



Department of
Justice

www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Analytical Services Group

County Court Bulletin

July to September 2018

Research and Statistical Bulletin 34/2018

Provisional quarterly figures

R Redmond

16 November 2018

Produced by Analytical Services Group,
Department of Justice.

For further information write to:

**Analytical Services Group,
NI Courts and Tribunals Service,
4th Floor, Laganside House,
23-27 Oxford Street,
Belfast BT1 3LA**

Telephone: 028 9072 8920

Email: rodney.redmond@courtsni.gov.uk

This bulletin is available on the Internet at:

www.justice-ni.gov.uk/courts-and-tribunals

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period July to September 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 July to September 2018:
- There were 1,702 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 5% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,784). In total, 1,960 civil bills were disposed, a decrease of 15% on the number disposed during the same period in 2017 (2,304).
- 25 equity cases were received during July to September 2018, down by one case compared to the 26 cases received during the period July to September 2017, while 23 equity cases were disposed, an increase of 21% on the 19 disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 279 ejectment cases were received, down 4% on the 289 cases received during July to September 2017, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 42%, from 165 in the same quarter last year to 234 this quarter.
- 2,142 small claims were received, down 36% on the 3,322 received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed decreased by 9% from 2,130 during July to September 2017 to 1,933 this quarter.
- Three criminal damage cases were received, compared to four received during the period July to September 2017. Three criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, compared to one during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 267 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, down 10% on the 298 granted during the same period last year.
- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 680 sitting days during the quarter, up 1% on the 675 sitting days recorded during the period July to September 2017. Some 49% of time was spent on criminal business with 31% spent on civil business and 20% on family business (compared to 48%, 31% and 21% respectively during July to September 2017).

CONTENTS

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	2
3. Findings	4
3.1 Ordinary civil bills	
3.2 Equity	
3.3 Ejectment	
3.4 Small claims	
3.5 Criminal damage	
3.6 Divorces	
3.7 Licences	
3.8 Sitting Days	
Appendix 1 – Tables	12
Appendix 2 – Explanatory Notes	29
Figure	Page
Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018	4
Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018	5
Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018	6
Figure 4: Small claims cases received: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018	7
Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018	8
Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type: July – September 2007 to July - September 2018	9
Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: July - September 2018	10
Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018	11
Table	Page
Table 1: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications received	12
Table 2: Number of ordinary civil bill cases with NID received by Judicial Level	13
Table 3: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications disposed	14
Table 4: Number of ordinary civil bill cases by amount awarded	15
Table 5: Outstanding civil bills with NID but no COR	15
Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR	16
Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases	16

<u>Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications</u>	17
<u>Table 9: Equity cases and applications received</u>	17
<u>Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed</u>	18
<u>Table 11: Outstanding equity cases</u>	18
<u>Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity</u>	19
<u>Table 13: Ejectment cases received</u>	19
<u>Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed</u>	20
<u>Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID</u>	20
<u>Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment</u>	20
<u>Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received</u>	21
<u>Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NOD received</u>	21
<u>Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed</u>	22
<u>Table 20: Outstanding claims with NOD</u>	23
<u>Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims</u>	23
<u>Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received</u>	24
<u>Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed</u>	24
<u>Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases</u>	24
<u>Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage</u>	24
<u>Table 26: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted</u>	25
<u>Table 27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued</u>	25
<u>Table 28: Matrimonial applications received</u>	26
<u>Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed</u>	26
<u>Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions</u>	26
<u>Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications</u>	27
<u>Table 32: Licences received and disposed</u>	27
<u>Table 33: County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days</u>	28

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 15th February 2019.

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

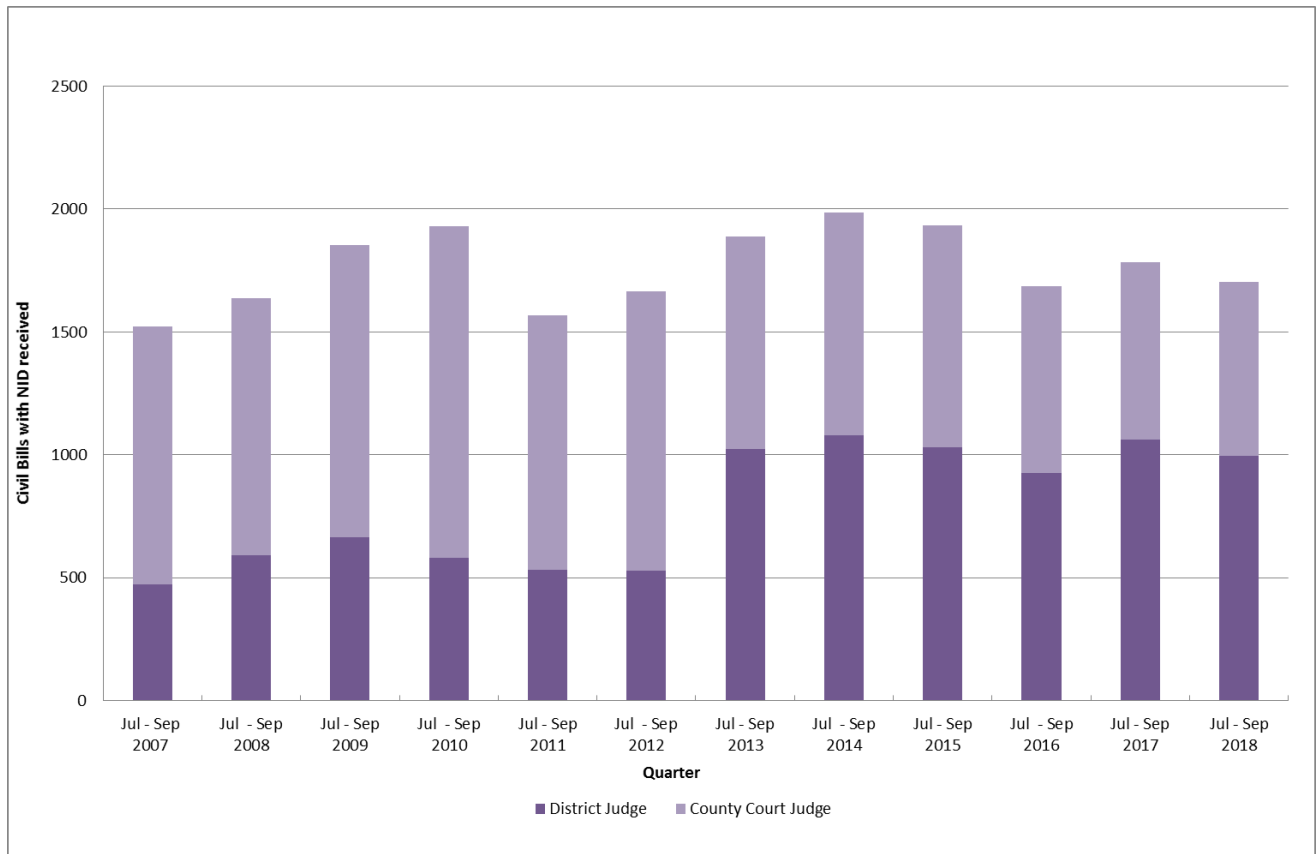
Any revision to data will be applied in light of the ASG (NICTS) Statistical Note ‘Policy Statement on Revisions’ which can be found at (www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/p_pd_stats_PolicyStatementRevisions.pdf). Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published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

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

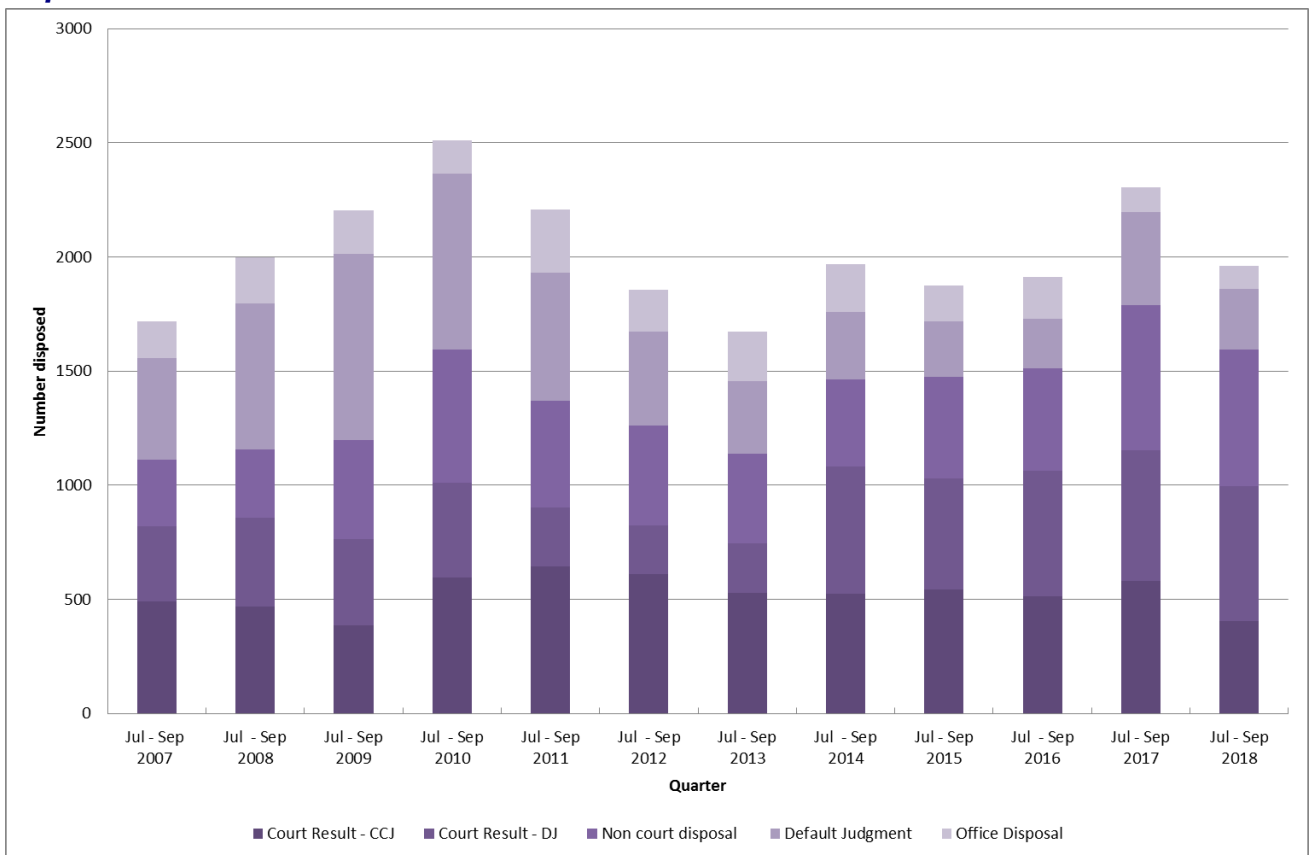
There were 1,702 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 5% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,784) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018



In total, 1,960 civil bills were disposed, a 15% decrease on the 2,304 disposed during the same period in 2017 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 54 weeks, compared to the 58 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2017.

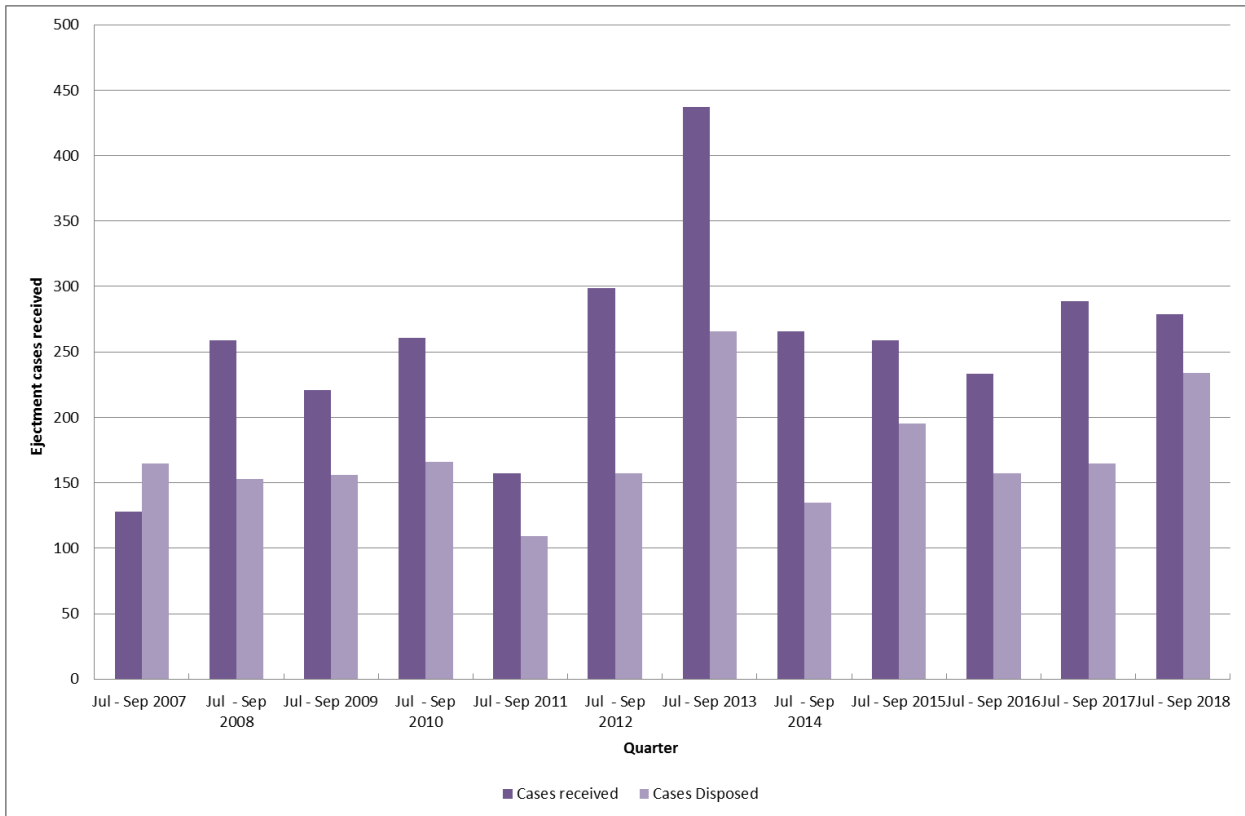
3.2 Equity

A total of 25 equity cases were received during July to September 2018, one less than the number received during the period July to September 2017 (26), while the number of equity cases disposed increased from 19 during the period July to September 2017, to 23 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 65 weeks down from 92 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 279 ejectment cases were received, down 4% on the 289 cases received during July to September 2017, with the number of ejectment cases disposed increasing by 42%, from 165 in the same quarter last year to 234 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018

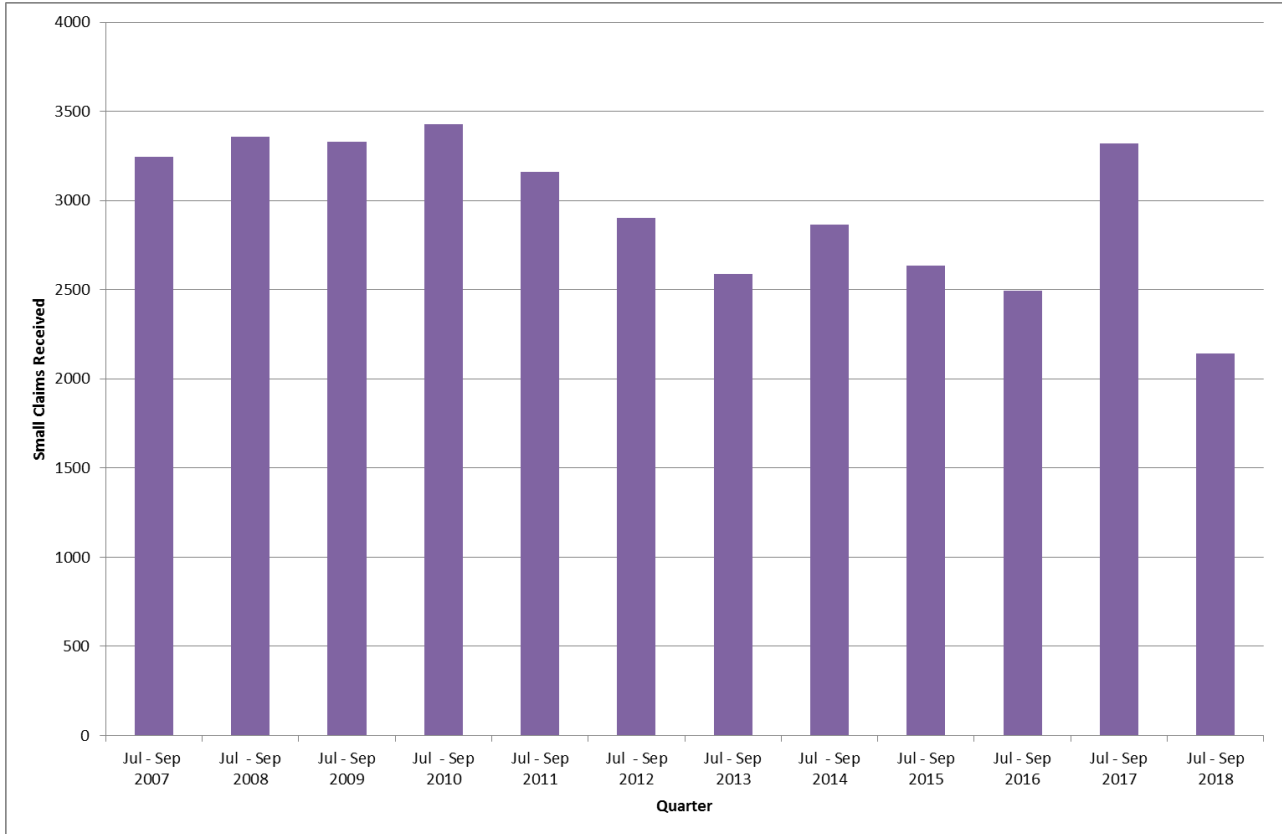


The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 24 weeks, compared to 22 weeks during the July to September quarter in 2017.

3.4 Small claims

2,142 small claims were received, down 36% on the 3,322 received during the same quarter last year (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Small claims cases received: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018



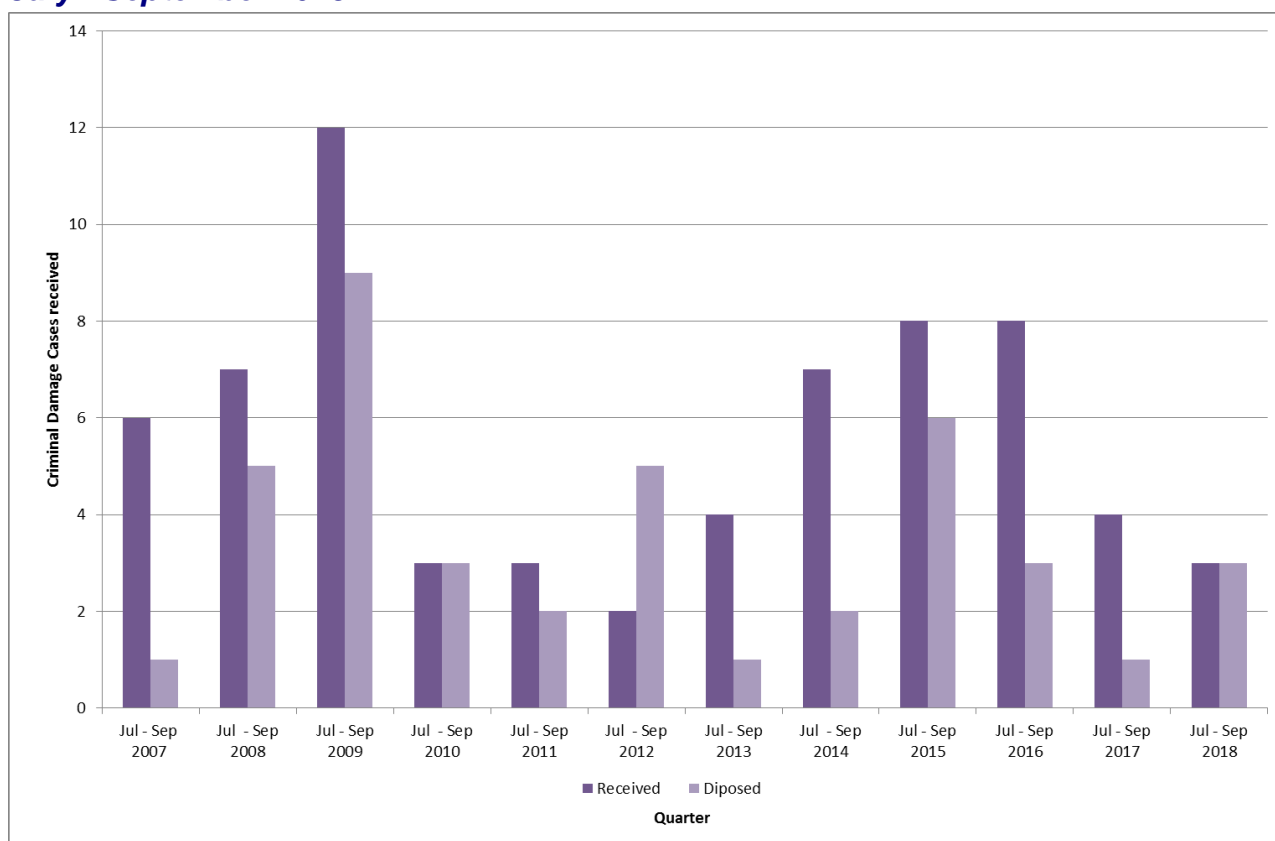
The number of small claims cases disposed decreased by 9% from 2,130 during July to September 2017 to 1,933 this quarter. Of the 1,933 small claims disposed during the quarter, the majority (61%) were disposed by way of default judgment.

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

3.5 Criminal Damage

Three criminal damage cases were received, with three disposed during the quarter. This compares with four cases received and one case disposed during the same quarter in 2017 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018



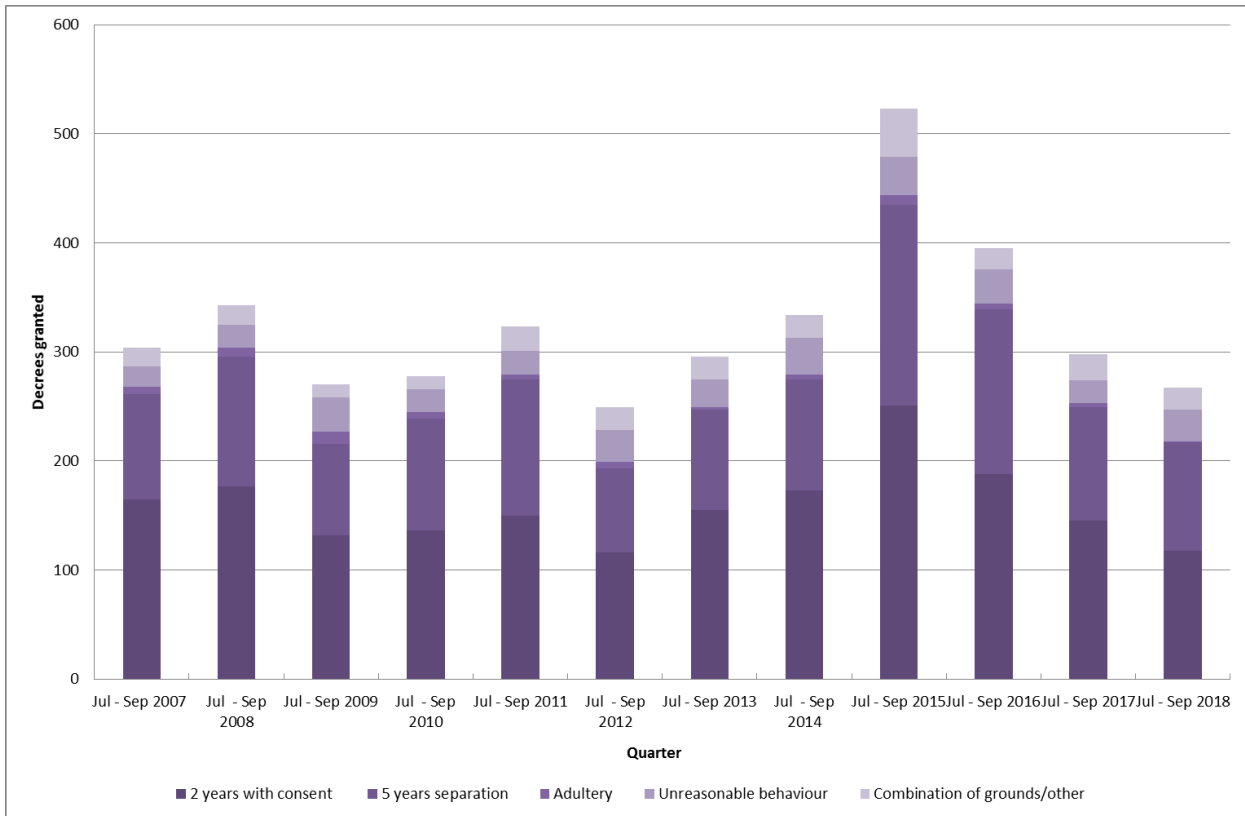
3.6 Divorces

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 267 divorce decrees were granted in the county court, down 10% on the 298 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 44% of decrees (118), followed by '5 years separation', 37% (99) of decrees (Figure 6).

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



A total of 294 decrees absolute were issued in the county court, a decrease of 18% on the 358 issued during the period July to September 2017. The most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 43% (127) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 32 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

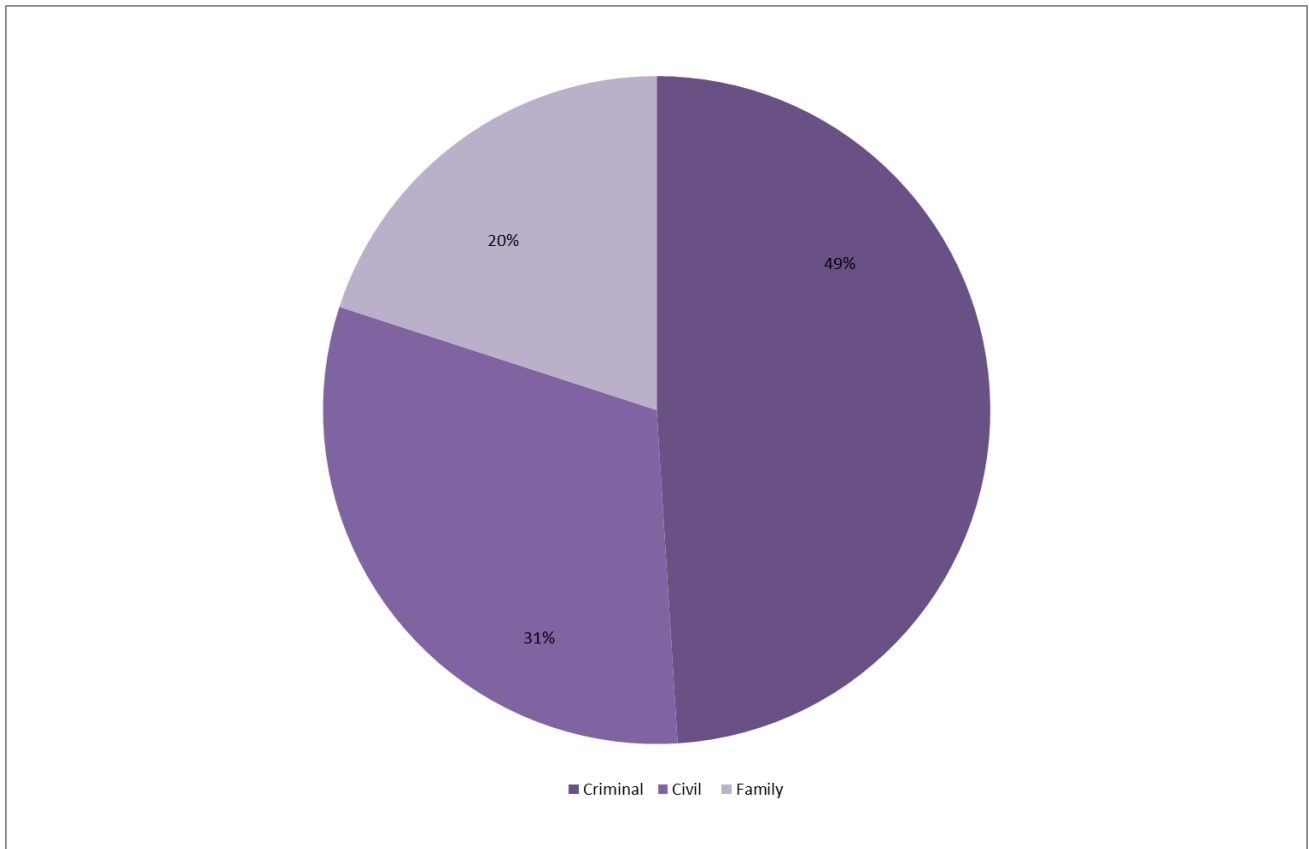
There were 30 licence applications received and 23 disposed, compared to the 48 received and 39 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 680 sitting days during the quarter, up 1% on the 675 sitting days recorded during the period July to September 2017.

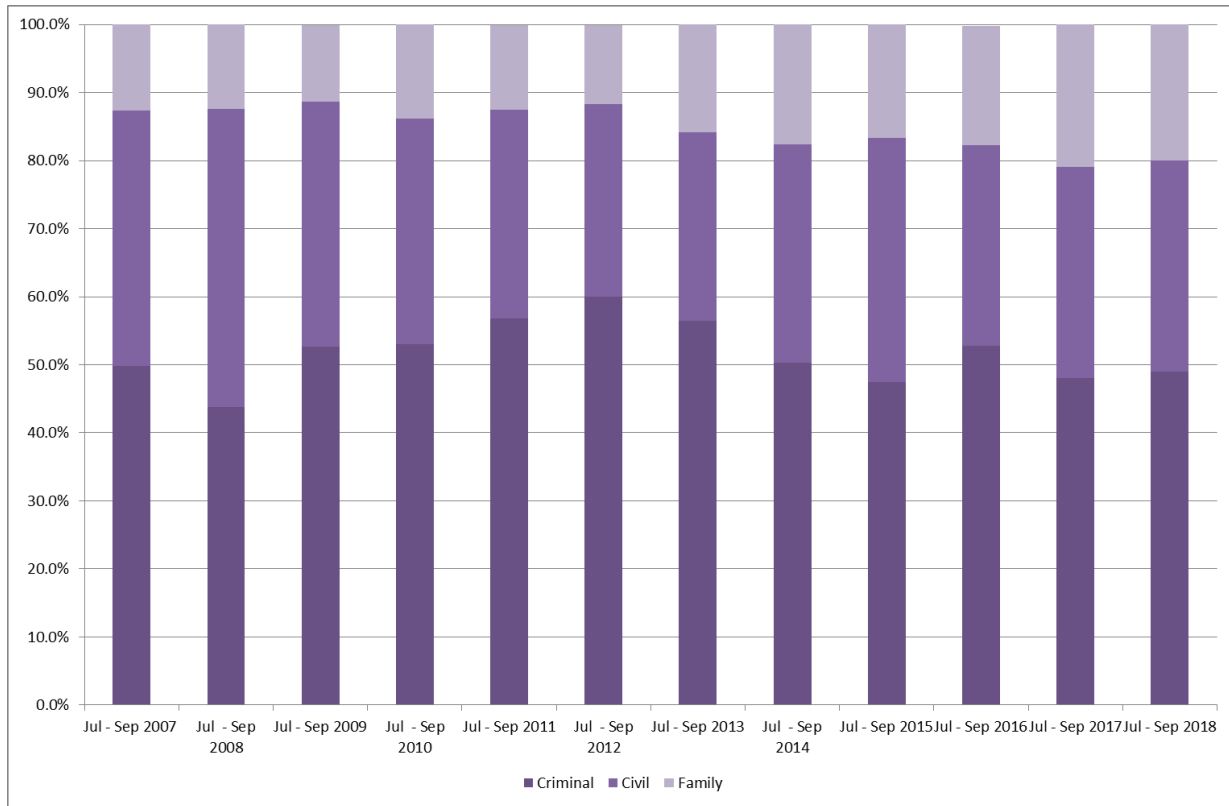
Within these 680 sitting days, 49% of time was spent on criminal business, 31% of time was spent on civil business and 20% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: July - September 2018



The proportion of time spent on criminal business fluctuated during July to September quarter since 2007, peaking at 60% during the quarter July to September 2012. This is largely reflective of County Court Judges dealing with increased volumes of cases in the Crown Court over that particular period.

Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type: July - September 2007 to July - September 2018



APPENDIX 1

Civil Bills

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

Case	Laganside Courts	674
	Newtownards Court Office	172
	Downpatrick Court Office	12
	Craigavon Court Office	94
	Armagh Court Office	16
	Omagh Court Office	161
	Antrim Court Office	17
	Londonderry Court Office	84
	Enniskillen Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	119
	Newry Court Office	112
	Limavady Court Office	1
	Magherafelt Court Office	4
	Ballymena Court Office	20
	Lisburn Court Office	82
	Dungannon Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	941
Total	2512	
Application	Laganside Courts	364
	Newtownards Court Office	99
	Downpatrick Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	54
	Armagh Court Office	6
	Omagh Court Office	65
	Antrim Court Office	7
	Londonderry Court Office	53
	Coleraine Court Office	50
	Newry Court Office	55
	Ballymena Court Office	12
	Lisburn Court Office	37
	Civil Processing Centre	310
	Total	1115

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

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	333	356	689
Newtownards Court Office	66	121	187
Downpatrick Court Office	6	10	16
Craigavon Court Office	35	65	100
Armagh Court Office	6	7	13
Omagh Court Office	66	96	162
Antrim Court Office	6	17	23
Londonderry Court Office	35	65	100
Enniskillen Court Office	0	1	1
Coleraine Court Office	48	86	134
Newry Court Office	51	75	126
Limavady Court Office	0	3	3
Magherafelt Court Office	1	3	4
Ballymena Court Office	10	18	28
Lisburn Court Office	29	45	74
Dungannon Court Office	0	1	1
Civil Processing Centre	14	27	41
Total	706	996	1702

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	265	234	193	3	32	727
	Newtownards Court Office	14	56	71	4	9	154
	Downpatrick Court Office	2	4	11	0	0	17
	Craigavon Court Office	20	51	51	1	7	130
	Armagh Court Office	3	4	3	0	0	10
	Omagh Court Office	25	74	52	2	8	161
	Antrim Court Office	0	4	6	0	0	10
	Londonderry Court Office	18	55	34	1	1	109
	Enniskillen Court Office	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Coleraine Court Office	29	32	64	1	4	130
	Newry Court Office	22	43	36	1	17	119
	Limavady Court Office	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Magherafelt Court Office	0	3	1	0	0	4
	Ballymena Court Office	2	1	12	0	0	15
	Lisburn Court Office	5	25	28	0	3	61
	Dungannon Court Office	1	3	0	0	1	5
	Civil Processing Centre	0	2	33	252	19	306
Total	406	591	597	265	101	1960	
Application	Laganside Courts	46	17	119	0	0	182
	Newtownards Court Office	6	0	22	0	0	28
	Downpatrick Court Office	1	0	2	0	0	3
	Craigavon Court Office	3	2	16	0	0	21
	Armagh Court Office	1	1	2	0	0	4
	Omagh Court Office	1	4	29	0	0	34
	Antrim Court Office	1	1	0	0	0	2
	Londonderry Court Office	4	5	18	0	0	27
	Coleraine Court Office	6	1	21	0	0	28
	Newry Court Office	3	10	15	0	0	28
	Ballymena Court Office	1	0	2	0	0	3
	Lisburn Court Office	6	2	5	0	0	13
	Civil Processing Centre	0	0	40	0	0	40
	Total	79	43	291	0	0	413

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	191	105	191	11	1	499
Newtownards Court Office	19	16	35	0	0	70
Downpatrick Court Office	1	2	3	0	0	6
Craigavon Court Office	11	27	32	1	0	71
Armagh Court Office	1	2	4	0	0	7
Omagh Court Office	23	32	43	1	0	99
Antrim Court Office	1	0	3	0	0	4
Londonderry Court Office	32	15	20	5	1	73
Coleraine Court Office	14	14	29	4	0	61
Newry Court Office	9	24	30	2	0	65
Magherafelt Court Office	0	1	2	0	0	3
Ballymena Court Office	1	0	2	0	0	3
Lisburn Court Office	4	11	14	1	0	30
Dungannon Court Office	1	0	3	0	0	4
Civil Processing Centre	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total	308	249	413	25	2	997

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	1265	848	2113
Newtownards Court Office	109	175	284
Downpatrick Court Office	16	9	25
Craigavon Court Office	89	92	181
Armagh Court Office	8	11	19
Omagh Court Office	193	230	423
Strabane Court Office	0	1	1
Antrim Court Office	18	23	41
Londonderry Court Office	104	147	251
Enniskillen Court Office	2	2	4
Coleraine Court Office	168	164	332
Newry Court Office	110	126	236
Limavady Court Office	0	2	2
Magherafelt Court office	4	3	7
Ballymena Court Office	19	25	44
Lisburn Court Office	60	75	135
Dungannon Court Office	3	3	6
Civil Processing Centre	121	127	248
Total	2289	2063	4352

Table 6: Outstanding civil bills with COR

	County court judge	District judge	Total
Laganside Courts	569	321	890
Newtownards Court Office	53	78	131
Downpatrick Court Office	3	5	8
Craigavon Court Office	38	49	87
Armagh Court Office	11	10	21
Omagh Court Office	95	144	239
Strabane Court Office	2	0	2
Antrim Court Office	3	2	5
Londonderry Court Office	59	66	125
Enniskillen Court Office	1	2	3
Coleraine Court Office	66	75	141
Newry Court Office	56	61	117
Limavady Court Office	2	0	2
Magherafelt Court Office	4	2	6
Ballymena Court Office	13	10	23
Lisburn Court Office	39	30	69
Dungannon Court Office	3	5	8
Civil Processing Centre	3	2	5
Total	1020	862	1882

Table 7: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases²

Case	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	59
Newtownards Court Office	33
Downpatrick Court Office	35
Craigavon Court Office	39
Armagh Court Office	33
Omagh Court Office	73
Antrim Court Office	30
Londonderry Court Office	56
Coleraine Court Office	49
Newry Court Office	46
Magherafelt Court Office	25
Ballymena Court Office	24
Lisburn Court Office	48
Dungannon Court Office	100
Civil Processing Centre	10
Total	54

²Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Table 8: Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications²

		Issue to disposal
Application	Laganside Courts	18
	Newtownards Court Office	22
	Downpatrick Court Office	0
	Craigavon Court Office	17
	Armagh Court Office	20
	Omagh Court Office	9
	Antrim Court Office	13
	Londonderry Court Office	13
	Coleraine Court Office	15
	Newry Court Office	9
	Ballymena Court Office	3
	Lisburn Court Office	12
	Total	16

²Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Equity

Table 9: Equity cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	8
	Omagh Court Office	4
	Londonderry Court Office	1
	Coleraine Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	6
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	3
	Total	25
Application	Laganside Courts	2
	Omagh Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	1
	Total	5

Table 10: Equity cases and applications disposed

		Court result - CCJ	Court result – DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	1	0	2	3
	Newtownards Court Office	1	0	1	2
	Craigavon Court Office	3	0	0	3
	Omagh Court Office	2	0	1	3
	Londonderry Court Office	2	0	0	2
	Coleraine Court Office	5	0	3	8
	Newry Court Office	1	0	0	1
	Ballymena Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Total	15	0	8	23
Application	Laganside Court Office	0	0	2	2
	Newtownards Court Office	1	0	0	1
	Omagh Court Office	1	0	2	3
	Ballymena Court Office	1	0	0	1
	Civil Processing Centre	0	0	1	1
	Total	3	0	5	8

Table 11: Outstanding equity cases

Case	Laganside Courts	27
	Newtownards Court Office	13
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Craigavon Court Office	15
	Omagh Court Office	66
	Londonderry Court Office	20
	Coleraine Court Office	33
	Newry Court Office	37
	Ballymena Court Office	6
	Lisburn Court Office	3
	Civil Processing Centre	27
Total	248	

Table 12: Time intervals in weeks for equity

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	46
	Newtownards Court Office	76
	Craigavon Court Office	60
	Omagh Court Office	33
	Londonderry Court Office	94
	Coleraine Court Office	63
	Newry Court Office	111
	Total	65
Application	Newtownards Court Office	19
	Omagh Court Office	15
	Ballymena Court Office	4
	Total	13

Ejectment

Table 13: Ejectment cases received

Case	Laganside Courts	93
	Newtownards Court Office	27
	Craigavon Court Office	7
	Omagh Court Office	11
	Londonderry Court Office	13
	Coleraine Court Office	13
	Newry Court Office	1
	Ballymena Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	14
	Civil Processing Office	99
	Total	279

Table 14: Ejectment cases disposed

		Court result – CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non Court Disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	0	111	1	112
	Newtownards Court Office	24	19	0	43
	Downpatrick Court Office	0	1	0	1
	Craigavon Court Office	0	1	1	2
	Omagh Court Office	0	13	0	13
	Antrim Court Office	0	2	0	2
	Londonderry Court Office	0	22	0	22
	Coleraine Court Office	0	12	1	13
	Newry Court Office	0	5	0	5
	Ballymena Court Office	0	0	1	1
	Lisburn Court Office	3	16	1	20
	Total		27	202	5

Table 15: Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

Case	Laganside Courts	19
	Newtownards Court Office	4
	Craigavon Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	10
	Londonderry Court Office	4
	Coleraine Court Office	3
	Newry Court Office	5
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	2
Total		49

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment³

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	25
	Newtownards Court Office	24
	Downpatrick Court Office	12
	Craigavon Court Office	16
	Omagh Court Office	42
	Antrim Court Office	21
	Londonderry Court Office	16
	Coleraine Court Office	23
	Newry Court Office	17
	Lisburn Court Office	16
Total		24

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

Small Claims

Table 17: Number of small claims cases and applications received

Case	Laganside Courts	108
	Newtownards Court Office	34
	Downpatrick Court Office	2
	Craigavon Court Office	15
	Armagh Court Office	3
	Omagh Court Office	30
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	23
	Coleraine Court Office	35
	Newry Court Office	18
	Ballymena Court Office	9
	Lisburn Court Office	10
	Civil Processing Centre	1854
	Total	2142
Application	Laganside Courts	16
	Newtownards Court Office	9
	Craigavon Court Office	2
	Armagh Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	5
	Londonderry Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	1
	Newry Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Civil Processing Centre	5
	Total	44

Table 18: Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Case	Laganside Courts	92
	Newtownards Court Office	45
	Craigavon Court Office	10
	Armagh Court Office	5
	Omagh Court Office	17
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	29
	Coleraine Court Office	34
	Newry Court Office	19
	Ballymena Court Office	6
	Lisburn Court Office	6
	Civil Processing Centre	3
Total	267	

Table 19: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	85	13	43	7	148
	Newtownards Court Office	26	4	13	2	45
	Downpatrick Court Office	0	0	1	0	1
	Craigavon Court Office	6	3	3	0	12
	Armagh Court Office	4	0	0	0	4
	Omagh Court Office	15	1	2	2	20
	Londonderry Court Office	8	0	5	2	15
	Enniskillen Court Office	2	0	0	0	2
	Coleraine Court Office	22	15	1	0	38
	Newry Court Office	17	1	4	0	22
	Ballymena Court Office	1	1	2	0	4
	Lisburn Court Office	5	0	1	3	9
	Civil Processing Centre	0	3	454	1156	1613
	Total	191	41	529	1172	1933
Application	Laganside Courts	13	3	0	0	16
	Newtownards Court Office	0	6	0	0	6
	Craigavon Court Office	2	0	0	0	2
	Omagh Court Office	4	0	0	0	4
	Londonderry Court Office	1	0	0	0	1
	Coleraine Court Office	5	0	0	0	5
	Newry Court Office	4	0	0	0	4
	Lisburn Court Office	3	0	0	0	3
	Civil Processing Office	0	2	0	0	2
	Total	32	11	0	0	43

Table 20: Outstanding small claims with NOD

Laganside Courts	176
Newtownards Court Office	40
Craigavon Court Office	22
Armagh Court Office	9
Omagh Court Office	30
Antrim Court Office	2
Londonderry Court Office	39
Enniskillen Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	70
Newry Court Office	29
Ballymena Court Office	10
Lisburn Court Office	10
Civil Processing Centre	15
Total	454

Table 21: Time intervals in weeks for small claims³

		Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	20
	Newtownards Court Office	18
	Craigavon Court Office	28
	Armagh Court Office	20
	Omagh Court Office	28
	Londonderry Court Office	17
	Enniskillen Court Office	23
	Coleraine Court Office	25
	Newry Court Office	30
	Ballymena Court Office	32
	Lisburn Court Office	68
	Total	23
	Application	Laganside Courts
Craigavon Court Office		13
Omagh Court Office		15
Londonderry Court Office		6
Coleraine Court Office		15
Newry Court Office		9
Lisburn Court Office		14
Total		10

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
	Omagh Court Office	1
	Total	3

Table 23: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

		Court disposal	Total
Case	Omagh Court Office	3	3
	Total	3	3

Table 24: Outstanding criminal damage cases

Laganside Courts	19
Newtownards Court Office	4
Craigavon Court Office	2
Armagh Court Office	2
Omagh Court Office	8
Londonderry Court Office	1
Coleraine Court Office	2
Newry Court Office	7
Ballymena Court Office	1
Dungannon Court Office	2
Total	48

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage cases³

		Issue to disposal
Case	Omagh Court Office	113
	Total	113

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	28	17	0	5	4	54
Downpatrick Court Office	9	9	0	2	4	24
Craigavon Court Office	14	15	0	4	1	34
Omagh Court Office	11	8	0	3	4	26
Londonderry Court Office	16	12	0	1	2	31
Coleraine Court Office	21	19	1	11	3	55
Newry Court Office	19	19	0	3	2	43
Total	118	99	1	29	20	267

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	45	29	0	7	2	83
Downpatrick Court Office	14	8	1	2	4	29
Craigavon Court Office	21	20	1	6	4	52
Armagh Court Office	0	1	0	0	0	1
Omagh Court Office	14	15	0	4	2	35
Londonderry Court Office	14	12	0	3	3	32
Coleraine Court Office	11	17	1	4	2	35
Newry Court Office	8	11	0	4	2	25
Dungannon Court Office	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	127	113	3	30	21	294

Table 28: Matrimonial applications received

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	10	1	0	11
Newtownards Court Office	2	0	0	2
Craigavon Court Office	4	0	0	4
Omagh Court Office	6	0	0	6
Londonderry Court Office	7	0	1	8
Coleraine Court Office	7	0	1	8
Newry Court Office	6	0	0	6
Ballymena Court Office	2	0	0	2
Total	44	1	2	47

Table 29: Matrimonial applications disposed

	Ancillary relief	Other	Total
Newtownards Courts	3	0	3
Craigavon Court Office	2	0	2
Armagh Court Office	1	0	1
Omagh Court Office	4	0	4
Londonderry Court Office	5	0	5
Coleraine Court Office	9	1	10
Newry Court Office	1	0	1
Ballymena Court Office	4	0	4
Lisburn Court Office	1	0	1
Dungannon Court Office	1	0	1
Total	31	1	32

Table 30: Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	35	7
Downpatrick Court Office	34	7
Craigavon Court Office	38	8
Omagh Court Office	30	9
Londonderry Court Office	29	8
Coleraine Court Office	26	8
Newry Court Office	32	8
Total	32	8

Table 31: Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications⁴

	Issue to disposal
Newtownards Courts	12
Craigavon Court Office	30
Armagh Court Office	22
Omagh Court Office	11
Londonderry Court Office	34
Coleraine Court Office	34
Newry Court Office	58
Ballymena Court Office	42
Lisburn Court Office	48
Dungannon Court Office	114
Total	32

⁴Excludes non-court disposals

Licences

Table 32: Licences received and disposed

Court Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	8	4
Newtownards	4	0
Newry	0	1
Laganside Courts	7	9
Craigavon	5	5
Omagh	4	4
Londonderry	2	0
Total	30	23

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	43	2:05:37	90:02:00	71:40:00	17:35:00	0:47:00
Ballymena	4	3:42:30	14:50:00	0:00:00	14:35:00	0:15:00
Laganside	318	2:43:59	869:09:00	381:58:00	260:59:00	226:12:00
Armagh	16	2:07:00	33:52:00	0:00:00	33:25:00	0:27:00
Lisburn	12	2:23:50	28:46:00	10:52:00	14:14:00	3:40:00
Magherafelt	4	4:51:15	19:25:00	0:00:00	11:55:00	7:30:00
Dungannon	37	3:36:55	133:46:00	92:32:00	18:19:00	22:55:00
Downpatrick	21	2:25:14	50:50:00	40:50:00	8:10:00	1:50:00
Craigavon	64	2:18:15	147:29:00	76:56:00	21:42:00	48:51:00
Strabane	4	3:23:15	13:33:00	4:00:00	9:00:00	0:33:00
Omagh	9	3:39:33	32:56:00	5:40:00	23:55:00	3:21:00
Enniskillen	6	3:09:50	18:59:00	3:46:00	13:58:00	1:15:00
Coleraine	10	3:21:42	33:37:00	0:00:00	18:15:00	15:22:00
Londonderry	47	2:34:28	121:00:00	74:38:00	16:30:00	29:52:00
Newtownards	26	1:57:18	50:50:00	7:10:00	43:30:00	0:10:00
Newry	51	2:17:17	116:42:00	96:12:00	19:23:00	1:07:00
Londonderry@Omagh	6	2:00:00	12:00:00	0:00:00	10:30:00	1:30:00
Londonderry@Coleraine	2	1:35:00	3:10:00	3:10:00	0:00:00	0:00:00
Total	680	2:38:01	1790:56:00	869:24:00	555:55:00	365:37:00

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.

Analytical Services Group,
Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service,
Department of Justice
4th Floor, Laganside House
23-27 Oxford Street,
Belfast BT1 3LA
Email: Rodney.redmond@courtsni.gov.uk
Telephone: 028 9072 8920

www.justice-ni.gov.uk/courts-and-tribunals