

5 April 2011

## **Small Claims limit increase to £3000**

From 2 May 2011 the Small Claims limit in Northern Ireland is increasing from £2000 to a new limit of £3000.

A small claim provides a simple and informal way to resolve certain legal disputes. The rise in the limit to £3000 is a significant change to a straightforward process allowing more claims to be processed and opening up justice to the citizen at a time of economic constraint.

The Small Claims Court offers a means of settling disputes in the County Court about issues surrounding unpaid debt, rent arrears, hire purchase payments, faulty goods, unsatisfactory workmanship and damage to property.

It is a simple and straightforward process which claimants can pursue online at [www.courtsni.gov.uk](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk) Where a small claim is not contested, the entire process can be conducted over the Internet without ever involving a court appearance.

ENDS

### **Notes to Editor**

1. Each year in excess of 10,000 small claims are lodged at court offices. From 2 May 2011 these can be up to a value of £3,000 for money owed in respect of: unpaid debt, rent arrears, hire purchase payments, faulty goods, unsatisfactory workmanship, damage to property, or claims by suppliers of goods or services for unpaid bills.
2. A small claim is dealt with informally by the County Court. Not all small claims will result in a court hearing; usually only those that are being disputed will need to be heard in court.
3. The Small Claims Court Fees are tiered depending on the value of the claim and range from £30 (a claim up to £300) to £100 (a claim up to £3,000). If an individual wins their case the fee will be recoverable.
4. Small Claims Online is part of the Court Service's ICOS (Integrated Court Operations System) IT modernisation programme to develop the accessibility of services to the public and other court users.
5. Further information about the Small Claims process can be found at [www.courtsni.gov.uk](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk). The Small Claims guide can also be downloaded from the website, or obtained from any court office.
6. Further information on the Small Claims process can also be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

If you have any further queries or if you have difficulty viewing the figures please contact:

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