

Serving the
community
through the
administration
of justice

Northern Ireland Court Service Judicial Statistics

2008



A National Statistics Publication



A NATIONAL STATISTICS PUBLICATION

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on:

Tel: **0845 601 3034**

Minicom: 01633812399

E-mail: info@statistics.gov.uk

Fax: 01633 652747

Letters: Customer Contact Centre,
Room 1.015, Office for National Statistics,
Cardiff Road, Newport NP10 8XG

You can also find National Statistics on the internet. Go to www.statistics.gov.uk



A NATIONAL STATISTICS PUBLICATION

Index

Introduction

Part A: The Court of Appeal

[Section 1: Criminal appeals](#)

[Section 2: Civil appeals](#)

[Section 3: Court sitting times](#)

Part B: The High Court

[Section 1: Chancery](#)

[Section 2: Bankruptcy](#)

[Section 3: Companies](#)

[Section 4: Queen's Bench Division](#)

[Section 5: Judicial Reviews](#)

[Section 6: Probate](#)

[Section 7: Matrimonial](#)

[Section 8: Wardship and Adoption](#)

[Section 9: Care & Protection](#)

[Section 10: Official Solicitor's Office](#)

[Section 11: Masters' appeals](#)

[Section 12: High Court Bails](#)

[Section 13: Court sitting days and court sitting times](#)

Part C: Crown Court

[Section 1: Cases received and disposed of](#)

[Section 2: Crown Court waiting times](#)

[Section 3: Defendants disposed of](#)

[Section 4: Crown Court sittings and times](#)

Part D: County Court

[Section 1: Appeals from magistrates' courts](#)

[Section 2: Criminal damage cases](#)

[Section 3: Licences](#)

[Section 4: Ordinary civil bills](#)

[Section 5: Equity](#)

[Section 6: Ejectment](#)

[Section 7: Small claims](#)

[Section 8: Divorce cases](#)

[Section 9: Court sitting days and court sitting times](#)

Part E: Magistrates' Courts

[Section 1: Business volumes received in the magistrates' court](#)

[Section 2: Adult criminal business disposed of](#)

[Section 3: Youth criminal business disposed of](#)

[Section 4: Civil & Family business disposed of](#)

[Section 5: Court sittings and court sitting times](#)

Part F: Children Order

[Section 1: Applications entered and disposed of](#)

[Section 2: Reasons for transfer](#)

[Section 3: Own motion orders and interim orders](#)

[Section 4: Final orders made](#)

[Section 5: Age and gender of children](#)

[Section 6: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue](#)

[Section 7: Court sittings and court sitting times](#)

Part G Miscellaneous

[Section 1: Enforcement of Judgments Office](#)

[Section 2: Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners and Pension Appeals Tribunals](#)

[Section 3: Coroners' office](#)

Appendix 1: Judge court sitting days

Introduction

1 Contents

The statistics in this report relate to the criminal, civil and family business conducted by the Northern Ireland Court Service (NICtS) and to the work of some associated tribunals and offices. This introduction sets out a brief description of the courts and the business that the statistics relate to.

2 The Court Structure

The Court of Appeal: The Court of Appeal sits at the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast. The Judges of the Court of Appeal are the Lord Chief Justice (who is the President of the Court of Appeal) and three Lords Justices of Appeal. High Court Judges can sit in the Court of Appeal on criminal causes or matters. The Court of Appeal hears appeals in criminal matters from the Crown Court and civil matters from the High Court (including Judicial Reviews). It also hears appeals on points of law from the county courts, magistrates' courts and certain appeal tribunals.

The High Court: The High Court sits at the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast. It consists of the Lord Chief Justice (who is the President of the High Court), and three Lords Justices of Appeal along with ten High Court Judges and two temporary High Court Judges. The High Court hears high value and complex civil cases. The High Court comprises three Divisions: the Chancery Division, Queen's Bench Division and Family Division.

The Crown Court: The Crown Court has exclusive jurisdiction to try offences charged on indictment. Offences tried on indictment are more serious offences. The Lord Chief Justice is President of the Crown Court and the Lords Justices of Appeal, High Court Judges and county court judges all sit in the Crown Court. The Crown Court sits throughout Northern Ireland.

The County Court: In Northern Ireland, there are seven county court divisions with seventeen county court judges and four district judges. Civil cases are commenced in the county court if the value of the case is less than £15,000. 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.

The Magistrates' Court: There are twenty-one petty sessions' districts in Northern Ireland. A magistrates' court (other than a youth court or family proceedings court) is presided over by a Resident Magistrate¹ sitting alone. The present complement of Resident Magistrates is twenty-one. The magistrates' court hears and determines less serious criminal cases, cases involving youth and some civil and domestic cases including family proceedings.

Coroners' Court: The Coroners Service is headed by a High Court Judge. There is one Senior Coroner and two Coroners. They deal with matters relating to deaths that may require further investigation to establish the cause of death.

¹ Resident Magistrates are referred to as District Judges (Magistrates' Courts) effective from 2 June 2008).

Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners: Social Security Commissioners hear appeals from Appeal Tribunals in relation to matters arising under the social security system. Child Support Commissioners hear appeals from Child Support Appeal Tribunals.

The Enforcement of Judgments Office: The Enforcement of Judgments Office (EJO) deals with enforcing money judgments and also enforces other types of civil judgments such as those that are connected with the possession of land and property.

3 Databases

There are a number of databases that are used to carry out the analysis in this report. As these are current databases, the figures here are taken at a cut off point of the 31 March 2009.

In previous years, Judicial Statistics reported on and compared business in the courts between years. In 2005, a new court operations system called the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS) was introduced in the High Court and county court. Regular downloads of information are available from this new system, and this has resulted in access to more detailed information across all court tiers. The High Court and county court sections have been completed based on ICOS and caution should be taken when comparing figures prior to 2005.

During 2006, ICOS was introduced in the Crown Court and criminal magistrates' court and these sections have been completed from the information extracted from ICOS. Caution should be taken when comparing figures prior to 2006.

During 2007, the civil and family module of ICOS was completed. This affects the information in the civil and family magistrates' court section and also in the Children Order section. For further advice on the differences between 2008 figures and previous years, please contact the NICtS.

The Court Structure in Northern Ireland

The House of Lords

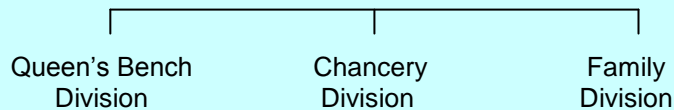
Final Court of Appeal on points of law for the United Kingdom in civil cases.
Final Court of Appeal on points of law for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in criminal cases.

The Court of Appeal

Deals with appeals in civil cases from the High Court and with appeals in criminal cases from the Crown Court. Hears appeals on points of law from the county courts and the magistrates' courts.

The High Court

Hears complex or important civil cases in three divisions and also appeals from county courts.



County Courts

(including family care centres)
(7 Divisions)

Hear a wide range of civil actions and also appeals from magistrates' courts.

Small Claims Courts

Hear consumer claims and minor civil cases.

Coroners' Courts

Investigate the circumstances of sudden, violent or unnatural deaths.

The Enforcement of Judgments Office

Enforces money and other judgments.

The Crown Court

Hears all serious criminal cases.

Magistrates' Courts

(including youth courts and family proceedings courts) (21 petty sessions districts)

Conduct preliminary hearings in more serious criminal cases.
Hear and determine less serious criminal cases, cases involving youths and some civil and domestic cases, including family proceedings.

Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners

Hear appeals from unified Appeal Tribunals in matters arising from social security, child support, tax credits etc.

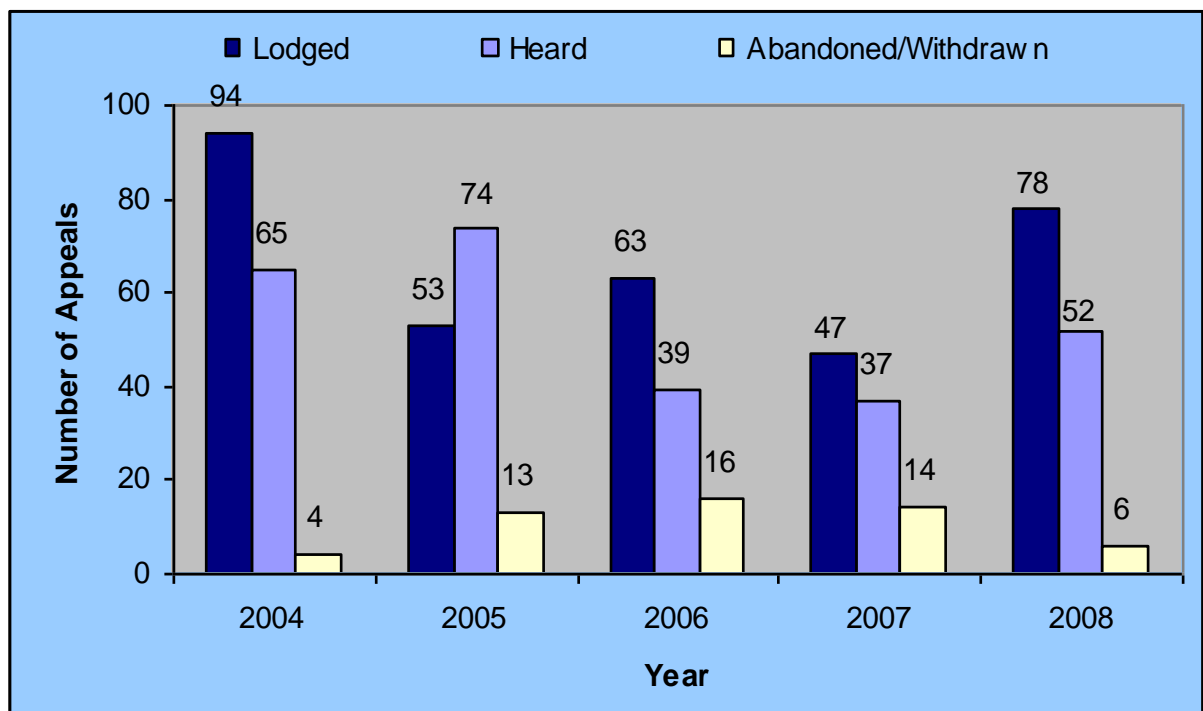
Part A Court Of Appeal

The Court of Appeal is divided into civil and criminal. It hears appeals from decisions in the High Court and against convictions and sentences passed by the Crown Court and cases stated from other court tiers. It also hears appeals from tribunals and outside bodies.

Key facts during 2008

- 78 criminal appeals were lodged in the Court of Appeal
- 58 criminal appeals were disposed of in the Court of Appeal
- 31 criminal appeals were successful
- 96 civil appeals were set down in the Court of Appeal
- 78 civil appeals were disposed of in the Court of Appeal

Figure A.1 Criminal appeals lodged and disposed of from 2004-2008



Section 1: Criminal appeals

The number of criminal appeals lodged in 2008 increased from 47 in 2007 to 78 in 2008 (Table A.1).

Table A.1: Criminal appeals lodged and disposed of in 2008

	Lodged	Heard by full court	Abandoned/Withdrawn
	78	52	6

There were 56 appeals lodged against sentence only, 14 were against conviction while the remaining 8 were against both conviction and sentence. Of the 78 appeals lodged during 2008, 12 resulted from trials dealing with scheduled offences (Table A.2).

Table A.2: Types of criminal appeal lodged in 2008

	Appeal against			Total
	Sentence	Conviction	Conviction and sentence	
Scheduled	0	12	0	12
Non-Scheduled	56	2	8	66
Total	56	14	8	78

There were 31 successful appeals in 2008 with 2 appeals refused, and 11 appeals abandoned or withdrawn (Table A.3).

Table A.3: Results of criminal appeals by type in 2008

	Conviction only or conviction & sentence		Sentence only	
	Scheduled	Non Scheduled	Scheduled	Non Scheduled
Conviction Quashed	0	4	0	0
Appeal Dismissed	4	4	0	0
Sentence Affirmed	0	0	0	5
Sentence varied	1	9	0	17
Withdrawn/Abandoned	1	2	0	8
Refused	0	0	0	2
Total	6	19	0	32

Section 2: Civil appeals

There were 96 civil appeals set down in 2008, 2 more than the 2007 total of 94. As in previous years, the main source of civil appeals was the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court with 37 cases set down. A total of 78 appeals were disposed of during the year (Table A.4).

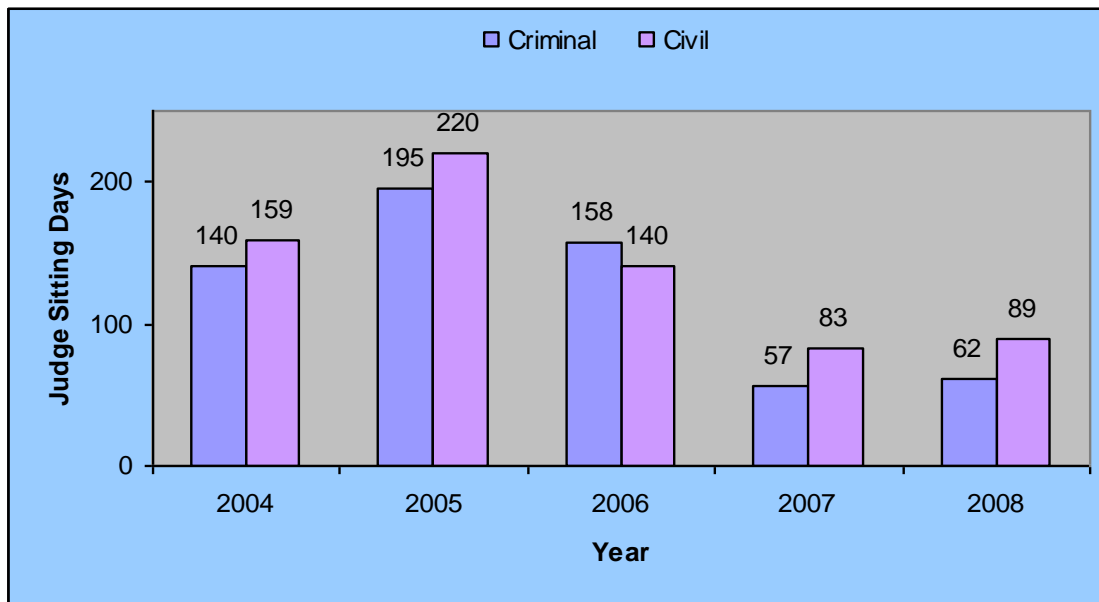
Table A.4: Appeals set down and disposed of by origin and type in 2008

	Set Down	Disposed
Chancery: Final	5	-
Chancery: Interlocutory	1	-
Family Division: Final	1	1
Family Division: Interlocutory	-	-
Queens Bench		
Judicial Review: Final	25	21
Judicial Review: Interlocutory	4	4
Commercial: Final	-	-
Commercial: Interlocutory	-	-
Other: Final	7	6
Other: Damages	-	-
Other: Interlocutory	1	-
Magistrates' court (Section 44 of Judicature Act)	-	-
Case Stated		
Court of Appeal (Appeal or Case Stated)	17	9
Requisition to Judge to State a Case	2	-
By Outside Body	7	15
By Lands Tribunal	-	-
By High Court Judge	17	11
By County Court Judge	3	-
By District Judge	-	-
By District Judge (Magistrates' Court)	3	9
Determination of pensions: Pension appeal	-	-
Immigration Tribunal	-	-
Motions on Notice	3	2
Proceeds of crime	-	-
Master (EJO)	-	-
Other	-	-
Total	96	78

Section 3: Court sitting times

The number of court sitting days spent on criminal appeals (by majority type of work) increased from 57 days in 2007 to 62 days in 2008. A total of 105 hours were spent in court hearing criminal appeals in 2008 compared with 97 court hours in 2007. There were 89 court sitting days (by majority type of work) spent on civil appeals during 2008 compared with 83 in 2007. A total of 159 hours were spent in court hearing civil appeals in 2008 compared with 164 court hours during 2007 (Figure A.2 & Table B.40).

Figure A.2 Number of court sitting days (majority days) in the Court of Appeal from 2004-2008



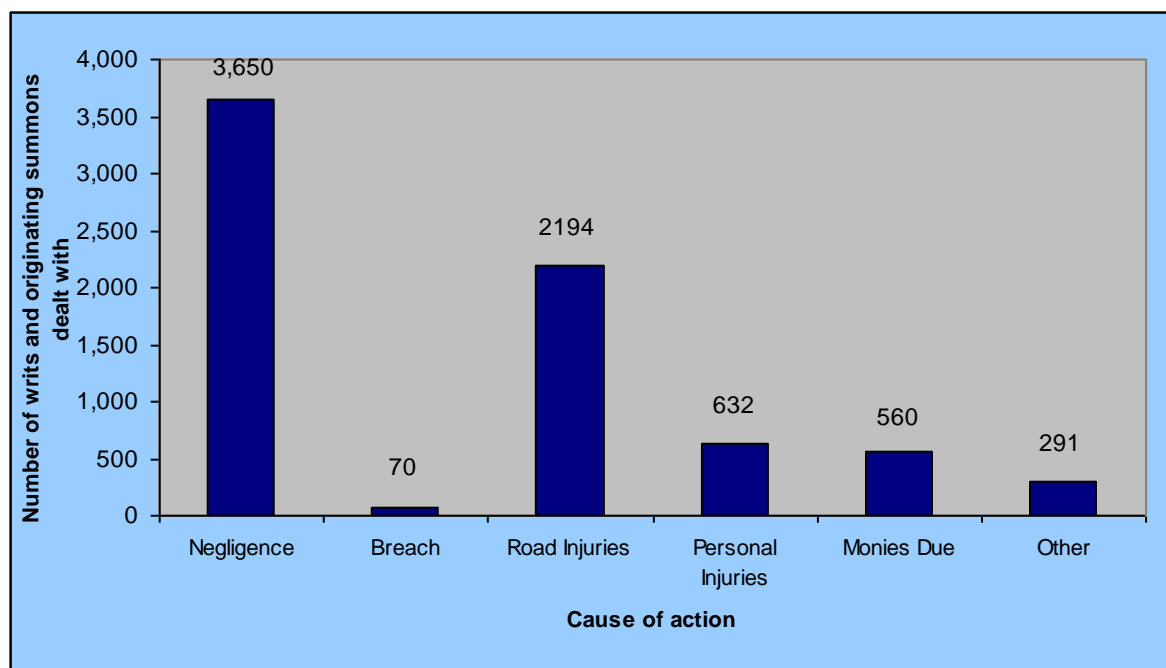
Part B High Court

The High Court is a civil court which consists of the Chancery Division, Queen's Bench Division and the Family Division.

Key facts during 2008

- 3,630 mortgage applications were entered in Chancery
- 3,518 bankruptcy proceedings were entered
- 3,049 bankruptcy proceedings were disposed of
- 380 companies proceedings were disposed of
- 5,956 writs and originating summonses were received
- 742 judgments by default were entered
- 3,055 divorce petitions were filed in the High Court
- 1,930 applications for bail were received

Figure B1: Queen's Bench writs and originating summons disposals in 2008



Section 1: Chancery

Table B.1 shows that during 2008, a total of 4,130 Chancery writs and originating summonses were issued. Mortgage suits continue to account for the majority (88%) of writs and originating summonses issued. The number of mortgages received has increased by 64% during 2008. (2,212 in 2007 compared to 3,630 in 2008).

Table B.1: Chancery cases and applications received in 2008

Cases	Mortgages	3630
	Other land and property	123
	Trade and business	20
	Trusts	17
	Other	340
	Total	4130
Applications	Notice of appointment	2801
	Summons	764
	Notice of motion	51
	Exparte application	161
	Injunction	25
	Other	1
	Total	3803

There were 2,978 cases and applications disposed of in 2008. Mortgages accounted for the majority of disposals with 2,009 cases disposed of. (Table B.2).

Table B.2: Chancery cases and applications disposed of in 2008

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Mortgages	5	2002	2	2009
	Other land and property	70	9	12	91
	Trade and business	18	2	5	25
	Trusts	7	1	1	9
	Other	111	13	14	138
	Total	211	2027	34	2272
Applications	Notice of appointment	6	83	-	89
	Summons	71	387	1	459
	Notice of motion	14	5	-	19
	Exparte application	17	113	-	130
	Injunction	6	1	-	7
	Other	2	-	-	2
	Total	116	589	1	706

Section 2: Bankruptcy

There were 3,518 bankruptcy proceedings issued in 2008. These included 2,022 bankruptcy petitions, 79% of which were creditor petitions (Petition by another person). Other bankruptcy proceedings included 164 originating applications and 1134 ordinary applications (Table B.3).

Table B.3: Bankruptcy cases and applications received in 2008

Cases	Petition by another person	1597
	Petition by debtor	392
	Other petition	33
	Originating application	164
	Other	72
	Total	2258
Applications	Notice of motion	16
	Ordinary application	1134
	Certificate of automatic discharge	73
	Other	37
	Total	1260

The Master dealt with a total of 3,040 bankruptcy proceedings. The main area of work disposed of by the Master was bankruptcy petitions, a total of 2,020 (Table B.4).

Table B.4: Bankruptcy cases and applications disposed of in 2008

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Petition by another person	2	1592	1	1595
	Petition by debtor	-	387	-	387
	Other petition	-	41	-	41
	Originating application	4	52	-	56
	Other	-	49	-	49
	Total	6	2121	1	2128
Applications	Notice of motion	-	9	-	9
	Ordinary application	-	825	2	827
	Certificate of automatic discharge	-	63	-	63
	Other	-	22	-	22
	Total	-	919	2	921

Section 3: Companies

Table B.5 and B.6 show the companies' proceedings entered and disposed of for 2008. There were 519 companies' proceedings received and 380 disposed of.

Table B.5: Companies cases and applications received in 2008

Cases	Winding up petition	316
	Other petitions	18
	Originating summons	135
	Other	20
	Total	489
Applications	Notice of motion	2
	Ordinary application	23
	Other	5
	Total	30

Table B.6: Companies cases and applications disposed of in 2008

		High Court Judge	Master	Total
Cases	Winding up petition	1	304	305
	Other petitions	1	21	22
	Originating summons	5	29	34
	Other	4	6	10
	Total	11	360	371
Applications	Notice of motion	-	1	1
	Ordinary application	2	5	7
	Other	1	-	1
	Total	3	6	9

Table B.7 shows the time interval in weeks for cases and applications in the Chancery Division for the three business areas. A chancery case takes on average 30 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal compared to 12 weeks for a bankruptcy case and 11 weeks for a companies case.

Table B.7: Average time intervals in weeks in 2008

	Chancery		Bankruptcy		Companies	
	Cases	Applications	Cases	Applications	Cases	Applications
Issue to first listing	21	4	7	2	8	11
First listing to disposal	7	5	4	2	3	4
Issue to disposal	30	8	12	4	11	13

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts

Section 4: Queen's Bench Division

There were 10,110 Queen's Bench cases and applications received during 2008, 59% of these were made up of writs and originating summonses. There has been a 17% increase in the number of writs received from 5,088 in 2007 to 5,956 in 2008 (Table B.8).

Table B.8: Queen's Bench cases and applications received in 2008

Writs and originating summonses	Negligence	2920
	Breach	159
	Road injuries	1144
	Personal injuries	426
	Monies due	932
	Other	375
	Total	5956
Miscellaneous	Foreign judgement	334
	Other	125
	Total	459
Applications	Summons/interlocutory applications	2298
	Remittals and removals	525
	Exparte applications	375
	Other	497
	Total	3695

Table B.9 shows the breakdown of the amount claimed in writs and originating summonses in 2008.

Table B.9: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses received by amount claimed in 2008

	Unliquidated	Less than £1,000	£1,000-2,999	£3,000-14,999	Over £15,000	Total
Negligence	2918	-	-	-	2	2920
Breach	153	-	-	-	6	159
Road injuries	1137	-	1	-	6	1144
Personal injuries	425	-	-	-	1	426
Monies due	239	1	22	196	474	932
Other	254	-	8	53	60	375
Total	5126	1	31	249	549	5956

There were 1,255 Queen's Bench writs (excluding commercial actions) set down for trial during 2008 (Table B.10).

Table B.10: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses setdown by amount claimed in 2008

	Unliquidated	£1,000-2,999	£3,000-14,999	Over £15,000	Total
Negligence	730	-	-	1	731
Breach	18	-	1	5	24
Road injuries	308	-	1	11	320
Personal injuries	115	-	7	15	137
Monies due	7	-	-	4	11
Other	30	-	1	1	32
Total	1208	-	10	37	1255

There were 1,760 writs dealt with in court and 4,895 writs disposed of as office disposals. Actions set down as negligence constituted 49% of writs disposed of (Table B.11).

Table B.11: Queen's Bench cases and applications disposed of in 2008

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal ^[1]	Default judgement	Total
Writs and originating summonses	Negligence	982	14	2609	45	3650
	Breach	30	1	27	12	70
	Road injuries	409	7	1762	16	2194
	Personal injuries	210	10	407	5	632
	Monies due	20	3	41	496	560
	Other	67	7	49	168	291
	Total	1718	42	4895	742	7397
Miscellaneous	Foreign judgement	-	5	-	-	5
	Other	7	2	13	-	22
	Total	7	7	13	-	27
Applications	Summons/interlocutory applications	83	2032	-	-	2115
	Remittals and removals	6	551	-	-	557
	Exparte applications	49	250	-	-	299
	Other	172	292	-	-	464
	Total	310	3125	-	-	3435

Excludes commercial actions

[1] In Queens Bench a new practice direction came into effect 1/4/08 which set out new procedures for setting down an action for trial. An exercise was carried out to dispose of old cases which were withdrawn or settled out of court.

Of the 2,502 writs disposed of, 40% were for over £15,000 (Table B.12).

Table B.12: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses disposed by amount in 2008

		Unliquidated	Less than £1,000	£1,000-2,999	£3,000-14,999	Over £15,000	Total
High Court Judge	Negligence	526	-	6	166	284	982
	Breach	16	-	1	4	9	30
	Road injuries	70	-	-	56	283	409
	Personal injuries	127	-	2	29	52	210
	Monies due	7	-	-	2	11	20
	Other	43	-	1	4	19	67
Master	Negligence	14	-	-	-	-	14
	Breach	1	-	-	-	-	1
	Road injuries	7	-	-	-	-	7
	Personal injuries	10	-	-	-	-	10
	Monies due	2	-	-	-	1	3
	Other	5	-	-	-	2	7
Default judgements	Negligence	45	-	-	-	-	45
	Breach	10	-	-	-	2	12
	Road injuries	16	-	-	-	-	16
	Personal injuries	4	-	-	-	1	5
	Monies due	15	1	22	191	267	496
	Other	12	-	7	72	77	168
Total		930	1	39	524	1008	2502

Excludes commercial actions

Tables B.13 and B.14 show the number of commercial actions set down and disposed of. During 2008, 71 actions were entered in the commercial list. In total, 127 cases were disposed of with 113 of these disposed of by a High Court Judge.

Table B.13: Queen's Bench commercial actions setdown in 2008

Negligence	24
Breach	13
Road injuries	1
Monies due	28
Other	5
Total	71

Table B.14: Queen's Bench commercial actions disposed of in 2008

	High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Negligence	21	-	8	29
Breach	36	-	3	39
Road injuries	1	-	-	1
Monies due	45	-	2	47
Other	10	-	1	11
Total	113	-	14	127

In 2008, the average length of time for a writ from first listing to disposal was 27 weeks (Table B.15).

Table B.15: Average time intervals in weeks in 2008

	Writs and originating summonses	Commercial actions	Miscellaneous ^[2]	Applications
Issue to setdown	91	105	233	-
Issue to first listing	107	89	74	3
Setdown to first listing	16	26	52	-
First listing to disposal	27	38	7	5
Issue to disposal	135	127	81	9

Excludes default judgements and office disposals

Due to rounding and not all writs and originating summonses having a set-down date, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts

^[2] The miscellaneous category refers to 14 cases of which only 2 were set down.

Section 5: Judicial Reviews

Tables B.16 to B.18 are in relation to Judicial Reviews. There were 89 applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review granted (37%). Of the 117 applications for Judicial Review that were disposed in 2008, 18% were granted.

Table B.16: Judicial Review applications received in 2008

Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	295
Applications for Judicial Review	127
Ancillary applications	10

Table B.17: Judicial Review applications disposed of in 2008

	Granted	Withdrawn/ Refused/ Dismissed	Other	Total
Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	89	109	44	242
Applications for Judicial Review	21	70	26	117
Ancillary applications	-	-	4	4

In 2008, the average length of time from issue to disposal of applications for Judicial Review was 44 weeks (Table B.18).

Table B.18: Average time intervals in weeks in 2008

	Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	Applications for Judicial Review	Ancillary applications
Issue to first listing	28	14	2
First listing to disposal	5	24	-
Issue to disposal	31	44	1

Due to rounding and not all applications having a court date, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts

Section 6: Probate

The number of grants of probate issued during 2008 increased by 8% from 6,019 in 2007 to 6,484 in 2008 (Table B.19).

Table B.19: Probate grants issued in non-contentious proceedings in 2008

	District registry		Probate	Northern Ireland
	By solicitor	Personal	By solicitor	
Grant of administration	-	-	1	1
Pendente Lite	-	-	1	1
Letters of administration with will annexed	36	-	153	189
Letters of administration with will annexed (DBN)	4	-	19	23
Letters of administration	329	-	1095	1424
Grant of probate	865	-	3937	4802
Letters of administration (DBN)	16	2	26	44
Total grants issued	1250	2	5232	6484

Section 7: Matrimonial

The number of divorce petitions filed increased by 1%, from 3,017 in 2007 to 3,055 in 2008 (Table B.20).

Table B.20: Divorce petitions received in 2008

		Filed by			Total
		Wife	Husband	Unknown	
Divorce Petitions	2 years with consent	747	513	1	1261
	5 years separation	468	407	-	875
	Adultery	51	23	-	74
	Unreasonable behaviour	468	76	-	544
	Combination of grounds/other	233	68	-	301
	Ancillary relief	-	-	-	-
Total		1967	1087	1	3055

There were 1,186 decrees nisi granted in the High Court during 2008, an increase of 5% on the 1,134 granted during 2007. The most common ground for dissolution continued to be separation (2 years with consent) accounting for 35% of all cases (Table B.21).

Table B.21: Divorce petitions by type of decree in 2008

		Wife	Husband	Both	Total
Decrees Nisi	2 years with consent	271	146	-	417
	5 years separation	169	105	-	274
	Adultery	18	8	-	26
	Unreasonable behaviour	207	23	3	233
	Combination of grounds/other	170	57	9	236
Nullity	Combination of grounds/other	4	-	-	4
Judicial Separation	2 years with consent	1	-	-	1
	5 years separation	-	-	-	-
	Adultery	-	-	-	-
	Unreasonable behaviour	3	1	-	4
	Combination of grounds/other	2	1	-	3
Total		845	341	12	1198

Table B.22: Divorce petitions by number of absolutes issued in 2008

		Found by			Total
		Wife	Husband	Both	
Divorce Petitions	2 years with consent	244	133	-	377
	5 years separation	153	109	-	262
	Adultery	20	8	-	28
	Unreasonable behaviour	173	18	-	191
	Combination of grounds/other	144	50	4	198
Total		734	318	4	1056

During 2008, there were 1,388 matrimonial applications received. In total, 45% of applications were for ancillary relief (Table B.23).

Table B.23: Matrimonial applications received in 2008

Applications	Combination of grounds/other	19
	Ancillary relief	623
	Matrimonial application	715
	Other	31
Total		1388

Of the 1,038 matrimonial applications disposed of during 2008, 458 (44%) were for ancillary relief (Table B.24).

Table B.24: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2008

		Judge	Master	Total
Applications	Combination of grounds/other	7	-	7
	Ancillary relief	13	445	458
	Matrimonial application	28	534	562
	Other	7	4	11
Total		55	983	1038

The average time from the issue of a petition to the date the decree was granted was 46 weeks (Table B.25).

Table B.25: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2008

	Divorce Petitions
Issue to first listing	38
First listing to date decree granted	7
Issue to date decree granted	46

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts

During 2008, the average time from issue to disposal of a matrimonial application was 10 weeks. Applications for ancillary relief took on average 42 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal (Table B.26).

Table B.26: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce applications in 2008

	Combination of grounds/other	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial applications	Other
Issue to first listing	3	7	8	5
First listing to disposal	7	35	3	6
Issue to disposal	10	42	10	10

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts

Section 8: Wardship and Adoption

During 2008, adoption order applications accounted for 56% of the total applications received (Table B.27).

Table B.27: Adoption cases and applications received in 2008

Adoption Order Applications	80
Child Abduction Originating Summonses	10
Freeing Order Applications	12
Human Fertilisation Originating Summonses	1
Interlocutory Applications	29
Wardship Originating Summonses	12
Total	144

Of the cases disposed, 94% were disposed of by a High Court Judge. The majority of applications disposed of (59%) were adoption order applications (Table B.28).

Table B.28: Adoption cases and applications disposed of in 2008

	High Court Judge	Master	Total
Adoption Order Applications	68	1	69
Child Abduction Originating Summonses	10	-	10
Freeing Order Applications	14	1	15
Human Fertilisation Originating Summonses	1	-	1
Interlocutory Applications	16	-	16
Wardship Originating Summonses	1	5	6
Total	110	7	117

Ex-parte applications for occupation/non-molestation orders accounted for 40% of the total number of Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications received (Table B.29).

Table B.29: Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications received in 2008

Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	48
Ex-parte Applications for Occupation /Non-Molestation	32
Application to extend/discharge/vary Occupation/Non-Molestation	1
Total	81

The Master disposed of 98% of the total number of Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications during 2008. Table B.30 shows that 47% of these cases were ex-parte.

Table B.30: Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications disposed in 2008

	High Court Judge	Master	Total
Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	1	25	26
Ex-parte Applications for Occupation /Non-Molestation	-	24	24
Application to extend/discharge/vary Occupation/Non-Molestation	-	1	1
Total	1	50	51

Table B.31 shows the average time in weeks for adoption and Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications during 2008. It took on average 32 weeks for an adoption case from date of issue to date of disposal.

Table B.31: Average time intervals in weeks in 2008

	Adoption	Family Homes And Domestic Violence
Issue to first listing	16	3
First listing to disposal	16	14
Issue to disposal	32	17

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts

Section 9: Care and Protection

There were 907 patients referred to the Office of Care and Protection in 2008 for investigation under the Mental Health Order, representing a 14% increase on the 2007 total of 795 patients. The total live caseload for 2008 was 1,448 (Table B.32).

Table B.32: Office of Care and Protection – Mental Health proceedings in 2008

New referrals	907
Enduring Power of Attorney applications received	295
Orders issued	955
Certificates issued	5930
Reviews completed	822
Visits	28
Casework Sections Incoming Post	8175
Referrals Section Incoming Post	4537
Live Caseload at 31st December	1448

Section 10: Official Solicitor's Office

Tables B.33 and B.34 demonstrate the caseload of the Official Solicitor's Office. There were 428 live patient cases and 283 live minors' cases in 2008.

Table B.33: Official Solicitor's Office – Patients caseload in 2008

New Referrals	30
Orders:	
Ad. Interim orders	6
Controller orders	36
Certificates drafted	3085
Live cases	428
Incoming correspondence	9463
Miscellaneous queries	31

Table B.34: Official Solicitor's Office – Minors' caseload in 2008²

	Received	Live Caseload	Disposed
Guardian of the Fortune	8	18	4
Adoption	1	3	1
Inter-Country Adoption	3	5	2
Children Order	51	116	26
Art 159 Children Order	5	6	5
Parental Incapacity	13	30	2
Trustee	-	1	-
Criminal Injury	5	39	1
Change of Surname	1	1	1
Declaratory Proceedings	3	4	2
Estate	1	9	-
Judicial Review	4	10	4
Motor Insurers' Bureau	7	12	2
Personal Injury	-	3	-
Miscellaneous	12	26	6
Total	114	283	56

Section 11: Masters' appeals

There were 53 Masters' appeals received and 59 Masters' appeals disposed of in 2008 (Tables B.35 and B.36).

Table B.35: Masters' appeals received in 2008

Queen's Bench Masters' appeals	41
Chancery Masters' appeals	12

Table B.36: Masters' appeals disposed in 2008

Queen's Bench Masters' appeals	51
Chancery Masters' appeals	8

² Live case load only include those cases where specific actions are actively being taken to progress matters. These cases are recorded as 'disposed of' when the said actions have come to an end. A minor's case is closed when he/she reaches the age of 18 yrs.

Section 12: High Court Bails

There were 1,930 applications for bail in the High Court during 2008. Of the 1,356 applications disposed in court, 46% were granted (Tables B.37 and B.39).

Table B.37 Number of bail applications received in 2008

Bail applications	1236
Bail pending appeals to the county court	15
Compassionate bail applications	139
Miscellaneous applications	3
Applications to revoke bail	20
Schedule 2 breaches	6
Time extension	3
Bail variations	508
Total	1930

Table B.38 Number of bail applications disposed of in chambers 2008

	Granted	Refused	Other	Total
Bail applications	12	-	4	16
Compassionate bail applications	5	-	-	5
Application to revoke bail	-	-	1	1
Bail variations	283	6	28	317
Total	300	6	33	339

Table B.39 Number of bail applications disposed of in court 2008

	Granted	Refused	Revoke	Other	Total
Bail applications	452	544	5	75	1076
Bail pending appeals to the county court	10	3	-	2	15
Compassionate bail applications	73	40	-	13	126
Miscellaneous applications	2	-	-	1	3
Application to revoke bail	3	6	9	2	20
Schedule 2 breaches	3	-	1	-	4
Bail variations	86	17	2	7	112
Total	629	610	17	100	1356

Section 13: Court sitting days and court sitting times

High Court Judges sat on a total of 2,557 court sitting days, a decrease of 0.1% on the 2,559 days sat during 2007. By majority type of work, High Court Judges sat for a total 628 days hearing Queen's Bench business and 625 in the Crown Court (Table B.40).

Table B.40 High Court Judges court sitting days and court sitting times in 2008 (hrs : mins)

	Court sitting days	Total court sitting time
Crown	625	1589:09
Queen's Bench	628	1235:41
Judicial Reviews	319	630:56
Children Order	108	267:47
Other Family	201	355:09
Appeals	9	15:13
Chancery	219	405:15
Bails	290	552:27
Callover/Mixed	7	14:05
Court of Appeal - Civil	89	158:34
Court of Appeal - Criminal	62	105:15
Total	2557	5329:31

Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken

Total court sitting time is classified on the basis of all court sitting time spent on each business area

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.

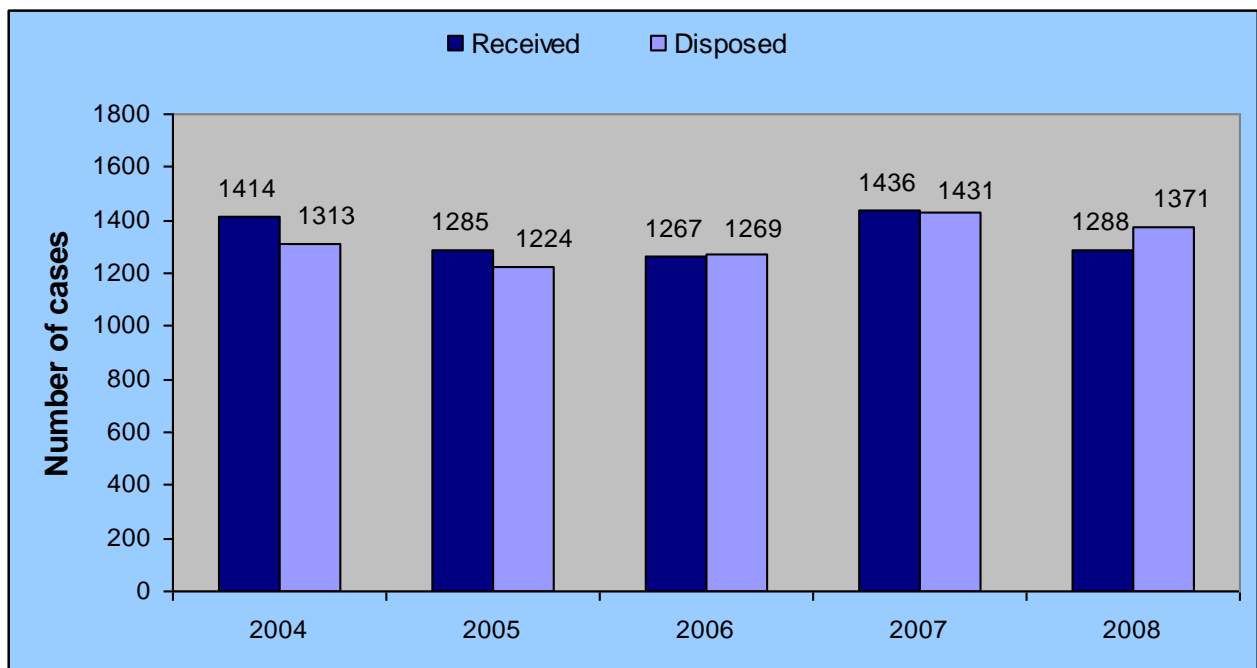
Part C Crown Court

The Crown Court deals with all cases committed for trial by magistrates' courts, cases for trial are usually heard before a judge and jury.

Key facts during 2008

- 1,288 Crown Court cases were received
- 1,371 Crown Court cases were disposed of
- There were a total of 1,733 defendants disposed of
- The average time from committal to start of trial was 134 days (19 weeks)

Figure C.1: Number of cases received and disposed of in the Crown Court from 2004-2008



Section 1: Cases received and disposed of

Tables C.1 show the number of cases received in 2008. There were 1,288 cases received in 2008 compared to 1,436 in 2007, a decrease of 10%. In 2008, there were 1,371 cases disposed of, a 4% decrease from the 1,431 in 2007 as shown in Table C.2.

Table C.1: Crown Court cases received in 2008

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	161	-	161
Ards	-	132	-	132
Armagh & South Down	-	124	-	124
Belfast	20	429	-	449
Craigavon	-	125	-	125
Fermanagh & Tyrone	-	164	-	164
Londonderry	-	133	-	133
Total	20	1268	-	1288

[1] Refers to cases to be tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007

Table C.2: Crown Court cases disposed of in 2008

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	169	-	169
Ards	-	159	-	159
Armagh & South Down	-	138	-	138
Belfast	15	445	18	478
Craigavon	-	124	-	124
Fermanagh & Tyrone	-	170	-	170
Londonderry	-	133	-	133
Total	15	1338	18	1371

[1] Refers to cases tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007

Table C.3 Defendants committed to Crown Court in 2008

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	214	-	214
Ards	-	160	-	160
Armagh & South Down	-	164	-	164
Belfast	44	519	-	563
Craigavon	-	149	-	149
Fermanagh & Tyrone	-	206	-	206
Londonderry	-	156	-	156
Total	44	1568	-	1612

[1] Refers to defendants tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007

There were a total of 1,733 defendants disposed of during 2008. This is a decrease of 5% compared to the 1,818 defendants disposed of in 2007. (Table C.4)

Table C.4: Crown Court defendants disposed of in 2008

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	214	-	214
Ards	-	186	-	186
Armagh & South Down	-	183	-	183
Belfast	35	543	37	615
Craigavon	-	152	-	152
Fermanagh & Tyrone	-	209	-	209
Londonderry	-	174	-	174
Total	35	1661	37	1733

[1] Refers to defendants tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007

Section 2: Crown Court waiting times

The average waiting time between committal to start of trial was 134 days (Table C.5).

Table C.5: Average waiting time in days in 2008

	Committal to start of trial – days	Conviction to disposal – days	Total defendants disposed of
Antrim	103	51	202
Ards	109	37	177
Armagh & South Down	159	29	177
Belfast	170	59	575
Craigavon	143	43	147
Fermanagh & Tyrone	78	38	197
Londonderry	108	51	171
Total	134	48	1646

Excludes defendants who had a bench warrant or deferred sentence

Section 3: Defendants disposed of

The majority of defendants were disposed of by a County Court Judge (93%). (Table C.6)

Table C.6: Crown Court defendants disposed of by judge type in 2008

	Judicial Level		Total
	County Court Judge	High Court Judge	
Antrim	204	10	214
Ards	176	10	186
Armagh & South Down	168	15	183
Belfast	553	62	615
Craigavon	151	1	152
Fermanagh & Tyrone	205	4	209
Londonderry	159	15	174
Total	1616	117	1733

Table C.7: Crown Court defendants disposed of by charge type

All Offences Against the Person	271
All Sexual Offences	150
All Burglary Offences	67
All Robbery Offences	45
All Theft Offences	86
All Fraud and Forgery Offences	45
All Criminal Damage Offences	38
All Offences Against the State	20
All Other Offences	64
All Drug Offences	183
All Motoring Offences	61
All Non-Police Offences	40
Combination of Charges	663
Total	1733

In total, 44% of defendants made a plea of guilty on all charges and 14% were acquitted on all charges. (Table C.8).

Table C.8: Outcome of Crown Court defendants in 2008

	Plea of guilty on all charges	Plea of not guilty on at least one charge – found guilty on at least one charge	Plea not guilty – acquitted on all charges	All charges withdrawn	Total
Antrim	114	83	15	2	214
Ards	115	56	14	1	186
Armagh & South Down	63	97	21	2	183
Belfast	260	251	103	1	615
Craigavon	61	60	31	-	152
Fermanagh & Tyrone	71	105	33	-	209
Londonderry	71	78	25	-	174
Total	755	730	242	6	1733

Section 4: Crown Court sittings and times

There were 2,684 sittings in the Crown Court in 2008. The total time spent on Crown Court business has decreased by 1% from 2007.

Table C.9: Crown Court sittings and total Crown Court time (hrs : mins)

	Number of sittings	Total time
Antrim	397	1228:35
Ards	243	493:56
Armagh & South Down	217	576:31
Belfast	1163	2535:52
Craigavon	206	590:41
Fermanagh & Tyrone	182	481:37
Londonderry	276	779:29
Total	2684	6686:41

Crown Court sittings refer to a sitting where any Crown Court business is heard.
 Total Crown time includes all time spent on Crown business.
 High Court Judges & county court judges sit on Crown business.

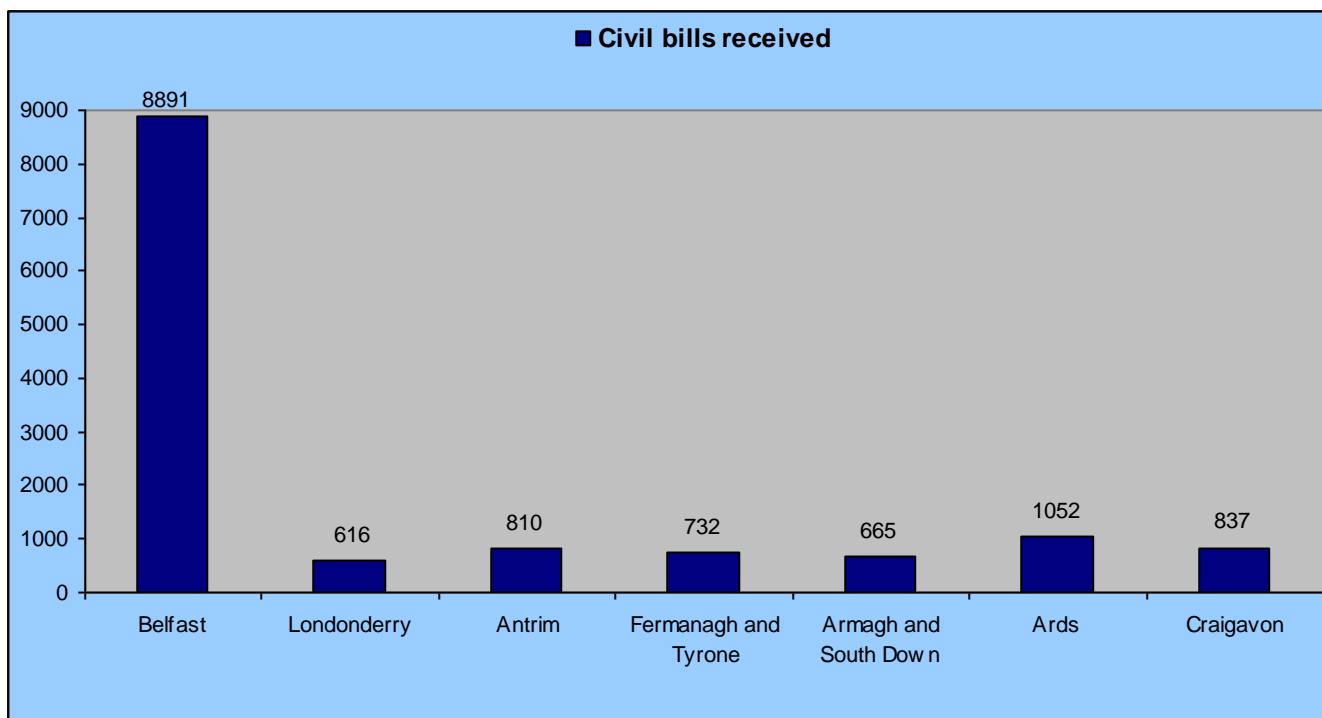
Part D County Court

The county court deals with civil matters including all monetary claims up to £15,000. In Northern Ireland there are seven County Court Divisions, however the court may sit in more than one venue within the Division.

Key facts during 2008

- 2,800 appeals were disposed of
- 80 criminal damage cases were received
- 6,740 ordinary civil bills had Notice of Intention to Defend
- 9,956 ordinary civil bills were disposed of
- 13,409 small claims were received
- 10,649 small claims were disposed of
- 1,651 decrees nisi were granted

Figure D.1: Number of ordinary civil bills received in 2008



Section 1: Appeals from magistrates' courts

There were a total of 2,610 appeals received during 2008 (Table D.1) and 2,800 appeals were disposed of in the county court during 2008 (Table D.2). County Court Appeals were recorded on ICOS from 2007 and caution should be taken when comparing with previous years.

Table D.1: Appeals received in 2008

	Appeals received
Antrim	504
Ards	349
Armagh and South Down	289
Belfast	373
Craigavon	375
Fermanagh and Tyrone	552
Londonderry	168
Total	2610

Table D.2: Appeals disposed of in 2008

	Appeals disposed
Antrim	530
Ards	358
Armagh and South Down	315
Belfast	373
Craigavon	386
Fermanagh and Tyrone	653
Londonderry	185
Total	2800

Tables D.3 to D.5 show the result of appeals against conviction and sentence, sentence only and civil appeals. The vast majority of appeals (98%) dealt with in court were criminal cases, and 2% were civil cases. Of the criminal appeals, 68% were against sentence only and 32% were against conviction and sentence.

Table D.3: Number of magistrates' court appeals against conviction and sentence in 2008

	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied on Appeal	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Abandoned/ Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	45	37	16	15	113
Ards	16	37	3	15	71
Armagh and South Down	26	29	41	10	106
Belfast	42	44	23	8	117
Craigavon	14	46	27	10	97
Fermanagh and Tyrone	91	73	63	76	303
Londonderry	9	42	11	24	86
Total	243	308	184	158	893

Table D.4 Number of magistrates' court appeals against sentence only in 2008

	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied on Appeal	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Abandoned/ Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	5	282	78	40	405
Ards	1	131	54	98	284
Armagh and South Down	3	140	31	28	202
Belfast	5	134	35	68	242
Craigavon	1	151	69	65	286
Fermanagh and Tyrone	4	170	97	75	346
Londonderry	2	52	17	25	96
Total	21	1060	381	399	1861

Table D.5 Number of magistrates' court civil appeals in 2008

	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	3	5	2	2	12
Ards	-	-	1	2	3
Armagh and South Down	1	2	-	4	7
Belfast	5	3	2	4	14
Craigavon	-	-	1	2	3
Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	2	2	-	4
Londonderry	-	1	1	1	3
Total	9	13	9	15	46

Section 2: Criminal damage cases

There were 80 criminal damage cases received during 2008. Belfast accounted for 63% of all cases received. Table D.7 shows that there were 19 criminal damage cases disposed of in 2008.

Table D.6: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received in 2008

Cases	Antrim	1
	Ards	1
	Armagh and South Down	6
	Belfast	50
	Craigavon	9
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	3
	Londonderry	10
	Total	80
Applications	Antrim	-
	Ards	-
	Armagh and South Down	-
	Belfast	1
	Craigavon	1
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-
	Londonderry	1
	Total	3

Table D.7: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2008

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Total
Cases	Antrim	-	-	-
	Ards	-	-	-
	Armagh and South Down	-	-	-
	Belfast	17	2	19
	Craigavon	-	-	-
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	-	-
	Londonderry	-	-	-
	Total	17	2	19
Applications	Antrim	-	-	-
	Ards	-	-	-
	Armagh and South Down	-	-	-
	Belfast	-	-	-
	Craigavon	-	1	1
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	-	-
	Londonderry	1	1	2
	Total	1	2	3

Table D.8: Time intervals in weeks (average) for criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2008

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	-
	Ards	-
	Armagh and South Down	-
	Belfast	82
	Craigavon	-
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-
	Londonderry	-
	Total	82
Applications	Antrim	-
	Ards	-
	Armagh and South Down	-
	Belfast	-
	Craigavon	-
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-
	Londonderry	2
	Total	2

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

Section 3: Licences

There were 375 licence applications received in the county court in 2008 and 325 licence applications disposed of.

Table D.9: Licences received and disposed of in 2008

	Licences received	Licences disposed of
Antrim	48	46
Ards	36	35
Armagh and South Down	35	40
Belfast	74	76
Craigavon	29	24
Fermanagh and Tyrone	103	58
Londonderry	50	46
Total	375	325

Section 4: Ordinary civil bills

There were 13,603 ordinary civil bills received in 2008. There were also 5,167 applications received during the same period. Belfast received 65% of ordinary civil bills compared to 5% in Armagh and South Down.

Table D.10: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications received in 2008

Cases	Antrim	810
	Ards	1052
	Armagh and South Down	665
	Belfast	8891
	Craigavon	837
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	732
	Londonderry	616
	Total	13603
Applications	Antrim	481
	Ards	578
	Armagh and South Down	362
	Belfast	2580
	Craigavon	477
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	315
	Londonderry	374
	Total	5167

The number of ordinary civil bills where Notices of Intention to Defend were received rose from 6,583 in 2007 to 6,740 in 2008, representing a 2% increase in business (Table D.11).

Table D.11: Number of ordinary civil bill cases with Notice of Intention to Defend by judicial level in 2008

	County court judge level	District judge level	Total
Antrim	485	203	688
Ards	654	270	924
Armagh and South Down	352	226	578
Belfast	1825	822	2647
Craigavon	466	256	722
Fermanagh and Tyrone	426	207	633
Londonderry	311	237	548
Total	4519	2221	6740

The number of cases disposed of increased by 1%, from 9,816 cases in 2007 compared to 9,956 in 2008. Of the ordinary civil bills disposed of, 27% were default judgements. A further 21% were disposed of at district judge level compared to 30% disposed of at county court judge level.

Table D.12: Number of ordinary civil bills cases and applications disposed of in 2008

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Default judgement	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Antrim	379	223	153	16	75	846
	Ards	471	294	179	10	61	1015
	Armagh and South Down	205	164	109	21	59	558
	Belfast	1144	692	391	23	206	2456
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	151	2535	178	2864
	Craigavon	212	302	176	16	72	778
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	368	198	116	28	66	776
	Londonderry	248	225	115	8	67	663
	Total	3027	2098	1390	2657	784	9956
Applications	Antrim	106	68	78	-	-	252
	Ards	90	78	133	-	-	301
	Armagh and South Down	58	117	79	-	-	254
	Belfast	333	219	470	-	-	1022
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	31	-	-	31
	Craigavon	57	74	109	-	-	240
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	124	41	57	-	-	222
	Londonderry	109	66	78	-	-	253
	Total	877	663	1035	-	-	2575

CCJ and DJ split based on the judicial level assigned to the final sitting date, ie CCJ will include DJ sitting as a DCCJ

Table D.13 shows the amount awarded for ordinary civil bills during 2008. Just over a quarter of civil bills (26%) were awarded between £1000-2999.

Table D.13: Number of ordinary civil bills cases by amount awarded in 2008

		Unliquidated	Less than £1000	£1000-2999	£3000-4999	Over £5000	Total
Cases	Antrim	110	48	174	136	134	602
	Ards	167	79	220	185	114	765
	Armagh and South Down	85	43	91	70	80	369
	Belfast	703	144	429	350	210	1836
	Craigavon	99	58	152	112	93	514
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	135	44	153	110	124	566
	Londonderry	137	47	130	85	74	473
	Total	1436	463	1349	1048	829	5125

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

On average, it took 46 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal for civil bills to progress through the county court (Table D.14).

Table D.14: Average time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases disposed of in 2008

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	46
	Ards	40
	Armagh and South Down	49
	Belfast	42
	Craigavon	47
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	54
	Londonderry	58
	Total	46

Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals, office disposals and cases dealt with by the Civil Processing Centre.

Table D.15: Average time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications disposed of in 2008

		Issue to disposal
Applications	Antrim	4
	Ards	5
	Armagh and South Down	7
	Belfast	5
	Craigavon	6
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	5
	Londonderry	5
	Total	5

Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals, office disposals and cases dealt with by the Civil Processing Centre.

Section 5: Equity

There were 314 equity cases and 150 equity applications received during 2008.

Table D.16: Equity cases and applications received in 2008

Cases	Antrim	42
	Ards	42
	Armagh and South Down	31
	Belfast	78
	Craigavon	40
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	50
	Londonderry	31
	Total	314
Applications	Antrim	14
	Ards	27
	Armagh and South Down	17
	Belfast	21
	Craigavon	18
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	29
	Londonderry	24
	Total	150

Table D.17 shows that there were 248 equity cases disposed of in 2008. The majority of equity cases were disposed of in court (84%).

Table D.17: Equity cases and applications disposed of in 2008

		Court result	Non court disposals	Total
Cases	Antrim	32	2	34
	Ards	21	3	24
	Armagh and South Down	14	11	25
	Belfast	51	10	61
	Craigavon	26	4	30
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	44	-	44
	Londonderry	21	9	30
	Total	209	39	248
Applications	Antrim	10	1	11
	Ards	14	6	20
	Armagh and South Down	5	4	9
	Belfast	11	5	16
	Craigavon	10	3	13
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	20	8	28
	Londonderry	16	4	20
	Total	86	31	117

Table D.18 shows the time intervals for equity cases and applications from date of issue to date of disposal for each county court division. On average, for cases disposed of during 2008, it took 56 weeks for an equity case to progress through the county courts.

Table D.18: Average time intervals in weeks for equity cases disposed of in 2008

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	53
	Ards	50
	Armagh and South Down	53
	Belfast	42
	Craigavon	31
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	93
	Londonderry	54
	Total	56
Applications	Antrim	5
	Ards	4
	Armagh and South Down	16
	Belfast	8
	Craigavon	16
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	9
	Londonderry	7
	Total	9

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

Section 6: Ejectment

In total, there were 1,052 ejectment cases received during 2008, with 48% received in Belfast (Table D.19).

Table D.19: Ejectment cases received in 2008

Cases	Antrim	124
	Ards	215
	Armagh and South Down	34
	Belfast	503
	Craigavon	110
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	30
	Londonderry	36
	Total	1052

During the year, 798 ejectment cases were disposed of in the county court. The majority of ejectment cases were disposed of in court (96%).

Table D.20: Ejectment cases disposed of in 2008

		Court result	Non court disposals	Total
Cases	Antrim	121	-	121
	Ards	220	2	222
	Armagh and South Down	19	5	24
	Belfast	235	18	253
	Craigavon	104	1	105
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	29	-	29
	Londonderry	39	5	44
	Total	767	31	798

Table D.21 shows the average time in weeks for ejectment cases to progress through the courts during 2008. On average, it took 16 weeks for a case from date of issue to date of disposal.

Table D.21: Average time intervals in weeks for ejectment cases disposed of in 2008

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	10
	Ards	15
	Armagh and South Down	24
	Belfast	17
	Craigavon	17
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	31
	Londonderry	23
	Total	16

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

Section 7: Small claims

Table D.22 shows that the number of small claims received increased from 12,938 cases in 2007 to cases 13,409 in 2008. There were 272 applications received in small claims during the year.

Table D.22: Number of small claims cases and applications received in 2008

Cases	Antrim	277
	Ards	328
	Armagh and South Down	227
	Belfast	11905
	Craigavon	251
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	223
	Londonderry	198
	Total	13409
Applications	Antrim	23
	Ards	45
	Armagh and South Down	16
	Belfast	103
	Craigavon	33
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	31
	Londonderry	21
	Total	272

Table D.23: Number of small claims cases with a Notice of Dispute received in 2008

Cases	Antrim	227
	Ards	285
	Armagh and South Down	189
	Belfast	614
	Craigavon	208
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	185
	Londonderry	165
Total	1873	

In total, 10,649 small claims cases were disposed of in 2008. This is a decrease of 2% on the 10,866 cases disposed of during 2007 (Table D.24).

Table D.24: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed of in 2008

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Cases	Antrim	219	9	18	1	247
	Ards	225	6	123	14	368
	Armagh and South Down	175	-	14	4	193
	Belfast	492	9	147	66	714
	Civil Processing Centre	-	45	2666	5823	8534
	Craigavon	161	10	54	9	234
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	152	-	28	7	187
	Londonderry	140	11	17	4	172
	Total	1564	90	3067	5928	10649
Applications	Antrim	18	2	-	-	20
	Ards	23	4	-	-	27
	Armagh and South Down	13	1	-	-	14
	Belfast	85	4	-	-	89
	Craigavon	21	3	-	-	24
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	14	-	-	-	14
	Londonderry	10	5	-	-	15
	Total	184	19	-	-	203

Table D.25 shows that during 2008, it took on average 19 weeks for a small claims case to progress from date of issue to date of disposal.

Table D.25: Average time intervals in weeks for small claims cases disposed of in 2008

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	17
	Ards	20
	Armagh and South Down	18
	Belfast	19
	Craigavon	23
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	18
	Londonderry	17
	Total	19
Applications	Antrim	5
	Ards	7
	Armagh and South Down	7
	Belfast	5
	Craigavon	8
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	8
	Londonderry	9
	Total	6

Excludes default judgements, non-court disposals, office disposals and cases dealt with by the Civil Processing Centre.

Section 8: Divorce cases

There were 1,651 decrees nisi granted in undefended divorce cases in the county court in 2008 (Table D.26). The number of decrees nisi granted has decreased by 11% from 1,851 in 2007.

Table D.26: Divorce Petitions by type of decrees nisi in 2008

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Antrim	159	112	5	29	15	320
Ards	110	69	5	6	6	196
Armagh and South Down	79	53	4	10	10	156
Belfast	180	122	7	15	8	332
Craigavon	152	53	8	15	11	239
Fermanagh and Tyrone	75	61	5	28	13	182
Londonderry	101	73	7	28	17	226
Total	856	543	41	131	80	1651

Table D.27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued in 2008

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/other	Total
Antrim	142	103	9	28	11	293
Ards	136	81	4	9	5	235
Armagh and South Down	84	53	1	13	8	159
Belfast	190	125	9	16	14	354
Craigavon	174	66	9	17	11	277
Fermanagh and Tyrone	70	56	2	24	13	165
Londonderry	96	81	4	26	27	234
Total	892	565	38	133	89	1717

Tables D.28 and D.29 show the number of matrimonial applications received and disposed of during 2008.

Table D.28: Matrimonial applications received in 2008

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application	Other	Total
Antrim	29	2	5	36
Ards	10	1	6	17
Armagh and South Down	45	1	2	48
Belfast	13	1	110	124
Craigavon	23	-	7	30
Fermanagh and Tyrone	38	2	8	48
Londonderry	56	5	14	75
Total	214	12	152	378

Table D.29: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2008

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application	Other	Total
Antrim	19	4	7	30
Ards	12	2	6	20
Armagh and South Down	30	2	2	34
Belfast	20	1	2	23
Craigavon	22	-	3	25
Fermanagh and Tyrone	31	1	4	36
Londonderry	55	9	6	70
Total	189	19	30	238

County court divorce petitions took on average 29 weeks from date of issue to date decree nisi granted. Matrimonial applications took on average 39 weeks to progress through the county courts during 2008.

Table D.30: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2008

	Issue to date decree nisi granted	Date decree nisi granted to date absolute issued
Antrim	26	10
Ards	26	11
Armagh and South Down	31	13
Belfast	31	13
Craigavon	26	10
Fermanagh and Tyrone	32	11
Londonderry	34	12
Total	29	11

Table D.31: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce applications in 2008

	Issue to disposal
Antrim	40
Ards	39
Armagh and South Down	31
Belfast	31
Craigavon	25
Fermanagh and Tyrone	26
Londonderry	58
Total	39

Section 9: Court sitting days and court sitting times

Table D.32 shows that there were 3,980 court sitting days in 2008.

Table D.32: County court sitting days and court sitting times in 2008 (hrs : mins)

	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Total court time	Total court criminal time	Total court civil time	Total family time
Antrim	462	2:54	1337:03	766:47	515:59	54:17
Ards	426	2:41	1143:11	477:31	626:20	39:20
Armagh and South Down	373	2:56	1094:26	570:09	452:31	71:46
Belfast	1472	2:30	3680:04	1867:52	1237:38	574:34
Craigavon	407	3:08	1277:58	613:24	412:37	251:57
Fermanagh and Tyrone	383	2:50	1084:58	529:41	439:52	115:25
Londonderry	457	2:58	1352:07	790:25	382:29	179:13
Total	3980	2:45	10969:47	5615:49	4067:26	1286:32

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.

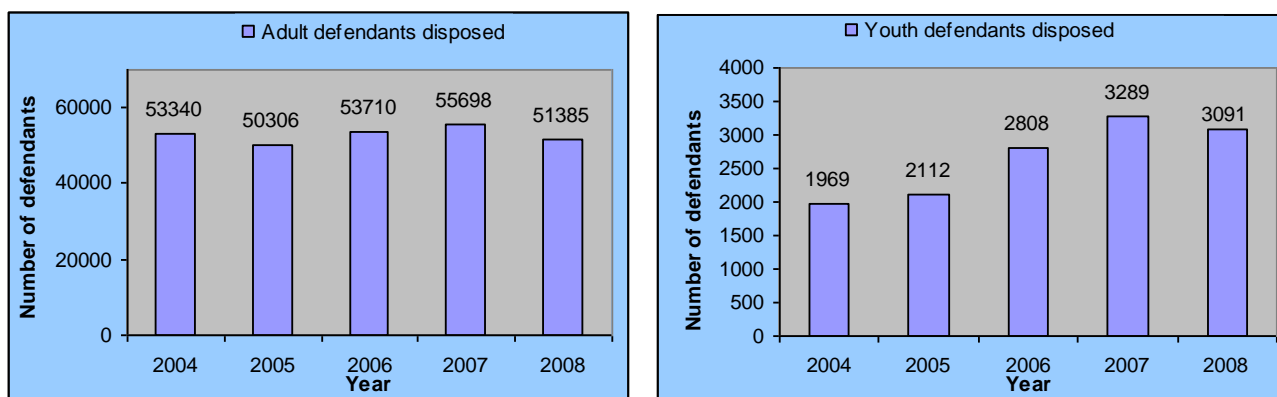
Part E Magistrates' Court

The magistrates' court hears and determines less serious criminal cases, cases involving youth and some civil and domestic cases including family proceedings.

Key facts during 2008

- 51,385 adult criminal defendants were disposed of
- 3,091 youth criminal defendants were disposed of
- 5,604 civil applications were disposed of
- The average waiting time between 1st hearing and disposal for adult criminal cases was 7 weeks
- The average waiting time between 1st hearing and finding for youth criminal cases was 11 weeks

Figure E.1: Magistrates' court adult and youth defendants disposed of (2004-2008)



With effect from 30 August 2005 the jurisdiction of the youth court was extended to include 17 year olds

Section 1: Business volumes received in the magistrates' court

In 2008, there were 51,910 adult defendants received. In the youth court, there were 2,851 defendants received (Table E.1).

Table E.1: Business volumes received in adult criminal, youth and civil courts in 2008.

		Number of adult defendants	Number of youth defendants	Number of civil applications
Antrim	Antrim	1996	60	181
	Ballymena	1711	149	315
	Coleraine	2969	151	391
	Larne	683	41	128
	Division Total	7359	401	1015
Ards	Bangor	1699	165	244
	Downpatrick	1679	127	252
	Newtownards	2291	157	457
	Division Total	5669	449	953
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	1454	58	120
	Banbridge	1145	35	25
	Newry	3551	144	523
	Division Total	6150	237	668
Belfast	Belfast	15043	781	1945
	Division Total	15043	781	1945
Craigavon	Craigavon	2584	151	331
	Lisburn	2508	180	249
	Division Total	5092	331	580
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	3100	131	192
	Enniskillen	1425	80	135
	Omagh	2019	107	217
	Strabane	951	55	95
	Division Total	7495	373	639
Londonderry	Limavady	1064	11	95
	Londonderry	2954	221	726
	Magherafelt	1084	47	74
	Division Total	5102	279	895
Northern Ireland		51910	2851	6695

Section 2: Adult criminal business disposed of

There were 51,385 defendants disposed of in 2008. Belfast accounted for 29% of the business, in contrast Craigavon division disposed of 10% of adult defendants (Table E.2).

Table E.2: Number of adult defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2008

		Number of adult defendants	Divisional % of NI Total
Antrim	Antrim	1951	
	Ballymena	1779	
	Coleraine	2926	
	Larne	684	
	Division Total	7340	
Ards	Bangor	1721	
	Downpatrick	1806	
	Newtownards	2312	
	Division Total	5839	
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	1448	
	Banbridge	1129	
	Newry	3467	
	Division Total	6044	
Belfast	Belfast	14669	
	Division Total	14669	
Craigavon	Craigavon	2512	
	Lisburn	2471	
	Division Total	4983	
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	3119	
	Enniskillen	1442	
	Omagh	2100	
	Strabane	939	
	Division Total	7600	
Londonderry	Limavady	1066	
	Londonderry	2820	
	Magherafelt	1024	
	Division Total	4910	
Northern Ireland		51385	100

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

Table E.3 shows the types of charges disposed of in 2008. In total, there were 106,526 charges disposed of.

Table E.3: Number and type of charges brought for defendants disposed of in 2008

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Indictable charges	3189	10	-	3199
Hybrid charges	22787	565	-	23352
Indictable triable summarily charges	10360	39	-	10399
Summary charges	51793	16285	1498	69576
Total	88129	16899	1498	106526

Figures are based on the number of charges disposed
The class on ICOS is based on the police classification. Major & minor motoring charges have been counted in either summary, indictable, indictable triable summarily or hybrid.

Table E.4 shows the outcomes of defendants disposed of in 2008. 37% of defendants pleaded guilty on all charges.

Tables E.4: Outcomes of defendants disposed of in 2008

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Committed to Crown Court	1692	-	-	1692
Plea of guilty on all charges	15687	3101	-	18788
All charges withdrawn	6821	3687	55	10563
Fixed Penalty default	-	-	1443	1443
Plea not guilty – found guilty on at least one charge	10763	6106	-	16869
Plea not guilty – acquitted on all charges	1557	473	-	2030
Total	36520	13367	1498	51385

Figures are based on the number of final orders

Table E.5 shows there were 136,078 final orders granted in the magistrates' adult court in 2008.

Table E.5: Types of disposals from the magistrates' adult court in 2008

	Northern Ireland
Community Orders	4140
Custodial Orders	9019
Monetary Orders	46314
Non-Custodial Orders	5973
Road Traffic Orders	22799
Withdrawn	33698
Other Final Orders	14135
Total	136078

Figures are based on the number of final orders

The average waiting time in Northern Ireland for defendants disposed of in 2008 between the date of summons and the date of first hearing was 8 weeks. The waiting time between the date of first hearing and disposal averaged 7 weeks (Table E.6).

Table E.6: Average waiting times in weeks for adult defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2008.

		Summons/charge to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)	Summons to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	Antrim	8.1	5.1	5.6	13.7
	Ballymena	8.1	9.5	10.4	18.6
	Coleraine	8.3	12.1	13.5	21.8
	Larne	8.8	5.2	5.8	14.6
	Division Total	8.3	8.9	9.9	18.2
Ards	Bangor	11.0	7.2	8.4	19.4
	Downpatrick	9.2	11.0	12.1	21.3
	Newtownards	9.2	5.5	6.3	15.6
	Division Total	9.7	7.7	8.7	18.5
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	9.5	5.1	5.5	15.1
	Banbridge	8.6	4.2	4.7	13.3
	Newry	8.8	5.2	5.7	14.5
	Division Total	8.9	5.0	5.5	14.4
Belfast	Belfast	7.4	6.6	7.2	14.6
	Division Total	7.4	6.6	7.2	14.6
Craigavon	Craigavon	10.3	3.8	4.4	14.7
	Lisburn	8.6	6.5	7.4	16.0
	Division Total	9.4	5.1	5.9	15.3
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	7.7	7.4	8.3	16.1
	Enniskillen	7.5	5.0	5.7	13.2
	Omagh	8.5	5.6	6.3	14.7
	Strabane	7.8	5.0	5.6	13.4
	Division Total	7.9	6.1	6.9	14.8
Londonderry	Limavady	8.5	5.0	5.7	14.2
	Londonderry	10.4	5.2	5.9	16.2
	Magherafelt	8.7	5.5	6.2	14.8
	Division Total	9.6	5.2	5.9	15.5
Northern Ireland		8.4	6.5	7.3	15.7

Bench warrants, adjourned generally and deferred sentences are excluded

Section 3: Youth criminal business disposed of

In 2008, there were 3,091 youth defendants disposed of with 28% in Belfast and 8% in Armagh and South Down (Table E.7).

Table E.7: Number of defendants disposed of in the youth court in 2008

		Number of youth defendants	Divisional % NI Total
Antrim	Antrim	50	13.4
	Ballymena	164	
	Coleraine	150	
	Larne	49	
	Division Total	413	
Ards	Bangor	189	16.8
	Downpatrick	159	
	Newtownards	170	
	Division Total	518	
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	58	7.6
	Banbridge	26	
	Newry	150	
	Division Total	234	
Belfast	Belfast	874	28.3
	Division Total	874	
Craigavon	Craigavon	162	12.2
	Lisburn	215	
	Division Total	377	
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	139	13.4
	Enniskillen	97	
	Omagh	115	
	Strabane	64	
	Division Total	415	
Londonderry	Limavady	13	8.4
	Londonderry	210	
	Magherafelt	37	
	Division Total	260	
Northern Ireland		3091	100

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

Table E.8 shows the types of charges disposed of in 2008 for youth defendants. In total, there were 6,806 charges disposed of in 2008.

Table E.8: Number and type of charges brought for youth defendants disposed of in 2008

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Indictable charges	289	-	-	289
Hybrid charges	2355	15	-	2370
Indictable triable summarily charges	1393	-	-	1393
Summary charges	2646	101	7	2754
Total	6683	116	7	6806

Figures are based on the number of charges disposed
The class on ICOS is based on the police classification. Major & minor motoring charges have been counted in either summary, indictable, indictable triable summarily or hybrid.

Table E.9: Outcomes for youth defendants disposed of in 2008

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Committed to the Crown Court	72	-	-	72
Plea of guilty on all charges	1190	18	-	1208
All charges withdrawn	911	38	-	949
Fixed Penalty default	-	-	7	7
Plea not guilty – found guilty on at least one charge	656	12	-	668
Plea not guilty – acquitted on all charges	163	24	-	187
Total	2992	92	7	3091

Figures are based on the number of defendants disposed

Table E.10 shows there were 8,093 final orders granted in the magistrates' youth court in 2008.

Table E.10: Types of disposals from the youth courts in 2008

	Northern Ireland
Community Orders	1648
Custodial Orders	678
Monetary Orders	784
Non-Custodial Orders	315
Road Traffic Orders	589
Withdrawn	2691
Other Final Orders	1388
Total	8093

Figures are based on the number of final orders

The average waiting time in Northern Ireland for youth defendants between the dates of summons to the date of first hearing in 2008 was 7 weeks. The average waiting time between the date of first hearing and finding was 11 weeks. The average waiting time from date of first hearing to date of disposal was 15 weeks. (Table E.11)

Table E.11: Average waiting times in weeks for youth defendants disposed of in the youth courts in 2008.

		Summons/charge to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)	Summons to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	Antrim	6.7	8.6	10.5	17.2
	Ballymena	4.9	19.8	24.2	29.1
	Coleraine	7.3	22.4	25.1	32.3
	Larne	5.9	11.3	13.2	19.2
	Division Total	5.9	18.1	21.4	27.3
Ards	Bangor	7.9	13.4	18.4	26.2
	Downpatrick	8.0	16.5	19.1	27.1
	Newtownards	10.7	11.1	15.1	25.8
	Division Total	8.9	13.5	17.5	26.3
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	6.7	8.5	10.1	16.8
	Banbridge	7.2	5.3	10.4	17.6
	Newry	6.3	7.7	10.8	17.1
	Division Total	6.5	7.6	10.6	17.1
Belfast	Belfast	5.7	10.2	13.7	19.4
	Division Total	5.7	10.2	13.7	19.4
Craigavon	Craigavon	7.8	8.1	11.0	18.8
	Lisburn	6.3	15.1	18.7	25.0
	Division Total	7.0	11.8	15.0	22.0
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	8.1	11.7	15.9	24.0
	Enniskillen	7.9	8.2	10.5	18.4
	Omagh	8.1	7.3	10.9	19.0
	Strabane	6.4	9.4	13.2	19.7
	Division Total	7.8	9.3	12.9	20.7
Londonderry	Limavady	5.4	11.6	13.7	19.1
	Londonderry	5.6	6.9	12.6	18.2
	Magherafelt	8.2	8.2	12.9	21.0
	Division Total	6.0	7.3	12.7	18.7
Northern Ireland		6.8	11.3	15.0	21.8

Bench warrants, adjourned generally, deferred sentences and youth monitored cases are excluded

Section 4: Civil & Family business disposed of

There were 5,604 applications disposed of during 2008. (Table E.12).

Table E.12: Number of civil & family applications disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2008

		Total
Antrim	Antrim	159
	Ballymena	303
	Coleraine	352
	Larne	100
	Division Total	914
Ards	Bangor	203
	Downpatrick	224
	Newtownards	407
	Division Total	834
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	98
	Banbridge	23
	Newry	422
	Division Total	543
Belfast	Belfast	1545
	Division Total	1545
Craigavon	Craigavon	270
	Lisburn	189
	Division Total	459
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	163
	Enniskillen	121
	Omagh	181
	Strabane	70
	Division Total	535
Londonderry	Limavady	87
	Londonderry	626
	Magherafelt	61
	Division Total	774
Northern Ireland		5604

The average waiting time for Northern Ireland in the civil and family magistrates' court for the date of issue to first hearing was 2 weeks. The average waiting time from the date of first hearing to disposal was 6 weeks. (Table E.13).

Table E.13: Average waiting times in weeks in the civil and family magistrates' courts in 2008.

		Date of issue to first hearing (weeks)	Date of first hearing to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	Antrim	1.8	5.1
	Ballymena	2.3	6.8
	Coleraine	2.6	6.0
	Larne	1.8	2.9
	Division Total	2.3	5.8
Ards	Bangor	1.4	3.3
	Downpatrick	2.2	10.2
	Newtownards	1.8	6.0
	Division Total	1.8	6.5
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	2.1	6.3
	Banbridge	2.9	4.6
	Newry	1.5	4.1
	Division Total	1.6	4.6
Belfast	Belfast	2.0	4.9
	Division Total	2.0	4.9
Craigavon	Craigavon	1.5	5.9
	Lisburn	1.5	11.7
	Division Total	1.5	8.3
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	1.6	2.8
	Enniskillen	1.9	4.0
	Omagh	1.6	3.4
	Strabane	1.8	2.8
	Division Total	1.7	3.3
Londonderry	Limavady	1.7	2.7
	Londonderry	1.5	7.0
	Magherafelt	2.5	4.7
	Division Total	1.6	6.3
Northern Ireland		1.9	5.6

Table E.14: Outcome of applications under the Family Homes & Domestic Violence Order in 2008.

	Granted	Dismissed or refused	Withdrawn	Vary discharge	Other	Total
Non molestation	2856	697	848	190	10	4601
Occupation	15	16	32	2	1	66
Combination non-mol occupation	-	-	-	2	-	2
Vary discharge non-mol occupation	3	10	16	36	-	65
Total	2874	723	896	230	11	4734

Section 5: Court sittings and court sitting times

Tables E.15 and E.16 show the number of scheduled, additional and special court sittings and court sitting times in the magistrates' court in 2008. There were 4,761 scheduled and additional court sittings in the magistrates' court and the average court sitting time was 3hrs 29mins. The average court sitting time for special courts was 48 minutes.

Table E.15: Scheduled and additional sittings & average sitting times in the magistrates' courts by division & venue in 2008 (hrs : mins)

		Adult		Youth		Civil & Family		Total number of sitting	
		Number of sittings	Average sitting time	Number of sittings	Average sitting time	Number of sittings	Average sitting time	Number of sittings	Average sitting time
Antrim	Antrim	65	3:52	22	1:17	24	3:05	111	3:11
	Ballymena	114	3:51	24	3:45	75	2:46	213	3:28
	Coleraine	144	4:35	24	3:05	46	3:00	214	4:04
	Larne	52	3:37	10	2:37	24	2:53	86	3:18
	Antrim@Ballymena	9	5:15	-	-	-	-	9	5:15
	Total	384	4:08	80	2:44	169	2:54	633	3:37
Ards	Bangor	85	4:04	-	-	21	2:53	106	3:50
	Downpatrick	111	4:33	26	2:52	11	3:52	148	4:12
	Newtownards	198	2:43	50	2:42	176	2:09	424	2:29
	Total	394	3:31	76	2:45	208	2:19	678	3:04
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	92	3:52	18	2:24	5	2:24	115	3:35
	Banbridge@Newry	52	4:12	8	3:54	3	2:45	63	4:06
	Newry	149	4:04	23	3:01	76	3:10	248	3:41
	Total	293	4:02	49	2:56	84	3:07	426	3:43
Belfast	Belfast	1016	3:19	158	2:57	279	3:14	1453	3:16
	Total	1016	3:19	158	2:57	279	3:14	1453	3:16
Craigavon	Craigavon	149	3:12	23	2:45	68	2:19	240	2:54
	Lisburn	136	3:48	22	3:23	45	3:56	203	3:47
	Lisburn@Craigavon	8	4:16	2	3:28	4	3:28	14	3:55
	Total	293	3:31	47	3:05	117	2:59	457	3:20
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	182	4:14	23	3:28	21	4:53	226	4:13
	Enniskillen	100	3:44	23	3:01	12	3:05	135	3:34
	Omagh	134	4:20	23	2:46	50	4:13	207	4:08
	Strabane	97	3:25	11	3:13	1	5:40	109	3:25
	Total	513	4:01	80	3:06	84	4:15	677	3:56
Londonderry	Limavady	57	3:46	-	-	1	2:35	58	3:45
	Londonderry	185	4:09	36	3:44	81	4:18	302	4:09
	Magherafelt	61	3:34	15	2:36	1	3:05	77	3:23

	Total	303	3:58	51	3:24	83	4:16	437	3:57
Northern Ireland		3196	3:42	541	2:58	1024	3:07	4761	3:29

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.

Table E.16: Special sittings & average sitting times in the magistrates' courts by division & venue in 2008 (hrs : mins)

		Criminal	
		Number of sittings	Average sitting time
Antrim	Ballymena	45	0:44
	Coleraine	1	1:24
	Larne	1	1:24
	Division Total	47	0:46
Ards	Newtownards	37	0:40
	Division total	37	0:40
Armagh & South Down	Banbridge@Newry	1	0:15
	Newry	40	0:51
	Division Total	41	0:51
Belfast	Laganside	1	1:24
	Division total	1	1:24
Craigavon	Craigavon	21	0:51
	Lisburn	21	0:51
	Lisburn@Craigavon	1	0:30
	Division Total	43	0:51
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	2	1:24
	Omagh	30	0:45
	Strabane	1	1:24
	Division Total	33	0:48
Londonderry	Londonderry	46	0:53
	Division Total	46	0:53
Northern Ireland		248	0:48

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.

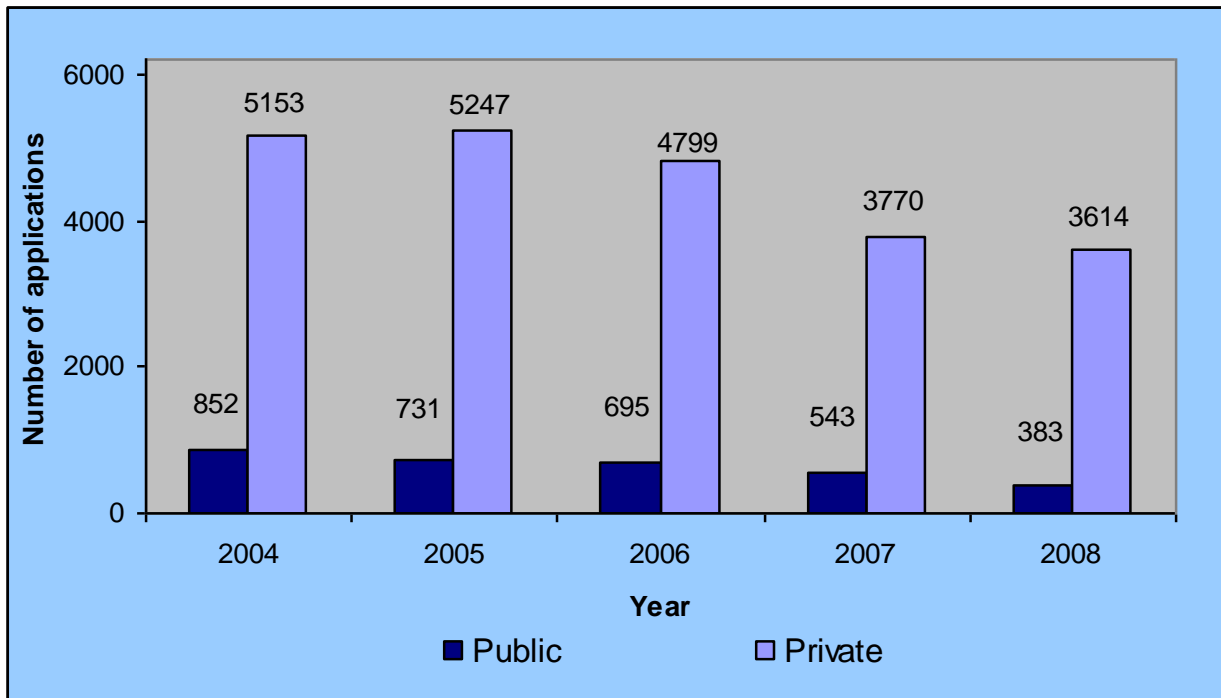
Part F Children Order

Children Order business is conducted before the family proceedings courts, the family care centres and the High Court.

Key facts during 2008

- 3,997 total applications were lodged
- 3,639 total applications were disposed of
- 4,791 children were involved
- 9,629 orders were made
- 1,691 Children Order court sitting days with an average time of 2hrs 13mins

Figure F.1: Public and private law applications entered 2004 - 2008



Section 1: Applications entered and disposed of

Tables F.1 and F.2 show that a total of 3,997 applications were received in designated courts in 2008. The majority of business (91%) was lodged in family proceedings courts, with 4% lodged in the High Court and 4% lodged in family care centres. Of the 3,639 applications disposed of, the High Court accounted for 5% of all business dealt with, care centres for 11% and family proceedings / magistrates court for 84%.

Table F.1: Applications received and disposed of in 2008

		Number of applications received	Number of disposals
Public Law	Family Proceedings Court	357	363
	Family Care Centre	11	120
	High Court	15	37
	Total	383	520
Private Law	Family Proceedings Court	3299	2701
	Family Care Centre	159	285
	High Court	156	133
	Total	3614	3119

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

Public law = care, supervision, child assessment, education supervision, emergency protection orders, extensions, contact with children in care, secure accommodation.

Table F.2: Applications entered and disposed of by venue in 2008

		Public Law		Private Law	
		Number of applications entered	Number of disposals	Number of applications entered	Number of disposals
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	-	-	9	4
	Armagh	-	-	-	1
	Ballymena	38	45	312	285
	Belfast	80	96	857	773
	Coleraine	-	-	12	4
	Craigavon	40	32	267	199
	Downpatrick	-	-	3	-
	Dungannon	75	59	216	208
	Larne	-	-	5	2
	Limavady	-	-	2	1
	Lisburn	17	20	318	214
	Londonderry	29	28	471	324
	Newry	42	35	330	285
	Newtownards	35	47	482	394
	Omagh	1	1	15	7
	Venue total	357	363	3299	2701
Family Care Centre	Belfast	7	63	24	100
	Craigavon	2	33	110	133
	Dungannon	1	16	12	12
	Londonderry	1	8	13	40
	Venue total	11	120	159	285
High Court	Matrimonial	3	1	25	17
	Office of Care and Protection	12	36	131	116
	Venue total	15	37	156	133
Northern Ireland		383	520	3614	3119

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

[2] Public law = care, supervision, child assessment, education supervision, emergency protection orders, extensions, contact with children in care, secure accommodation

Section 2: Reasons for transfer

Complexity accounted for 33% of the reasons quoted for the transfer of cases between courts (Table F.3).

Table F.3: Reasons for transfer in 2008

	Convenience	Urgency	Gravity	Importance	Complexity	Consolidation	Other	Total
Family Proceedings Court	15	-	-	-	96	55	112	278
Magistrates' Court	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Family Care Centre	-	-	-	-	23	8	45	76
High Court	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Northern Ireland	15	-	-	-	119	63	160	357

Where a court tier / venue is omitted, this indicates a nil return for the period to date.
There may be more than one reason for each case.

Section 3: Own motion orders and interim orders

Care orders accounted for 25% of own motion orders followed by contact permission orders (21%) in 2008 (Table F.4).

Table F.4: Own motion orders³ granted in 2008

	Own motion orders
Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	93
Care	568
Child Assessment	-
Contact: Permission	474
Education Supervision	6
Emergency Protection	14
Extension of Emergency Protection Order	-
Family Assistance	2
Non-Molestation Order	-
Occupation Articles	-
Other orders, applications etc	791
Parental Responsibility	10
Prohibited Steps	33
Recovery	-
Residence	201
Secure Accommodation	39
Specific Issues	47
Supervision	26
Total	2304

³ These figures may also involve an element of interim orders. Own motion orders as recorded on ICOS.

Out of the 9,889 interim orders made during 2008, 33% were interim care orders and 51% were interim/short term contact permission orders (Table F.5)

Table F.5: Interim orders granted in 2008

	Interim orders
Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	-
Article 53 Contact	-
Care	3274
Child Assessment	-
Contact: Permission	5058
Contact: Refusal	-
Contribution and other Financial	-
Education Supervision	-
Emergency Protection	-
Exclusion Requirement	-
Extension of Emergency Protection Order	-
Family Assistance	-
Non-Molestation Order	22
Occupation Articles	-
Other orders, applications etc	1
Parental Responsibility	14
Prohibited Steps	280
Recovery	-
Residence	1008
Secure Accommodation	6
Specific Issues	31
Supervision	195
Total	9889

Section 4: Final Orders Made

Table F.6 show the number of final orders made in 2008.

Table F.6: Final Orders Made - 2008

Adjourn Generally	33
Article 3 Legal Aid granted	972
Article 8 Contact	2134
Authority to refuse contact with a child in care	1
C2 Leave granted to commence proceedings	40
C18 Final Order	2311
Care Order	204
Child Assessment Order	1
Contact with a child in care	13
Declaration of Parentage	47
Discharge of a Care Order	24
Discharge Non-molestation / occupation order	5
Discharge Residence Order	2
Discharge / variation of a Supervision Order	4
Dismissed	15
Education Supervision	20
Emergency Protection Order	58
Extension of an Emergency Protection Order	9
Family Assistance Order	11
Financial Provision	5
Leave to change surname by which the child is known	13
Non-molestation order	3
Order or Directions	529
Other Order	23
Parental Responsibility Order	199
Prohibit further proceeding for set period	132
Prohibited steps	151
Recovery of a child	13
Refusal of Article 3 Legal Aid Certificate	8
Residence Order	1384
Secure Accommodation Order	201
Specific Issues	149
Strike Out Order	96
Supervision Order	44
Terminating Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	427
Withdrawn	348
Total	9629

Section 5: Age and gender of children

There were a total of 4,791 children involved in Children Order cases during 2008. In total, 35% of these were aged 0-4 and 29% aged 5-8 (Table F.7).

Table F.7: Age and gender of children in applications disposed of in 2008

	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	Total
Male	892	709	534	275	2410
Female	787	696	598	268	2349
Unknown	5	8	14	5	32
Total	1684	1413	1146	548	4791

Section 6: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue

The average disposal times for private law cases in 2008 was 36 weeks in the High Court, 39 weeks in the family care centres and 24 weeks in the family proceedings courts. Disposal times of cases in the High Court and the family care centres may include the time spent at the lower courts if cases were transferred (Table F.8).

Table F.8: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue in 2008

		Public law		Private law	
		Average time weeks	Number of cases	Average time weeks	Number of cases
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	-	-	2.2	4
	Armagh	-	-	16.6	1
	Ballymena	24.6	45	25.0	285
	Belfast	28.2	96	23.4	773
	Coleraine	-	-	18.5	4
	Craigavon	21.5	32	22.1	199
	Dungannon	16.5	59	23.1	208
	Larne	-	-	8.4	2
	Limavady	-	-	0.3	1
	Lisburn	35.3	20	22.2	214
	Londonderry	25.5	28	22.0	324
	Newry	27.1	35	22.1	285
	Newtownards	27.9	47	27.3	394
	Omagh	6.0	1	0.5	7
	Total	25.2	363	23.5	2701
Family Care Centre	Belfast	44.7	63	63.9	100
	Craigavon	40.7	33	18.1	133
	Dungannon	26.1	16	23.1	12
	Londonderry	49.9	8	53.4	40
	Total	41.5	120	39.3	285
High Court	Matrimonial	25.0	1	76.1	17
	Office of Care and Protection	53.6	36	30.3	116
	Total	52.8	37	36.1	133
Northern Ireland		30.9	520	25.5	3119

The time shown will include the time taken at the first court tier.

Section 7: Court sittings and court sitting times

Table F.9 shows the number of sittings where any Children Order business was heard in court. During 2008, the family proceedings courts sat for over 2,415 hours, 64% of the total court sitting time for Children Order.

Table F.9: Court sittings and court sitting times in 2008 (hrs : mins)

		Total court sitting time	Average Children Order court sitting time	Number of court sittings
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	47:35	2:58	16
	Ballymena	167:24	2:59	56
	Banbridge@Newry	0:35	0:18	2
	Belfast	696:07	3:09	221
	Coleraine	69:05	3:00	23
	Craigavon	105:58	2:12	48
	Downpatrick	0:20	0:20	1
	Dungannon	93:10	4:14	22
	Larne	44:05	1:55	23
	Limavady	2:35	2:35	1
	Lisburn	138:40	3:13	43
	Lisburn@Craigavon	10:45	3:35	3
	Londonderry	307:58	3:43	83
	Newry	205:20	3:07	66
	Newtownards	312:56	2:07	148
	Omagh	213:05	3:57	54
	Venue total	2415:38	2:59	810
Family Care Centre	Belfast	533:06	1:35	338
	Craigavon	198:07	2:32	78
	Dungannon	23:02	1:09	20
	Enniskillen	6:11	1:02	6
	Limavady	0:50	0:25	2
	Lisburn	1:55	0:58	2
	Londonderry	57:48	0:53	66
	Magherafelt	3:15	1:38	2
	Newry	4:00	4:00	1
	Omagh	7:43	1:17	6
		Venue total	835:57	1:36
High Court	Matrimonial	45:25	1:45	26
	Office of Care and Protection	454:47	1:22	334
	Venue total	500:12	1:23	360
Northern Ireland		3751:47	2:13	1691

A court sitting 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.

Children Order sittings refer to a sitting where any Children Order business is heard.

Total Children Order time includes all time spent on Children Order business.

High Court Judges, county court judges and resident magistrates sit on Children Order business.

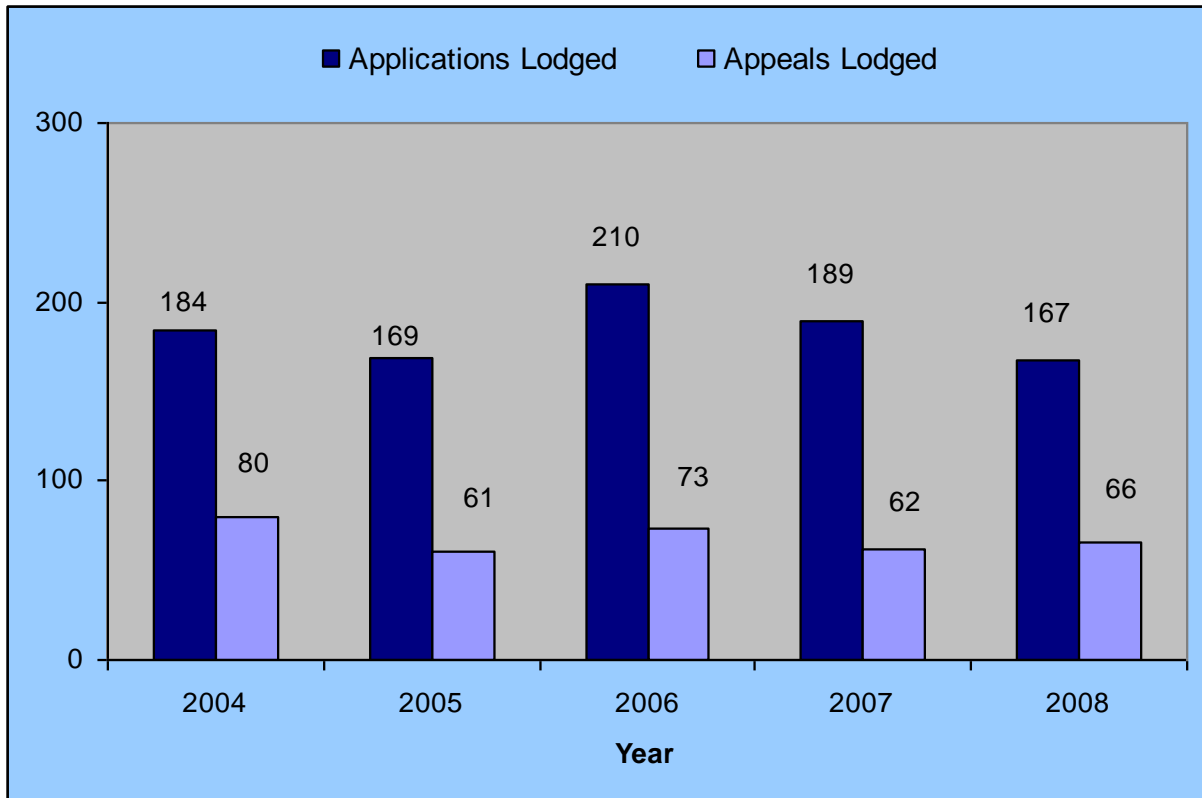
Part G Miscellaneous

This section covers the caseload from Enforcement of Judgments Office (EJO), Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners and Coroners' Court.

Key facts during 2008

- 12,066 notices of intention to enforce were lodged
- 5,352 applications for enforcement were accepted
- 167 applications for leave to appeal to the Commissioners were lodged and 162 were cleared
- 66 appeals to the Commissioners were lodged and 48 were cleared
- 208 inquests were held

Figure G.1: Social Security Commissioners – Applications and Appeals Lodged 2004-2008



Section 1: Enforcement of Judgments Office

Since the early 1970s, the task of enforcing civil judgments in Northern Ireland has been simplified by the creation of the Enforcement of Judgments Office (EJO), which operates under the supervision of the Master (Enforcement of Judgments), assisted by the Chief Enforcement Officer. In 2008, 12,066 notices of intention to enforce were lodged and 5,352 applications for enforcement were accepted (Table G.1).

Table G.1: Enforcement orders made and applications for enforcement in 2008

Method of search	
By EJO staff	832
On-line (by customers)	68995
Notices of intention:	
Notices Issued	12066
Applications for enforcement:	
Applications accepted	5352
Types of application	
Article 23 discovery	743
Money judgment	3597
Possession judgment	1005
Possession of Goods	7
Total	5352

Table G.2 shows the 'Debt Ratio' which is the amount of debt recovered for every £1 paid in enforcement fees.

Table G.2: Money judgments and debt ratio in 2008

Original debt lodged	£15,239,031.71
EJO fees paid	£1,121,160.90
Total debt registered	£16,360,192.61
Total debt recovered	£6,234,466.44
% of debt recovered	38.11%
Debt ratio	£5.56

A possession file is deemed 'completed' when –

- An eviction takes place.
- The creditor withdraws their application.
- An official arrangement between the creditor and debtor is made (these cases may be re-activated if the arrangement breaks down)

Table G.3 shows that during the year, 704 cases were completed.

Table G.3 Possession judgments in 2008

Evictions completed	210
Cases withdrawn	163
Arrangement in place (case held)	331
Total	704

Section 2: Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners and Pension Appeals Tribunals

There were 167 applications for leave to appeal to the Social Security Commissioners lodged during 2008, 22 less than the 189 lodged during 2007. There were 162 applications for leave cleared in 2008 compared to 197 cleared during 2007 (Table G.4).

Table G.4: Social Security Commissioners' applications for leave to appeal to the Commissioners in 2008

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total
2008	167	3	159	162

The number of appeals to the Commissioners lodged increased by 6% from 62 in 2007 to 66 in 2008. In total, 48 were cleared in 2008 compared with 64 in 2007 (Table G.5).

Table G.5: Social Security Commissioners' appeals to the Commissioners in 2008

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total
2008	66	8	40	48

Table G.6 shows the number of applications to the Commissioners for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 2008.

Table G.6: Social Security Commissioners' Applications to the Commissioners for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 2008

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total
2008	4	0	2	2

Tables G.7 to G.12 show the caseload of Pensions Appeal Tribunals in 2008. 79 entitlement appeals and 109 assessment appeals were dealt with in 2008. The majority of assessment appeals (69%) were dealt with after a hearing.

Table G.7: Pensions Appeal Tribunals entitlement appeals in 2008

	Lodged	Cleared			Adjourned
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total	
2008	70	53	26	79	24

Table G.8: Pensions Appeal Tribunals assessment appeals in 2008

	Lodged	Cleared			Adjourned
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total	
2008	96	75	34	109	25

Table G.9: Pensions Appeal Tribunals specified decision appeals in 2008

	Lodged	Cleared			Adjourned
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total	
2008	24	11	11	22	3

Table G.10: Pensions Appeal Tribunals late appeals in 2008

	Lodged	Cleared			Adjourned
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total	
2008	16	2	6	8	2

Table G.11: Pensions Appeal Tribunals jurisdiction appeals in 2008

	Lodged	Cleared			Adjourned
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total	
2008	13	3	14	17	1

Table G.12: Pensions Appeal Tribunals leave to appeal applications in 2008

	Lodged	Cleared			Adjourned
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total	
2008	2	0	2	2	2

Section 3: Coroners' office

Table G.13 shows the Coroners' caseload for 2008.

Table G.13: Coroners' caseload in 2008

Number of deaths reported	4241
Number of inquests held	208
No inquests with post mortem	1496
No inquests and no post mortem	1791
Other disposals of registered entries	863

Appendix 1: Judge court sitting days

Judge type	Business area ^[1]	Sitting days
High Court Judge	Crown	625
	Queen's Bench	628
	Children Order	108
	Other Family	201
	Appeals	9
	Chancery	219
	Bails	290
	Callover	7
	Judicial Reviews	319
	Court of Appeal - Civil	89
	Court of Appeal - Criminal	62
Total		2557
County Court Judge	Crown Court	1851
	County court judge day	1255
District Judge	County court judge day	182
	District judge day	518
Deputy District Judge	District judge day	90
Deputy County Court Judge	County court judge day	84
Total		3980
Resident Magistrates	Criminal	3444
	Youth	541
	Civil/Family	1024
Total		5009
Social Security Commissioners	Oral hearings	10
Total		10
Total number of sitting days		11556

[1] Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken
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

This publication can be made available in a wide range of alternative formats. Requests for alternative formats should be made to the Information Centre.

Northern Ireland Court Service

Information Centre
Laganside House
23-25 Oxford Street
Belfast
BT1 3LA

Phone: 028 9032 8594

Fax: 028 9041 2390

Textphone: 028 9041 2920

www.courtsni.gov.uk

email: informationcentre@courtsni.gov.uk