



Northern Ireland

**Courts and
Tribunals Service**

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Children Order Bulletin

July to September 2011

serving the community through the administration of justice

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Summary

During July - September 2011:

- There were 1,562 applications entered during the period, of which:
 - 189 = Public
 - 1,373 = PrivateThis represents an increase of 4% on the same period last year (1,499).
- There were 1,331 applications dealt with during the period, of which:
 - 117 = Public
 - 1,214 = PrivateThis represents an increase of 15% on the same period last year (1,160).
- There were 153 cases transferred during the period with 159 reasons for transfer. This is a 25% increase on the July to September 2010 figures, when 122 cases were transferred with 125 reasons.
- During the period there were 238 own motion orders made, and 4% were in relation to Contact issues. This is a 5% increase compared with the 227 own motion orders made between July – September 2010.
- There were 5,147 interim orders made, and the majority were in relation to Contact (2,316) and Care (2,216) issues. This represents a 26% increase on the same period last year (4,088).
- There were 386 sittings spent on Children Order business between July and September 2011, this indicates an 8% increase compared with July to September 2010 (359 sittings). The court times spent on Children Order business between July – September 2011 were:
 - Total time = 894 hours 39 minutes
 - Average sitting time = 2 hrs 19 minutes
- There were 3,549 final orders made between July and September 2011, this is a 37% increase on the 2,582 orders made between July to September 2010.
- The average waiting time in weeks from lodgement to disposal for public law cases was 36 weeks, compared with 27 weeks for July – September 2010.
- The average waiting time in weeks between lodgement to disposal for private law cases was 21 weeks, compared with 22 weeks for July – September 2010.
- There were 1,689 children involved in Children Order Proceedings during the period, which was a 12% increase on July to September 2010 (1,508).
- 43% of children involved in Children Order Proceedings were under the age of five. In July to September 2010, 39% were under the age of five.

Table 1a: Applications entered and disposed

		Number of applications entered	Number of disposals
Private Law	Family Proceedings Court	1283	1093
	Family Care Centre	31	76
	High Court	59	45
	Total	1373	1214
Public Law	Family Proceedings Court	173	85
	Family Care Centre	9	15
	High Court	7	17
	Total	189	117

Private law = residence, contact, specific issues, prohibited steps, parental responsibility, financial contribution, guardianship, family assistance, non-molestation and occupation orders

Table 1b: Applications entered and disposed by processing office

		Public Law		Private Law	
		Number of applications entered	Number of disposals	Number of applications entered	Number of disposals
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	0	1	5	23
	Armagh	0	0	0	1
	Ballymena	22	8	118	88
	Bangor	0	0	5	4
	Belfast	39	16	387	322
	Coleraine	0	0	23	15
	Craigavon	17	8	81	68
	Downpatrick	0	0	6	4
	Dungannon	25	11	77	72
	Larne	0	0	2	5
	Limavady	0	0	1	1
	Lisburn	12	9	96	94
	Londonderry	16	6	155	134
	Magherafelt	0	0	0	0
	Newry	17	10	122	97
	Newtownards	25	15	201	162
	Omagh	0	1	4	3
	Venue total	173	85	1283	1093
Family Care Centre	Belfast	9	6	23	40
	Craigavon	0	6	6	27
	Dungannon	0	0	0	1
	Londonderry	0	3	2	8
	Venue total	9	15	31	76
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	7	17	59	45
	Venue total	7	17	59	45

Private law = residence, contact, specific issues, prohibited steps, parental responsibility, financial contribution, guardianship, family assistance, non-molestation and occupation orders.

Table 1c: Applications entered and disposed

	Public Law		Private Law	
	Number of applications entered	Number of disposals	Number of applications entered	Number of disposals
Northern Ireland	189	117	1373	1214

Table 2: Reasons for transfer [1]

Transferred from		Complexity	Consolidation	Convenience	Gravity	Jurisdiction	Returned to Lower Court	Separate Representation for Child	Urgency	Point of Law	Public Interest	Other	Total
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Armagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ballymena	24	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	29
	Belfast	31	9	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	46
	Coleraine	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Craigavon	8	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	16
	Downpatrick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Dungannon	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Larne	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Lisburn	11	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
	Londonderry	10	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
	Newry	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	Newtownards	4	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
	Omagh	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Venue total	94	21	1	2	20	0	2	0	2	0	0	142
Family Care Centre	Belfast	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
	Craigavon	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Dungannon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Londonderry	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
	Venue total	5	2	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	13
High Court	Office of Care and Protection	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
	Matrimonial Office	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Venue total	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Northern Ireland Total		99	23	3	2	23	3	2	2	2	0	0	159

[1] Total number of reasons for transfer. There may be more than one reason for each case. There were 153 cases transferred during the period.

Table 3: Total own motion orders

	Own motion orders
Parental Responsibility	7
Contact: Permission	10
Contact: Refusal	0
Residence	10
Prohibited Steps	13
Specific Issues	7
Family Assistance	0
Care	16
Supervision	1
Education Supervision	1
Declaration of Parentage	0
Child Assessment	17
Emergency Protection	1
Extension of EPO	3
Recovery	0
Secure Accommodation	2
Article 53 Contract	0
Appointment of Guardian	81
Contribution and other Financial	0
Non-Molestation Order	0
Occupation Articles	0
Article 56 Investigations	0
Exclusion Requirement	0
Ex Parte Application refused	0
Other orders, applications etc	69
Total	238

Table 4: Total interim orders

	Interim orders
Parental Responsibility	2
Contact: Permission	2316
Contact: Refusal	0
Residence	345
Prohibited Steps	139
Specific Issues	7
Family Assistance	0
Care	2216
Supervision	49
Education Supervision	0
Child Assessment	0
Emergency Protection	0
Extension of EPO	0
Recovery	0
Secure Accommodation	60
Article 53 Contract	0
Appointment of Guardian	0
Contribution and other Financial	0
Non-Molestation Order	13
Occupation Articles	0
Article 56 Investigations	0
Exclusion Requirement	0
Other orders, applications etc	0
Total	5147

Table 5a: Sitting times disposed of by court venue

		Total sitting time	Average sitting time	Total sittings
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	23:20	02:55	8
	Ballymena	37:05	02:04	18
	Banbridge@Newry	00:20	00:10	2
	Bangor	00:10	00:10	1
	Belfast	169:55	03:02	56
	Coleraine	31:35	04:31	7
	Craigavon	41:45	02:59	14
	Dungannon	33:35	04:48	7
	Larne	14:50	03:43	4
	Lisburn	53:30	04:28	12
	Londonderry	85:35	03:25	25
	Newry	49:10	02:54	17
	Newtownards	93:15	02:13	42
	Omagh	38:00	02:55	13
	Venue total	672:05	02:58	226
Family Care Centre	Belfast	94:34	02:15	42
	Craigavon	41:50	03:29	12
	Dungannon	05:46	00:29	12
	Enniskillen	00:10	00:10	1
	Lisburn	01:00	00:30	2
	Londonderry	16:40	01:07	15
	Omagh	00:05	00:05	1
	Strabane	00:05	00:05	1
	Venue total	160:10	01:52	86
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	62:24	00:51	74
	Venue total	62:24	00:51	74

Table 5b: Sitting times and business disposed of in Northern Ireland

	Total sitting time	Average sitting time	Total sittings
Northern Ireland	894:39	02:19	386

[1] Total sittings include both minority and majority sittings

Table 6: Orders Made

		Orders Made		Total
		By Consent	Other	
Orders Made	Adjourn Generally	0	3	3
	Article 20 Non-Molestation Order	0	7	7
	Article 53 Contact with a Child in Care	0	25	25
	Care Order	33	98	131
	Contact Order	684	308	992
	Declaration of Parentage	25	5	30
	Discharging a Care Order	9	0	9
	Discharge Contact Order	15	34	49
	Discharge Prohibited Steps Order	20	1	21
	Discharge Residence Order	7	0	7
	Dismiss Order (Children Order)	0	34	34
	Education Supervision Order	0	9	9
	Emergency Protection Order	3	24	27
	Emergency Protection Order - Out of Hours	0	10	10
	Extension of an Emergency Protection Order	4	4	8
	Family Assistance Order	1	4	5
	Financial Provision	1	3	4
	Leave to change surname by which child is known	1	0	1
	Leave to withdraw	244	88	332
	Non Molestation Order	0	7	7
	Order of No Order (Final Order)	23	17	40
	Order for Leave of Court	0	27	27
	Order terminating appointment of GAL	135	66	201
	Other Order	50	381	431
	Parental Responsibility Order	82	34	116
	Proceedings dismissed without prejudice (Final Order)	39	48	87
	Prohibited Steps Order	26	37	63
	Recovery of a Child	0	7	7
	Residence Order	398	229	627
	Secure Accommodation Order	15	7	22
Specific Issues Order	37	61	98	
Strike out	13	51	64	
Supervision Order	6	49	55	
Total	1871	1678	3549	

Table 7a: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal of cases by processing office

		Public law		Private law	
		Average time weeks	Number of cases	Average time weeks	Number of cases
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	19.0	1	26.7	23
	Armagh	0	0	16.6	1
	Ballymena	25.8	8	24.4	88
	Bangor	0	0	0	4
	Belfast	24.0	16	15.8	322
	Coleraine	0	0	7.6	15
	Craigavon	21.4	8	18.6	68
	Downpatrick	0	0	2.8	4
	Dungannon	23.4	11	15.9	72
	Larne	0	0	20.6	5
	Limavady	0	0	0	1
	Lisburn	19.7	9	17.8	94
	Londonderry	26.9	6	24.3	134
	Newry	33.9	10	22.2	97
	Newtownards	11.4	15	20.6	162
	Omagh	3.9	1	1.5	3
	Total	22.2	85	19.1	1093
Family Care Centre	Belfast	36.2	6	41.1	40
	Craigavon	65.3	6	49.4	27
	Dungannon	0	0	57.0	1
	Londonderry	98.1	3	32.0	8
		Total	60.2	15	43.3
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	80.2	17	21.8	45
	Total	80.2	17	21.8	45

N.B. Cases disposed will include time spent at the lower court tier.

Table 7b: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal of cases in Northern Ireland

	Public law		Private law	
	Average time weeks	Number of cases	Average time weeks	Number of cases
Northern Ireland	35.5	117	20.8	1214

N.B. Cases disposed will include time spent at the lower court tier.

Table 8: Age and gender of children

	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	Total
Male	355	242	162	75	834
Female	365	242	147	101	855
Total	720	484	309	176	1689

Appendix 1 - Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue for Care Cases

		Average time in weeks	Number of cases
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	0	0
	Ballymena	43.1	3
	Belfast	38.5	6
	Craigavon	41.0	3
	Dungannon	41.8	5
	Lisburn	44.7	3
	Londonderry	0	0
	Newtownards	26.8	2
	Newry	45.6	7
	Total	41.4	29
Family Care Centre	Belfast	36.2	6
	Craigavon	78.1	4
	Dungannon	0	0
	Londonderry	57.2	2
	Total	53.7	12
High Court	Office of Care & Protection	103.5	13
	Total	103.5	13

N.B. Cases disposed will include time spent at the lower court tier. This table includes all care applications irrespective of the order made.

Appendix 1 - Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal for Care Cases

	Average time weeks	Number of cases
Northern Ireland	59.1	54

N.B. Cases disposed will include time spent at the lower court tier. This table includes all care applications irrespective of the order made.

Appendix 2 - Average time in weeks spent at the court tier in which the case was finally disposed

		Public Law	Private Law
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	19.0	26.3
	Armagh	0	16.6
	Ballymena	17.3	24.3
	Bangor	0	0
	Belfast	24.0	15.6
	Coleraine	0	7.6
	Craigavon	21.4	18.4
	Downpatrick	0	2.8
	Dungannon	23.4	15.9
	Larne	0	20.6
	Limavady	0	0
	Lisburn	19.7	17.8
	Londonderry	26.9	24.2
	Newry	33.9	22.2
	Newtownards	11.4	20.6
	Omagh	3.9	1.5
Total	21.5	19.1	
Family Care Centre	Belfast	30.9	28.0
	Craigavon	43.9	32.1
	Dungannon	0	57.0
	Londonderry	56.3	21.6
	Total	41.2	29.2
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	69.9	19.4
	Total	69.9	19.4

Appendix 2 - Average time in weeks spent at the court tier in which the case was finally disposed

	Public Law	Private Law
Northern Ireland	31.0	19.7

Data source and validations:

Data from the Integrated Courts Operations System (ICOS) are used for this publication. This system has been chosen as it is the main system within the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS). The data are input to this system on a daily basis. A download from this system is supplied to the Statistics and Research team on a weekly basis on flat files.

This information is downloaded via SPSS and validations are produced from this system to ensure that the data are reliable and robust for use. Any inconsistencies are reported back to individual court offices and if required, any necessary amendments are made to the data. Once, these amendments have been checked, computer syntax is then used to produce the tables in the bulletin. The aggregated total figures in the bulletin are produced from the computer syntax. The data are broken down by court location as this is the established way of producing and presenting these data.

To ensure that timely data are used, the latest available extract is used to compile this bulletin.

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