court.

Representation Higher applications accounted for **35% (7,151)** of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2022/23 (Figure 4.9; Table A1).

Representation Higher applications granted in 2022/23 were almost evenly split between non-family and family cases; half (50%; 3,583) were in relation to non-family cases while the other half (50%; 3,568) were in relation to family cases. Of the family applications, almost a third (32%; 1,145) were in relation to matrimonial matters.

Figure 4.9: Civil legal aid applications granted by Category of Service, 2022/23



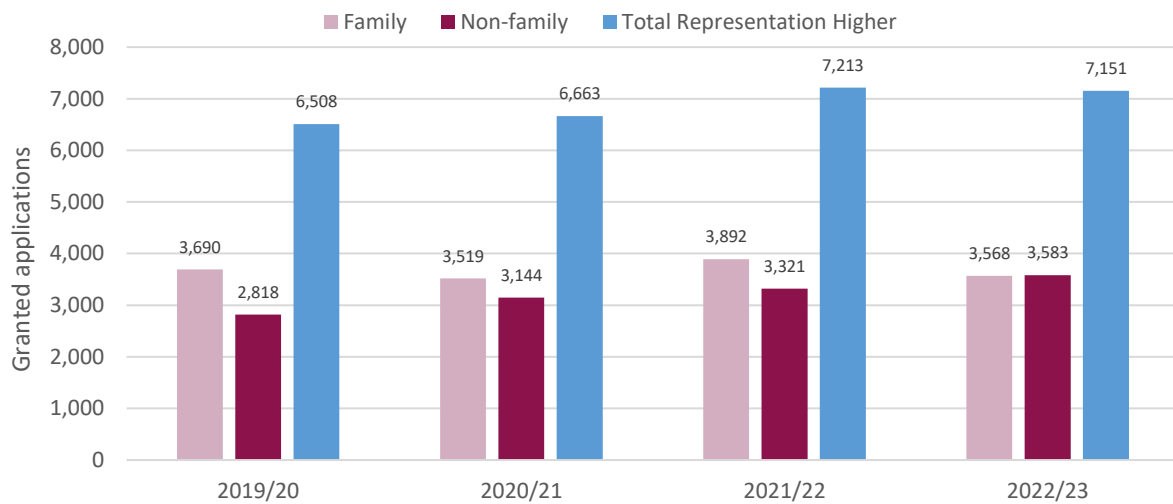
Annual Representation Higher Applications Granted

Following two consecutive years of increase in Representation Higher applications granted between 2019/20 and 2021/22, Representation Higher applications granted decreased slightly by 1% (62 applications) between 2021/22 and 2022/23 (Figure 4.10; Table A1).

While the number of Representation Higher granted applications in relation to family cases fluctuated slightly year on year, non-family granted applications have been on a gradually increasing trend from 2019-2023. Representation Higher non-family granted applications accounted for 43% of all Representation Higher applications granted in 2019/20, but this had increased to 50% by 2022/23.

Increases in granted applications over the year to 2021/22 were seen in 14 out of the 17 primary natures within Representation Higher. The largest increases were seen within Matrimonial/Civil Partnership (+214 granted applications) and Personal Injury (+168 granted applications). One fifth of the annual increase to 2021/22 in Representation Higher applications granted can be attributed to increases within Children Order natures (+109 granted applications).

Figure 4.10: Annual Representation Higher applications granted, 2019/20 – 2022/23

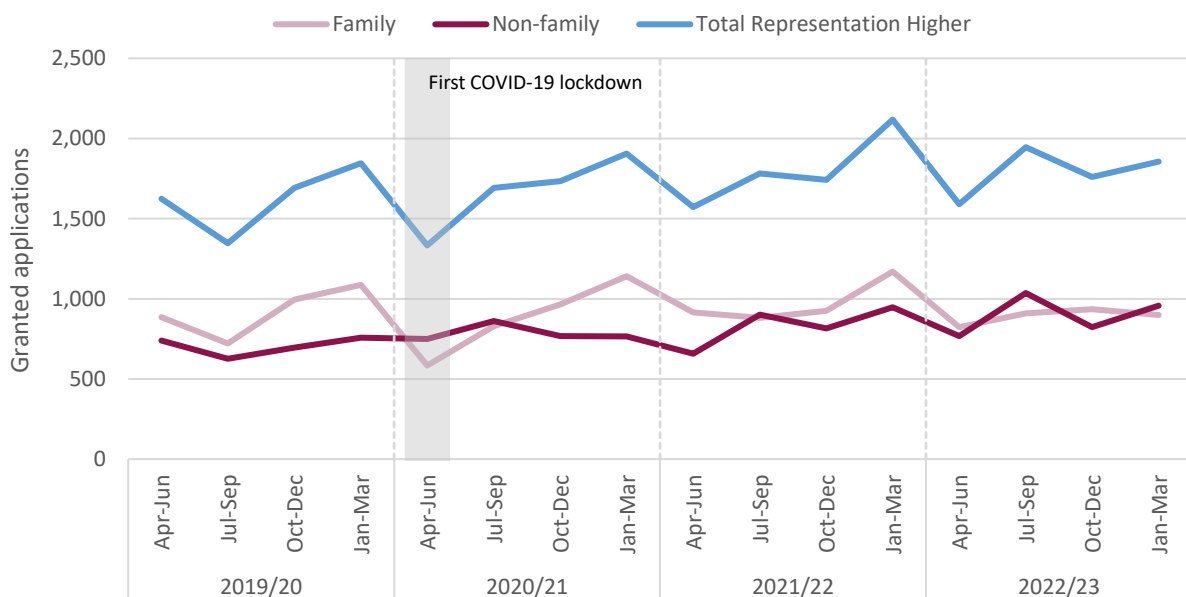


Quarterly Representation Higher Applications Granted

Overall, Representation Higher applications granted have been on a gradually increasing trend between Q1 2019/20 and Q4 2022/23 (Figure 4.11). Representation Higher granted applications increased between Q3 and Q4 of each year - this trend has been largely driven by increases in Matrimonial/Civil Partnership and Personal Injury cases between these quarters. With the exception of 2019/20, Representation Higher granted applications reached their lowest point in Q1 of each year – this trend has been largely driven by decreases in Matrimonial/Civil Partnership and Children Order Article 44-58 cases between these quarters. Granted applications in relation to family and non-family cases have followed similar trends throughout the time series.

The series high in Representation Higher applications granted was recorded in Q4 2021/22 (2,118), while the series low was recorded in Q1 2020/21 (1,333).

Figure 4.11: Quarterly Representation Higher applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



Representation Higher Applications Granted by Primary Nature

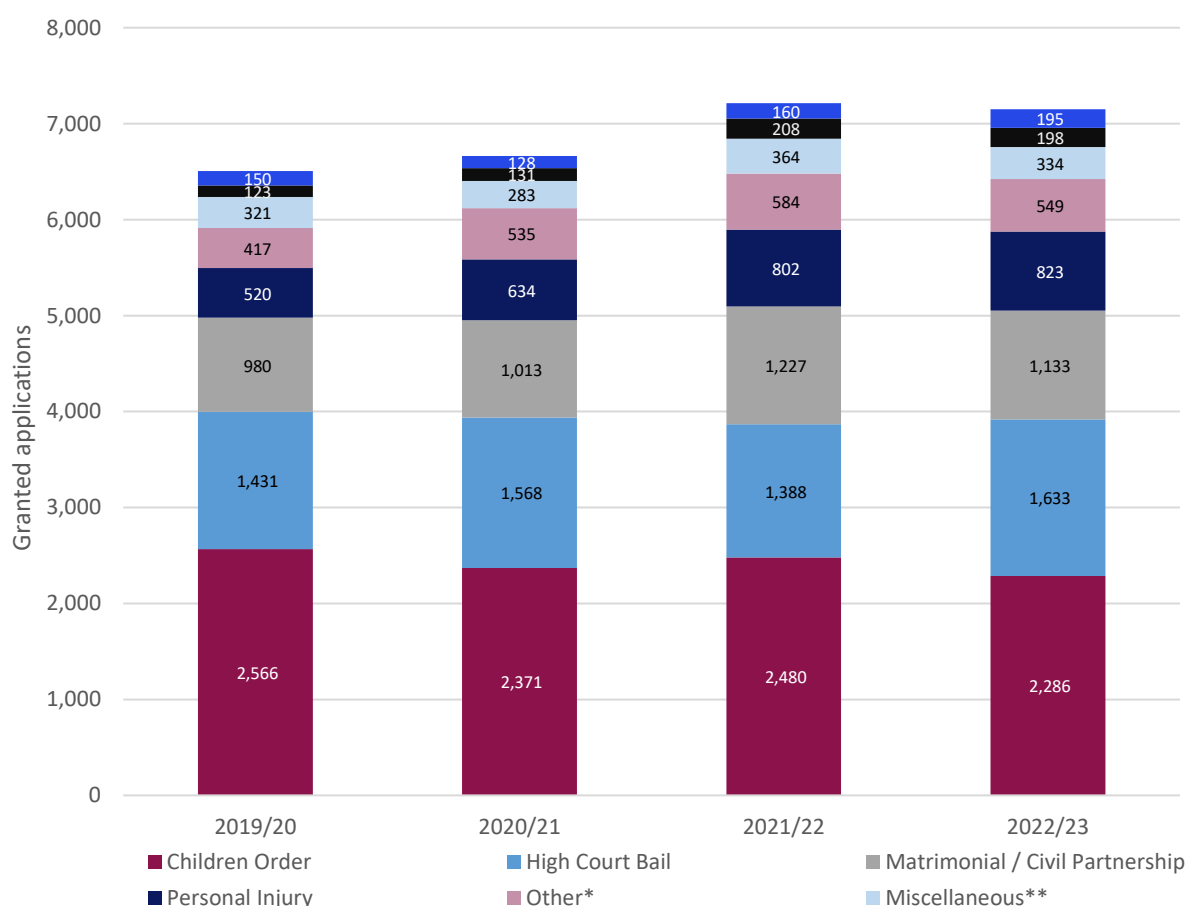
For presentational purposes, the four Representation Higher Children Order primary natures have been grouped into one category, and various primary natures with small numbers of applications granted (Parole, Maintenance, Land/property, Quasi criminal, Debt/ejectment, Family Homes Domestic Violence and Asylum & Immigration) have been grouped into a ‘Miscellaneous’ category in the following section. A full breakdown of applications granted by primary natures is available in Table A3.

The composition of Representation Higher granted applications by Primary Nature (Figure 4.12) has remained relatively unchanged in recent years, with around four fifths of Representation Higher applications granted being in relation to Children Order, High Court Bail, Matrimonial/Civil Partnership and Personal Injury cases in each year between 2019/20 and 2022/23.

The number of Representation Higher Personal Injury applications granted has gradually increased year on year throughout the time period and has increased by 58% (303) from 2019/20 to 2022/23.

Over the four-year time period, 5% or less of Representation Higher applications granted were in relation to Miscellaneous** natures.

Figure 4.12: Representation Higher applications granted by Primary Nature, 2019/20 – 2022/23



* Includes matters such as injunctions and breach of order/contract.

** Includes the following primary natures: Parole; Maintenance; Land/property; Quasi criminal; Debt/ejectment; Family Homes Domestic Violence; and Asylum & Immigration.

4.1.4 Exceptional Funding

Exceptional funding allows representation in cases (like inquests) which are not covered by any other legal aid scheme.

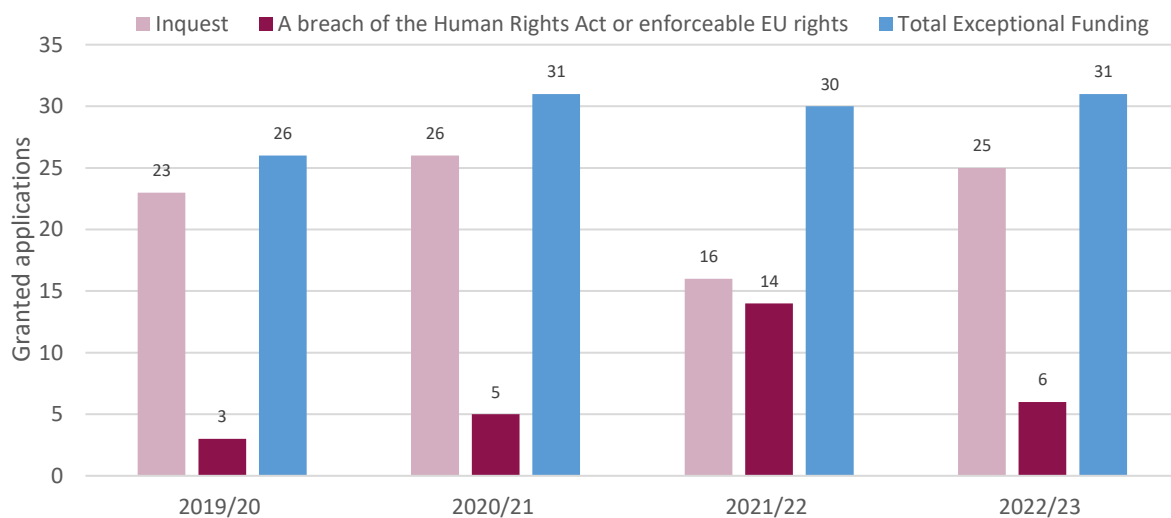
Exceptional Funding applications accounted for only **0.2% (31)** of the total civil legal aid applications granted in 2022/23. Of these 31 applications, around four fifths (81%; 25) were in relation to Inquests; while the remaining fifth (19%; 6) were in relation to A breach of the Human Rights Act or enforceable EU rights. A total of 118 Exceptional Funding applications were granted in the four-year period between 2019/20 and 2022/23.

Annual Exceptional Funding Applications Granted

The annual number of Exceptional Funding applications granted has remained relatively consistent for the last three years, ranging from 30-31 applications granted per year from 2020/21 to 2022/23 (Figure 4.13; Table A1). There were 5 more Exceptional Funding applications granted in 2022/23 than in 2019/20.

Due to the small numbers of Exceptional Funding applications, it is not appropriate to look for trends at a quarterly level, however a quarterly breakdown is included within Table A2.

Figure 4.13: Annual Exceptional Funding applications granted, 2019/20 – 2022/23



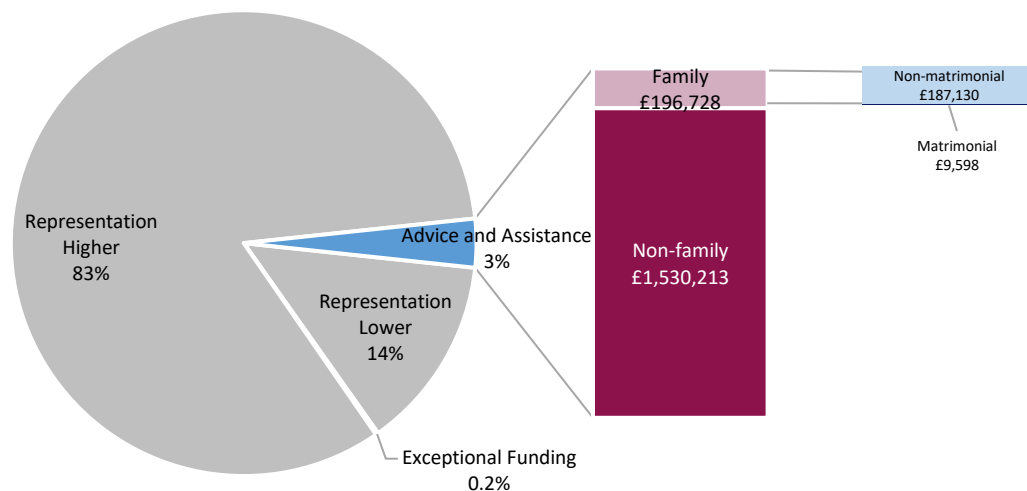
4.2 Civil authorised expenditure (family vs non-family)

4.2.1 Advice and Assistance

While Advice and Assistance cases accounted for 29% of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2022/23 (Section 4.1.1), they accounted for a much smaller proportion of the expenditure at **3%** (**£1,726,941**) of the total civil legal aid expenditure in 2022/23 (Figure 4.14; Table A4).

Advice and Assistance non-family cases made up the majority (89%; £1,530,213) of the total Advice and Assistance legal aid expenditure in 2022/23, while family cases constituted just over a tenth (11%; £196,728). Of the expenditure on family matters, 5% (£9,598) was in relation to matrimonial matters.

Figure 4.14: Civil authorised expenditure by Category of Service, 2022/23

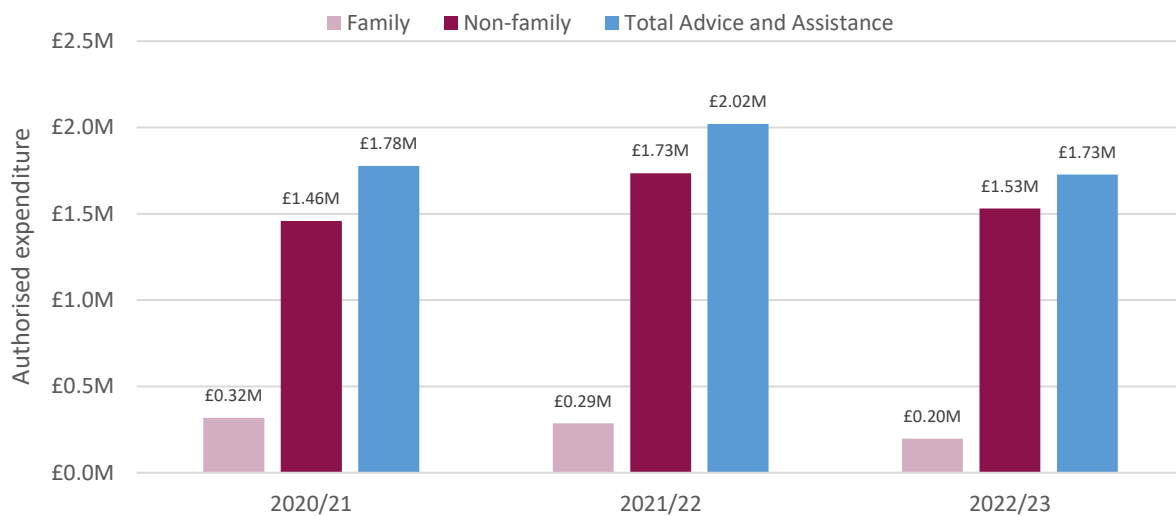


Annual Advice and Assistance Authorised Expenditure

While the number of applications granted in relation to Advice and Assistance decreased by 51% between 2021/22 and 2022/23 (Section 4.1.1) as a result of more stringent financial eligibility testing, expenditure on these case types declined at a lesser rate; with total Advice and Assistance expenditure decreasing by 15% (£294,091) over the year to 2022/23 (Figure 4.15). Both family and non-family expenditure decreased between 2021/22 and 2022/23, with expenditure on Advice and Assistance family cases decreasing by 31% (£89,644) and non-family cases decreasing by 12% (£204,447).

Advice and Assistance expenditure in relation to family cases has been on a continually decreasing trend from 2020/21 to 2022/23. Expenditure on Advice and Assistance family cases decreased by 38% (£122,008) from 2020/21 to 2022/23.

Figure 4.15: Annual Advice and Assistance legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2022/23

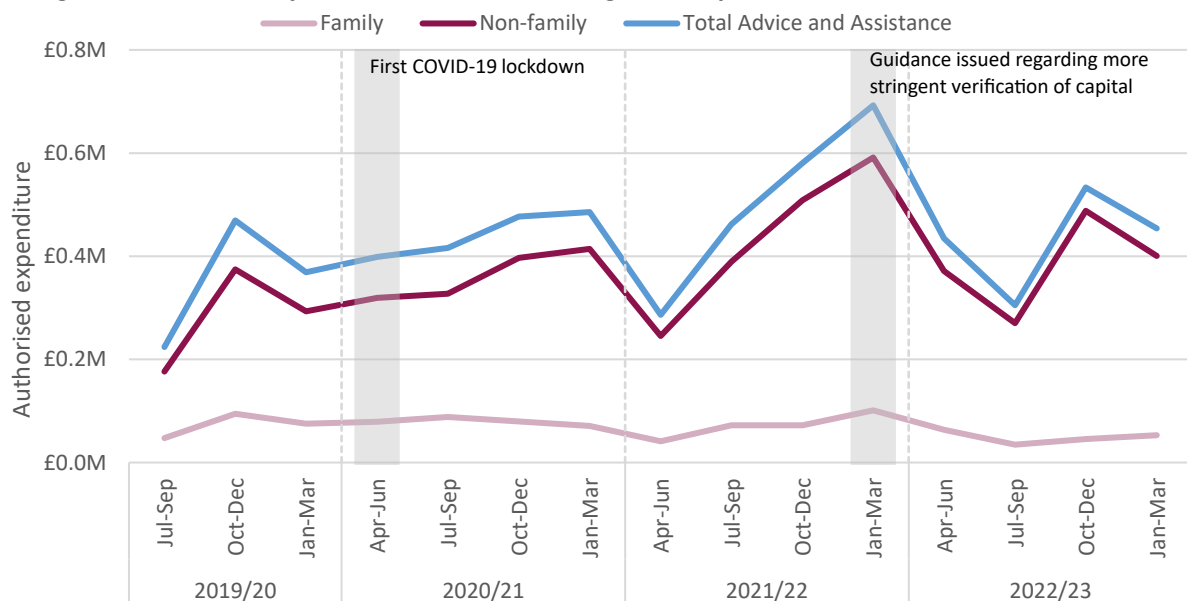


Quarterly Advice and Assistance Authorised Expenditure

Advice and Assistance expenditure in Q4 2022/23 was 23% (£84,812) higher than in Q4 2019/20; however it was over a third lower (35%; £238,944) than the series high recorded in Q4 2021/22 (Figure 4.16; Table A5). Three consecutive quarters of increase in Advice and Assistance expenditure were recorded between Q1 2021/22 and the series high in Q4 2021/22. During Q4 2021/22, new guidance was issued in respect of more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the Advice and Assistance financial eligibility test which led to a reduction in Advice and Assistance applications (see Section 4.1.1). The impact of this guidance can also be seen in Advice and Assistance expenditure, with two consecutive quarters of decrease noted between Q4 2021/22 and Q2 2022/23. A decrease of 56% (£387,483) was observed between Q4 2021/22 and Q2 2022/23.

As Advice and Assistance expenditure is predominantly comprised of costs for non-family cases, as expected, the overall trend in Advice and Assistance expenditure mirrors that of non-family.

Figure 4.16: Quarterly Advice and Assistance legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



For presentational purposes, two primary natures (Parole Matters and Housing & Debt) with relatively small expenditure have been grouped into a 'Miscellaneous' category in the following section. A full breakdown of expenditure by primary natures is available in Table A6.

Despite the overall decline in Representation Higher expenditure between 2021/22 and 2022/23, expenditure on 'Other' Advice and Assistance cases has been on a continually increasing trend from 2020/21 to 2022/23 (Figure 4.17; Table A6). Almost two thirds (65%; £611,486) of Advice and Assistance 'Other' nature expenditure in 2022/23 was in relation to Immigration matters. Expenditure on Advice and Assistance Immigration matters has seen two consecutive years of increase; and increased by 91% (£290,787) between 2020/21 and 2022/23.

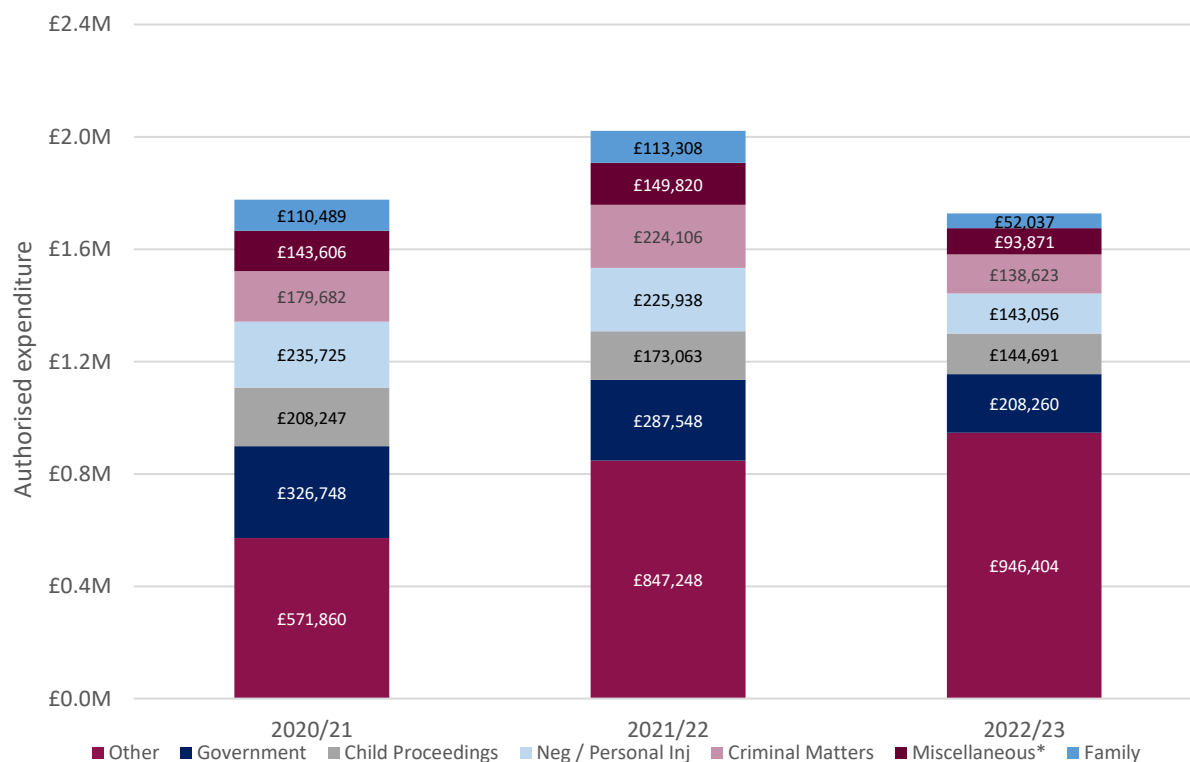
Conversely, expenditure on Advice and Assistance Government, Child Proceedings and Negligence/Personal Injury cases experienced two consecutive years of decrease between 2020/21 and 2022/23.

Advice and Assistance expenditure on Government matters decreased by 36% (£118,488) between 2020/21 and 2022/23. This decrease was largely driven by a decrease in Historical Enquiries (-95%; -£59,845) from 2020/21 to 2022/23.

Expenditure on Advice and Assistance Child Proceedings cases decreased by 31% (£63,556) between 2020/21 and 2022/23. This decrease was largely driven by Children Order matters, for which expenditure decreased by 77% (£41,929) from 2020/21 to 2022/23.

Expenditure on Advice and Assistance Negligence/Personal Injury cases decreased by 39% (£92,669) between 2020/21 and 2022/23. This decrease was largely driven by decreases in Historical Abuse (-55%; -£32,519) and Negligence General (-43%; -£19,208) from 2020/21 to 2022/23.

Figure 4.17: Advice and Assistance expenditure by Primary Nature, 2020/2021 – 2022/2023



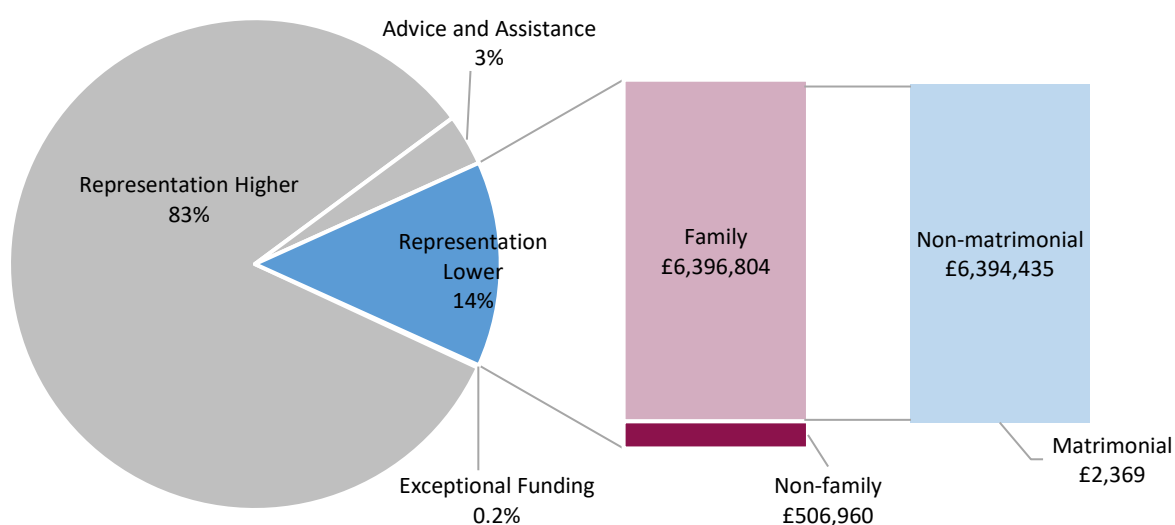
*Includes Parole Matters and Housing & Debt

4.2.2 Representation Lower

While Representation Lower cases accounted for 35% of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2022/23 (Figure 4.5), they represented a smaller proportion of the expenditure, at **14% (£6,903,764)** of the total 2022/23 civil legal aid authorised expenditure (Figure 4.18; Table A4).

Of the Representation Lower expenditure in 2022/23, the vast majority (93%; £6,396,804) was in relation to family cases; while just 7% (£506,960) was in relation to non-family cases. Of the Representation Lower family expenditure, almost all was in relation to non-matrimonial cases.

Figure 4.18: Civil authorised expenditure by Category of Service, 2022/23

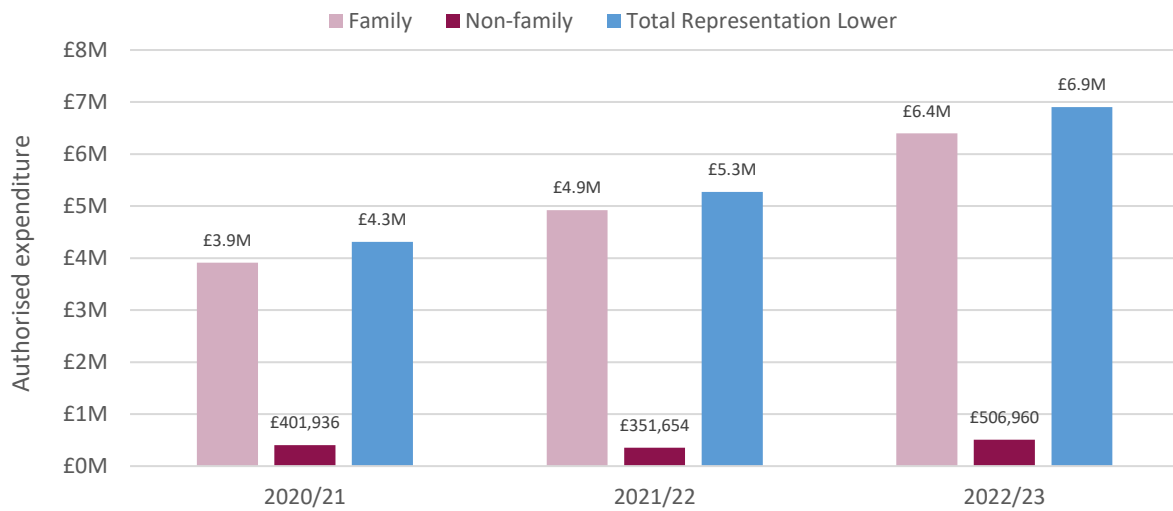


Annual Representation Lower Authorised Expenditure

Expenditure on Representation Lower cases has been on an increasing trend in recent years (Figure 4.19; Table A4), having increased by 22% (£960,931) between 2020/21 and 2021/22; and by 31% (£1,631,768) between 2021/22 and 2022/23. This has been largely driven by increases in expenditure on family cases, which increased by 26% (£1,011,214) between 2020/21 and 2021/22; and by 30% (£1,476,462) between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

While expenditure on Representation Lower non-family cases recorded a decrease of 13% (£50,283) between 2020/21 and 2021/22, there was an increase of 44% (£155,306) over the year to 2022/23.

Figure 4.19: Annual Representation Lower legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2022/23

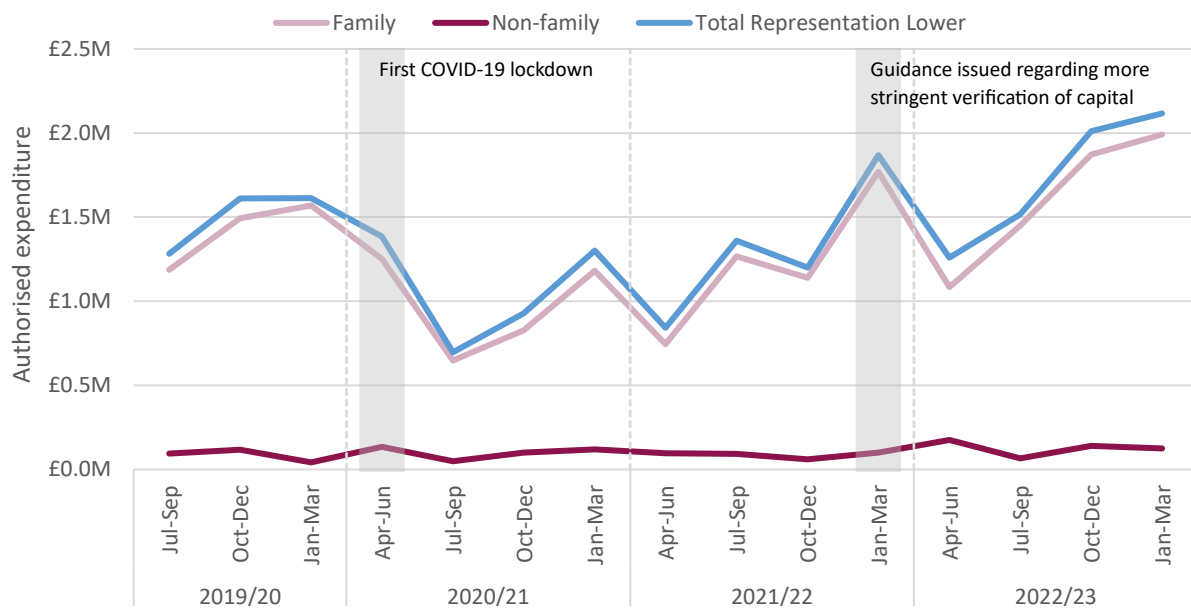


Quarterly Representation Lower Authorised Expenditure

There have been three consecutive quarters of increase in Representation Lower expenditure since Q1 2022/23, and the latest estimate for Q4 2022/23 (£2,116,186) is the highest in the series (Figure 4.20; Table A5).

As Representation Lower expenditure is largely comprised of costs for family cases, the overall trend in Representation Lower expenditure mirrors that of family expenditure. Expenditure on non-family Representation Lower cases ranged from a series low of £42,197 in Q4 2019/20 to a series high of £175,463 in Q1 2022/23. There was a decrease of one tenth (10%; £14,162) in Representation Lower non-family expenditure over the latest quarter, however the latest estimate for Q4 2022/23 is 25% (£24,702) higher than the same quarter in the previous year.

Figure 4.20: Quarterly Representation Lower legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



Representation Lower Authorised Expenditure by Primary Nature

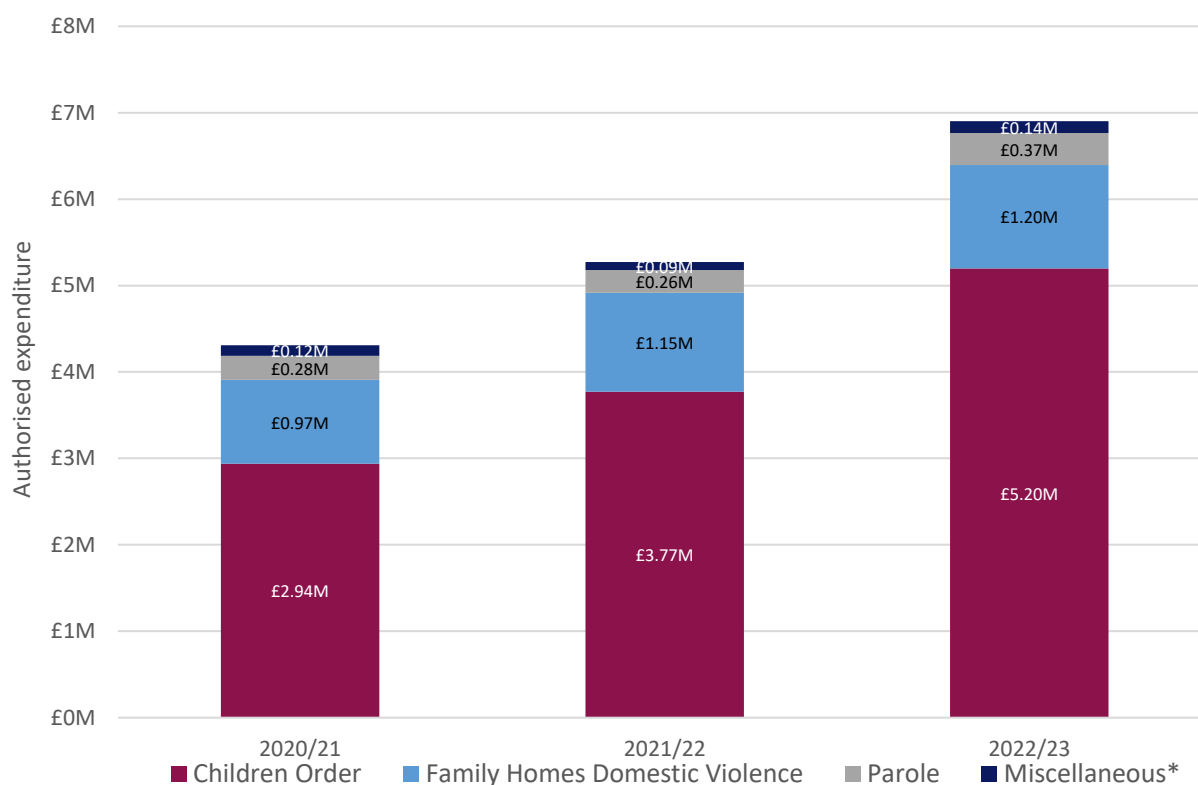
For presentational purposes, the four Representation Lower Children Order primary natures have been grouped into one category, and three primary natures (Tribunal, Quasi criminal and Maintenance) with relatively small expenditure have been grouped into a 'Miscellaneous' category in the following section. A full breakdown of expenditure by primary natures is available in Table A6.

The annual increases in Representation Lower authorised expenditure between 2020/21 and 2022/23 have been largely driven by increases in expenditure on Children Order cases (Figure 4.21; Table A6). Expenditure on Representation Lower Children Order cases increased by 28% (£832,728) between 2020/21 and 2021/22; and by 38% (£1,426,075) between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Expenditure on Representation Lower Family Homes Domestic Violence cases has also been on an increasing trend, increasing by 18% (£177,780) between 2020/21 and 2021/22; and by 4% (£49,806) between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Expenditure on Representation Lower parole and miscellaneous* cases both saw decreases over the year to 2021/22; with parole expenditure decreasing by 6% (£17,970) and miscellaneous expenditure decreasing by 25% (£31,608).

Figure 4.21: Representation Lower expenditure by Primary Nature, 2020/2021 – 2022/2023



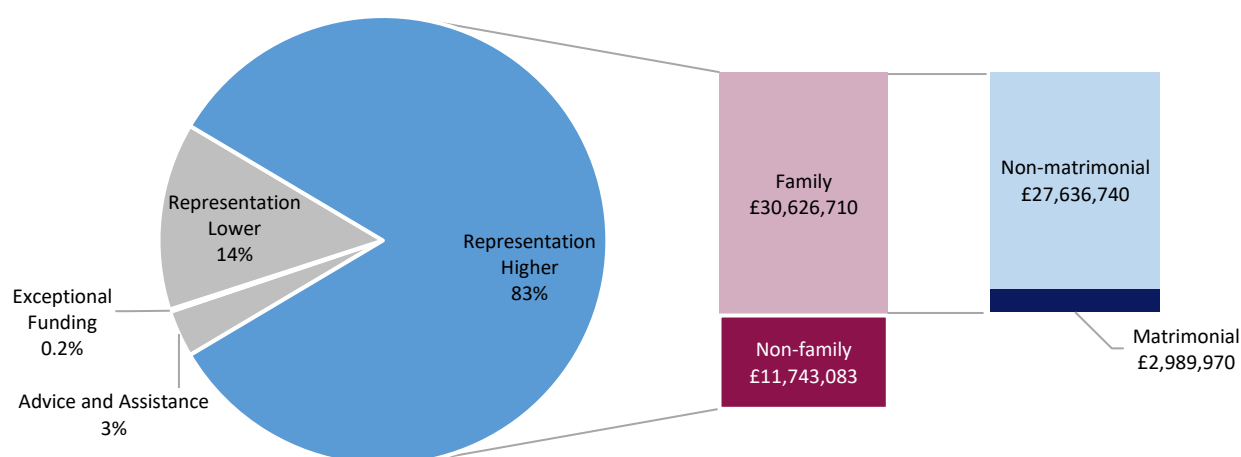
* Includes Tribunal, Quasi criminal and Maintenance.

4.2.3 Representation Higher

Although Representation Higher cases accounted for 35% of all civil granted applications in 2022/23 (Figure 4.9), they accounted for a larger proportion of the expenditure, at **83% (£42,369,792)** of civil legal aid expenditure in this year (Figure 4.22; Table A4).

Almost three quarters (72%; £30,626,710) of Representation Higher authorised expenditure in 2022/23 was in relation to family cases; with the remaining 28% (£11,743,083) relating to non-family cases. In terms of Representation Higher family expenditure, the majority (90%; £27,636,740) was in relation to non-matrimonial cases, while 10% (£2,989,970) was in relation to matrimonial cases.

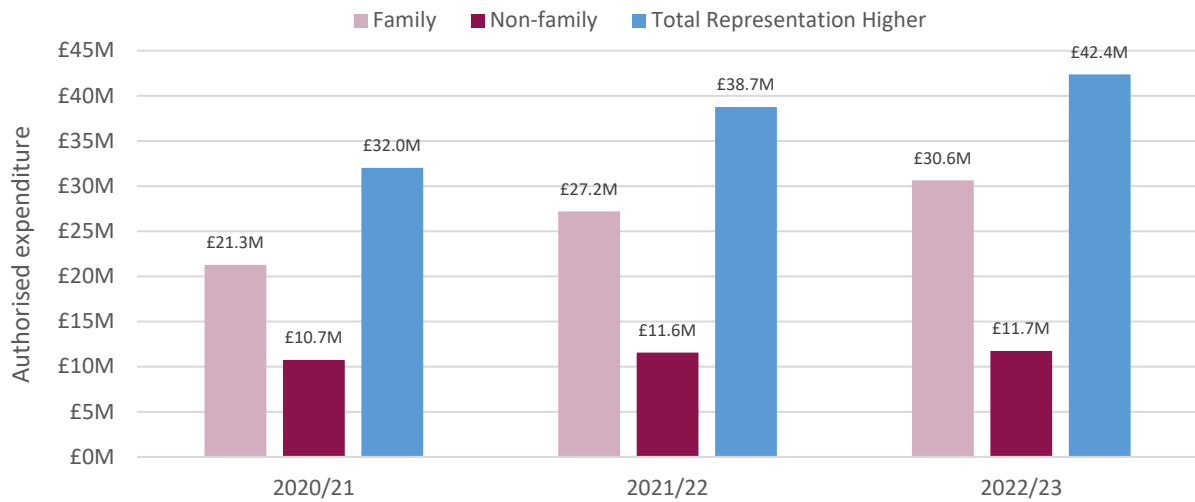
Figure 4.22: Civil authorised expenditure by Category of Service, 2022/23



Annual Representation Higher Authorised Expenditure

Expenditure on Representation Higher cases has been on a continually increasing trend between 2020/21 and 2022/23 when considering the total annual expenditure (Figure 4.23; Table A4). Expenditure on Representation Higher cases increased by almost a third (32%; £10,363,370) between 2020/21 and 2022/23. This was largely driven by increases in expenditure on family cases, which has increased by 44% (£9,359,179) from 2020/21 to 2022/23. Annual Representation Higher expenditure on non-family cases has remained relatively consistent over the past three years, particularly in 2021/22 (£11,560,433) and 2022/23 (£11,743,083).

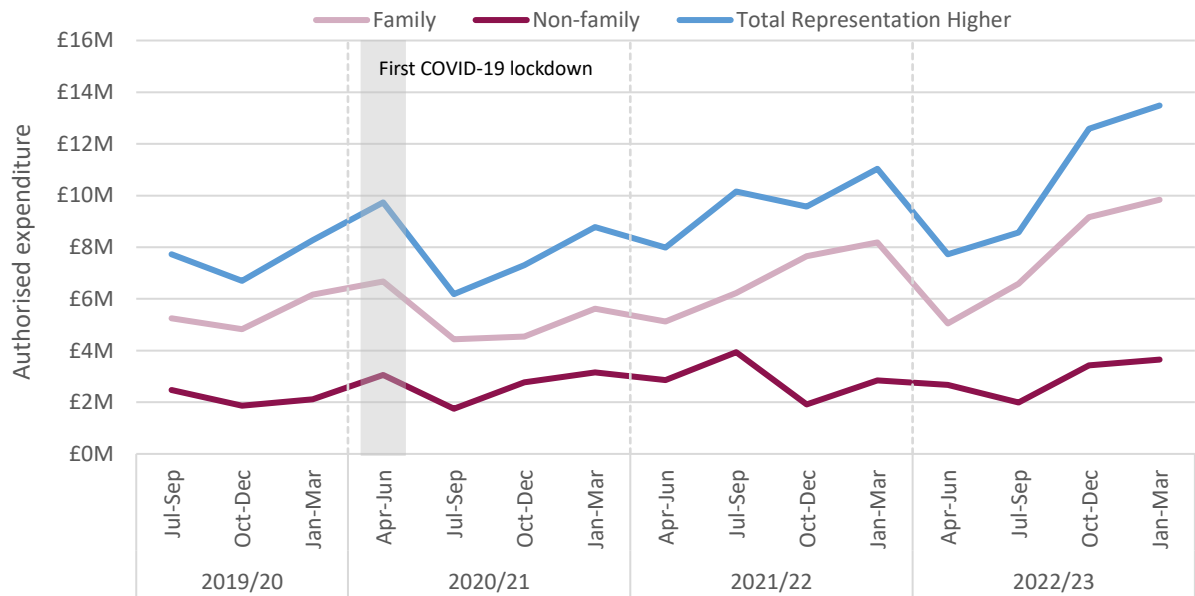
Figure 4.23: Annual Representation Higher legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2022/23



Quarterly Representation Higher Authorised Expenditure

Overall, Representation Higher expenditure has been on an increasing trend between Q2 2019/20 and Q4 2022/23 (Figure 4.24; Table A5), with the series high recorded in the most recent quarter (£13,483,706; Q4 2022/23). There has been an increase of 22% (£2,454,955) in Representation Higher expenditure between Q4 2021/22 and Q4 2022/23 – this has been largely driven by increases in family expenditure over this time period (+20%; +£1,658,390).

Figure 4.24: Quarterly Representation Higher legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



For presentational purposes, the four Representation Higher Children Order primary natures have been grouped into one category, and various primary natures with relatively small expenditure (Parole, Maintenance, Land/property, Quasi criminal, Debt/ejectment, Family Homes Domestic Violence and Asylum & Immigration) have been grouped into a ‘Miscellaneous’ category in the following section. A full breakdown of expenditure by primary natures is available in Table A6.

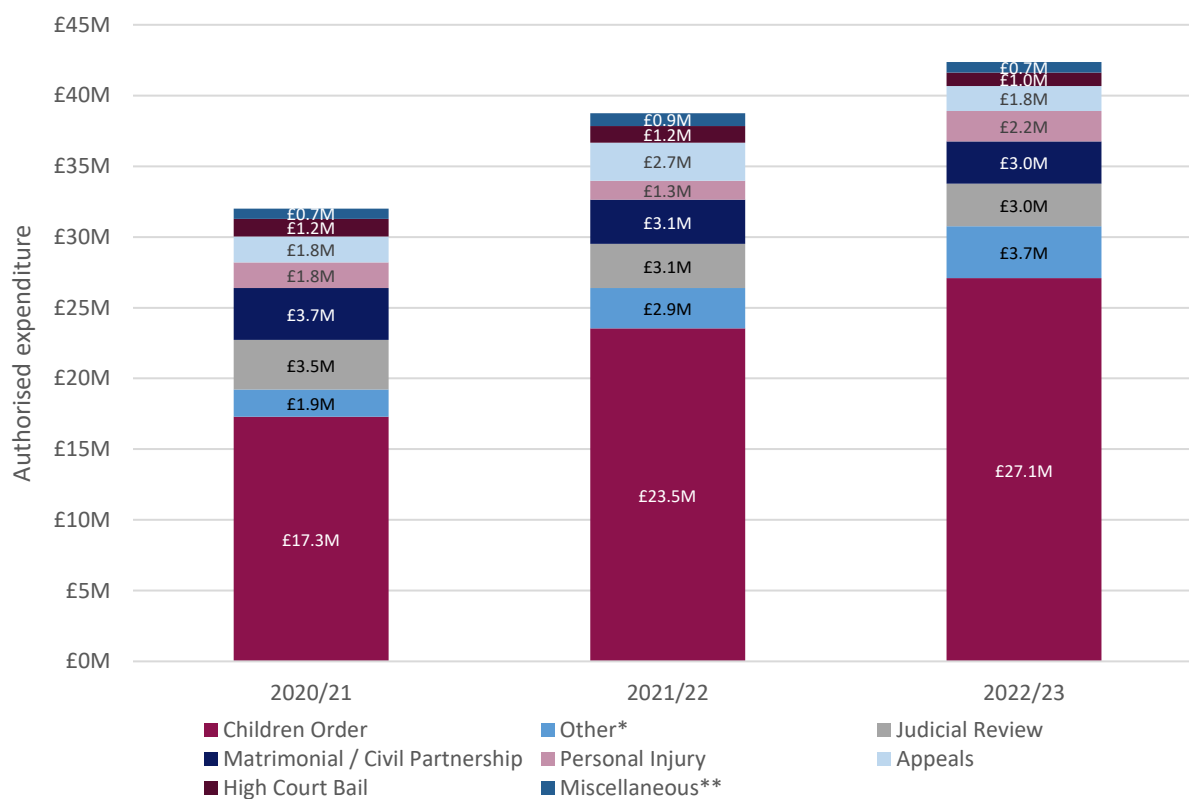
While around one third (32%) of Representation Higher applications granted in 2022/23 were in relation to Children Order cases (Figure 4.12), these cases accounted for almost two thirds (64%; £27,090,802) of the total Representation Higher legal aid expenditure in 2022/23 (Figure 4.25; Table A6).

Expenditure on Children Order cases increased year on year from 2020/21 to 2022/23, and was 57% (£9,794,432) higher in 2022/23 than in 2020/21. Expenditure on Other* Representation Higher cases has also been on a continually increasing trend, and was 92% (£1,749,922) higher in 2022/23 than in 2020/21.

Expenditure on both Representation Higher Judicial Reviews and Matrimonial/Civil Partnership cases has been on a continually decreasing trend from 2020/21 to 2022/23.

While High Court Bail accounted for almost a quarter (23%) of Representation Higher applications granted in 2022/23 (Figure 4.12), these case types accounted for only 2% (£959,133) of the Representation Higher legal aid expenditure in 2022/23.

Figure 4.25: Representation Higher expenditure by Primary Nature, 2020/2021 – 2022/2023



*Includes matters such as injunctions and breach of order/contract.

**Includes: Parole; Maintenance; Land/property; Quasi criminal; Debt/ejectment; Family Homes Domestic Violence; and Asylum & Immigration

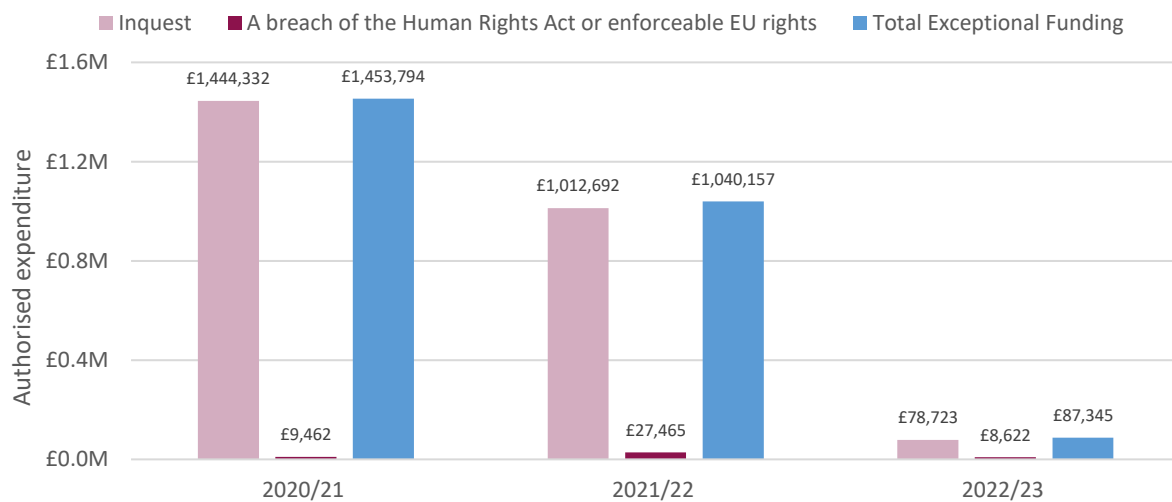
4.2.4 Exceptional Funding

Exceptional Funding accounted for 0.2% of civil applications granted in 2022/23 (Section 4.1.4) and also represented **0.2% (£87,345)** of the civil legal aid expenditure for 2022/23. The vast majority (90%; £78,723) of Exceptional Funding expenditure in 2022/23 was related to inquests, while the remaining 10% (£8,622) was in relation to A breach of the Human Rights Act or enforceable EU rights.

Annual Exceptional Funding Authorised Expenditure

Annual Exceptional Funding authorised expenditure has seen two consecutive years of decrease from 2020/21 to 2022/23 (Figure 4.26). The decrease of 92% (£952,811) between 2021/22 and 2022/23 can be attributed to a large recoupment of legal aid funds following settlement of legacy inquest cases.

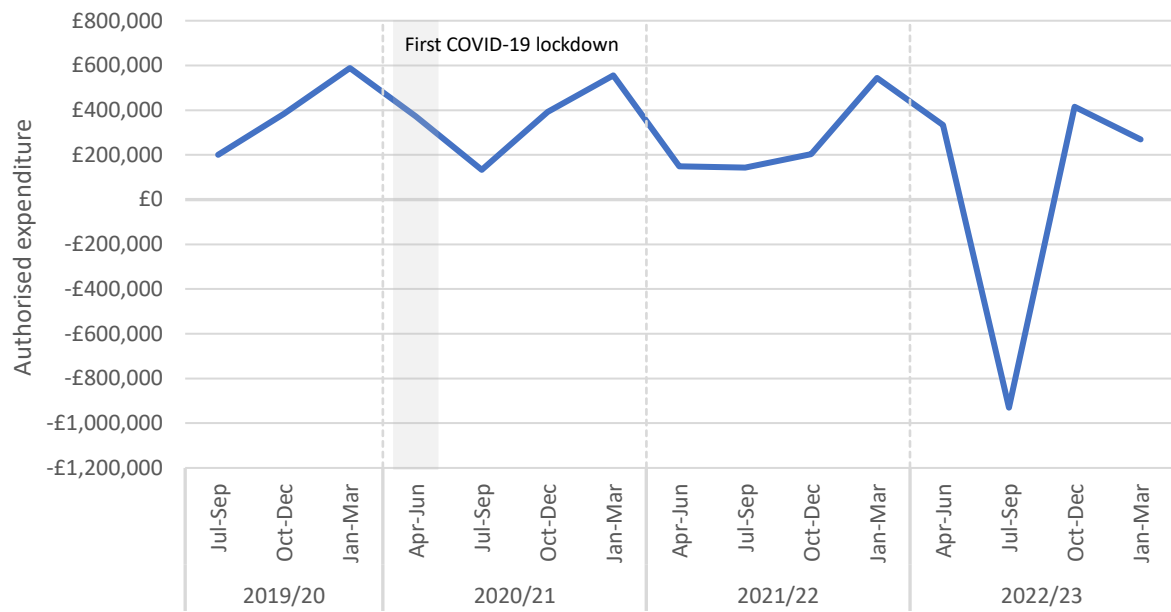
Figure 4.26: Annual Exceptional Funding legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2022/23



Quarterly Exceptional Funding Authorised Expenditure

Exceptional Funding authorised expenditure showed a seasonal pattern between 2019/20 and 2021/22, with expenditure experiencing two consecutive quarters of growth between quarters two and four in each of the three years (Figure 4.27). Exceptional Funding authorised expenditure in 2022/23 was affected by a large recoupment of legal aid funds following settlement of legacy inquest cases.

Figure 4.27: Quarterly Exceptional Funding legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



4.3 Children Order cases, Public v Private Law

Representation Lower and Representation Higher Children Order cases can be further broken down into public and private law. Public law applications are those brought by local authorities and include matters such as care, supervision and emergency protection orders. Private law applications are those brought by private individuals, generally in connection with divorce or the parents' separation. This section of the report details current levels and historical trends in public and private Children Order granted applications and expenditure.

It should be noted that there are a small number of Children Order cases within the Advice and Assistance scheme, however it is not possible to determine whether these are public or private cases. Therefore, these cases have been excluded from this section of the report. For information, there were 296 Advice and Assistance Children Order applications granted in 2022/23, and a total expenditure of £12,240 on these case types in 2022/23.

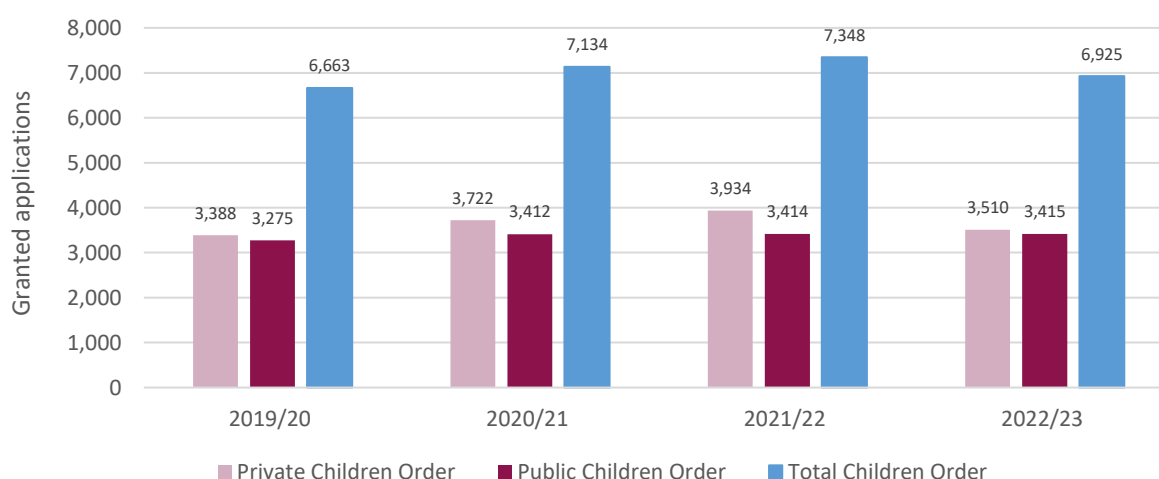
4.3.1 Children Order Applications Granted

Annual Children Order Applications Granted

The total number of Children Order applications granted was on a gradually increasing trend from 2019/20 to 2021/22; however the number of Children Order applications granted decreased by 6% (423) over the year to 2022/23 (Figure 4.28; Table A7). This decrease was driven by a decline in private Children Order applications granted (-11%; -424) between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Throughout the time period 2019/20 to 2022/23, there was a fairly even split of private and public Children Order applications granted. In 2022/23, 51% (3,510) of Children Order applications granted were in relation to private cases; with 49% (3,415) representing public cases.

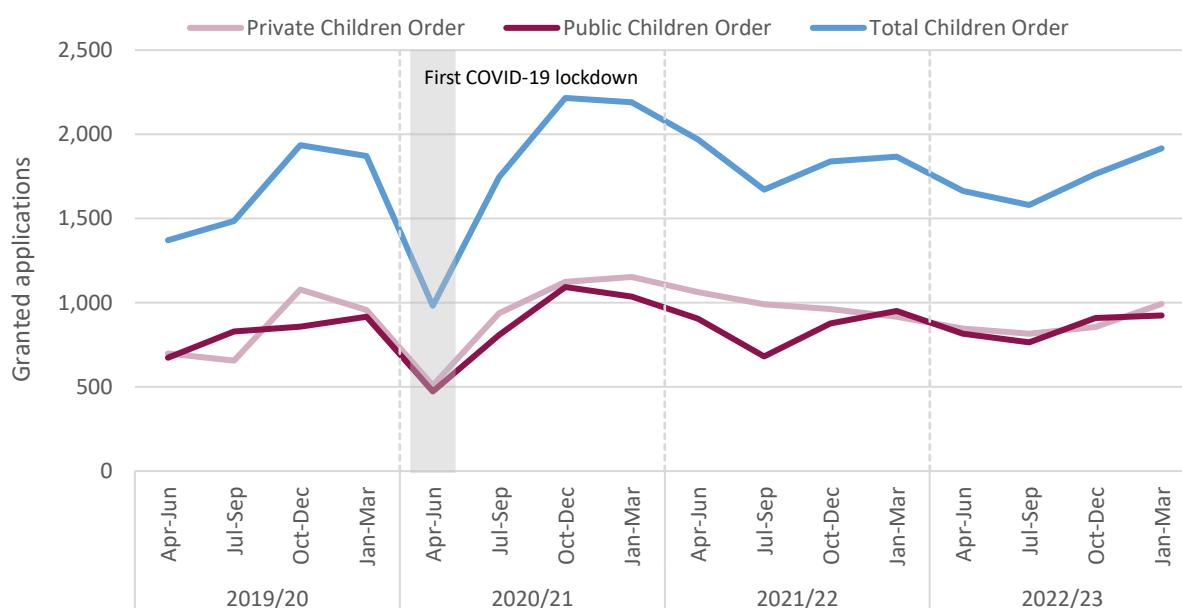
Figure 4.28: Annual Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order applications granted by public/private split, 2019/20 – 2022/23



Quarterly Children Order Applications Granted

Children Order applications granted reached a series low of 982 in Q1 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 4.29; Table A8). Children Order applications granted had surpassed pre-COVID levels by Q3 2020/21, reaching a series high of 2,216 in this quarter. Following the high in Q3 2020/21, Children Order applications granted recorded three consecutive quarters of decline to Q2 2021/22, primarily driven by decreases in public Children Order matters. Children Order applications granted have seen increases in recent quarters, with two consecutive quarters of increase recorded from Q2 to Q4 2022/23. Both the public and private Children Order series have followed very similar trends throughout 2019/20 to 2022/23.

Figure 4.29: Quarterly Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order applications granted by public/private split, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



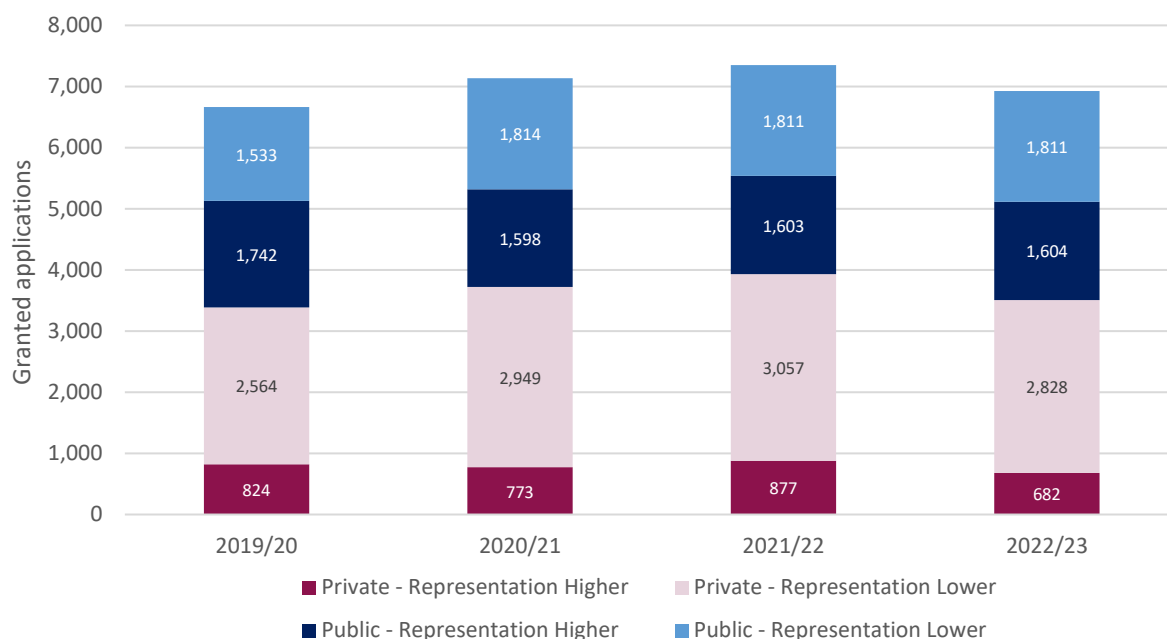
Children Order Applications Granted by Category of Service

The largest proportion of Children Order applications granted in each year between 2019/20 and 2022/23 was in relation to Private Representation Lower Children Order cases (Figure 4.30; Table A7). In 2022/23, these applications accounted for 41% (2,828) of all Children Order applications granted.

Private Representation Lower Children Order applications granted had been on a gradually increasing trend between 2019/20 and 2021/22; but saw a 7% (229) decrease over the year to 2022/23. Private Representation Higher Children Order applications granted also saw a decrease over the year to 2022/23 (-22%; -195).

The numbers of annual applications granted in relation to both public Representation Higher and public Representation Lower cases have remained virtually unchanged in the latest three years.

Figure 4.30: Annual Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order applications granted by Category of Service, 2019/20 – 2022/23



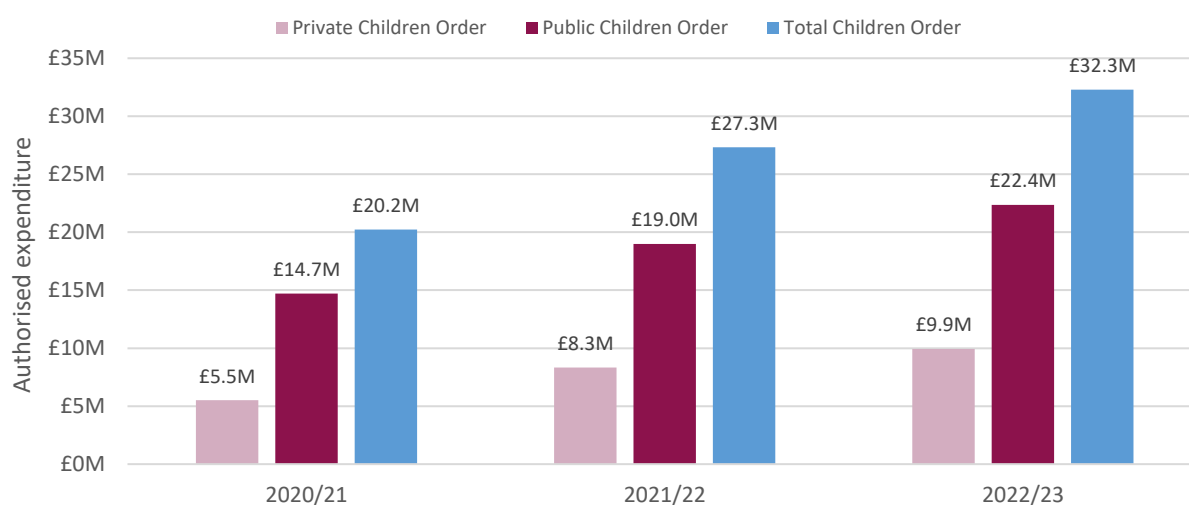
4.3.2 Children Order Authorised Expenditure

Annual Children Order Authorised Expenditure

While total Children Order applications granted have been fairly evenly split between public and private Children Order applications in recent years (Figure 4.28), the majority of Children Order expenditure from 2020/21 to 2022/23 was in relation to public Children Order cases. Public Children Order expenditure represented over two thirds (69%; £22,363,427) of the total Children Order expenditure in 2022/23 (Figure 4.31; Table A9).

Expenditure on both public and private Children Order cases has seen two consecutive years of increase between 2020/21 and 2022/23.

Figure 4.31: Annual Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order authorised expenditure by public/private split, 2020/21 – 2022/23



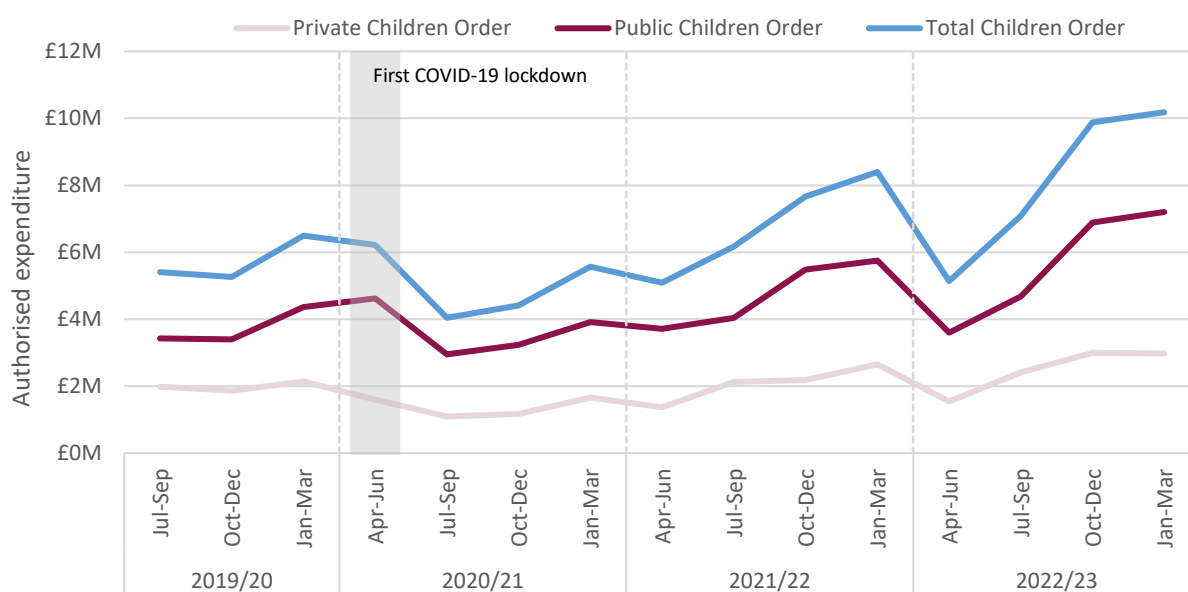
Quarterly Children Order Authorised Expenditure

Quarterly Children Order expenditure reached a series low in Q2 2020/21 (£4,041,649) before displaying a generally increasing trend from this point to a series high in Q4 2022/23 (£10,179,995; Figure 4.32; Table A10).

Total Children Order expenditure in Q4 2022/23 was 21% (£1,780,809) higher than the same quarter in the previous year (£8,399,186; Q4 2021/22), and 57% (£3,687,353) higher than in Q4 2019/20 (£6,492,642).

Both public and private Children Order expenditure have followed similar trends throughout the time series; however, the overall increase in the latest quarter has been driven by an increase in public Children Order expenditure.

Figure 4.32: Quarterly Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order authorised expenditure by public/private split, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2022/23



Children Order Authorised Expenditure by Category of Service

While private Representation Lower Children Order cases accounted for 41% of all Children Order applications granted in 2022/23 (Figure 4.30), they accounted for a much smaller proportion of the expenditure, at 10% (£3,285,668) of the 2022/23 Children Order expenditure (Figure 4.33; Table A9).

Public Representation Higher Children Order cases accounted for the majority of Children Order expenditure in each year between 2020/21 and 2022/23. This category accounted for almost two thirds (63%; £20,451,946) of 2022/23 Children Order expenditure; whereas it represented around a quarter (23%) of applications granted in this year (Figure 4.30).

Private Representation Higher Children Order cases accounted for around a fifth (21%; £6,638,856) of 2022/23 Children Order expenditure; while Public Representation Lower cases accounted for the smallest proportion of Children Order expenditure, at 6% (£1,911,481) of 2022/23 Children Order expenditure.

Figure 4.33: Annual Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order authorised expenditure by Category of Service, 2020/21 – 2022/23



5. ASSISTED PERSONS, 2022/23

This section provides an overview of the characteristics of applicants to whom legal aid was granted in 2022/23, either by the Courts or the Agency, with a focus on age, gender and geographic location.

The figures in this section are derived from personal information recorded as part of the formal application process. In cases where such information is unknown or not available, they have been excluded from the respective analyses.

As legal aid is awarded and administered on a case-level basis, it is not possible to examine applications on an individual (person) basis. If the same individual is granted legal aid on multiple occasions within the reporting period, their characteristics will feature several times within the data.

5.1 Age and Gender of Assisted Persons

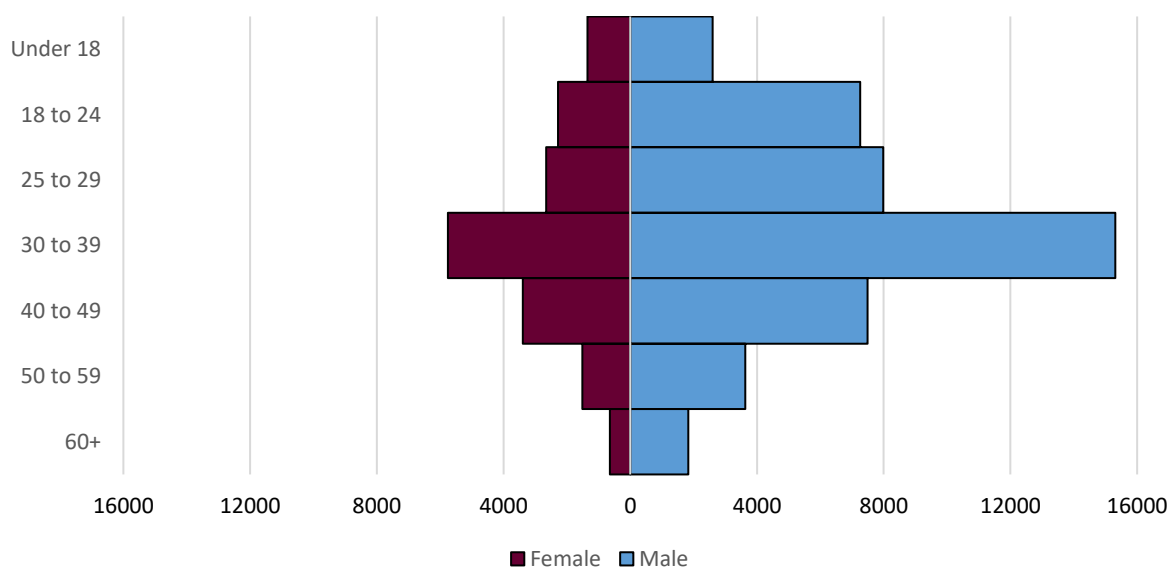
In 2022/23, there were 287 legal aid cases granted where the gender and/or age (at date of application) of the assisted person is unknown. These cases have been excluded from the following analyses, which is therefore based on a total of 63,604 granted applications.

It is evident from Figure 5.1 and Table A11 that legal aid is more likely to be granted to a male recipient than a female. In 2022/23, just over a quarter (28%; 17,668) of all applications were granted to females, compared with 72% to males (46,239).

For both genders, the age band with the highest volume of granted applications was 30-39 years, accounting for a third (33%) of both female and male applications granted in 2022/23.

For male applications granted, 25-29 year olds accounted for the second highest number of applications granted (7,983; 17%), while for female applications the second highest number of applications granted was in relation to 40-49 year olds (3,386; 19%).

Figure 5.1: Applications granted by age and gender, 2022/23



When these figures are standardised using the latest Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates of each group, it is apparent that 25 to 39-year-olds (and particularly those within the 25 to 29 age band), are more likely to utilize legal aid regardless of gender. For example, males aged 25-29 display an overall rate of 138.0 grants per 1,000 population, followed closely by males aged 30 to 39 (124.6 grants per 1,000 population). Among females, these rates fall by around two-thirds to 46.3 and 44.0 respectively (Table A11).

During 2022/23, the legal aid grant rate per 1,000 population was almost three times higher for males (49.2 grants per 1,000 population) than females (18.2 per 1,000 population). Despite displaying similar grant rates for civil cases (10.9 and 10.2 respectively), males were almost five times more likely to be the recipient of legal aid in criminal cases (38.3 v 8.0). This contrast is exemplified among assisted persons aged 60+ where males displayed a grant rate over six times higher than that of their female counterparts (6.2 per 1,000 population compared with 1.0 per 1,000; Table A11).

At 110.9 grants per 1,000 population, the highest grant rate observed in 2022/23 was among males aged 25 to 29 in criminal cases. This compares with an equivalent rate for females of 20.4 per 1,000 (Table A11).

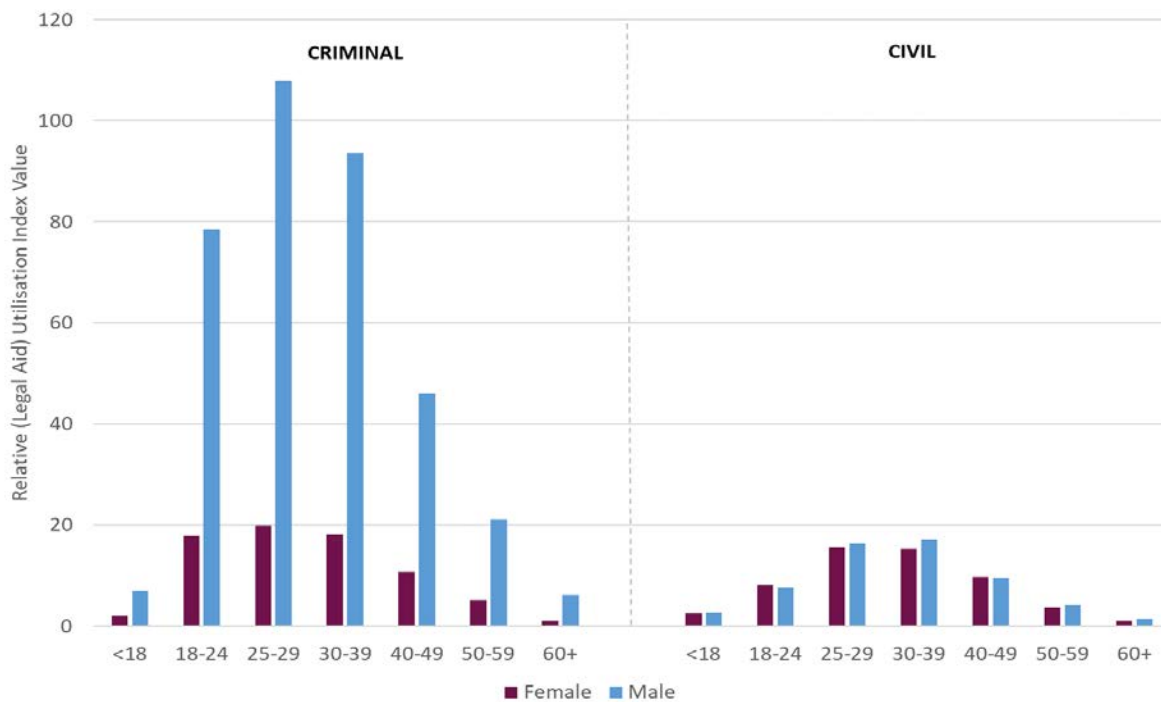
The relationship between age and gender in the uptake of legal aid can also be examined and presented using a relative index. In this analysis, index values have been calculated by dividing the volume of granted applications to each age-gender group by the equivalent mid-year population estimate. These scores are then divided by the reference group with the lowest utilisation - in this case females aged 60+, meaning the weight for this group is set to 1.

These index values show that a male aged 25-29 is 51.5 times more likely than a female aged 60+ to use legal aid, while a female aged 25-29 is 17.2 times more likely. These groups are followed closely by those aged 30-39 for both males (46.3) and females (16.4; Table A11).

While the level of legal aid uptake is similar for males and females across all age groups in regard to civil matters, the gender difference becomes apparent within criminal proceedings, where the granting of legal aid is multiple times more likely to be to a male across all age bands.

This trend is visualized in Figure 5.2 where the relative index values are broken into criminal and civil distributions. While males and females aged 25-29 display similar index values equating to being 16.3 times and 15.6 times (respectively) more likely to avail of civil legal aid than females aged 60+ are, these scores change drastically to 107.9 versus 19.8 to contrast the gender difference when it comes to criminal legal aid (Figure 5.2 and Table A11).

Figure 5.2: Relative (legal aid) utilisation index values by age-gender bands, 2022/23



As civil legal aid is dominated by family matters, it is perhaps to be expected that these particular (middle) age groups display the higher indexes as the presence of children are a core component within these cases. This also explains the similar uptake rates across both males and females who are both likely to be opponents in the one case.

Likewise, the distinct gender contrast in the award of criminal legal aid is reflective of Northern Ireland’s [Public Prosecution Service \(PPSNI\) figures](#) for the same reporting year. PPSNI annual statistics 2022/23 show that over three in four (77%) suspects on files received were recorded as male, with the largest proportion of suspects (30%), regardless of gender, within the 26-35 age category and 71% between the ages of 18 and 45. These figures are consistent with the granting of criminal legal aid to fund the defence.

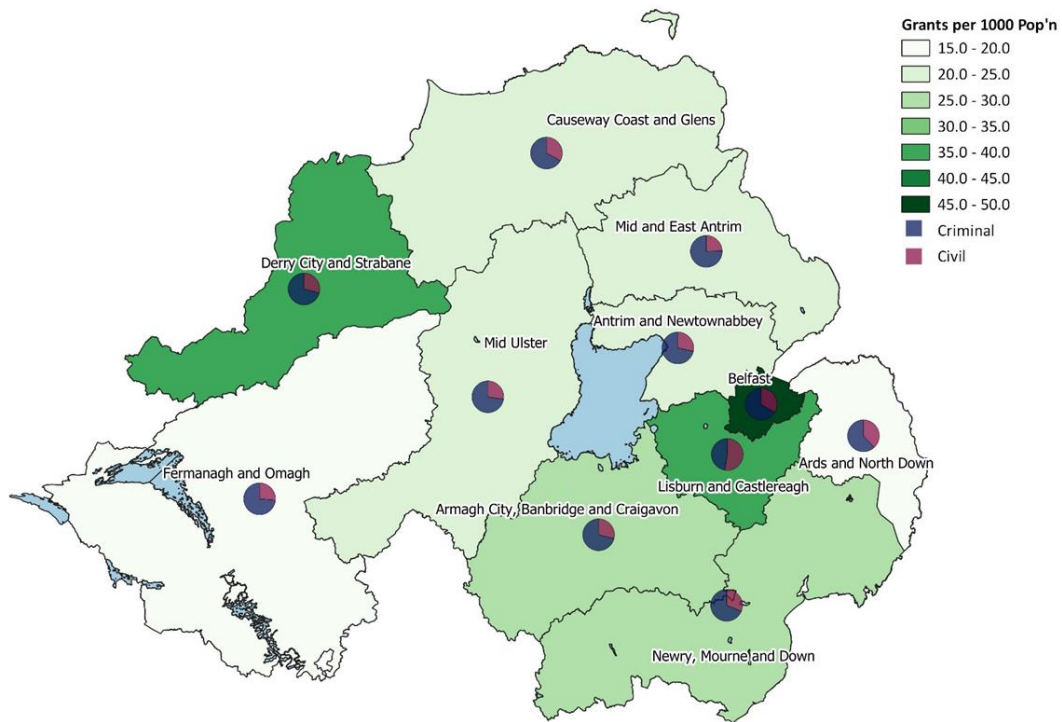
5.2 Geographic Location of Assisted Persons

Northern Ireland is comprised of 11 Council Areas, formally referred to as Local Government Districts (LGDs). Where a valid postcode has been provided as part of the application process, this has been used to assign a LGD (council area).

From Table A12 it is apparent that, in 2022/23, the greatest volume of legal aid applications were granted to applicants in the Belfast LGD. At 17,010, Belfast displayed almost three times that of the second highest district (Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon; 5,721).

However, once standardised by the resident population of each LGD (to produce comparable statistics), the picture changes with Belfast still displaying the highest rate of grants (of 48.9 grants per 1,000 population), but at a rate that is one-third higher than both Derry City & Strabane (36.9) and Lisburn & Castlereagh (36.6; Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Applications granted per 1,000 population, by Local Government District, 2022/23



In terms of criminal cases, Belfast displays the highest rate of grants at 32.5 per 1,000 population. This is almost 50% higher than the Northern Ireland average (22.9) and compares with the second highest rate of 26.2 in Derry City and Strabane. However, when it comes to civil legal aid, Lisburn & Castlereagh LGD displays the highest rate at 19.2 per 1,000 population, with Belfast second highest at 16.4 per 1,000.

Not only does Lisburn & Castlereagh display the highest rate of civil grants per 1,000 population across NI (19.2), and a rate that is almost double the NI average (10.6), but interestingly, it is also the only council area in Northern Ireland where civil grants exceeded criminal grants in 2022/23 (Figure 5.3 and Table A12). While the rate of criminal grants is comparable with other regions, it is the particularly high rate of civil grants to applicants within this LGD that causes this distortion. This is driven by the unique make-up of the local resident population that incorporates both HM Prison Maghaberry and Hydebank Young Offenders Centre. Of the 2,871 civil applications granted to those in the Lisburn & Castlereagh LGD, over 70% were granted to applicants registered in these establishments in 2022/23. It has been estimated that removing these cases from the analysis would generate an equivalent civil grant rate at around half the NI average and result in around three-quarters of all grants in this council area being of a criminal nature.

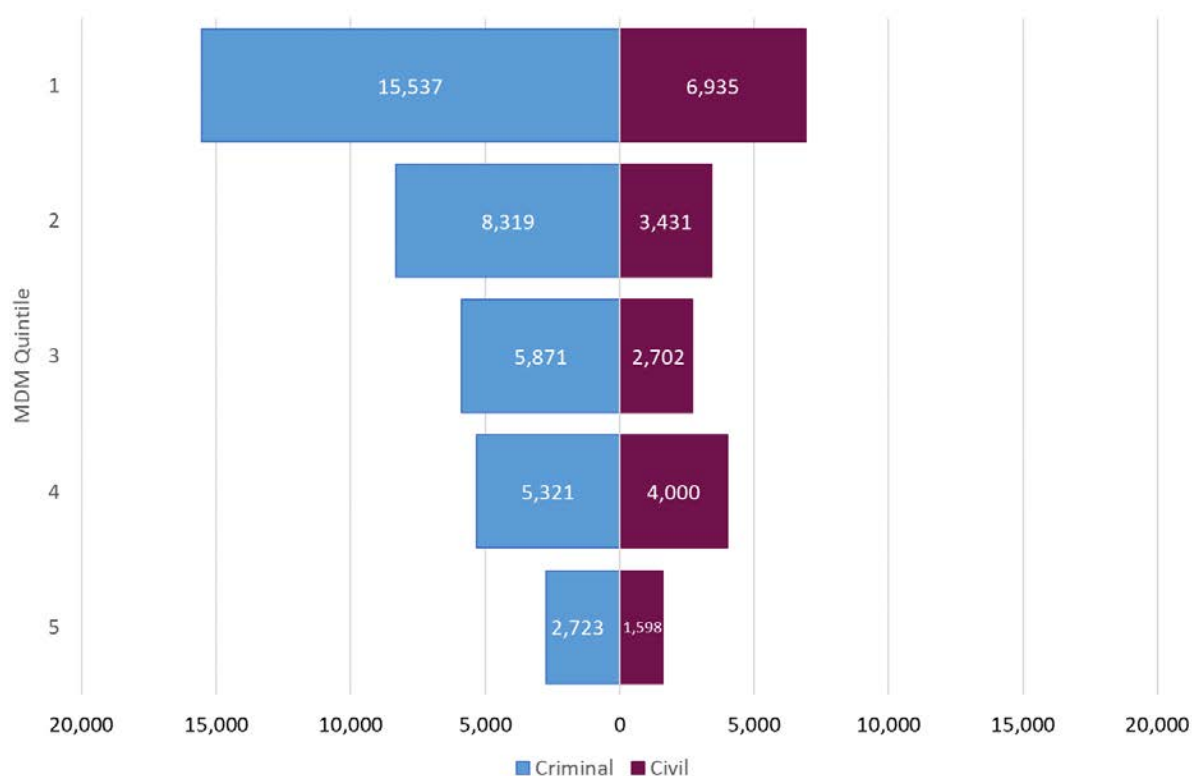
Finally, the legal aid grant rate is lowest for applicants living in Ards and North Down (12.0 per 1,000 population) for criminal cases and in Fermanagh and Omagh (4.9 per 1,000) for civil cases (Table A12).

5.3 Grants by area of deprivation

As financial eligibility is a key factor in assessing an applicant’s entitlement to legal aid, it is to be expected that grants would correlate with an area’s level of deprivation.

As depicted in Figure 5.4, grants of legal aid during 2022/23 were highest in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland (MDM Quintile 1), for both criminal and civil cases (Table A13). Similarly, they were at their lowest in least deprived areas (MDM Quintile 5). Overall, grants show a linear trend whereby the number of grants decrease as the level of deprivation falls. This is particularly evident in criminal cases, with civil grants displaying a slight distortion in Quintile 4, which may be a reflection of the specific nature of civil cases and also the influence of the HM Prison Maghaberry within this quintile.

Figure 5.4: Applications granted by multiple deprivation, 2022/23



6. PROVIDERS OF LEGAL AID SERVICES, 2019/20 TO 2022/23

This section explores the distribution of legal aid services throughout Northern Ireland by registered providers mostly consisting of legal practitioners. Insight into registrations over time as well as geographical location of solicitor firms with attributed legal aid expenditure is presented to the year ending March 2023.

Legal aid services in Northern Ireland are delivered to assisted persons through three main providers who must first register with the agency and create an account on the Legal Aid Management System (LAMS):

- **Solicitors** – generally the first point of contact for legal aid applicants providing advice and legal representation in matters dealt with in the lower courts;
- **Barristers** – provide legal representation for applicants in the higher courts; and
- **Third Party Payees** – interpreting/translation related services paid directly by LSANI.

6.1 Registered Providers

6.1.1 Solicitor Firms

During 2022/23, there were **459** solicitor firms registered on LAMS to provide legal aid services. This represents a 4% increase from the pre-COVID position in 2019/20 when LAMS went live, but a 3% reduction in solicitor firms registered during 2021/22. However, the total number of solicitor firms receiving payment during 2022/23 remained unchanged from the previous year at **410** (Figure 6.1; Table A14).

- Factoring in the Northern Ireland population of just over 1.9m, the number of firms registered in 2022/23 equates to 24 firms per 100,000 population.

Figure 6.1: Registered Solicitor Firms and Solicitor Firms receiving payment, 2019/20 to 2022/23

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Registered Solicitor Firms	443	455	472	459
Solicitor Firms receiving payment	393	398	410	410

6.1.2 Barristers

As can be seen in Figure 6.2 (Table A14), a total of **621** barristers registered during 2022/23 to provide legal services. While this equates to a 7% decrease compared with 2021/22 (667), it represents a 6% increase from the pre-COVID position in 2019/20 when LAMS registrations were first introduced.

- At 621 registrations, the rate of barristers providing legal aid services in Northern Ireland is 33 per 100,000 population.

The number of barristers receiving payment for legal services has remained relatively stable since 2020/21, with the latest figure for 2022/23 (**492**) showing a 9% increase since 2019/20 (453; Figure 6.2; Table A14).

Figure 6.2: Registered Barristers and Barristers receiving payment, 2019/20 to 2022/23

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Registered Barristers	585	632	667	621
Barristers receiving payment	453	488	495	492

6.1.3 Third Party Payees

With over 99% of registered providers being either solicitors or barristers, the numbers of third party payees are relatively low. These annual registrations for third party payees are presented in Figure 6.3 (Table A14).

Figure 6.3: Registered Third Party Payees and Third Party Payees receiving payment, 2019/20 to 2022/23

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Registered Third Party Payees	4	4	4	7
Third Party Payees receiving payment	3	4	4	6

6.2 Registered Solicitor Firms by Location

With solicitors being the first point of contact for legal aid applicants it is useful to consider the location of solicitor firms to help understand access to justice for the NI population. However, it should be noted that proximity of a residing population to a solicitor firm will provide a partial indication to how well an area is serviced for access to legal aid. Other factors such as proximity to court venue, number of solicitors per firm and area deprivation levels would need to be considered to get a fuller picture.

Figure 6.4 (Table A15) shows the number of solicitor firms registered during 2022/23 by Local Council area (LGD), number of firms per 100,000 population as well as average minimum distance to nearest solicitor firm.

Figure 6.4: Registered Solicitor Firms, Firms per 100,000 population and average minimum distance to nearest Firm by Local Government District (LGD), 2022/23

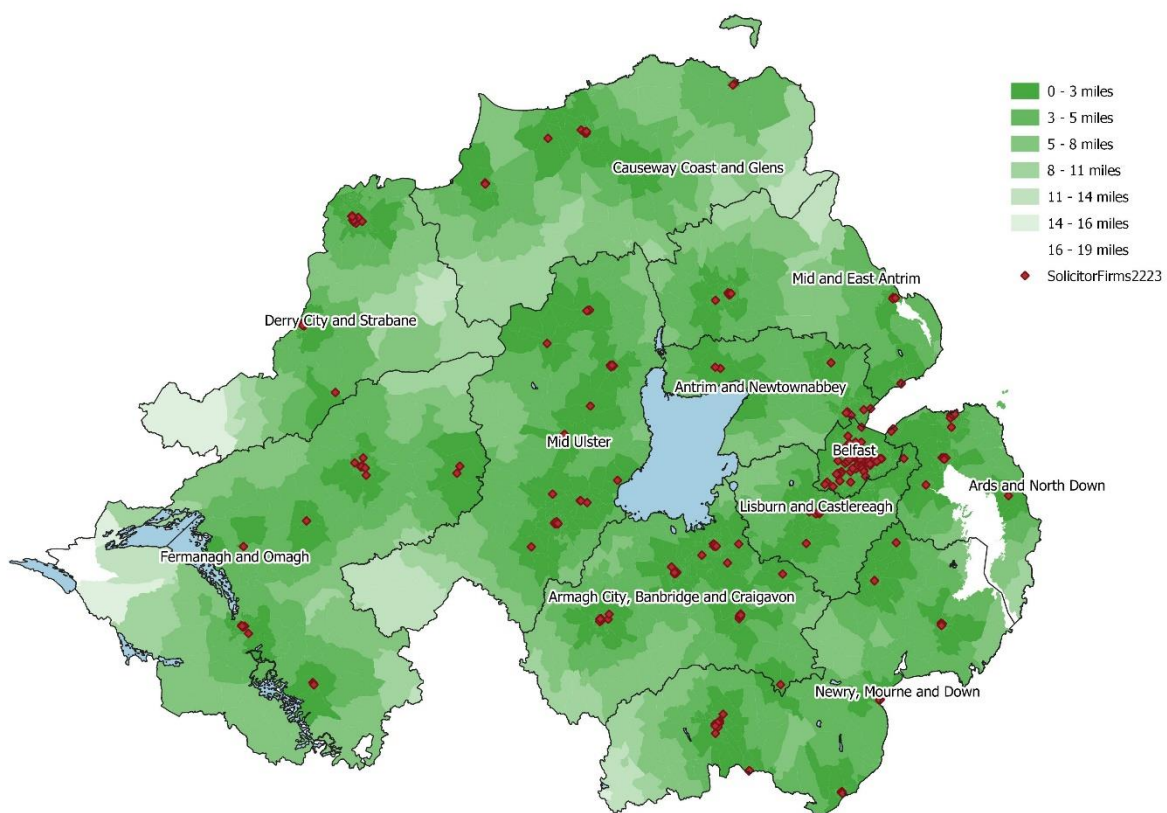
Local Government District (LGD)	Solicitor Firms	Solicitor Firms per 100,000 population	Average minimum distance to nearest Firm
Belfast	163	46.8	0.4
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	52	23.6	2.1
Newry, Mourne and Down	42	23.0	2.9
Fermanagh and Omagh	35	29.9	3.8
Mid Ulster	35	23.2	2.7
Derry City and Strabane	31	20.6	2.5
Causeway Coast and Glens	24	17.0	3.7
Ards and North Down	24	14.6	1.7
Mid and East Antrim	22	15.8	2.4
Lisburn and Castlereagh	16	10.7	1.8
Antrim and Newtownabbey	14	9.6	1.6
Outside NI	1	-	-
Total	459	24.0	2.1

Looking at the distribution of registered solicitor firms in 2022/23 across NI by Local Council area shows that the largest proportion (35%) is located in Belfast council area with 163 firms followed by 11% (52) in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon and 9% (42) in Newry, Mourne and Down. The lowest proportion of solicitor firms is in Antrim and Newtownabbey with 3% (14), with the next lowest being in Lisburn and Castlereagh, 3% (16).

Across Local Council areas Belfast shows the highest number of firms per 100,000 population with 46.8 followed by Fermanagh and Omagh with 29.9. The remaining 9 Local Council areas display a rate lower than the overall NI level (24.0). Antrim and Newtownabbey show the lowest levels with 9.6 firms per 100,000 population followed by Lisburn and Castlereagh with 10.7.

The NI average minimum distance to nearest solicitor firm is 2.1 miles. With Belfast having the largest urban population of all council areas it has the lowest average proximity with 0.4 miles. This is followed by Antrim and Newtownabbey and Ards and North Down with 1.6 miles and 1.7 miles respectively. The highest average proximity to solicitor firms can be seen in Fermanagh and Omagh with 3.8 miles which is to be expected, as it along with Mid Ulster, has the largest rural population. For illustrative purposes, Figure 6.5 presents a map of NI indicating the location of solicitor firms along with the population average proximity to nearest solicitor firm by the latest [Census Data Zones](#). In the map, the darker shading indicates areas having a closer average proximity to solicitor firms.

Figure 6.5: Registered Solicitor Firms and average minimum distance to nearest Solicitor Firm, 2022/23



6.3 Authorised Expenditure by Provider

Looking at overall authorised expenditure provides a fuller picture into legal aid cost to the public purse. However, it is worth noting that although the information in this section will present expenditure by provider type, that not all of the remuneration value will be for work carried out by the provider. Authorised expenditure can consist of:

Profit Costs – Professional fees paid to providers for the legal services they provide;

VAT – Value Added Tax added to the cost of the service delivered by the provider; and

Disbursements – Predominantly solicitor remuneration for payment made on behalf of their client for third party services e.g. Medical Expert Report.

Section 6.3.3 will separately present a breakdown of these costs by **provider** and **expenditure type**. By way of context, disbursements made to solicitor firms in 2022/23 totaled £9.3m, equating to 16% of total authorisations to solicitor firms.

6.3.1 Authorised Expenditure by Provider Type

Figure 6.6 (Table A16) presents the authorised expenditure by provider type for the last three complete financial years.

There has been a significant increase in expenditure to solicitor firms and barristers from 2020/21 to 2022/23 but this will largely be down to Covid recovery impact as detailed in previous sections. However, the 7% (£6.5m) increase in overall expenditure from 2021/22 to 2022/23 will relate to a real increasing demand for legal assistance. Interestingly, the proportion of expenditure by provider type has remained relatively stable across all three financial years with almost 60% attributed to solicitor firms and just over 40% to Barristers.

Figure 6.6: Authorised expenditure by Provider Type, 2020/21 to 2022/23

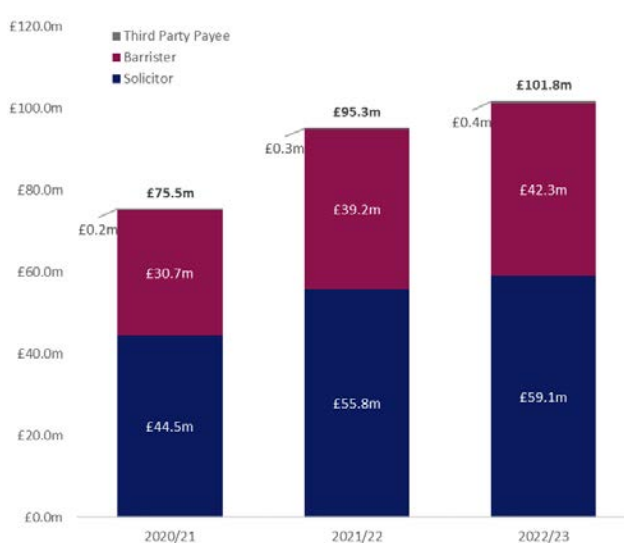
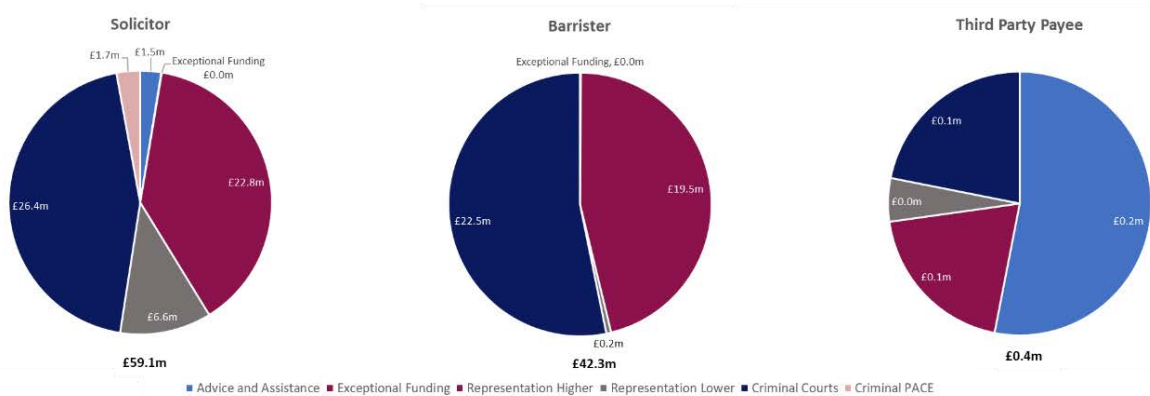


Figure 6.7 (Table A17) provides a further insight into the areas of legal assistance that each provider delivered in 2022/23. For solicitor firms and barristers, a majority of their authorised expenditure is related to activity in Criminal Courts and Representation Higher cases. With solicitors being the first

point of contact in all legal aid cases, just under a fifth of their total expenditure is attributed to Advice and Assistance, Criminal PACE and Representation Lower cases where counsel is unlikely to be required.

Figure 6.7: Authorised expenditure by Provider Type and Category of Service, 2022/23



6.3.2 Authorised Expenditure by Solicitor Firm Location 2022/23

Looking at authorised expenditure by geographical location of solicitor firms provides an additional insight into Legal Aid utilisation across Northern Ireland.

Figure 6.8 (Table A18) illustrates the proportionate distribution of 2022/23 expenditure by the Local Council Area of solicitor firms. With the largest proportion of registered solicitor firms, almost half of solicitor expenditure (£27.6m) went to firms in Belfast. This is followed by Derry City and Strabane £6.4m (11%), Newry, Mourne and Down £6.0m (10%) and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon £5.3m (9%). Solicitor firms in Lisburn and Castlereagh had the lowest expenditure with £1.1m (2%).

Figure 6.8 Distribution of authorised expenditure to Solicitor Firms by Local Government District, 2022/23

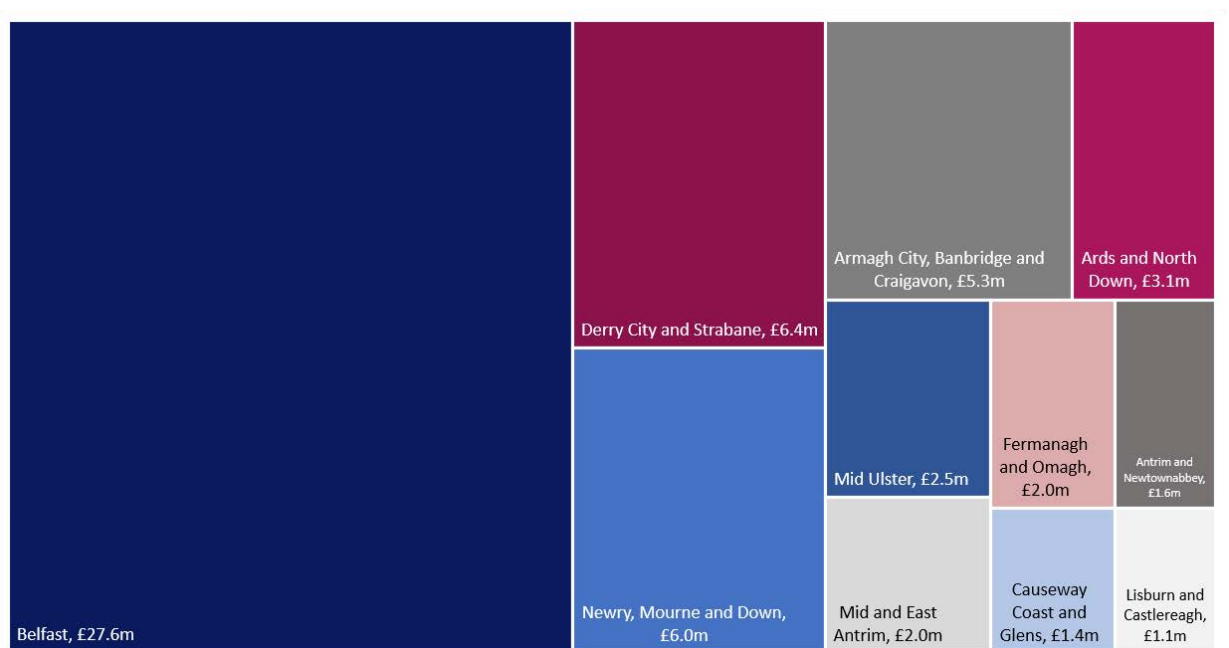
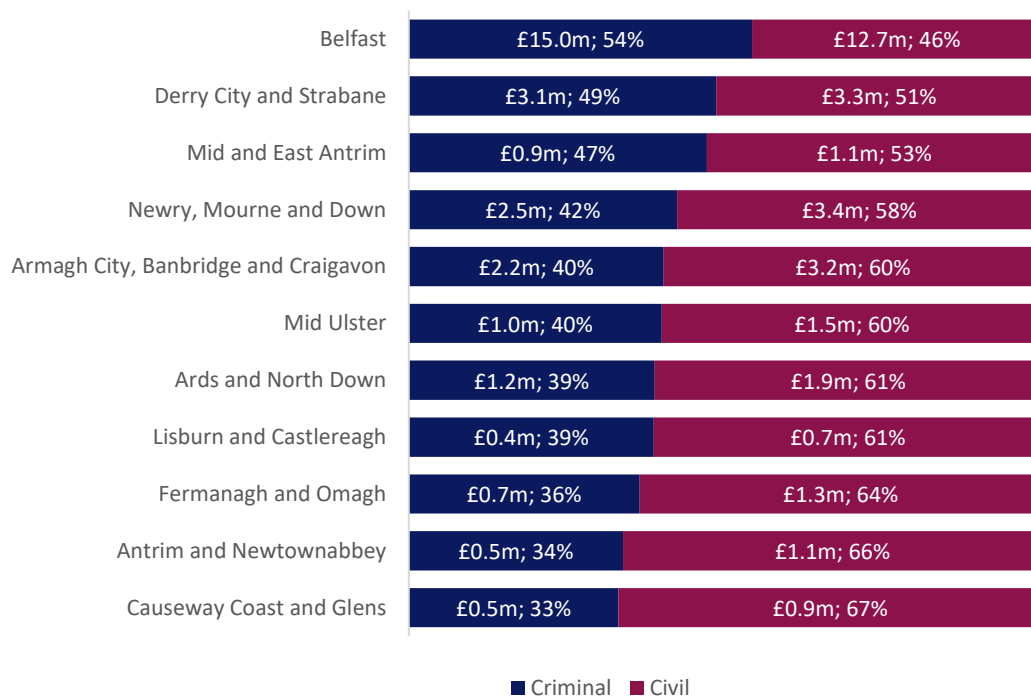


Figure 6.9 (Table A18) provides a further analysis of solicitor expenditure distribution within each local council area by criminal and civil groupings.

Belfast is the only area showing a higher proportion of criminal expenditure (54%) than civil expenditure. This is further compounded by [2022/23 PSNI recorded crime](#) rates being much higher in Belfast with just under one third (32%) of Northern Ireland recorded crime being attributed to Belfast City Policing Districts.

From Figure 6.9 a general pattern emerges across council areas in the proportion split between criminal and civil expenditure. While this is likely to reflect a range of factors it is apparent that the proportion of criminal expenditure tends to show an inverse correlation with levels of rurality. However, contrary to this, Antrim and Newtownabbey as well as Lisburn and Castlereagh areas present high proportions of civil expenditure with 66% and 61% respectively, despite their predominant urban populations. This can be explained by initial analysis which indicates that in both of these districts the majority of assisted person applications were granted to a firm in the Belfast council area.

Figure 6.9 Distribution of authorised expenditure to Solicitor Firms by Local Government District and Criminal/Civil proceedings, 2022/23

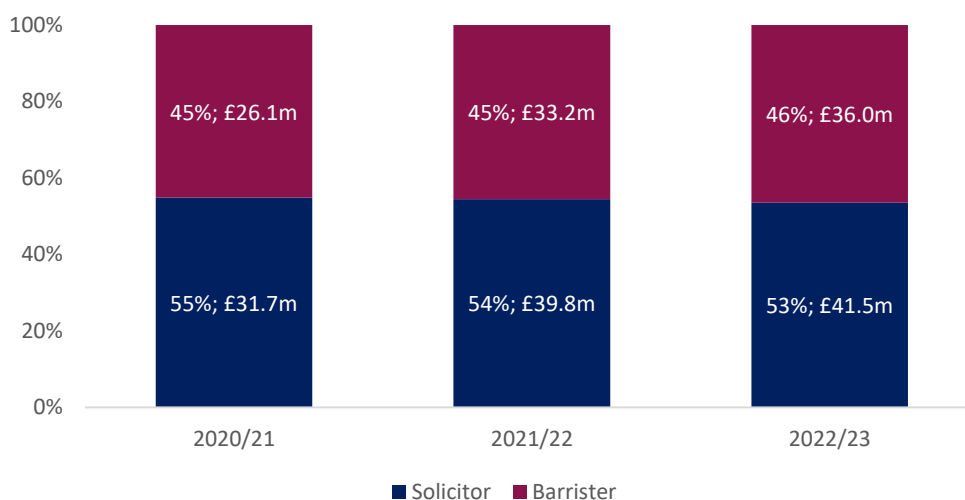


6.3.3 Authorised Expenditure by Provider and Expenditure Type

While expenditure in Section 6 has so far focused on overall expenditure to providers of legal aid, Table A19 disaggregates these amounts to a more granular level, to separate out profit costs, VAT and disbursements. This can provide a more accurate view on the amount of money that solicitor firms and barristers are paid to deliver legal aid, as opposed to the distribution of all costs associated with an entire case.

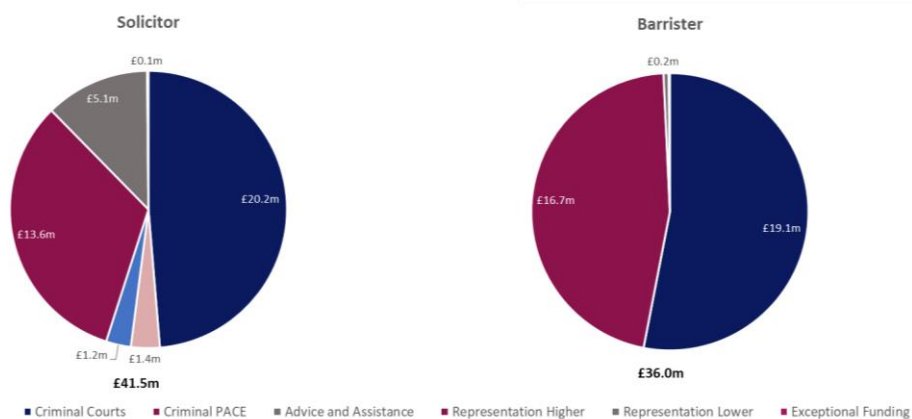
Figure 6.10 below looks at solicitor and barrister profit costs (excluding VAT) expenditure by financial year. From this, it is evident that once disbursements are excluded, the expenditure split between solicitor firms and barristers narrow. The figure shows that barristers received 45%-46% of profit cost expenditure whilst solicitors received 53%-55% across the three years.

Figure 6.10 Solicitor Firm and Barrister Profit Costs, 2020/21 to 2022/23



Breaking down these overall 2022/23 solicitor and barrister profit costs by category of service, as depicted in Figure 6.11, shows that expenditure from Criminal Courts and Representation Higher cases contribute 81% of solicitor profit costs and over 99% of barrister profit costs. This breakdown of overall authorised expenditure in 2022/23, by payment type and category of service, is detailed further in Table A20.

Figure 6.11 Solicitor Firm and Barrister Profit Costs, 2022/23



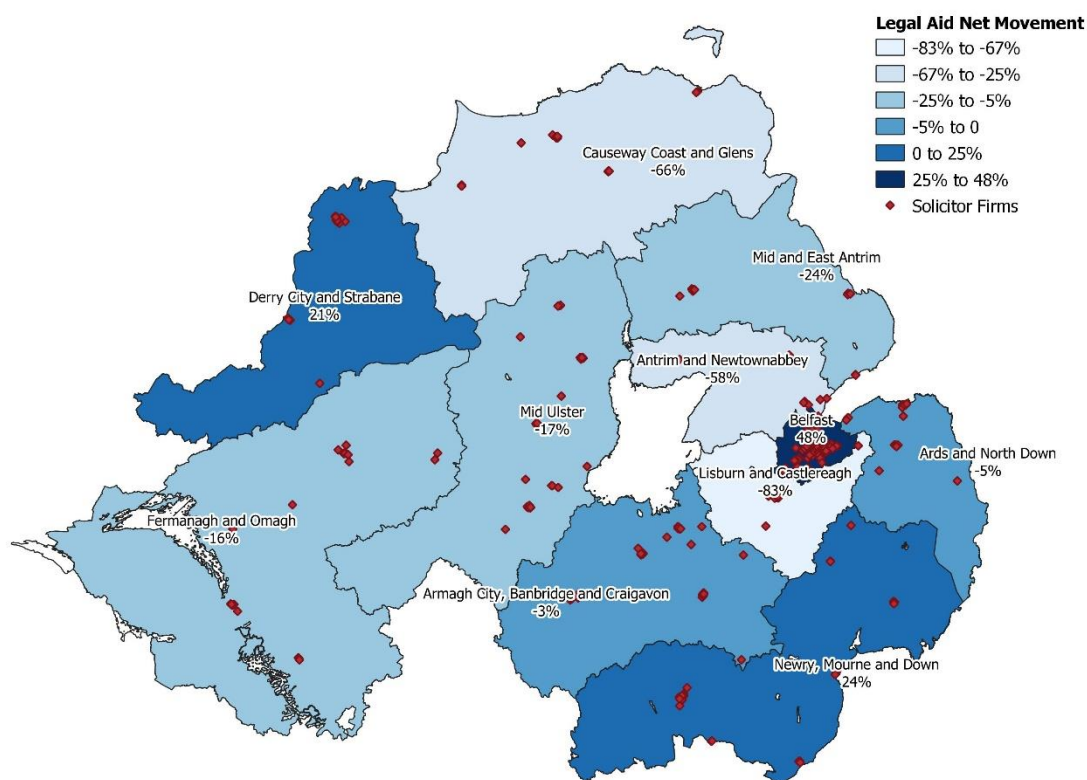
7. LEGAL AID MOVEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND, 2022/23

This section builds upon the previous two sections and provides a brief exploration into the observed geographical relationship between the council area in which the application is registered (Section 5) and that of the associated solicitor firm (Section 6) granted the legal aid certificate.

Access to legal aid services is transient by nature in that an assisted person is not restricted to use solicitor firms local to them. Table A21 details the number applications granted to individuals registered within each district council area alongside any subsequent movement (inward and outward) of applications where an assisted person availed of a solicitor firm outside of their registered council area.

Figure 7.1 illustrates the net movement of applications granted in 2022/23 where the darker shading highlights those council areas that experienced a positive net movement of legal aid work. From the map it can be seen that the Belfast area had the largest net increase with solicitor firms gaining almost 11,000 legal aid cases granted to applicants in other council areas. In contrast, Lisburn and Castlereagh showed the highest net decrease (-83%; -4,559) which is consistent with the findings in Section 6 in that a majority of assisted persons in this council area seek legal aid services from Belfast based solicitor firms.

Figure 7.1: Legal aid net movement across Local Government Districts, 2022/23



8. TABULAR ANNEX

Please see the LSANI website for the following tables in fully accessible format.

Table A1: Applications granted, 2019/20 to 2022/23

Category of Service	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Criminal Total	48,112	37,517	42,043	43,790
Criminal Courts	27,580	20,567	24,649	24,925
Crown Court	2,207	1,810	2,495	2,129
Magistrate's Court	23,912	17,893	20,838	21,252
Extradition	72	58	76	74
Criminal Court of Appeal	44	56	52	36
County Court Appeal	1,345	750	1,188	1,434
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	20,532	16,950	17,394	18,865
Civil Total	26,186	27,258	26,919	20,186
Advice and Assistance Civil	13,552	12,954	12,088	5,885
Family	3,819	4,188	3,537	1,394
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	518	540	445	146
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	3,301	3,648	3,092	1,248
Non-Family	9,733	8,766	8,551	4,491
Representation Lower	6,100	7,610	7,588	7,119
Family	5,745	7,208	7,206	6,710
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	11	15	14	16
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	5,734	7,193	7,192	6,694
Non-Family	355	402	382	409
Representation Higher	6,508	6,663	7,213	7,151
Family	3,690	3,519	3,892	3,568
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	989	1,019	1,235	1,145
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	2,701	2,500	2,657	2,423
Non-Family	2,818	3,144	3,321	3,583
Exceptional Funding	26	31	30	31
Breach of Human Rights	3	5	14	6
Inquest	23	26	16	25
Grand Total	74,298	64,775	68,962	63,976

Table A2: Applications granted, by Quarter, April 2019 to March 2023

Category of Service	2019/20				2020/21				2021/22				2022/23			
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
Criminal Total	12,118	12,966	11,808	11,220	5,768	9,944	11,274	10,531	10,780	10,823	9,964	10,476	10,346	11,499	10,559	11,386
Criminal Courts	7,950	6,756	6,887	5,987	2,430	5,305	6,633	6,199	6,283	6,328	5,958	6,080	5,901	6,535	5,989	6,500
Crown Court	596	517	600	494	100	391	615	704	691	585	666	553	471	529	522	607
Magistrate's Court	7,000	5,845	5,890	5,177	2,275	4,757	5,676	5,185	5,293	5,431	4,935	5,179	5,080	5,678	5,016	5,478
Extradition	13	19	22	18	10	15	21	12	8	14	34	20	21	17	18	18
Criminal Court of Appeal	14	7	9	14	16	12	9	19	16	10	15	11	7	10	10	9
County Court Appeal	327	368	366	284	29	130	312	279	275	288	308	317	322	301	423	388
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	4,168	6,210	4,921	5,233	3,338	4,639	4,641	4,332	4,497	4,495	4,006	4,396	4,445	4,964	4,570	4,886
Civil Total	5,331	6,211	7,197	7,447	4,694	7,421	7,572	7,571	6,559	6,373	7,258	6,729	4,733	5,260	5,082	5,111
Advice and Assistance Civil	2,465	3,538	3,662	3,887	2,138	3,683	3,598	3,535	2,869	2,767	3,654	2,798	1,505	1,567	1,549	1,264
Family	449	1,065	1,094	1,211	744	1,234	1,158	1,052	881	835	1,013	808	342	440	300	312
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	81	128	138	171	76	161	152	151	121	114	131	79	34	53	27	32
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	368	937	956	1,040	668	1,073	1,006	901	760	721	882	729	308	387	273	280
Non-Family	2,016	2,473	2,568	2,676	1,394	2,449	2,440	2,483	1,988	1,932	2,641	1,990	1,163	1,127	1,249	952
Representation Lower	1,235	1,311	1,842	1,712	1,223	2,040	2,230	2,117	2,112	1,815	1,856	1,805	1,626	1,743	1,766	1,984
Family	1,164	1,232	1,736	1,613	1,143	1,929	2,118	2,018	2,020	1,743	1,745	1,698	1,540	1,642	1,662	1,866
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	0	2	5	4	1	3	6	5	4	4	4	2	4	5	4	3
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	1,164	1,230	1,731	1,609	1,142	1,926	2,112	2,013	2,016	1,739	1,741	1,696	1,536	1,637	1,658	1,863
Non-Family	71	79	106	99	80	111	112	99	92	72	111	107	86	101	104	118
Representation Higher	1,625	1,347	1,691	1,845	1,333	1,691	1,733	1,906	1,572	1,782	1,741	2,118	1,591	1,945	1,759	1,856
Family	886	721	996	1,087	584	830	965	1,140	915	881	926	1,170	824	909	936	899
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	325	127	195	342	275	279	168	297	201	313	245	476	187	371	287	300
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	561	594	801	745	309	551	797	843	714	568	681	694	637	538	649	599
Non-Family	739	626	695	758	749	861	768	766	657	901	815	948	767	1,036	823	957
Exceptional Funding	6	15	2	3	0	7	11	13	6	9	7	8	11	5	8	7
Breach of Human Rights	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	5	5	1	2	2	2	0
Inquest	6	12	2	3	0	6	10	10	3	4	2	7	9	3	6	7
Grand Total	17,449	19,177	19,005	18,667	10,462	17,365	18,846	18,102	17,339	17,196	17,222	17,205	15,079	16,759	15,641	16,497

Table A3: Civil applications granted, by Primary Nature, 2019/20 to 2022/23

Category of Service	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Advice and Assistance	13,552	12,954	12,088	5,885
Child Proceedings	1,542	1,713	1,277	624
Criminal Matters	2,927	2,156	2,298	396
Family	2,277	2,475	2,260	770
Government	1,545	1,678	1,327	612
Housing & Debt	530	463	355	86
Neg / Personal Inj	1,727	1,419	1,141	341
Other	2,752	2,766	3,178	2,832
Parole Matters	252	284	252	224
Representation Lower	6,100	7,610	7,588	7,119
Children Order Articles 44 - 58	1,409	1,694	1,642	1,663
Children Order Articles 62 - 69	124	119	167	148
Children Order Articles 7 - 41	2,505	2,818	2,904	2,694
Children Order Generic	59	132	155	134
Family Homes Domestic Violence	1,637	2,430	2,324	2,055
Maintenance	11	15	14	16
Parole	175	219	208	212
Quasi criminal	39	44	23	29
Tribunal	141	139	151	168
Representation Higher	6,508	6,663	7,213	7,151
Appeals	123	131	208	198
Asylum & Immigration	135	101	112	112
Children Order Articles 44 - 58	1,471	1,359	1,335	1,310
Children Order Articles 62 - 69	8	10	12	10
Children Order Articles 7 - 41	775	729	827	612
Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	312	273	306	354
Debt / Ejectment	22	14	30	36
Family Homes Domestic Violence	126	121	158	114
High Court Bail	1,431	1,568	1,388	1,633
Judicial Review	150	128	160	195
Land / Property	13	22	41	48
Maintenance	4	5	1	5
Matrimonial / Civil Partnership	980	1,013	1,227	1,133
Other	417	535	584	549
Parole	0	0	2	2
Personal Injury	520	634	802	823
Quasi criminal	21	20	20	17
Exceptional Funding	26	31	30	31
Breach of the Human Rights Act or enforceable EU rights	3	5	14	6
Inquest	23	26	16	25
Grand Total	26,186	27,258	26,919	20,186

Note:

1. Criminal legal aid is administered by Court Tier and is presented, alongside PACE in Table A1. The information has not been duplicated in this Table.

Table A4: Authorised expenditure, 2020/21 to 2022/23

Category of Service	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Criminal Total	£35,916,726	£48,208,122	£50,679,427
Criminal Courts	£34,006,808	£46,236,261	£48,963,663
Crown Court	£17,614,895	£20,965,940	£25,463,825
Magistrate's Court	£11,790,278	£19,931,555	£18,460,011
Extradition	£59,827	£558,655	£534,174
Criminal Court of Appeal	£4,184,415	£4,170,322	£3,747,541
County Court Appeal	£357,394	£609,789	£758,112
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	£1,909,918	£1,971,861	£1,715,763
Civil Total	£39,547,639	£47,079,215	£51,087,843
Advice and Assistance Civil	£1,776,357	£2,021,032	£1,726,941
Family	£318,736	£286,372	£196,728
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	£23,250	£27,728	£9,598
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	£295,486	£258,643	£187,130
Non-Family	£1,457,621	£1,734,660	£1,530,213
Representation Lower	£4,311,065	£5,271,996	£6,903,764
Family	£3,909,129	£4,920,343	£6,396,804
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	£1,083	£1,788	£2,369
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	£3,908,046	£4,918,554	£6,394,435
Non-Family	£401,936	£351,654	£506,960
Representation Higher	£32,006,423	£38,746,031	£42,369,792
Family	£21,267,531	£27,185,598	£30,626,710
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	£3,670,338	£3,183,570	£2,989,970
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	£17,597,193	£24,002,028	£27,636,740
Non-Family	£10,738,892	£11,560,433	£11,743,083
Exceptional Funding	£1,453,794	£1,040,157	£87,345
Breach of Human Rights	£9,462	£27,465	£8,622
Inquest	£1,444,332	£1,012,692	£78,723
Grand Total	£75,464,365	£95,287,337	£101,767,269

Table A5: Authorised expenditure, by Quarter, July 2019 to March 2023

Category of Service	2019/20				2020/21				2021/22				2022/23			
	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	
Criminal Total	£9,162,907	£11,159,531	£10,637,377	£9,126,074	£8,074,267	£6,335,354	£12,381,031	£12,434,032	£10,942,997	£10,477,735	£14,353,358	£9,796,368	£10,210,133	£15,368,813	£15,304,113	
Criminal Courts	£8,466,690	£10,383,249	£9,915,062	£8,675,969	£7,583,189	£5,851,483	£11,896,167	£12,121,873	£10,471,445	£9,938,018	£13,704,925	£9,365,832	£9,826,794	£14,927,510	£14,843,528	
Crown Court	£2,864,222	£4,868,333	£5,987,273	£4,820,578	£4,046,886	£3,338,509	£5,408,922	£5,252,318	£4,650,956	£4,015,270	£7,047,395	£3,553,402	£6,390,298	£7,025,783	£8,494,343	
Magistrate's Court	£5,078,776	£4,800,936	£3,264,155	£3,135,769	£1,909,127	£1,929,625	£4,815,757	£4,862,175	£4,877,569	£4,813,827	£5,377,984	£4,348,081	£3,092,150	£6,017,875	£5,001,905	
Extradition	£1,223	£53,226	£123,728	£8,153	£19,991	£15,726	£15,958	£64,370	£21,193	£21,700	£451,391	£245,215	£43,318	£62,783	£182,858	
Criminal Court of Appeal	£344,130	£434,113	£415,467	£606,536	£1,542,187	£513,017	£1,522,674	£1,808,838	£768,824	£960,359	£632,301	£1,103,055	£132,316	£1,580,430	£931,740	
County Court Appeal	£178,339	£226,640	£124,439	£104,933	£64,998	£54,607	£132,856	£134,171	£152,903	£126,861	£195,854	£116,078	£168,712	£240,640	£232,682	
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	£696,217	£776,283	£722,315	£450,105	£491,078	£483,871	£484,863	£312,160	£471,552	£539,717	£648,432	£430,536	£383,339	£441,303	£460,586	
Civil Total	£9,428,215	£9,159,411	£10,843,476	£11,893,175	£7,430,945	£9,106,338	£11,117,181	£9,264,883	£12,126,479	£11,553,992	£14,133,861	£9,752,019	£9,466,450	£15,547,445	£16,321,929	
Advice and Assistance Civil	£223,880	£469,143	£368,789	£398,350	£416,028	£476,564	£485,415	£286,342	£461,699	£580,445	£692,546	£434,912	£305,063	£533,364	£453,602	
Family	£47,556	£94,572	£75,498	£79,148	£88,627	£79,809	£71,151	£41,021	£72,096	£72,083	£101,172	£63,563	£34,647	£45,553	£52,964	
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	£3,478	£6,820	£6,559	£4,711	£6,385	£6,584	£5,569	£3,605	£6,670	£6,490	£10,962	£3,989	£2,679	£1,547	£1,383	
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	£44,078	£87,752	£68,938	£74,437	£82,242	£73,225	£65,582	£37,416	£65,425	£65,593	£90,210	£59,574	£31,968	£44,006	£51,582	
Non-Family	£176,324	£374,570	£293,292	£319,201	£327,401	£396,754	£414,264	£245,321	£389,603	£508,362	£591,374	£371,349	£270,415	£487,811	£400,638	
Representation Lower	£1,281,512	£1,612,033	£1,612,469	£1,385,372	£696,572	£928,842	£1,300,279	£842,088	£1,360,324	£1,200,753	£1,868,832	£1,259,361	£1,516,778	£2,011,439	£2,116,186	
Family	£1,186,691	£1,493,818	£1,570,271	£1,251,470	£647,796	£827,953	£1,181,909	£744,846	£1,267,175	£1,140,093	£1,768,229	£1,083,898	£1,450,054	£1,871,971	£1,990,881	
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	£1,112	£361	£877	£630	£75	£0	£378	£168	£261	£514	£845	£1,460	£671	£79	£159	
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	£1,185,580	£1,493,457	£1,569,394	£1,250,840	£647,721	£827,953	£1,181,531	£744,678	£1,266,914	£1,139,579	£1,767,383	£1,082,438	£1,449,383	£1,871,892	£1,990,722	
Non-Family	£94,820	£118,215	£42,197	£133,901	£48,776	£100,889	£118,370	£97,242	£93,149	£60,660	£100,603	£175,463	£66,724	£139,468	£125,305	
Representation Higher	£7,721,923	£6,695,209	£8,273,855	£9,737,827	£6,184,851	£7,308,212	£8,775,532	£7,986,938	£10,160,625	£9,569,717	£11,028,751	£7,723,690	£8,575,045	£12,587,351	£13,483,706	
Family	£5,249,009	£4,828,001	£6,160,783	£6,678,641	£4,436,539	£4,536,418	£5,615,933	£5,129,921	£6,224,809	£7,651,857	£8,179,010	£5,049,673	£6,580,358	£9,159,277	£9,837,401	
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	£628,787	£633,846	£970,373	£1,416,903	£783,809	£688,142	£781,483	£490,299	£943,768	£778,225	£971,278	£579,825	£542,331	£752,459	£1,115,354	
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	£4,620,222	£4,194,155	£5,190,410	£5,261,738	£3,652,730	£3,848,276	£4,834,450	£4,639,622	£5,281,041	£6,873,632	£7,207,732	£4,469,848	£6,038,027	£8,406,818	£8,722,047	
Non-Family	£2,472,914	£1,867,209	£2,113,073	£3,059,186	£1,748,312	£2,771,794	£3,159,599	£2,857,017	£3,935,816	£1,917,860	£2,849,741	£2,674,017	£1,994,686	£3,428,074	£3,646,306	
Exceptional Funding	£200,900	£383,026	£588,363	£371,626	£133,494	£392,720	£555,955	£149,515	£143,832	£203,077	£543,733	£334,056	-£930,436	£415,291	£268,434	
Breach of Human Rights	£0	£0	£562	£9,462	£0	£0	£0	£13,597	£8,712	£0	£5,155	£0	£2,577	£0	£6,045	
Inquest	£200,900	£383,026	£587,801	£362,164	£133,494	£392,720	£555,955	£135,918	£135,120	£203,077	£538,577	£334,056	-£933,013	£415,291	£262,390	
Grand Total	£18,591,122	£20,318,942	£21,480,853	£21,019,249	£15,505,213	£15,441,692	£23,498,212	£21,698,916	£23,069,476	£22,031,727	£28,487,219	£19,548,387	£19,676,583	£30,916,258	£31,626,042	

Table A6: Civil authorised expenditure, by Primary Nature, 2019/20 to 2022/23

Category of Service	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Advice and Assistance	£1,776,357	£2,021,032	£1,726,941
Child Proceedings	£208,247	£173,063	£144,691
Criminal Matters	£179,682	£224,106	£138,623
Family	£110,489	£113,308	£52,037
Government	£326,748	£287,548	£208,260
Housing & Debt	£32,849	£52,237	£30,895
Neg / Personal Inj	£235,725	£225,938	£143,057
Other	£571,860	£847,248	£946,404
Parole Matters	£110,757	£97,583	£62,976
Representation Lower	£4,311,065	£5,271,996	£6,903,764
Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£1,324,043	£1,433,448	£1,825,986
Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£60,181	£61,374	£84,523
Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£1,508,059	£2,206,987	£3,173,429
Children Order Generic	£46,064	£69,265	£113,211
Family Homes Domestic Violence	£969,700	£1,147,480	£1,197,286
Maintenance	£1,083	£1,788	£2,369
Parole	£278,725	£260,755	£370,073
Quasi criminal	£18,736	£12,649	£9,560
Tribunal	£104,475	£78,250	£127,327
Representation Higher	£32,006,423	£38,746,031	£42,369,792
Appeals	£1,833,824	£2,680,487	£1,761,208
Asylum & Immigration	£146,493	£182,646	£175,205
Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£11,907,520	£15,111,190	£18,061,364
Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£8,375	£34,587	£115,564
Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£3,311,444	£5,308,724	£6,037,547
Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£2,069,031	£3,084,677	£2,876,327
Debt / Ejectment	£294,968	£68,835	£42,775
Family Homes Domestic Violence	£224,994	£372,277	£321,462
High Court Bail	£1,237,578	£1,189,620	£959,133
Judicial Review	£3,519,619	£3,113,200	£3,019,392
Land / Property	£26,600	£83,395	£155,007
Maintenance	£6,364	£50,231	£5,241
Matrimonial / Civil Partnership	£3,662,136	£3,129,291	£2,974,913
Other	£1,912,222	£2,854,758	£3,662,144
Parole	£0	£300	£1,015
Personal Injury	£1,822,155	£1,340,870	£2,158,539
Quasi criminal	£23,099	£140,942	£42,957
Exceptional Funding	£1,453,794	£1,040,157	£87,345
Breach of the Human Rights Act or enforceable EU rights	£9,462	£27,465	£8,622
Inquest	£1,444,332	£1,012,692	£78,723
Grand Total	£39,547,639	£47,079,216	£51,087,842

Note:

1. Criminal legal aid is administered by Court Tier and is presented, alongside PACE in Table A4. The information has not been duplicated in this Table.

Table A7: Annual Children Order applications granted, 2019/20 to 2022/23

Category of Service/Primary Nature		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Public Children Order	Representation Higher	1,742	1,598	1,603	1,604
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	1,471	1,359	1,335	1,310
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	8	10	12	10
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	263	229	256	284
	Representation Lower	1,533	1,814	1,811	1,811
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	1,409	1,694	1,642	1,663
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	124	119	167	148
	Children Order Generic	0	1	2	0
Total	3,275	3,412	3,414	3,415	
Private Children Order	Representation Higher	824	773	877	682
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	775	729	827	612
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	49	44	50	70
	Representation Lower	2,564	2,949	3,057	2,828
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	2,505	2,818	2,904	2,694
	Children Order Generic	59	131	153	134
	Total	3,388	3,722	3,934	3,510
Grand Total	6,663	7,134	7,348	6,925	

Table A8: Children Order applications granted, by Quarter, Q1 2019/20 to Q4 2022/23

Category of Service/Primary Nature		2019/20				2020/21				2021/22				2022/23			
		Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
Public Children Order	Representation Higher	345	405	478	514	217	354	524	503	423	302	424	454	422	349	439	394
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	286	342	408	435	186	290	452	431	341	243	360	391	363	297	357	293
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	2	2	3	1	0	6	1	3	0	0	3	9	5	0	3	2
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	57	61	67	78	31	58	71	69	82	59	61	54	54	52	79	99
	Representation Lower	328	424	379	402	256	455	569	534	483	379	452	497	394	415	471	531
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	301	390	358	360	233	420	535	506	435	323	431	453	350	385	437	491
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	27	34	21	42	23	35	33	28	48	55	20	44	44	30	34	40
Children Order Generic	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	
	TOTAL	673	829	857	916	473	809	1,093	1,037	906	681	876	951	816	764	910	925
Private Children Order	Representation Higher	180	173	278	193	78	163	233	299	242	206	225	204	183	148	172	179
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	172	160	261	182	72	159	218	280	228	193	210	196	172	131	155	154
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	8	13	17	11	6	4	15	19	14	13	15	8	11	17	17	25
	Representation Lower	518	483	800	763	431	774	890	854	822	785	737	713	664	668	683	813
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	506	470	786	743	410	753	845	810	785	735	700	684	640	630	647	777
	Children Order Generic	12	13	14	20	21	21	45	44	37	50	37	29	24	38	36	36
	TOTAL	698	656	1,078	956	509	937	1,123	1,153	1,064	991	962	917	847	816	855	992
Grand Total		1,371	1,485	1,935	1,872	982	1,746	2,216	2,190	1,970	1,672	1,838	1,868	1,663	1,580	1,765	1,917

Table A9: Annual Children Order authorised expenditure, 2020/21 to 2022/23

Category of Service/Primary Nature		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Public Children Order	Representation Higher	£13,325,910	£17,490,149	£20,451,946
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£11,907,520	£15,111,190	£18,061,364
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£8,375	£34,587	£115,564
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£1,410,015	£2,344,373	£2,275,018
	Representation Lower	£1,385,551	£1,495,058	£1,911,481
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£1,324,043	£1,433,448	£1,825,986
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£60,181	£61,374	£84,523
	Children Order Generic	£1,328	£236	£972
	Total	£14,711,461	£18,985,207	£22,363,427
Private Children Order	Representation Higher	£3,970,460	£6,049,029	£6,638,856
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£3,311,444	£5,308,724	£6,037,547
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£659,016	£740,305	£601,309
	Representation Lower	£1,552,795	£2,276,017	£3,285,668
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£1,508,059	£2,206,987	£3,173,429
	Children Order Generic	£44,736	£69,030	£112,239
Total	£5,523,255	£8,325,046	£9,924,524	
Grand Total		£20,234,716	£27,310,253	£32,287,951

Table A10: Children Order authorised expenditure, by Quarter, Q2 2019/20 to Q4 2022/23

Category of Service/Primary Nature		2019/20				2020/21				2021/22				2022/23			
		Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	
Public Children Order	Representation Higher	£3,056,381	£2,862,682	£3,837,777	£4,163,444	£2,669,727	£2,956,834	£3,535,904	£3,497,058	£3,582,253	£5,126,422	£5,284,416	£3,319,077	£4,250,115	£6,320,807	£6,561,947	
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£2,563,442	£2,419,867	£3,260,573	£3,719,642	£2,344,206	£2,754,594	£3,089,078	£3,151,124	£3,038,694	£4,295,565	£4,625,807	£2,868,934	£3,844,833	£5,702,525	£5,645,072	
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£4,715	£4,413	£11,636	£254	£1,380	£0	£6,741	£19,061	£10,213	£4,171	£1,142	£2,418	£43,141	£19,895	£50,110	
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£488,224	£438,402	£565,567	£443,548	£324,142	£202,240	£440,085	£326,874	£533,346	£826,686	£657,467	£447,725	£362,142	£598,387	£866,765	
	Representation Lower	£369,081	£532,327	£523,790	£452,199	£279,009	£281,362	£372,983	£216,962	£457,593	£353,246	£467,257	£276,883	£426,014	£568,389	£640,195	
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£343,875	£502,666	£495,665	£430,541	£260,267	£270,845	£362,390	£213,557	£438,781	£333,373	£447,737	£266,453	£406,433	£544,605	£608,496	
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£17,297	£28,417	£25,815	£20,982	£18,506	£10,516	£10,177	£3,405	£18,577	£19,873	£19,520	£10,430	£19,110	£23,519	£31,463	
	Children Order Generic	£7,908	£1,245	£2,309	£676	£236	£0	£416	£0	£236	£0	£0	£0	£471	£265	£236	
	TOTAL	£3,425,461	£3,395,010	£4,361,567	£4,615,643	£2,948,736	£3,238,195	£3,908,887	£3,714,020	£4,039,846	£5,479,668	£5,751,673	£3,595,960	£4,676,130	£6,889,196	£7,202,141	
Private Children Order	Representation Higher	£1,457,989	£1,209,580	£1,249,467	£1,009,056	£857,497	£870,929	£1,232,978	£1,046,500	£1,549,929	£1,662,449	£1,790,151	£1,072,706	£1,648,308	£1,946,491	£1,971,351	
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£1,302,955	£1,170,176	£1,046,116	£798,831	£682,866	£757,820	£1,071,928	£1,025,081	£1,261,065	£1,414,685	£1,607,894	£991,194	£1,417,402	£1,814,137	£1,814,814	
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£155,035	£39,404	£203,350	£210,225	£174,631	£113,109	£161,050	£21,420	£288,864	£247,764	£182,257	£81,512	£230,906	£132,354	£156,537	
	Representation Lower	£521,313	£659,396	£881,608	£589,836	£235,417	£301,619	£425,923	£326,547	£575,377	£516,731	£857,362	£467,933	£763,426	£1,047,807	£1,006,503	
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£500,164	£641,737	£860,590	£560,007	£232,226	£297,873	£417,953	£317,339	£561,375	£487,630	£840,643	£453,810	£736,322	£1,017,823	£965,474	
	Children Order Generic	£21,149	£17,659	£21,018	£29,829	£3,191	£3,746	£7,970	£9,208	£14,002	£29,100	£16,719	£14,123	£27,104	£29,984	£41,029	
TOTAL	£1,979,303	£1,868,976	£2,131,075	£1,598,892	£1,092,914	£1,172,548	£1,658,901	£1,373,047	£2,125,306	£2,179,180	£2,647,513	£1,540,638	£2,411,734	£2,994,298	£2,977,854		
Grand Total	£5,404,764	£5,263,986	£6,492,642	£6,214,535	£4,041,649	£4,410,744	£5,567,788	£5,087,068	£6,165,152	£7,658,848	£8,399,186	£5,136,598	£7,087,864	£9,883,494	£10,179,995		

Table A11: Applications granted and associated relative index values, by gender and age band, 2022/23

Gender	Age Band	Number of applications granted			NI Population ¹	Grants per 1,000 population			Relative Utilisation Index Values ²		
		Criminal	Civil	Total		Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total
Female	Under 18	438	912	1,350	213,055	2.1	4.3	6.3	2.0	2.6	2.4
	18 to 24	1,319	963	2,282	71,959	18.3	13.4	31.7	17.8	8.1	11.8
	25 to 29	1,169	1,488	2,657	57,391	20.4	25.9	46.3	19.8	15.6	17.2
	30 to 39	2,442	3,312	5,754	130,741	18.7	25.3	44.0	18.2	15.3	16.4
	40 to 49	1,380	2,015	3,395	125,034	11.0	16.1	27.2	10.7	9.7	10.1
	50 to 59	704	804	1,508	132,216	5.3	6.1	11.4	5.2	3.7	4.2
	60+	247	399	646	240,200	1.0	1.7	2.7	1.0	1.0	1.0
	ALL	7,775	9,893	17,668	970,596	8.0	10.2	18.2	-	-	-
Male	Under 18	1,594	1,004	2,598	223,650	7.1	4.5	11.6	6.9	2.7	4.3
	18 to 24	6,275	980	7,255	77,783	80.7	12.6	93.3	78.5	7.6	34.7
	25 to 29	6,416	1,567	7,983	57,839	110.9	27.1	138.0	107.9	16.3	51.3
	30 to 39	11,833	3,479	15,312	122,874	96.3	28.3	124.6	93.7	17.0	46.3
	40 to 49	5,613	1,877	7,490	118,525	47.4	15.8	63.2	46.1	9.5	23.5
	50 to 59	2,766	863	3,629	127,371	21.7	6.8	28.5	21.1	4.1	10.6
	60+	1,324	506	1,830	211,905	6.2	2.4	8.6	6.1	1.4	3.2
	ALL	35,963	10,276	46,239	939,947	38.3	10.9	49.2	-	-	-

Notes:

1. NI Population figures in the above table are sourced from [NISRA 2022 mid-year population estimates for NI](#).
2. Index Values have been calculated using the volumes of applications granted to each age-gender group, standardised by the equivalent NI mid-year population estimates.
3. Analysis excludes 287 granted applications where the gender and/or age of the assisted person is unknown. In cases where the gender was known (but not the age) they have been added back into the 'ALL' category for Male or Female respectively.

Table A12: Applications granted, by Local Government District, 2022/23

Local Government District (LGD)	Number of applications granted			NI Population ¹	Applications granted per 1,000 population		
	Criminal	Civil	Total		Criminal	Civil	Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	2,146	848	2,994	146,148	14.7	5.8	20.5
Ards and North Down	1,977	1,215	3,192	164,223	12.0	7.4	19.4
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	4,078	1,643	5,721	220,271	18.5	7.5	26.0
Belfast	11,303	5,707	17,010	348,005	32.5	16.4	48.9
Causeway Coast and Glens	2,200	1,093	3,293	141,316	15.6	7.7	23.3
Derry City and Strabane	3,950	1,610	5,560	150,836	26.2	10.7	36.9
Fermanagh and Omagh	1,590	579	2,169	116,994	13.6	4.9	18.5
Lisburn and Castlereagh	2,615	2,871	5,486	149,915	17.4	19.2	36.6
Mid and East Antrim	2,484	814	3,298	139,200	17.8	5.8	23.7
Mid Ulster	2,239	849	3,088	151,001	14.8	5.6	20.5
Newry, Mourne and Down	3,189	1,437	4,626	182,634	17.5	7.9	25.3
Northern Ireland (Total)	43,790	20,186	63,976	1,910,543	22.9	10.6	33.5

Notes:

1. NI Population figures in the above table are sourced from [NISRA 2022 mid-year population estimates for NI](#).
2. Analysis excludes 7,539 granted applications where the LGD of the assisted person is unknown, though these are included in the NI Total.
3. LGD is assigned on the registered postcode of each granted application.

Table A13: Applications granted, by area of deprivation (MDM), 2022/23

MDM Quintile	Number of applications granted		
	Criminal	Civil	Total
Quintile 1 (most deprived)	15,537	6,935	22,472
Quintile 2	8,319	3,431	11,750
Quintile 3	5,871	2,702	8,573
Quintile 4	5,321	4,000	9,321
Quintile 5 (least deprived)	2,723	1,598	4,321
Northern Ireland (Total)	43,790	20,186	63,976

Notes:

1. Quintiles of deprivation in the above table are sourced from NISRA's [Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 \(NIMDM2017\)](#).
2. Analysis excludes 7,539 granted applications where the MDM Quintile associated with the application is unknown, though these are included in the NI Total.
3. MDM Quintile is assigned on the registered postcode of each granted application.

Table A14: Registered Legal Aid Service Providers by Type, 2019/20 to 2022/23

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Solicitor Firms	443	455	472	459
Solicitor Firms receiving payment	393	398	410	410
Barristers	585	632	667	621
Barristers receiving payment	453	488	495	492
Third Party Payees	4	4	4	7
Third Party Payees receiving payment	3	4	4	6

Table A15: Registered Solicitor Firms by Local Government District (LGD), Firms per 100,000 head of Population and Average Minimum Distance to Nearest Solicitor Firm, 2022/23

Local Government District	Solicitor Firms	NI Population ¹	Firms per 100k Population	Average Distance to nearest Firm ³
Antrim and Newtownabbey	14	146,148	9.6	1.6
Ards and North Down	24	164,223	14.6	1.7
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	52	220,271	23.6	2.1
Belfast	163	348,005	46.8	0.4
Causeway Coast and Glens	24	141,316	17	3.7
Derry City and Strabane	31	150,836	20.6	2.5
Fermanagh and Omagh	35	116,994	29.9	3.8
Lisburn and Castlereagh	16	149,915	10.7	1.8
Mid and East Antrim	22	139,200	15.8	2.4
Mid Ulster	35	151,001	23.2	2.7
Newry, Mourne and Down	42	182,634	23	2.9
Outside NI	1	-	-	-
Total²	459	1,910,543	24	2.1

Notes:

1. NI Population figures in the above table are sourced from NISRA 2022 mid-year population estimates for NI.
2. The total head of population rate has been calculated based upon solicitor firms located within NI meaning that the one registered firm outside of NI has been excluded from base calculation.
3. Average distance is calculated on a straight line basis between the postcode centroids of both the registered applicant and solicitor firm addresses. Further information on this calculation is provided in the guidance notes.

Table A16: Authorised Expenditure by Provider Type, 2020/21 to 2022/23

Provider Type	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Solicitor Firm	£44,519,869	£55,801,329	£59,061,226
Barrister	£30,747,086	£39,155,613	£42,303,440
Third Party Payee	£197,410	£330,394	£402,603
Total	£75,464,365	£95,287,337	£101,767,269

Table A17: Authorised Expenditure by Provider Type and Category of Service, 2022/23

Category Of Service	Solicitor Firm	Barrister	Third Party Payee
Criminal Total	£28,078,788	£22,512,521	£88,117
Criminal Courts	£26,363,025	£22,512,521	£88,117
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	£1,715,763	£0	£0
Civil Total	£30,982,438	£19,790,918	£314,487
Advice and Assistance Civil	£1,513,256	£0	£213,685
Representation Lower	£6,633,504	£248,818	£21,443
Representation Higher	£22,797,757	£19,492,676	£79,359
Exceptional Funding	£37,921	£49,424	£0
Total	£59,061,226	£42,303,440	£402,603

Table A18: Solicitor Firm Authorised Expenditure by Provided Legal Aid Service and Local Government District, 2022/23

Local Government District	Civil	Criminal	Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	£1,072,505	£548,596	£1,621,101
Ards and North Down	£1,893,428	£1,201,829	£3,095,256
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	£3,190,852	£2,151,706	£5,342,558
Belfast	£12,651,340	£14,983,459	£27,634,800
Causeway Coast and Glens	£931,373	£461,508	£1,392,881
Derry City and Strabane	£3,283,601	£3,100,426	£6,384,027
Fermanagh and Omagh	£1,264,994	£725,289	£1,990,283
Lisburn and Castlereagh	£686,585	£433,304	£1,119,888
Mid and East Antrim	£1,055,563	£938,485	£1,994,048
Mid Ulster	£1,522,660	£1,013,418	£2,536,078
Newry, Mourne and Down	£3,429,537	£2,520,768	£5,950,306
Total	£30,982,438	£28,078,788	£59,061,226

Note:

1. LGD is assigned on the registered postcode of each Solicitor Firm.

Table A19: Authorised Expenditure by Provider and Payment Type, 2020/21 to 2022/23

Provider Type	Payment Type	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Solicitor	Profit Cost	£31,665,727	£39,802,298	£41,492,567
	VAT	£6,242,952	£7,878,604	£8,258,583
	Disbursement	£6,611,189	£8,120,428	£9,310,076
	Total	£44,519,869	£55,801,329	£59,061,226
Barrister	Profit Cost	£26,078,903	£33,248,512	£36,038,555
	VAT	£4,643,031	£5,733,748	£6,241,134
	Disbursement	£25,153	£173,353	£23,750
	Total	£30,747,086	£39,155,613	£42,303,440
Third Party Payee	Profit Cost	£147,633	£268,698	£331,883
	VAT	£29,527	£53,721	£66,230
	Disbursement	£20,250	£7,976	£4,490
	Total	£197,410	£330,394	£402,603
All	Profit Cost	£57,892,263	£73,319,508	£77,863,006
	VAT	£10,915,510	£13,666,073	£14,565,947
	Disbursement	£6,656,592	£8,301,756	£9,338,317
	Total	£75,464,365	£95,287,337	£101,767,269

Table A20: Authorised Expenditure by Provider, Payment Type and Category of Service, 2022/23

Provider Type	Payment Type	Criminal			Civil					Grand Total
		Criminal Courts	PACE	Criminal Total	Advice and Assistance	Representation Lower	Representation Higher	Exceptional Funding	Civil Total	
Solicitor	Profit Cost	£20,198,600	£1,393,540	£21,592,140	£1,205,261	£5,057,975	£13,572,550	£64,640	£19,900,427	£41,492,567
	VAT	£4,031,373	£277,401	£4,308,775	£235,591	£1,013,934	£2,686,867	£13,418	£3,949,809	£8,258,583
	Disbursement	£2,133,051	£44,822	£2,177,873	£72,404	£561,596	£6,538,340	-£40,137	£7,132,203	£9,310,076
	Total	£26,363,025	£1,715,763	£28,078,788	£1,513,256	£6,633,504	£22,797,757	£37,921	£30,982,438	£59,061,226
Barrister	Profit Cost	£19,118,942	£0	£19,118,942	£0	£216,157	£16,654,053	£49,402	£16,919,613	£36,038,555
	VAT	£3,398,483	£0	£3,398,483	£0	£32,363	£2,810,266	£22	£2,842,651	£6,241,134
	Disbursement	-£4,904	£0	-£4,904	£0	£297	£28,357	£0	£28,654	£23,750
	Total	£22,512,521	£0	£22,512,521	£0	£248,818	£19,492,676	£49,424	£19,790,918	£42,303,440
Third Party Payee	Profit Cost	£72,952	£0	£72,952	£178,071	£15,414	£65,447	£0	£258,931	£331,883
	VAT	£14,590	£0	£14,590	£35,614	£2,936	£13,089	£0	£51,639	£66,230
	Disbursement	£574	£0	£574	£0	£3,093	£823	£0	£3,916	£4,490
	Total	£88,117	£0	£88,117	£213,685	£21,443	£79,359	£0	£314,487	£402,603
All	Profit Cost	£39,390,495	£1,393,540	£40,784,035	£1,383,332	£5,289,545	£30,292,051	£114,043	£37,078,970	£77,863,006
	VAT	£7,444,447	£277,401	£7,721,848	£271,205	£1,049,233	£5,510,222	£13,440	£6,844,099	£14,565,947
	Disbursement	£2,128,721	£44,822	£2,173,544	£72,404	£564,986	£6,567,520	-£40,137	£7,164,773	£9,338,317
	Total	£48,963,663	£1,715,763	£50,679,427	£1,726,941	£6,903,764	£42,369,792	£87,345	£51,087,843	£101,767,269

Table A21: Legal Aid Movement across Local Government Districts in Northern Ireland, 2022/23

Local Government District (LGD)	Applications Granted to Assisted Persons	Applications Out	Applications In	Net Movement of Applications		Cases Granted to Solicitor Firms
				No.	%	
Antrim and Newtownabbey	2,994	2,462	719	-1,743	-58%	1,251
Ards and North Down	3,192	1,691	1,533	-158	-5%	3,034
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	5,721	1,843	1,696	-147	-3%	5,574
Belfast	17,010	2,769	10,917	8,148	48%	25,158
Causeway Coast and Glens	3,293	2,368	211	-2,157	-66%	1,136
Derry City and Strabane	5,560	771	1,953	1,182	21%	6,742
Fermanagh and Omagh	2,169	776	422	-354	-16%	1,815
Lisburn and Castlereagh	5,486	4,886	327	-4,559	-83%	927
Mid and East Antrim	3,298	1,840	1,052	-788	-24%	2,510
Mid Ulster	3,088	1,144	629	-515	-17%	2,573
Newry, Mourne and Down	4,626	1,154	2,245	1,091	24%	5,717

Notes:

1. Analysis excludes 7,539 granted applications where the LGD of the assisted person is unknown.
2. LGD is assigned on the registered postcode of each granted application and of the Solicitor Firm.

9. TECHNICAL NOTES

Numbers and Percentages

For presentational purposes, the majority of figures contained within this report (expenditure and percentages) have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As a result, totals may appear not to sum.

Percentages calculated on base numbers of under 100 should be treated with caution to avoid drawing unwarranted conclusions.

Population analyses

Where statistics have been standardised to enable direct comparison between groups, this has been based on the latest [NI mid-year population estimates](#). In Statistical Bulletin 1/2024, this was NISRA's 2022 update.

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM)

The [Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 \(NIMDM2017\)](#) replaced the NIMDM 2010 as the official measure of deprivation in Northern Ireland.

The MDM provides a mechanism for ranking Northern Ireland's 890 Super Output areas (SOAs) from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890).

Local Geographies

Analyses at local geography level is based on the postcode registered with each application. By nature, this will include addresses such as prisons, hospitals and those applications where, for example, the assisted person is a minor and the associated address is that of a third-party taking proceedings on behalf of the child in a public law case. It is expected that in the majority of cases the registered address will reflect the primary residence of the assisted person.

In instances where address information is unknown or not available, these cases have been excluded from the respective sub-analyses, though will be included in the equivalent Northern Ireland total. On average 11% of applications granted each year do have a valid postcode recorded.

Typically, NI headline statistics are broken down into the eleven council areas known as [Local Government Districts \(LGDs\)](#).

Geographical Location Attribution

Solicitor Firm

The assignment of Local Government District (LGD) to solicitor firms are based upon the firm's address postcode provided at registration or during change of details updates. The postcode is linked to NISRA's most recently available [Central Postcode Directory](#) to geographically allocate the firm to an LGD.

Applicant

Applicants are attributed to a geographical location using the address postcode provided during the registration of an application onto the LAMS system.

It is likely that this will reflect the residing address for the applicant at that point in time. However, users should be aware that in some circumstances an alternative non-residential contact address may be provided e.g. prison, police station, solicitors office, child protection service.

As with solicitor firms, the applicant's postcode is linked to NISRA's most recently available [Central Postcode Directory](#) to allocate them to a geographical location.

Average Distance

The average distance to solicitor firm is calculated on the basis of straight line distance between the population weighted centroid of [Census Data Zones](#) (DZ2021) and nearest solicitor firm. Each area calculation is then weighted by the population size and aggregated up to LGD level to produce a population weighted average minimum distance to solicitor firm.