

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Provisional Figures

January to March 2026

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CONTENTS

■	1.	Key Findings	1
■	2.	Introduction	2
■	3.	Children Order	4
■	4.	County Court	6
■	5.	Crown Court	9
■	6.	High Court	11
■	7.	Magistrates' Court	14
■	8.	Appendix 1: Methodology	16

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This bulletin is available on the [Department of Justice](#) website on the [NICTS Business Data](#) page.

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1

Key Findings

This report provides an overview of Children Order and County, Crown, High and Magistrates' Courts business during January to March 2026 and how it compares with the comparative figures for the same quarter in the previous year. The headline findings are summarised below -

- During the quarter there were 463 Children Order sittings (1,075 total hours sat), 1,078 Children Order applications received and 1,023 disposed. In terms of orders made, 367 were own motion, 2,295 were interim and 1,446 were final orders.
 - County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,261 days within the Crown and County Court. In terms of cases received, there were; 37 equity; 182 ejectment; 2,023 small claims and no criminal damage. In terms of cases disposed; 32 equity; 183 ejectment; 1,841 small claims and no criminal damage cases were disposed.
 - In terms of Crown Court business there were 685 sittings with 450 cases and 522 defendants received and 90 cases and 106 defendants disposed.
- There were 567 High Court sitting days. The highest proportion of these was spent on Bails business (18%). There were 1,368 writs and originating summons received and 965 disposed.
 - Within the 1,074 Magistrates' sitting days total, 72% were adult criminal, 6% were youth criminal and 22% were civil and family days. There were 744 civil and family applications and 8,133 adult and 247 youth defendants received; corresponding disposals were 735, 8,209 and 281 respectively.

2 | Introduction

About this report

This bulletin is produced in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. It presents the following statistics for the Northern Ireland Court and Tribunals Service for the quarter January to March 2026 –

- The number of Children Order applications received and disposed at Family Proceedings Courts, Family Care Centres and the High Court, together with waiting times from lodgment to disposal (section 3);
- Civil and family business received and disposed, waiting times and sitting days in County Courts (section 4);
- The number of cases and defendants received and disposed, waiting times, pleas and findings and sittings at the Crown Court (section 5);
- Business received and disposed, waiting times and sitting days in the Chancery, King’s Bench and Family Divisions of the High Court (section 6); and
- The number of youth and adult defendants received and disposed, charges and outcomes, sittings, civil applications received and disposed and waiting times at Magistrates’ Courts (section 7).

Comparative information for the same quarter in the previous year is also provided, along with an indication of whether any change is higher or lower.

It is important to note court activity during 2020 and 2021 was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time the courts made more use of remote audio and video technology.

It should also be noted that Crown Court figures have been impacted by a withdrawal of services by Criminal Barristers. A partial withdrawal of services has been ongoing since 01 November 2024 with a full withdraw of services undertaken from 06 January 2025 to 28 February 2025 and from 5 January 2026 to date.

2 | Introduction

Background information about the Children Order and the County, Crown, High and Magistrates' Courts along with methodological information is available in the [NICTS statistics user guide](#) and a glossary of terms available in the [glossary](#). Data in the bulletin, along with trend information, are available in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

The next update covering the quarter to 30th June 2026 will be published in August 2026. A full [publication schedule](#) is available on the DOJ website.

3

Children Order

Children Order Quarterly Business

- Table 1 on the following page shows that during the quarter there were 463 sittings (1,075 hours), 1,078 Children Order applications received and 1,023 disposed.
 - A total of 1,531 children were involved in the applications disposed. 52% of the children were male and 47% female. In terms of age, 26% 0-4 years, 29% 5-8 years, 28% 9-12 years and 17% 13-16 years.
 - Like each of the last five years, the most common reason for transferring Children Order applications during the quarter was Complexity (63%, 110 of 176 reasons). This was followed by Consolidation (33), Jurisdiction (20), Return to Lower Court (8), Point of Law (3) and Gravity (2).
- In terms of orders made –
 - 367 were own motion orders.
 - 2,295 were interim orders.
 - 1,446 were final orders.
 - The average waiting time for applications disposed was 48 weeks for public and 33 weeks for private law.
 - Table 1 shows that compared with figures for the same quarter in the previous year, applications received decreased by 3%, applications disposed decreased by 5%; waiting times for disposal for public law decreased from 51.8 to 48.2 weeks and private law increased from 29.6 to 32.8 weeks.

3 | Children Order

Table 1: Children Order Business – January to March 2026 compared with January to March 2025

	Quarter 1 2026	Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025
Sittings	463	485	5% ↓
Hours sat	1,075	1,038	4% ↑
Applications received	1,078	1,107	3% ↓
Applications disposed	1,023	1,076	5% ↓
Number of children involved in applications disposed	1,531	1,578	3% ↓
Own motion orders made	367	318	15% ↑
Interim orders made	2,295	2,288	<1% ↑
Final orders made	1,446	1,477	2% ↓
Average waiting time for disposal for public law (weeks)	48.2	51.8	7% ↓
Average waiting time for disposal for private law (weeks)	32.8	29.6	11% ↑

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

4 | County Court

County Court Quarterly Business

- Table 2 on the following pages shows that County Court and District Judges sat a total of 1,261 sitting days during the quarter. Within those days, 525 were spent on criminal business and 736 days on civil and family business.
- During the quarter –
 - 2,612 Civil bills with notice of intention to defend (NID) were received and 3,287 civil bills disposed.
 - In terms of cases 37 equity; 182 ejectment; 2,023 small claims and no criminal damage cases were received; and 32 equity; 183 ejectment; 1,841 small claims and no criminal damage cases were disposed.
 - 185 divorce decrees were granted and 335 decrees absolute issued.
 - 80 licence applications were received and 58 disposed.

4 | County Court

Table 2: County Court Business – January to March 2026 compared with January to March 2025

	Quarter 1 2026	Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025
Sitting days	1,261	1,203	5%↑
Civil bills with NID received	2,612	2,488	5%↑
Civil bills disposed	3,287	2,848	15%↑
Average time taken from issue to disposal of civil bill (weeks)	52	52	-
Equity cases received	37	37	-
Equity cases disposed	32	60	47%↓
Average time taken from issue to disposal of equity cases (weeks)	108	197	45%↓
Ejectment cases received	182	192	5%↓
Ejectment cases disposed	183	156	17%↑
Average time taken from issue to disposal of ejectment cases (weeks)	43	33	30%↑

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

4 | County Court

Table 2 continued: County Court Business – January to March 2026 compared with January to March 2025

	Quarter 1 2026	Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025
Small claims received	2,023	1,907	6%↑
Small claims disposed	1,841	1,781	3%↑
Average time taken from issue to disposal of small claims cases (weeks)	25	22	14%↑
Criminal damage cases received	0	0	-
Criminal damage cases disposed	0	4	100%↓
Divorce decrees granted	185	233	21%↓
Decree absolute issued	335	374	10%↓
Average time taken from issue to date divorce decree granted (weeks)	62	42	48%↑
Licences applications received	80	51	57%↑
Licences applications disposed	58	44	32%↑

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

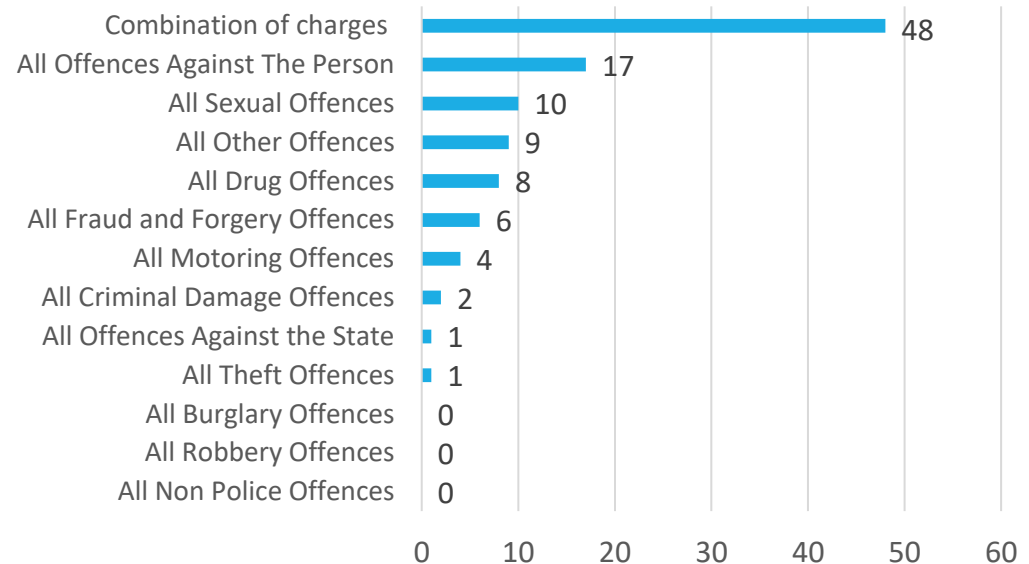
5 | Crown Court

Crown Court Quarterly Business

Please note that figures have been impacted by a withdrawal of services by Criminal Barristers. A partial withdrawal of services has been ongoing since 01 November 2024 with a full withdraw of services undertaken from 06 January 2025 to 28 February 2025 and from 5 January 2026 to date.

- As can be seen from Table 3 on the next page, during the quarter there were 685 sittings (530 hours sat). Similar to previous quarters, County Court Judges disposed of the majority of defendants (98% ; 104).
- There were 450 cases and 522 defendants received during the quarter and 90 cases and 106 defendants disposed. The average time from committal to hearing was 181 days and from conviction to disposal was 78 days.
- Compared to the same quarter last year, the number of cases and defendants received increased, while the number of cases and defendants disposed decreased. Average time from committal to hearing and from conviction to disposal both decreased.
- Figure 1 shows that, consistent with previous years, most disposed defendants were charged with a combination of offences.

Figure 1: Crown Court defendants disposed by charge type January to March 2026



5 | Crown Court

Table 3: Crown Court Business – January to March 2026 compared with January to March 2025

	Quarter 1 2026	Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025
Sittings	685	624	10%↑
Hours sat	530	889	40%↓
Cases received	450	327	38%↑
Cases disposed	90	248	64%↓
Defendants received	522	398	31%↑
Defendants disposed	106	311	66%↓
Defendants pleading guilty to all charges	30	62	52%↓
Defendants pleading guilty or found guilty of at least one charge	56	198	72%↓
Average time from committal to hearing (days)	181	190	5%↓
Average time from conviction/acquittal to disposal (days)	78	113	31%↓

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

6 High Court

High Court Quarterly Business

- Table 4 on the following pages shows that there were 567 High Court sitting days during the quarter, the highest proportion of which was spent on Bails business (18%).
- King's Bench business included –
 - Receipt of 1,368 and disposal of 965 writs and originating summonses.
 - Receipt of 53 applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review; 10 applications for Judicial Review and two Ancillary applications.
- Chancery Division business included –
 - Receipt of 544 (42% of which were Chancery, 33% bankruptcy and 25% companies cases) and disposal of 483 cases.
 - 2,114 grants issued in the Probate office.
- Family Division business included –
 - Receipt of 15 and disposal of 19 adoption cases and applications.
 - 584 divorce petitions received, 251 decrees granted and 308 decrees absolute issued.
 - 74 Official Solicitor's Office Patient caseloads and 46 Minors' caseloads were received, with 59 and 64 disposed.

6 | High Court

Table 4: High Court Business – January to March 2026 compared with January to March 2025

	Quarter 1 2026	Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025
Sitting days	567	528	7%↑
Writs & originating summonses received	1,368	1,356	1%↑
Writs & originating summonses disposed	965	640	51%↑
Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review received	53	61	13%↓
Applications for Judicial Review received	10	3	233%↑
Ancillary applications received	2	-	↑
Chancery, Bankruptcy & Companies cases received	544	639	15%↓
Chancery, Bankruptcy & Companies cases disposed	483	562	14%↓
Grants issued in the Probate office	2,114	1,956	8%↑

Supplementary data are available from the DOJ website in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

6 | High Court

Table 4 continued: High Court Business – January to March 2026 compared with January to March 2025

	Quarter 1 2026	Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025
Adoption cases & applications received	15	19	21%↓
Adoption cases & applications disposed	19	18	6%↑
Average time taken from issue to disposal for adoption case/application (weeks)	34	23	48%↑
Divorce petitions received	584	625	7%↓
Decrees granted in High Court	251	261	4%↓
Decrees absolute issued	308	178	73%↑
Average time taken from issue of divorce petition to date decree granted (weeks)	69	57	21%↑
Official Solicitor's Office Patients cases received	74	78	5%↓
Official Solicitor's Office Patients cases disposed	59	32	84%↑
Official Solicitor's Office Minors cases received	46	37	24%↑
Official Solicitor's Office Minors cases disposed	64	23	178%↑

Note: caseload data relating to Minors in the Official Solicitor's Office are now included. Please refer to note 34 in the accompanying spreadsheet and methodology section at the end of this report

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

7 Magistrates' Court

Magistrates' Court Quarterly Business

- During the quarter there were 1,028 scheduled, 9 additional and 37 special Magistrates' sitting days (Table 5).
- Within the 1,074 total, 72% were adult criminal, 6% were youth criminal and 22% were civil and family days.

Table 5: Magistrates' Court Sitting Days – January to March 2026 compared with January to March 2025

	Adult Quarter 1 2026	Youth Quarter 1 2026	Civil & Family Quarter 1 2026	Total Quarter 1 2026	Total Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025
Scheduled	729	68	231	1,028	1,020	1%↑
Additional	6	1	2	9	5	80%↑
Special	37	0	0	37	34	9%↑
Total	772	69	233	1,074	1,059	1%↑

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

7 | Magistrates' Court

- There were 744 new civil and family applications and 8,133 new adult and 247 new youth defendants received; corresponding disposals were 735, 8,209 and 281 respectively.
- The average waiting times from first hearing to disposal in the adult and youth criminal courts were 9 weeks and 16 weeks respectively. For civil and family applications it was 29 and 10 weeks respectively from date of receipt to disposal.

Table 6: Magistrates' Court Business – January to March 2026 compared with January to March 2025

	Adult Quarter 1 2026	Adult Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025	Youth Quarter 1 2026	Youth Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025	Civil Quarter 1 2026	Civil Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025	Family Quarter 1 2026	Family Quarter 1 2025	% change from 2025
Defendants or applications received	8,133	8,710	7%↓	247	260	5%↓	85	97	12%↓	659	738	11%↓
Defendants or applications disposed	8,209	8,699	6%↓	281	254	11%↑	92	100	8%↓	643	659	2%↓
Average waiting time (weeks)	9	9	-	16	16	-	29	47	38%↓	10	9	11%↑

Supplementary data are available from the DoJ website in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

8

Appendix 1 - Methodology

Data Source and Coverage

The statistics are produced using administrative data sourced from the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS). ICOS is a live operating system used in each court tier to process every part of court business, from receipt of payments through to the production of final orders made. The data are input into this system on a daily basis by court clerks, and this information is checked and confirmed by another member of staff to ensure the data entries are correct.

Full details of data relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, coherence, user need, cost and confidentiality is available in the accompanying [background quality report](#) report. Details of the data quality checks and processes that DoJ has in place are available in the [Quality Assurance of Administrative Data \(QAAD\) document](#) on the DoJ website.

Counting Rules

- Children Order

Receipts are counted from the date the case is entered onto ICOS. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to 'dealt with.'

- County Court

Receipts are counted from the date the case is entered onto ICOS and the fees are receipted. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to 'dealt with'.

8

Appendix 1 - Methodology

- Crown Court

Receipts are counted from the date the case is committed to the Crown Court from the Magistrates court. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to 'dealt with.'

- High Court

Receipts are counted from the date the case is entered onto ICOS and the fees are receipted. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case, or the date an applicant withdraws or discontinues their application prior to the hearing, changing the case status to 'dealt with'.

- Magistrates' Court

Receipts are counted from the date a served summons or a charge sheet is received by the Magistrates' Court office. Disposals are counted from the result date that a final order was made against the case changing the case status to 'dealt with'.

- Official Solicitor's Office

Previous quarterly publications reported caseload data for patients (18 and over). This publication and subsequent publications now includes caseload data for minors (under 18s).

Previously reported figures relating to patients' incoming correspondence were incorrectly labelled – the figures included correspondence relating to both minors and patients. The labelling has been updated to reflect this and can be found in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

The annual Judicial Statistics Publications are unaffected.