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The Northern Ireland Court Service
Magistrates' Court Bulletin

Oct - Dec 2009

(Provisional figures)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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The roll out of the new court operations system called the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS) has been completed throughout the divisions. Caution should be taken when comparing figures with previous quarters. For further advice on the differences between the current figures and previous quarters, please contact the NICtS. Figures are run from an administrative database and may change due to late returns and further validations.

Summary

During Oct - Dec 2009:

- There were 1,132 scheduled magistrates' sittings of which:

Criminal	753
Youth	134
Family	245

- There were 67 additional magistrates' sittings of which:

Criminal	62
Youth	2
Family	3

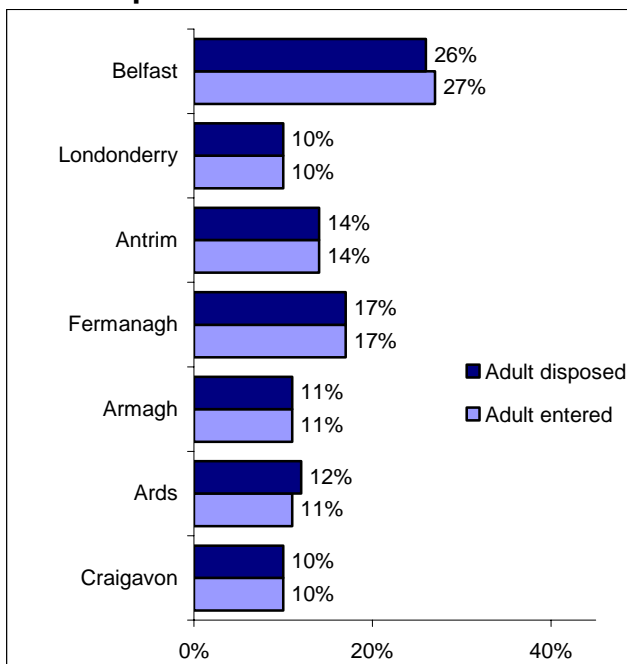
- There were 54 special magistrates' sittings of which:

Criminal	54
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- 14,221 new adult criminal defendants were received in court and 13,795 adult defendants were disposed of during the period. (Figure 1)

- The majority of prosecutions disposed in the adult court were brought by the police/PPS.

Figure 1: Percentage of adults entered and disposed of in the court divisions



- The volume of adult business was highest in the Division of Belfast.

- The average waiting time in the adult criminal court from first hearing to disposal was 6 weeks. (Figure 2)

- 767 new defendants were entered in the youth court and 794 youth defendants were disposed of in the youth court.

- The average waiting time in the youth court from first hearing to disposal was 11 weeks.

- 1,447 new civil applications were entered and 1,455 civil applications were disposed of.

- The average length of time for a case to progress through the civil court was 9 weeks from date of issue to disposal.

Figure 2: Waiting times in weeks in adult magistrates' courts (1st hearing to disposal)

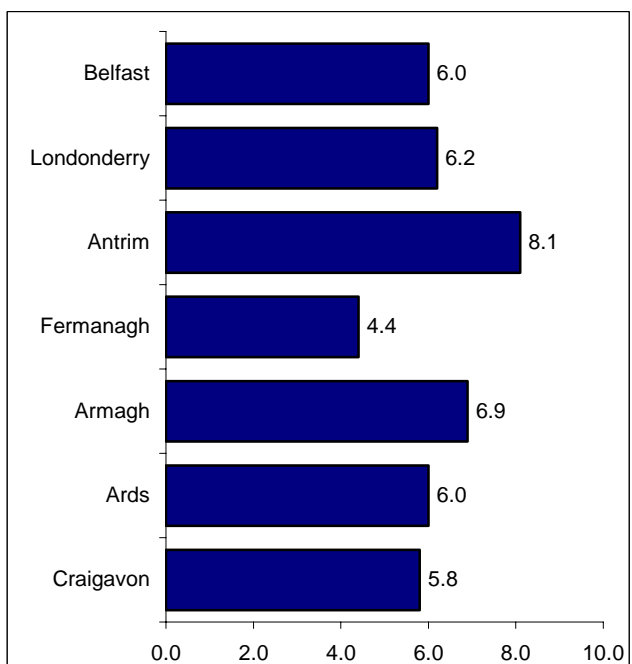


Table 1.1: Scheduled court sitting days & average court sitting times in the magistrates' courts by division & venue

		Adult criminal day		Youth criminal day		Family day	
		Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time
Belfast	Laganside	242	3:26:43	39	3:21:55	70	3:15:22
	Total	242	3:26:43	39	3:21:55	70	3:15:22
Londonderry	Limavady	14	4:30:42		.		.
	Magherafelt	15	3:12:24	6	1:51:40		.
	Londonderry	47	5:12:39	10	4:12:00	20	4:01:45
	Total	76	4:41:11	16	3:19:22	20	4:01:45
Antrim	Antrim	19	4:28:15	4	2:00:00	5	3:15:00
	Ballymena	25	3:58:36	6	2:36:40	16	3:45:00
	Larne	12	3:34:35	2	3:30:00	6	3:05:50
	Coleraine	42	5:05:21	6	4:00:00	12	3:36:40
	Total	98	4:30:01	18	3:02:13	39	3:32:33
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	42	4:18:05	6	3:39:10	7	3:55:00
	Strabane	22	3:16:21	3	4:03:20		.
	Omagh	26	4:12:30	6	3:38:20	11	4:25:49
	Enniskillen	24	4:45:00	6	3:40:00	3	2:51:40
	Total	114	4:10:34	21	3:42:37	21	4:02:05
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	22	3:50:59	4	1:50:00	1	1:30:00
	Banbridge@Newry	11	4:10:00	1	5:30:00	2	4:15:00
	Newry	33	4:15:18	5	3:12:00	19	3:31:03
	Total	66	4:06:19	10	2:53:00	22	3:29:32
Ards	Bangor	20	3:57:30		.	5	2:17:00
	Downpatrick	23	5:20:46	6	3:03:42	3	2:18:20
	Newtownards	41	2:36:27	12	3:00:00	40	2:31:15
	Total	84	3:40:45	18	3:01:14	48	2:28:57
Craigavon	Lisburn	39	4:00:23	6	2:27:30	9	4:05:33
	Craigavon	34	3:43:49	6	3:10:50	16	3:15:18
	Total	73	3:52:40	12	2:49:10	25	3:33:24

Table1.1a: Scheduled court sitting days & average court sitting times in the magistrates' courts for Northern Ireland

	Adult criminal day		Youth criminal day		Family day	
	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time
Northern Ireland	753	3:56:39	134	3:14:20	245	3:19:55

Table 1.2: Additional court sitting days & average court sitting times in the magistrates' courts by division & venue

		Adult criminal day		Youth criminal day		Family day	
		Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time
Belfast	Laganside	1	4:45:00	.	.	1	0:15:00
	Total	1	4:45:00	.	.	1	0:15:00
Londonderry	Limavady	1	4:45:00	.	.	.	.
	Londonderry	1	6:16:00	.	.	.	.
	Total	2	5:30:30	.	.	.	.
Antrim	Antrim	4	4:02:30	.	.	.	.
	Ballymena	6	2:35:00	.	.	2	3:02:30
	Coleraine	4	3:42:30	.	.	.	.
	Total	14	3:19:17	.	.	2	3:02:30
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Dungannon	3	4:53:20	.	.	.	.
	Omagh	3	2:46:40	.	.	.	.
	Enniskillen	2	2:27:30	.	.	.	.
	Total	8	3:29:22	.	.	.	.
Armagh & South Down	Armagh	5	3:28:23	.	.	.	.
	Newry	14	3:30:21	1	2:00:00	.	.
	Total	19	3:29:50	1	2:00:00	.	.
Ards	Downpatrick	6	2:48:50	1	1:45:00	.	.
	Newtownards	11	1:53:10	.	.	.	.
	Total	17	2:12:49	1	1:45:00	.	.
Craigavon	Lisburn	1	1:30:00	.	.	.	.
	Total	1	1:30:00	.	.	.	.

Table 1.2a: Additional court sitting days & average court sitting times in the magistrates' courts for Northern Ireland

	Adult criminal day		Youth criminal day		Family day	
	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time
Northern Ireland	62	3:09:27	2	1:52:30	3	2:06:40

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 1.3: Special court sitting days & average court sitting times in the magistrates' courts by division & venue

		Adult criminal day	
		Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time
Londonderry	Magherafelt	1	0:50:00
	Londonderry	8	0:32:30
	Total	9	0:34:26
Antrim	Ballymena	8	0:45:37
	Total	8	0:45:37
Fermanagh & Tyrone	Omagh	9	0:44:26
	Total	9	0:44:26
Armagh & South Down	Newry	11	0:37:43
	Total	11	0:37:43
Ards	Newtownards	9	0:24:33
	Total	9	0:24:33
Craigavon	Lisburn	5	0:39:00
	Craigavon	3	0:45:00
	Total	8	0:41:15

Table 1.3: Special court sitting days & average court sitting times in the magistrates' courts for Northern Ireland

	Adult criminal day	
	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time
Northern Ireland	54	0:37:47

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 2.1 Adult criminal defendants received in the magistrates' courts by division & venue

		PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Fixed penalty	Total
Belfast	Laganside Courts	2284	1444	47	3775
	Division total	2284	1444	47	3775
Londonderry	Londonderry	583	224	31	838
	Limavady	239	88	13	340
	Magherafelt	179	85	6	270
	Division total	1001	397	50	1448
Antrim	Antrim	387	112	6	505
	Coleraine	535	243	12	790
	Ballymena	424	80	8	512
	Larne	93	54	4	151
	Division total	1439	489	30	1958
Fermanagh and Tyrone	Omagh	358	117	28	503
	Strabane	210	61	12	283
	Enniskillen	359	151	8	518
	Dungannon	713	307	20	1040
	Division total	1640	636	68	2344
Armagh and South Down	Armagh	192	150	23	365
	Banbridge	300	69	5	374
	Newry	576	262	17	855
	Division total	1068	481	45	1594
Ards	Newtownards	485	189	32	706
	Downpatrick	300	139	16	455
	Bangor	329	108	11	448
	Division total	1114	436	59	1609
Craigavon	Craigavon	503	193		696
	Lisburn	499	267	21	787
	Division total	1002	460	21	1483

Table 2.1 Adult criminal defendants received in the magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland

	PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Fixed penalty	Total
Northern Ireland	9548	4343	320	14211

Table 2.2 Adult criminal defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court by division & venue

		PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Fixed penalty	Total
Belfast	Laganside Courts	2303	1174	47	3524
	Division total	2303	1174	47	3524
Londonderry	Londonderry	605	217	31	853
	Limavady	236	84	13	333
	Magherafelt	162	88	6	256
	Division total	1003	389	50	1442
Antrim	Antrim	358	120	6	484
	Coleraine	565	228	13	806
	Ballymena	337	81	7	425
	Larne	96	65	4	165
	Division total	1356	494	30	1880
Fermanagh and Tyrone	Omagh	320	121	29	470
	Strabane	211	59	12	282
	Enniskillen	367	146	8	521
	Dungannon	723	317	21	1061
	Division total	1621	643	70	2334
Armagh and South Down	Armagh	221	156	22	399
	Banbridge	276	73	5	354
	Newry	516	282	19	817
	Division total	1013	511	46	1570
Ards	Newtownards	481	204	28	713
	Downpatrick	299	140	16	455
	Bangor	331	114	11	456
	Division total	1111	458	55	1624
Craigavon	Craigavon	467	207	2	676
	Lisburn	494	230	21	745
	Division total	961	437	23	1421

Table 2.2 Adult criminal defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court in Northern Ireland

	PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Fixed penalty	Total
Northern Ireland	9368	4106	321	13795

Table 2.3: Average waiting times in the adult magistrates' courts by division & venue

		Summons to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	Finding to disposal (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)
Belfast	Lagside Courts	7.72	5.47	.54	6.01
	Total	7.72	5.47	.54	6.01
Londonderry	Londonderry	7.04	6.42	.76	7.18
	Limavady	6.44	3.16	.21	3.37
	Magherafelt	8.91	5.86	.57	6.43
	Total	7.23	5.55	.60	6.15
Antrim	Antrim	7.65	5.45	.59	6.04
	Coleraine	6.37	9.78	.91	10.70
	Ballymena	7.15	5.82	.77	6.60
	Larne	8.99	4.91	.33	5.25
	Total	7.11	7.33	.74	8.08
Fermanagh and Tyrone	Omagh	7.89	4.48	.69	5.17
	Strabane	8.36	2.85	.71	3.56
	Enniskillen	7.59	2.88	.54	3.42
	Dungannon	8.16	3.86	.85	4.71
	Total	8.01	3.66	.73	4.40
Armagh and South Down	Armagh	12.09	6.37	.36	6.73
	Banbridge	7.03	5.89	.66	6.55
	Newry	8.39	6.29	.74	7.03
	Total	9.02	6.22	.63	6.85
Ards	Newtownards	10.48	3.78	.41	4.19
	Downpatrick	7.79	7.64	1.16	8.80
	Bangor	9.16	5.31	.83	6.14
	Total	9.36	5.28	.74	6.01
Craigavon	Craigavon	9.93	4.45	.69	5.14
	Lisburn	7.78	5.39	.95	6.34
	Total	8.81	4.94	.82	5.76

Bench warrants, adjourned generally and deferred sentences excluded

Table 2.3: Average waiting times in the adult magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland

	Summons to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	Finding to disposal (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)
Northern Ireland	8.09	5.44	.67	6.11

Bench warrants, adjourned generally and deferred sentences excluded

Table 2.4: Number and type of charges brought for adult defendants disposed of by business area

	PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Fixed penalty	Total
All Offences Against the Person	797			797
All Sexual Offences	163			163
All Burglary Offences	105			105
All Robbery Offences	20			20
All Theft Offences	573			573
All Fraud and Forgery Offences	49	87		136
All Criminal Damage Offences	213			213
All Offences Against the State	8			8
All Other Offences	705	132		837
All Drug Offences	284	2		286
All Motoring Offences	4423	161		4584
All Non-Police Offences	65	3453	321	3839
All Breach	139	218		357
Combination of charges	1824	53		1877
Total	9368	4106	321	13795

Table 2.5: Outcome of adult defendants disposed of by business area

	PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Fixed penalty	Total
Plea of guilty on all charges	4199	951		5150
All charges withdrawn	1906	1207	1	3114
Fixed penalty default			320	320
Plea not guilty - found guilty on at least one charge	2732	1787		4519
Plea not guilty - acquitted on all charges	531	161		692
Total	9368	4106	321	13795

Table 3.1 Youth defendants received in the magistrates' courts by division & venue

		PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Total
Belfast	Laganside Courts	238	8	246
	Division total	238	8	246
Londonderry	Londonderry	60	5	65
	Limavady	2		2
	Magherafelt	7		7
	Division total	69	5	74
Antrim	Antrim	21		21
	Coleraine	45		45
	Ballymena	40	4	44
	Larne	3		3
	Division total	109	4	113
Fermanagh and Tyrone	Omagh	23	1	24
	Strabane	8	2	10
	Enniskillen	18		18
	Dungannon	37	1	38
	Division total	86	4	90
Armagh and South Down	Armagh	11		11
	Banbridge	11		11
	Newry	33		33
	Division total	55		55
Ards	Newtownards	49	4	53
	Downpatrick	34		34
	Bangor	39		39
	Division total	122	4	126
Craigavon	Craigavon	34	3	37
	Lisburn	26		26
	Division total	60	3	63

Table 3.1 Youth defendants received in the magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland

	PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Total
Northern Ireland	739	28	767

Table 3.2 Youth defendants disposed of in the magistrates' courts by division & venue

		PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Total
Belfast	Laganside Courts	239	7	246
	Division total	239	7	246
Londonderry	Londonderry	59	3	62
	Limavady	5		5
	Magherafelt	10		10
	Division total	74	3	77
Antrim	Antrim	16		16
	Coleraine	44	2	46
	Ballymena	39	4	43
	Larne	8		8
	Division total	107	6	113
Fermanagh and Tyrone	Omagh	15	2	17
	Strabane	9	2	11
	Enniskillen	20		20
	Dungannon	43		43
	Division total	87	4	91
Armagh and South Down	Armagh	10		10
	Banbridge	16		16
	Newry	37		37
	Division total	63		63
Ards	Newtownards	59	3	62
	Downpatrick	31		31
	Bangor	36	1	37
	Division total	126	4	130
Craigavon	Craigavon	33	2	35
	Lisburn	38	1	39
	Division total	71	3	74

Table 3.2 Youth defendants disposed of in the magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland

	PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Total
Northern Ireland	767	27	794

Table 3.3: Average waiting times in the youth magistrates' courts by division & venue

		Summons to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	Finding to disposal (weeks)
Belfast	Laganside Courts	5.07	6.36	3.00
	Total	5.07	6.36	3.00
Londonderry	Londonderry	4.99	4.97	4.18
	Limavady	4.40	17.23	4.00
	Magherafelt	6.77	11.25	5.89
	Total	5.21	7.15	4.43
Antrim	Antrim	3.63	8.16	7.00
	Coleraine	6.33	17.01	3.03
	Ballymena	5.02	5.22	4.79
	Larne	4.89	8.83	9.29
	Total	5.46	11.41	4.55
Fermanagh and Tyrone	Omagh	7.47	10.22	2.62
	Strabane	5.21	3.06	.44
	Enniskillen	5.24	4.34	3.52
	Dungannon	6.59	7.39	4.85
	Total	6.32	6.81	3.67
Armagh and South Down	Armagh	5.17	11.26	0.00
	Banbridge	4.67	10.84	2.31
	Newry	5.26	2.80	3.09
	Total	5.09	5.97	2.50
Ards	Newtownards	7.52	6.86	2.85
	Downpatrick	6.66	5.28	2.20
	Bangor	7.49	5.41	4.66
	Total	7.31	6.08	3.22
Craigavon	Craigavon	5.74	11.33	4.70
	Lisburn	5.57	8.89	3.49
	Total	5.66	10.19	4.14

Bench warrants, adjourned generally and deferred sentences excluded

Table 3.3: Average waiting times in the youth magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland

	Summons to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	Finding to disposal (weeks)
Northern Ireland	5.72	7.45	3.53

Table 3.3: Average waiting times in the youth magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland

	Summons to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	Finding to disposal (weeks)
Northern Ireland	5.72	7.45	3.53

Bench warrants, adjourned generally and deferred sentences excluded

Table 3.4: Number and type of charges brought for youth defendants disposed of by business area

	PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Total
All Offences Against the Person	119		119
All Sexual Offences	9		9
All Burglary Offences	52		52
All Robbery Offences	2		2
All Theft Offences	74		74
All Fraud and Forgery Offences	2		2
All Criminal Damage Offences	63		63
All Offences Against the State	1		1
All Other Offences	104		104
All Drug Offences	11		11
All Motoring Offences	103		103
All Non-Police Offences		6	6
All Breach	5	20	25
Combination of charges	222	1	223
Total	767	27	794

Table 3.5: Outcome of youth defendants disposed of by business area

	PSNI/PPS prosecution	Departmental prosecution	Total
Plea of guilty on all charges	327	13	340
All charges withdrawn	253	8	261
Plea not guilty - found guilty on at least one charge	151	1	152
Plea not guilty - acquitted on all charges	36	5	41
Total	767	27	794

Table 4.1 Number of civil applications received in the magistrates' court by division & venue

		Domestic Proceedings	Family Homes & Domestic Violence	Total
Belfast	Laganside Courts	45	396	441
	Division total	45	396	441
Londonderry	Londonderry	17	102	119
	Limavady		11	11
	Magherafelt	2	10	12
	Division total	19	123	142
Antrim	Antrim	6	43	49
	Coleraine	17	82	99
	Ballymena	14	75	89
	Larne	1	19	20
	Division total	38	219	257
Fermanagh and Tyrone	Omagh	7	45	52
	Strabane	2	26	28
	Enniskillen	7	16	23
	Dungannon	6	30	36
	Division total	22	117	139
Armagh and South Down	Armagh	1	22	23
	Banbridge		3	3
	Newry	20	109	129
	Division total	21	134	155
Ards	Newtownards	15	114	129
	Downpatrick	6	23	29
	Bangor	8	30	38
	Division total	29	167	196
Craigavon	Craigavon	6	54	60
	Lisburn	14	42	56
	Division total	20	96	116

Table 4.1 Number of civil applications received in the magistrates' court in Northern Ireland

		Domestic Proceedings	Family Homes & Domestic Violence	Total
Northern Ireland		194	1252	1446

Table 4.2 Number of civil applications disposed in the magistrates' court by division & venue

		Domestic Proceedings	Family Homes & Domestic Violence	Total
Belfast	Laganside Courts	40	360	400
	Division total	40	360	400
Londonderry	Londonderry	27	100	127
	Limavady		12	12
	Magherafelt	3	12	15
	Division total	30	124	154
Antrim	Antrim	5	41	46
	Coleraine	11	90	101
	Ballymena	12	70	82
	Larne	2	21	23
	Division total	30	222	252
Fermanagh and Tyrone	Omagh	4	56	60
	Strabane	1	30	31
	Enniskillen	8	22	30
	Dungannon	7	29	36
	Division total	20	137	157
Armagh and South Down	Armagh	2	25	27
	Banbridge	1	3	4
	Newry	27	108	135
	Division total	30	136	166
Ards	Newtownards	17	113	130
	Downpatrick	7	29	36
	Bangor	9	27	36
	Division total	33	169	202
Craigavon	Craigavon	11	40	51
	Lisburn	14	59	73
	Division total	25	99	124

Table 4.2 Number of civil applications disposed in the magistrates' court in

Northern Ireland

	Domestic Proceedings	Family Homes & Domestic Violence	Total
Northern Ireland	208	1247	1455

Table 4.3: Average waiting times in the civil magistrates' courts by division & venue

		Date of issue to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)
Belfast	Laganside Courts	4.58	6.44
	Total	4.58	6.44
Londonderry	Londonderry	2.57	7.69
	Limavady	1.49	9.08
	Magherafelt	3.08	4.00
	Total	2.53	7.46
Antrim	Antrim	2.53	8.68
	Coleraine	1.86	4.17
	Ballymena	1.70	3.79
	Larne	2.45	4.09
	Total	1.99	4.86
Fermanagh and Tyrone	Omagh	1.83	4.33
	Strabane	1.81	1.71
	Enniskillen	2.02	9.21
	Dungannon	1.93	2.40
	Total	1.89	4.31
Armagh and South Down	Armagh	2.04	4.84
	Banbridge	1.32	2.25
	Newry	1.83	5.69
	Total	1.85	5.47
Ards	Newtownards	1.40	4.44
	Downpatrick	2.73	14.35
	Bangor	1.62	10.41
	Total	1.68	7.27
Craigavon	Craigavon	1.69	8.19
	Lisburn	1.06	11.90
	Total	1.32	10.37

Table 4.3: Average waiting times in the civil magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland

	Date of issue to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)
Northern Ireland	2.63	6.39

Table 4.4 Outcome of applications under Family Homes & Domestic Violence Order in the magistrates' court in Northern Ireland

	Granted	Dismissed or refused	Withdrawn	Vary /discharge	Other	Total
Non molestation	692	218	215	78	6	1209
Occupation	2	7	10			19
Vary/discharge non-mol/occupation	1	5	6	6	1	19
Total	695	230	231	84	7	1247