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Provisional Figures

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[Northern Ireland Court Service Statistical Publications](#)

Executive Summary

This report covers data from October to December 2020, so court activity during this period has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Figures published show that although courts continue to carry out urgent business and make more use of remote audio and video technology, the impact of COVID-19 is evident. It is expected that the limited operation of the county courts during the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have an impact on many of the published figures in this and future releases.

- This bulletin provides information on throughput at County Courts in Northern Ireland during the period October to December 2020 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2011. 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 October to December 2020:
- There were 1,656 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 6% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,757). In total, 1,967 civil bills were disposed, a decrease of 22% on the number disposed during the same period in 2019 (2,521).
- 42 equity cases were received during October to December 2020, up by eight cases compared to the 34 cases received during the period October to December 2019, while 28 equity cases were disposed, compared with 23 equity cases disposed during the same period last year.
- A total of 59 ejectment cases were received, down 79% on the 280 cases received during October to December 2019, with the number of ejectment cases disposed decreasing by 85%, from 228 in the same quarter last year to 35 this quarter.
- 1,308 small claims were received, down 32% on the 1,916 cases received during the same quarter last year. The number of small claims cases disposed decreased by 60% from 2,144 during October to December 2019 to 853 this quarter.
- Four criminal damage cases were received, compared to five received during the period October to December 2019. Three criminal damage cases were disposed during the quarter, a decrease on the 7 disposed during the same quarter last year.
- A total of 360 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, down 13% on the 412 granted during the same period last year.

- County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1043 sitting days during the quarter, down 14% on the 1207 days recorded during the period October to December 2019. Some 40% of time was spent on criminal business with 28% spent on civil business and 31% on family business (compared to 54%, 25% and 20% respectively during October to December 2019).

Administrative case management reviews were introduced by the Lord Chief Justice as part of the coronavirus contingency arrangements. This has resulted in Judges investing significant time reviewing cases and making directions or orders administratively (where appropriate), and this has continued even as courts have resumed to support business recovery. This extra time is not recorded on the courts operating system (ICOS), and therefore is not reflected within the sittings times published within this report.

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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 uses information inputted into 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. Data is inputted into this system, by court clerks on a daily basis and information is checked and confirmed by another member of staff to ensure data entries are correct. As data on licence applications received and disposed is not recorded on ICOS, these figures are compiled manually by each County Court Office and submitted on a quarterly basis.

2.2 Methodology for generating data

Analytical Services 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; names and addresses are not held. These statistical files are not transmitted outside the NICTS statistical team. ASG statisticians based in the NICTS import 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 data is reliable and robust.

2.3 Baseline and Time period

Data contained within this bulletin relates to the current calendar year 2020. The time series for this information dates back to 2007 when ICOS was adopted as the source of County Court data, however, within this publication, comparisons of trends are viewed over a 10-year period.

2.4 Frequency of Publication

This bulletin is published on a quarterly basis. The next bulletin will cover the first quarter of 2021 and will be published on 14th May 2021.

2.5 Data quality and validation

ASG statisticians based in the NICTS have invested significant time and effort creating an 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 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 within the relevant edition of Judicial Statistics (published in June of each year for the previous calendar year).

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, [Northern Ireland Court Service Statistical Publications](#)

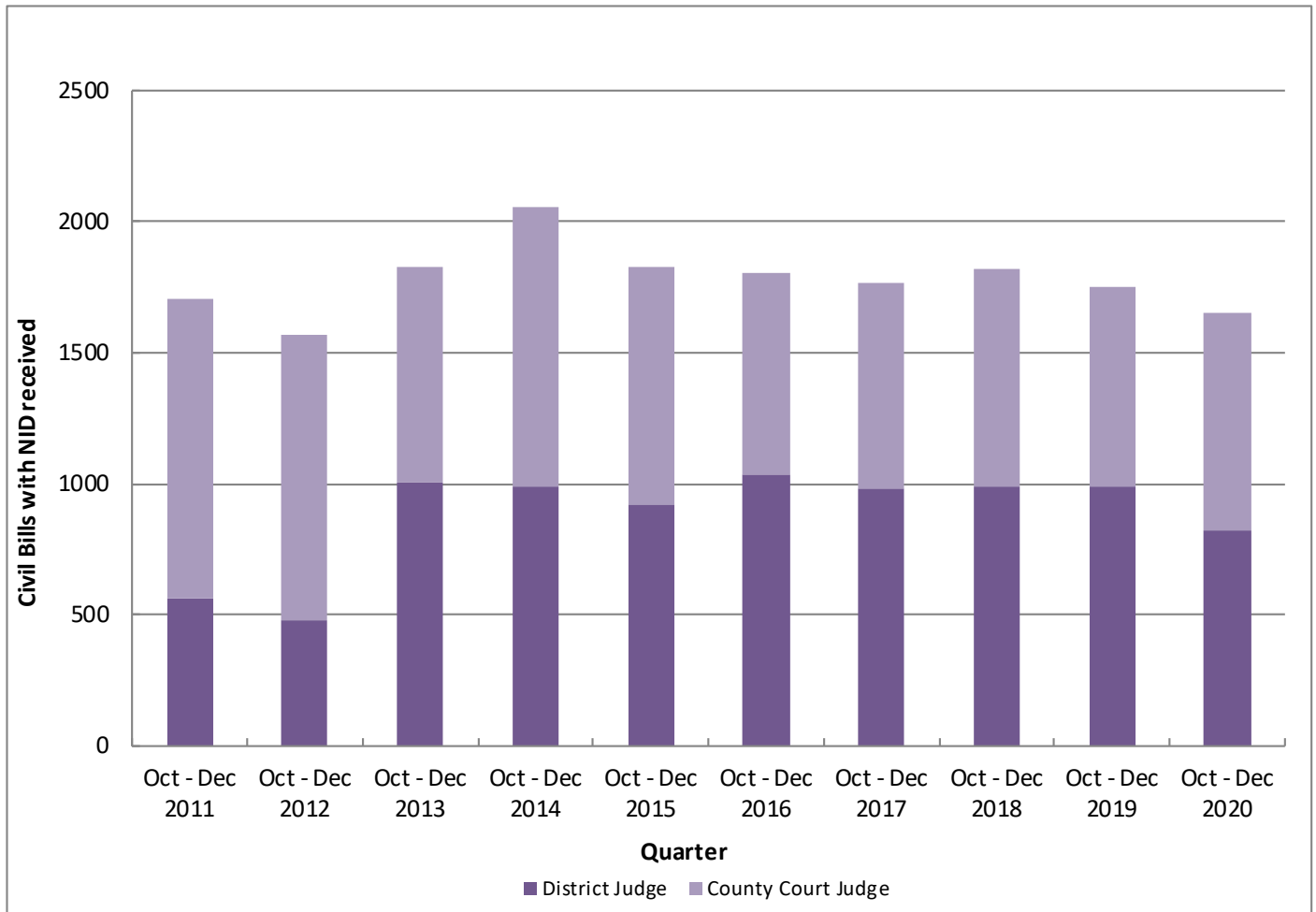
Incorrect figures of changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Ordinary civil bills

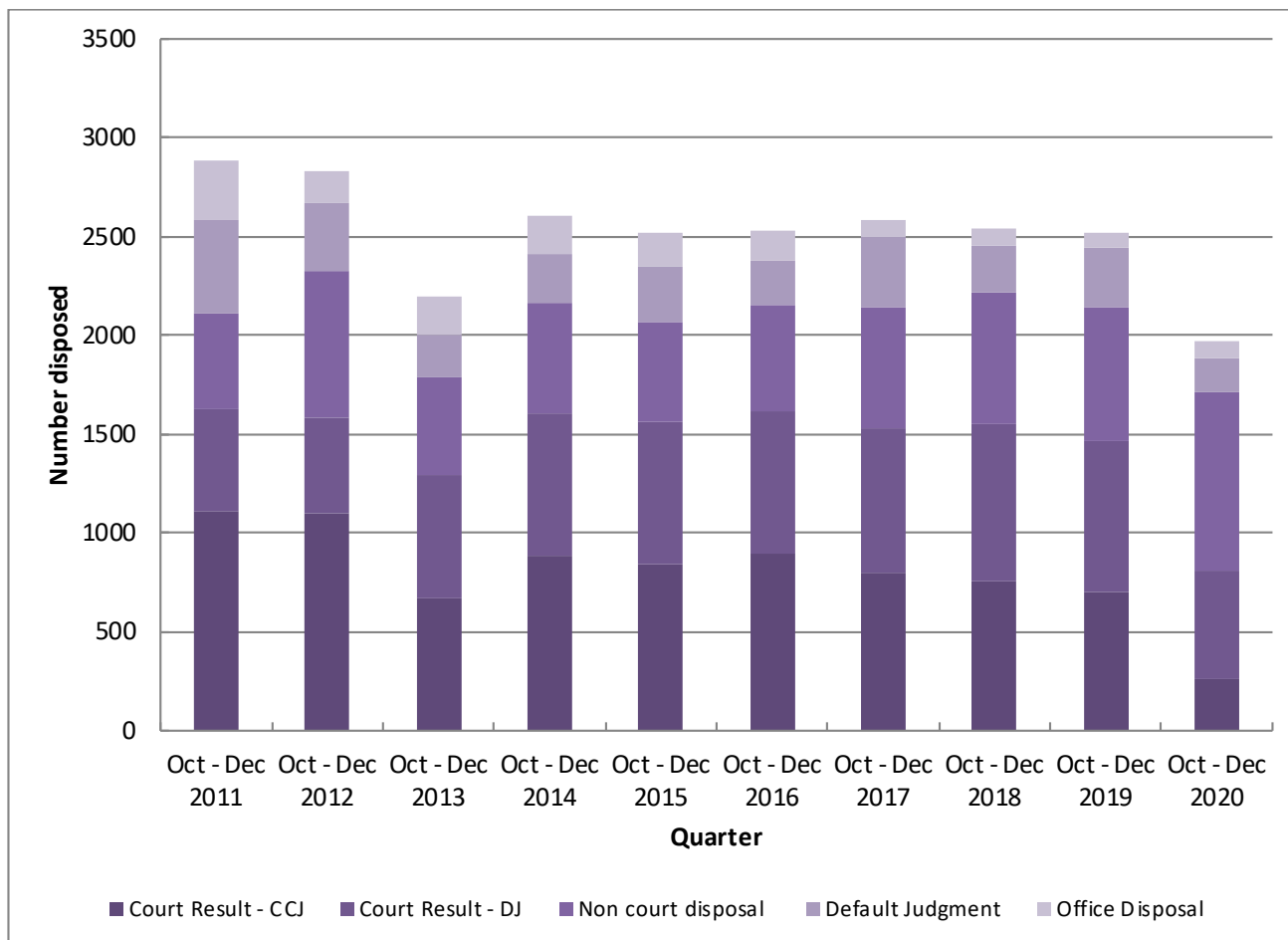
There were 1,656 civil bills with a notice of intention to defend (NID) received, a 6% decrease on the same quarter last year (1,757) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Civil bills with NID received – October to December 2011 to October to December 2020



In total, 1,967 civil bills were disposed, a 22% decrease on the 2,521 disposed during the same period in 2019 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Civil bills disposed, by method of disposal – October to December 2011 to October to December 2020



The average time taken from issue to disposal of a civil bill was 59 weeks, compared to the 53 weeks reported for the same quarter in 2019.

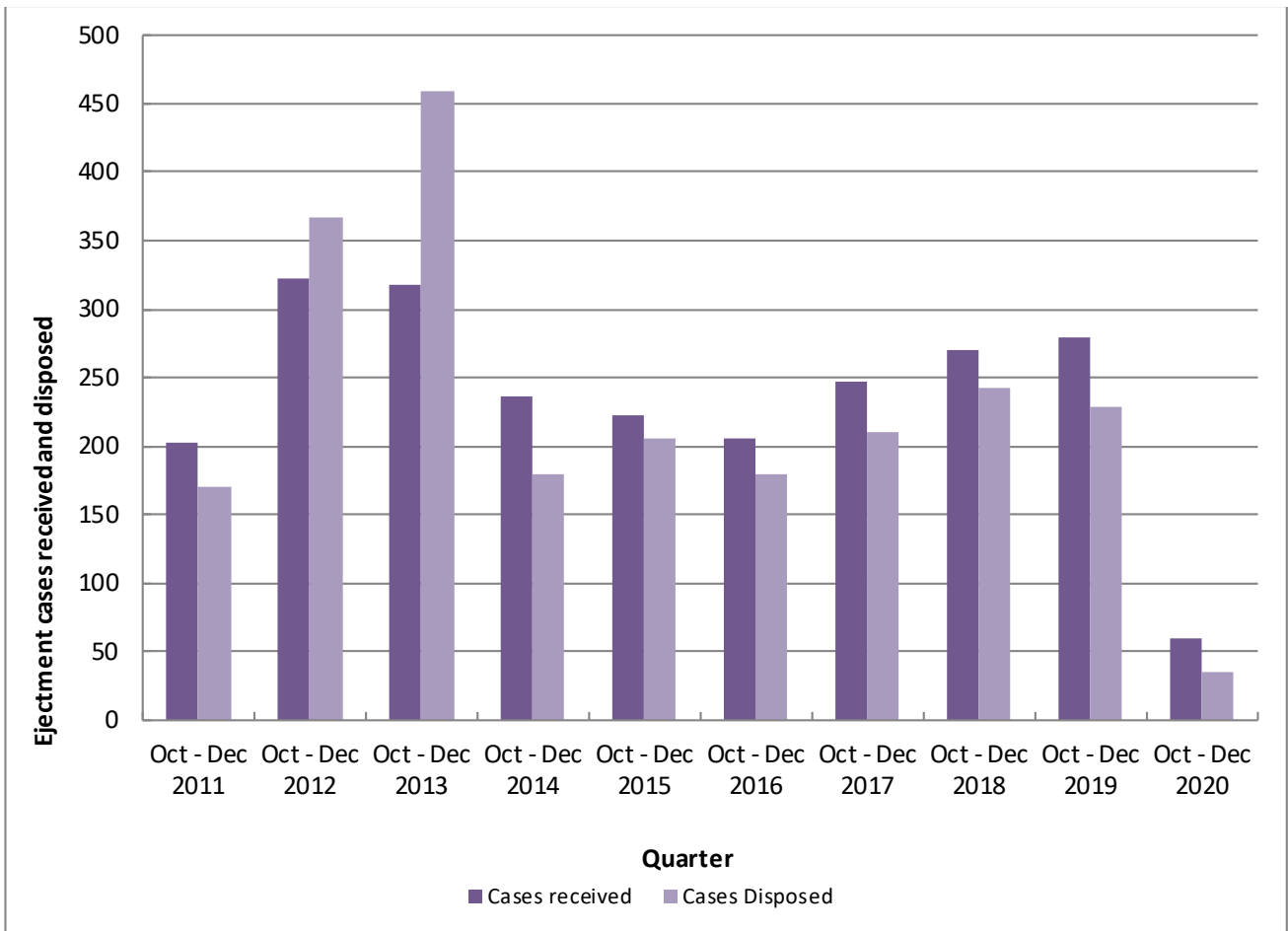
3.2 Equity

A total of 42 equity cases were received during October to December 2020, eight more than the number received during the period October to December 2019 (34). The number of equity cases disposed increased from 23 during the period October to December 2019, to 28 this quarter. The average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases was 86 weeks, up from 60 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 59 ejectment cases were received, down 79% on the 280 cases received during October to December 2019, with the number of ejectment cases disposed decreasing by 85%, from 228 in the same quarter last year to 35 this quarter (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ejectment cases received and disposed – October to December 2011 to October to December 2020

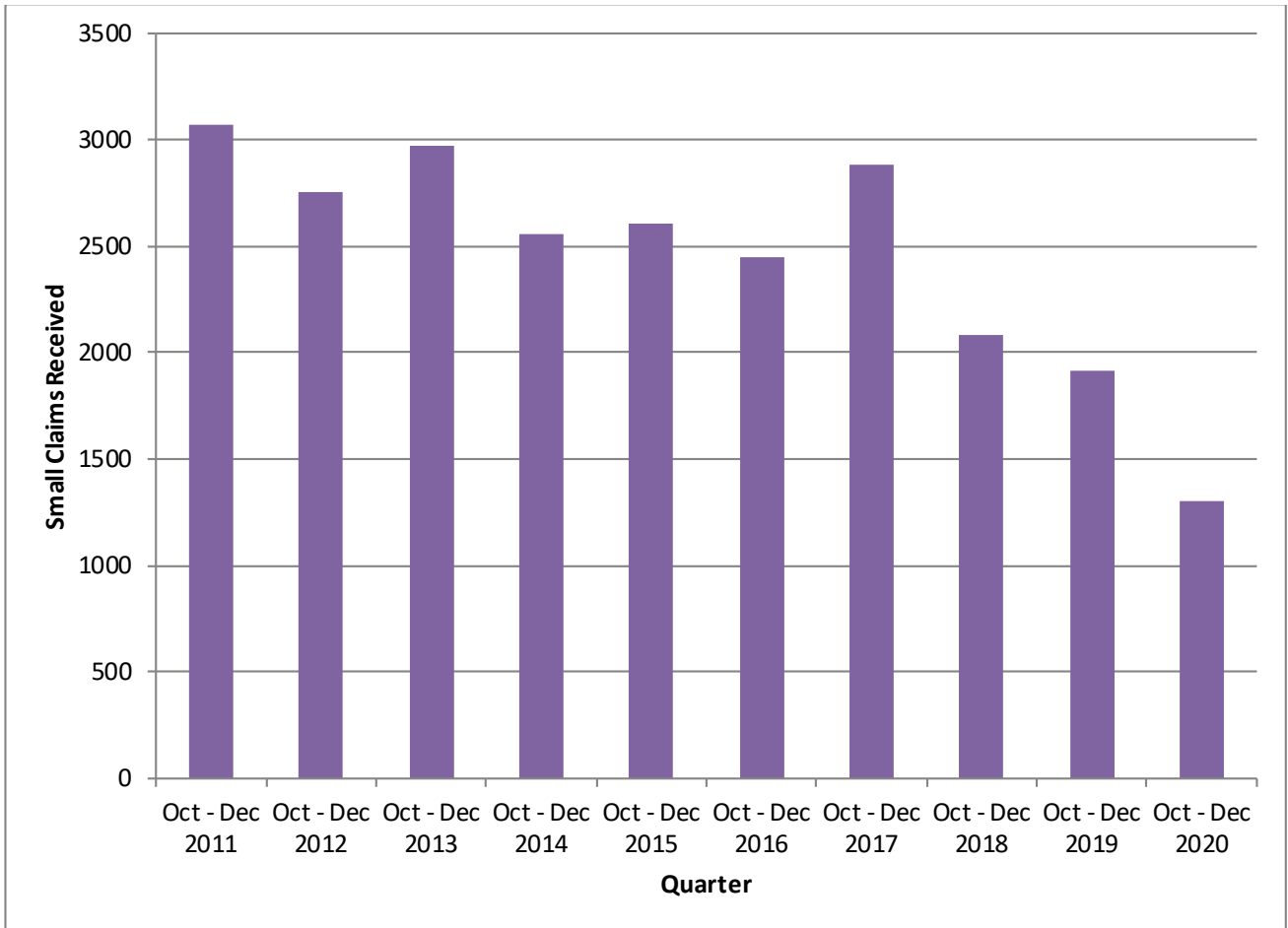


The average time taken from issue to disposal for ejectment cases was 39 weeks, an increase on the 21 weeks taken during the October to December quarter in 2019.

3.4 Small claims

1,308 small claims were received, down 32% on the 1,916 received during the same quarter last year (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Small claims cases received – October to December 2011 to October to December 2020



The number of small claims cases disposed decreased by 60% from 2,144 during October to December 2019 to 853 this quarter. Of the 853 small claims disposed during the quarter, the majority (64%) were disposed by way of default judgment.

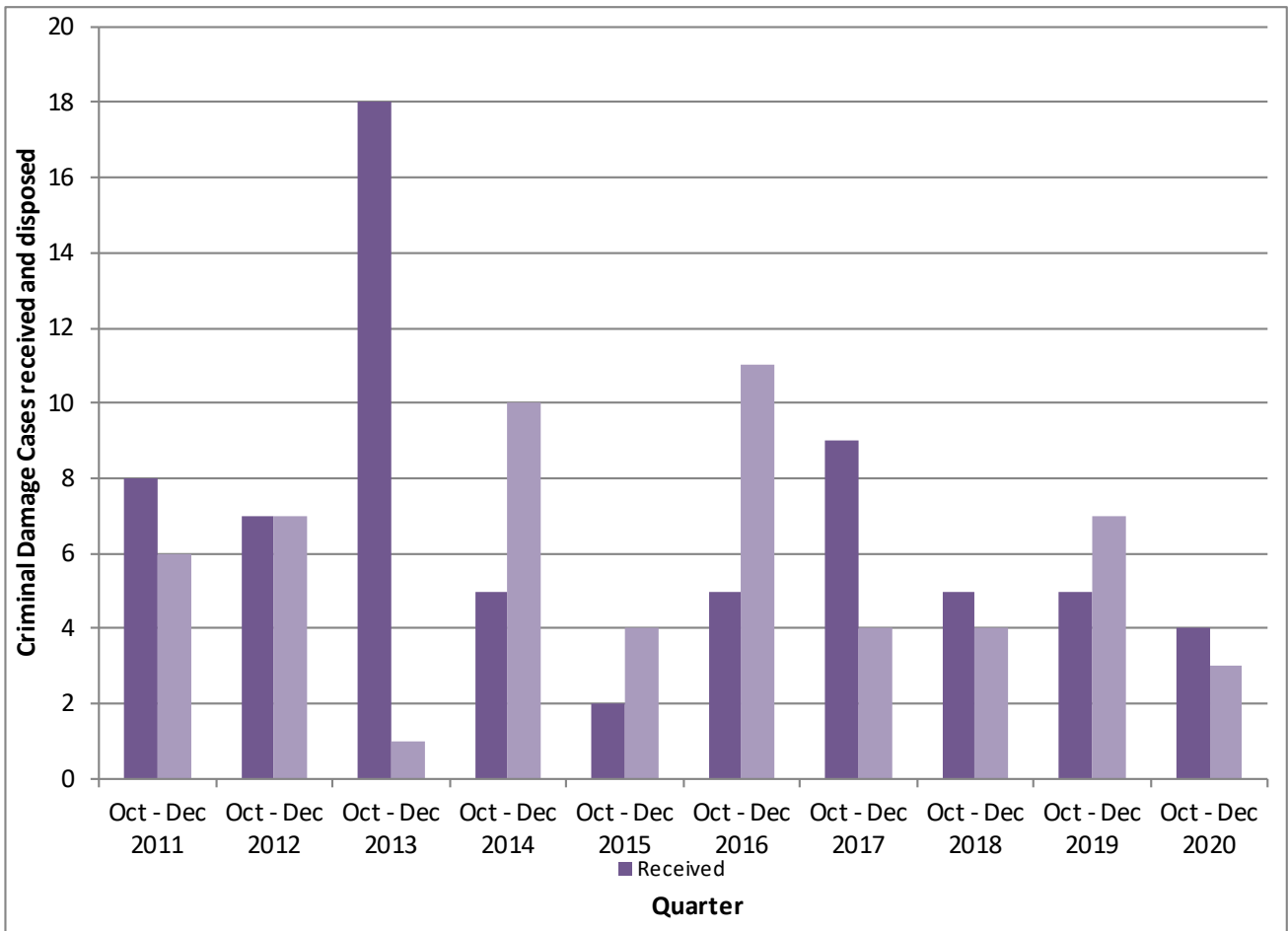
The average number of weeks from issue to disposal for small claims cases was 7 weeks, a decrease on the 21 weeks taken in the corresponding quarter last year.

There were no small claims court disposals during the period October to December 2020.

3.5 Criminal Damage

Four criminal damage cases were received, with three disposed during the quarter. This compares with five cases received and seven cases disposed during the same quarter in 2019 (Figure 5)

Figure 5: Criminal Damage cases received and disposed – October to December 2011 to October to December 2020



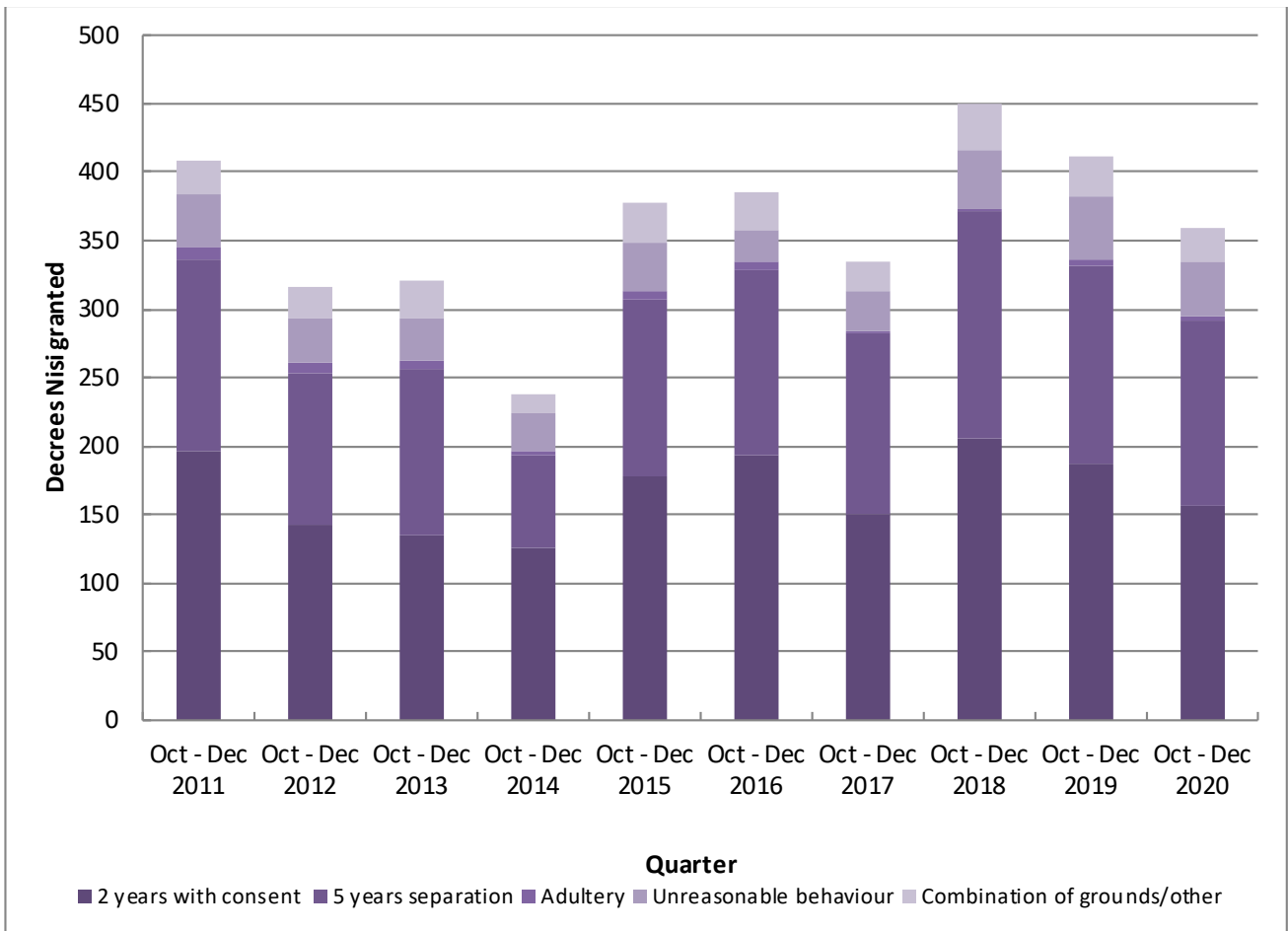
3.6 Divorces

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 360 divorce decrees were granted in the County Court, down 13% on the 412 granted during the same period last year.

The main type of divorce decree granted was '2 years with consent' accounting for 44% of decrees (157), followed by '5 years separation', accounting for 37% of decrees (134) (Figure 6)

Figure 6: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted, by type – October to December 2011 to October to December 2020



A total of 228 decrees absolute were issued in the County Court, a decrease of 52% on the 476 issued during the period October to December 2019. The most common type of decree absolute was ‘2 years with consent’, accounting for 43% (99) of cases.

The average time taken from issue to the date a divorce decree was granted was 39 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 nine weeks during the same period last year.

3.7 Licences

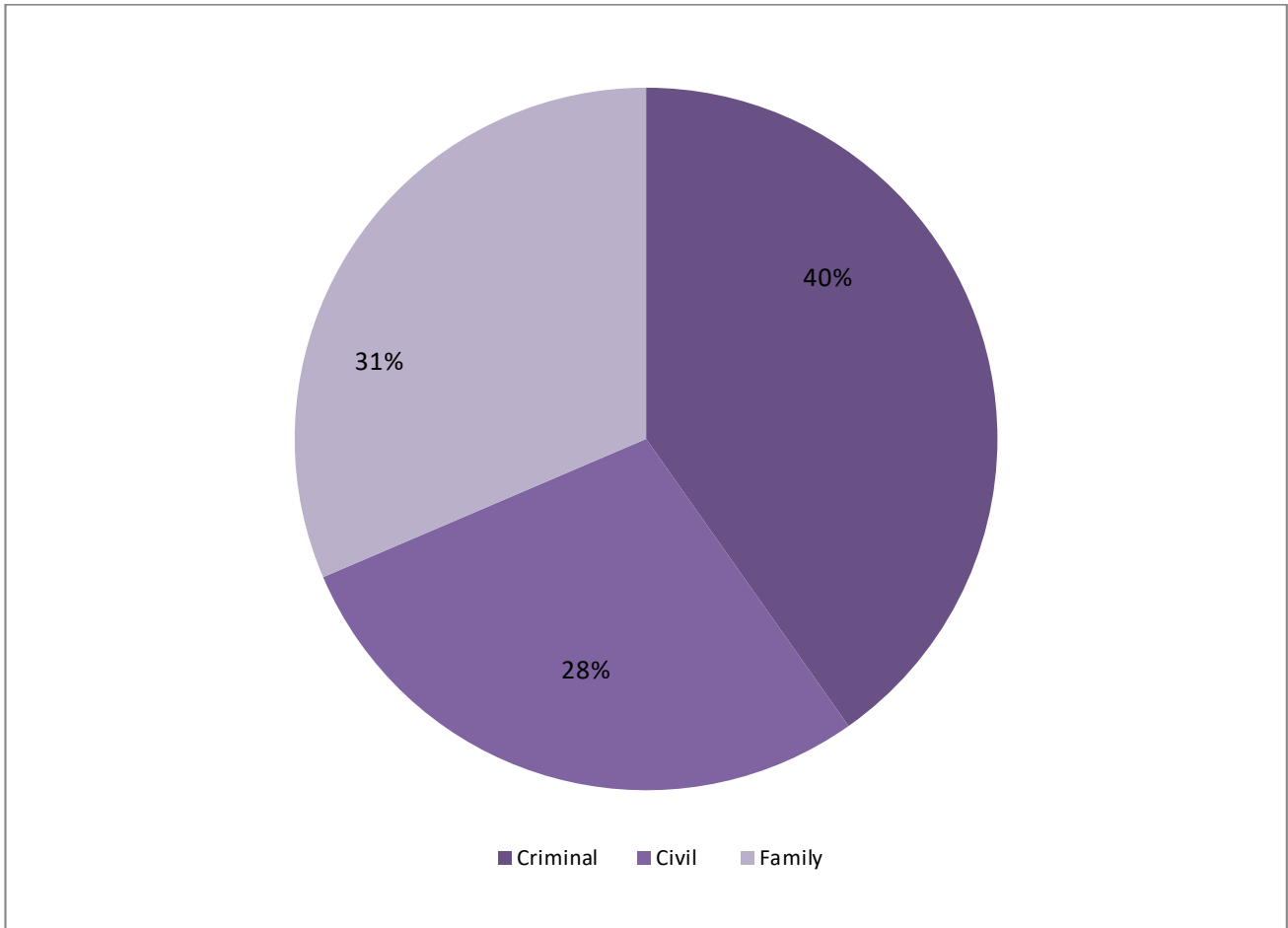
There were 56 licence applications received and 67 disposed, compared to the 74 received and 84 disposed during the same quarter last year.

3.8 Sitting Days

County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1043 sitting days during the quarter, down 14% on the 1207 sitting days recorded during the period October to December 2019.

Within these 1043 sitting days, 40% of time was spent on criminal business, 28% of time was spent on civil business and 31% of time was spent on family business (Figure 7).

Figure 7: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – October to December 2020

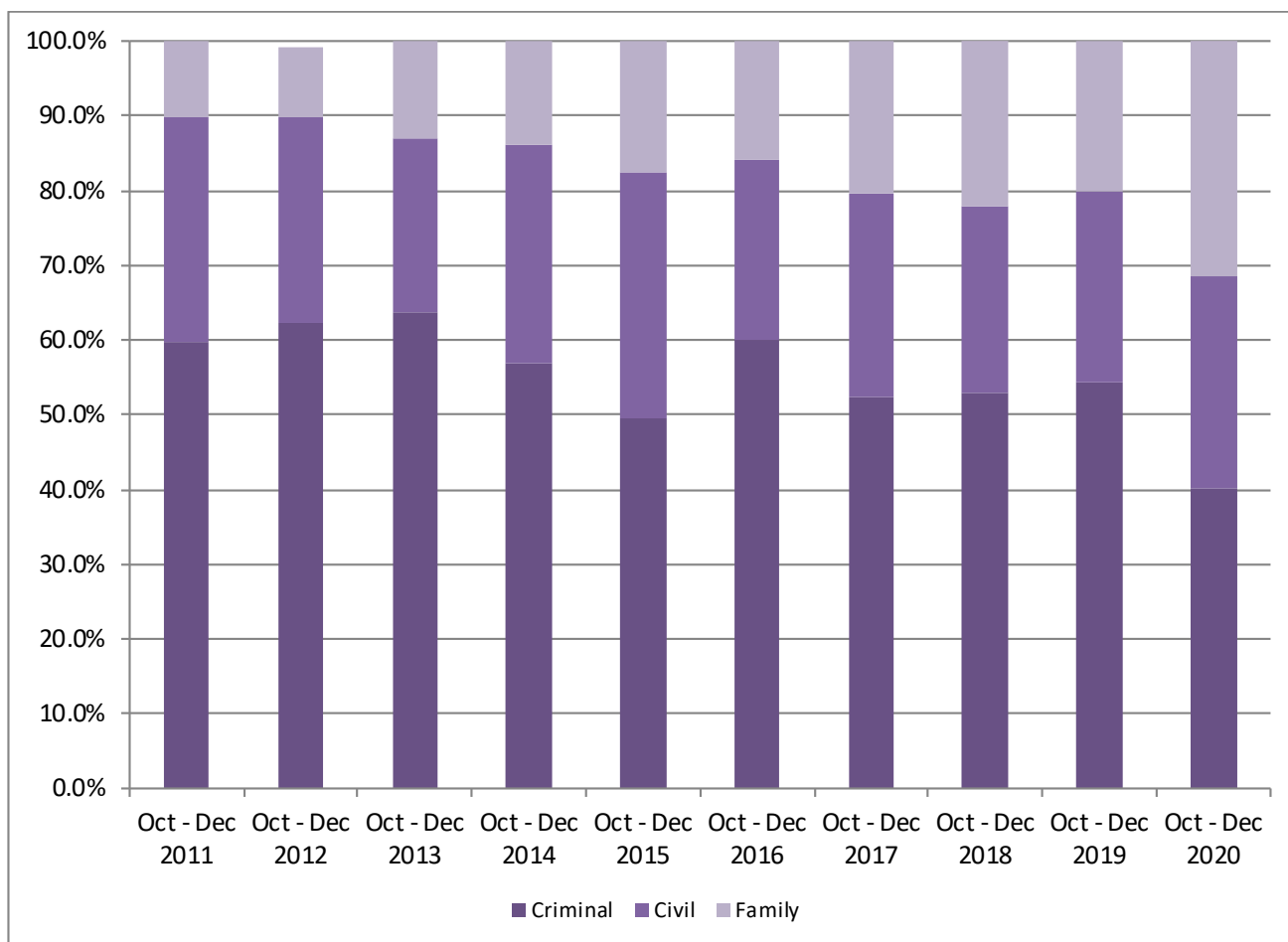


Due to rounding, the percentages may not add up to 100%

The proportion of time spent on criminal business has fluctuated during October to December quarter since 2007, peaking at 64% during the quarter October to December 2013. This is largely reflective of County Court Judges dealing with increased volumes of cases in the Crown Court over that particular period. The proportion of time spent on criminal business then decreased to 50% during October to December 2015, which 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 has fluctuated slightly with the proportion of time spent by County Court Judges on criminal business increasing to 60% of sittings during October to December 2016, while the backlog of cases arising from the dispute was being addressed. Progress made in addressing the backlog has meant the proportion of time spent on criminal business fell to just above 50% in both 2017 and 2018. The proportion of time spent on criminal business (40%) this quarter is the lowest since the time series began.

Figure 8: County Court Sitting Days by Business Type – October to December 2011 to October to December 2020



APPENDIX 1 – TABLES.

Civil Bills

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

Type	Processing Office	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	619
	Newtownards Court Office	69
	Downpatrick Court Office	58
	Craigavon Court Office	66
	Armagh Court Office	30
	Omagh Court Office	77
	Strabane Court Office	1
	Antrim Court Office	25
	Londonderry Court Office	71
	Enniskillen Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	54
	Newry Court Office	103
	Magherafelt Court Office	10
	Ballymena Court Office	37
	Lisburn Court Office	54
	Dungannon Court Office	21
	Civil Processing Centre	906
	Total	2203
Application	Laganside Courts	180
	Newtownards Court Office	45
	Downpatrick Court Office	30
	Craigavon Court Office	7
	Armagh Court Office	72
	Omagh Court Office	27
	Antrim Court Office	1
	Londonderry Court Office	64
	Coleraine Court Office	35
	Newry Court Office	16
	Ballymena Court Office	2
	Lisburn Court Office	7
	Civil Processing Centre	397
	Total	883

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

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	325	416	741
Newtownards Court Office	71	15	86
Downpatrick Court Office	19	44	63
Craigavon Court Office	39	36	75
Armagh Court Office	14	21	35
Omagh Court Office	62	52	114
Strabane Court Office	1	-	1
Antrim Court Office	18	19	37
Londonderry Court Office	53	37	90
Enniskillen Court Office	3	3	6
Coleraine Court Office	28	24	52
Newry Court Office	70	59	129
Magherafelt Court Office	8	7	15
Ballymena Court Office	29	19	48
Lisburn Court Office	41	23	64
Dungannon Court Office	8	15	23
Civil Processing Centre	35	42	77
Total	824	832	1656

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

Type	Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Default judgement	Office disposal	Total	
Case	Laganside Courts	76	79	296	8	18	477	
	Newtownards Court Office	1	81	57	5	2	146	
	Downpatrick Court Office	24	1	55	-	9	89	
	Craigavon Court Office	23	32	49	1	9	114	
	Armagh Court Office	8	10	10	-	2	30	
	Omagh Court Office	28	61	75	2	2	168	
	Antrim Court Office	1	22	24	1	3	51	
	Londonderry Court Office	13	52	51	1	3	120	
	Enniskillen Court Office	1	6	9	-	-	16	
	Coleraine Court Office	14	63	59	1	4	141	
	Newry Court Office	42	41	64	2	5	154	
	Limavady Court Office	-	1	2	-	-	3	
	Magherafelt Court Office	2	12	11	-	-	25	
	Ballymena Court Office	1	39	35	-	-	75	
	Lisburn Court Office	24	30	48	-	2	104	
	Dungannon Court Office	7	15	10	-	1	33	
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	45	151	25	221	
	Total		265	545	900	172	85	1967
	Application	Laganside Courts	51	10	93	-	-	154
		Newtownards Court Office	2	1	10	-	-	13
Downpatrick Court Office		17	-	15	-	-	32	
Craigavon Court Office		3	1	9	-	-	13	
Armagh Court Office		5	2	17	-	-	24	
Omagh Court Office		11	4	19	-	-	34	
Londonderry Court Office		3	6	14	-	-	23	
Coleraine Court Office		7	4	15	-	-	26	
Newry Court Office		10	7	15	-	-	32	
Ballymena Court Office		-	-	1	-	-	1	
Lisburn Court Office		3	1	4	-	-	8	
Civil Processing Centre		-	-	37	-	-	37	
Total			112	36	249	-	-	397

Table 4 - Number of ordinary civil bills cases by amount awarded

Processing Office	No value	Less than £3000	£3000-14999	£15000-29999	£30000 and over	Total
Laganside Courts	37	40	73	4	1	155
Newtownards Court Office	15	31	36	-	-	82
Downpatrick Court Office	1	2	20	2	-	25
Craigavon Court Office	11	17	24	3	-	55
Armagh Court Office	-	4	10	4	-	18
Omagh Court Office	24	22	38	5	-	89
Antrim Court Office	5	7	10	1	-	23
Londonderry Court Office	22	16	24	3	-	65
Enniskillen Court Office	-	1	5	1	-	7
Coleraine Court Office	26	22	27	2	-	77
Newry Court Office	10	22	41	9	1	83
Limavady Court Office	-	-	1	-	-	1
Magherafelt Court Office	-	3	11	-	-	14
Ballymena Court Office	13	10	17	-	-	40
Lisburn Court Office	10	16	24	4	-	54
Dungannon Court Office	3	7	12	-	-	22
Total	177	220	373	38	2	810

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

Table 5 - Outstanding civil bills with NID but no COR

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	1125	1785	2910
Newtownards Court Office	148	25	173
Downpatrick Court Office	25	172	197
Craigavon Court Office	101	99	200
Armagh Court Office	35	44	79
Omagh Court Office	182	219	401
Strabane Court Office	2	7	9
Antrim Court Office	35	58	93
Londonderry Court Office	159	143	302
Enniskillen Court Office	14	12	26
Coleraine Court Office	64	135	199
Newry Court Office	167	163	330
Limavady Court Office	1	-	1
Magherafelt Court Office	12	13	25
Ballymena Court Office	44	64	108
Lisburn Court Office	103	74	177
Dungannon Court Office	22	70	92
Civil Processing Centre	132	144	276
Total	2371	3227	5598

Table 6 - Outstanding civil bills with COR

Processing Office	District judge	County court judge	Total
Laganside Courts	396	593	989
Newtownards Court Office	100	-	100
Downpatrick Court Office	3	53	56
Craigavon Court Office	45	28	73
Armagh Court Office	16	10	26
Banbridge Court Office	1	-	1
Omagh Court Office	81	80	161
Strabane Court Office	1	4	5
Antrim Court Office	26	29	55
Londonderry Court Office	42	41	83
Enniskillen Court Office	4	5	9
Coleraine Court Office	59	49	108
Newry Court Office	57	47	104
Limavady Court Office	1	-	1
Magherafelt Court Office	3	6	9
Ballymena Court Office	37	27	64
Lisburn Court Office	38	21	59
Dungannon Court Office	8	8	16
Civil Processing Centre	13	11	24
Total	931	1012	1943

Table 7 -Time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	55
Newtownards Court Office	47
Downpatrick Court Office	40
Craigavon Court Office	57
Armagh Court Office	42
Omagh Court Office	72
Antrim Court Office	75
Londonderry Court Office	74
Enniskillen Court Office	28
Coleraine Court Office	63
Newry Court Office	58
Limavady Court Office	37
Magherafelt Court Office	47
Ballymena Court Office	66
Lisburn Court Office	57
Dungannon Court Office	46
Total	59

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Table 8 -Time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	20
Newtownards Court Office	7
Downpatrick Court Office	11
Craigavon Court Office	16
Armagh Court Office	3
Omagh Court Office	12
Londonderry Court Office	27
Coleraine Court Office	8
Newry Court Office	19
Lisburn Court Office	44
Total	17

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Equity

Table 9 -Equity cases and applications received

Type	Processing Office	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	9
	Downpatrick Court Office	3
	Craigavon Court Office	2
	Omagh Court Office	11
	Londonderry Court Office	3
	Coleraine Court Office	2
	Newry Court Office	1
	Lisburn Court Office	1
	Dungannon Court Office	2
	Civil Processing Centre	8
	Total	42
Application	Laganside Courts	1
	Newtownards Court Office	1
	Downpatrick Court Office	1
	Omagh Court Office	8
	Londonderry Court Office	2
	Coleraine Court Office	4
	Newry Court Office	4
	Civil Processing Centre	1
	Total	22

Table 10 - Equity cases and applications disposed

Type	Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	1	1	2	4
	Downpatrick Court Office	-	-	1	1
	Craigavon Court Office	-	-	1	1
	Omagh Court Office	5	-	3	8
	Londonderry Court Office	5	-	1	6
	Enniskillen Court Office	1	-	-	1
	Coleraine Court Office	2	-	-	2
	Newry Court Office	2	-	2	4
	Lisburn Court Office	1	-	-	1
	Total	17	1	10	28
Application	Downpatrick Court Office	-	-	1	1
	Craigavon Court Office	-	-	1	1
	Omagh Court Office	7	-	-	7
	Londonderry Court Office	1	-	2	3
	Coleraine Court Office	-	-	1	1
	Newry Court Office	2	-	-	2
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	1	1
	Total	10	-	6	16

Table 11 - Outstanding equity cases

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	56
Newtownards Court Office	4
Downpatrick Court Office	20
Craigavon Court Office	12
Armagh Court Office	3
Omagh Court Office	63
Strabane Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	23
Enniskillen Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	22
Newry Court Office	31
Ballymena Court Office	4
Lisburn Court Office	5
Dungannon Court Office	10
Civil Processing Centre	29
Total	285

Table 12 - Time intervals in weeks for equity

Type	Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Case	Laganside Courts	38
	Omagh Court Office	32
	Londonderry Court Office	103
	Enniskillen Court Office	41
	Coleraine Court Office	101
	Newry Court Office	227
	Lisburn Court Office	106
	Total	86
	Application	Omagh Court Office
Londonderry Court Office		16
Newry Court Office		17
Total		7

Ejectment

Table 13 - Ejectment cases received

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	5
Newtownards Court Office	1
Downpatrick Court Office	2
Craigavon Court Office	1
Armagh Court Office	2
Omagh Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	1
Newry Court Office	3
Lisburn Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	41
Total	59

Table 14 - Ejectment cases disposed

Processing Office	Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Total
Laganside Courts	-	14	6	20
Newtownards Court Office	-	1	-	1
Downpatrick Court Office	-	-	1	1
Craigavon Court Office	-	1	-	1
Armagh Court Office	-	1	-	1
Omagh Court Office	1	2	-	3
Londonderry Court Office	-	-	1	1
Coleraine Court Office	-	3	-	3
Newry Court Office	1	1	-	2
Ballymena Court Office	-	1	-	1
Lisburn Court Office	-	1	-	1
Total	2	25	8	35

Table 15 - Outstanding ejectment cases with NID

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	15
Newtownards Court Office	1
Downpatrick Court Office	5
Craigavon Court Office	4
Omagh Court Office	4
Londonderry Court Office	5
Enniskillen Court Office	2
Coleraine Court Office	1
Newry Court Office	8
Ballymena Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	5
Total	51

Table 16: Time intervals in weeks for ejectment

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	36
Newtownards Court Office	19
Craigavon Court Office	10
Armagh Court Office	19
Omagh Court Office	75
Coleraine Court Office	39
Newry Court Office	15
Ballymena Court Office	21
Lisburn Court Office	102
Total	39

Excludes default judgements, non court disposals and office disposals

Small Claims

Table 17 - Number of small claims cases and applications received

Type	Processing Office	Total	
Case	Laganside Courts	59	
	Newtownards Court Office	28	
	Downpatrick Court Office	1	
	Craigavon Court Office	10	
	Armagh Court Office	2	
	Omagh Court Office	18	
	Londonderry Court Office	7	
	Enniskillen Court Office	2	
	Coleraine Court Office	16	
	Newry Court Office	6	
	Ballymena Court Office	4	
	Lisburn Court Office	6	
	Dungannon Court Office	1	
	Civil Processing Centre	1148	
	Total	1308	
	Application	Laganside Courts	7
		Newtownards Court Office	2
Armagh Court Office		2	
Omagh Court Office		3	
Coleraine Court Office		1	
Newry Court Office		1	
Lisburn Court Office		1	
Civil Processing Centre		9	
Total		26	

Table 18 - Number of small claims cases with NODs received

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	67
Newtownards Court Office	35
Downpatrick Court Office	1
Craigavon Court Office	12
Armagh Court Office	2
Omagh Court Office	18
Londonderry Court Office	12
Enniskillen Court Office	3
Coleraine Court Office	21
Newry Court Office	8
Ballymena Court Office	4
Lisburn Court Office	8
Dungannon Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	40
Total	232

Table 19 - Number of small claims cases and applications disposed

Type	Processing Office	Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Case	Laganside Courts	-	6	5	2	13
	Newtownards Court Office	-	-	5	2	7
	Craigavon Court Office	-	-	1	-	1
	Armagh Court Office	-	-	-	1	1
	Omagh Court Office	-	-	2	1	3
	Enniskillen Court Office	-	-	1	-	1
	Coleraine Court Office	-	-	-	1	1
	Newry Court Office	-	-	-	1	1
	Civil Processing Centre	-	1	286	538	825
	Total	-	7	300	546	853
Application	Laganside Courts	3	2	-	-	5
	Newtownards Court Office	-	3	-	-	3
	Armagh Court Office	-	2	-	-	2
	Newry Court Office	-	1	-	-	1
	Total	3	8	-	-	11

Table 20 - Outstanding small claims with NOD

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	232
Newtownards Court Office	73
Downpatrick Court Office	8
Craigavon Court Office	33
Armagh Court Office	5
Omagh Court Office	44
Antrim Court Office	1
Londonderry Court Office	33
Enniskillen Court Office	4
Coleraine Court Office	56
Newry Court Office	46
Ballymena Court Office	13
Lisburn Court Office	42
Dungannon Court Office	1
Civil Processing Centre	138
Total	729

Table 21 - Time intervals in weeks for small claims

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	7
Total	7

Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals and office disposals

Criminal Damage

Table 22: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	2
Omagh Court Office	1
Newry Court Office	1
Total	4

Table 23 - Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed

Processing Office	Non court disposal	Total
Laganside Courts	1	1
Omagh Court Office	1	1
Londonderry Court Office	1	1
Total	3	3

Table 24 - Outstanding criminal damage cases

Processing Office	Total
Laganside Courts	16
Newtownards Court Office	1
Omagh Court Office	8
Londonderry Court Office	3
Newry Court Office	2
Dungannon Court Office	1
Total	31

Table 25: Time intervals in weeks for criminal damage

Due to COVID-19 there have been no court disposals during the period, and therefore it has not been possible to produce the time interval calculations as they are based on court disposals, and DJ and non-court disposals are excluded.

Divorces

Table 26 - Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted

Processing Office	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	43	35	2	6	7	93
Downpatrick Court Office	19	12	-	3	-	34
Craigavon Court Office	14	12	1	2	3	32
Omagh Court Office	13	10	-	6	1	30
Londonderry Court Office	27	22	-	4	3	56
Coleraine Court Office	28	21	1	9	8	67
Newry Court Office	10	17	-	10	3	40
Dungannon Court Office	3	5	-	-	-	8
Total	157	134	4	40	25	360

Table 27 - Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued

Processing Office	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Laganside Courts	28	20	-	5	5	58
Downpatrick Court Office	4	3	1	2	-	10
Craigavon Court Office	17	13	-	2	-	32
Armagh Court Office	2	-	-	-	-	2
Omagh Court Office	6	4	-	1	1	12
Londonderry Court Office	9	12	-	1	3	25
Coleraine Court Office	22	16	1	13	4	56
Newry Court Office	10	9	-	7	2	28
Dungannon Court Office	1	2	-	1	1	5
Total	99	79	2	32	16	228

Table 28 - Matrimonial applications received

Processing Office	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	4	-	1	5
Newtownards Court Office	2	-	-	2
Downpatrick Court Office	1	-	-	1
Craigavon Court Office	-	-	1	1
Armagh Court Office	6	-	2	8
Omagh Court Office	4	-	-	4
Londonderry Court Office	4	1	4	9
Coleraine Court Office	8	-	-	8
Ballymena Court Office	1	-	-	1
Total	30	1	8	39

Table 29 - Matrimonial applications disposed

Processing Office	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application to a master	Other	Total
Laganside Courts	5	1	-	6
Newtownards Court Office	1	-	-	1
Downpatrick Court Office	1	-	-	1
Craigavon Court Office	1	-	3	4
Omagh Court Office	7	-	-	7
Londonderry Court Office	1	1	6	8
Coleraine Court Office	10	-	-	10
Newry Court Office	5	-	-	5
Ballymena Court Office	1	-	-	1
Dungannon Court Office	1	-	-	1
Total	33	2	9	44

Table 30 - Time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions

Processing Office	Issue to date decree granted	Date decree granted to date absolute issued
Laganside Courts	43	8
Downpatrick Court Office	31	7
Craigavon Court Office	32	9
Omagh Court Office	38	8
Londonderry Court Office	46	8
Coleraine Court Office	34	8
Newry Court Office	38	9
Dungannon Court Office	37	8
Total	39	8

Table 31 - Time intervals in weeks for divorce applications

Processing Office	Issue to disposal
Laganside Courts	69
Newtownards Court Office	18
Craigavon Court Office	26
Omagh Court Office	84
Londonderry Court Office	23
Coleraine Court Office	99
Newry Court Office	71
Ballymena Court Office	103
Dungannon Court Office	75
Total	73

Excludes non-court disposals

Licences

Table 32 - Licences received and disposed

Processing Office	Licences Received	Licences Disposed
Coleraine	14	8
Newtownards	10	14
Newry	8	14
Laganside Courts	14	19
Craigavon	1	1
Omagh	5	7
Londonderry	4	4
Total	56	67

County Court and District Judge Sitting Days

Table 33 - County Court Judge & District Judge Sitting Days

Processing Office	Number of sitting days	Average sitting	Total time	Total criminal time	Total civil time	Total family time
Antrim	109	2:23:28	260:38:00	147:38:00	90:15:00	22:45:00
Laganside	341	2:43:27	928:57:00	416:02:00	123:22:00	389:33:00
Armagh	126	2:48:00	352:48:00	2:43:00	157:17:00	192:48:00
Dungannon	80	2:22:03	189:25:00	124:57:00	15:38:00	48:50:00
Royal Courts Of Justice	1	2:00:00	2:00:00	0:00:00	2:00:00	0:00:00
Downpatrick	51	1:53:30	96:29:00	2:12:00	88:47:00	5:30:00
Craigavon	54	2:22:46	128:30:00	120:54:00	0:02:00	7:34:00
Strabane	1	0:30:00	0:30:00	0:30:00	0:00:00	0:00:00
Omagh	78	2:06:40	164:41:00	2:43:00	127:34:00	34:24:00
Enniskillen	11	1:30:16	16:33:00	4:52:00	3:05:00	8:36:00
Coleraine	1	3:00:00	3:00:00	0:00:00	3:00:00	0:00:00
Londonderry	103	2:35:19	266:39:00	149:13:00	36:15:00	81:11:00
Newtownards	33	1:56:40	64:10:00	0:00:00	64:10:00	0:00:00
Newry	54	0:57:01	51:19:00	44:15:00	4:18:00	2:46:00
Total	1043	2:25:17	2525:39:00	1015:59:00	715:43:00	793:57:00

Administrative case management reviews were introduced by the Lord Chief Justice as part of the [coronavirus contingency](#) arrangements. This has resulted in Judges investing significant time reviewing cases and making directions or orders administratively (where appropriate), and this has continued even as courts have resumed to support business recovery. This extra time is not recorded on the courts operating system (ICOS), and therefore is not reflected within the sittings times published within this report.

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 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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