

Analytical Services Group

County Court Bulletin

April to June 2018

Research and Statistical Bulletin 24/2018

Provisional quarterly figures

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17 August 2018

Produced by Analytical Services Group,
Department of Justice.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period April to June 2018 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2007. On 31st October 2016, a single County Court Division called “The County Court of Northern Ireland” replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court Bulletin is now disaggregated by Court Office (Processing Office). During the period April to June 2018:
- There were 2,013 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 9% increase on the same quarter last year (1,849). In total, 2,496 civil bills were disposed, a decrease of 1% on the number disposed during the same period in 2017 (2,517).
- 32 equity cases were received during April to June 2018, down 18% on the 39 cases received during the period April to June 2017, while 26 equity cases were disposed, around half the number (51) disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 307 ejectment cases were received, up 16% on the 265 cases received during April to June 2017, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 17%, from 224 in the same quarter last year to 262 this quarter.
- 2,720 small claims were received, a similar number to the 2,727 received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 5% from 2,398 during April to June 2017 to 2,512 this quarter.
- Four criminal damage cases were received, compared to seven received during the period April to June 2017. Six criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, compared to nine during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 388 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, down 1% on the 393 granted during the same period last year.
- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,180 sitting days during the quarter, up 4% on the 1,131 sitting days recorded during the period April to June 2017. Some 56% of time was spent on criminal business with 25% spent on civil business and 19% on family business (compared to 57%, 27% and 16% respectively during April to June 2017).

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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 current calendar year 2018.

2.4 Frequency of Publication

This bulletin is published on a quarterly basis. The next bulletin will cover the third quarter of 2018 and will be published on 16th November 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 2018 edition of Judicial Statistics (published on 28th June 2019).

2.6 Counting rules

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

2.7 Interpreting trends

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

2.8 Revisions

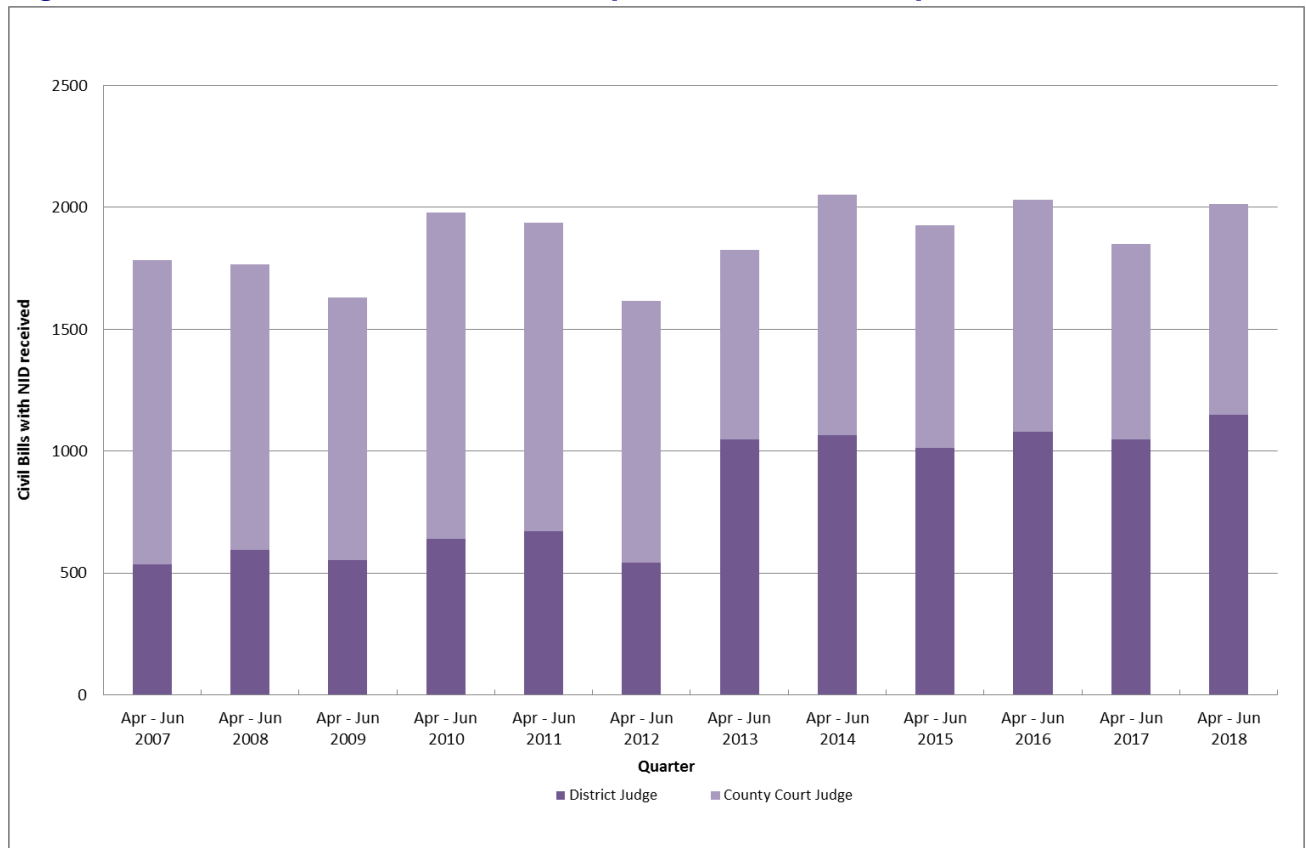
Any revision to data will be applied in light of the ASG (NICTS) Statistical Note ‘Policy Statement on Revisions’ which can be found at (www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/p_pd_stats_PolicyStatementRevisions.pdf). Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published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

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

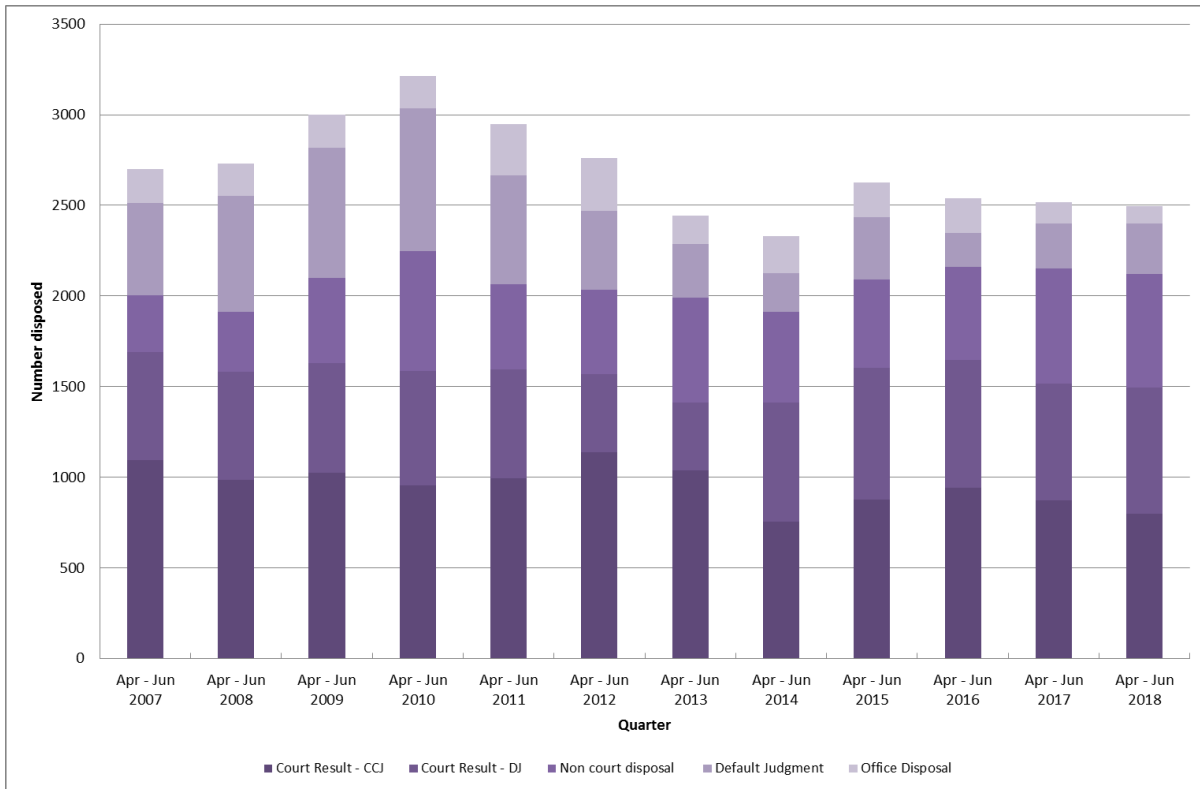
There were 2,013 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 9% increase on the same quarter last year (1,849) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received: April - June 2007 to April - June 2018



In total, 2,496 civil bills were disposed, a 1% decrease on the 2,517 disposed during the same period in 2017 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal: April - June 2007 to April - June 2018



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 61 weeks, compared to the 63 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2017.

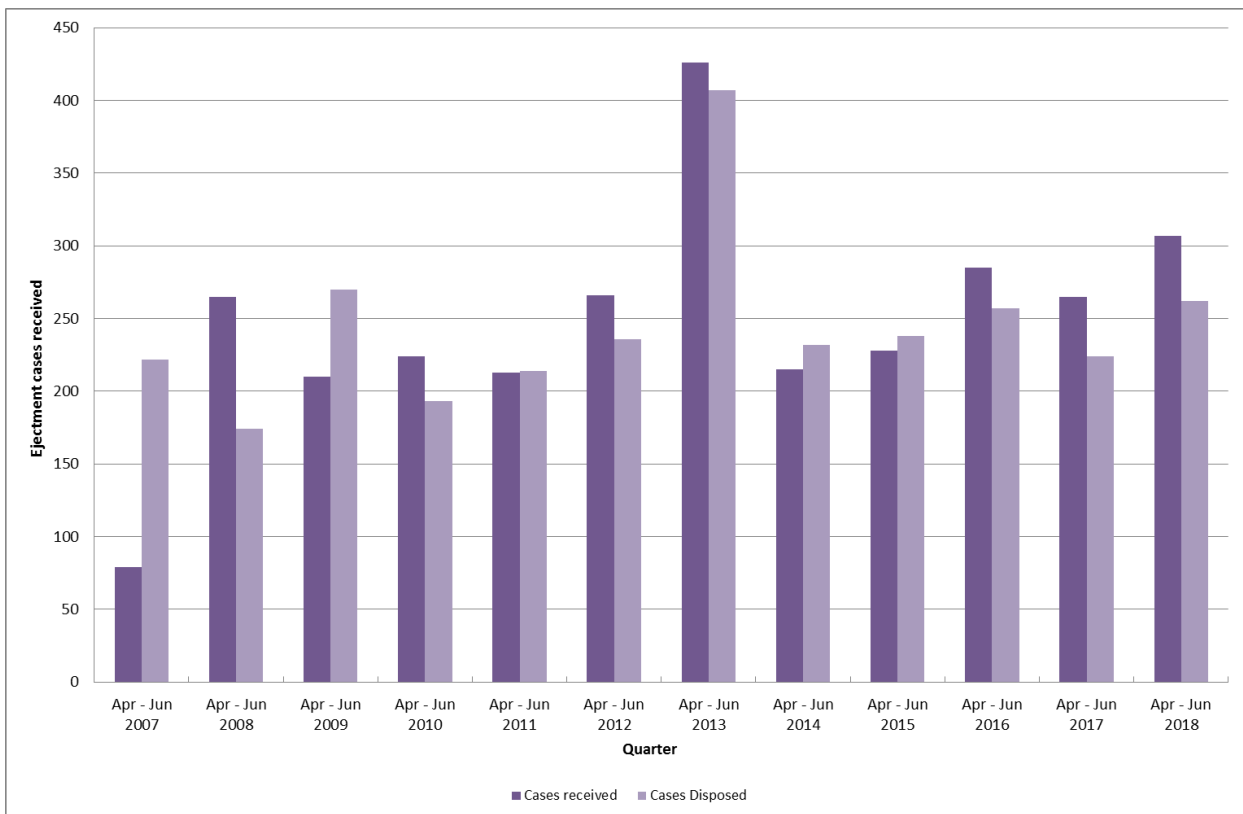
3.2 Equity

A total of 32 equity cases were received during April to June 2018, an 18% decrease on the number received during the period April to June 2017 (39), while the number of equity cases disposed decreased from 51 during the period April to June 2017, to 26 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 77 weeks down from 89 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 307 ejectment cases were received, up 16% on the 265 cases received during April to June 2017, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 17%, from 224 in the same quarter last year to 262 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed: April - June 2007 to April - June 2018



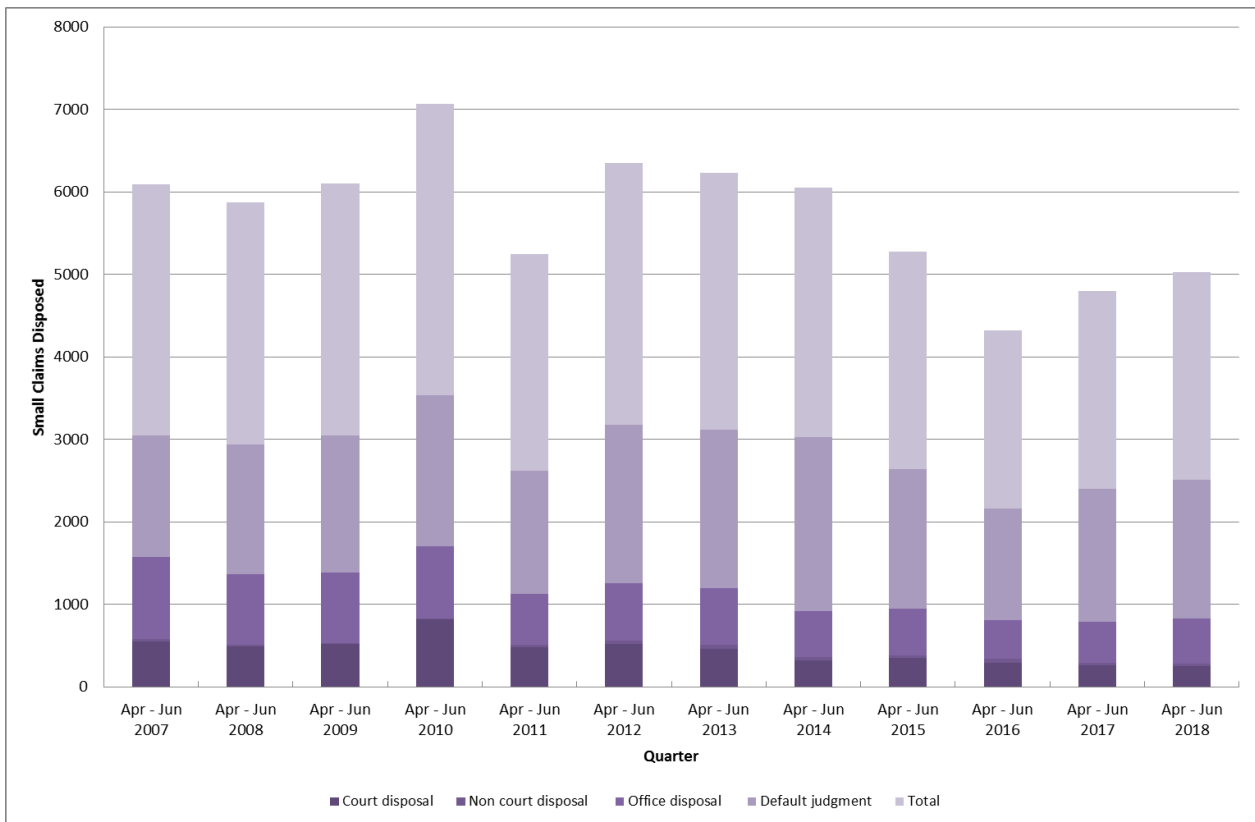
The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 22 weeks, the same as the average time taken during the April to June quarter in 2017.

3.4 Small claims

2,720 small claims were received, a similar number to the 2,727 received during the same quarter last year.

The number of small claims cases disposed increased by 5% from 2,398 during April to June 2017 to 2,512 this quarter. Of the 2,512 small claims disposed during the quarter, the majority (67%) were disposed by way of default judgment (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Small claims cases disposed, by type of disposal: April - June 2007 to April - June 2018

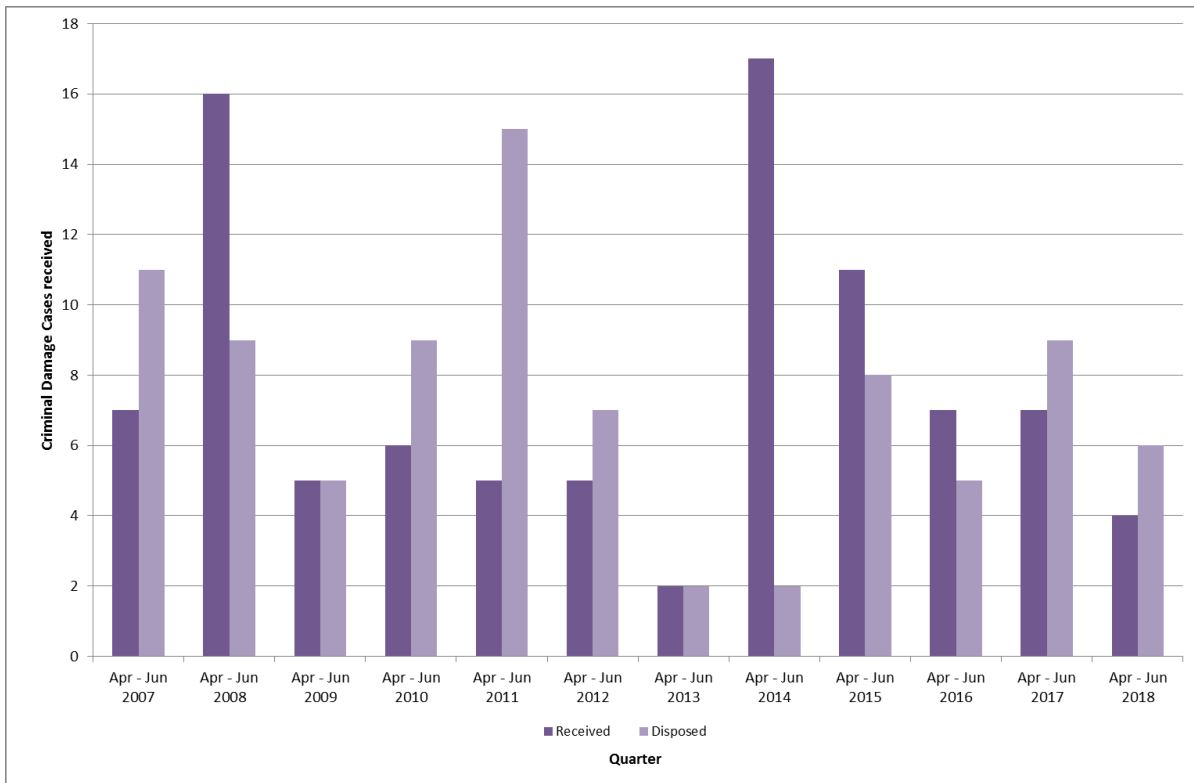


The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 21 weeks, compared to 28 weeks during the corresponding quarter last year.

3.5 Criminal Damage

Four criminal damage cases were received, with six disposed during the quarter. This compares with seven cases received and nine cases disposed during the same quarter in 2017 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed: April - June 2007 to April - June 2018



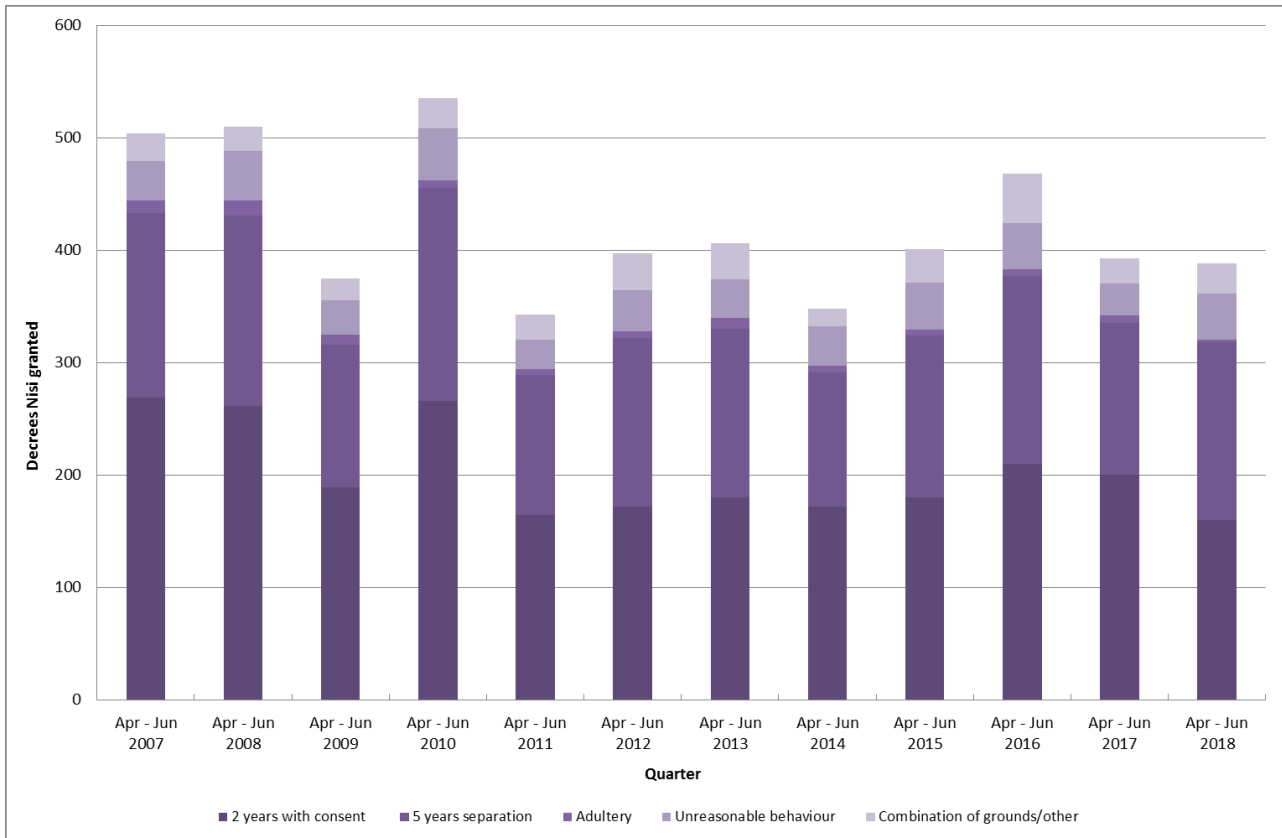
3.6 Divorces

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

A total of 388 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, down 1% on the 393 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 41% of decrees (160), followed by '5 years separation', 41% (158) of decrees (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type: April - June 2007 to April - June 2018



A total of 321 decrees absolute were issued in the county court, an increase of 8% on the 298 issued during the period January to March 2017. The most common type of decree absolute was '2 years with consent', accounting for 44% (142) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 33 weeks, with an average of eight weeks from the date the decree was granted until the date the decree absolute was issued. This compares to 31 weeks and eight weeks during the same period last year.

3.7 Licences

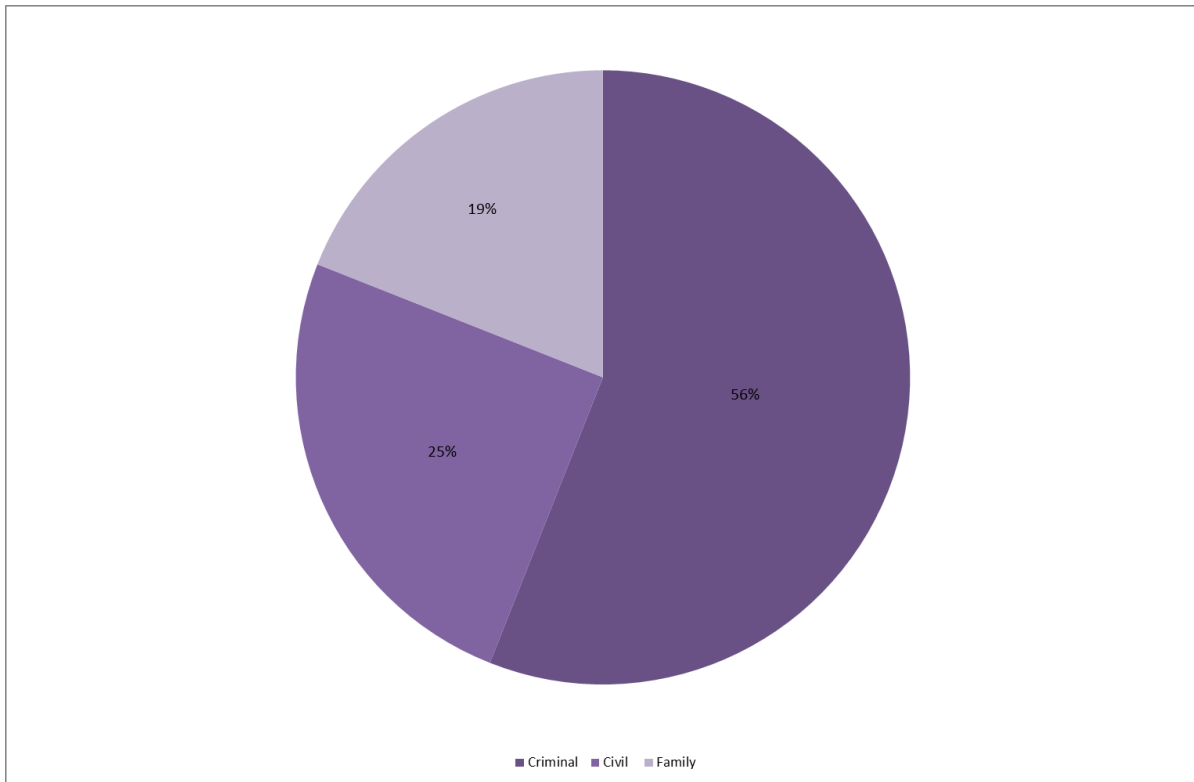
There were 85 licence applications received and 88 disposed, compared to the 74 received and 64 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,180 sitting days during the quarter, up 4% on the 1,131 sitting days recorded during the period April to June 2017.

Within these 1,180 sitting days, 56% of time was spent on criminal business, 25% of time was spent on civil business and 19% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

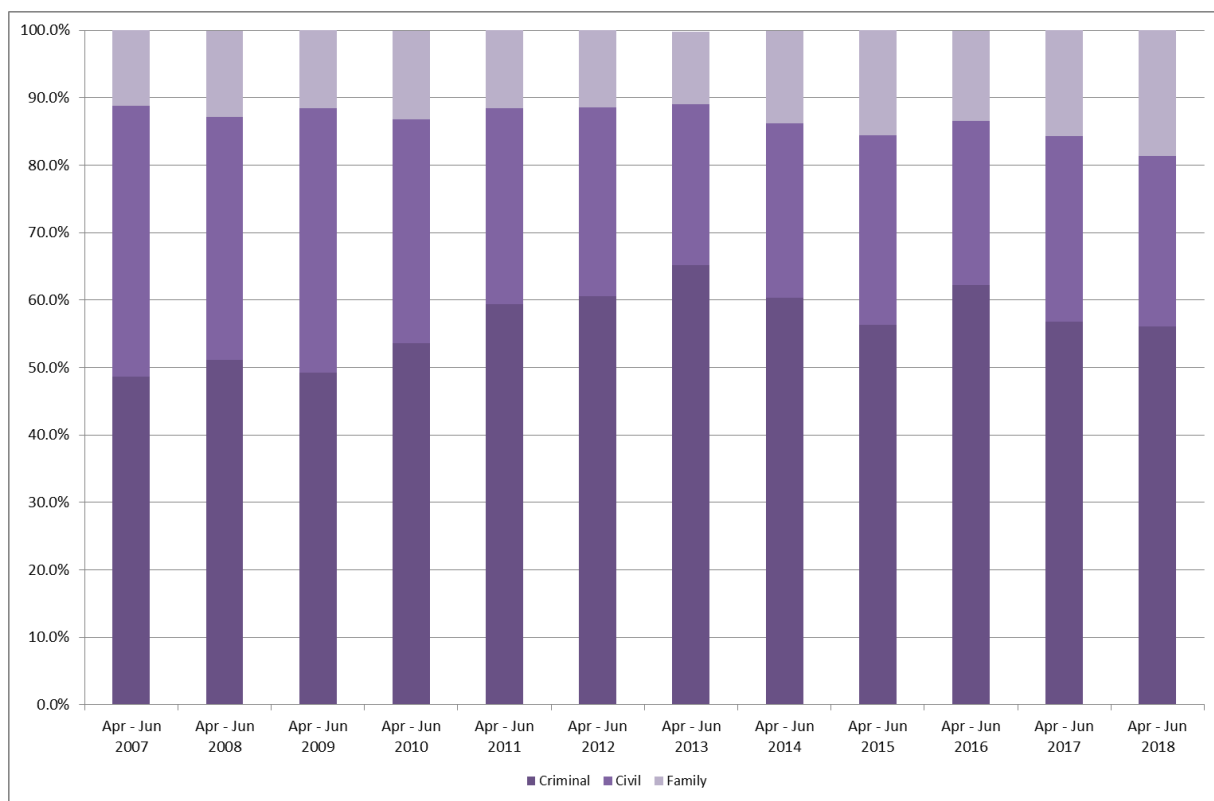
Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: April - June 2018



The proportion of time spent on criminal business fluctuated during April to June quarter since 2007, peaking at 65% during the quarter April to June 2013. This is largely reflective of County Court Judges dealing with increased volumes of cases in the Crown Court over the period.

The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 56% during April to June 2015. This decrease was reflective of the action taken by a number of solicitors and counsel who withdrew their representation from a number of Crown Court cases in response to the introduction, in May 2015, of new rules in relation to legal aid remuneration. Following resolution of this dispute in February 2016, activity in the Crown Court increased, with the proportion of time spent by County Court Judges on criminal business increasing to 62% of sittings during April to June 2016, while the backlog of cases arising from the dispute was addressed. Progress made in addressing the backlog has meant the proportion of time spent on criminal business decreased to 57% during April to June 2017, and to 56% this quarter.

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



APPENDIX 1

Civil Bills

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

Case	Laganside Courts	744
	Newtownards Court Office	185
	Downpatrick Court Office	18
	Craigavon Court Office	130
	Armagh Court Office	10
	Omagh Court Office	149
	Antrim Court Office	12
	Londonderry Court Office	84
	Coleraine Court Office	142
	Newry Court Office	134
	Magherafelt Court Office	3
	Ballymena Court Office	20
	Lisburn Court Office	58
	Dungannon Court Office	3
	Civil Processing Centre	1,119
Total	2,811	
Application	Laganside Courts	351
	Newtownards Court Office	115
	Downpatrick Court Office	4
	Craigavon Court Office	63
	Armagh Court Office	8
	Omagh Court Office	97
	Antrim Court Office	8
	Londonderry Court Office	68
	Coleraine Court Office	46
	Newry Court Office	66
	Ballymena Court Office	7
	Lisburn Court Office	43
	Civil Processing Centre	336
	Total	1,212

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

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	414	387	801
Newtownards Court Office	51	146	197
Downpatrick Court Office	5	12	17
Craigavon Court Office	59	68	127
Armagh Court Office	3	9	12
Omagh Court Office	69	127	196
Antrim Court Office	3	6	9
Londonderry Court Office	23	62	85
Coleraine Court Office	60	95	155
Newry Court Office	62	93	155
Magherafelt Court Office	0	8	8
Ballymena Court Office	6	10	16
Lisburn Court Office	31	47	78
Dungannon Court Office	1	0	1
Civil Processing Centre	76	80	156
Total	863	1,150	2,013

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

		Court result - CCJ	Court result – DJ	Non court disposals	Default judgement	Office disposal	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	476	217	249	12	33	987
	Newtownards Court Office	56	103	62	4	6	231
	Downpatrick Court Office	1	2	2	0	1	6
	Craigavon Court Office	28	46	46	4	7	131
	Armagh Court Office	9	9	3	0	0	21
	Omagh Court Office	76	99	52	7	12	246
	Antrim Court Office	4	6	8	1	0	19
	Londonderry Court Office	23	60	23	1	7	114
	Enniskillen Court Office	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Coleraine Court Office	56	52	60	3	7	178
	Newry Court Office	41	60	46	3	5	155
	Magherafelt Court Office	0	3	1	0	0	4
	Ballymena Court Office	4	0	11	1	2	18
	Lisburn Court Office	22	34	34	1	3	94
	Dungannon Court Office	2	2	2	0	1	7
	Civil Processing Centre	0	1	30	242	11	284
	Total	798	694	629	279	96	2,496
Application	Laganside Courts	42	20	148	0	0	210
	Newtownards Court Office	11	2	20	0	0	33
	Downpatrick Court Office	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Craigavon Court Office	4	0	15	0	0	19
	Armagh Court Office	0	0	2	0	0	2
	Omagh Court Office	0	11	44	0	0	55
	Antrim Court Office	1	0	3	0	0	4
	Londonderry Court Office	3	6	18	0	0	27
	Coleraine Court Office	6	4	13	0	0	23
	Newry Court Office	14	5	14	0	0	33
	Ballymena Court Office	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Lisburn Court Office	4	1	6	0	0	11
	Civil Processing Centre	0	0	20	0	0	20
	Total	87	49	304	0	0	440

Table 4: Number of ordinary civil bills cases by amount awarded¹

		No value	Less than £3000	£3000-14999	£15000-29999	£30000 and over	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	313	133	234	12	1	693
	Newtownards Court Office	34	52	71	2	0	159
	Downpatrick Court Office	0	3	0	0	0	3
	Craigavon Court Office	13	23	36	2	0	74
	Armagh Court Office	7	5	6	0	0	18
	Omagh Court Office	55	33	76	11	0	175
	Antrim Court Office	2	5	1	2	0	10
	Londonderry Court Office	23	29	28	3	0	83
	Coleraine Court Office	21	26	57	4	0	108
	Newry Court Office	36	23	39	3	0	101
	Magherafelt Court Office	0	0	3	0	0	3
	Ballymena Court Office	0	1	3	0	0	4
	Lisburn Court Office	14	20	22	0	0	56
	Dungannon Court Office	1	0	0	3	0	4
	Civil Processing Centre	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	519	353	577	42	1	1,492	

¹Excludes 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	1,256	872	2,128
Newtownards Court Office	92	179	271
Downpatrick Court Office	17	14	31
Craigavon Court Office	88	112	200
Armagh Court Office	6	11	17
Omagh Court Office	190	246	436
Strabane Court Office	0	1	1
Antrim Court Office	13	10	23
Londonderry Court Office	99	158	257
Enniskillen Court Office	5	3	8
Coleraine Court Office	158	151	309
Newry Court Office	108	129	237
Limavady Court Office	1	0	1
Magherafelt Court office	3	3	6
Ballymena Court Office	14	17	31
Lisburn Court Office	53	47	100
Dungannon Court Office	5	3	8
Civil Processing Centre	183	162	345
Total	2,291	2,118	4,409

Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	513	302	815
Newtownards Court Office	20	51	71
Downpatrick Court Office	0	5	5
Craigavon Court Office	37	57	94
Armagh Court Office	11	7	18
Omagh Court Office	88	132	220
Strabane Court Office	2	0	2
Antrim Court Office	3	5	8
Londonderry Court Office	53	60	113
Coleraine Court Office	64	63	127
Newry Court Office	43	43	86
Limavady Court Office	1	0	1
Magherafelt Court Office	4	3	7
Ballymena Court Office	10	8	18
Lisburn Court Office	36	32	68
Dungannon Court Office	1	8	9
Civil Processing Centre	3	3	6
Total	889	779	1,668

Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases²

Case	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	64
Newtownards Court Office	38
Downpatrick Court Office	45
Craigavon Court Office	51
Armagh Court Office	52
Omagh Court Office	88
Antrim Court Office	88
Londonderry Court Office	54
Coleraine Court Office	56
Newry Court Office	51
Magherafelt Court Office	18
Ballymena Court Office	78
Lisburn Court Office	54
Dungannon Court Office	133
Civil Processing Centre	7
Total	61

²Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications²

		Issue to disposal
Application	Laganside Courts	13
	Newtownards Court Office	10
	Downpatrick Court Office	19
	Craigavon Court Office	5
	Omagh Court Office	7
	Antrim Court Office	13
	Londonderry Court Office	4
	Coleraine Court Office	9
	Newry Court Office	17
	Lisburn Court Office	21
Total	12	

²Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Equity

Table 9: Equity cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	2
	Newtownards Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	9
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	4
	Newry Court Office	4
	Magherafelt Court Office	1
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	3
	Total	32
Application	Laganside Courts	2
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	8
	Coleraine Court Office	3
	Newry Court Office	1
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	2
	Total	20

Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result – DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	3	0	2	5
	Newtownards Court Office	3	0	0	3
	Craigavon Court Office	3	1	0	4
	Armagh Court Office	1	0	0	1
	Omagh Court Office	4	0	2	6
	Londonderry Court Office	1	0	0	1
	Coleraine Court Office	3	0	0	3
	Newry Court Office	3	0	0	3
	Total	21	1	4	26
Application	Newtownards Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Craigavon Court Office	1	0	1	2
	Omagh Court Office	7	0	3	10
	Londonderry Court Office	0	1	0	1
	Coleraine Court Office	0	0	2	2
	Newry Court Office	1	0	0	1
	Civil Processing Centre	0	0	1	1
	Total	9	1	8	18

Table 11: Outstanding equity cases

Case	Laganside Courts	23
	Newtownards Court Office	9
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	13
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	59
	Londonderry Court Office	18
	Coleraine Court Office	37
	Newry Court Office	31
	Magherafelt Court Office	1
	Ballymena Court Office	4
	Lisburn Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	33
Total	232	

Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	52
	Newtownards Court Office	75
	Craigavon Court Office	55
	Armagh Court Office	45
	Omagh Court Office	137
	Londonderry Court Office	58
	Coleraine Court Office	54
	Newry Court Office	95
	Total	77
Application	Craigavon Court Office	8
	Omagh Court Office	13
	Londonderry Court Office	9
	Newry Court Office	7
	Total	12

Ejectment

Table 13: Ejectment cases received

Case	Laganside Courts	86
	Newtownards Court Office	36
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	4
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	18
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	17
	Coleraine Court Office	7
	Newry Court Office	6
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	18
	Civil Processing Office	111
	Total	307

Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed

		Court result – CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non Court Disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	0	97	2	99
	Newtownards Court Office	2	45	1	48
	Craigavon Court Office	1	12	0	13
	Armagh Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Omagh Court Office	0	18	0	18
	Londonderry Court Office	0	16	0	16
	Coleraine Court Office	0	21	0	21
	Newry Court Office	0	11	1	12
	Magherafelt Court Office	0	2	0	2
	Ballymena Court Office	0	1	0	1
	Lisburn Court Office	0	27	2	29
	Civil Processing Centre	0	2	0	2
Total		3	252	7	262

Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

Case	Laganside Courts	21
	Newtownards Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	8
	Londonderry Court Office	4
	Coleraine Court Office	4
	Newry Court Office	5
	Civil Processing Centre	3
Total		49

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment³

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	24
	Newtownards Court Office	19
	Craigavon Court Office	18
	Omagh Court Office	27
	Londonderry Court Office	16
	Coleraine Court Office	20
	Newry Court Office	14
	Magherafelt Court Office	15
	Ballymena Court Office	13
	Lisburn Court Office	30
	Civil Processing Centre	11
	Total	22

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

Small Claims

Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	100
	Newtownards Court Office	45
	Craigavon Court Office	19
	Armagh Court Office	7
	Omagh Court Office	15
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	23
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	39
	Newry Court Office	22
	Ballymena Court Office	3
	Lisburn Court Office	6
	Civil Processing Centre	2,439
	Total	2,720
Application	Laganside Courts	13
	Newtownards Court Office	6
	Craigavon Court Office	3
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	4
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	9
	Newry Court Office	7
	Civil Processing Centre	7
	Total	51

Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Case	Laganside Courts	108
	Newtownards Court Office	40
	Craigavon Court Office	15
	Armagh Court Office	5
	Omagh Court Office	20
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	31
	Enniskillen Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	41
	Newry Court Office	19
	Ballymena Court Office	2
	Lisburn Court Office	4
	Civil Processing Centre	2
Total	289	

Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	78	9	34	6	127
	Newtownards Court Office	27	2	6	3	38
	Downpatrick Court Office	1	0	0	0	1
	Craigavon Court Office	15	5	2	2	24
	Armagh Court Office	5	2	0	0	7
	Omagh Court Office	37	0	13	0	50
	Londonderry Court Office	31	1	3	2	37
	Enniskillen Court Office	1	0	0	0	1
	Coleraine Court Office	25	9	4	0	38
	Newry Court Office	22	5	2	0	29
	Ballymena Court Office	1	1	0	0	2
	Lisburn Court Office	5	0	0	3	8
	Civil Processing Centre	0	2	477	1,671	2,150
Total	248	36	541	1,687	2,512	
Application	Laganside Courts	12	3	0	0	15
	Newtownards Court Office	2	3	0	0	5
	Omagh Court Office	2	0	0	0	2
	Londonderry Court Office	1	0	0	0	1
	Coleraine Court Office	8	0	0	0	8
	Newry Court Office	8	0	0	0	8
	Total	33	6	0	0	39

Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD

Laganside Courts	218
Newtownards Court Office	36
Downpatrick Court Office	1
Craigavon Court Office	24
Armagh Court Office	9
Omagh Court Office	29
Antrim Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	28
Enniskillen Court Office	4
Coleraine Court Office	63
Newry Court Office	26
Ballymena Court Office	7
Lisburn Court Office	6
Civil Processing Centre	16
Total	468

Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims³

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	20
	Newtownards Court Office	19
	Downpatrick Court Office	8
	Craigavon Court Office	49
	Armagh Court Office	11
	Omagh Court Office	26
	Londonderry Court Office	17
	Enniskillen Court Office	32
	Coleraine Court Office	20
	Newry Court Office	15
	Ballymena Court Office	14
	Lisburn Court Office	21
	Total	21
	Application	Laganside Courts
Newtownards Court Office		7
Omagh Court Office		14
Londonderry Court Office		6
Coleraine Court Office		5
Newry Court Office		7
Total		6

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

Criminal Damage

Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	2
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	1
	Total	4

Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	3	3
	Omagh Court Office	1	1
	Londonderry Court Office	2	2
	Total	6	6
Application	Newry Court Office	1	1
	Total	1	1

Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases

Laganside Courts	16
Newtownards Court Office	5
Craigavon Court Office	2
Armagh Court Office	2
Omagh Court Office	10
Londonderry Court Office	1
Coleraine Court Office	3
Newry Court Office	7
Ballymena Court Office	1
Dungannon Court Office	2
Total	49

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage cases³

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	44
	Omagh Court Office	216
	Londonderry Court Office	23
	Total	66
Application	Newry Court Office	4
	Total	4

³Excludes 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	43	41	0	6	5	95
Downpatrick Court Office	25	11	1	4	4	45
Craigavon Court Office	28	17	1	9	4	59
Omagh Court Office	14	20	0	3	3	40
Londonderry Court Office	16	21	0	5	5	47
Coleraine Court Office	23	29	0	9	4	65
Newry Court Office	11	19	0	5	2	37
Total	160	158	2	41	27	388

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	44	43	1	9	5	102
Downpatrick Court Office	15	12	0	0	1	28
Craigavon Court Office	16	13	0	3	4	36
Armagh Court Office	0	0	0	1	1	2
Omagh Court Office	8	13	0	1	1	23
Londonderry Court Office	16	17	0	6	5	44
Coleraine Court Office	34	19	0	7	5	65
Newry Court Office	8	9	0	0	2	19
Ballymena Court Office	1	0	0	0	0	1
Dungannon Court Office	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	142	126	1	28	24	321

Table 28: Matrimonial applications received

	Ancillary relief	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	5	0	5
Newtownards Court Office	4	0	4
Downpatrick Court Office	1	1	2
Craigavon Court Office	4	0	4
Armagh Court Office	1	0	1
Omagh Court Office	5	1	6
Londonderry Court Office	9	0	9
Coleraine Court Office	14	2	16
Newry Court Office	4	1	5
Ballymena Court Office	4	0	4
Dungannon Court Office	2	0	2
Total	53	5	58

Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed

	Ancillary relief	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	3	0	3
Craigavon Court Office	3	0	3
Armagh Court Office	1	0	1
Omagh Court Office	5	1	6
Londonderry Court Office	9	1	10
Coleraine Court Office	4	0	4
Newry Court Office	3	1	4
Ballymena Court Office	2	1	3
Dungannon Court Office	3	0	3
Total	33	4	37

Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	23	8
Downpatrick Court Office	25	8
Craigavon Court Office	34	8
Omagh Court Office	29	9
Londonderry Court Office	38	8
Coleraine Court Office	54	8
Newry Court Office	27	9
Total	33	8

Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications⁴

	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	70
Craigavon Court Office	6
Armagh Court Office	26
Omagh Court Office	14
Londonderry Court Office	46
Coleraine Court Office	11
Newry Court Office	21
Ballymena Court Office	22
Dungannon Court Office	81
Total	33

⁴Excludes non-court disposals

Licences

Table 32: Licences received and disposed

Court Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	20	19
Newtownards	3	8
Newry	7	9
Laganside Courts	38	33
Craigavon	4	5
Omagh	5	5
Londonderry	8	9
Total	85	88

County Court Judge and District Judge Sitting Days

Table 33: County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days⁵

	Total time			Total criminal time	Total civil time	Total family time
	Number of sitting days	Average sitting	Total time			
Antrim	92	2:38:18	242:44:00	231:06:00	11:38:00	00:00:00
Ballymena	8	3:43:45	29:50:00	0:00:00	26:05:00	03:45:00
Laganside	434	2:52:23	1,246:55:00	579:19:00	288:09:00	379:27:00
Armagh	42	2:13:04	93:09:00	09:58:00	82:50:00	00:21:00
Limavady	1	3:35:00	03:35:00	00:00:00	03:35:00	00:00:00
Lisburn	9	2:57:00	26:33:00	04:33:00	21:00:00	01:00:00
Magherafelt	5	1:32:00	07:40:00	0:00:00	06:10:00	01:30:00
Dungannon	99	3:53:32	385:21:00	319:06:00	34:15:00	32:00:00
Downpatrick	43	1:48:30	77:46:00	68:24:00	05:22:00	04:00:00
Craigavon	123	1:59:45	245:31:00	134:48:00	31:30:00	79:13:00
Strabane	5	2:50:00	14:10:00	03:00:00	06:00:00	05:10:00
Omagh	21	4:28:00	93:48:00	09:30:00	55:57:00	28:21:00
Enniskillen	7	4:32:25	31:47:00	0:00:00	30:47:00	01:00:00
Coleraine	25	3:44:36	93:35:00	28:20:00	59:10:00	06:05:00
Londonderry	114	2:33:16	291:14:00	170:57:00	56:08:00	64:09:00
Newtownards	36	2:34:36	92:46:00	11:25:00	80:36:00	00:45:00
Newry	116	2:33:17	296:22:00	264:41:00	29:24:00	02:17:00
Total	1,180	2:46:24	3,272:46:00	1,835:07:00	828:36:00	609:03:00

⁵A 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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