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NORTHERN IRELAND COURT SERVICE

Judicial Statistics



serving the community through the administration of justice

A NATIONAL STATISTICS PUBLICATION

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Introduction

1 Contents

The statistics in this report relate to the criminal, civil and family business conducted by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) and to the work of some associated 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 district judge (magistrates' court) sitting alone. The present complement of district judges (magistrates' court) 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 three Coroners (one of which is a fixed term appointment). They deal with matters relating to deaths that may require further investigation to establish the cause of death.

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 7 June 2010.

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 2009 figures and previous years, please contact the NICTS.

The Court Structure in Northern Ireland

The Supreme Court

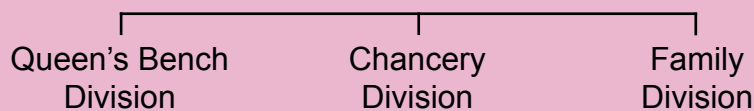
Final Court of Appeal on points of law for the United Kingdom in civil cases.
Final Court of Appeal on points of law for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in criminal cases.

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.

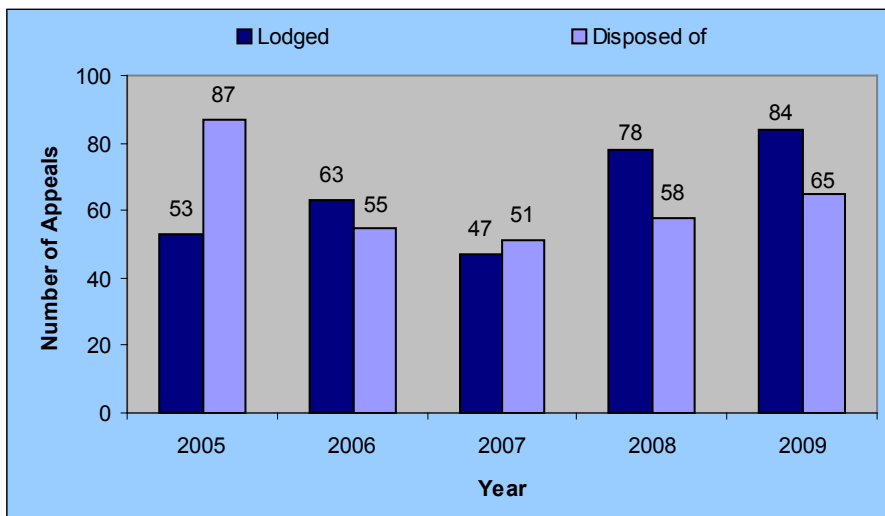
Key facts during 2009

- 84 criminal appeals were lodged in the Court of Appeal
- 65 criminal appeals were disposed of in the Court of Appeal
- 28 criminal appeals were successful
- 83 civil appeals were set down in the Court of Appeal
- 84 civil appeals were disposed of in the Court of Appeal

Figure A.1 Criminal appeals lodged and disposed of from 2005-2009

Section

1:



Criminal appeals

The number of criminal appeals lodged in 2009 increased from 78 in 2008 to 84 in 2009 (Table A.1).

Table A.1: Criminal appeals lodged and disposed of in 2009

Lodged	Disposed of
84	65

There were 45 appeals lodged against sentence only, 11 were against conviction and 28 were against both conviction and sentence. Of the 84 appeals lodged during 2009, 8 resulted from trials dealing with scheduled offences (Table A.2).

Table A.2: Types of criminal appeal lodged in 2009

	Appeal against			Total
	Sentence	Conviction	Conviction and sentence	
Scheduled	7	-	1	8
Non-Scheduled	38	11	27	76
Total	45	11	28	84

There were 28 successful appeals in 2009 with 7 appeals refused, and 11 appeals abandoned or withdrawn (Table A.3).

Table A.3: Results of criminal appeals by type in 2009

	Appeal pursuant to Article 17 of Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2004	Conviction only or conviction & sentence		Sentence only	
		Scheduled	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Non-Scheduled
Conviction Quashed	-	-	14	-	-
Appeal Dismissed	1	-	3	3	12
Sentence Affirmed	-	-	-	-	-
Sentence Varied	-	1	-	3	10
Withdrawn/Abandoned	-	-	4	1	6
Refused	-	-	4	1	2
Total	1	1	25	8	30

Section 2: Civil appeals

There were 83 civil appeals set down in 2009, 13 less than the 2008 total of 96. As in previous years, the main source of civil appeals was the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court with 51 cases set down. A total of 84 appeals were disposed of during the year (Table A.4).

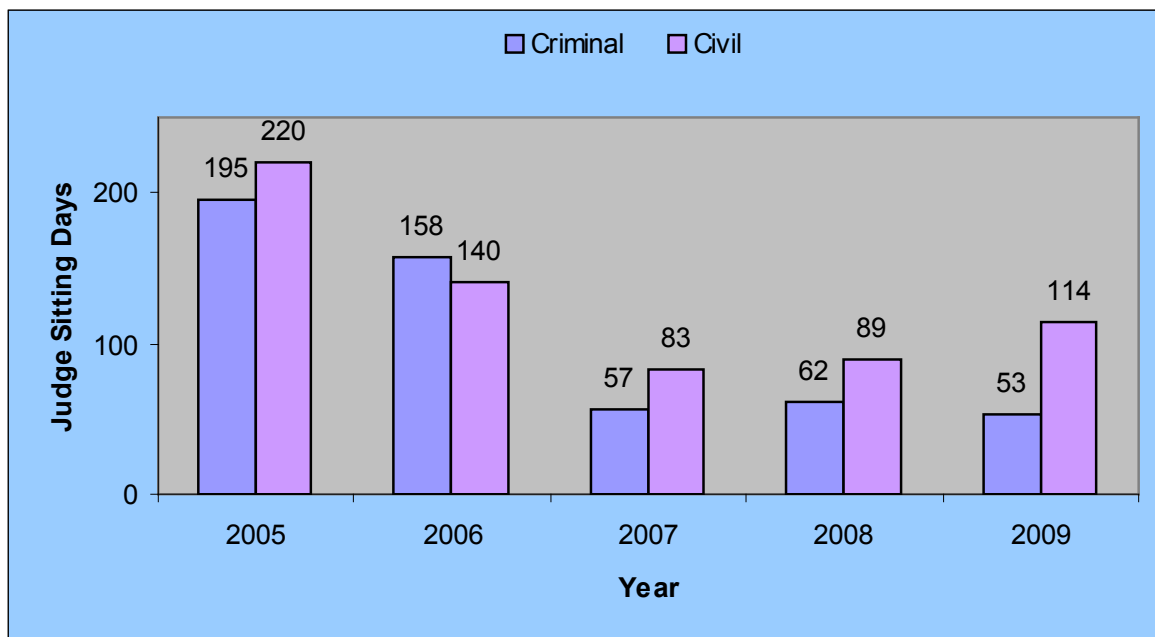
Table A.4: Appeals set down and disposed of by origin and type in 2009

	Set Down	Disposed
Chancery Division: Final	8	8
Chancery Division: Interlocutory	2	2
Family Division: Final	3	3
Family Division: Interlocutory	-	-
Queen's Bench Division:		
Judicial Review: Final	27	24
Judicial Review: Interlocutory	5	4
Commercial: Final	1	-
Commercial: Interlocutory	-	-
Other: Final	15	7
Other: Damages	-	-
Other: Interlocutory	3	-
Magistrates' court (Section 44 of Judicature Act)	-	-
Case Stated		
Court of Appeal (Appeal or Case Stated)	1	14
Requisition to Judge to State a Case	-	1
By Outside Body	6	6
By Lands Tribunal	-	-
By High Court Judge	8	11
By County Court Judge	-	2
By District Judge	1	1
By District Judge (Magistrates' Court)	2	1
Determination of pensions: Pension appeal	-	-
Immigration Tribunal	-	-
Motions on Notice	1	-
Proceeds of crime	-	-
Master (EJO)	-	-
Other	-	-
Total	83	84

Section 3: Court sitting times

The number of court sitting days spent on criminal appeals (by majority type of work) decreased from 62 days in 2008 to 53 days in 2009. A total of 106 hours were spent in court hearing criminal appeals in 2009 compared with 105 court hours in 2008. There were 114 court sitting days (by majority type of work) spent on civil appeals during 2009 compared with 89 in 2008. A total of 203 hours were spent in court hearing civil appeals in 2009 compared with 159 court hours during 2008 (Figure A.2 & Table B.40).

Figure A.2 Number of court sitting days (majority days) in the Court of Appeal from 2005-2009



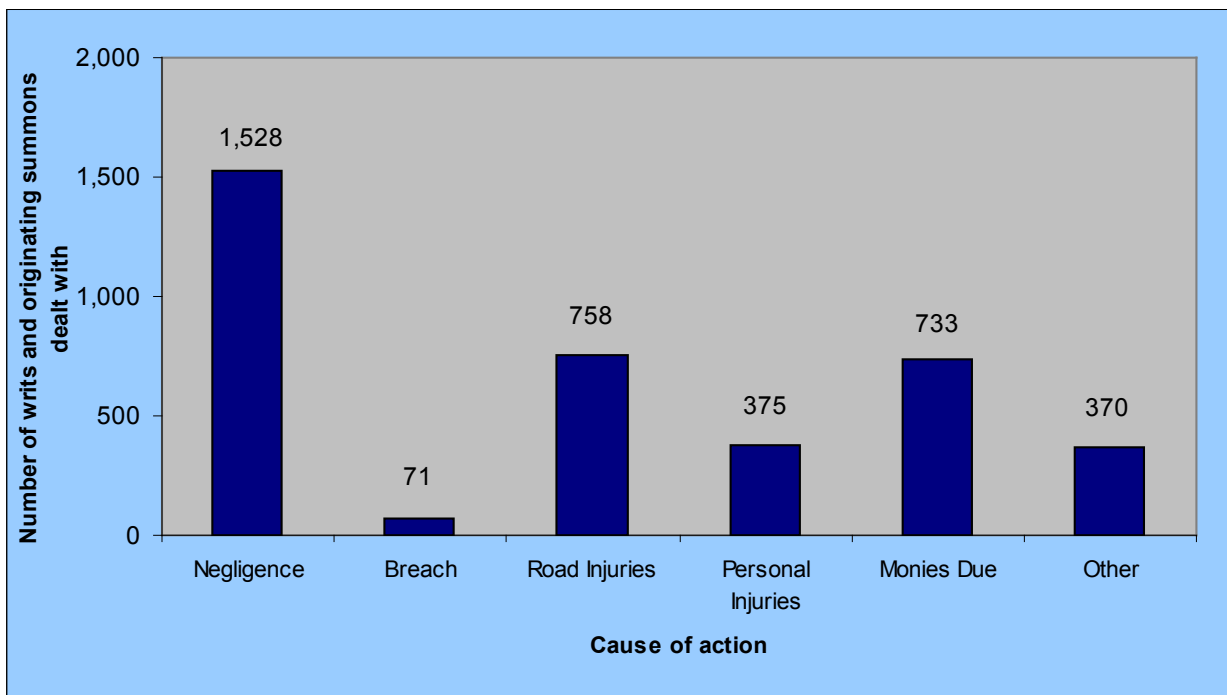
Part B High Court

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

Key facts during 2009

- 3,906 mortgage applications were entered in Chancery
- 3,412 bankruptcy proceedings were entered
- 2,961 bankruptcy proceedings were disposed of
- 404 companies proceedings were disposed of
- 7,188 writs and originating summonses were received
- 786 judgments by default were entered
- 2,746 divorce petitions were filed in the High Court
- 2,195 applications for bail were received

Figure B1: Queen's Bench writs and originating summons disposals in 2009



Section 1: Chancery

Table B.1 shows that during 2009, a total of 4,567 Chancery writs and originating summonses were issued. Mortgage suits continue to account for the majority (86%) of writs and originating summonses issued. The number of mortgages received has increased by 8% during 2009 (3,630 in 2008 compared with 3,906 in 2009).

Table B.1: Chancery cases and applications received in 2009

Cases	Mortgages	3906
	Other land and property	148
	Trade and business	28
	Trusts	11
	Other	474
	Total	4567
Applications	Notice of appointment	3697
	Summons	950
	Notice of motion	34
	Exparte application	300
	Injunction	25
	Other	2
	Total	5008

There were 3,928 cases and applications disposed of in 2009. Mortgages accounted for the majority of disposals with 2,666 cases disposed of (Table B.2).

Table B.2: Chancery cases and applications disposed of in 2009

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Mortgages	2	2657	7	2666
	Other land and property	78	2	5	85
	Trade and business	11	-	2	13
	Trusts	4	1	-	5
	Other	125	21	23	169
	Total	220	2681	37	2938
Applications	Notice of appointment	2	97	-	99
	Summons	133	461	-	594
	Notice of motion	17	1	1	19
	Exparte application	19	252	-	271
	Injunction	7	-	-	7
	Other	-	-	-	-
	Total	178	811	1	990

Section 2: Bankruptcy

There were 3,412 bankruptcy proceedings issued in 2009. These included 1,928 bankruptcy petitions, 69% of which were creditor petitions (Petition by another person). Other bankruptcy proceedings included 276 originating applications and 1,043 ordinary applications (Table B.3).

Table B.3: Bankruptcy cases and applications received in 2009

Cases	Petition by another person	1324
	Petition by debtor	595
	Other petition	9
	Originating application	276
	Other	114
	Total	2318
Applications	Notice of motion	6
	Ordinary application	1043
	Certificate of automatic discharge	25
	Other	20
	Total	1094

The Master dealt with a total of 2,952 bankruptcy proceedings. The main area of work disposed of by the Master was bankruptcy petitions, a total of 1,965 (Table B.4).

Table B.4: Bankruptcy cases and applications disposed of in 2009

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Petition by another person	2	1378	-	1380
	Petition by debtor	-	575	-	575
	Other petition	-	12	-	12
	Originating application	-	90	-	90
	Other	-	83	1	84
	Total	2	2138	1	2141
Applications	Notice of motion	1	4	-	5
	Ordinary application	5	769	-	774
	Certificate of automatic discharge	-	23	-	23
	Other	-	18	-	18
	Total	6	814	-	820

Section 3: Companies

Table B.5 and B.6 show the companies' proceedings entered and disposed of for 2009. There were 586 companies' proceedings received and 404 disposed of.

Table B.5: Companies' cases and applications received in 2009

Cases	Winding up petition	345
	Other petitions	9
	Originating summons	147
	Other	32
	Total	533
Applications	Notice of motion	14
	Ordinary application	32
	Other	7
	Total	53

Table B.6: Companies' cases and applications disposed of in 2009

		High Court Judge	Master	Total
Cases	Winding up petition	4	313	317
	Other petitions	3	6	9
	Originating summons	7	38	45
	Other	6	8	14
	Total	20	365	385
Applications	Notice of motion	2	2	4
	Ordinary application	2	9	11
	Other	2	2	4
	Total	6	13	19

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 with 11 weeks for a bankruptcy case and 16 weeks for a companies' case.

Table B.7: Average time intervals in weeks in 2009

	Chancery		Bankruptcy		Companies	
	Cases	Applications	Cases	Applications	Cases	Applications
Issue to first listing	23	7	6	3	12	2
First listing to disposal	5	4	5	2	4	3
Issue to disposal	30	8	11	5	16	4

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 11,164 Queen's Bench cases and applications received during 2009, 64% of these were made up of writs and originating summonses. There has been a 21% increase in the number of writs received from 5,956 in 2008 to 7,188 in 2009 (Table B.8).

Table B.8: Queen's Bench cases and applications received in 2009

Writs and originating summonses	Negligence	4080
	Breach	163
	Road injuries	1141
	Personal injuries	352
	Monies due	1229
	Other	223
	Total	7188
Miscellaneous	Foreign judgement	373
	Other	108
	Total	481
Applications	Summons/interlocutory applications	2062
	Remittals and removals	589
	Exparte applications	324
	Other	520
	Total	3495

Table B.9 shows the breakdown of the amount claimed in writs and originating summonses in 2009.

Table B.9: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses received by amount claimed in 2009

	Unliquidated	Less than £1,000	£1,000-2,999	£3,000-14,999	Over £15,000	Total
Negligence	4078	-	-	1	1	4080
Breach	150	-	-	1	12	163
Road injuries	1133	-	-	1	7	1141
Personal injuries	346	-	-	3	3	352
Monies due	107	1	47	329	745	1229
Other	217	-	-	2	4	223
Total	6031	1	47	337	772	7188

There were 1,800 Queen's Bench writs (excluding commercial actions) set down for trial during 2009 (Table B.10).

Table B.10: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses setdown by amount claimed in 2009

	Unliquidated	£1,000-2,999	£3,000-14,999	Over £15,000	Total
Negligence	1139	-	3	5	1147
Breach	16	-	-	6	22
Road injuries	397	-	3	13	413
Personal injuries	123	-	4	13	140
Monies due	13	1	1	11	26
Other	45	-	2	5	52
Total	1733	1	13	53	1800

There were 1,665 writs dealt with in court and 1,384 writs disposed of as office disposals. Actions set down as negligence constituted 40% of writs disposed of (Table B.11).

Table B.11: Queen's Bench cases and applications disposed of in 2009

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal [1]	Default judgement	Total
Writs and originating summonses	Negligence	951	30	514	33	1528
	Breach	31	-	29	11	71
	Road injuries	356	8	379	15	758
	Personal injuries	165	17	189	4	375
	Monies due	9	4	36	684	733
	Other	88	6	237	39	370
	Total	1600	65	1384	786	3835
Miscellaneous	Foreign judgement	-	10	-	1	11
	Other	13	2	10	-	25
	Total	13	12	10	1	36
Applications	Summons/interlocutory applications	147	1658	-	-	1805
	Remittals and removals	4	494	-	-	498
	Exparte applications	38	195	-	-	233
	Other	191	264	-	-	455
	Total	380	2611	-	-	2991

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 2,451 writs disposed of, 38% were for over £15,000 (Table B.12).

Table B.12: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses disposed by amount in 2009

		Unliquidated	Less than £1,000	£1,000-2,999	£3,000-14,999	Over £15,000	Total
High Court Judge	Negligence	522	1	17	166	245	951
	Breach	21	-	1	3	6	31
	Road injuries	54	-	3	67	232	356
	Personal injuries	103	-	2	22	38	165
	Monies due	5	-	-	1	3	9
	Other	59	-	-	7	22	88
Master	Negligence	27	-	-	2	1	30
	Breach	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Road injuries	5	-	-	2	1	8
	Personal injuries	17	-	-	-	-	17
	Monies due	4	-	-	-	-	4
	Other	6	-	-	-	-	6
Default judgements	Negligence	32	-	-	-	1	33
	Breach	8	-	-	-	3	11
	Road injuries	14	-	-	-	1	15
	Personal injuries	4	-	-	-	-	4
	Monies due	23	1	23	260	377	684
	Other	5	-	3	22	9	39
Total		909	2	49	552	939	2451

Excludes commercial actions.

Tables B.13 and B.14 show the number of commercial actions set down and disposed of. During 2009, 62 actions were entered in the commercial list. In total, 118 cases were disposed of with 107 of these disposed of by a High Court Judge.

Table B.13: Queen's Bench commercial actions setdown in 2009

Negligence	12
Breach	23
Personal injuries	1
Monies due	22
Other	4
Total	62

Table B.14: Queen's Bench commercial actions disposed of in 2009

	High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Negligence	22	1	3	-	26
Breach	35	-	2	-	37
Personal injuries	-	-	-	-	-
Monies due	43	-	1	2	46
Other	7	-	1	1	9
Total	107	1	7	3	118

In 2009, the average length of time for a writ from first listing to disposal was 20 weeks (Table B.15).

Table B.15: Average time intervals in weeks in 2009

	Writs and originating summonses	Commercial actions	Miscellaneous[2]	Applications
Issue to first listing	106	108	12	9
First listing to disposal	20	42	17	5
Issue to disposal	125	148	15	15

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 25 cases, of which only 14 were set down.

Section 5: Judicial Reviews

Tables B.16 to B.18 are in relation to Judicial Reviews. There were 76 applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review granted (34%). Of the 100 applications for Judicial Review that were disposed in 2009, 19% were granted.

Table B.16: Judicial Review applications received in 2009

Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	268
Applications for Judicial Review	105
Ancillary applications	3

Table B.17: Judicial Review applications disposed of in 2009

	Granted	Withdrawn/ Refused/ Dismissed	Other	Total
Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	76	116	31	223
Applications for Judicial Review	19	54	27	100
Ancillary applications	-	-	2	2

In 2009, the average length of time from issue to disposal of applications for Judicial Review was 42 weeks (Table B.18).

Table B.18: Average time intervals in weeks in 2009

	Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	Applications for Judicial Review	Ancillary applications
Issue to first listing	3	21	2
First listing to disposal	6	21	15
Issue to disposal	9	42	9

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 2009 decreased by 5% from 6,484 in 2008 to 6,187 in 2009 (Table B.19).

Table B.19: Probate grants issued in non-contentious proceedings in 2009

	District registry		Probate	Northern Ireland
	By solicitor	Personal	By solicitor	
Grant of administration	-	-	1	1
Pendente Lite	-	-	-	-
Letters of administration with will annexed	28	-	133	161
Letters of administration with will annexed (DBN)	7	-	18	25
Letters of administration	297	-	1008	1305
Grant of probate	736	-	3919	4655
Letters of administration (DBN)	9	-	31	40
Total grants issued	1077	-	5110	6187

Section 7: Matrimonial

The number of divorce petitions filed decreased by 10%, from 3,055 in 2008 to 2,746 in 2009 (Table B.20).

Table B.20: Divorce petitions received in 2009

		Filed by			Total
		Wife	Husband	Unknown	
Divorce Petitions	2 years with consent	686	437	1	1124
	5 years separation	373	344	-	717
	Adultery	64	19	-	83
	Unreasonable behaviour	435	93	-	528
	Combination of grounds/other	212	81	-	293
	Ancillary relief	1	-	-	1
Total		1771	974	1	2746

There were 948 decrees nisi granted in the High Court during 2009, a decrease of 20% on the 1,186 granted during 2008. The most common ground for dissolution continued to be separation (2 years with consent) accounting for 34% of all cases (Table B.21).

Table B.21: Divorce petitions by type of decree in 2009

		Wife	Husband	Both	Total
Decrees Nisi	2 years with consent	197	124	-	321
	5 years separation	118	87	-	205
	Adultery	15	7	-	22
	Unreasonable behaviour	153	19	2	174
	Combination of grounds/other	169	50	7	226
Nullity	Combination of grounds/other	-	-	-	-
Judicial Separation	2 years with consent	-	-	-	-
	5 years separation	1	-	-	1
	Adultery	-	-	-	-
	Unreasonable behaviour	1	1	-	2
	Combination of grounds/other	3	-	-	3
Total		657	288	9	954

Table B.22: Divorce petitions by number of absolutes issued in 2009

		Found by			Total
		Wife	Husband	Both	
Divorce Petitions	2 years with consent	206	114	-	320
	5 years separation	137	92	-	229
	Adultery	11	6	-	17
	Unreasonable behaviour	158	10	-	168
	Combination of grounds/other	132	37	8	177
Total		644	259	8	911

During 2009, there were 1,308 matrimonial applications received. In total, 39% of applications were for ancillary relief (Table B.23).

Table B.23: Matrimonial applications received in 2009

Applications	Combination of grounds/other	27
	Ancillary relief	515
	Matrimonial application	711
	Other	55
Total		1308

Of the 1,123 matrimonial applications disposed of during 2009, 495 (44%) were for ancillary relief (Table B.24).

Table B.24: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2009

		Judge	Master	Total
Applications	Combination of grounds/other	11	-	11
	Ancillary relief	4	491	495
	Matrimonial application	30	569	599
	Other	13	5	18
Total		58	1065	1123

The average time from the issue of a petition to the date the decree was granted was 45 weeks (Table B.25).

Table B.25: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2009

	Divorce Petitions
Issue to first listing	39
First listing to date decree granted	6
Issue to date decree granted	45

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

During 2009, the average time from issue to disposal of a matrimonial application was 47 weeks. Applications for ancillary relief took on average 56 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal (Table B.26).

Table B.26: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce applications in 2009

	Combination of grounds / other	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial applications	Other
Issue to first listing	-	10	44	2
First listing to disposal	20	47	4	8
Issue to disposal	20	56	47	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 2009, adoption order applications accounted for 52% of the total applications received (Table B.27).

Table B.27: Adoption cases and applications received in 2009

Adoption Order Applications	64
Child Abduction Originating Summonses	9
Freeing Order Applications	19
Interlocutory Applications	19
Wardship Originating Summonses	12
Total	123

Of the cases disposed, 95% were disposed of by a High Court Judge. The majority of applications disposed of (63%) were adoption order applications (Table B.28).

Table B.28: Adoption cases and applications disposed of in 2009

	High Court Judge	Master	Office Disposal	Total
Adoption Order Applications	73	-	2	75
Child Abduction Originating Summonses	6	-	-	6
Freeing Order Applications	15	-	-	15
Interlocutory Applications	15	-	-	15
Wardship Originating Summonses	4	4	-	8
Total	113	4	2	119

Ex-parte applications for occupation/non-molestation orders accounted for 62% 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 2009

Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	17
Article 20 Non-Molestation	4
Ex-parte Applications for Occupation /Non-Molestation	34
Total	55

The Master disposed of 76% of the total number of Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications during 2009. Table B.30 shows that 59% of all cases were ex-parte.

Table B.30: Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications disposed in 2009

	High Court Judge	Master	Total
Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	7	15	22
Article 20 Non-Molestation	-	4	4
Ex-parte Applications for Occupation /Non-Molestation	8	28	36
Article 23 Ex-parte Non-Molestation and Occupation	-	1	1
Total	15	48	63

Table B.31 shows the average time in weeks for adoption and Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications during 2009. It took on average 31 weeks for an adoption case from date of issue to date of disposal.

Table B.31: Average time intervals in weeks in 2009

	Adoption	Family Homes And Domestic Violence
Issue to first listing	23	1
First listing to disposal	9	23
Issue to disposal	31	24

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 794 patients referred to the Office of Care and Protection in 2009 for investigation under the Mental Health Order, representing a 12% decrease on the 2008 total of 907 patients. The total live caseload for 2009 was 1,493 (Table B.32).

Table B.32: Office of Care and Protection – Mental Health proceedings in 2009

New referrals	794
Enduring Power of Attorney applications received	304
Orders issued	871
Certificates issued	5900
Reviews completed	845
Visits	14
Casework Sections Incoming Post	8240
Referrals Section Incoming Post	5670
Live Caseload at 31st December	1493

Section 10: Official Solicitor's Office

Tables B.33 and B.34 demonstrate the caseload of the Official Solicitor's Office. There were 550 live patient cases and 227 live minors' cases in 2009.

Table B.33: Official Solicitor's Office – Patient caseload in 2009

Referrals	36
Orders:	
Ad. Interim orders	12
Controller orders	14
Dismissals	35
Live cases	550
Incoming correspondence	8182
Miscellaneous queries	52

Table B.34: Official Solicitor's Office – Minors' caseload in 2009

	Received	Current Caseload	Disposed
Guardian of the Fortune	2	12	0
Adoption	5	3	3
Inter-Country Adoption	9	10	1
Children Order	95	101	37
Art 159 Children Order	3	0	3
Parental Incapacity	10	21	1
Trustee	0	1	0
Criminal Injury	3	38	0
Change of Surname	3	0	3
Declaratory Proceedings	0	1	0
Estate	1	6	0
Judicial Review	1	4	0
Motor Insurers' Bureau	0	4	0
Personal Injury	0	3	0
House Purchase	1	1	0
Declined	0	1	0
Wardship	3	1	2
Miscellaneous	22	20	14
Total	158	227	64

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 11: Masters' appeals

There were 56 Masters' appeals received and 51 Masters' appeals disposed of in 2009 (Tables B.35 and B.36).

Table B.35: Masters' appeals received in 2009

Queen's Bench Masters' appeals	40
Chancery Masters' appeals	16

Table B.36: Masters' appeals disposed in 2009

Queen's Bench Masters' appeals	32
Chancery Masters' appeals	19

Section 12: High Court Bails

There were 2,195 applications for bail in the High Court during 2009. Of the 1,656 applications disposed in court, 47% were granted (Tables B.37 and B.39).

Table B.37 Number of bail applications received in 2009

Bail applications	1438
Bail pending appeals to the county court	29
Compassionate bail applications	181
Miscellaneous applications	-
Applications to revoke bail	18
Schedule 2 breaches	1
Time extension	6
Bail variations	522
Total	2195

Table B.38 Number of bail applications disposed of in chambers 2009

	Granted	Refused	Other	Adjourned	Total
Bail applications	13	4	-	-	17
Bail pending appeals to the county court	1	-	-	-	1
Compassionate bail applications	-	1	-	-	1
Application to revoke bail	-	-	-	-	-
Bail variations	298	3	39	1	341
Total	312	8	39	1	360

Table B.39 Number of bail applications disposed of in court 2009

	Granted	Refused	Revoke	Other	Total
Bail applications	554	664	1	79	1298
Bail pending appeals to the county court	10	16	-	-	26
Compassionate bail applications	105	55	1	6	167
Miscellaneous applications	-	-	-	-	-
Application to revoke bail	3	1	9	3	16
Schedule 2 breaches	1	-	-	-	1
Bail variations	113	27	-	8	148
Total	786	763	11	96	1656

Section 13: Court sitting days and court sitting times

High Court Judges sat on a total of 2,403 court sitting days, a decrease of 6% on the 2,557 days sat during 2008. By majority type of work, High Court Judges sat for a total 598 days hearing Queen's Bench business and 439 in the Crown Court (Table B.40).

Table B.40 High Court Judges court sitting days and court sitting times in 2009 (hrs:mins)

	Court sitting days	Total court sitting time
Crown	439	1221:17
Queen's Bench	598	1460:39
Judicial Reviews	274	498:23
Children Order	211	518:17
Other Family	152	307:20
Appeals	13	20:45
Chancery	214	528:48
Bails	334	645:28
Callover/Mixed	1	00:05
Court of Appeal - Civil	114	203:00
Court of Appeal - Criminal	53	106:15
Total	2403	5510:17

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.

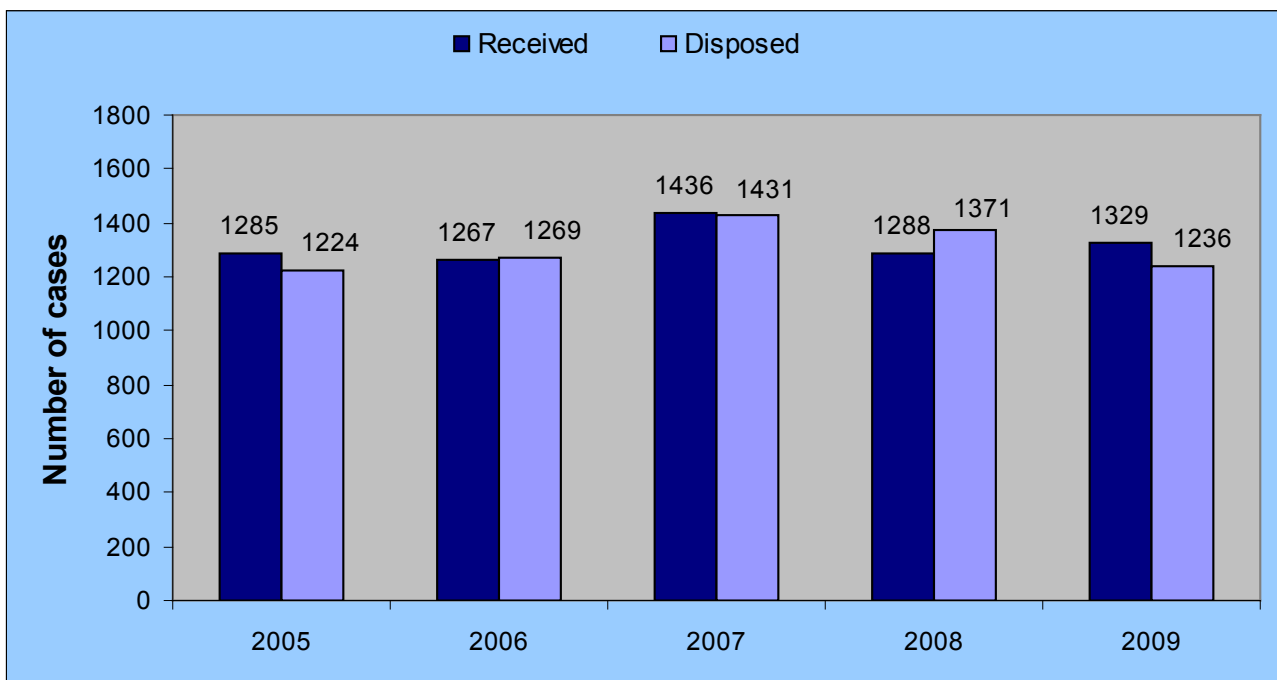
Part C Crown Court

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 2009

- 1,329 Crown Court cases were received
- 1,236 Crown Court cases were disposed of
- There were a total of 1,556 defendants disposed of
- The average time from committal to start of trial was 118 days (17 weeks)

Figure C.1: Number of cases received and disposed of in the Crown Court from 2005-2009



Section 1: Cases received and disposed of

Tables C.1 show the number of cases received in 2009. There were 1,329 cases received in 2009 compared with 1,288 in 2008, an increase of 3%. In 2009, there were 1,236 cases disposed of (Table C.2), a 10% decrease from the 1,371 in 2008.

Table C.1: Crown Court cases received in 2009

	Justice & Security Act [1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	186	-	186
Ards	-	123	-	123
Armagh & South Down	-	97	-	97
Belfast	14	464	-	478
Craigavon	-	115	-	115
Fermanagh & Tyrone	-	185	-	185
Londonderry	-	145	-	145
Total	14	1315	-	1329

[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 2009

	Justice & Security Act [1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	175	-	175
Ards	-	115	-	115
Armagh & South Down	-	81	-	81
Belfast	13	426	4	443
Craigavon	-	121	-	121
Fermanagh & Tyrone	-	159	-	159
Londonderry	-	142	-	142
Total	13	1219	4	1236

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

Table C.3 Defendants committed to Crown Court in 2009

	Justice & Security Act [1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	234	-	234
Ards	-	136	-	136
Armagh & South Down	-	137	-	137
Belfast	22	605	-	627
Craigavon	-	138	-	138
Fermanagh & Tyrone	-	234	-	234
Londonderry	-	180	-	180
Total	22	1664	-	1686

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

There were a total of 1,556 defendants disposed of during 2009. This was a decrease of 10% when compared with the 1,733 defendants disposed of in 2008 (Table C.4).

Table C.4: Crown Court defendants disposed of in 2009

	Justice & Security Act [1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	232	-	232
Ards	-	139	-	139
Armagh & South Down	-	118	-	118
Belfast	35	503	6	544
Craigavon	-	149	-	149
Fermanagh & Tyrone	-	203	-	203
Londonderry	-	171	-	171
Total	35	1515	6	1556

[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 118 days (Table C.5).

Table C.5: Average waiting time in days in 2009

	Committal to start of trial – days	Conviction to disposal – days	Total defendants disposed of
Antrim	124	49	211
Ards	110	30	135
Armagh & South Down	90	29	117
Belfast	142	53	520
Craigavon	143	37	142
Fermanagh & Tyrone	90	35	192
Londonderry	74	40	160
Total	118	43	1477

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 (95%) (Table C.6).

Table C.6: Crown Court defendants disposed of by judge type in 2009

	Judicial Level		Total
	County Court Judge	High Court Judge	
Antrim	224	8	232
Ards	131	8	139
Armagh & South Down	113	5	118
Belfast	502	42	544
Craigavon	148	1	149
Fermanagh & Tyrone	201	2	203
Londonderry	162	9	171
Total	1481	75	1556

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

All Offences Against the Person	250
All Sexual Offences	134
All Burglary Offences	50
All Robbery Offences	33
All Theft Offences	74
All Fraud and Forgery Offences	55
All Criminal Damage Offences	32
All Offences Against the State	7
All Other Offences	61
All Drug Offences	215
All Motoring Offences	47
All Non-Police Offences	15
Combination of Charges	583
Total	1556

In total, 40% of defendants made a plea of guilty on all charges and 13% were acquitted on all charges (Table C.8).

Table C.8: Outcome of Crown Court defendants in 2009

	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	112	99	21	-	232
Ards	73	55	10	1	139
Armagh & South Down	35	63	15	5	118
Belfast	222	240	82	-	544
Craigavon	58	70	21	-	149
Fermanagh & Tyrone	66	104	31	2	203
Londonderry	63	79	29	-	171
Total	629	710	209	8	1556

Section 4: Crown Court sittings and times

There were 2,457 sittings in the Crown Court in 2009. The total time spent on Crown Court business has increased by 4% from 2008.

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

	Number of sittings	Total time
Antrim	409	1397:44
Ards	214	362:47
Armagh & South Down	192	500:26
Belfast	1001	2956:01
Craigavon	203	584:58
Fermanagh & Tyrone	193	496:47
Londonderry	245	645:33
Total	2457	6944:18

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.

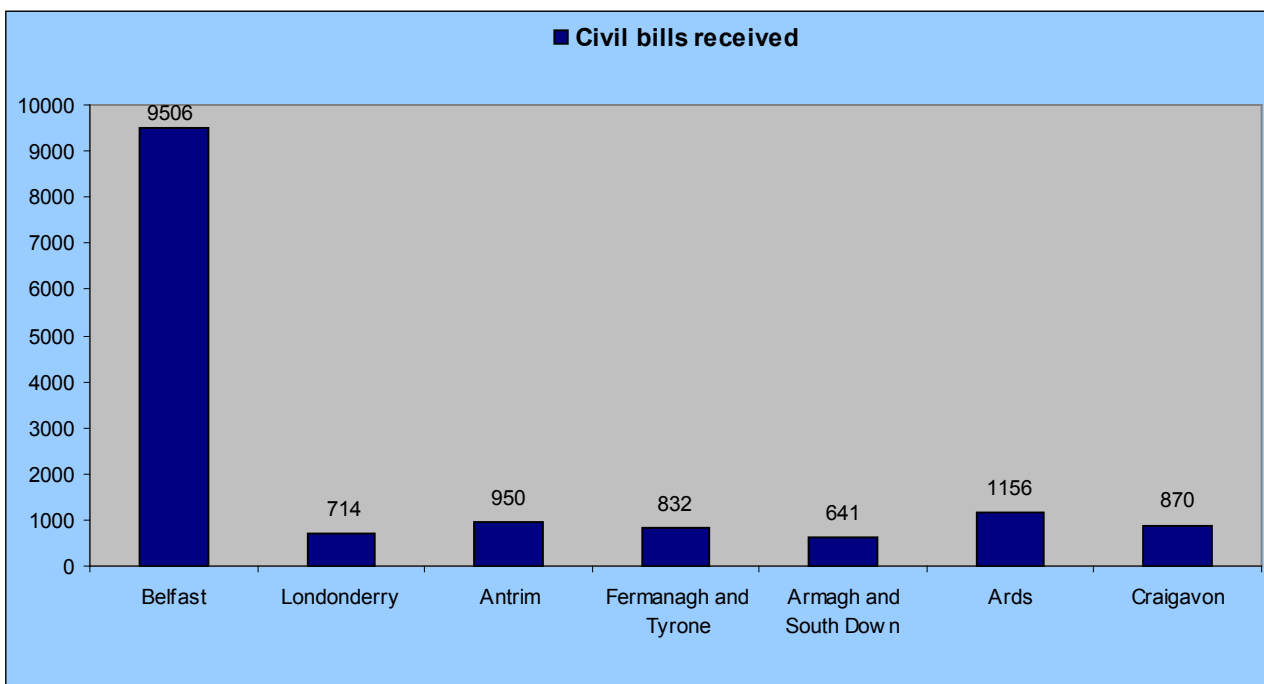
Part D County Court

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 2009

- 2,864 appeals were disposed of
- 38 criminal damage cases were received
- 7,331 ordinary civil bills had Notice of Intention to Defend
- 11,101 ordinary civil bills were disposed of
- 13,839 small claims were received
- 12,167 small claims were disposed of
- 1,315 decrees nisi were granted

Figure D.1: Number of ordinary civil bills received in 2009



Section 1: Appeals from magistrates' courts

There were a total of 3,133 appeals received during 2009 (Table D.1) and 2,864 appeals were disposed of in the county court during 2009 (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 2009

	Appeals received
Antrim	520
Ards	311
Armagh and South Down	418
Belfast	381
Craigavon	471
Fermanagh and Tyrone	751
Londonderry	281
Total	3133

Table D.2: Appeals disposed of in 2009

	Appeals disposed
Antrim	508
Ards	272
Armagh and South Down	372
Belfast	337
Craigavon	439
Fermanagh and Tyrone	653
Londonderry	283
Total	2864

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, 70% were against sentence only and 30% were against conviction and sentence.

Table D.3: Number of magistrates' court appeals against conviction and sentence in 2009

	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied on Appeal	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Abandoned/ Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	66	41	25	10	142
Ards	10	65	10	15	100
Armagh and South Down	19	21	5	29	74
Belfast	33	57	25	28	143
Craigavon	24	43	35	11	113
Fermanagh and Tyrone	22	68	43	51	184
Londonderry	12	31	35	31	109
Total	186	326	178	175	865

Table D.4: Number of magistrates' court appeals against sentence only in 2009

	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied on Appeal	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Abandoned/ Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	14	205	93	54	366
Ards	2	100	25	45	172
Armagh and South Down	6	182	64	46	298
Belfast	7	101	34	52	194
Craigavon	13	191	74	48	326
Fermanagh and Tyrone	7	181	157	124	469
Londonderry	-	40	88	46	174
Total	49	1000	535	415	1999

Table D.5: Number of magistrates' court civil appeals in 2009

	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	3	4	1	-	8
Ards	5	1	-	1	7
Armagh and South Down	-	1	2	-	3
Belfast	2	1	5	-	8
Craigavon	-	2	-	4	6
Fermanagh and Tyrone	4	3	2	-	9
Londonderry	5	1	1	1	8
Total	19	13	11	6	49

Section 2: Criminal damage cases

There were 38 criminal damage cases received during 2009. Belfast accounted for 55% of all cases received. Table D.7 shows that there were 37 criminal damage cases disposed of in 2009.

Table D.6: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received in 2009

Cases	Antrim	-
	Ards	1
	Armagh and South Down	3
	Belfast	21
	Craigavon	10
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	2
	Londonderry	1
	Total	38
Applications	Antrim	1
	Ards	-
	Armagh and South Down	-
	Belfast	-
	Craigavon	-
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-
	Londonderry	2
	Total	3

Table D.7: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2009

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Total
Cases	Antrim	-	-	-
	Ards	-	-	-
	Armagh and South Down	-	-	-
	Belfast	34	3	37
	Craigavon	-	-	-
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	-	-
	Londonderry	-	-	-
	Total	34	3	37
Applications	Antrim	1	-	1
	Ards	-	-	-
	Armagh and South Down	-	-	-
	Belfast	-	-	-
	Craigavon	-	-	-
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-	-	-
	Londonderry	2	-	2
	Total	3	-	3

Table D.8: Time intervals in weeks (average) for criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2009

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	-
	Ards	-
	Armagh and South Down	-
	Belfast	115
	Craigavon	-
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-
	Londonderry	-
	Total	115
Applications	Antrim	11
	Ards	-
	Armagh and South Down	-
	Belfast	-
	Craigavon	-
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	-
	Londonderry	3
	Total	5

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

Section 3: Licences

There were 285 licence applications received in the county court in 2009 and 278 licence applications disposed of.

Table D.9: Licences received and disposed of in 2009

	Licences received	Licences disposed of
Antrim	41	31
Ards	46	36
Armagh and South Down	24	28
Belfast	92	71
Craigavon	28	29
Fermanagh and Tyrone	32	64
Londonderry	22	19
Total	285	278

Section 4: Ordinary civil bills

There were 14,669 ordinary civil bills received in 2009. There were also 5,382 applications received during the same period. Belfast received 65% of ordinary civil bills compared with 4% in Armagh and South Down.

Table D.10: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications received in 2009

Cases	Antrim	950
	Ards	1156
	Armagh and South Down	641
	Belfast	9506
	Craigavon	870
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	832
	Londonderry	714
	Total	14669
Applications	Antrim	445
	Ards	572
	Armagh and South Down	393
	Belfast	2593
	Craigavon	498
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	376
	Londonderry	505
	Total	5382

The number of ordinary civil bills where Notices of Intention to Defend were received rose from 6,740 in 2008 to 7,331 in 2009, representing a 9% 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 2009

	County court judge level	District judge level	Total
Antrim	529	274	803
Ards	695	311	1006
Armagh and South Down	378	208	586
Belfast	1882	926	2808
Craigavon	494	284	778
Fermanagh and Tyrone	451	260	711
Londonderry	359	280	639
Total	4788	2543	7331

The number of cases disposed of increased by 12%, from 9,956 cases in 2008 compared with 11,101 in 2009. Of the ordinary civil bills disposed of, 25% were default judgements. A further 20% were disposed of at district judge level compared with 30% disposed of at county court judge level.

Table D.12: Number of ordinary civil bills cases and applications disposed of in 2009

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Default judgement	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Antrim	342	276	273	8	83	982
	Ards	509	270	235	7	102	1123
	Armagh and South Down	280	182	125	-	65	652
	Belfast	1264	779	538	14	304	2899
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	129	2766	98	2993
	Craigavon	283	237	209	7	88	824
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	334	237	173	5	70	819
	Londonderry	330	233	161	5	80	809
	Total	3342	2214	1843	2812	890	11101
Applications	Antrim	90	50	100	-	-	240
	Ards	108	54	134	-	-	296
	Armagh and South Down	84	81	71	-	-	236
	Belfast	325	108	434	-	-	867
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	42	-	-	42
	Craigavon	96	32	106	-	-	234
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	109	65	81	-	-	255
	Londonderry	168	99	76	-	-	343
	Total	980	489	1044	-	-	2513

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 2009. Just under a quarter of civil bills (24%) were awarded between £1000-2999.

Table D.13: Number of ordinary civil bills cases by amount awarded in 2009

		Unliquidated	Less than £1000	£1000- 2999	£3000- 4999	Over £5000	Total
Cases	Antrim	145	54	164	130	125	618
	Ards	116	77	239	208	139	779
	Armagh and South Down	121	44	112	84	101	462
	Belfast	648	211	451	412	321	2043
	Craigavon	119	65	113	115	108	520
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	138	63	130	108	132	571
	Londonderry	200	48	134	91	90	563
	Total	1487	562	1343	1148	1016	5556

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

On average, it took 47 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 2009

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	43
	Ards	37
	Armagh and South Down	50
	Belfast	45
	Craigavon	48
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	49
	Londonderry	70
	Total	47

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 2009

		Issue to disposal
Applications	Antrim	5
	Ards	5
	Armagh and South Down	6
	Belfast	6
	Craigavon	7
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	6
	Londonderry	19
	Total	8

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

Section 5: Equity

There were 221 equity cases and 123 equity applications received during 2009.

Table D.16: Equity cases and applications received in 2009

Cases	Antrim	25
	Ards	24
	Armagh and South Down	40
	Belfast	51
	Craigavon	14
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	38
	Londonderry	29
	Total	221
Applications	Antrim	13
	Ards	15
	Armagh and South Down	24
	Belfast	20
	Craigavon	6
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	21
	Londonderry	24
	Total	123

Table D.17 shows that there were 217 equity cases disposed of in 2009. The majority of equity cases were disposed of in court (88%).

Table D.17: Equity cases and applications disposed of in 2009

		Court result	Non court disposals	Total
Cases	Antrim	21	6	27
	Ards	7	3	10
	Armagh and South Down	28	3	31
	Belfast	37	3	40
	Craigavon	21	1	22
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	45	8	53
	Londonderry	31	3	34
	Total	190	27	217
Applications	Antrim	4	6	10
	Ards	9	6	15
	Armagh and South Down	14	4	18
	Belfast	7	2	9
	Craigavon	8	1	9
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	13	2	15
	Londonderry	23	4	27
	Total	78	25	103

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 2009, it took 67 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 2009

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	67
	Ards	81
	Armagh and South Down	62
	Belfast	62
	Craigavon	47
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	73
	Londonderry	76
	Total	67
Applications	Antrim	6
	Ards	7
	Armagh and South Down	11
	Belfast	14
	Craigavon	11
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	2
	Londonderry	37
	Total	17

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

Section 6: Ejectment

In total, there were 1,026 ejectment cases received during 2009, with 45% received in Belfast (Table D.19).

Table D.19: Ejectment cases received in 2009

Cases	Antrim	81
	Ards	222
	Armagh and South Down	40
	Belfast	465
	Craigavon	141
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	50
	Londonderry	27
	Total	1026

During the year, 793 ejectment cases were disposed of in the county court. The majority of ejectment cases were disposed of in court (97%) (Table D.20).

Table D.20: Ejectment cases disposed of in 2009

		Court result	Non court disposals	Total
Cases	Antrim	69	3	72
	Ards	175	7	182
	Armagh and South Down	35	2	37
	Belfast	283	3	286
	Craigavon	145	-	145
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	39	3	42
	Londonderry	24	5	29
	Total	770	23	793

Table D.21 shows the average time in weeks for ejectment cases to progress through the courts during 2009. On average, it took 15 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 2009

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	13
	Ards	17
	Armagh and South Down	15
	Belfast	12
	Craigavon	16
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	26
	Londonderry	36
	Total	15

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

Section 7: Small claims

Table D.22 shows that the number of small claims received was 13,839 cases in 2009, an increase from 13,409 cases in 2008. There were 391 applications received in small claims during 2009 compared with 272 in 2008.

Table D.22: Number of small claims cases and applications received in 2009

Cases	Antrim	258
	Ards	362
	Armagh and South Down	235
	Belfast	12347
	Craigavon	208
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	237
	Londonderry	192
	Total	13839
Applications	Antrim	22
	Ards	46
	Armagh and South Down	24
	Belfast	201
	Craigavon	27
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	40
	Londonderry	31
	Total	391

Table D.23: Number of small claims cases with a Notice of Dispute received in 2009

Cases	Antrim	218
	Ards	296
	Armagh and South Down	197
	Belfast	714
	Craigavon	175
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	206
	Londonderry	156
Total	1962	

In total, 12,167 small claims cases were disposed of in 2009. This was an increase of 14% on the 10,649 cases disposed of during 2008 (Table D.24).

Table D.24: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed of in 2009

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Office disposal	Default judgement	Total
Cases	Antrim	196	45	23	1	265
	Ards	314	4	162	4	484
	Armagh and South Down	220	11	11	3	245
	Belfast	711	7	192	22	932
	Civil Processing Centre	-	10	2883	6732	9625
	Craigavon	161	6	47	9	223
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	190	2	29	2	223
	Londonderry	147	1	20	2	170
	Total	1939	86	3367	6775	12167
Applications	Antrim	11	2	-	-	13
	Ards	32	2	-	-	34
	Armagh and South Down	12	5	-	-	17
	Belfast	142	3	-	-	145
	Craigavon	19	3	-	-	22
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	25	1	-	-	26
	Londonderry	19	4	-	-	23
	Total	260	20	-	-	280

Table D.25 shows that during 2009, it took on average 21 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 2009

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	23
	Ards	23
	Armagh and South Down	18
	Belfast	20
	Craigavon	22
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	21
	Londonderry	19
	Total	21
Applications	Antrim	3
	Ards	9
	Armagh and South Down	4
	Belfast	5
	Craigavon	9
	Fermanagh and Tyrone	9
	Londonderry	4
	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 1,315 decrees nisi granted in undefended divorce cases in the county court in 2009 (Table D.26). The number of decrees nisi granted has decreased by 20% from 1,651 in 2008.

Table D.26: Divorce Petitions by type of decrees nisi in 2009

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds / other	Total
Antrim	99	75	7	24	11	216
Ards	95	50	6	3	2	156
Armagh and South Down	62	60	4	20	9	155
Belfast	131	90	2	10	10	243
Craigavon	104	47	1	10	4	166
Fermanagh and Tyrone	55	51	4	10	16	136
Londonderry	91	87	6	37	22	243
Total	637	460	30	114	74	1315

Table D.27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued in 2009

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds / other	Total
Antrim	107	74	6	20	14	221
Ards	88	51	8	3	2	152
Armagh and South Down	61	59	3	12	10	145
Belfast	133	109	3	12	10	267
Craigavon	95	50	2	9	7	163
Fermanagh and Tyrone	51	42	5	18	9	125
Londonderry	83	66	2	29	12	192
Total	618	451	29	103	64	1265

Tables D.28 and D.29 show the number of matrimonial applications received and disposed of during 2009.

Table D.28: Matrimonial applications received in 2009

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application	Other	Total
Antrim	34	-	6	40
Ards	8	-	4	12
Armagh and South Down	37	-	3	40
Belfast	11	-	107	118
Craigavon	20	2	3	25
Fermanagh and Tyrone	26	1	1	28
Londonderry	59	6	14	79
Total	195	9	138	342

Table D.29: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2009

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application	Other	Total
Antrim	26	-	2	28
Ards	5	-	3	8
Armagh and South Down	46	-	3	49
Belfast	13	-	2	15
Craigavon	22	1	4	27
Fermanagh and Tyrone	36	-	1	37
Londonderry	53	5	6	64
Total	201	6	21	228

County court divorce petitions took on average 35 weeks from date of issue to the date decree nisi granted. Divorce applications took on average 48 weeks to progress through the county courts during 2009.

Table D.30: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2009

	Issue to date decree nisi granted	Date decree nisi granted to date absolute issued
Antrim	35	12
Ards	29	10
Armagh and South Down	37	12
Belfast	35	12
Craigavon	33	10
Fermanagh and Tyrone	37	13
Londonderry	37	11
Total	35	11

Table D.31: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce applications in 2009

	Issue to disposal
Antrim	31
Ards	29
Armagh and South Down	39
Belfast	41
Craigavon	58
Fermanagh and Tyrone	46
Londonderry	61
Total	48

Section 9: Court sitting days and court sitting times

Table D.32 shows that there were 3,954 court sitting days in 2009.

Table D.32: County court sitting days and court sitting times in 2009 (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	460	3:08	1440:04	965:33	431:27	43:04
Ards	396	2:28	973:42	389:26	551:25	32:50
Armagh and South Down	393	2:52	1127:31	549:16	509:05	69:10
Belfast	1433	3:13	4618:51	2494:27	1503:34	615:53
Craigavon	431	3:11	1370:30	651:11	518:25	200:09
Fermanagh and Tyrone	386	2:58	1145:52	595:35	471:10	79:07
Londonderry	455	2:43	1236:45	624:50	394:22	217:32
Total	3954	3:01	11913:16	6270:20	4379:30	1257:45

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.

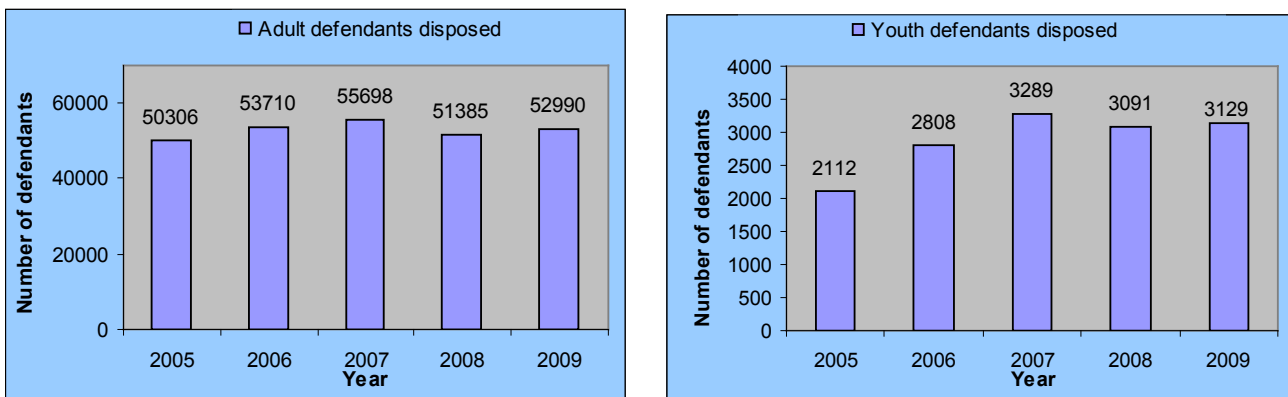
Part E Magistrates' Court

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 2009

- 52,990 adult criminal defendants were disposed of
- 3,129 youth criminal defendants were disposed of
- 5,962 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 8 weeks

Figure E.1: Magistrates' court adult and youth defendants disposed of (2005-2009)



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 2009, there were 53,815 adult defendants received. In the youth court, there were 3,067 defendants received (Table E.1).

Table E.1: Business volumes received in adult criminal, youth and civil courts in 2009.

		Number of adult defendants	Number of youth defendants	Number of civil applications
Antrim	Antrim	2146	77	162
	Ballymena	1690	146	399
	Coleraine	2697	171	506
	Larne	683	26	118
	Division Total	7216	420	1185
Ards	Bangor	1438	122	219
	Downpatrick	1792	93	190
	Newtownards	2310	217	541
	Division Total	5540	432	950
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	1467	45	144
	Banbridge	1516	49	11
	Newry	3635	138	559
	Division Total	6618	232	714
Belfast	Belfast	15094	931	1880
	Division Total	15094	931	1880
Craigavon	Craigavon	2483	156	248
	Lisburn	2921	144	250
	Division Total	5404	300	498
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	3492	132	228
	Enniskillen	1724	97	121
	Omagh	1980	90	216
	Strabane	1076	48	98
	Division Total	8272	367	663
Londonderry	Limavady	1202	23	64
	Londonderry	3430	319	699
	Magherafelt	1039	43	91
	Division Total	5671	385	854
Northern Ireland		53815	3067	6744

Section 2: Adult criminal business disposed of

There were 52,990 defendants disposed of in 2009. Belfast accounted for 27% 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 2009

		Number of adult defendants	Divisional % of NI Total
Antrim	Antrim	2179	
	Ballymena	1664	
	Coleraine	2883	
	Larne	701	
	Division Total	7427	14.0
Ards	Bangor	1466	
	Downpatrick	1814	
	Newtownards	2283	
	Division Total	5563	10.5
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	1435	
	Banbridge	1468	
	Newry	3368	
	Division Total	6271	11.8
Belfast	Belfast	14459	
	Division Total	14459	27.3
Craigavon	Craigavon	2430	
	Lisburn	2818	
	Division Total	5248	9.9
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	3492	
	Enniskillen	1731	
	Omagh	1987	
	Strabane	1095	
	Division Total	8305	15.7
Londonderry	Limavady	1226	
	Londonderry	3442	
	Magherafelt	1049	
	Division Total	5717	10.8
Northern Ireland		52990	100

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

Table E.3 shows the types of charges disposed of in 2009. In total, there were 108,496 charges disposed of.

Table E.3: Number and type of charges brought for defendants disposed of in 2009

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Indictable charges	2813	12	-	2825
Hybrid charges	24810	1458	-	26268
Indictable triable summarily charges	10331	20	-	10351
Summary charges	52113	15566	1373	69052
Total	90067	17056	1373	108496

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 2009. 37% of defendants pleaded guilty on all charges.

Tables E.4: Outcomes of defendants disposed of in 2009

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Committed to Crown Court	1687	-	-	1687
Plea of guilty on all charges	16296	3397	-	19693
All charges withdrawn	7499	3907	41	11447
Fixed Penalty default	-	-	1332	1332
Plea not guilty – found guilty on at least one charge	10866	5761	-	16627
Plea not guilty – acquitted on all charges	1745	459	-	2204
Total	38093	13524	1373	52990

Figures are based on the number of final orders.

Table E.5 shows there were 141,792 final orders granted in the magistrates' adult court in 2009.

Table E.5: Types of disposals from the magistrates' adult court in 2009

	Northern Ireland
Community Orders	4948
Custodial Orders	10055
Monetary Orders	44656
Non-Custodial Orders	6233
Road Traffic Orders	23115
Withdrawn	35583
Other Final Orders	17202
Total	141792

Figures are based on the number of final orders.

The average waiting time in Northern Ireland for defendants disposed of in 2009 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 2009.

		Summons/charge to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)	Summons to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	Antrim	8.1	5.4	5.9	13.9
	Ballymena	7.9	7.4	8.5	16.5
	Coleraine	8.1	11.2	12.0	20.1
	Larne	11.1	5.5	6.0	17.1
	Division Total	8.3	8.1	8.8	17.2
Ards	Bangor	8.6	6.3	7.5	16.1
	Downpatrick	8.4	8.2	9.1	17.5
	Newtownards	9.0	4.5	5.0	14.0
	Division Total	8.7	6.2	7.0	15.7
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	8.0	5.6	6.1	14.0
	Banbridge	7.4	4.9	5.4	12.8
	Newry	8.1	5.9	6.6	14.7
	Division Total	7.9	5.6	6.2	14.1
Belfast	Belfast	7.1	5.7	6.3	13.4
	Division Total	7.1	5.7	6.3	13.4
Craigavon	Craigavon	9.1	4.2	4.9	14.0
	Lisburn	7.9	5.9	7.0	14.9
	Division Total	8.5	5.1	6.0	14.5
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	7.8	5.1	6.0	13.8
	Enniskillen	7.0	3.7	4.5	11.4
	Omagh	8.1	4.8	5.4	13.6
	Strabane	8.2	4.1	4.7	12.9
	Division Total	7.8	4.6	5.4	13.1
Londonderry	Limavady	7.0	4.7	5.1	12.1
	Londonderry	7.5	5.6	6.4	13.9
	Magherafelt	8.2	5.7	6.6	14.8
	Division Total	7.5	5.4	6.2	13.7
Northern Ireland		7.8	5.8	6.5	14.4

Bench warrants, adjourned generally and deferred sentences are excluded.

Section 3: Youth criminal business disposed of

In 2009, there were 3,129 youth defendants disposed of with 31% in Belfast and 7% in Armagh and South Down (Table E.7).

Table E.7: Number of defendants disposed of in the youth court in 2009

		Number of youth defendants	Divisional % NI Total
Antrim	Antrim	81	
	Ballymena	161	
	Coleraine	148	
	Larne	25	
	Division Total	415	
Ards	Bangor	131	
	Downpatrick	101	
	Newtownards	209	
	Division Total	441	
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	48	
	Banbridge	54	
	Newry	126	
	Division Total	228	
Belfast	Belfast	958	
	Division Total	958	
Craigavon	Craigavon	151	
	Lisburn	181	
	Division Total	332	
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	126	
	Enniskillen	80	
	Omagh	95	
	Strabane	50	
	Division Total	351	
Londonderry	Limavady	20	
	Londonderry	337	
	Magherafelt	47	
	Division Total	404	
Northern Ireland		3129	100

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

Table E.8 shows the types of charges disposed of in 2009 for youth defendants. In total, there were 7,096 charges disposed of in 2009.

Table E.8: Number and type of charges brought for youth defendants disposed of in 2009

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Indictable charges	256	-	-	256
Hybrid charges	2498	24	-	2522
Indictable triable summarily charges	1650	-	-	1650
Summary charges	2543	125	-	2668
Total	6947	149	-	7096

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 2009

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Committed to the Crown Court	67	-	-	67
Plea of guilty on all charges	1199	40	-	1239
All charges withdrawn	988	27	-	1015
Fixed Penalty default	-	-	-	-
Plea not guilty – found guilty on at least one charge	628	13	-	641
Plea not guilty – acquitted on all charges	138	29	-	167
Total	3020	109	-	3129

Figures are based on the number of defendants disposed.

Table E.10 shows there were 8,418 final orders granted in the magistrates' youth court in 2009.

Table E.10: Types of disposals from the youth courts in 2009

	Northern Ireland
Community Orders	1761
Custodial Orders	680
Monetary Orders	602
Non-Custodial Orders	199
Road Traffic Orders	614
Withdrawn	2788
Other Final Orders	1774
Total	8418

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 2009 was 6 weeks. The average waiting time between the date of first hearing and finding was 8 weeks. The average waiting time from date of first hearing to date of disposal was 12 weeks (Table E.11).

Table E.11: Average waiting times in weeks for youth defendants disposed of in the youth courts in 2009

		Summons/ charge to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)	Summons to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	Antrim	8.7	7.4	9.9	18.7
	Ballymena	5.1	7.4	10.6	15.7
	Coleraine	8.7	18.9	21.4	30.0
	Larne	5.9	5.2	8.9	14.8
	Division Total	7.2	11.7	14.5	21.7
Ards	Bangor	7.5	16.8	21.8	29.3
	Downpatrick	6.5	11.6	14.7	21.3
	Newtownards	6.8	7.4	9.9	16.8
	Division Total	7.0	11.2	14.6	21.6
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	4.3	8.7	12.0	16.3
	Banbridge	6.3	10.1	13.6	19.9
	Newry	5.3	7.0	9.4	14.7
	Division Total	5.3	8.1	11.0	16.3
Belfast	Belfast	6.3	7.5	10.6	16.9
	Division Total	6.3	7.5	10.6	16.9
Craigavon	Craigavon	6.3	7.8	11.4	17.5
	Lisburn	7.1	11.5	15.5	22.6
	Division Total	6.7	9.6	13.4	20.1
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	6.5	6.1	9.9	16.4
	Enniskillen	7.6	5.8	8.8	16.4
	Omagh	7.0	6.3	8.1	15.1
	Strabane	6.7	6.1	7.0	13.7
	Division Total	6.9	6.1	8.8	15.7
Londonderry	Limavady	5.0	6.4	9.1	14.1
	Londonderry	5.3	5.5	9.9	15.2
	Magherafelt	6.9	10.4	12.9	19.8
	Division Total	5.5	6.1	10.2	15.7
Northern Ireland		6.4	8.4	11.7	18.1

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

Section 4: Civil & Family business disposed of

There were 5,962 applications disposed of during 2009 (Table E.12).

Table E.12: Number of civil & family applications disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2009

		Total
Antrim	Antrim	142
	Ballymena	361
	Coleraine	459
	Larne	111
	Division Total	1073
Ards	Bangor	197
	Downpatrick	178
	Newtownards	449
	Division Total	824
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	142
	Banbridge	9
	Newry	519
	Division Total	670
Belfast	Belfast	1557
	Division Total	1557
Craigavon	Craigavon	202
	Lisburn	253
	Division Total	455
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	206
	Enniskillen	113
	Omagh	204
	Strabane	93
	Division Total	616
Londonderry	Limavady	61
	Londonderry	621
	Magherafelt	85
	Division Total	767
Northern Ireland		5962

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 2009

		Date of issue to first hearing (weeks)	Date of first hearing to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	Antrim	1.8	6.4
	Ballymena	1.6	5.3
	Coleraine	1.7	5.2
	Larne	2.1	4.8
	Division Total	1.7	5.3
Ards	Bangor	1.6	7.2
	Downpatrick	2.0	10.6
	Newtownards	1.4	5.5
	Division Total	1.6	7.0
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	2.0	4.4
	Banbridge	2.9	4.2
	Newry	1.8	4.4
	Division Total	1.8	4.4
Belfast	Belfast	3.1	5.0
	Division Total	3.1	5.0
Craigavon	Craigavon	1.7	12.5
	Lisburn	1.1	15.2
	Division Total	1.3	14.0
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	1.8	2.0
	Enniskillen	1.7	6.2
	Omagh	1.5	3.3
	Strabane	2.2	3.3
	Division Total	1.7	3.4
Londonderry	Limavady	1.6	5.0
	Londonderry	2.2	5.9
	Magherafelt	2.3	2.9
	Division Total	2.2	5.5
Northern Ireland		2.1	5.9

Table E.14: Outcome of applications under the Family Homes & Domestic Violence Order in 2009

	Granted	Dismissed or refused	Withdrawn	Vary discharge	Other	Total
Non molestation	3145	831	919	199	7	5101
Occupation	25	18	27	4	-	74
Combination non-mol occupation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vary discharge non-mol occupation	7	16	15	33	-	71
Total	3177	865	961	236	7	5246

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 2009. There were 4,780 scheduled and additional court sittings in the magistrates' court and the average court sitting time was 3hrs 35mins. The average court sitting time for special courts was 41 minutes.

Table E.15: Scheduled and additional sittings & average sitting times in the magistrates' courts by division & venue in 2009 (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	74	4:40	22	1:41	23	3:04	119	3:48
	Ballymena	120	3:28	27	2:10	69	3:22	216	3:16
	Coleraine	175	4:54	25	3:47	47	3:32	247	4:31
	Larne	51	3:36	11	1:59	24	2:35	86	3:06
	Total	420	4:17	85	2:30	163	3:15	668	3:48
Ards	Bangor	80	3:51	-	-	23	2:14	103	3:29
	Downpatrick	118	4:38	25	3:00	12	3:40	155	4:18
	Newtownards	207	2:29	46	2:44	166	2:26	419	2:30
	Total	405	3:23	71	2:50	201	2:29	677	3:04
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	98	3:45	20	2:46	2	1:45	120	3:33
	Banbridge@ Newry	46	3:48	7	3:06	7	2:41	60	3:36
	Newry	178	3:53	23	2:59	71	3:31	272	3:43
	Total	322	3:50	50	2:55	80	3:24	452	3:39
Belfast	Belfast	995	3:22	152	3:23	276	3:25	1423	3:23
	Total	995	3:22	152	3:23	276	3:25	1423	3:23
Craigavon	Craigavon	144	3:28	24	3:01	54	3:16	222	3:22
	Lisburn	142	3:59	22	2:48	42	3:40	206	3:47
	Lisburn@ Craigavon	11	3:38	2	4:35	4	5:10	17	4:06
	Total	297	3:43	48	2:59	100	3:31	445	3:36
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	174	4:08	23	2:47	33	4:58	230	4:07
	Enniskillen	98	4:29	24	3:02	12	2:31	134	4:03
	Omagh	120	3:44	24	3:16	45	4:19	189	3:49
	Strabane	91	3:25	12	3:03	-	-	103	3:22
	Total	483	3:58	83	3:02	90	4:19	656	3:54
Londonderry	Limavady	59	4:10	-	-	-	-	59	4:10
	Londonderry	189	4:43	39	3:55	85	4:22	313	4:31
	Magherafelt	64	3:02	23	1:46	-	-	87	2:42
	Total	312	4:16	62	3:07	85	4:22	459	4:08
Northern Ireland		3234	3:45	551	3:01	995	3:22	4780	3:35

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 2009 (hrs:mins)

		Criminal	
		Number of sittings	Average sitting time
Antrim	Ballymena	41	0:39
	Division Total	41	0:39
Ards	Newtownards	38	0:27
	Division total	38	0:27
Armagh & South Down	Newry	40	0:45
	Division Total	40	0:45
Belfast	Laganside	1	1:24
	Division total	1	1:24
Craigavon	Craigavon	17	0:40
	Lisburn	17	0:38
	Division Total	34	0:39
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Enniskillen	1	1:24
	Omagh	33	0:53
	Division Total	34	0:54
Londonderry	Londonderry	43	0:40
	Magherafelt	2	1:07
	Division Total	45	0:41
Northern Ireland		233	0:41

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.

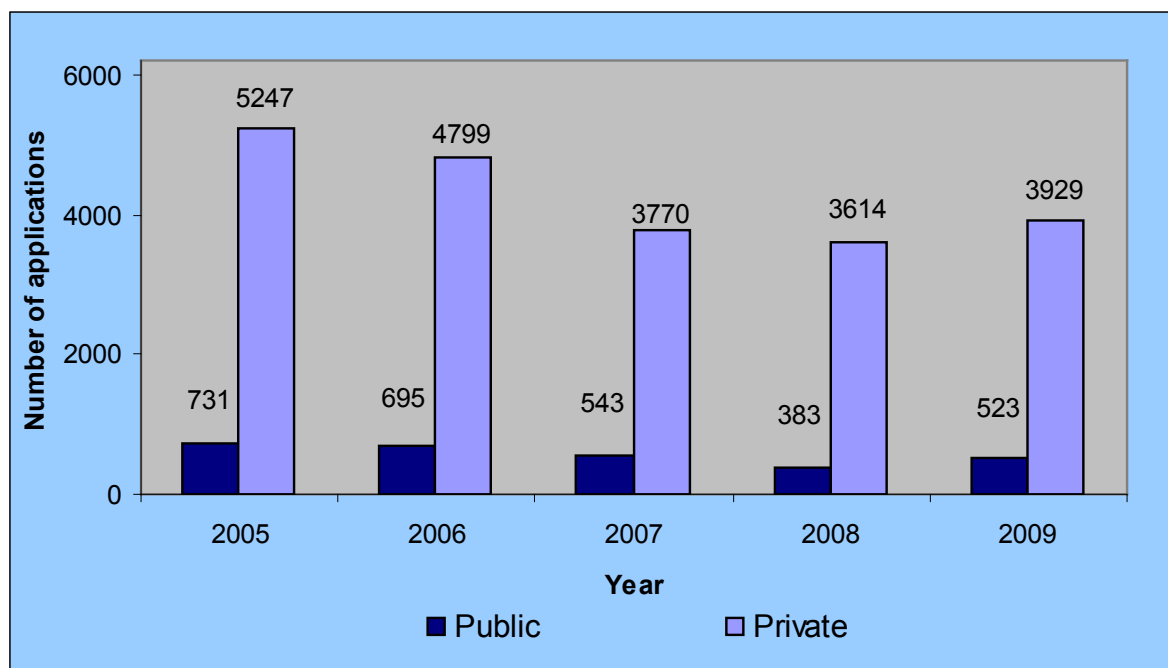
Part F Children Order

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

Key facts during 2009

- 4,452 total applications were lodged
- 3,606 total applications were disposed of
- 4,698 children were involved
- 8,970 orders were made
- 1,783 Children Order court sitting days with an average time of 2hrs 31mins

Figure F.1: Public and private law applications entered 2005 – 2009



Section 1: Applications entered and disposed of

Tables F.1 and F.2 show that a total of 4,452 applications were received in designated courts in 2009. The majority of business (93%) was lodged in family proceedings courts, with 4% lodged in the High Court and 4% lodged in family care centres. Of the 3,606 applications disposed of, the High Court accounted for 5% of all business dealt with, care centres accounted for 7% and family proceedings / magistrates' court accounted for 87%.

Table F.1: Applications received and disposed of in 2009

		Number of applications received	Number of disposals
Public Law[1]	Family Proceedings Court	474	312
	Family Care Centre	25	66
	High Court	24	51
	Total	523	429
Private Law[2]	Family Proceedings Court	3651	2841
	Family Care Centre	137	200
	High Court	141	136
	Total	3929	3177

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

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

Table F.2: Applications entered and disposed of by venue in 2009

		Public Law[1]		Private Law[2]	
		Number of applications entered	Number of disposals	Number of applications entered	Number of disposals
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	-	-	6	2
	Armagh	-	-	4	1
	Ballymena	61	32	390	265
	Banbridge	-	-	1	1
	Bangor	-	-	3	1
	Belfast	117	77	964	759
	Coleraine	3	3	25	13
	Craigavon	31	29	274	212
	Downpatrick	-	-	-	-
	Dungannon	59	60	209	208
	Enniskillen	-	-	2	1
	Larne	-	-	8	2
	Limavady	-	-	2	1
	Lisburn	30	20	374	273
	Londonderry	37	13	481	380
	Magherafelt	-	-	4	3
	Newry	62	31	345	287
	Newtownards	73	46	555	428
	Omagh	1	1	4	4
	Venue total	474	312	3651	2841
Family Care Centre	Belfast	13	35	48	84
	Coleraine	-	-	-	1
	Craigavon	9	24	77	71
	Dungannon	1	2	4	12
	Londonderry	2	5	8	32
	Venue total	25	66	137	200
High Court	Matrimonial	1	-	10	4
	Office of Care and Protection	23	51	131	132
	Venue total	24	51	141	136
Northern Ireland		523	429	3929	3177

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

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

Section 2: Reasons for transfer

Complexity accounted for 56% of the reasons quoted for the transfer of cases between courts (Tables F.3a and F.3b).

Table F.3a: Reasons for transfer in 2009 (January- March)

	Convenience	Urgency	Gravity	Importance	Complexity	Consolidation	Other	Total
Family Proceedings Court	10	-	2	-	40	19	7	78
Family Care Centre	5	5	2	-	20	1	8	41
High Court	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	4
Northern Ireland	16	5	4	-	60	20	18	123

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.

Table F.3b: Reasons for transfer in 2009 (April-December)

	Complexity	Consolidation	Convenience	Gravity	Jurisdiction	Returned to Lower Court	Separate Representation for Child	Urgency	Point of Law	Public Interest	Other	Total
Family Proceedings Court	208	60	9	20	52	-	4	2	7	2	-	364
Family Care Centre	62	9	8	-	5	4	-	2	1	-	-	91
High Court	-	2	2	-	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	12
Northern Ireland	270	71	19	20	58	11	4	4	8	2	-	467

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.

From April 2009 data collection methods for transfers changed to incorporate a wider range of reasons.

Section 3: Own motion orders and interim orders

Contact permission orders accounted for 27% and care orders accounted for 26% of own motion orders in 2009 (Table F.4).

Table F.4: Own motion orders granted in 2009

	Own motion orders
Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	93
Care	554
Child Assessment	13
Contact: Permission	570
Declaration of Parentage	10
Education Supervision	-
Emergency Protection	13
Extension of Emergency Protection Order	3
Family Assistance	3
Non-Molestation Order	-
Occupation Articles	-
Other orders, applications etc	469
Parental Responsibility	13
Prohibited Steps	21
Recovery	2
Residence	286
Secure Accommodation	19
Specific Issues	35
Supervision	13
Total	2117

These figures may also include some interim orders. Own motion orders are as recorded on ICOS.

Out of the 15,055 interim orders made during 2009, 37% were interim care orders and 48% were interim/short term contact permission orders (Table F.5)

Table F.5: Interim orders granted in 2009

	Interim orders
Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	-
Article 53 Contact	1
Care	5506
Child Assessment	-
Contact: Permission	7205
Contact: Refusal	4
Contribution and other Financial	-
Education Supervision	-
Emergency Protection	-
Exclusion Requirement	-
Extension of Emergency Protection Order	-
Family Assistance	-
Non-Molestation Order	55
Occupation Articles	-
Other orders, applications etc	-
Parental Responsibility	8
Prohibited Steps	406
Recovery	-
Residence	1329
Secure Accommodation	182
Specific Issues	31
Supervision	328
Total	15055

Section 4: Final Orders Made

Table F.6 show the number of final orders made in 2009.

Table F.6: Final Orders Made - 2009

Adjourn Generally	57
Article 3 Legal Aid granted	903
Article 8 Contact	2422
Authority to refuse contact with a child in care	-
C2 Leave granted to commence proceedings	-
C18 Final Order	820
Care Order	220
Child Assessment Order	-
Contact with a child in care	52
Declaration of Parentage	69
Discharge of a Care Order	32
Discharge Non-molestation / occupation order	3
Discharge Prohibited Steps Order	20
Discharge Residence Order	-
Discharge / variation of a Supervision Order	-
Dismissed	212
Education Supervision	22
Emergency Protection Order	74
Emergency Protection Order – out of hours	15
Extension of an Emergency Protection Order	19
Family Assistance Order	12
Financial Provision	12
Leave to change surname by which the child is known	18
Leave to remove child from United Kingdom	1
Non-molestation order	25
Order or Directions	137
Other Order	428
Parental Responsibility Order	254
Prohibit further proceeding for set period	-
Prohibited steps	129
Recovery of a child	12
Refusal of Article 3 Legal Aid Certificate	2
Residence Order	1490
Secure Accommodation Order	51
Specific Issues	162
Strike Out Order	117
Supervision Order	72
Terminating Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	419
Withdrawn	689
Total	8970

Section 5: Age and gender of children

There were a total of 4,698 children involved in Children Order cases during 2009. In total, 36% 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 2009

	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	Total
Male	869	673	582	269	2393
Female	815	710	477	288	2290
Unknown	11	2	2	-	15
Total	1695	1385	1061	557	4698

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

The average disposal times for private law cases in 2009 was 43 weeks in the High Court, 44 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 2009

		Public law		Private law	
		Average time weeks	Number of cases	Average time weeks	Number of cases
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	-	-	29.3	2
	Armagh	-	-	3.6	1
	Ballymena	25.2	32	24.7	265
	Banbridge	-	-	2.6	1
	Bangor	-	-	14.9	1
	Belfast	20.9	77	23.5	759
	Coleraine	4.3	3	13.3	13
	Craigavon	31.9	29	26.1	212
	Dungannon	29.1	60	25.5	208
	Enniskillen	-	-	-	1
	Larne	-	-	-	2
	Limavady	-	-	-	1
	Lisburn	34.7	20	20.3	273
	Londonderry	11.5	13	25.1	380
	Magherafelt	-	-	0.4	3
	Newry	31.8	31	24.0	287
	Newtownards	24.0	46	26.0	428
	Omagh	26.7	1	35.3	4
Total	25.8	312	24.2	2841	
Family Care Centre	Belfast	52.8	35	46.8	84
	Coleraine	-	-	0.9	1
	Craigavon	55.9	24	27.8	71
	Dungannon	11.7	2	52.7	12
	Londonderry	98.6	5	71.1	32
	Total	56.1	66	44.1	200
High Court	Matrimonial	-	-	70.2	4
	Office of Care and Protection	91.1	51	42.2	132
	Total	91.1	51	43.0	136
Northern Ireland		38.3	429	26.2	3177

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 2009, the family proceedings courts sat for over 2,651 hours, 59% of the total court sitting time for Children Order.

Table F.9: Court sittings and court sitting times in 2009 (hrs:mins)

		Total court sitting time	Average Children Order court sitting time	Number of court sittings
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	44:55	3:45	12
	Ballymena	192:45	3:23	57
	Banbridge@Newry	0:15	0:05	3
	Bangor	2:10	1:05	2
	Belfast	743:25	3:31	211
	Coleraine	89:25	3:12	28
	Craigavon	131:35	3:08	42
	Dungannon	140:10	3:54	36
	Enniskillen	1:40	1:40	1
	Larne	41:54	1:54	22
	Lisburn	140:00	2:55	48
	Lisburn@Craigavon	15:45	3:09	5
	Londonderry	330:07	3:45	88
	Newry	216:50	3:27	63
	Newtownards	366:20	2:27	150
	Omagh	193:54	4:13	46
	Venue total	2651:10	3:15	814
Family Care Centre	Armagh	15:25	3:51	4
	Ballymena	0:40	0:40	1
	Belfast	585:57	1:56	304
	Craigavon	158:24	2:59	53
	Dungannon	7:28	0:34	13
	Enniskillen	0:30	0:08	4
	Lisburn	1:00	1:00	1
	Londonderry	78:03	0:56	83
	Magherafelt	1:15	1:15	1
	Newtownards	6:00	6:00	1
	Newry	6:02	2:01	3
	Omagh	7:40	0:51	9
	Venue total	868:24	1:49	477
High Court	Matrimonial	3:50	1:55	2
	Office of Care and Protection	955:41	1:57	490
	Venue total	959:31	1:57	492
Northern Ireland		4479:05	2:31	1783

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 district judges (magistrates' court) sit on Children Order business.

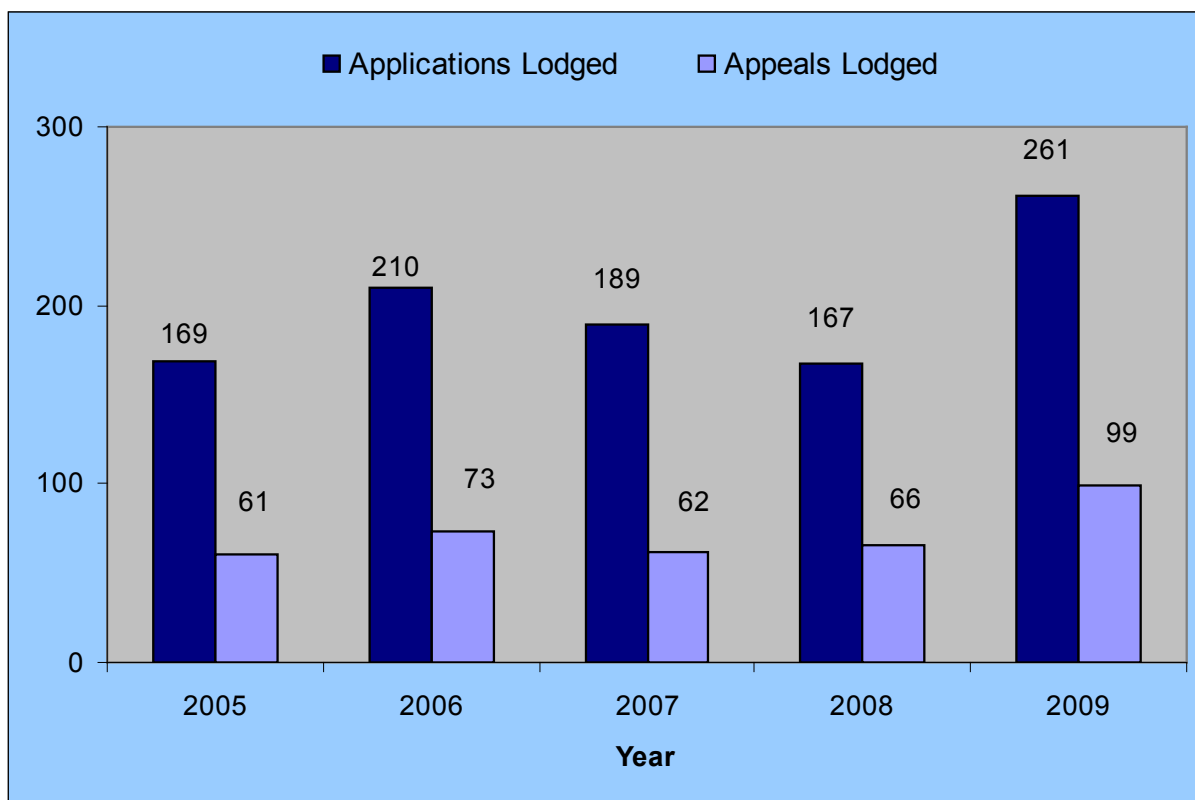
Part G Miscellaneous

This section covers the caseload from Enforcement of Judgments Office (EJO), Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners and Coroners Service for Northern Ireland.

Key facts during 2009

- 16,700 notices of intention to enforce were lodged
- 8,964 applications for enforcement were accepted
- 261 applications for leave to appeal to the Commissioners were lodged and 188 were cleared
- 99 appeals to the Commissioners were lodged and 96 were cleared
- 186 inquests were held relating to the Coroners Service for Northern Ireland

Figure G.1: Social Security Commissioners – Applications and Appeals Lodged 2005-2009



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 2009, 16,700 notices of intention to enforce were lodged and 8,964 applications for enforcement were accepted (Table G.1).

Table G.1: Enforcement orders made and applications for enforcement in 2009

Method of search	
By EJO staff	1145
On-line (by customers)	47423
Notices of intention:	
Notices Issued	16700
Applications for enforcement:	
Applications accepted	8964
Types of application	
Article 23 discovery	829
Money judgment	6559
Possession judgment	1571
Possession of Goods	5
Total	8964

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 2009

Original debt lodged	£20,236,035.59
EJO fees paid	£2,682,246.40
Total debt registered	£22,918,281.99
Total debt recovered	£5,115,299.44
% of debt recovered	22.32%
Debt ratio	£1.91

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, 897 cases were completed.

Table G.3 Possession judgments in 2009

Evictions completed	452
Cases withdrawn	89
Arrangement in place (case held)	356
Total	897

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

There were 261 applications for leave to appeal to the Social Security Commissioners lodged during 2009, 94 more than the 167 lodged during 2008. There were 188 applications for leave cleared in 2009 compared with 162 cleared during 2008 (Table G.4).

Table G.4: Social Security Commissioners’ applications for leave to appeal to the Commissioners in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	261	6	182	188

The number of appeals to the Commissioners lodged increased by 50% from 66 in 2008 to 99 in 2009. In total, 96 were cleared in 2009 compared with 48 in 2008 (Table G.5).

Table G.5: Social Security Commissioners’ appeals to the Commissioners in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	99	17	79	96

Table G.6 shows the number of applications to the Commissioners for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 2009.

Table G.6: Social Security Commissioners’ Applications to the Commissioners for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	1	0	0	0

Tables G.7 to G.13 show the caseload of Pensions Appeal Tribunals in 2009. 71 entitlement appeals and 129 assessment appeals were dealt with in 2009. The majority of assessment appeals (57%) were dealt with after a hearing.

Table G.7: Pensions Appeal Tribunals entitlement appeals in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	91	34	37	71

Table G.8: Pensions Appeal Tribunals assessment appeals in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	134	73	56	129

Table G.9: Pensions Appeal Tribunals specified decision appeals in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	22	14	12	26

Table G.10: Pensions Appeal Tribunals armed forces compensation scheme appeals in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	10	2	3	5

Table G.11: Pensions Appeal Tribunals late appeals in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	31	1	28	29

Table G.12: Pensions Appeal Tribunals jurisdiction appeals in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	2	2	3	5

Table G.13: Pensions Appeal Tribunals leave to appeal applications in 2009

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2009	0	0	1	1

Section 3: Coroners Service for Northern Ireland

Table G.14 shows the Coroners' caseload for 2009.

Table G.14: Coroners' caseload in 2009

Number of deaths reported	4044
Number of inquests held	186
No inquests with post mortem	1382
No inquests and no post mortem	1793
Other disposals of registered entries	889

Appendix 1: Judge court sitting days

Judge type	Business area[1]	Sitting days
High Court Judge	Crown	439
	Queen's Bench	598
	Children Order	211
	Other Family	152
	Appeals	13
	Chancery	214
	Bails	334
	Callover	1
	Judicial Reviews	274
	Court of Appeal - Civil	114
	Court of Appeal - Criminal	53
Total		2403
County Court Judge	Crown Court	1847
	County court judge day	1244
District Judge	County court judge day	99
	District judge day	471
Deputy District Judge	District judge day	209
Deputy County Court Judge	County court judge day	84
Total		3954
District Judge (Magistrates' Court)	Criminal	3467
	Youth	551
	Civil/Family	995
Total		5013
Social Security Commissioners	Oral hearings	26
Total		26
Total number of sitting days		11396

[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.

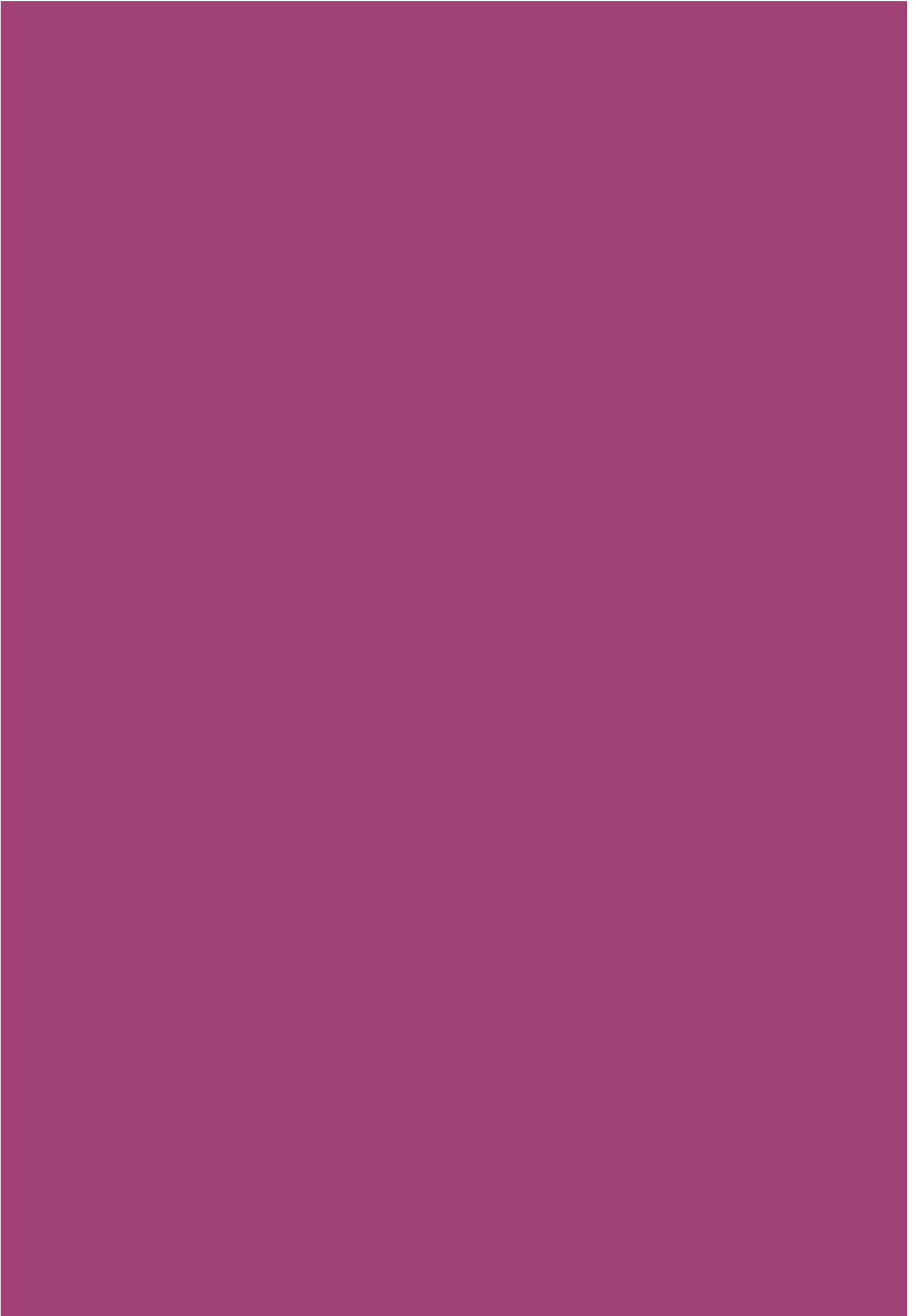
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