

**Analytical Services Group**

# **County Court Bulletin**

**January to March 2018**

**Research and Statistical Bulletin 17/2018**

**Provisional quarterly figures**

**R Redmond**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period January to March 2018 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2007. On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016, a single County Court Division called “The County Court of Northern Ireland” replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court Bulletin is now disaggregated by Court Office (Processing Office). During the period January to March 2018:
- There were 1,672 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 13% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,920). In total, 2,529 civil bills were disposed, a decrease of 7% on the number disposed during the same period in 2017 (2,720).
- 33 equity cases were received during January to March 2018, down 15% on the 39 cases received during the period January to March 2017, while 28 equity cases were disposed, an increase of 17% on the 24 disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 332 ejectment cases were received, up 8% on the 306 cases received during January to March 2017, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 26%, from 201 in the same quarter last year to 254 this quarter.
- 3,243 small claims were received, up 16% on the 2,803 received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 14% from 2,326 during January to March 2017 to 2,663 this quarter.
- Eight criminal damage cases were received, compared to ten received during the period January to March 2017. Nine criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, whereas none were disposed during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 322 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, a 21% increase on the 266 granted during the same period last year.
- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,166 sitting days during the quarter, down 9% on the 1,282 sitting days recorded during the period January to March 2017. Some 55% of time was spent on criminal business with 29% spent on civil business and 16% on family business (compared to 62%, 27% and 12% respectively during January to March 2017). The decrease in both the number of sitting days, and the proportion of time spent on criminal business is reflective of increased activity in the Crown Court during the same period last year, which aimed at addressing a backlog of cases arising from the legal aid dispute that commenced during May 2015 and was resolved in February 2016.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Data sources**

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

### **2.2 Methodology for generating data**

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

### **2.3 Baseline and Time period**

Data contained within this bulletin relate to the time series 2007, when ICOS was adopted as the source of county court data, to the calendar year 2018.

### **2.4 Frequency of Publication**

This bulletin is published on a quarterly basis. The next bulletin will cover the second quarter of 2018 and will be published on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

### **2.5 Data quality and validation**

ASG statisticians based in the NICTS have invested significant time and effort creating and extensive computer programme within SPSS to validate the information downloaded from ICOS. The programme includes over 100 checks against downloaded court data to: (i) check consistency over time and between variables; (ii) assess the reliability of data using

logic checks; (iii) check that variables fall within accepted ranges; and (iv) check with the ICOS Support Team in the event of any major discrepancies that have occurred since the last download. The validation program produces user friendly tables highlighting the potential problems which are circulated to each county court venue as a validation report. The NICTS statistics team then ensure that all validations relating to the reporting period are amended prior to publication. Once these amendments have been checked, SPSS syntax programming is then used to generate the tables in the publication. Data contained in this bulletin are currently provisional and will undergo further validation before being published in their final form in the 2017 edition of Judicial Statistics (published on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018).

## **2.6 Counting rules**

Receipts are counted from the date the case is entered onto ICOS and the fees are receipted. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to dealt with. On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016, a single County Court Division called “The County Court of Northern Ireland” replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court Bulletin is now disaggregated by Court Office (Processing Office) as at the time of data download.

## **2.7 Interpreting trends**

Care should be taken when comparing data trends before and after 2005, when ICOS was introduced as the source for the majority of county court data. Additionally, due to on-going changes to the legal jurisdiction of the county court, users should be cautious of comparing trends in small claims and ordinary civil bills. Changes made to the upper limit of small claims in May 2011 (from £2,000 to £3,000) will have resulted in some claims that would have previously been ordinary civil bills becoming small claims. Also, changes to jurisdiction to increase the upper limit of ordinary civil bills during February 2013 (from £15,000 to £30,000) will have resulted in some cases that were previously High Court writs becoming ordinary civil bills. For further advice on differences in data between years, please contact the statistician responsible for this bulletin.

## **2.8 Revisions**

Any revision to data will be applied in light of the ASG (NICTS) Statistical Note ‘Policy Statement on Revisions’ which can be found at ([www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/p\\_pd\\_stats\\_PolicyStatementRevisions.pdf](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/p_pd_stats_PolicyStatementRevisions.pdf)). Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

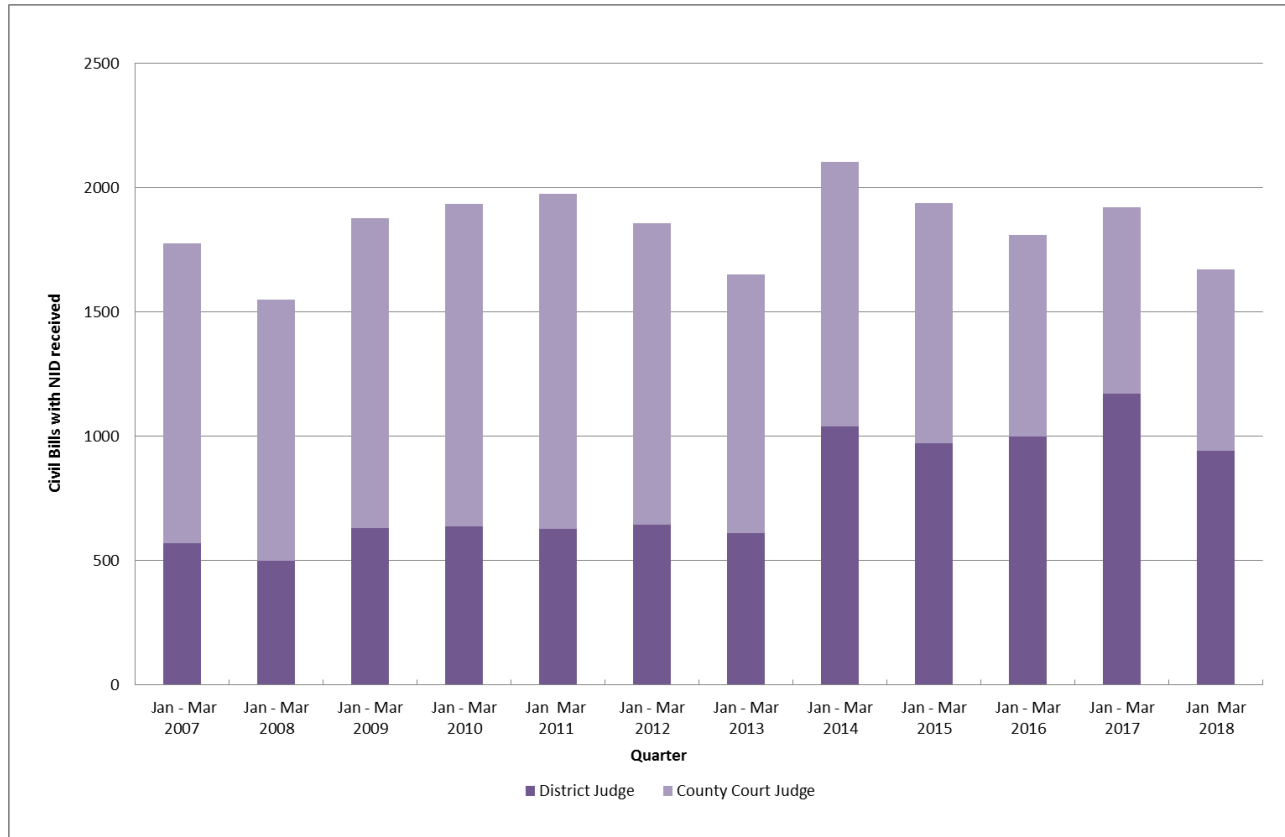


### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Ordinary civil bills

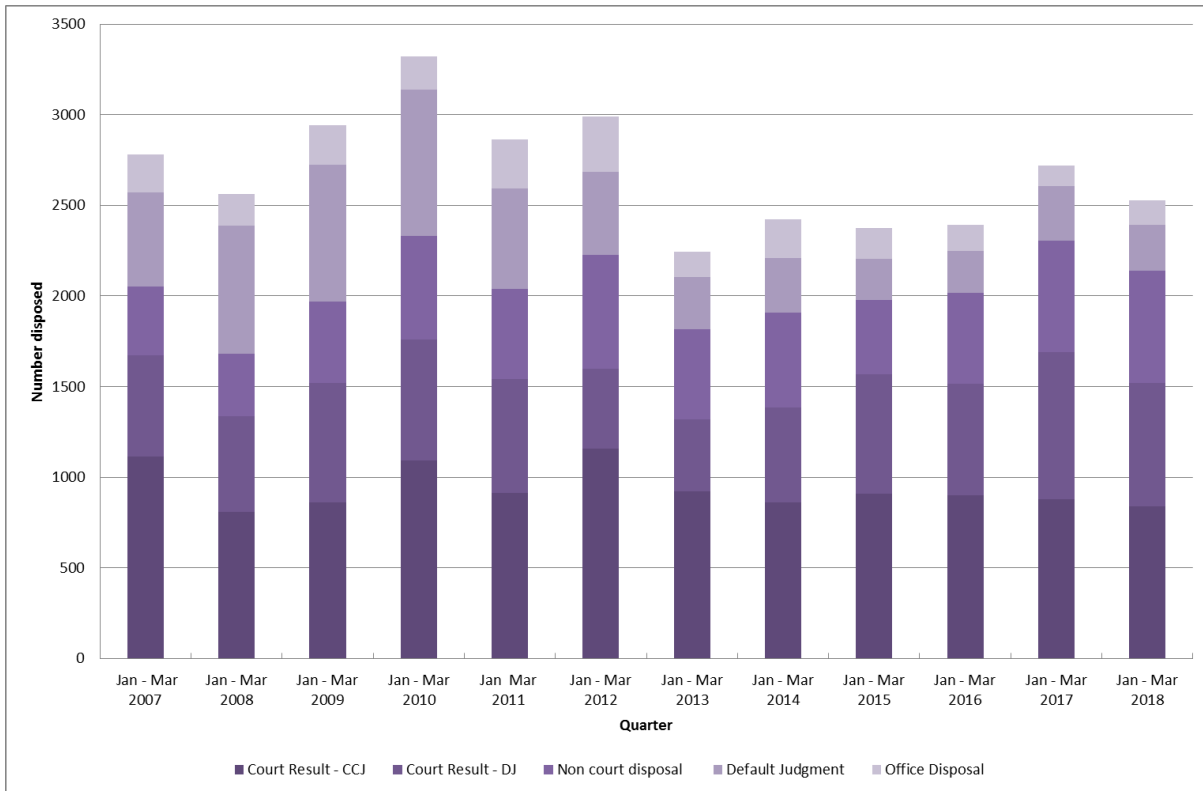
There were 1,672 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 13% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,920) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received: January - March 2007 to January - March 2018**



In total, 2,529 civil bills were disposed, a decrease of 7% on the 2,720 disposed during the same period in 2016 (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal: January - March 2007 to January - March 2018**



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 60 weeks, compared to the 57 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2017.

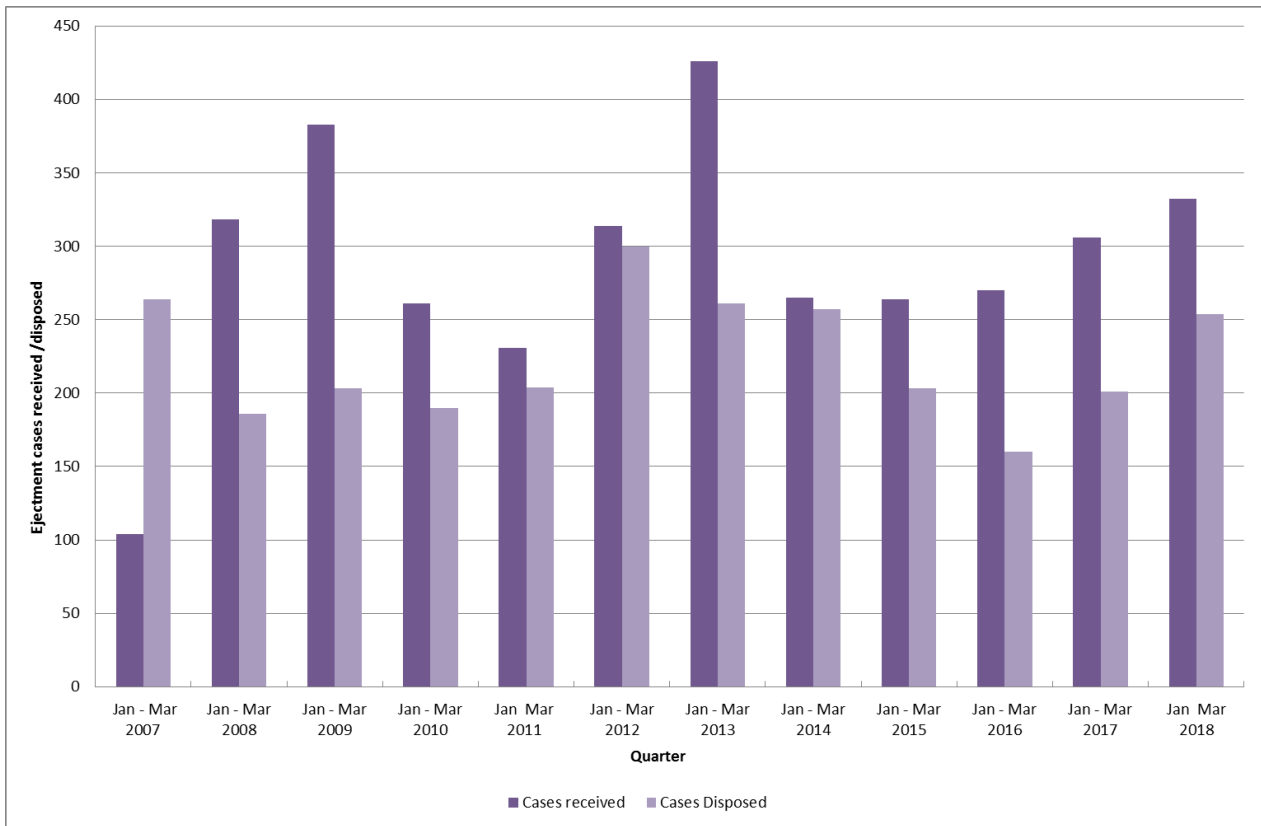
### 3.2 Equity

A total of 33 equity cases were received during January to March 2018, a 15% decrease on the number received during the period January to March 2017 (39), while the number of equity cases disposed increased from 24 during the period January to March 2017, to 28 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 59 weeks down from 84 weeks during the same period last year. The relatively small number of equity cases disposed each quarter can lead to significant changes in average times observed from issue to disposal.

### 3.3 Ejectment

A total of 332 ejectment cases were received, up 8% on the 306 cases received during January to March 2017, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 26%, from 201 in the same quarter last year to 254 this quarter (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Ejection cases received and disposed: January - March 2007 to January - March 2018**



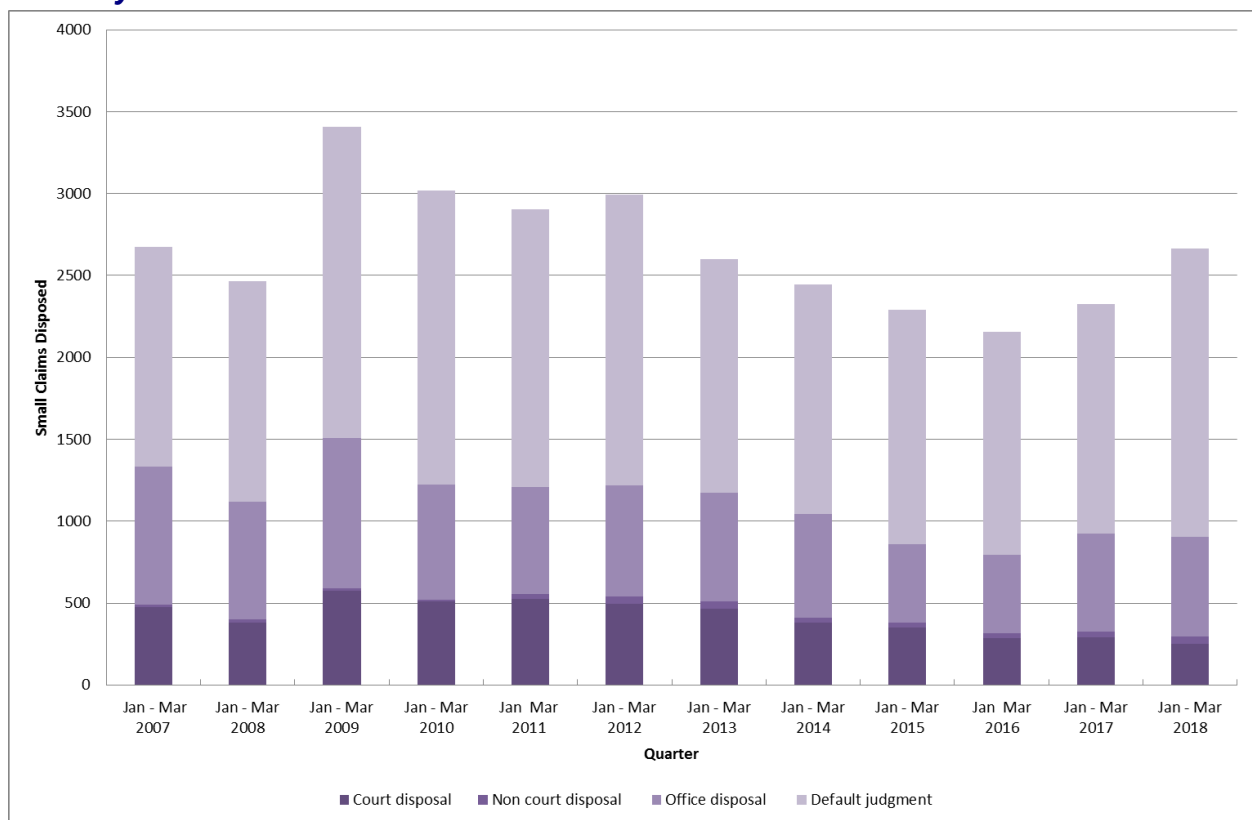
The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejection cases was 20 weeks, the same as the average time taken during the January to March quarter in 2017.

### 3.4 Small claims

3,243 small claims were received, up 16% on the 2,803 received during the same quarter last year.

The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 14% from 2,326 during January to March 2017 to 2,663 this quarter. Of the 2,663 small claims disposed during the quarter, the majority (66%) were disposed by way of default judgment, the highest level observed since the beginning of the time series in 2007 (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Small claims cases disposed, by type of disposal: January - March 2007 to January - March 2018**

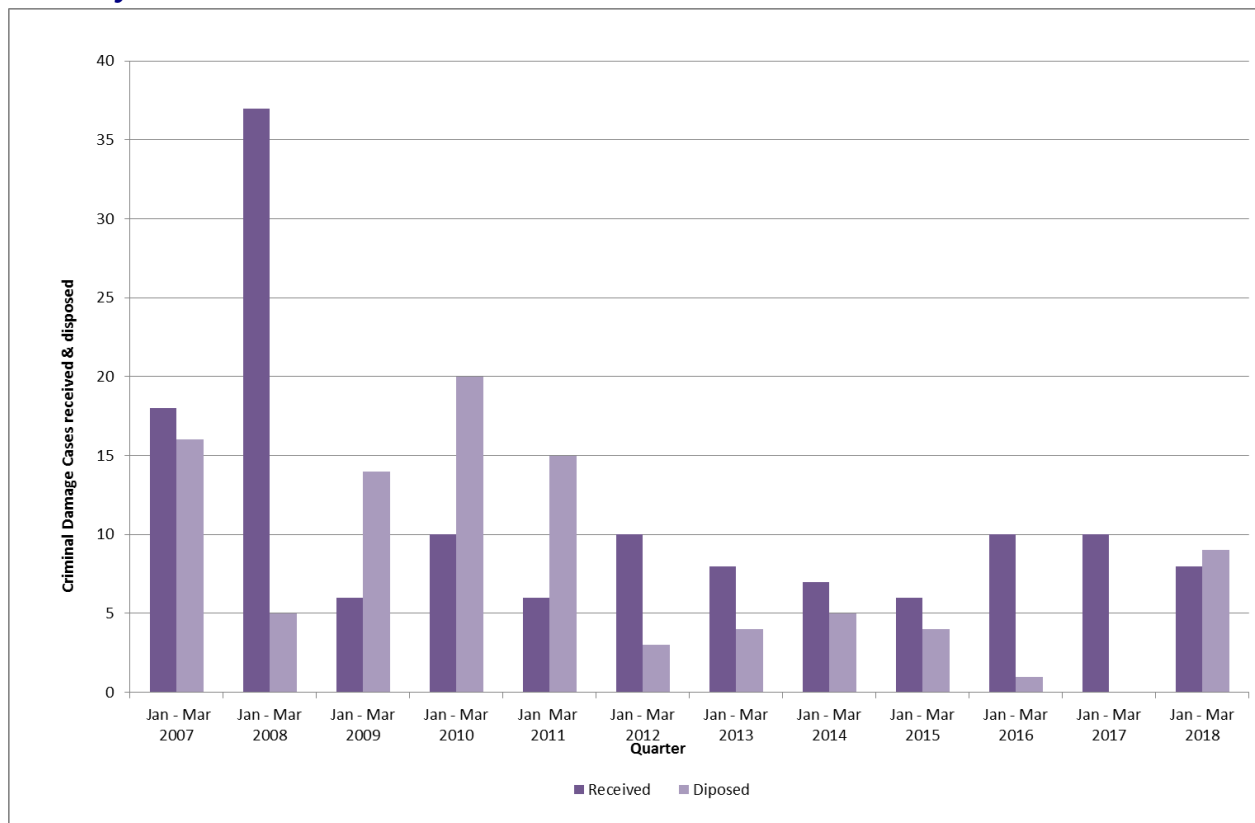


The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 23 weeks, compared to 18 weeks during the corresponding quarter last year.

### 3.5 Criminal Damage

Eight criminal damage cases were received, with nine disposed during the quarter. This compares with ten cases received and no cases disposed during the same quarter in 2017 (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed: January - March 2007 to January - March 2018**



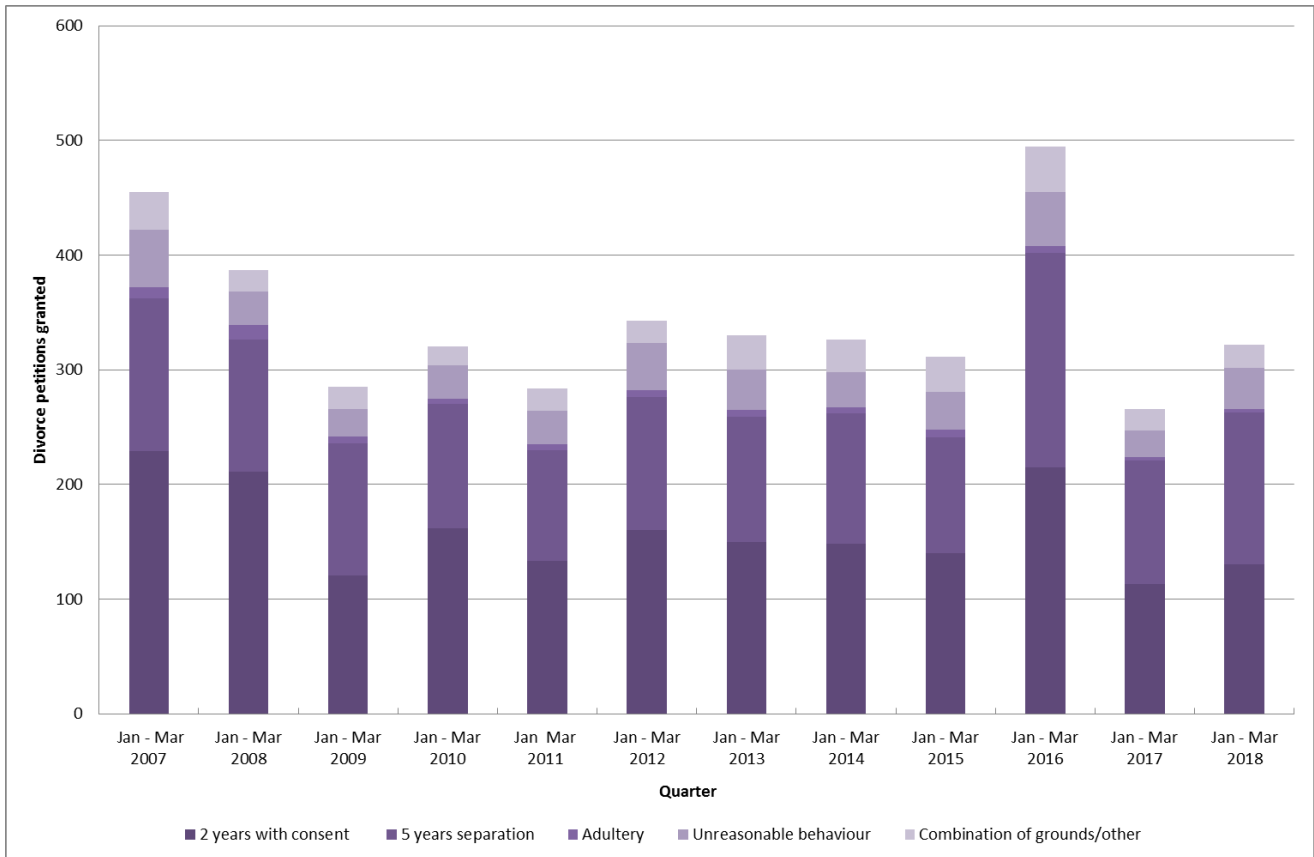
### 3.6 Divorces

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

A total of 322 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, up 21% on the 266 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '5 years separation' accounting for 41% of decrees (133), followed by '2 years with consent', 40% (130) of decrees (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type: January - March 2007 to January - March 2018**



A total of 360 decrees absolute were issued in the county court, an increase of 5% on the 342 issued during the period January to March 2017. The most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 46% (164) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 30 weeks, with an average of eight weeks from the date the decree was granted until the date the decree absolute was issued. This compares to 30 weeks and eight weeks during the same period last year.

### 3.7 Licences

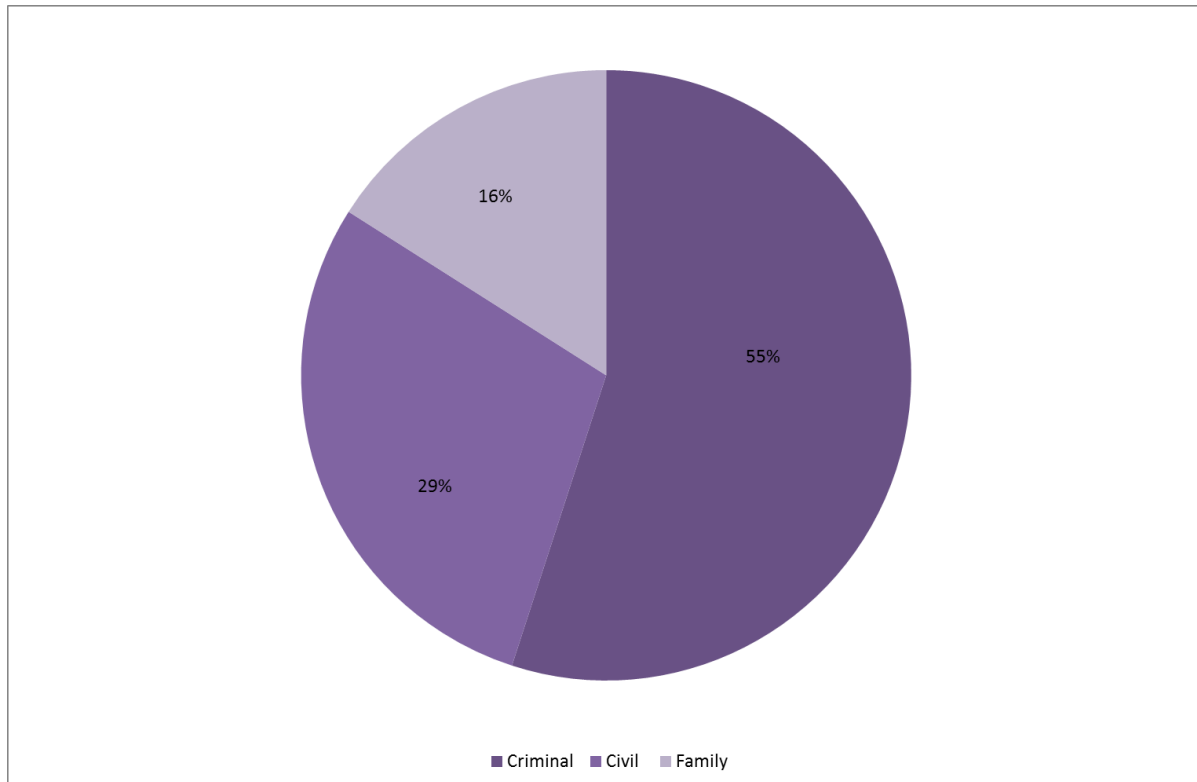
There were 47 licence applications received and 48 disposed, compared to the 43 received and 45 disposed during the same quarter last year.

### 3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,166 sitting days during the quarter, down 9% on the 1,282 sitting days recorded during the period January to March 2017.

Within these 1,166 sitting days, 55% of time was spent on criminal business, 29% of time was spent on civil business and 16% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

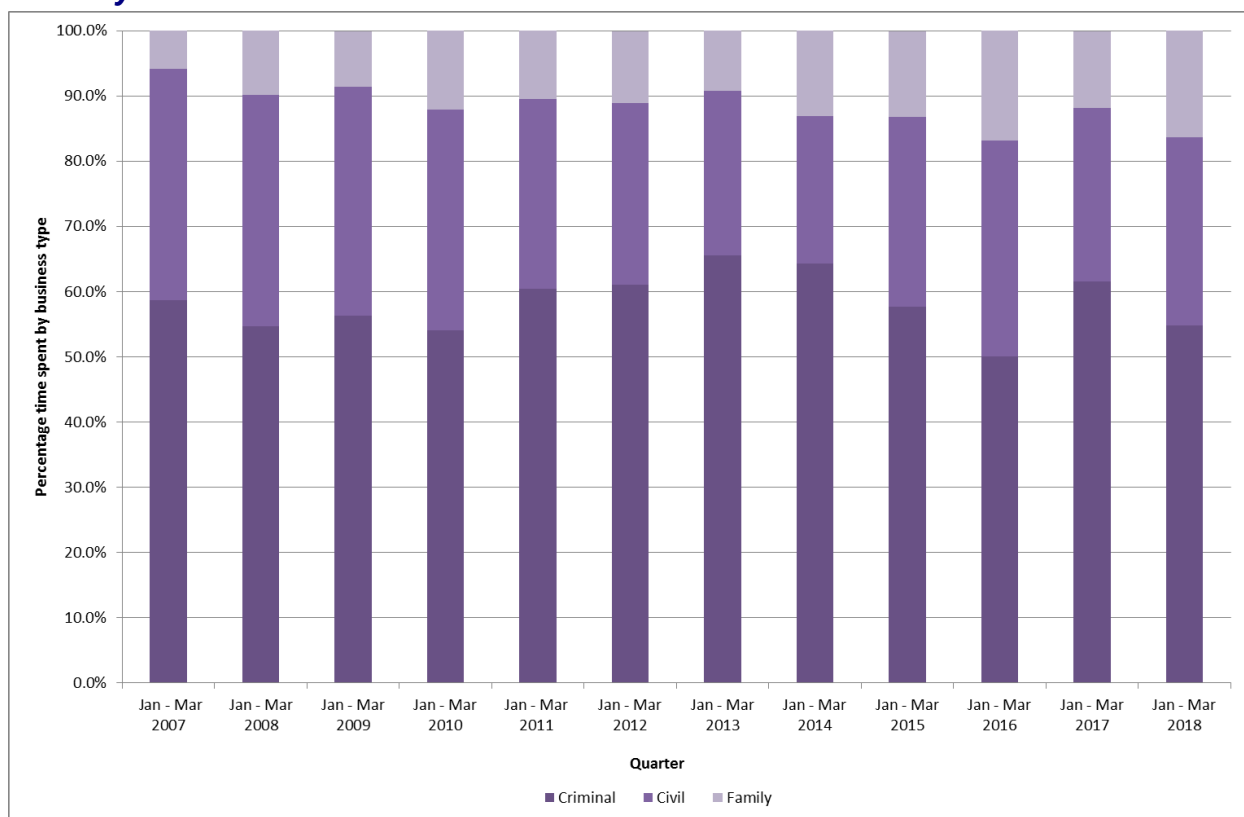
**Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: January - March 2018**



The proportion of time spent on criminal business fluctuated during January to March quarter since 2007, peaking at 66% during the quarter January to March 2013. This is largely reflective of County Court Judges dealing with increased volumes of cases in the Crown Court over the period.

The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 50% during January to March 2016. This decrease was reflective of the action taken by a number of solicitors and counsel who withdrew their representation from a number of Crown Court cases in response to the introduction, in May 2015, of new rules in relation to legal aid remuneration. Following resolution of this dispute in February 2016, activity in the Crown Court increased, with the proportion of time spent by County Court Judges on criminal business increasing to 62% of sittings during January to March 2017, while the backlog of cases arising from the dispute was addressed. Progress made in addressing the backlog has meant the proportion of time spent on criminal business decreased this quarter, compared to the same period last year, with the proportion of time spent on criminal business falling to 55%.

**Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: January - March 2007 to January - March 2017**





## APPENDIX 1

### Civil Bills

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

<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	717
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	155
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	18
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	101
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	12
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	146
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	17
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	86
	<b>Enniskillen Court Office</b>	7
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	122
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	103
	<b>Limavady Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Magherafelt Court Office</b>	6
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	33
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	52
	<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	14
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	1225
	<b>Total</b>	2815
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	338
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	133
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	3
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	48
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	9
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	72
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	12
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	49
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	30
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	61
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	4
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	37
	<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	0
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	321
	<b>Total</b>	1117

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

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	376	344	720
Newtownards Court Office	45	112	157
Downpatrick Court Office	8	6	14
Craigavon Court Office	39	66	105
Armagh Court Office	4	6	10
Omagh Court Office	43	96	139
Strabane Court Office	0	1	1
Antrim Court Office	9	8	17
Londonderry Court Office	29	59	88
Enniskillen Court Office	5	2	7
Coleraine Court Office	43	73	116
Newry Court Office	34	65	99
Limavady Court Office	1	0	1
Magherafelt Court Office	5	1	6
Ballymena Court Office	17	12	29
Lisburn Court Office	13	23	36
Dungannon Court Office	4	9	13
Civil Processing Centre	57	57	114
<b>Total</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>1672</b>

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

		<b>Court result - CCJ</b>	<b>Court result – DJ</b>	<b>Non court disposals</b>	<b>Default judgement</b>	<b>Office disposal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	495	275	211	7	37	1025
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	32	117	90	4	14	257
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	1	3	5	0	1	10
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	68	11	54	2	7	142
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	8	6	1	0	0	15
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	73	67	51	6	16	213
	<b>Strabane Court Office</b>	2	1	0	0	0	3
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	3	1	4	0	1	9
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	29	52	30	5	10	126
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	32	73	71	0	18	194
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	48	64	63	1	6	182
	<b>Magherafelt Court Office</b>	1	0	3	0	0	4
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	2	2	2	0	0	6
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	46	6	23	4	6	85
	<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	0	0	1	0	1	2
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	1	0	11	223	21	256
	<b>Total</b>	841	678	620	252	138	2529
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	54	8	105	0	0	167
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	5	4	22	0	0	31
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	0	1	0	0	0	1
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	0	1	15	0	0	16
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	0	1	1	0	0	2
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	6	4	28	0	0	38
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	6	0	3	0	0	9
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	4	0	17	0	0	21
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	6	0	16	0	0	22
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	11	5	10	0	0	26
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	1	0	4	0	0	5
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	5	0	5	0	0	10
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	0	0	36	0	0	36
	<b>Total</b>	98	24	262	0	0	384

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

		No value	Less than £3000	£3000-14999	£15000-29999	£30000 and over	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	349	166	231	24	0	770
	Newtownards Court Office	32	48	66	3	0	149
	Downpatrick Court Office	1	0	3	0	0	4
	Craigavon Court Office	19	22	33	5	0	79
	Armagh Court Office	2	2	10	0	0	14
	Omagh Court Office	46	26	59	9	0	140
	Strabane Court Office	1	0	2	0	0	3
	Antrim Court Office	2	1	0	1	0	4
	Londonderry Court Office	22	24	29	6	0	81
	Coleraine Court Office	14	33	56	2	0	105
	Newry Court Office	22	31	56	3	0	112
	Magherafelt Court Office	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Ballymena Court Office	1	1	2	0	0	4
	Lisburn Court Office	14	15	22	1	0	52
	Civil Processing Centre	1	0	0	0	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1519</b>

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

**Table 5: Outstanding civil bills with NID but no COR**

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	1259	817	2076
Newtownards Court Office	93	143	236
Downpatrick Court Office	12	11	23
Craigavon Court Office	87	122	209
Armagh Court Office	12	6	18
Omagh Court Office	197	258	455
Strabane Court Office	0	1	1
Antrim Court Office	13	11	24
Londonderry Court Office	110	168	278
Enniskillen Court Office	5	3	8
Coleraine Court Office	159	130	289
Newry Court Office	93	112	205
Limavady Court Office	1	0	1
Magherafelt Court office	7	0	7
Ballymena Court Office	21	19	40
Lisburn Court Office	42	51	93
Dungannon Court Office	5	10	15
Civil Processing Centre	163	135	298
<b>Total</b>	<b>2279</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>4276</b>

**Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR**

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	609	317	926
Newtownards Court Office	39	66	105
Downpatrick Court Office	0	3	3
Craigavon Court Office	28	50	78
Armagh Court Office	7	13	20
Omagh Court Office	92	123	215
Antrim Court Office	2	11	13
Londonderry Court Office	39	55	94
Coleraine Court Office	71	81	152
Newry Court Office	45	48	93
Limavady Court Office	1	0	1
Magherafelt Court Office	1	0	1
Ballymena Court Office	4	2	6
Lisburn Court Office	26	34	60
Dungannon Court Office	3	6	9
Civil Processing Centre	4	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>1784</b>

**Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases**

Case	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	63
Newtownards Court Office	34
Downpatrick Court Office	29
Craigavon Court Office	51
Armagh Court Office	70
Omagh Court Office	92
Strabane Court Office	716
Antrim Court Office	37
Londonderry Court Office	52
Coleraine Court Office	48
Newry Court Office	44
Magherafelt Court Office	18
Ballymena Court Office	60
Lisburn Court Office	57
Civil Processing Centre	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

**Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications<sup>1</sup>**

		Issue to disposal
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	22
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	11
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	3
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	78
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	2
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	12
	<b>Antrim Court Office</b>	18
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	8
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	17
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	9
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	40
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	22
	<b>Total</b>	18

<sup>1</sup>Excludes default judgements and office disposals

## **Equity**

**Table 9: Equity cases and applications received**

<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	8
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	0
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	2
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	4
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	4
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	4
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	2
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	8
	<b>Total</b>	33
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	2
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	2
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	6
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	2
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	3
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	2
	<b>Total</b>	19

**Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed**

		Court result - CCJ	Court result – DJ	Non court disposals	Total
<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	3	0	0	3
	Newtownards Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Craigavon Court Office	1	0	2	3
	Omagh Court Office	8	0	1	9
	Londonderry Court Office	1	0	1	2
	Coleraine Court Office	1	0	0	1
	Newry Court Office	5	0	0	5
	Ballymena Court Office	1	0	1	2
	Lisburn Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Civil Processing Centre	0	0	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Application</b>	Laganside Courts	1	0	1	2
	Craigavon Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Omagh Court Office	3	1	2	6
	Londonderry Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Newry Court Office	1	0	1	2
	Ballymena Court Office	2	0	0	2
	Lisburn Court Office	0	0	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>

**Table 11: Outstanding equity cases**

<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	29
	Newtownards Court Office	10
	Downpatrick Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	15
	Armagh Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	54
	Londonderry Court Office	17
	Coleraine Court Office	39
	Newry Court Office	27
	Ballymena Court Office	2
	Lisburn Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	28
<b>Total</b>		<b>227</b>

**Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity**

		Issue to disposal
<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	60
	Craigavon Court Office	99
	Omagh Court Office	71
	Londonderry Court Office	63
	Coleraine Court Office	76
	Newry Court Office	40
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	<b>Total</b>	59
<b>Application</b>	Laganside Courts	3
	Omagh Court Office	13
	Newry Court Office	4
	Ballymena Court Office	21
	<b>Total</b>	12

## Ejectment

**Table 13: Ejectment cases received**

<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	107
	Newtownards Court Office	36
	Craigavon Court Office	7
	Omagh Court Office	8
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	17
	Coleraine Court Office	9
	Newry Court Office	10
	Lisburn Court Office	15
	Dungannon Court office	1
	Civil Processing Office	121
	<b>Total</b>	332



**Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed**

		Court result – CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non Court Disposals	Total
<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	0	96	0	96
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	0	42	1	43
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	0	1	0	1
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	0	29	0	29
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	2	22	1	25
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	0	21	0	21
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	0	13	0	13
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	0	7	2	9
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	0	16	1	17
	<b>Total</b>	2	247	5	254

**Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID**

<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	17
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	4
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	9
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	3
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	6
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	43	

**Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment<sup>2</sup>**

		Issue to disposal
<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	23
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	20
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	15
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	14
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	25
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	16
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	13
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	34
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	16
	<b>Total</b>	20

<sup>2</sup>Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

## Small Claims

**Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received**

<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	127
	Newtownards Court Office	47
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	20
	Armagh Court Office	8
	Omagh Court Office	33
	Londonderry Court Office	32
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	31
	Newry Court Office	20
	Ballymena Court Office	5
	Lisburn Court Office	8
	Civil Processing Centre	2910
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3243</b>
<b>Application</b>	Laganside Courts	22
	Newtownards Court Office	5
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	2
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	6
	Newry Court Office	6
	Civil Processing Centre	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>

**Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received**

<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	128
	Newtownards Court Office	42
	Downpatrick Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	23
	Armagh Court Office	7
	Omagh Court Office	36
	Londonderry Court Office	20
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	26
	Newry Court Office	20
	Ballymena Court Office	4
	Lisburn Court Office	10
	Civil Processing Centre	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	

**Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed**

		<b>Court disposal</b>	<b>Non court disposal</b>	<b>Office disposal</b>	<b>Default judgement</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	92	9	63	4	168
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	40	8	9	0	57
	<b>Downpatrick Court Office</b>	2	1	0	0	3
	<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	23	11	3	1	38
	<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	4	0	0	0	4
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	17	1	4	0	22
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	12	3	2	1	18
	<b>Enniskillen Court Office</b>	2	0	1	0	3
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	23	3	3	0	29
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	15	3	3	1	22
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	5	3	0	0	8
	<b>Lisburn Court Office</b>	12	2	1	0	15
	<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	1	0	0	0	1
	<b>Civil Processing Centre</b>	2	2	517	1754	2275
	<b>Total</b>	250	46	606	1761	2663
<b>Application</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	15	2	0	0	17
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	5	2	0	0	7
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	2	0	0	0	2
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	3	0	0	0	3
	<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	6	4	0	0	10
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	7	0	0	0	7
	<b>Lisburn Court Centre</b>	1	0	0	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	39	8	0	0	47

**Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD**

Laganside Courts	235
Newtownards Court Office	25
Downpatrick Court Office	2
Craigavon Court Office	31
Armagh Court Office	9
Omagh Court Office	53
Londonderry Court Office	32
Enniskillen Court Office	4
Coleraine Court Office	54
Newry Court Office	31
Ballymena Court Office	6
Lisburn Court Office	7
Civil Processing Centre	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>507</b>

**Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims<sup>3</sup>**

		<b>Issue to disposal</b>
<b>Case</b>	Laganside Courts	26
	Newtownards Court Office	18
	Downpatrick Court Office	24
	Craigavon Court Office	25
	Armagh Court Office	13
	Omagh Court Office	16
	Londonderry Court Office	15
	Enniskillen Court Office	73
	Coleraine Court Office	39
	Newry Court Office	14
	Ballymena Court Office	19
	Lisburn Court Office	16
	Dungannon Court Office	39
	<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Application</b>	Laganside Courts	7
	Newtownards Court Office	4
	Omagh Court Office	13
	Londonderry Court Office	10
	Coleraine Court Office	8
	Newry Court Office	8
	Lisburn Court Office	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>

<sup>3</sup>Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

## Criminal Damage

**Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received**

<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	3
	<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	2
	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Total</b>	8
<b>Application</b>	<b>Newry Court Office</b>	1
	<b>Total</b>	1

**Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed**

		<b>Court disposal</b>	<b>Non court disposal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Case</b>	<b>Laganside Courts</b>	7	1	8
	<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	1	0	1
	<b>Total</b>	8	1	9

**Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases**

<b>Laganside Courts</b>	23
<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	4
<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	4
<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	3
<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	12
<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	3
<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	2
<b>Newry Court Office</b>	6
<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	1
<b>Dungannon Court Office</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	60

**Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage cases<sup>3</sup>**

	<b>Issue to disposal</b>
<b>Laganside Courts</b>	81
<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	33
<b>Total</b>	75

<sup>3</sup>Excludes default judgements, non court disposals and office disposals

## **Divorces**

**Table 26: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted**

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	45	44	2	10	5	106
Downpatrick Court Office	8	10	0	1	1	20
Craigavon Court Office	17	22	1	5	3	48
Omagh Court Office	6	12	0	6	4	28
Londonderry Court Office	18	18	0	9	1	46
Coleraine Court Office	25	19	0	4	5	53
Newry Court Office	11	8	0	1	1	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>322</b>

**Table 27: Divorce petitions by number of absolutes issued**

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	60	35	0	4	8	107
Newtownards Court Office	2	1	1	0	0	4
Downpatrick Court Office	17	9	0	3	2	31
Craigavon Court Office	22	18	0	4	1	45
Armagh Court Office	2	4	0	2	1	9
Omagh Court Office	3	9	0	5	3	20
Londonderry Court Office	14	18	0	3	0	35
Coleraine Court Office	36	30	2	9	11	88
Newry Court Office	5	5	0	1	1	12
Dungannon Court Office	3	4	0	1	1	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>360</b>

**Table 28: Matrimonial applications received**

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	5	0	0	5
Newtownards Court Office	1	0	0	1
Downpatrick Court Office	1	0	0	1
Craigavon Court Office	7	0	0	7
Omagh Court Office	8	0	0	8
Londonderry Court Office	10	0	3	13
Coleraine Court Office	7	0	1	8
Newry Court Office	3	0	0	3
Ballymena Court Office	2	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>48</b>

**Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed**

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	9	0	0	9
Newtownards Court Office	2	0	0	2
Craigavon Court Office	4	0	0	4
Armagh Court Office	1	0	0	1
Omagh Court Office	5	0	0	5
Londonderry Court Office	5	0	2	7
Coleraine Court Office	6	0	2	8
Newry Court Office	3	0	0	3
Ballymena Court Office	5	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>44</b>

**Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions**

	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	28	8
Downpatrick Court Office	24	8
Craigavon Court Office	24	8
Omagh Court Office	30	10
Londonderry Court Office	53	8
Coleraine Court Office	24	8
Newry Court Office	32	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>

**Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications<sup>4</sup>**

	<b>Issue to disposal</b>
<b>Laganside Courts</b>	29
<b>Newtownards Court Office</b>	12
<b>Craigavon Court Office</b>	24
<b>Armagh Court Office</b>	205
<b>Omagh Court Office</b>	11
<b>Londonderry Court Office</b>	27
<b>Coleraine Court Office</b>	25
<b>Newry Court Office</b>	12
<b>Ballymena Court Office</b>	33
<b>Total</b>	28

<sup>4</sup>Excludes non-court disposals

## **Licences**

**Table 32: Licences received and disposed**

<b>Court Office</b>	<b>Licences Received</b>	<b>Licences Disposed</b>
<b>Coleraine</b>	4	4
<b>Newtownards</b>	9	12
<b>Newry</b>	4	3
<b>Laganside Courts</b>	16	18
<b>Craigavon</b>	6	5
<b>Omagh</b>	1	1
<b>Londonderry</b>	7	5
<b>Total</b>	47	48



## County Court Judge and District Judge Sitting Days

Table 33: County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days<sup>5</sup>

	Total time			Total criminal time	Total civil time	Total family time
	Number of sitting days	Average sitting	Total time			
Antrim	75	02:21:44	177:10:00	162:45:00	14:25:00	0:00:00
Ballymena	11	03:53:38	42:50:00	0:00:00	34:15:00	08:35:00
Laganside	439	02:44:26	1203:06:00	542:49:00	351:51:00	308:26:00
Armagh	37	02:13:43	82:28:00	03:40:00	77:33:00	01:15:00
Lisburn	15	03:41:52	55:28:00	17:21:00	35:27:00	02:40:00
Magherafelt	4	01:31:15	06:05:00	0:00:00	06:00:00	00:05:00
Dungannon	121	02:55:05	353:07:00	272:33:00	57:15:00	23:19:00
Downpatrick	63	02:58:43	187:40:00	173:11:00	12:29:00	02:00:00
Craigavon	114	02:43:06	309:55:00	203:17:00	36:53:00	69:45:00
Strabane	1	01:50:00	01:50:00	01:50:00	0:00:00	0:00:00
Omagh	28	02:57:49	82:59:00	01:10:00	54:10:00	27:39:00
Enniskillen	5	04:54:48	24:34:00	0:00:00	24:00:00	0:34:00
Coleraine	17	02:48:49	47:50:00	11:30:00	24:40:00	11:40:00
Londonderry	96	02:24:54	231:51:00	123:47:00	64:50:00	43:14:00
Newtownards	38	02:19:28	88:20:00	13:20:00	74:35:00	0:25:00
Newry	102	01:58:11	200:56:00	170:07:00	26:25:00	04:24:00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1166</b>	<b>02:39:19</b>	<b>3096:09:00</b>	<b>1697:20:00</b>	<b>894:48:00</b>	<b>504:01:00</b>

<sup>5</sup>A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

## **APPENDIX 2 - EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **Amount awarded**

This relates to the monetary value awarded in cases such as small claims and ordinary civil bills. On occasion the amount awarded may be unliquidated which means that the claim was not made for a specific amount of money, but rather, for example, damage caused to a property, for repairs for damage caused or for faulty workmanship.

### **Application**

The act of applying to a civil court to ask it to do something, for example to start proceedings or make an order.

### **Case**

The proceedings, arguments and evidence in court and the court hearing.

### **Certificate of Readiness (COR)**

When a small claim or civil bill is contested by the respondent, the matter will proceed to the county court for judgment. Before the case can be heard, both parties must contribute to the completion of a Certificate of Readiness (COR) which informs the court that the case is ready to be heard and can therefore be listed by the court for hearing.

### **County Court Judge (CCJ)**

This is a judge who sits in the County Court and the Crown Court. In the County Court, they will sit on business such as ordinary civil bills (with a value over £10,000 and up to £30,000), criminal damage, licences, equity, ejectment and divorces.

### **Court Disposal**

Includes all cases issued with a final order by County Court Judge or District Judge.

### **Criminal Damage**

These are cases in which there is an allegation that a property has been destroyed or damaged or where a person is alleged to have made threats, had intent, or was found to have anything on their property with intent to cause damage to another property.

### **Default Judgment**

This is a judgment in favour of one party due to some failure to take action by the other party. In most cases this will be a judgment in favour of the applicant due to the failure of the respondent to contest the claim brought against them. The failure to take action is the default. The default judgment is the relief requested in the party's original petition.

## **Disposed**

The date a case is finally dealt with via a court or non-court result and the case is no longer in the court process.

## **District Judge (DJ)**

This is a judge who sits in the County Court or Magistrates' Court. In the County Court they will sit on business such as small claims and ordinary civil bills (with a value up to £10,000).

## **Divorces**

These are proceedings initiated in order to dissolve a marriage. Dissolutions of civil partnerships are also included within these figures. Following the issue of a divorce petition in the High Court, if it is a defended case it will be heard in the High Court and if it is an undefended case it may be heard either in the High Court or the County Court (depending on the choice of the individuals involved). Initially a Decree Nisi, judicial separation or nullity is granted, which is an initial order for divorce. Providing that no reason is provided to the court to challenge the nisi, a Decree Absolute, which is a final order for divorce that dissolves a marriage and permits an individual party to remarry, is made. A defended divorce is a proceeding in which an individual (the petitioner) applies for a divorce and the other party (the respondent) indicates that they wish to contest a divorce being granted at all, or on the reasons stated by the petitioner.

## **Equity**

Any type of proceeding which seeks a court judgement on disputes relating to property disputes i.e. who owns it, and should damages be paid.

## **Ejectment**

A legal document which seeks to recover possession of land and/or a dwelling house (e.g. where a tenant has stopped paying rent). Similar matters relating to properties owned with a mortgage are dealt with through proceedings within the Chancery Division of the High Court.

## **Issue**

This is the process by which a complaint or claim is lodged with the court. It can also be described as the 'Received Date'.

## **Licences**

These are applications for intoxicating liquor licences and certificates of registration for public houses and clubs, enabling their legal operation.

### **Matrimonial Application**

These are applications attached to divorce proceedings such as Ancillary Relief applications that relate to financial relief to one or both parties following a petition for divorce, for example, maintenance and the division of property/finances.

### **Notice of Dispute (NOD)**

When a small claim is taken by an applicant against a respondent, the respondent may contest the claim and signal their intention to dispute the claim through a Notice of Dispute. This means that the case will then be listed before a judge in court for resolution.

### **Non court disposal**

Includes all disposals not completed in court, for example settlements or withdrawals.

### **Notice of Intention to Defend (NID)**

When a civil bill is taken by an applicant against a respondent, the respondent may contest the claim and signal their intention to dispute the claim through a Notice of Intention to Defend. This means that the case will then be listed before a judge in court for resolution.

### **Ordinary civil bills**

A legal document which seeks to recover damages for (i) personal injury claims (injuries caused by negligence), for example, traffic accidents, falls on pavements and accidents at work and (ii) consumer disputes, for example, faulty goods or services. There have been a number of changes in the threshold for ordinary civil bills in recent years. Until 25 February 2013 ordinary civil bills related to cases seeking damages between £3,000 and £15,000 (prior to May 2011, the lower limit was £2,000). Following changes made on 25 February 2013, the upper limit for civil bills was extended to include cases seeking damages between £3,000 and £30,000.

### **Outstanding case**

A case that is currently active within the County Court system, for example, live cases not yet disposed.

### **Received**

The date the papers are lodged with the court and the fees receipted.

## **Sitting Days**

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It is a period of work by a judge on a single day. Multiple sittings on one calendar date will be aggregated into one sitting day based on the Judicial officer, venue and sitting date. Several types of business may be heard within one sitting day. Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken, except for the Magistrates court, when it is based in the first instance, on the earliest scheduled sitting. Where the start time for two or more sittings is the same, the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

## **Small claims**

Small claims allow certain types of claims to be decided informally by the county court, usually without the need of a solicitor or barrister. In general a small claim is one where the value to be claimed is not more than £3,000 (before May 2011 the upper limit was £2,000). Examples of small claims are (i) compensation for faulty services by, for example, builders, dry cleaners and garages (ii) compensation for faulty goods such as electrical goods (iii) disputes between landlords and tenants for rent arrears or compensation for not doing repairs and (iv) debts or wages owed or money in lieu of notice.

## **Time intervals**

This is the time taken (in weeks) between the case, application or claim being received by the court and the date it is finally resolved, by either the court, an arrangement between parties out of court or by being withdrawn by the applicant.

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