



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

Courts Service

Annual Report

2022





Mission Statement

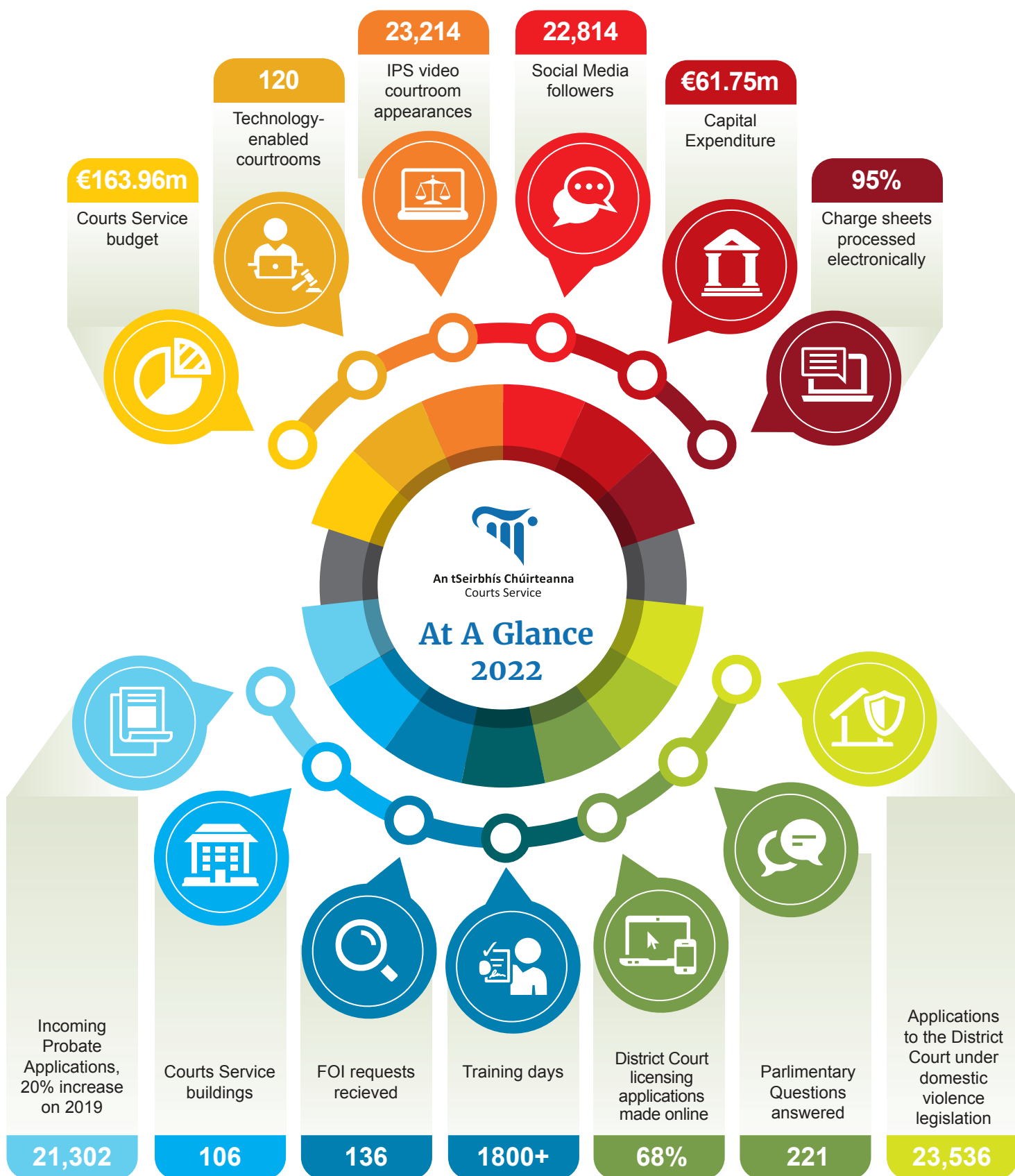
*To manage the courts,
support the judiciary and provide
a high quality and professional
service to all users of the courts.*



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

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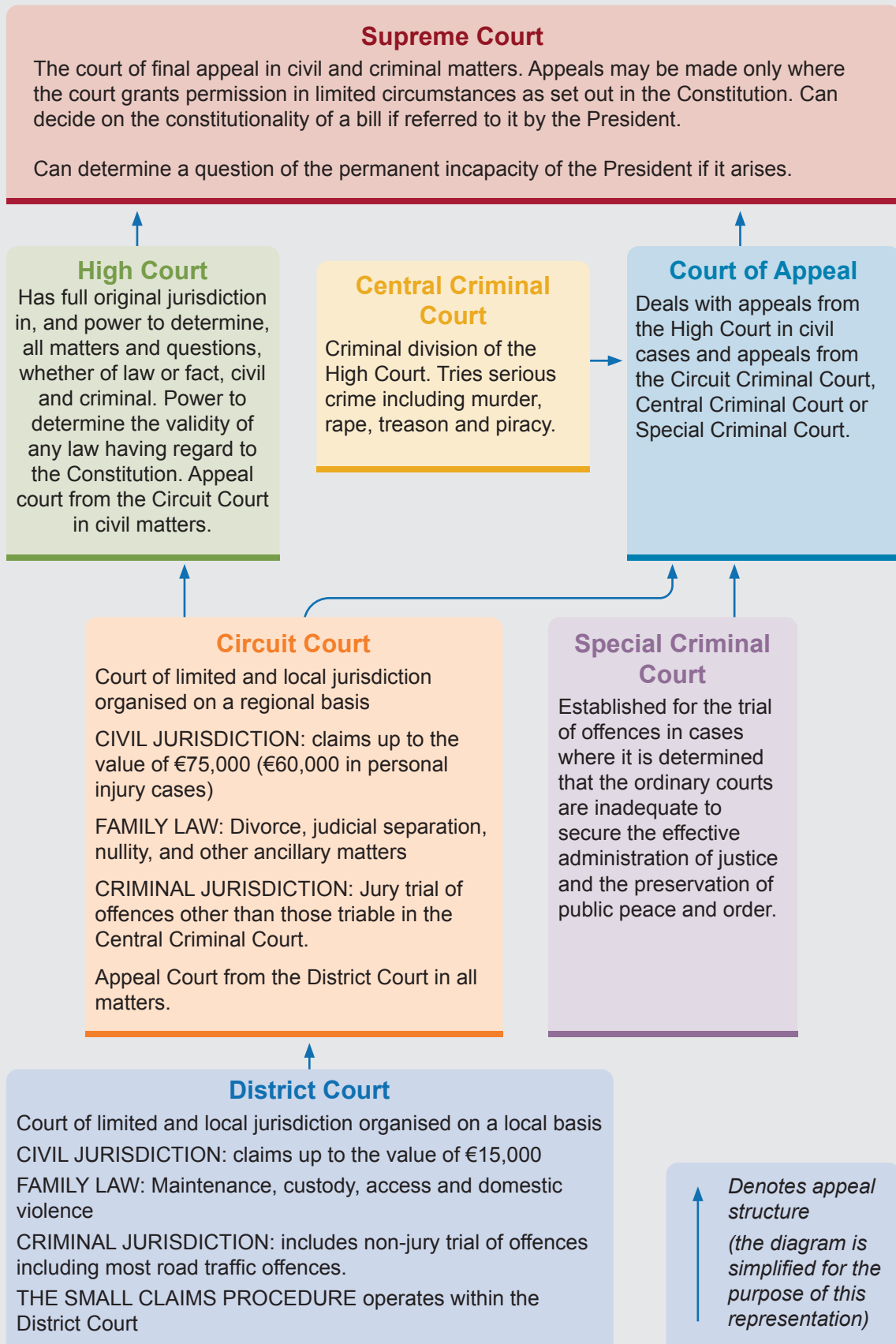
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*We are
responsible for
the management
of all aspects of
court activities*

Structure of the Courts





Foreword by the Chief Justice and Chairperson of the Board

2022 saw the long-awaited lifting of measures which had been implemented to safeguard public health throughout the pandemic, and this presented the Courts Service with a new challenge as we faced into a gradual return to normal court practices: to continue to drive change and build on the significant progress made to date in expediting the reform and modernisation of the courts system in Ireland. The efforts of Courts Service staff and members of the judiciary in meeting this task head on are detailed throughout this report.

Increases and decreases in work

This year, we saw changes to work levels across a number of areas which required the redeployment of personnel and resources where needed. For example:

- The number of new cases increased by 25% in the Central Criminal Court and by 10% in the Circuit Court when compared with 2019 levels; nevertheless, the number of cases disposed of in both courts was higher in 2022 than in 2019. This trend was also reflected in the area of family law where new applications increased by 15% in the Circuit Court and by 10% in the District Court.

- Significant changes were also evident in the area of personal injuries. For example, the number of awards of damages made in the Circuit Court dropped to 57% of the number of awards made in 2019 and the value of those awards was down to 58% of 2019 levels. Further to that, the number of new personal injuries actions commenced followed the pattern which emerged in the second half of 2021 and continued to trend downwards following the implementation of the Judicial Council's Personal Injuries Guidelines.

System Improvements

The replacement of outdated and time-consuming manual processes with more efficient digital systems continued as part of the Courts Service's Modernisation Programme, which saw the successful completion of the 'e-charge sheets project'. This new system, which automatically extracts charge sheet and station bail data from An Garda Síochána's ICT system for entry into the Courts Service's system, is now being used to process 95% of all charge sheets and has resulted in a 77% reduction in the time taken to complete this task.



This presented the Courts Service with a new challenge as we faced into a gradual return to normal court practices: to continue to drive change and build on the significant progress made to date in expediting the reform and modernisation of the courts system in Ireland.



Preparations also continued to ensure that all the necessary systems are in place for the impending introduction of a new legal framework which will provide decision-making support to vulnerable adults when the wardship list is phased out and the remaining provisions of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 are commenced in early 2023.

A word of thanks

This is only a small sample of the types of projects which were progressed throughout the year involving considerable engagement and collaboration with other agencies and bodies. I would like to extend my thanks to colleagues in the Department of Justice, An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service, the Probation Service, the legal community and the various NGOs for their collegiality, input and continued support in 2022.

I would also like to express my gratitude and that of the Board of the Courts Service to my colleagues in the judiciary and to the staff of the Courts Service for their innovation, diligence and continued efforts in making the modernisation of the Courts a reality. I commend this report to you as a great insight into those efforts.

Donal O'Donnell

Donal O'Donnell
Chief Justice
Chairperson of the Courts Service Board





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About the Courts Service



About the Courts Service

The Courts Service is responsible for the administration and management of the Courts in Ireland. Our primary functions are to manage the Courts, provide support services to the Judiciary, provide information on the courts system to the public, and provide court buildings and facilities for court users. Our ancillary powers include acquiring, holding, and disposing of land, entering into contracts, designating court venues, and making proposals to the Minister for Justice regarding, for example, reform and development matters.

We are responsible for the management of all aspects of court activities (with the exception of judicial functions which are a matter exclusively for the Judiciary). In fulfilling our functions our 1,100 people, across a nationwide network of offices and court venues, provide services in Civil, Criminal and Family Law to court users daily. These offices, supported by directorates established as part of our management structure, working with the Judiciary, facilitate the work of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, Circuit Court and District Court.

The Courts Service Board

The Courts Service is governed by a Board consisting of a chairperson and 17 other members.

The Courts Service Act, 1998 provides that the chairperson of the Board should be the Chief Justice and that the Board should contain judicial representatives from each Court, a staff representative, a representative of the Minister for Justice and representatives from the legal professions, trade unions and business world. The Board considers and determines policy in relation to the Courts Service and oversees the implementation of that policy by the Chief Executive Officer. The Courts Service Act provides that the Board consider the most beneficial, effective, and efficient use of organisation resources and how any policy or objective of the Government or Minister might affect or relate to the functions of the organisation. The Act also provides that the Board may establish committees to advise it in relation to the performance of its functions and may appoint committee members who

“
We are responsible for the management of all aspects of court activities

are not members of the Board but have a specialist knowledge and experience related to the purposes of the committee. Committees and their actions are subject to confirmation by the Board as deemed necessary. The committees of the Board as at 31 December 2022 were:

- Finance Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Family Law Court Development Committee
- Building Committee
- Modernisation Committee



Courts Service Board



Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell, Chief Justice and Chairperson of the Board



Mr. Justice George Birmingham, President of the Court of Appeal



Mr. Justice David Barniville President of the High Court*



Ms. Justice Elizabeth Dunne, Elected by the ordinary judges of the Supreme Court



Mr. Justice Patrick McCarthy, Elected by the ordinary judges of the Court of Appeal



Mr. Justice Tony O'Connor, Elected by the judges of the High Court



Ms. Justice Patricia Ryan, President of the Circuit Court



Her Honour Judge Alice Doyle, Elected by the ordinary judges of the Circuit Court



His Honour Judge Paul Kelly, President of the District Court

Membership details are as at 31 December 2022.

* Ms. Mary Justice Irvine retired July 2022 as President of the High Court and was replaced by Mr. Justice Barniville.

2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030



Judge Alan Mitchell,
Elected by the judges of the
District Court**



Ms. Angela Denning,
Chief Executive Officer,
Courts Service



Ms. Sara Phelan Nominee
of the Bar Council***



Ms. Michele O'Boyle
Nominee of the Law Society



Ms. Hilary McSweeney
Elected by the staff of the
Courts Service



Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan,
Official of the Department
of Justice nominated by the
Minister



Ms. Karen Kiernan,
Nominated by the Minister
to represent consumers of
the services provided by the
Courts



Ms. Patricia King, Nominee
of Irish Congress of Trade
Unions



Ms. Deirdre Kiely,
Nominated by the Minister
because of her relevant
knowledge and experience
in commerce, finance and
administration

**Judge Conal Gibbons retired in September 2022 and was replaced by Judge Alan Mitchell as the member elected by the judges of the District Court.

***Ms. Maura McNally's term as Chairperson of Council of the Bar of Ireland came to an end in July 2022 and she was replaced on the Board by Ms. Sara Phelan as the Bar Council representative



Committees of the Board (end-2022)

Finance Committee

The Hon. Mr. Justice George Birmingham, President of the Court of Appeal (Chair)
The Hon. Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell, Chief Justice
The Hon. Mr. Justice David Barniville, President of the High Court
The Hon. Ms. Justice Patricia Ryan, President of the Circuit Court
His Honour Judge Paul Kelly, President of the District Court
Ms. Angela Denning, Chief Executive Officer, the Courts Service
Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan, Board member representing the Department of Justice and Equality
Ms. Deirdre Kiely, Board member representing commercial and financial interests
Ms. Amelia Casey, External member

Audit and Risk Committee

Ms. Deirdre Kiely, Board member (representative of commercial and financial interests) – (Chair)
The Hon. Mr. Justice Seamus Noonan, Judge of the Court of Appeal
His Honour Judge Francis Comerford, Judge of the Circuit Court
Judge John Hughes, Judge of the District Court
Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan, Board member representing the Department of Justice and Equality
Ms. Michelle Mc Greal, External Member
Mr. Andrew O'Sullivan, External Member, CIO An Garda Síochána

Building Committee

The Hon. Mr. Justice Patrick McCarthy, Judge of the Court of Appeal, Chair
The Hon. Mr. Justice Seamus Noonan, Judge of the Court of Appeal
The Hon. Mr. Justice John Jordan, Judge of the High Court
Her Honour Judge Kathryn Hutton, Judge of the Circuit Court
Judge Paula Murphy, Judge of the District Court
Ms. Angela Denning, Chief Executive and Courts Service Board
Ms. Patricia King, Courts Service Board Member (Chair)
Mr. Jack Nicholas, Nominee of the Chairman of the Bar Council
Mr. Peter Mullan, Assistant Secretary of Circuit and District Court Operations
Mr. John Cleere, Assistant Secretary of Corporate Services Directorate
Mr. Ciaran O'Connor, representative of the Office of Public Works
Ms. Deirdre Browne BL who was nominated for the Bar Council



Family Law Court Development Committee

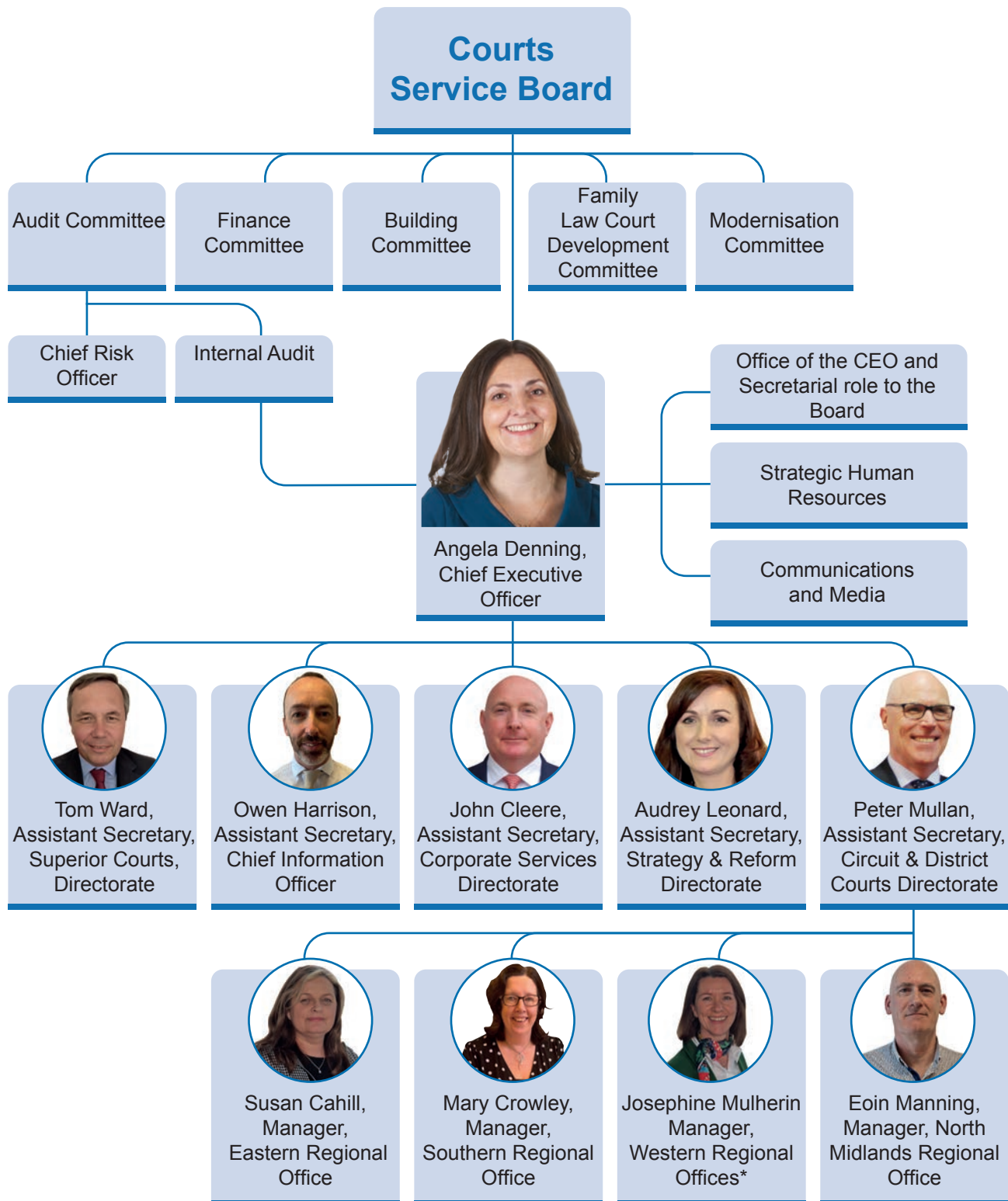
Ms. Karen Kiernan, member of the Courts Service Board (Chair)
Her Honour Judge Alice Doyle, Judge of the Circuit Court
Her Honour Judge Sinéad Ní Chúlacháin, Judge of the Circuit Court
Her Honour Judge Sarah Berkeley, Judge of the Circuit Court
Judge Carol Ann Coolican, Judge of the District Court
Judge Máire Conneely, Judge of the District Court
Mr. John McDaid, Legal Aid Board
Mr. Seán ÓhUaláchain, Bar Council
Ms. Helen Coughlan, Law Society
Mr. Tom Ward, Assistant Secretary of Superior Courts Operations
Ms. Hilary McSweeney, Courts Service representative on Courts Service Board
Ms. Emer Darcy, Head of Family Law Reform
Mr. Peter Mullan, Assistant Secretary of Circuit and District Court Operations
Ms. Rita Considine, Dublin County Registrar
Ms. Sarah Benson, CEO, Women's Aid

Modernisation Committee of the Courts Service Board

The Hon. Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell, Chief Justice, (Chair)
His Honour Judge Colin Daly, Judge of the Circuit Court
Mr. Michael Quinlan, Legal Practitioner Representative
Ms. Catherine Treacy, Former CEO of the Property Registration Authority
Ms. Angela Denning, Chief Executive Officer.



Organisation Structure



* Josephine Mulherin replaced Brendan McDonald who retired in Autumn 2022



Chief Executive Officer and Senior Management Team

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of policies approved by the Board, the day-to-day management of the staff, administration and business of the Courts Service and is also the Accounting Officer for the Courts Service. The Chief Executive Officer is supported by the Senior Management Team comprising Assistant Secretaries with responsibility for Superior Courts, Circuit and District Courts, Strategy and Reform, Corporate Services, the Chief Information Officer together with the Head of Strategic Human Resources, a representative of the Principal Officers and the Principal Officer in the Office of the CEO and Communications.

Organisation structure

The Courts Service is a largely decentralised organisation with administrative responsibility for courthouses and court venues throughout Ireland. In Dublin, court offices support the work of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, Dublin Circuit Court and Dublin Metropolitan District Court in the Four Courts, Criminal Courts of Justice, Dolphin House, Swords, Dun Laoghaire and Cloverhill.

Outside of Dublin, 25 court offices support the work of both the Circuit Court and the District Court, and eight offices support the work of the District Court only.

The Southern Regional Office includes the administrative area of counties: Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, and Kerry.

The Eastern Regional Office includes the administrative area of counties: Kildare, Wicklow, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Laois, and Waterford.

The Western Regional Office includes the administrative area of counties: Mayo, Galway, Clare, Sligo, Roscommon, Donegal, and Leitrim.

The North Midlands Regional Office includes the administrative area of counties: Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Westmeath, Offaly, Longford, and Cavan.



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The year in review



Introduction by Angela Denning, CEO



With the full lifting of pandemic restrictions, the Courts resumed a busy pace of work in 2022. The post-pandemic period revealed some interesting trends which we will be monitoring closely to understand if they are part of long-term change or a short-term readjustment.

Incoming civil business has not returned to the levels experienced before the pandemic. Whether this is due to a change in behaviour, or a legacy of the pandemic years remains to be seen. Following the adoption by the Judicial Council of Personal Injury Guidelines we have noted there has been a significant reduction in the number of new personal injury actions commencing in the High Court and the Circuit Court. Despite the business levels we maintained throughout 2020 and 2021, in 2022 significant delays in family law and criminal courts built up, especially in the Central and Circuit Criminal Courts.

However, to alleviate the waiting times developed due to the pandemic, and to sustain the demand from a growing population and dynamic economy it became apparent in 2022 that the appointment of additional judges with appropriate support structures is required. I would like to recognise the work of the Judicial Planning Working Group (JPWG) undertaken in 2022. The Group was tasked with considering the number and type of judges required to ensure the efficient administration of justice over the next five years as well as the longer term. As a member of the Group, the Courts Service provided data, and analysis to demonstrate the need for extra judges. We also demonstrated the direct correlation between the number of judges and the Courts Service resources needed to provide adequate support services. I believe our membership also helped the Group realise how much of our Modernisation Programme goals and activities are aligned to the efficiencies they envisage for the sector and users. We look forward to working with the Department of Justice, the Judicial Council

and the judiciary, to ensure the implementation of their recommendations, published in 2023.

In 2022, an unprecedented number of people left the Courts Service for various reasons including retirements, and with them years of expertise left also. The timing was particularly difficult coming out of a highly challenging period when staff had gone above and beyond to keep Courts open and safe. This was compounded by the pressure we were under to sustain the momentum of change needed to progress our Modernisation Programme goals.

Recruitment therefore proved another major challenge for us in 2022. And again, our people stepped up, working in an agile way, senior managers and offices across the country collaborated with HR to recruit directly in local and specialised areas. Supported by the Communications and Media Unit, we ran a number of very successful recruitment campaigns nationwide, attracting staff who were excited by the opportunity to work in the Courts. With over 520 people employed in regional offices around the country, the Courts Service can also offer those living outside Dublin the chance to work nearer to home.

In addition, we also introduced new intern programmes with a number of universities nationwide. The intern programmes offer students a paid placement and work experience, whilst providing offices with much needed support. In total last year we welcomed approximately 328 new people, all of whom started with us on new entrants or intern programmes. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our recruits, we are very pleased to have you with us and plan to offer you opportunities to stay for many years to come.



Going from a workforce with a tradition of long service in the same position and lots of experience to hundreds of new recruits and 126 internal candidates successfully gaining promotion has challenged our training approach. We have had to re-examine our training model in 2022. Introducing new and effective systems of learning to train increasing numbers of staff for their current roles as well as setting them up for the roles of the future, is a priority for me and the Senior Management Team as we emerge from 2022. We are committed to continuous improvement in the way we train our staff so that they continue to deliver excellent services while developing new skills and advancing in their careers with us.

Listening to our people will help us best transform how we continue to improve our services, how we work, and how we recruit, train and reward in the most effective way possible. As a mark of our commitment to our people, in 2022 we launched our first People and Organisation Strategy, which included rolling out our first ever organisation employee engagement survey with Healthy Place to Work (HPTW). At the height of our recruitment and operational challenges at the end of last year, over 832 of our people completed the survey. I would like to thank each and every one of them for taking the time to answer and for their responses. As this report is being written, we have received the results and are listening to the feedback. Responding to the survey results, developing action plans and supporting teams across the organisation to make the Courts Service a healthier place to work are also key priorities for myself and the Senior Management Team in 2023.

2022 culminated in the end of the second phase of the Modernisation Programme – the Transition Phase which we marked by transitioning the last of all our 1200 people over to our new desktop ICT solution. By providing everyone with the same modern technology on the one platform, we can start to build consistent systems in a cohesive way across all areas of the organisation. The development of a single case management system is a key to improving our ability to deliver services and to gather data,

which makes securing funding for the next stage of the programme very important. To maintain the momentum and to advance the Modernisation Programme through the Transition Phase (2021 – 2022) total funding of €9.2m was provided for 2022. We were pleased that our second strategic business case submission in 2022 was successful for the Transform Phase. The commitment to and support of our Modernisation Programme by both the Department of Justice and the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform is acknowledged and very much appreciated. Chapter 2 captures in more detail the achievements of the Modernisation Programme in 2022 with a view to these longer-term objectives.

The Courts Service Modernisation Programme is one of a number of programmes and strategies across the justice sector looking to transform the way the sector works. The JPWG recommendations represent another programme of change affecting the entire sector. Data will support effective change and we need reliable, accurate and easily accessible data to achieve this. We are already starting to drive improvements in data availability, reliability, consistency and quality. This will ultimately change how we present and report the data into the future. Collaboration will be the other key success factor in realising the benefits for the user as well as everyone working across the system. We have recent experience of the benefits of good collaboration – keeping Courts open and safe during the pandemic. I look forward to building on this collaborative way of working with the Department of Justice, the judiciary and our colleagues across the justice sector to provide easier and more efficient access to justice in a modern, digital Ireland.

Finally, I would like to sign-off by thanking all our colleagues across the organisation and the sector for their hard work and dedication in 2022.

Angela Denning
Chief Executive Officer
The Courts Service



About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of Court Service operations across all jurisdictions, specifically highlighting the trends and changing nature of some of the work as we emerged from the pandemic.

We then provide a progress update on the Modernisation Programme, highlighting particular achievements. At the end of this chapter we report on our target activities for 2022 that are aligned to our six strategic goals from the Corporate Strategic Plan 2021-2023, which in turn supports delivery of our Strategic Vision 2030.

We also provide environmental sustainability and energy updates. 2022 was a very positive year for our outreach programme as we welcomed back school tours, and delivered an extensive Decade of Centenary Commemorations programme marking the Battle of the Four Courts, on which we also provide an update.

2. Workforce profile 2017- 2022

The chart at Figure 1 shows the significant increase of those employed on a Full-time Equivalent (FTE) basis over the past 6 years. The challenge is to retain and develop our new colleagues to be successful and increase our organisational performance and effectiveness. To find out more about how we plan to do this, please read our

People and Organisation Strategy update under the Modernisation Programme section of this chapter.

2.1 Business of the Courts in 2022

2.1.1 Circuit and District Court Operations

We entered 2022 having faced two years with the exceptional challenge of keeping Courts open and safe. The Government’s Transitional Protocol and the updated Courts Service Health and Safety Management programme led to a gradual, and very welcome, return to regular business.

Although courts remained open during the pandemic, there were extended periods when only emergency and urgent matters were being heard. Much productive court time was lost, and capacity levels coming out of the pandemic meant that completely making up for lost court time proved impossible in 2022.

Over the period of 2019 to 2022, activity in Criminal and Family Courts increased but there was also a significant decrease in Civil Court activity. It is difficult to say if patterns of activity during and directly after the pandemic will continue, they may just reflect the uncertain times to which the pandemic gave rise.

Figure 1. FTE 31 Dec 2017 To 31 Dec 2022

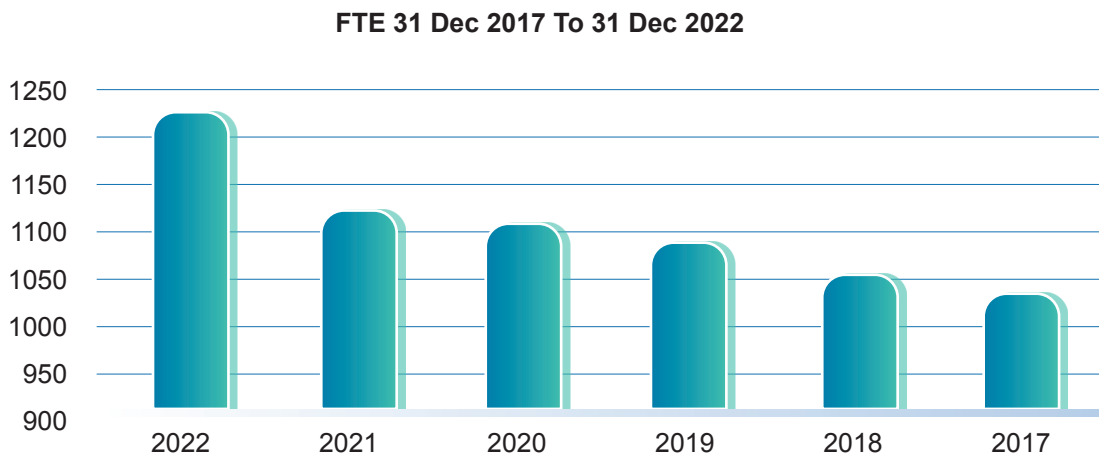
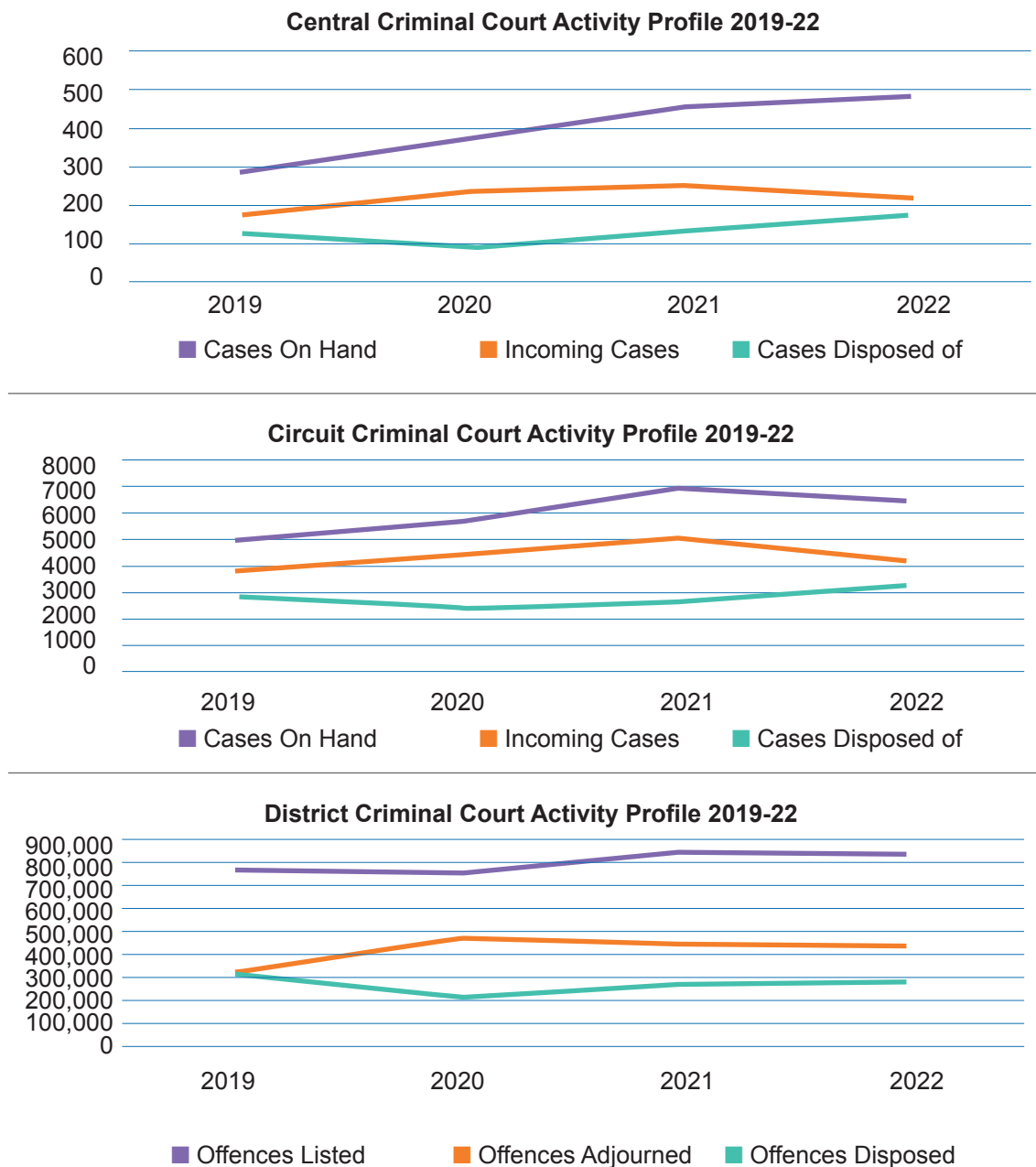




Figure 2. Trends in Central, Circuit and District Criminal Courts



Trends in the Criminal Courts

Both the Central and Circuit Criminal Courts experienced high growth in new cases over the period 2019 to 2022 (see Figure 2), while also having periods when trials were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. New cases increased by over 25% each year in the Central Criminal Court and by over 10% in the Circuit Criminal Court. Compared to 2019 both Courts have increased volumes of cases on hand at the end of 2022 because of the loss of court sitting time and the increase in new cases. A higher number

of cases were ‘disposed of’ (cases can be closed for several reasons) in 2022 than 2019 in both Courts.

In the same period, District Criminal Courts saw increased volumes of adjournments and a decrease in offences being disposed of as COVID-19 restrictions often meant only urgent matters could be dealt with.

In 2022 with the full re-opening of Courts, adjournments started to reduce and the disposal rates increased. We expect this pattern will continue.



Figure 3. Trends in the Family Courts

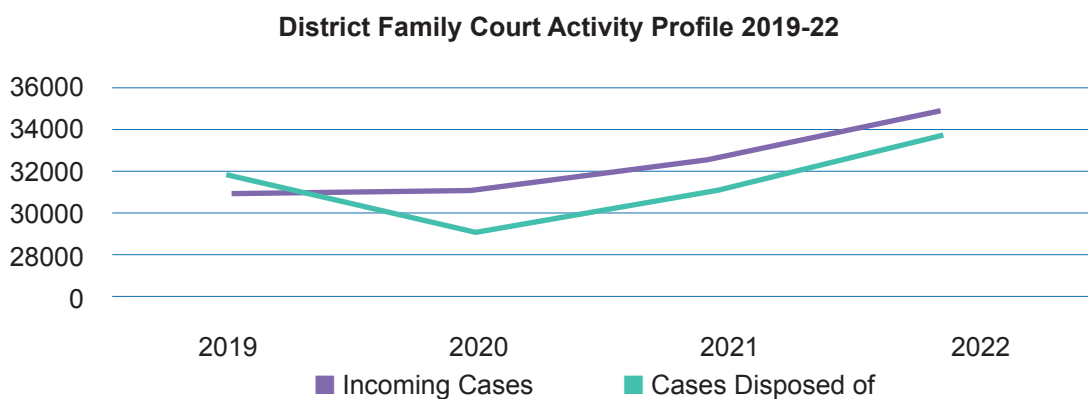
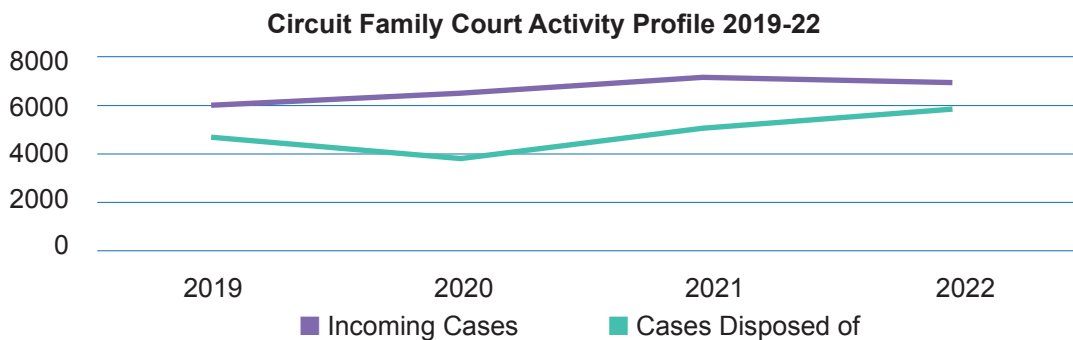
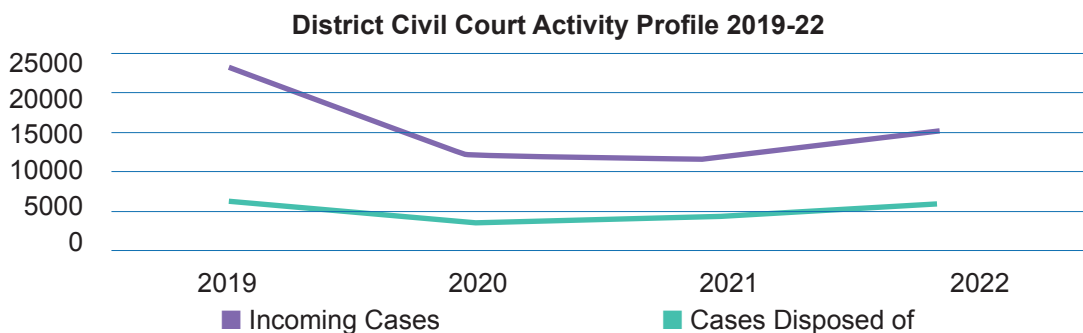
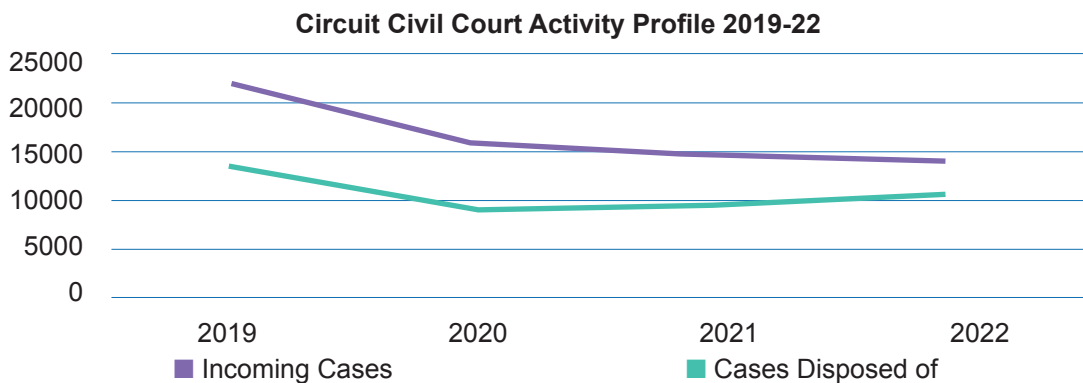


Figure 4. Trends in Civil Courts





Trends in Family Courts

We have seen an increase in new applications over the period in both Circuit and District Family Courts (see Figure 3). The Circuit Court experienced an increase of over 15% and the District Court of over 10%, between 2019 - 2022. The rate of disposal has also increased but not quite at the same level of new business. The trend of decreasing judicial separation applications has continued since the introduction of the Family Law Act 2019, with 486 applications received in 2022 compared to 1,229 in 2019.

Trends in Civil Courts

There has been a sharp fall in new Civil cases in both Circuit and District Courts. New applications were down by 35% in both jurisdictions, and this followed significant decreases in 2020 and 2021 as well (see figure 4). Disposal rates rebounded in 2022 and are now back to 80% of pre-pandemic levels in the Circuit and 90% in the District Court.

In personal injury cases, the Circuit and District Courts differed. Following the adoption by the Judicial Council of Personal Injury Guidelines we have noted the number of awards made in Circuit Courts dropped to 57% of 2019's volume and 58% of the value. District Court awards increased in volume by 14% but decreased by 10% in value.

2.1.2 Delivery of judgments in the Appellate Jurisdictions (Superior Courts)

The work in the Appellate Courts continued apace in 2022 with more time being devoted to judgment writing and proportionately less time sitting to hear cases. This was prompted by the significant number of cases awaiting judgments, particularly in the Court of Appeal, where the holding of remote sittings was prioritised during the pandemic. Save for emergency matters, the Court did not sit to hear applications between 25 April and 2 June, to facilitate the delivery of judgments for cases heard in late 2021 and early 2022.

Changes in incoming business in the High Court

The numbers of new cases commenced in the High Court has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, as can be seen in Figure 5.

A significant reason for the change in the overall pattern of incoming cases appears to relate to the impact of the Judicial Council Guidelines on Personal Injury awards. In previous years, the numbers of new personal injury summonses issued in the High Court tended to average around 400 per month. In the run up to commencement of the implementation of the guidelines, there was a spike of over 900 new sets of proceedings issued in April 2021. This figure dropped to under 200 per month for each of the remaining months in 2021 and monthly numbers of new applications continued at this level in 2022, as can be seen from the chart in Figure 6.

The numbers of Personal Injury cases commenced after the end of April 2021 that resulted in an award in Court continued to be relatively small, and this is consistent with previous years. For those cases where an award was made, the average amount awarded by the High Court in respect of cases issued after April 2021 continued to trend downwards. Based upon a small sample size, it is interesting to note that the average award on foot of a settlement ruled by the Court was €135,934 in comparison to the average award made by settlements in Court of €120,043 in 2022. We also saw the highest amount awarded in the High Court drop to €19 million in 2022 from €30 million the previous year which was an increase on €22.5 million in 2020 and €25 million in 2019.

The data on awards tells only part of the story on activity in personal injury lists in the High Court. In reality, users of the court will be aware that there continues to be large numbers of cases listed in the personal injury lists each day, with consequent orders being made. In 2022, 7,854 orders were made by the High Court for personal injury cases issued in 2022 and previous



Figure 5. Cases commenced in the High Court

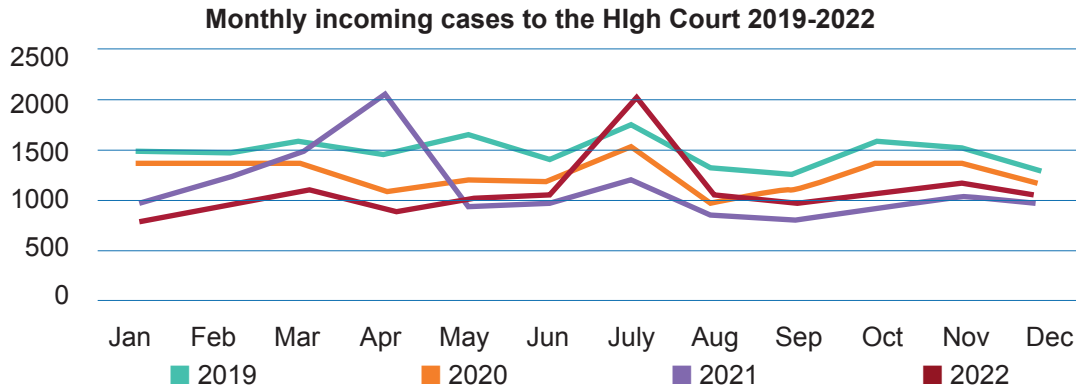
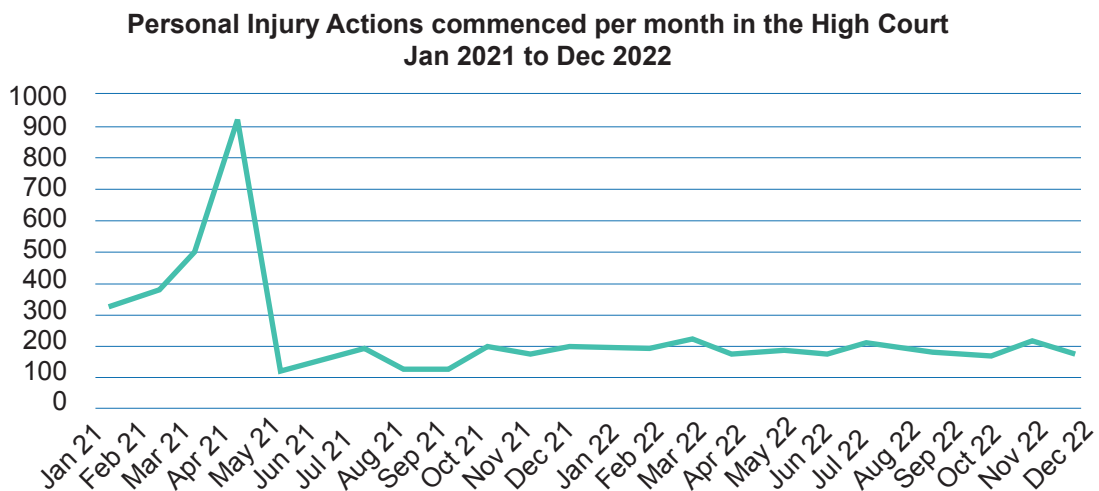


Figure 6. Personal Injury actions commenced Jan 21 to Dec 2022



years. Of that number, the court ordered in 2,892 instances that the cases listed for hearing could be struck out because the parties had settled the case before hearing. A further 1,140 cases were struck out with an associated order for costs because of a motion issued by one or other party. Of the other orders that were made, the most notable class of order made were discovery orders where there were 1,080 cases where either the plaintiff or the defendant applied to the court seeking to compel disclosure and production of relevant documents held or the control of the other party to the dispute.

Wardship

Much of 2022 was taken up preparing for the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act 2022 which was signed into law at the end of the year. 26 April 2023 was set as the commencement date of the new regime to replace wardship. Despite this and in advance of that date, the numbers of new applications to bring people into wardship showed no sign of abating. As can be seen in Figure 6 the numbers of new applications for wardship remained at similar levels in the time since the enactment of the 2015 Act up to 2021. In 2022, that rate of application increased with over 500 applications received in the calendar year.



At the same time, the Courts Service has seen a change in profile of the cases, with more younger people being made Wards of Court for a range of different reasons. This trend is reflected in, not only the total number of active cases for which the

General Solicitor acts as Committee, (who represent the interests of the Ward) (Figure 7) but also, the reasons why people are currently supported by the General Solicitor and her staff (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Applications for wardship 2016 - 2022

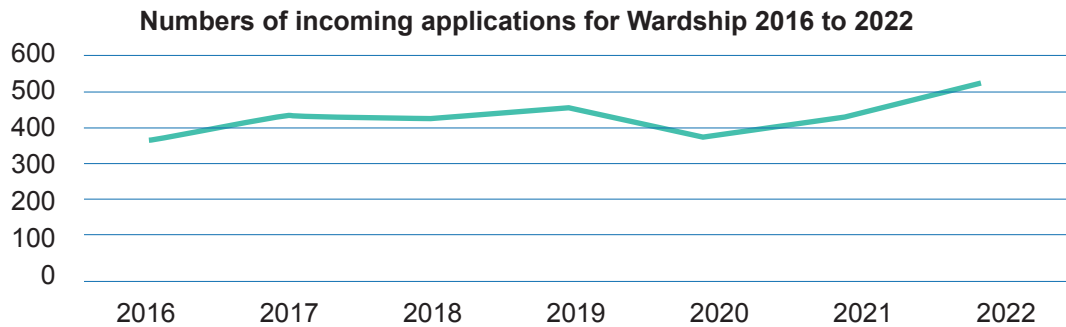


Figure 8. Yearly average number of cases where the General Solicitor acts as Committee for Wards.

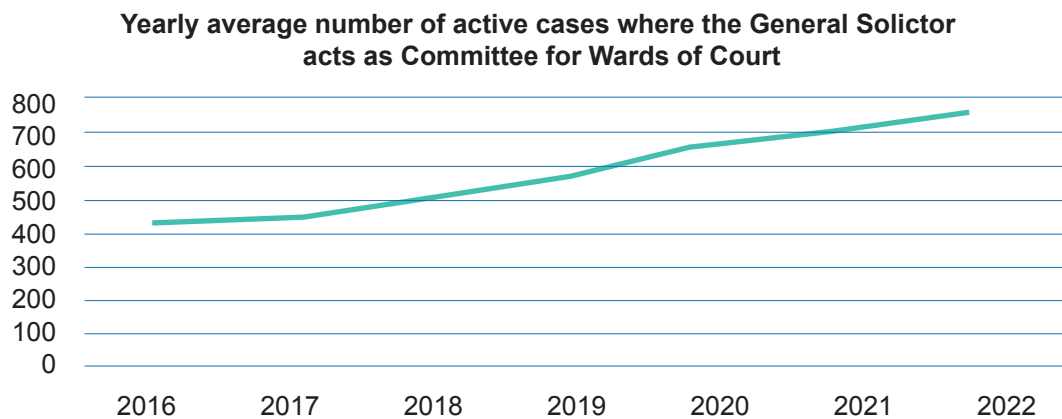


Figure 9. Reasons for admittance into Wardship where General Solicitor acts as Committee.

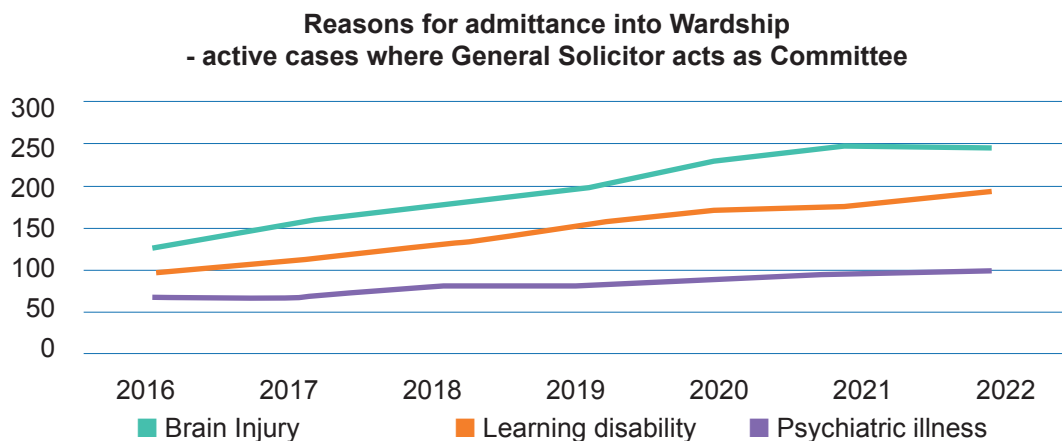




Figure 10. Incoming applications for registration of Enduring Powers of Attorney

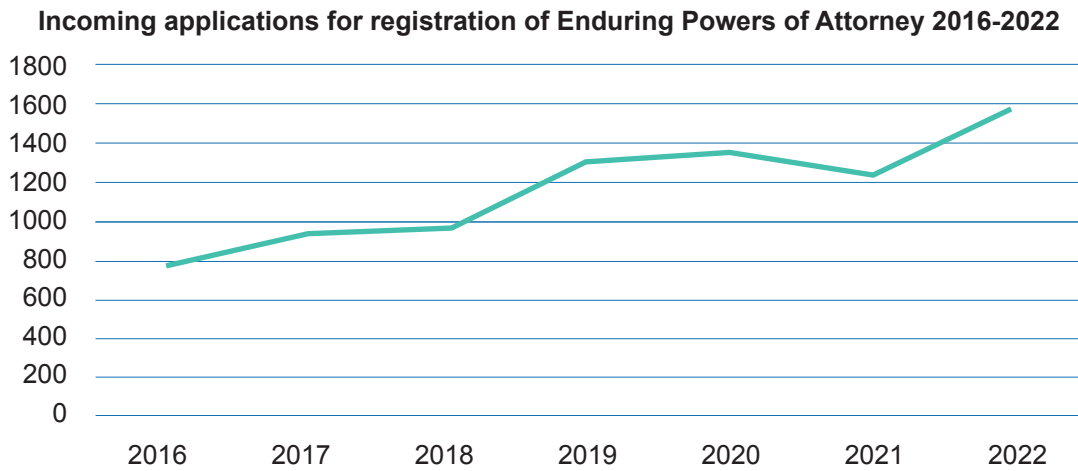
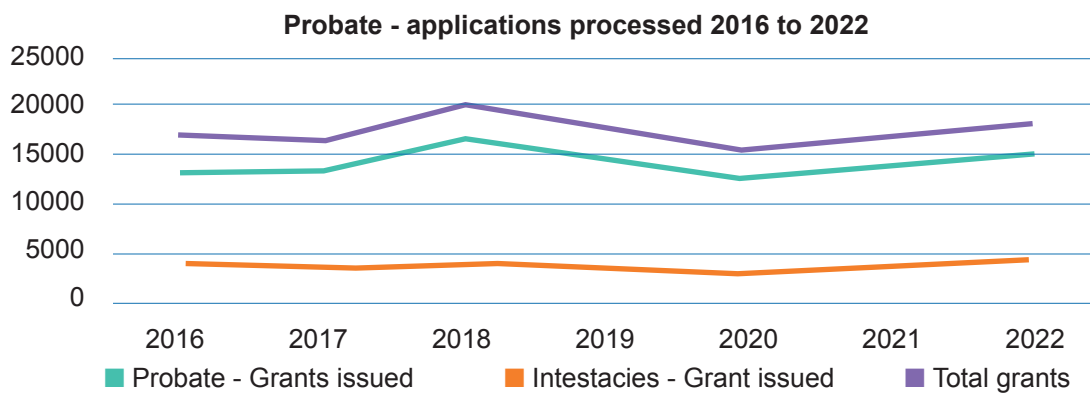


Figure 11. Probate applications processed 2016 – 2022



Over the period of the pandemic, there was also a spike in the numbers of people registering Enduring Powers of Attorney to make personal care decisions on a donor’s behalf, where they are no longer capable of taking decisions for themselves. The number of applications had doubled since 2016 and carried on into 2022, with almost 1,600 registered as per Figure 9.

Probate

The numbers of applications for a Grant of Letters of Administration or of Probate issued in 2022 returned to pre-pandemic levels (see Figure 10). While travel restrictions during the pandemic may have delayed some applications for probate being lodged, it is interesting to note that the reduction in the numbers of applications

for probate during the pandemic was not as pronounced as in other civil application types.

Delays in processing applications both in the Dublin Probate Office and the District Probate Registries were a cause of concern, given the need to support efforts to increase the supply of residential units, as part of the Housing for All policy. Challenges, for the Courts Service to process applications smoothly included an increase in the complexity of estates, with more people having properties in other jurisdictions, staffing challenges with the retirement of experienced staff after the pandemic period as well as ongoing issues with errors in applications.



In an effort to meet the need to reduce the processing time for applications, an eProbate project will get under way in 2023 with the aim of streamlining the processes for applicants, simplifying the application process and making it easier to complete the process, regardless of where in the country they are based.

2.2 Modernisation Programme

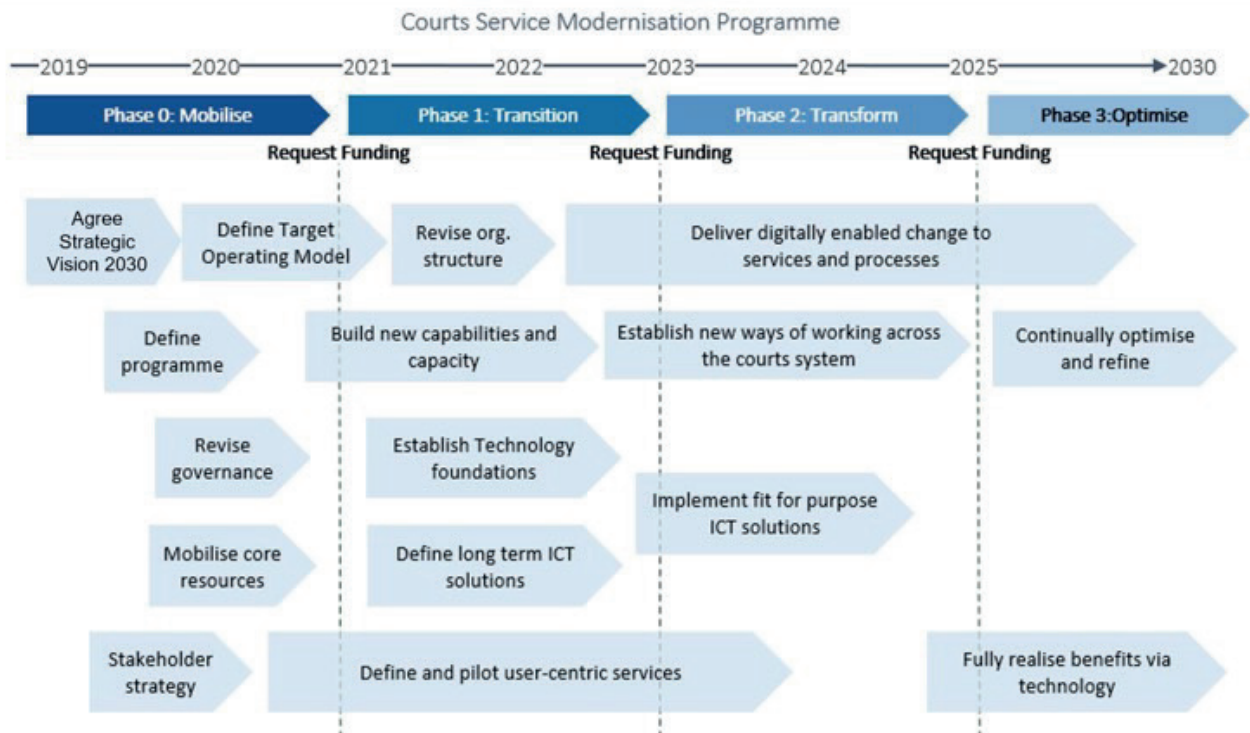
In 2022 the Courts Service reached the end of the second phase of our ten-year Modernisation Programme, the Transition Phase (2021-2022). As detailed in Figure 11, this phase was about establishing the supports and structures needed to deliver our long-term transformational change programme. Many of the achievements in 2022 are listed under the Strategic Goals table from our Corporate Strategic Plan 2021-2023, detailed later in this chapter. Last year we progressed our user-centric and digital first goals which aim to provide

users with simpler and more consistent services. Here we provide a quick overview of the progress made.

User-centric approach

Listening to users over the past two years has informed our thinking across many projects. Our new information on, preparing for family law court, divorce and judicial separation was released on courts.ie in 2022. By listening to a wide range of people involved in the family law system, including service users, we developed accessible and easy-to-understand Family Law information to help people when their relationships break down. Courts Service staff can now point people to this resource to help members of the public understand the process and the supports available. Information on additional family law topics such as maintenance, domestic abuse, and arrangements for children will be added in 2023.

Figure 12. Modernisation Programme 10-year roadmap





The Civil Reform and Innovation teams in 2022 developed a new and innovative “360 Virtual Tour” resource to help people prepare for coming to Court. The tours were developed as a direct response to user feedback highlighting how many people find going to Court intimidating and challenging. Our Innovation team were successful in securing funding from Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform’s Public Service Innovation Fund for the “360 Virtual Tours” project. In 2022 tours of the Four Courts complex, Criminal Courts of Justice and the Family Law office in Dolphin House were completed, to be launched in 2023. The tours address user pain points by guiding them through the physical court buildings and highlighting some of the types of people they can expect to meet.

cash handled at counters also supports the work of our customer-facing staff in Circuit and District Courts and offices nationwide.

Innovation

2022 was an exciting year for innovation in the Courts Service. In addition to the “360 Virtual Tours” mentioned above, we also launched our first Innovation Education programme, tailored specifically to the Courts Service. This programme will be delivered with our Learning and Development Unit to build innovation capabilities across the organisation which we see as key to the success of the Modernisation Programme. We also ran another action-packed National Public Service Innovation Week 2022 at the end of the year.

Service design, designing services and improvements for users with users, is at the heart of putting users first and both these projects demonstrate this approach in action and the benefits. Our approach and experience has informed the Design Principles for Government in Ireland adopted across the public sector in 2022.

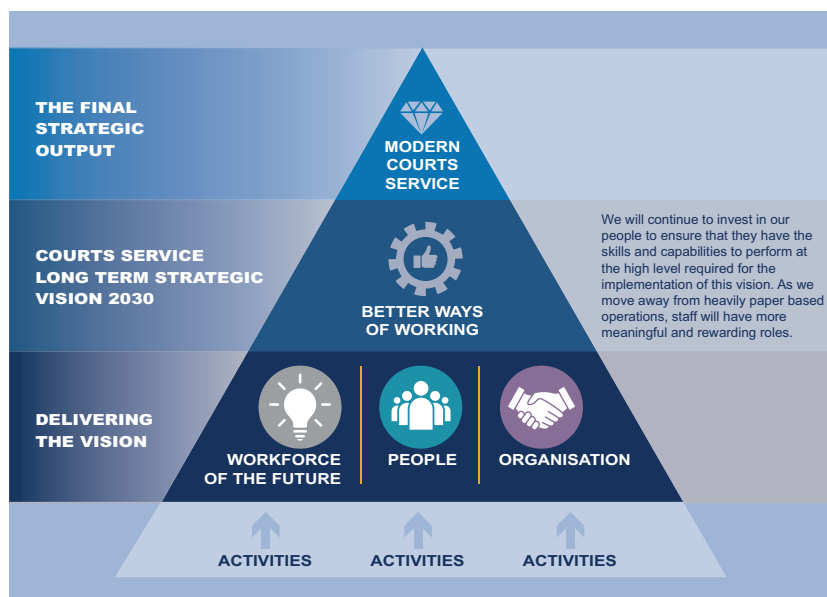
Building Capacity and Capability

In 2022 we launched two strategies that clearly set out how we want to change the organisation, as part of the Modernisation Programme, over the rest of the decade.

Not all our projects are about redesigning services, some are about looking at how we provide increased or better options for users. In 2022 we introduced card payment options across the offices to allow court users pay certain transactions by card in addition to cheque and cash. Reducing the amount of

People and Organisation Strategy 2022 - 2024

To support our Strategic Vision 2030 of “Better Ways of Working”, our People and Organisation Strategy sets out how we will provide the right support and environment for our staff to flourish. The Strategy was developed through consultation with staff and groups of representatives from each area of the organisation.





Divided across three strategic themes, Workforce of the Future, People and Organisation, there are 22 specific measurable actions. Focusing on purpose, values, culture and career development, workforce planning, skills development and leadership development, a leadership in action programme at Principal Officer level was established in 2022 to support the rollout.

Employee engagement was also an important area of focus last year, in order to grow the organisation we need to understand the organisation. At the end of 2022 we ran the Healthy Place to Work (HPTW) survey which had a terrific response rate with over 70% of the organisation participating in the survey. Encouraging healthy places to work make for healthier, happier people. We are very grateful for all the responses received and have started listening closely to the feedback. We scored 50% which is short of the 70% needed to be certified as a Healthy Place to Work. In 2023 we will be adding to our 22 People and Organisation Actions to fulfil the actions coming from the HPTW results.

To read the Strategy, scan the accompanying QR Code.



Inclusion Group

The Courts Service takes seriously the issues of equality and human rights and its obligations under section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. Inclusivity and the need to create a more inclusive environment for staff, as well as those visiting the Courts, consistently featured as part of the staff feedback during the development of the People and Organisation strategy. The Courts Service Inclusion Group was established in 2022 by

combining the existing Human Rights and Equality group within the Courts Service and managers involved in the People and Organisation strategy implementation, who saw the potential to bring consideration of the subjects of inclusivity and equality together.

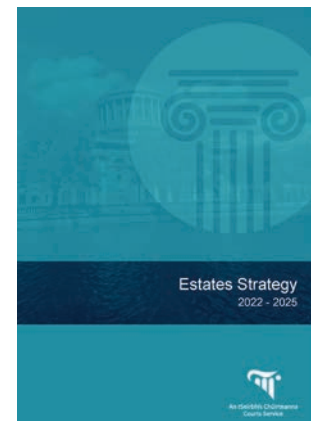
This group of like-minded people across the organisation aims to ensure the Courts Service is not just compliant with the equality and human rights legislation but that we proactively strive to achieve a diverse and inclusive work environment protecting the human rights of staff and users. In 2022 the Inclusion group's work focused on building awareness amongst staff, access to Justice and collaborating with court user groups. The group are dedicated to creating an environment where equality, diversity and inclusion are at the centre of how we operate, work together and deliver our services.

Courts Service Estates Strategy 2022 - 2025

The Courts Service estate is a valuable state asset, which is central to where and how we administer justice, and for which we have an obligation to manage and maintain. For

context, the estate consists of 103 individual buildings, with an average age of 162 years old, many of which are protected structures presenting unique challenges. While we have successfully refurbished and modernised a number of court buildings nationwide, the Strategy aims to ensure that our buildings and facilities are fit-for-purpose and continue to properly serve all our users.

Our estate plays a crucial role in facilitating the transformation of the Courts Service and enhancing our user-centric approach to delivering improved services. The Strategy





is the first of its kind for the organisation and sets out an ambitious long-term vision and the strategic initiatives needed to advance our progress under the Modernisation Programme. The strategy was published in 2022, covering the period 2022 to 2025 and aligns to our current multi-annual capital funding.

The strategy sets out how we intend to develop the estate and respond to digitisation, modernisation and new ways of working for staff, the Judiciary and court users. It was prepared following consultation with internal and external stakeholders which identified challenges and opportunities facing the estate. In light of this the Estates Vision is – **“A fit-for-purpose estate that facilities access to justice for all users and is responsive to our future ways of delivering services.”**

Unlocking the full potential of our estate will require significant transformation. In response to this challenge the strategy covers 4 Pillars, each containing a number of initiatives to achieve our Vision and address the challenges which we face.

To read the Strategy, scan the accompanying QR Code.



ICT developments and progress in 2022

Our very ambitious plans outlined in our 10-year Modernisation Programme cannot be turned around overnight, we need considered long- and short-term planning. A significant overhaul of the existing ICT infrastructure and redesign of services around the needs of Court users requires good data. Data is therefore a critical enabler in facilitating the successful delivery of the Modernisation Programme.



HR plays a vital role in creating a healthier, engaged, resilient and productive workforce.

Our Corporate Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023 sets out our ICT strategic goals for the period including goal 2 ‘We will adopt a digital first approach’ with two attaching priorities, to:

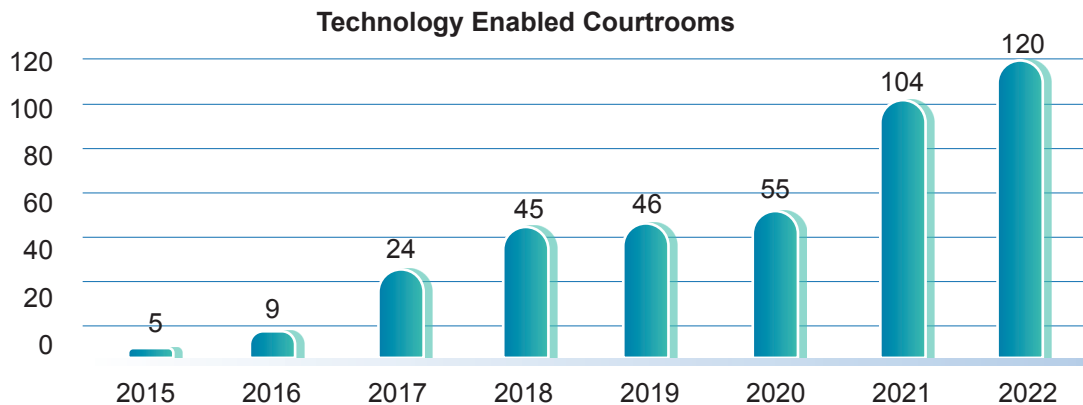
1. Develop an ICT and data strategy to define the application, infrastructure and data architecture to support a modern and digitally-enabled Courts Service.
2. Engage in collaborative digital initiatives with other agencies to drive efficiencies.

We developed and published the ICT and data strategies in 2021 and in 2022 we focused on delivering the actions set out in the strategies. Our target activities for 2022 and achievements are listed at the back of this chapter.

We started with the basics by transitioning all 1,200 staff over to a new digital desktop solution. Our new solution provides the latest Microsoft cloud products to users via laptops and mobile phones – Office, Outlook, Teams, OneDrive, etc. Not only does this solution provide security and reliability from an IT risk perspective, it also gives staff the tools to work in a much more connected and collaborative way. Equipped with the same standardised and reliable digital tools and technology on a versatile platform, we can now support consistent digital systems for the future.



Figure 13. Technology Enabled Courtrooms



Our systems had organically grown over decades of under-funding to over 140 different systems, managing various case types, without any integration. On the Microsoft Power Platform, we can now replace our legacy case management systems with a single modern platform capable of offering online services. In 2022 we concentrated on developing the building blocks of a unified case management system for the Courts and in 2023 will start to replace Civil legacy systems in the High Court and the Family Law system in the Circuit Court, with others to follow. We have also started building new processes on the platform. In 2022 we started developing a new system to support the procedures to be introduced with the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 and Amended Act 2022 in 2023. The introduction of the new system, developed for all Circuit Court offices across the country receiving the new 'Capacity applications' for the appointment of a decision-making representative, will be our first case type to move into the unified case management system.

These key projects are the start of our move to a single digital first platform, aimed at improving our staff, judiciary, and court user experience. It will give a coherence to the way we operate and how we gather data to support our decision-making. From an end-user perspective, this case management system will be capable of supporting electronic filings, payments, order collection, case tracking and other related services via an online portal.

Digital Projects

In 2022 we also continued to modernise some of services and deliver on our cross-agency digital projects:



- By the end of 2022 we had completed the rollout of 120 *video technology-enabled courtrooms across our estate*. The technology supports virtual appearances from litigants, legal professionals, expert witnesses, prisoners, and Gardaí dialling-in from remote locations to a physical courtroom with digital evidence display. Video technology in courtrooms provides users with more options for participating in cases without needing to be physically present in the courtroom. A major benefit has been the uptake by the Irish Prison Service, who accounted for approximately 68% of the 34,355 videolink calls in 2022.
- We successfully completed the eCharge sheets project which automatically pulls charge sheet and station bail data from An Garda Síochána's system into the



Courts Service system (up to 2021, all data had to be manually typed in). The new system is being used to process 95% of all charge sheets and has resulted in 77% reduction in the time taken to process a charge sheet. This has resulted in improved turnaround times and better quality of data, leading to improved process efficiencies, one of our priority modernisation aims.

- September saw the launch of a new automated data sharing system whereby the Courts send driver disqualification data to the Road Safety Authority for processing. This initiative streamlined a previously manual process while improving data quality.
- In December 2022, we launched the new online jury summons platform, allowing those who receive a jury summons to respond and monitor the status of their reply in real time. The platform is being rolled out across the country on a phased basis.

Data

The Courts process a vast amount of data on any given day and a unified case management system is part of the solution to better manage that data. The Courts Service Data Strategy, outlines a series of initiatives that will enhance our capacity to manage and appropriately use data generated from our activities. The initiatives in the Strategy are grouped under four data themes: governance, use of data, improved processes and technology with a total of 23 actions. The actions for 2022 are tracked to our target activities, the achievements for which are detailed at the back of this chapter.

However, we recognise that we also need to better understand the data we have before we can improve. Understanding our data has been the challenge and preoccupation of our new Head of Data who progressed a number of projects in 2022 to mine through, sort, organise and define the data across all systems. In trying to better understand and categorise data, we also worked with the

National Archives of Ireland to carry out a full survey of the records of all court jurisdictions in 2022. This work informed a data retention policy for the organisation which we will start to implement in 2023.

Better data management will improve how we make decisions and will support the Judicial Planning Working Group recommendations developed in 2022 for publication by the Minister for Justice Simon Harris in 2023.

Hammond Lane

The Hammond Lane project will provide a modern, purpose-built court facility where family law cases can be held in a dignified and secure environment, with a range of support services at hand. The new complex is being designed with the specific needs of family law court users in mind. On completion it will replace existing family law facilities at Dolphin House, Chancery Street and Phoenix House. A preliminary business case was completed and submitted to the Department of Justice in early 2022 and approval in principle was received from the Department in June 2022.

Work on the design of the building was ongoing over the course of the year and in September detailed plans were provided by the OPW. The plans provide for 19 courtrooms, a family law court office, accommodation for family law staff and





Prof Diarmuid Ferriter delivers a lecture in the Four Courts Round Hall

judges as well as space for the Legal Aid Board, legal practitioners and a range of services that operate in the area of family law including mediation and domestic violence support services. The building will have a variety of public waiting areas including child- and family-friendly waiting areas and will be fully accessible. Following receipt of the plans a detailed consultation exercise was undertaken with approximately 30 internal and external stakeholders. The plans were positively received. Work by the Office of Public Works on the planning application was underway by year end.

2.3 Environmental Sustainability in 2022

In 2022, the Courts Service focused on delivering on the key actions set out in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy published in November 2021. A sample of the actions completed include

- Completion of a Gap to Target analysis in preparation for publication of the first Climate Action Roadmap in Q1 2023.
- Collaboration with the OPW and SEAI in a Pathfinder project for two protected Courthouses to identify appropriate technical solutions and funding mechanisms to achieve 2030 decarbonisation targets.
- Investment of €1.5 Million in upgrades to thermal plant and systems, smart building controls, migration to electric heating, energy-efficient lighting and fuel monitors.
- Expansion of our staff engagement programs and green team activities.

We participated in the 'Reduce Your Use' campaign in the winter of 2022/23, a Public Sector-wide energy-efficiency initiative developed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and the Office of Public Works. This included twice-weekly emails to all staff, weekly webinars and the provision of Courts Service fleeces to all staff in late 2022 to align with the campaign messaging.

Energy data

In 2022 the Courts Service Monitoring and Reporting data indicated the following provisional results

- Total energy expenditure €3,782,618.*
- Total final energy consumption of 28,062,078 kWh.
- Carbon emissions of 5,246,688 kgCO₂.
- Contribution from renewables 0.1% (thermal).
- The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland Monitoring and Reporting provisional result indicates the Courts Service was 37.8% more energy efficient in 2022 than in 2009, indicating an improvement of 15.7% between 2021 and 2022.



- COVID-19 continued to have a significant impact on our energy utilisation in early 2022 due to system operation to support increased ventilation in line with Health and Safety guideline.
- Our electricity and gas supply is via public sector contracts managed by the Office of Government Procurement. The electricity contract was retendered and awarded in June 2022 for an 18-month term with a large increase resulting due to instability in the utility markets.

2.4 Outreach

In 2022 we were able to reopen our doors to school visits and our Transition Year work experience programme, which booked up quickly. We also hosted open days to the public in the Four Courts for Open House Dublin and on Culture Night.

In September, we joined 300,000 attendees and 1,700 exhibitors in Ratheniska, Co. Laois, at our first visit to the National Ploughing Championships. We met hundreds of attendees and shared information on the courts system with them and promoted the upcoming job opportunities across the country.

Decade of Centenaries

Our contribution to the Decade of Centenaries commemorations proved a resounding success in 2022, with a series of tours, lectures, an exhibition and a new mobile 3D App telling the story of the Four Courts in 1922.

Notable lectures were delivered by Professor Diarmuid Ferriter, Liz Gillis, Las Fallon, Ruth Cannon BL, Professor Eunan O’Halpin, The Hon. Mr. Justice Gerard Hogan, The Hon. Mr. Justice John Hedigan and Dr Bláthna Ruane.

Some 19 volunteers and 10 guides escorted more than 800 visitors around the Four Courts to talk through the Battle of the Four Courts and the opening days of the Irish Civil War.

Many more visited our exhibition, ‘The Four Courts: 1922, Before and After’, which ran in the historic Round Hall during the summer.

The Commemorations additionally attracted more than 600,000 hits on social media and considerable positive response across various platforms.

Our centenary commemorations will continue over the next 2 years, covering the period that saw the end of the Dáil Courts and the introduction of a new Courts system in the country.

‘FourCourts100’ App

The ‘Four Courts 100’ app was developed to give people everywhere access to our exhibition and the history of the Four Courts. The app explores how the Four Courts were built, the occupation and battle, the rebuilding and finally the future of the Courts Service.

You can take a virtual tour of the Four Courts and understand how the battle unfolded over those momentous days. The app can also be used for a self-guided tour to take you through the buildings.

To download the app please go to any app store and search for “Four Courts 100” or use the accompanying QR code to get the link from our App website.



2.5 Strategic Goals 1 - 6: Actions and Deliverables 2021

In 2020, the Courts Service adopted an ambitious ten-year Modernisation Programme aimed at improving access to justice in a modern, digital Ireland. The first two years of the programme established the foundations which are critical for a successful long-term programme. In this section we map our strategic goals and priority actions detailed in our Corporate Strategic Plan 2021-2023 to our targeted activities for the Corporate Business Plan 2022.

The Corporate Business Plan for 2022 outlines the priority actions for the second year of



the Strategic Plan and which covers the 'transition' phase of our 10-year Modernisation Programme to reach our Strategic Vision 2030. The annual business plan provides guidance for individual office business plans as each office sets about carrying out their goals for the coming year.

Our operating environment is dynamic. We must acknowledge that our business-as-usual working environment has changed significantly in the past few years and that it continues to change. Our Corporate Business Plan is reviewed quarterly and amended if the broader environment in which we operate requires us to adjust. Progress is reviewed against the Strategic Plan 2021 — 2023 by our Board on a quarterly basis allowing us to continue to refine and adapt our efforts whilst maintaining a focus on our medium-term strategic goals.

Our 2022 deliverables are aimed at embedding the work achieved during the initial set-up stage of the Modernisation Programme and transitioning to new ways of working. Across the following six tables we provide a snapshot of the activities delivered in 2022 to keep us on track for reaching our 3-year Strategic Plan goals to end of 2023.



Goal 1: Take a user-centric approach

Strategic Goal

We will adopt new collaborative ways of working, taking a user-centric approach, to provide improved and enhanced service delivery.

supports a user-centric, evidence-based approach to provide equal service to all sectors of society.

- Better understanding of the needs of all service users.
- Culture of collaborative working.
- User-friendly and efficient experience for those who engage with the Courts

Key Outcomes 2021 - 2023

- A Service Delivery Model in place that

Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Establish User Research and Service Design function to partner with the Judiciary and stakeholders to ensure best outcomes for all court users, with a specific focus on vulnerable users.	Customer charter to be reviewed and to consider the customer service function for 2023.	Initial scoping work completed. Customer service project to be established in 2023.
	Continue the research and service design methodology to inform the development of modernised services.	User research and service design has been integrated into the programme workstreams.
Develop and implement a Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and plan to effectively engage stakeholders	Implement Modernisation Programme (MP) communications and engagement plan.	MP Communications and engagement plan implemented in line with the Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and followers across all social media platforms grew.
	Coordinate bi-monthly Judicial Engagement Working Group and Legal Practitioners Working Group meetings to provide Modernisation Programme feedback with key stakeholders across the justice sector.	Six meetings of each group took place in 2022.
	Establish a Civic Society Engagement Working Group.	Separate engagement with the different organisations took place directly with the reform teams and projects in 2022. Forming of the formal group was deferred to 2023.
	Adopt the Courts Service Change Model and Change Management practices into all new change projects.	The Model has been developed and will be reviewed in 2023 to reflect changes in project management approaches.
	Develop Decade of Centenary Commemorations to extend our reach to a broader range of stakeholders.	Delivered a comprehensive programme of commemorations including a 3D App on the history of the Four Courts 1922. +800 members of the public attended events and social media following grew by 31% across all channels.



Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Standardise and simplify appropriate court procedures.	Resource the Criminal Reform pillar of the Modernisation Programme.	Criminal Reform projects resourced as necessary
	Standardise and simplify court procedures relating to Civil Debt and Family law.	Draft digital rules are currently under consideration.
	Prioritise Assisted Decision Making (ADM) procedures and rules/forms for simplification and user-centricity.	Considerable work was undertaken on simplifying procedures, rules and forms ahead of commencement of the Act in 2023.
	Improve awareness and understanding of court procedures relating to Civil and Family Law.	New content on pre-court requirements, separation and divorce went live on our website in 2022. A wide range of information was provided to support users in advance of the commencement of the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act. Work was completed on three “360 virtual tours” of Áras Uí Dhálaigh, the Four Courts, the Criminal Courts of Justice and Dolphin House, with launch set for Spring 2023.
Support legislative initiatives as prioritised in the Programme for Government such as the Family Courts Bill.	Continue to contribute to the preparation of legislation that will impact on the operations of the Courts and in particular the Courts Bill and the Family Courts Bill.	We continued to provide input to the Department of Justice on operational issues arising from the Family Courts Bill.
	Develop arrangements for commencement of the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act (ADMC) Act.	Work continued through 2022 to develop new ICT systems, processes and learning modules, ahead of commencement in 2023.
	Finalise interface arrangements with Decision Support Service (DSS) in advance of commencement of (ADMC) Act.	We collaborated with DSS throughout 2022 including delivering a joint webinar with over 1,300 attendees.
	Finalise development of internal procedures to ready cases in all jurisdictions for supervision under new Decision Support arrangements.	Work is well advanced, and we will be ready for the go-live date in 2023.
	Finalise project to develop internal procedures, communicate with key stakeholders and assign resources to manage new applications under (ADMC) Act.	Impact assessments have been completed, regular information updates provided to user, joint information webinar held with the DSS to +1,300 attendees. Work will continue until the go-live date in 2023.



Goal 2: Support the Judiciary

Strategic Goal

We will work collaboratively with the Judiciary to define and provide the resources needed to effectively carry out their judicial functions.

Key Outcomes 2021 - 2023

- ▶ Efficient, effective and suitable support services provided to the Judiciary to enable fulfilment of their judicial functions.
- ▶ Reform of court procedures and practices progressed through stronger collaboration.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Engage with the Judiciary to define requirements, to improve efficiencies and share information and best practice.	Bi-monthly meetings with the Judicial Engagement Working Group to identify common areas for reform and act as champions for engagement and change.	Six meetings took place in 2022 and engagement with the Working Group has been productive.
	Lead out on agreed recommendations of Civil Justice Review Report within the remit of the Courts Service.	3 meetings attended with the Dept. of Justice Kelly Implementation Group, including an evaluation of the Judicial Review process. Further meetings are planned for 2023.
	Implement Judicial Communications Committee proposal and recommendations to improve communication with the Judiciary.	Complete. The Committee will remain in place to monitor progress.
Review and restructure Judicial and Library Research Services, with a focus on improved Judicial research functionality.	Upgrade Library Systems and transition them to Cloud services.	Complete.
	Review and integrate Information and Knowledge Services.	
	Review EU Legal Research Support service for judiciary and Courts Service and create a centralised function.	Current arrangements are working well so it was agreed to carry forward to 2023.
	Review the effectiveness of the MOU with the Judicial Council.	
Create year two of a three-year training and onboarding plan for judicial assistants.	Complete.	
Support strategy to promote Ireland as the leading venue for dispute resolution in the EU.	Work with members of the judiciary and stakeholders to develop materials for the promotion of Ireland post-Brexit.	Provided assistance and data as required to support Government's International Legal Service Strategy. Hosted study visits by International judicial delegations.



Goal 3: Digital First

Strategic Goal

We will adopt a digital first approach.

Key Outcomes 2021 - 2023

- Digital channels in place reflecting user-centric approach and best practice in online service design.
- Reduced reliance on paper-based processes and outdated technology.
- Improved customer service that is inclusive and provides for digital first solutions, taking account of human and equality rights of all users and ensures that no user is disadvantaged when interacting with the Courts.
- A robust, secure and transparent data ecosystem supporting the functioning of the Courts, effective decision-making, and collaboration with justice agencies and government in line with GDPR

Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Develop an ICT and data strategy to define the application, infrastructure and data architecture to support a modern and digitally-enabled Courts Service.	Design, develop and rollout a public-facing Digital Jury Management System on a phased basis.	Successfully completed initial launch. Response from staff and the public has been positive, with an initial uptake of 37%.
	Design, develop and pilot a public-facing Digital Debt Management System.	Developed and tested the system. Work will continue on rolling it out during 2023, including a digital online portal.
	Design, develop and pilot a public-facing Digital Management System for one of the primary Family Law case types.	Developed and tested a Family Case Management System based on Divorce. This system will be implemented in 2023, to initially include an online portal for Divorce.
	Rollout a new Desktop to staff, including Outlook and Teams, across 2022.	Complete.
	Rollout a new Mobile (inc. laptops) Device Management Platform and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) Platform.	Mobile Device Management Platform rolled out successfully. New AI based Network Detect and Response was launched.
	Rollout first wave of a multi-year Wi-Fi expansion across the Courts Service estate.	This multi-year project was successfully piloted in the Dublin area in 2022.
	Introduce first phase of cashless payments (Chip & Pin facilities) in five pilot locations.	The debit / credit card facility was deployed to 41 of 44 offices in 2022, with 44 of 47 machines installed.
	a. Full deploy nationally b. Post project review and lessons learned.	



Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
	Introduce a new internal-facing intranet and staff organisation chart.	Due to recruitment challenges which have been addressed project on track for 2023.
	Digitisation of the General Solicitors Office through the introduction of an electronic Legal Practice Management System.	Delayed due to operational pressures and resourcing constraints within the General Solicitors Office on track for delivery in 2023.
	Video Courtroom Expansion – Continue to expand the number of technology-enabled courtrooms.	120 tech-enabled courtrooms installed nationally by end of 2022. This project will continue in 2023.
	Rollout of a new Judicial ICT Support and Training Model.	We expect this project to be completed early in 2023.
	Upgrade of Judicial Desktop, including Outlook and Teams, across 2022.	Design and pilot completed in 2022. Full rollout in 2023.
	Establish a Data Dictionary for the Courts Service.	An Initial version of the Data Dictionary has been established and it will evolve over the coming years.
	Engage in collaborative digital initiatives with other agencies to drive efficiencies.	Design, develop and rollout a new internal-facing digital case management system for Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act (ADMCA).
Finish pilot and rollout digital Charge Sheets project as part of the Criminal Justice Operational Hub (CJOH) programme.		Complete.
Exploration project to assess feasibility of digital exchange for Higher Court outcomes with An Garda Síochána and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.		Complete.
Electronic transfer of Court data to the Probation Service as part of the CJOH programme.		Complete.



Goal 4: Better ways of working

Strategic Goal

We will continue to invest in and support our people to create a high-performing organisation, delivering on the modernisation agenda and broader government priorities.

Key Outcomes 2021 - 2023

- Learning and development supporting delivery of user-centric services to court users and staff learning for the new skills required to deliver the Modernisation Programme.
- A culture of continuous improvement with flexible working arrangements in place which maximise staff members' contribution to a high-performing organisation.
- Skilled staff with the capability to deliver on the Modernisation Programme, public service and court reform.
- Innovation culture embedded where staff are inspired, empowered and equipped to innovate.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Develop a people and organisation strategy to create a diverse organisation that supports digitally-enabled operations and new ways of working.	Develop a programme plan for the delivery of the People and Organisation Strategy.	People and Organisation Strategy completed.
	Implement Actions as set out in the plan.	Complete.
	Develop and implement a 2022 workforce plan.	Completed for 2022 and ongoing for 2023/24.
	Finalise Location Independent Working Protocol and supporting arrangement in line with Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDPDR) Guidelines.	Complete
Build on existing Health and Safety Authority 'Work Positive' programmes.	Design and deliver a Health & Wellbeing Plan for 2021 to 2023	In progress. The 'Healthy Places to Work' Survey will be used to support our initiatives for 2023 and beyond



Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Implement our three-year Learning and Development strategy, including training to develop awareness of human rights, equality and supporting those who are vulnerable.	Implement actions identified for 2022 in Learning & Development (L&D) strategy.	<p>Implemented actions in relation to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New to grade posts for EO, HEO & AP. ➤ Development Learning Pathways ➤ Management competencies short courses developed ➤ ICDL & short IT courses added to address digital literacy <p>Targeted Training for specialised areas commenced will progress in 2023 and 2024</p>
	Develop and Implement L&D plan which sets out options for developing agreed capabilities identified in the Modernisation Programme.	Continued the rollout of Trauma Informed Practice training; digital skills (ICDL), Innovation, and support for the Family and Civil workstreams.
	Roll out year 1 of Principal Officer Leadership in Action Development programme.	Leadership In Action development programme delivered across four areas: Purpose and Value, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Culture Development, and Employee Experience.
Implement our Innovation Strategy	Broaden the Organisational understanding of innovation and how it fits into the wider Our Public Service (OPS) agenda and work with the team and advocates to identify areas which we can work through in 2022.	Continued to increase the number of staff Innovation Advocates to support modernisation initiatives. Internal and external innovation programme and events rolled out over the year.
	Plan and implement a programme of training and education for the Innovation team and advocates throughout 2022.	Rollout of our innovation education programme continued through 2022.
	Plan and deliver events to bring greater awareness to the broader organisation - such as Design Thinking webinars, participation in Justice sector workshops etc.	Participated in internal and external events aimed at developing service design thinking as part of Modernisation Programme.
Prevent discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of staff and of those to whom we provide services and meet our obligations under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014.	Implement activities set out in the assessment of Human Rights and Equality in the Service published in 2021.	Amalgamated the Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Group with the Principal Officer Inclusion group to form one 'Inclusion' Group to lead on identified activities.



Goal 5: Provide a modern and improved estate and facilities

Strategic Goal

Provide buildings that are modern, fit-for-purpose, safe and accessible and support the new ways in which we will conduct business.

Key Outcomes 2021 - 2023

- Enhanced facilities in our buildings for court users.
- Advanced progress on the development of user-informed Family Law Court, supporting objectives of the Programme for Government.
- Biodiversity programme
- Implementing and meeting our public service energy usage targets.
- An emphasis on sustainability is included in our fiscal, enterprise, innovation, and environmental approach and policies.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Conduct a National Review of Venues and develop an Estates Strategy to align with the future operating model.	Completion of the Estate Strategy. Completion of the Venue Review.	Estate strategy completed. The review process has commenced will be completed in 2023
Review condition assessment surveys and develop a strategy to move towards a Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) regime.	Develop a strategy to move towards a PPM regime, taking account of the Estate Strategy, venue review and works required following the condition assessment survey. Completed Dublin Estate Review for Phoenix House, Áras Uí Dhálaigh and the Four Courts.	This work will commence in 2023. Work is underway with a focus on better utilisation of existing space.



Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Develop a user-centric approach to the development of new specialist Family Law Courts at Hammond Lane in Dublin.	Completion of plans for site to include sustainability and ICT requirements.	Detailed plans and internal layouts were received from OPW in September 2022. A detailed consultation exercise with approximately 30 internal and external stakeholders took place during Q4 in respect of the plans
	Legal and technical advisors appointed.	This will take place in 2023.
	Part 9 planning process complete.	Work on the planning application, which is being undertaken by OPW, was underway by year end; it will be completed and lodged in 2023.
	Prepare Public Sector Benchmark (PSB).	Timeline for this activity is under review.
	Develop output specifications	Complete.
	Governance arrangements for Justice Public-Private Partnership (PPP) programme finalised.	Complete.
	Justice PPP Project Board and team established.	The Project Board was established.
	Sanction of Preliminary Business Case received from Department of Justice as approving authority.	The preliminary business case was completed and submitted to the Department of Justice in early 2022. Sanction was received in June.
	Handover to the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA).	Expected by the end of 2023.



Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Progress preparatory work on the priority capital projects in the National Development Plan 2018 – 2027	Advance site acquisition or identification at Tralee, Naas, Galway and Navan.	<p>Tralee: Approval was granted by Kerry County Council to dispose of Island of Geese site to the Courts Service. A legal conveyancing process is underway.</p> <p>Naas: Site acquisition has been completed.</p> <p>Galway: A process is underway to identify a new site and expanded accommodation for the existing courthouse.</p> <p>Navan: no suitable site has been identified as yet.</p>
Develop an Environmental Sustainability vision for the Courts Service, including a strategy to achieve 2030 public sector energy and carbon targets.	Integrate recording of business travel fuel used into environmental sustainability metrics.	Complete.
	Carry out detailed baselining analysis on existing waste streams within major venues and across the organisation.	Activity deferred to 2023 as a result of prioritising completion on on-site projects delayed due to 2022 supply chain issues.
	Migrate to new monitoring and reporting software by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI); analyse impact of new 2030 targets for public bodies and develop a Climate Action Roadmap.	Deadline changed by SEAI from Q4 2022 to Q1 2023. Complete and signed off by the Board in Q1 2023.
	Expand and support green teams across the Service including customised L&D content to inform development of sustainability modules.	Complete.
	Map biodiversity opportunities across estate, expand ongoing biodiversity pilots and review via perception surveys and partner with external biodiversity initiatives.	Complete.



Goal 6: Accountability and Leadership

Strategic Goal

We will put in place robust governance structures to ensure effective accountability and leadership for our modernisation and reform agenda.

Key Outcomes 2021 - 2023

- ▶ A single organisational approach to managing change is embedded.
- ▶ Robust business continuity, analysis and risk structures in place.
- ▶ Benefits of Modernisation Programme and reform agenda are realised.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2022	Status
Develop and implement a Single Change Governance Framework.	Embed the Single Change Governance Framework including Change Model across the organisation.	Complete.
Ensure the governance framework for the Modernisation Programme is reviewed and monitored regularly.	Regular review meetings held to monitor and update framework as necessary, necessary reporting protocols in place.	Complete.
Ensure a process to review, adapt, evaluate and test Business Continuity Plans (BCP) for all offices, including a supporting ICT Disaster Recovery (DR) Plan.	Put in place appropriate infrastructure to support the implementation of the BCP and DR plans developed. Rollout of an organisation-wide Enterprise Backup Solution.	Complete.
Monitor progress and performance of the actions set out in this strategic plan.	Quarterly review of progress against strategic plan and CEO report to Board.	Complete.
Monitor and report on the benefits accruing from the Modernisation Programme and reform agenda.	Finalise Benefits Framework and Profile for Identified Priority Benefits. Monitor and report on the benefits accruing from the Modernisation Programme and reform agenda.	Complete. 10 key Priority Benefits to 2025 have been identified. Complete.



3

**The Year
in Numbers**



Introduction

The Courts Service Modernisation Programme aims to increase our use of digital technology and drive improvements in the area of data. As we implement this Programme, we recognise the existing limitations attaching to our data due to an over reliance on paper, different processes across jurisdictions, legacy systems, and limited integration. Enhancements to our IT infrastructure are already underway and the quality of our data will improve significantly in the coming months and years. The reliance on manual and paper-based processes will reduce. This will drive improvements in data availability, reliability, consistency and in the quality of data within the Courts Service. As a result, it is envisaged that the way we present the data including in the Annual Report will change in the coming years.

Overview

Civil Business By Jurisdiction	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
District Court	127,289	91,577	100,607	69,193
Circuit Court	26,663	30,938	23,504	24,125
High Court	15,971	17,121	12,473	12,401
Court of Appeal	311	317	362	431
Supreme Court	191	195	213	222
Total	170,425	140,148	137,159	106,372

Civil Business By Type	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Civil and commercial litigious cases	102,921	107,330	72,937	76,841
Civil and commercial non-litigious cases	62,905	27,921	59,693	24,905
Non-litigious enforcement cases	3,262	3,200	3,317	3,190
Appeals	1,314	1,872	1,189	1,410
Cases Stated	23	42	23	26
Total	170,425	140,365	137,159	106,372

Criminal Offences And Appeals By Jurisdiction	Incoming*		Resolved*	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
District Court	338,825	353,495	266,922	264,481
Circuit Court	33,124	32,565	37,902	31,674
Special Criminal Court	69	145	57	177
Central Criminal Court	3,021	3,602	2,134	1,317
Court of Appeal	2,022	1,391	1,872	1,222
Supreme Court	33	35	28	46
Total	377,094	391,233	308,915	298,917

*by offence



Criminal offences and appeals total	Incoming*		Resolved*	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Offences	359,780	375,517	291,164	283,766
Appeals	17,245	14,607	17,751	14,314
Total	377,025	390,124	308,915	298,080

*orders made in respect of offences

Civil Business

Civil Business Is Categorised By Case Type:

1. Civil and Commercial Litigious Cases

Comprise cases where one party is suing another; European Payment Order Applications; Corporate Insolvency Cases; Personal Insolvency Cases (Concerning Applications by Creditors); Appeals to the District Court and Litigious Enforcement Matters

2. Civil and Commercial Non-Litigious Cases

Comprise Proceedings issued in Ireland that are not Inter-Partes (Including Probate, Wards of Court and Personal Insolvency Cases Concerning Applications by Debtors in person); And Certain Foreign Proceedings.

3. Non-Litigious Enforcement Cases

Comprise Proceedings by Creditors Following Judgment to Procure Payment of Debts Due.

4. Appeals

Comprise Civil and Family Law Appeals from the District Court to the Circuit Court; from the Circuit Court to the High Court; and from the High Court to the Court of Appeal. They also include Applications for Leave to Appeal and Appeals to the Supreme Court.

5. Cases Stated

Are instances where a Court asks for an opinion on a point of law from a Higher Court.

Civil statistics are presented by reference to cases/matters received and cases/matters resolved during the year. The majority of civil cases initiated in Ireland do not proceed to trial. Typically, they are either settled between the parties (with or without a Court approving a settlement), are formally discontinued (involving notification to the defendant and the Court), or are not pursued further by the plaintiff (without the plaintiff notifying the Court). It is therefore not possible to provide figures for pending caseloads in most Courts. The case statistics for 2022 are shown alongside 2021 under most categories, please note cases referred to as 'resolved' may include cases commenced in years other than 2021 or 2022.



1. Civil And Commercial Litigious Cases

A person may pursue a claim for damages for personal injuries through the Courts upon receipt of an authorisation from the Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB). This is a legal document issued in the absence of consent from the person responsible for the injury (the respondent) to the assessment of the claim by the PIAB or the rejection by either party of a PIAB assessment. PIAB does not deal with medical negligence claims.

Settlements in personal injury cases involving persons under 18 years (infant rulings) must be brought before the relevant Court for approval prior to being accepted.

2022 saw the introduction of changes to the threshold of amounts awarded in the Circuit Court.

There were 12,459 personal injury suits filed in 2022, a 17% decrease on the 15,071 in 2021, a 30% decrease on the 17,810 in 2020 and a 43% decrease on the 21,981 in 2019.

- 3,766 in the High Court, a 26% decrease on the 5,145 in 2021
- 7,151 in the Circuit Court, a 19% decrease on the 8,856 in 2021
- 1,542 in the District Court, a 44% increase on the 1,070 in 2021

Personal Injury	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court*	Out of Court	By Court*	Out of Court
High Court	3,766	5,145	563	3,336	505	3,071
Circuit Court	7,151	8,856	6,172	400	5,493	499
District Court	1,542	1,070	704	0	750	0
Total	12,459	15,071	7,439	3,736	6,748	3,570

* Cases dealt with by the Court include all cases assigned to a judge. The majority of these cases are dealt with without a substantive court hearing.



The District Court has power to award up to €15,000 in damages in personal injuries cases and the Circuit Court has power to award up to €60,000, though both Courts can make higher awards with the consent of the parties. The High Court has unlimited power to award damages.

Personal Injury Awards: Amount	District Court	
	Cases	
	2022	2021
€0 to €7,500	290	227
€7,500 to €15,000	154	245
€15,000+	6	7
Total	450	479

Personal Injury Awards: Amount	Circuit Court	
	Cases	
	2022	2021
€0 to €15,000	346	445
€15,000 to €60,000	447	741
€60,000+	1	2
Total	794	1,188

Personal Injury Awards: Amount	High Court	
	Cases*	
	2022	2021
€0 to €60,000	144	138
€60,000 to €199,999	118	118
€200,000 to €499,999	33	23
€500,000+	59	57
Total	354	336

* includes medical negligence awards

Amounts awarded*	High Court		Circuit Court		District Court	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Lowest amount	€1,000	€5,000	€900	€500	€543	€500
Highest amount	€19,000,000	€25,000,000	€75,000	€64,441	€16,402	€17,500
Total amount	€253,486,344	€281,832,361	€15,041,482	€21,949,204	€2,801,164	€3,662,251

* includes medical negligence awards



Medical Negligence Awards: Amount	High Court	
	Cases	
	2022	2021
€0 to €60,000	40	20
€60,000 to €199,999	20	19
€200,000 to €499,999	6	7
€500,000+	41	38
Total	107	84

Medical Negligence Awards: Amount	High Court	
	Cases	
	2022	2021
Lowest amount awarded	€10,000	€7,000
Highest amount awarded	€19,000,000	€30,000,000
Total amount awarded	€178,711,076	€203,600,714

2. Negligence (excluding medical negligence causing personal injury)

Negligence claims are claims for damages against a person or persons against whom it is alleged breached a duty of care owed to the claimant, resulting in pecuniary loss.

There was a 29% decrease in negligence cases in 2022 with 185 cases down from 260 in 2021, an 11% decrease on the 210 in 2020 and a 21% decrease on the 234 in 2019.

Negligence	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By court	Out of court	By court	Out of court
High Court	185	260	44	32	16	10



3. Commercial

Commercial proceedings are defined in Rule 1 of Order 63A of the Rules of the Superior Courts. In short, they include claims in contract or tort arising out of business transactions where the value of the claim is not less than €1 million, intellectual property cases (including passing off), certain types of arbitration claims and appeals from, or judicial review applications in respect of, any statutory body where the judge in charge of the list considers that, having regard to the commercial or any other aspect of such an application it is one appropriate for entry into the commercial list.

Entry into the commercial list is not mandatory for any case types. Cases are only admitted to the list if one of the parties makes an application and the judge admits the case. They are not automatically admitted to the commercial list because of the relief sought and can be prosecuted in the chancery or in the non-jury lists if the parties so wish.

Overall, there was a decrease in the number of matters admitted into the Commercial List in 2022 when compared with 2019 when 172 cases were admitted. However, it should be noted that part of that decrease has resulted from High Court Practice Direction 114 dated 29 September 2022 under which commercial planning cases were transferred from the Commercial List to the Commercial Planning and Environmental List.

Commercial	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By court	Out of court	By court	Out of court
High Court	126	152*	75	3	82	29

*152 has been updated from 285 as published in 2021 due to an error.

Analysis Of Cases Resolved	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Motion to dismiss	0	3	0	4	2	6
Settled after entry	36	15	32	10	7	9
Settled after directions hearing	2	8	13	10	18	10
Settled after hearing date set	8	7	15	11	12	15
Settled at hearing	10	7	10	14	19	11
Full hearing	14	15	51	44	58	72
Other	62	56	12	2	0	2
Miscellaneous orders	550	671	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	682	782	133	95	116	125



4. Chancery

Chancery matters are dealt with in the High Court. They include injunction applications, company law motions, specific performance/rescission of contracts, administration of estates of deceased persons and trust actions.

2022 saw a 10% decrease in incoming chancery matters with 1,132 cases down from 1,260 in 2021, a 27% decrease on the 1,552 in 2020 and a 30% decrease on the 1,624 in 2019.

Chancery	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By court	Out of court	By court	Out of court
High Court	1,132	1,260	337	188	245	203

Analysis Of Incoming Cases	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Specific performance	93	99	125	145	144	133
Injunction	188	238	212	247	314	405
Declaration	425	487	663	633	792	1,066
European Communities (Cross-Border mergers) Regulations, 2008*	5	6	2	3	10	0
Other	421	430	550	596	646	665
Total	1,132	1,260	1,552	1,624	1,906	2,269

* S.I. No. 157 of 2008



5. Property

Property (possession) cases are cases in which the plaintiff is seeking possession of lands and/or premises including family homes.

Other property cases include 'mortgage suits' (cases where the creditor has a mortgage on the property in which the defendant has an interest but does not have power to sell that property unless the Court declares the mortgage well-charged on the debtor's interest), applications for ejectment, applications under Landlord and Tenant legislation, applications involving the Residential Tenancies Board and ground rent matters.

In the High Court there was a 10% decrease in incoming matters with 61 cases down from the 71 in 2021, a 10% increase on the 55 in 2020 and a 42% decrease on the 105 in 2019.

In the Circuit Court there was a 75% increase in incoming matters with 837 cases up from the 477 in 2021, a 208% increase on the 272 in 2020 and a 25% decrease on the 1,112 in 2019.

Property (Possession)	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	61	71	47	23	9	8
Circuit Court	837	477	548	0	435	0
Total	898	548	595	23	444	8

Property (Possession)	Orders Granted		Orders Not Granted	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Circuit Court	208	82	340	353

Property (Other)	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	23	37	65	19	5	0
Circuit Court	137	142	639	176	743	273
District Court	484	53	58	0	78	0
Total	644	232	762	195	826	273



6. Breach of contract

Where a party refuses or fails to fulfil an obligation imposed by a contract, the injured party can bring an action for damages. In this context, breach of contract cases do not include claims for liquidated damages (see section 7 below)

In 2022 there was 1,458 incoming breach of contract cases a 493% increase on the 246 in 2021. The large increase in 2022 was down to a large number of new claims against concrete block suppliers and quarry operators being initiated in the middle of the year. This represents a 530% increase on the 231 in 2020 and a 412% increase on the 195 in 2019.

High Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2022	2021	2022		2021	
		By court	Out of court	By court	Out of court
1,458	246	47	16	22	17

7. Recovery of debt (liquidated claims)

Actions to recover debt are generally taken by financial institutions seeking to recover specified amounts of money, often in respect of loans.

High Court: In 2022 there was a 22% decrease in incoming matters down from 773 in 2021, a 3% increase on the 585 in 2020 and a 65% decrease on the 1,744 in 2019. Circuit Court: In 2022 there was a 9% increase in incoming matters on the 1,371 in 2021, an 8% decrease on the 1,638 in 2020 and a 52% decrease on the 3,130 in 2019. District Court: In 2022 there was a 22% increase on the 12,405 incoming cases in 2021, a 9% increase on the 13,890 in 2020 and a 36% decrease on the 23,759 in 2019.

	Incoming		Resolved					
	2022	2021	2022			2021		
			By court	Out of court	Out of court	By court	Out of court	Out of court
				1*	2*		1*	2*
High Court	604	773	109	24	16	81	15	45
Circuit Court	1,499	1,371	159	148	716	149	171	602
District Court	15,188	12,405	1,165	0	6,968	1,026	0	3,453
Total	17,291	14,549	1,433	172	7,700	1,256	186	4,100

1 * Discontinuance

2 *Judgments marked in the office – these figures are also on page 78 as part of the civil and commercial non-litigious statistics.



8. Defamation

Defamation is defined by the Defamation Act 2009 as the “publication, by any means, of a defamatory statement concerning a person to one or more than one person (other than the first-mentioned person)”.

High Court: There was a marginal decrease in incoming matters in 2022 with 104 cases down from 109 in 2021, a 33% decrease on the 156 in 2020 and a 34% decrease on the 157 in 2019.

Circuit Court: There was a 133% increase in incoming matters in 2022 on the 121 in 2021, a 75% increase on the 161 in 2020 and an 86% increase on the 151 in 2019.

	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	104	109	17	11	4	12
Circuit Court	282	121	8	18	2	6
Total	386	230	25	29	6	18

9. Assault

Assault claims are claims for damages against a person or persons against whom it is alleged intentionally attempted or threatened to inflict injury that placed the claimant in fear of imminent bodily harm or brought about an unconsented harmful or offensive contact with the claimant.

2022 saw a 11% decrease in incoming assault matters, a 38% decrease on the 164 in 2020 and a 15% increase on the 89 in 2019.

	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	102	114	49	19	23	0



10. Employment

Employment cases include those relating to the enforcement of and appeals relating to decisions of the employment tribunals brought under legislative provisions relating to matters such as unfair dismissal, payment of wages, adoption leave, parental leave and organisation of working time.

Employment (Dismissal)	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	2	3	2	1	2	1
Circuit Court	3	2	5	0	1	0
Total	5	5	7	1	3	1

Employment (Other)	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	13	5	3	1	2	0
Circuit Court	26	12	20	4	14	1
Total	39	17	23	5	16	1





11. Small claims

The Small Claims procedure provides an inexpensive way for consumers to resolve consumer complaints and businesses to make claims against other businesses, without the need to employ a solicitor. To make a claim under the Irish Small Claims procedure both the claimant and the respondent must be living or based within the State and the claim cannot exceed €2,000. Claims can be made online or lodged in person in the court office.

The European Small Claims Procedure, provided for in Regulation (EC) No. 861/2007 and the District Court Rules 1997-2014, is an alternative method of commencing and dealing with civil and commercial matters in respect of a small claim in cross-border cases. These are cases where at least one of the parties lives in a Member State of the European Union (excluding Denmark) other than the Member State of the Court dealing with the claim. The claim cannot exceed €2,000. Claims cannot be made online.

There was a marginal increase on incoming small claims matters in 2022 and a 39% decrease on the 3,557 in 2020 and a 53% decrease on the 4,627 in 2019.

Small Claims: Ireland* And EU: District Court

Incoming		Resolved			
2022	2021	2022		2021	
		By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
2,159	2,134	462	1,594**	378	2,125

* claims include those made online

** includes applications deemed to fall outside the scope of the rules for small claims.

Analysis Of Cases Dealt With	2022		2021	
	Ireland	EU	Ireland	EU
Not proceeded with	264	28	461	14
Decrees by default	312	9	283	29
Settled by registrar	862	65	733	107
Referred to Court	437	25	450	13
Settled after notice to pay	54	n/a	35	n/a
Total	1,929	127	1,962	163

Adjudicated By The Court	2022		2021	
	Ireland	EU	Ireland	EU
Decrees granted	201	15	198	7
Cases dismissed	87	2	59	4
Withdrawn/struck out	149	8	193	2
Total	437	25	450	13



12. Proceeds of crime

The Proceeds of Crime Act 1996 provides for the civil forfeiture of property which is the proceeds of crime. Applications to the High Court under the Act are usually made by the Chief Bureau Officer of the Criminal Assets Bureau. If the Court is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that a person is in possession or control of property which is or represents the proceeds of crime, it may order the freezing of the property and, after seven years, its disposal for the benefit of the Exchequer.

High Court:			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
		By court	By court
34	36	36	40





13. Judicial review

Judicial review applications are made when a person seeks an order in respect of the actions or decisions of certain Courts, tribunal, or regulatory bodies. Applications in asylum-related cases generally seek an order quashing the decision of a body such as the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, or an injunction restraining the Minister for Justice from deporting them.

In 2022 there was a 6% decrease on the 360 asylum-related incoming matters in 2021, a 5% decrease on the 355 in 2020 and a 9% decrease on the 368 in 2019.

Judicial Review (Asylum-Related): High Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2022	2021	2022		2021	
		By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
336	360	349	20	377	251

Judicial Review (Other): High Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2022	2021	2022		2021	
		By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
576	614	326	64	269	101

Judicial Review: High Court	(Asylum-Related)		(Other)	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Incoming	336	360	576	614
Orders made:				
Liberty to apply for judicial review granted	212	201	298	243
Liberty to apply for judicial review refused	1	4	22	21
Interim orders	53	42	490	286
Final orders – relief granted	54	45	178	148
Final orders – relief refused	44	46	55	52
Final orders – miscellaneous	251	286	93	69
Final orders – struck out (no order)	20	251	64	101
Total	635	875	1,200	920

These are Judicial Reviews cases in respect of permissions or decisions concerning strategic infrastructure development and strategic housing developments.



	High Court	
	2022	2021
Incoming	63	72
Orders made:		
Liberty to apply for judicial review granted	35	27
Liberty to apply for judicial review refused	0	0
Interim orders	113	180
Final orders – relief granted	20	13
Final orders – relief refused	4	1
Final orders – struck out	4	8
Total	176	229

14. Regulation of professions

The High Court deals with cases relating to the confirmation of, and appeals relating to, sanctions imposed by bodies regulated by statute affecting the ability of a registered professional to practice.

In 2022 there was a 152% increase in incoming matters on the 111 in 2021. This was largely due to the high level of back dating solicitors certificates lodged as the Law Society moved to online only for updating certificates.

High Court:			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
280	111	261	87

15. Garda compensation

Members of An Garda Síochána who sustain injuries maliciously inflicted upon them in the performance of their duties or acting in their general capacity as a member of the force are entitled to apply to the High Court for compensation. Off-duty members assaulted by virtue of them being a member of the force may also apply for compensation.

2022 saw a marginal decrease in incoming Garda Compensation cases from 2021 and a 52% decrease on the 117 in 2020 and a 63% decrease on the 151 in 2019.

High Court:			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
		By court	By court
56	60	80	110



16. Habeas Corpus

Persons who believe they are being detained or held unlawfully, may apply to the High Court for an order of habeas corpus under the Habeas Corpus Act 1782. This requires the person or institution detaining them to either produce the body of the person detained before the Court or release that person from such detention. The expression 'order of habeas corpus' does not include an order made pursuant to Article 40.4 of the Constitution. In some instances, applications are issued and do not proceed. In others, the matter is resolved without recourse to the Court following the making of an interim order. In 2022, there was an 35% decrease in incoming Habeas Corpus matters, a 21% increase on the 52 in 2020 and a 14 % decrease on the 73 in 2019.

High Court:			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
		By court	By court
63	97	52	67

17. European Arrest Warrants

The High Court is responsible for the execution of European Arrest Warrants received by Ireland. A European Arrest Warrant, valid throughout the EU, may be issued by a national judicial authority if the person whose return is sought is accused of an offence for which the maximum penalty is at least a year in prison or if he or she has been sentenced to a prison term of at least four months. Likewise, the Director of Public Prosecutions may apply to the High Court for the issue of a European Arrest Warrant where a person in another member state is facing charges, or is required to serve a sentence in Ireland. It is anticipated that applications will continue to increase due to Ireland's connection to the Schengen Information System (SIS II), which has now been live since 15 March 2021. While applications to execute European Arrest Warrants are now being brought to the Court more efficiently, it is putting extra pressure on the Court to process them in accordance with the statutory timeframes. 2022 saw a 27% decrease in incoming European Arrest Warrants cases, a 38% decrease on the 416 in 2020 and a 35% decrease on the 399 in 2019.

High Court:			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
		By court	By court
259*	357	274	261

*includes 1 extradition



18. Bail

Most bail applications are made, in the first instance, to the District Court. An exception relates to a person charged with murder – he/she can only apply to the High Court for bail. A person refused bail in the District Court may apply to the High Court for bail and a person granted bail in the District Court may apply to the High Court to vary the conditions of the bail.

There was a marginal 3% decrease in incoming matters in 2022, a 12% decrease on the 1,898 in 2020 and a 21% increase on the 1,390 in 2019.

Bail	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By court	Out of court	By court	Out of Court
High Court	1,676	1,726	1,247	1	1,707	8





A. Cases where one party is suing another: Family Law

The High Court and the Circuit Court have concurrent jurisdiction in family law matters. However, the majority of judicial separation, divorce and nullity applications are made to the Circuit Court. There is a right of appeal from the Circuit Court to the High Court.

1. Divorce

A decree of divorce dissolves a marriage and allows each party to remarry. Before a Court can grant a divorce, the parties must have been married and living apart for a period amounting to two out of the previous three years before the application is made; there must be no reasonable prospect of reconciliation; and proper arrangements must have been made or will be made for the spouse and any dependent members of the family.

There was a marginal 5% decrease in the number of applications for divorce in 2022 – 5,551 as compared to 5,856 in 2021. There were 53 applications in the High Court, a 10% increase on the 48 in 2021 and 5,498 in the Circuit Court a 5% decrease on the 5,808 in 2021. There were 4,915 divorce orders made – 25 in the High Court and 4,890 in the Circuit Court.

Divorce	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	53	48	35	15	36	7
Circuit Court	5,498	5,808	4,891	0	4,243	0
Total	5,551	5,856	4,926	15	4,279	7

Divorce	2022			2021		
	Granted	Refused	Other	Granted	Refused	Other
High Court	25	0	0	23	0	20
Circuit Court	4,890	1	0	4,241	2	0
Total	4,915	1	1	4,264	2	20



2. Judicial separation

A decree of judicial separation removes the obligation on spouses to co-habit. The most common ground on which a decree is granted is where the Court considers that a normal marital relationship has not existed between the spouses for at least one year before the date of the application for the decree.

There were 486 applications for judicial separation in 2022 – a 12% decrease on the 550 in 2021. There was 18 in the High Court and 468 in the Circuit Court.

There were 340 orders made granting judicial separations – 27 in the High Court and 314 in the Circuit Court with two applications refused.

Judicial Separation	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	18	20	18	15	15	3
Circuit Court	468	530	314	0	274	0
Total	486	550	332	15	289	3

Judicial Separation	2022			2021		
	Granted	Refused	Other	Granted	Refused	Other
High Court	27	0	0	6	0	12
Circuit Court	314	0	0	272	2	0
Total	340	0	0	278	2	12



3. Dissolution of partnership

The Courts can dissolve civil partnerships in a similar way to the granting of divorce. A decree of dissolution allows both parties to a civil partnership to marry.

There were 79 applications to dissolve partnerships in the Circuit Court in 2022 – a 5% increase on the 75 applications in 2021. There were 39 orders made dissolving partnerships with zero applications refused.

Dissolution Of Partnership	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
Circuit Court	79	75	39	0	24	0

Dissolution Of Partnership	2022			2021		
	Granted	Refused	Other	Granted	Refused	Other
Circuit Court	39	0	0	24	0	0

4. Cohabitation

These are claims made under the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 in respect of claimants who are living together in an intimate and committed relationship, not married to each other, not in a registered civil partnership and not related to each other.

High Court						
Incoming			Resolved			
2022	2021		2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
8	3		7	0	3	0



5. Nullity

Nullity of marriage (civil nullity or civil annulment) is a legal declaration by the Court which states that although two people went through a marriage ceremony, their marriage never actually existed in the eyes of the law or the State. There are two types of marriages that may be annulled or cancelled - void marriages and voidable marriages. A void marriage is considered to have never taken place. A voidable marriage is considered to be a valid marriage until a decree of annulment is made.

Nullity of civil partnership is a declaration by a Court that a supposed civil partnership is null, and void and that no valid civil partnership exists between the partners. In nullity of civil partnership law, there are only void civil partnerships.

There was 6 incoming nullity cases in 2022, a 50% decrease on 2021, a 40% decrease on the 10 in 2020 and a 79% decrease on the 29 in 2019.

Nullity (Of Marriage)	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
			By Court	By Court
High Court	1	1	1	0
Circuit Court	5	11	8	10
Total	6	12	9	10

Nullity (Of Marriage)	2022			2021		
	Granted	Refused	Other	Granted	Refused	Other
High Court	1	0	0	0	0	0
Circuit Court	7	1	0	8	2	0
Total	8	1	0	8	2	0



6. Guardianship, custody, access

Guardianship means the rights and duties of parents in respect of the upbringing of their children. **Custody** is the right of a parent to exercise physical care and control in respect of the upbringing of his or her child on a day-to-day basis. **Access** is contact between a child and its parent or other relative with whom the child does not live. The majority of applications in all three areas are made to the District Court.

There were 10,822 applications in 2022, an 8% increase on the 10,016 in 2021, a 24% increase on the 8,747 in 2020 and a 14% decrease on the 12,582 in 2019.

Guardianship, Custody, Access: District Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
		By court	By court
10,822	10,016	10,143	8,667

	Custody And Access: Circuit Court – Outcomes																	
	Judicial Separation						Dissolution						Divorce					
	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Orders made	130	138	162	412	447	447	16	6	5	6	14	4	1313	1268	920	1058	869	976





7. Maintenance

Maintenance is financial support (money) paid by a person for the benefit of a dependent spouse/civil partner and/or dependent children. Spouses/civil partners are required to maintain each other according to their means and needs. Parents, whether married or not, are responsible for the maintenance of their dependent children. If the parties cannot reach an agreement about maintenance an application can be made to the Court for a maintenance order. The majority of applications for maintenance are made to the District Court.

Applications for maintenance in the Circuit Court are usually made as part of applications for judicial separation and/or divorce.

There were 5,862 applications in the District Court, a 7.5% increase on the 5,451 in 2021, a 16% decrease on the 5,055 in 2020 and a 30% decrease on the 8,384 in 2019.

Maintenance	Incoming		Resolved			
	2022	2021	2022		2021	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	0	0	0	0	1	0
District Court*	5,862	5,451**	5,025	0	4,288	0

* excludes foreign maintenance – see Page 86

** includes applications subsequent to initial application including applications to vary and applications to recover arrears





8. Domestic violence

Domestic violence legislation protects spouses/civil partners and children and offers legal remedies to dependent persons and persons in other domestic relationships where their safety or welfare is at risk because of the conduct of the other person in the relationship. It also gives An Garda Síochána powers to arrest without warrant where there is a breach of a court order.

Safety order

A safety order prohibits the person against whom the order is made (the respondent) from engaging in violence or threats of violence. It does not oblige that person to leave the family home. If the person does not normally live in the family home, it prohibits them from watching or being in the vicinity of where the person applying for the order (the applicant) and dependent children live. A safety order can be made for up to five years.

Barring order

A barring order requires the respondent to leave the family home and stay away from the family home of the applicant and/or dependent children. It may also include terms prohibiting the respondent from using or threatening to use violence. A barring order can be made for up to three years.

Once a summons has been issued for a safety order or a barring order the applicant can apply for a protection order or an interim barring order while waiting for the application to be heard in Court. It is also possible to apply for an emergency barring order, since its introduction in 2019.

Protection order

This is a temporary safety order. It gives protection to the applicant until the Court decides on a safety or barring order application. It is intended to last until the case is heard and a decision made. It does not oblige the respondent to leave the family home.

Interim barring order

This is a temporary barring order. It is intended to last until the barring order application is heard in Court and a decision made. A full court hearing must take place within eight working days of the granting of an interim barring order. The Court must be of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds for believing there is an immediate risk of significant harm to the applicant or any dependent person if the order is not made immediately and the granting of a protection order would not be sufficient to protect the applicant or any dependent person.

Applications to the District Court under the domestic violence legislation increased slightly by 4% to 23,536 from 22,596 in 2021, up 2% on the 22,970 in 2020 and up 15% on the 20,501 in 2019.

Domestic Violence: District Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
23,536	22,596	20,830	21,096

**Domestic Violence: Circuit Court - Outcomes**

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Orders Made	48	40	38	38	59	51	40

District Court: Domestic Violence - Trends*

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Barring order applications	2,933	2,987	3,577	3,323	3,343	2,613	2,658	2,638	2,671	2,738
Barring orders granted	732	810	1,159	1,137	946	822	1,329	859	877	1,167
Protection order applications	8,719	8,269	7,649	7,049	6,390	5,869	5,365	5,108	4,406	4,529
Protection orders granted**	5,815	6,917	6,592	5,864	5,515	5,006	4,627	4,225	4,024	4,142
Safety order applications	9,317	8,918	8,887	8,061	7,280	6,368	6,069	5,626	5,499	5,334
Safety orders granted	2,475	2,461	2,467	2,688	2,327	2,255	3,316	1,917	2,029	2,381
Interim barring order applications	1,951	1,917	1,918	1,643	1,270	917	880	731	699	674
Interim barring orders granted	951	1,141	1,251	1,209	982	693	676	563	569	522
Other applications	616	505	915	418	289	195	255	271	12	-
Orders granted	223	291	376	184	147	151	107	263	0	-

* Figures do not include applications struck out or withdrawn

**Some interim barring orders were granted on foot of applications for protection orders. Likewise, some protection orders were granted on foot of interim orders



9. Adoption

These are applications made under the Adoption Act 2010 for the making of adoption orders and challenges thereto.

Adoption: High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
55	45	44	41

10. Child abduction: Hague Luxembourg Convention

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (1980) is the main convention covering child abduction. The Convention seeks to protect children from the harmful effects of abduction and retention across international boundaries by providing a procedure to bring about their prompt return. It is based on the principle that the Court of the child's habitual residence is best placed to decide any custody disputes.

Ireland is a signatory to The Hague and Luxembourg Conventions. These conventions have been incorporated into Irish domestic law by the Child Abduction and Enforcement of Custody Orders Act 1991.

Child Abduction: High Court - Analysis			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
30	32	20	43

Child Abduction: High Court - Analysis							
	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Incoming	30	32	21	34	37	36	47
Orders made							
Assess child	7	17	7	11	8	14	9
Interim order*	103	85	44	81	102	126	130
Child returned (on consent)	3	15	6	6	11	8	8
Child returned (court order)	2	8	4	7	9	10	10
Child remain (on consent)	7	9	5	7	5	10	14
Child remain (court order)	8	1	1	1	3	6	8
Other	0	10	5	20	2	0	12
Total	130	145	72	133	140	174	191

* there may be a number of interim orders made in individual cases



11. Childcare - Supervision and care orders

The Courts deal with applications for orders in respect of the care or supervision of minors, or on behalf of minors concerning the arrangements made by TUSLA - the Child and Family Agency for their care. TUSLA can apply to the Courts for a number of different orders when dealing with children who are at risk or who are in need of care. These orders give the Courts a range of powers about the type of care necessary and about access to the children for parents and other relatives. The vast majority of applications are made to the District Court.

Emergency care orders

TUSLA can apply for an emergency care order for a child who is still at home or for one who has been removed by An Garda Síochána. In exceptional cases this type of order can be sought 'ex parte' without notice to the parent (e.g. a child may be found in a very vulnerable position unaccompanied with no adult carer). While exceptional applications may be made without notice being given to the parents or guardians of the child, generally, when An Garda Síochána remove a child, TUSLA notify the parent and the parent is in Court when the matter is heard. The order will be made if the judge considers that there is an immediate and serious risk to the health or welfare of the child requiring them to be placed, or to remain in, the care of TUSLA.

Care orders and interim care orders

TUSLA must apply for a care order or a supervision order (see below) if a child needs care and protection which they are unlikely to receive without an order. The District Court judge may make an interim care order while the decision on a full care order is pending. This means that the child is placed in the care of TUSLA for 29 days. It may be extended if TUSLA and the parents agree or if the Court finds that the threshold criteria for the making of the order continue to exist. Parents/guardians must be given notice of an interim care order application or the extension of the order unless exceptional circumstances exist making this impossible.

Supervision orders

A supervision order is an alternative to children being taken into the care of TUSLA. It may be applied for by the TUSLA instead of a Care Order. TUSLA may consider that a care order is not necessary or appropriate in the circumstances, but that the child should be visited regularly by a social worker under a court supervision order.

The Court can make a supervision order as an alternative, more proportionate remedy at the care order stage – but not at the interim care order stage. During the application for a care order the Court may decide that a supervision order will address the risk of harm identified by TUSLA. A supervision order may also be made when the Court has heard most of the evidence but needs more time to conclude the care proceedings.

The number of applications does not necessarily reflect the number of children in respect of whom orders are made, as several orders may be made in respect of an individual child. There may also be applications for a variety of orders in the same case.

There was a 5% increase overall with 14,985 cases up from 14,194 in 2021, a 13.5% increase on the 13,203 in 2020 and a 46% increase on the 10,291 in 2019.



Supervision and Care Orders	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
			By court	By court
High Court	71*	156	50	15
District Court	14,914	14,038	9,994	10,695
Total	14,985	14,194	10,044	10,710

*Includes 39 Guardianship of Infant cases

Child Care: High Court – Analysis							
	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Received	71	156	112	67	30	32	27
Orders made	279	259	205	125	234	313	323

Child Care: District Court - Overall Analysis												
	Incoming						Resolved					
	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Supervision order	439	376	397	450	385	548	343	299	356	370	362	538
Care order	926	871	1,563	812	961	934	767	661	1,463	746	833	903
Extension of care order	708	697	692	665	499	434	693	748	610	670	480	453
Interim care order	1,388	1,369	1,194	815	1,166	1,100	832	860	860	811	806	969
Extension of interim care order	6,087	6,052	5,015	4,250	4,386	3,590	5,252	5,782	4,889	4,169	4,319	4,621
Emergency care order	322	325	480	327	344	309	255	267	392	256	271	289
Review of care order	1,582	1,238	1,158	539	1,648	1,056	427	529	505	437	442	484
Re-entry of case	563	448	477	301	467	574	204	253	249	268	232	303
Other*	2,899	2,662	2,115	2,065	3,312	3,386	1,221	1,296	1,002	1,843	1,481	2,075
Total	14,914	14,038	13,091	10,224	13,168	11,931	9,994	10,695	10,326	9,570	9,226	10,635

* includes applications for adjournments, costs, production orders and vacation of hearing dates; and applications under:

s.23 Children Act, 1997 (to allow admission of hearsay evidence)

s.37 Child Care Act 1991 (access to children in care)

s.47 Child Care Act 1991 (applications for directions) which may include applications by parents or interested relatives where children are in voluntary care.

Child Care: Court - analysis of applications resolved

	Application granted		Application not granted	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Supervision order	304	267	39	32
Care order	556	523	211	138
Extension of care order	630	731	63	17
Interim care order	624	747	208	113
Extension of interim care order	5,041	5,704	211	78
Emergency care order	201	233	54	34
Review of care order	321	494	106	35
Re-entry of case	158	212	46	41
Other	960	1,115	261	181
Total	8,795	10,026	1,199	669





B. Corporate insolvency

1. Examinership

Examinership is a process in Irish law whereby the protection of the Court is obtained to assist the survival of a company. It allows a company to restructure with the approval of the Court.

Examinership: High Court																
Incoming		Resolved														
		Out of court		By court												
		Petition withdrawn		Appoint interim examiner*		Appoint examiner*		Extend time		Order reports		Wind up company		Misc.		
2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	
6	6	12	2	13	4	9	3	6	7	0	4	2	1	1	31	

* Figures for appointment of interim examiner and examiner may not be mutually exclusive as appointment of interim examiner often precedes appointment of examiner.

Examinership: Circuit Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2022	2021	2022		2021	
		By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
2	3	1	0	2	0

2. Liquidation

The Examiner's Office of the High Court continues to assist the Court in the supervision of pre-Companies Act 2014 liquidations, with particular regard towards bringing any outstanding liquidations to a timely conclusion. At the end of 2022 the Examiner had approximately 37 such cases on hand, together with a number of legacy cases.

Since the commencement of the Companies Act 2014 (on 1st June 2015), the High Court may direct, following the making of an order to wind up a company and the appointment of a liquidator, that the liquidation continue using the rules relating to a creditor's voluntary winding up. 2022 saw a 51% decrease in incoming matters down from the 75 in both 2021 and 2020 and a 57% decrease on the 87 in 2019.

Wind Up Company Orders: High Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2022	2021	2022		2021	
		Settled/ struck out/ withdrawn	Order made	Settled/ struck out/ withdrawn	Order made
37	75	35	102	60	107



3. Restrict Directors

In certain circumstances an application can be made to the High Court to have a company director restricted from acting as a director or secretary of a company or be concerned or take part in the formation or promotion of a company. Restriction orders remain in force for a period of five years and confine a person to being a director in certain types of companies that have been adequately capitalised by their shareholders.

Restrict Directors: High Court

Incoming 2022	Resolved				
	2021	2022		2021	
		Order made	Order refused	Order made	Order refused
12	15	29	0	9	0

4. Disqualified Directors

In certain circumstances the High Court may disqualify a person from being appointed or acting as a director or other officer, statutory auditor, receiver, liquidator, or examiner or being in any way, whether directly or indirectly, concerned or taking part in the promotion, formation or management of certain corporate bodies. These circumstances include where the Court is satisfied that the person is guilty of fraud or is in breach of their duty under Company Law or that the conduct of the person makes them unfit to be concerned in the management of a company.

Disqualified Directors: High Court

Incoming 2022	Resolved				
	2021	2022		2021	
		Order made	Order refused	Order made	Order refused
4	3	6	1	3	0



C. Personal insolvency

Personal insolvency (creditors' applications) (see also page 83)

Applications to have a person adjudicated bankrupt are filed in the Office of the Examiner of the High Court. Following the making of an adjudication order, ownership of the bankrupt's property is transferred to the Official Assignee in Bankruptcy (who manages the Bankruptcy Division within the Insolvency Service of Ireland). They are an independent statutory officer who administers the estate of the bankrupt person and is answerable to the High Court.

Bankruptcy applications may be made by creditors or by debtors in person. See below for details of pre-bankruptcy applications by creditors ('bankruptcy summonses') and applications by creditors to have debtors adjudicated bankrupt. Details of applications by debtors to be adjudicated bankrupt ('self-adjudications') and information about debt settlement procedures introduced under the Personal Insolvency Act, 2012 are on page 83.

Under the provisions of the Bankruptcy (Amendment) Act 2015 a person is automatically discharged from bankruptcy one year after the order of adjudication unless the period is extended by the High Court upon application by the Official Assignee in Bankruptcy.

Personal Insolvency: High Court	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
			Adjudicated/ granted/ approved	Adjudicated/ granted/ approved
Bankruptcy summonses	32	34	31	28
Bankruptcy petitions (creditors)	17	21	12	30



D. Appeals to District Court

There are a number of statutory entitlements to appeal decisions of regulatory bodies to the District Court. They include decisions regarding the award of taxi licences and gun licences. 2022 saw 70 appeals to the District Court, a 21% increase on the 58 in 2021, a 27% increase on the 55 in 2020 and a 32% decrease on the 103 in 2019.

Appeals To The District Court		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
70	58	46	35

E. Litigious enforcement

Following judgment, the creditor in a case can apply to the District Court for an Instalment Order against the debtor requiring them to pay the debt in instalments. The District Court can subsequently vary the amount ordered to be paid (variation order). If the debtor fails to make the instalments as ordered by the District Court, the creditor can apply for an Order committing the debtor to prison (committal order).

Summons For Attendance Of Debtor: District Court					
Incoming					
2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
1,094	1,243	1,240	1,954	2,236	2,692

Litigious Enforcement	Outcome	
	2022	2021
Instalment orders issued	1,334	1,593
Variation orders issued	92	75
Committal orders issued	2	2



2. Civil and Commercial Non-Litigious Cases

A. Proceedings in Ireland

1. Judgment marked in the office

Where a defendant does not respond to a summary summons in the High Court, a civil bill in the Circuit Court, or a claim notice in the District Court; or where the Master of the High Court gives liberty to enter 'final' judgment, the plaintiff can apply to have judgment 'marked' (awarded) against the defendant in the court office.

There was a 12% increase overall with 7,756 judgments marked in the office compared to 6,905 in 2021.

High Court : A 64% decrease on the 45 in 2021, a 72% decrease on the 58 in 2020 and a 97% decrease on the 552 in 2019.

Circuit Court: a 4% cent increase on the 627 in 2021, an 8% decrease on the 720 in 2020 and a 63% decrease on the 1,789 in 2019.

District Court: a 14% increase on the 6,233 in 2021, a 21% increase on the 5,839 in 2020 and a 28% decrease on the 9,841 in 2019.

Judgement Marked in the office	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
High Court	16	45	16	45
Circuit Court	656	627	716	602
District Court	7,084	6,233	6,968	3,453
Total	7,756	6,905	7,700	4,100

2. Deed poll

Persons requiring documentary confirmation of a change of name, other than on marriage, may need to execute a document called a 'deed poll'. The deed poll can be lodged in the Central Office of the High Court.

There was a marginal decrease in Deed Poll applications in 2022, down to 713 from 726 in 2020. This is a 51% increase on the 471 in 2020 and a 13% decrease on 820 in 2019.

Deed Poll: High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
713	726	713	726



3. Probate

A legal document called a Grant of Representation is required for authority to administer the estate of a deceased person. If there is a will, the executor needs to take out probate. If there is no will, or, if no executor has been appointed or the appointed person cannot act, an administrator may be appointed and then take out a Letter of Administration (or a Letter of Administration with Will Annexed if there is a will).

Intestacies: Grants Issued

	2022	2021
Principal Registry	2,304	1,901
Local Registries	1,135	1,212
Total	3,439	3,113

Probate (and Administrations With Wills Annexed): Grants Issued

	2022	2021
Principal Registry	9,960	10,144
Local Registries	4,631	3,570
Total	14,591	13,714

Incoming applications

	2022	2021
Principal Registry	13,287	11,184
Local Registries	8,015	7,588
Total	21,302	18,772



4. Wards of court

When a person becomes unable to manage their assets because of mental incapacity, an application can be made to the Courts for the person to become a ward of court. The Court must decide as to whether the person is capable of managing their own property for their own benefit and the benefit of their dependants. If it is decided that the person cannot manage their own property because of mental incapacity, a committee is appointed to control the assets on the ward's behalf. A person under 18 years of age may also be taken into wardship as a minor.

The increased number of incoming applications resulted from the expectation that the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act, 2015 as amended would commence in 2022 which did not happen until April 2023.

2022 saw a 21% increase on the 430 incoming matters in 2021, a 36% increase on the 382 in 2020 and a 14% increase on the 449 in 2019.

Wards Of Court: High Court			
2022	2021	2022	2021
520*	430	360	323

* 308 Declaration Orders and 11 applications dealt with by way of undertaking

Wards Of Court: High Court		
	2022	2021
Wardship cases	2,907	2,798
Applications awaiting hearing*	163	183
Adults and minors taken into wardship (declaratory orders)	388	304
Dismissed/discharged	187	222
Orders signed	2,318	2,204

* cases pending with inquiry order signed at 31st December

Wards Of Court: Active Cases		
Reason admitted to wardship	2022	2021
Brain injury	29	21
Dementia and age-related illness	211	201
Learning/intellectual disability	41	45
Minors (under 18 years of age)	21	15
Psychiatric illness	36	22
Total	338	304



5. General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court

The General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court is a solicitor in the service of the State appointed by the President of the High Court to act in certain wardship matters. They are accountable to the High Court for all monies and assets under their control relating to the affairs of a minor or ward. The General Solicitor can only act as solicitor in those matters assigned to them by the Registrar of the Wards of Court. They cannot take on private clients like a solicitor in private practice.

Due to the increase in number of wardship cases that now encompass the previous inherent jurisdiction applications to protect and vindicate the rights of vulnerable adults lacking capacity and minors, the number of cases where the General Solicitor is appointed as independent Committee has increased in both volume and complexity since 2015/2016. This has resulted in an increased level of expertise and work by the Case Officers to ensure their rights are vindicated and maintain the level of standard expected in accordance with legislation and court decisions.

General Solicitor For Minors And Wards Of Court

	2022	2021
Active (yearly average)	752	699
Pending	4	6
Dismissal	398	338
Total cases	1154	1043

General Solicitor For Minors And Wards Of Court: Active Cases

Reason admitted to wardship	2022	2021
Brain injury	94	95
Dementia and age-related illness	182	170
Learning/intellectual disability	261	244
Minors (under 18 years of age)	11	11
Psychiatric illness	192	176
Other	14	9
Total	754	705



6. Enduring Powers of Attorney (registered)

An Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) allows another specially appointed person ('the attorney') to make 'personal care decisions' on the donor's behalf once they are no longer fully mentally capable of taking decisions themselves. Personal care decisions may include deciding where and with whom the donor will live, who they should see or not see and what training or rehabilitation they should get. 2022 saw a 28% increase in incoming matters on the 1,234 in 2021, an 18% increase on the 1,338 in 2020 and a 20% increase on the 1,317 in 2019. The incoming applications are calculated based on the number of Notice of Intention to Register an Enduring Power of Attorney received during period concerned. The overall number resolved reflects the total number of Enduring Powers of Attorney registered in the Wards of Court Office.

Enduring Powers Of Attorney (Registered): High Court

Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
1,581	1,234	1,245	1,160

7. Care Representatives

Where a person has reduced capacity to make certain decisions (that is, diminished mental capacity) and wishes to apply for a Nursing Home Loan, the Circuit Court can appoint a Care Representative to act on behalf of the person in respect of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme and especially in respect of the Nursing Home Loan. The Care Representative can also act on behalf of the person in relation to making an application for a Care Needs Assessment, State support, or any other matter relating to the scheme. 2022 saw a 21% increase on the 591 incoming cases in 2021, a 27% increase on the 564 in 2020 and a 15% increase on the 621 in 2019.

Care Representatives: Circuit Court

Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
716	591	611	550

8. Mental Health Act applications

A person can appeal the making of an admission order or a renewal order by a mental health tribunal to the Circuit Court under the Mental Health Act 2001.

Mental Health Act Applications: Circuit Court

Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
112	114	30	35



9. Personal insolvency (self) (see also page 76)

The Insolvency Service of Ireland administers the debt settlement procedures introduced under the Personal Insolvency Act 2012. The Act introduced three debt resolution mechanisms for people who cannot afford to pay their personal debts. Applications may be made to the Circuit Court or to the High Court.

A **Debt Relief Notice** allows for the write-off of qualifying debt up to €35,000, subject to a 3-year supervision period. The Circuit Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear applications.

A Protective Certificate (PIA & DSA) offers a debtor and their assets protection from legal proceedings by creditors in respect of debts for a limited time while they are applying for a DSA or PIA. A Protective Certificate remains in force for a period of 70 days but may be extended in limited circumstances.

A **Debt Settlement Arrangement** applies to the agreed settlement of unsecured debts, usually over a period of 5 years. The Circuit Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear applications where the total value of unsecured debts does not exceed €2.5m. Where qualifying debts exceed €2.5m but do not exceed €3m, jurisdiction is vested in the High Court. For debts above €3m, the Act does not apply, and people are expected in the main to consider applying for bankruptcy.

An **Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Debt Settlement Arrangement** is an objection made by a Creditor to the proposal for a Debt Settlement Arrangement.

A Personal Insolvency Arrangement applies to the agreed settlement and/or restructuring of secured debts up to a total of €3m (as well as unsecured debts) over a period of 6 years. The Circuit Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear applications where the total value of qualifying debts does not exceed €2.5m. Where qualifying debts exceed €2.5m but do not exceed €3m, jurisdiction is vested in the High Court.

An **Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Personal Insolvency Arrangement** is an objection made by a creditor to the proposal for a Personal Insolvency Arrangement.

An Application Pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015 affords a debtor an opportunity to have Personal Insolvency Arrangements ("PIA"s), which has been rejected by creditors, reviewed by the Court under certain circumstances.

An **Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Application Pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015** is an objection made by a creditor to the proposal for an Application pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015

Bankruptcy applications may be made to the High Court by creditors or by debtors in person ('self-adjudications'). See below for details of applications by debtors to be adjudicated bankrupt. Details of pre-bankruptcy applications by creditors ('bankruptcy summonses') and details of applications by creditors to have debtors adjudicated bankrupt are on page 76.

In the High Court, 2022 saw a 46% decrease in Bankruptcy Petitions (self) on the 169 in 2021, a 23% decrease on the 119 in 2020 and a 60% decrease on the 230 in 2019.



Personal Insolvency: High Court

	Incoming		Resolved – by court							
			Approve request		Refused		Struck out		Withdrawn	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Debt settlement arrangements	3	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Personal insolvency arrangements	7	10	9	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	12	13	14	0	0	0	0	0	0

Personal Insolvency: Circuit Court

	Incoming		Resolved – by court							
			Approve request		Refused		Struck out			
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Debt relief notices	173	190	173	175	0	2	0	0	0	0
Protective Certificate (PIA & DSA)	1,114	1,214	1,099	1,183	1	0	1	0	0	0
Debt settlement arrangements	75	81	75	82	0	0	1	0	0	0
Personal Insolvency Arrangements	614	653	593	622	2	1	0	0	0	0
Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Personal Insolvency Arrangement	14	22	1	6	1	1	0	1	0	1
Application Pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015	225	278	64	196	13	235	1	17	0	0
Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Application Pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015	152	186	19	258	1	31	2	2	0	0
Application to Extend the Period of a Protective Certificate (PIA and DSA)	469	n/a	458	n/a	2	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
Total	2,836	2,626	2,482	2,523	20	280	5	20	0	0

**Bankruptcy Petitions (Self): High Court**

Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
		Adjudicated / granted / approved	Adjudicated / granted / approved
92	169	93	169

Personal Insolvency Appeals from the Circuit Court to the High Court

	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
High Court	58	90	51	123

10. Licensing

The majority of applications for licences are made to the District Court. They include pub, restaurant, dance and lottery licences with applications for special exemption orders comprising over 80% of applications in any year. Special exemption orders exempt the holder of an on-licence from the provisions of the Intoxicating Liquor Act relating to prohibited hours in respect of licensed premises. 2022 saw a return to regular incoming licensing cases with a 311% increase on the 10,764 in 2021, a 239% increase on the 13,058 in 2020 and a 3% increase on the 42,802 in 2019.

Licensing	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Circuit Court	203	161	146	161
District Court	44,052	10,603	42,067	10,603
Total	44,255	10,764	42,213	10,764

11. Marriage exemption

The Circuit Court can exempt persons wishing to marry from the requirement to give three months' notice to the Registrar of Marriages. It can also exempt persons from the age requirements for marriage.

2022 saw a further 17% increase in marriage exemptions on the 636 in 2021, a 63% increase on the 457 in 2020 and a 76% increase on the 421 in 2019.

Marriage Exemption: Short Notice: Circuit Court

Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
743	636	674	572



B. Foreign proceedings

1. Service of documents

Service Of Documents	Incoming requests		Outgoing requests	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
High Court*	89	122	No requests	No requests
Circuit Court	3,207	3,558	144	113

* Hague Convention (proceedings initiated in non-EU countries)

The reduction in levels of service of documents may be attributed to the reduction in business internationally as well as international travel.

2. Maintenance (foreign)

Maintenance (foreign)	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
High Court*	7	20	2	1
District Court	127	153	102	127

* applications under Regulation (EC) 4/2009

3. Other

Taking Of Evidence: District Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2022	2021	2022	2021
83	116	83	116



3. Non-Litigious Enforcement Cases

Following judgment, a creditor can choose a number of routes to obtain payment of money adjudged to be owed by a debtor, or the return of property the subject of possession proceedings ('enforce the judgment'). In general, once the creditor has a judgment order, the judgment can be enforced. Enforcement orders can be issued by court offices – the creditor does not have to go back to Court for the order. Creditors have 12 years from the date of the judgment to look for enforcement orders.

Execution orders issued – following judgments marked in the office in debt cases

2022 saw a marginal increase overall with 756 cases up from 751 and a 13% decrease on the 862 in 2020 and a 71% decrease on the 2,614 in 2019.

Execution orders issued – on foot of court orders

2022 saw an increase of 213% on the 92 in 2021, a 122% on the 130 in 2020 and a 7% decrease on the 310 in 2019.

Execution orders issued – possession case

2022 saw a 273% increase on the 41 in 2021, a 132% increase on the 66 in 2020 and a 28% decrease on the 213 in 2019.

Judgments registered

2022 saw an 11% decrease on the 1,414 in 2021, an 11% decrease on the 1,408 in 2020 and 36% decrease on the 1,953 in 2019.

Judgment mortgage certificates

2022 saw a 6% decrease on the 695 in 2021, a 26% decrease on the 875 in 2020 and a 70% decrease on the 2,180 in 2019.

1. Execution orders issued – following judgments marked in the office in debt cases

	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
High Court*	100	124	100	124
Circuit Court	656	627	716	602
Total	756	751	816	726

* includes execution orders issued on foot of court orders

2. Execution orders issued – on foot of court orders

	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Circuit Court	288	92	287	104



3. Execution orders issued – possession cases

	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
High Court	8	6	8	6
Circuit Court	145	35	141	38
Total	153	41	149	44

4. Judgments registered

Judgments Registered*	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
High Court; Circuit Court; District Court	1,257	1,414	1,257	1,414

* judgments of High Court, Circuit Court and District Court are registered in High Court Central Office

5. Judgment mortgage certificates issued

Judgment Mortgage Certificates Issued	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
High Court	200	249	200	249
Circuit Court	253	190	253	190
District Court	198	256	198	256
Total	651	695	651	695

6. Satisfaction piece issued

Satisfaction Piece Issued	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
High Court	34	57	34	57
Circuit Court	49	39	49	39
District Court	74	111	74	111
Total	157	207	157	207



4. Appeals

Appeals

Civil and Family Law	Incoming		Resolved	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Circuit Court to High Court	451	321	227	92
District Court to Circuit Court	812	822	614	665
Total	1,263	1,143	841	757

5. Cases Stated

Case stated is a procedure by which a Court or tribunal can ask another Court for its opinion on a point of law. There are two kinds: consultative case stated and appeal by way of case stated.

	2022		2021	
	Received	Orders made	Received	Orders made
District Court to High Court	14	9	19	17
Revenue (District Court) to High Court	9	45	23	9

6. Miscellaneous

1. Written judgments

The High Court may decide, following the hearing of a matter to 'reserve' its decision to another date. The decision may subsequently be delivered in the form of a written judgment. Many High Court judgments are available on the website of the Service: www.courts.ie.

Written Judgements Delivered: High Court	2022	2021
Reserved at 1 January	155	130
Delivered	743	500
Reserved at 31 December	195	155



2. Notices of motion

A Notice of Motion is a formal notice to participants in litigation of an intention on the part of another party to seek particular relief from the Court. There may be numerous notices of motion issued in the course of an action and notices of motion may be adjourned a number of times before they are dealt with.

Notices Of Motion	Issued/dealt with	
	2022	2021
High Court	12,217	12,761
Circuit Court	26,423*	22,959

* includes adjournments

3. Case progression (Family Law)

Case progression is the term given to the management of a case before it comes to trial. Its purpose is to ensure that proceedings are prepared in a manner which is fair, efficient and likely to keep the costs as low as possible. It also ensures that time and other resources of the Court are put to best use.

There was an 18% increase in the number of hearings in 2022, a 47% increase on the 3,833 in 2020 and a 5% increase on the 5,369 in 2019.

Case Progression (Family Law)	Number of hearings	
	2022	2021
Circuit Court	5,634	4,769



Criminal Business

Criminal Business: By Offence	Incoming		Resolved (orders made)*	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Serious criminal offences: Central Criminal Court; Special Criminal Court; Circuit Criminal Court	21,024	22,022	24,242	19,185
Misdemeanour and/or minor criminal offences: District Court	338,825	353,495	266,922	264,481
Appeals: Supreme Court; Court of Appeal; Circuit Court	17,245	15,716	17,751	15,151
Total	377,094	391,233	308,315	298,817

* orders made in respect of offences. Note that there may be more than one order made in respect of an individual offence.

District Court

The District Court exercising its criminal jurisdiction deals with four particular types of offences: summary offences, indictable offences which are triable summarily (these include 'minor offences'), indictable offences that may be dealt with summarily and indictable offences which are not triable summarily. When the District Court hears a criminal case, the judge sits without a jury. The District Judge decides the issues of fact and whether to convict. They also determine the sentence. In the case of most indictable offences which have to be tried by a judge sitting with a jury, the District Court may impose sentence where the accused pleads guilty provided that the Director of Public Prosecutions consents and the judge accepts the guilty plea. Otherwise, the accused is sent forward to the Circuit Court on their signed plea of guilty for sentencing. The District Court has a limit on the sentence it may impose in respect of a single criminal charge of 12 months imprisonment.

The District Court received 338,825 new offences in 2022, a 4% decrease on 2021. Not all offences were proceeded with by the prosecutor. The Court made 266,922 (up 1% on 2021) orders in respect of the offences that did proceed. It is important to note that there can be more than one order made in respect of an offence. For example, in respect of a road traffic offence a person may receive a fine, an imprisonment and defendant numbers.



Criminal Business: District Court Categories	Incoming		Resolved: offences: orders made		
	Offences	Defendants	Summary	Indictable dealt with summarily	Sent forward for trial*
Road traffic	181,969	122,562	147,337	677	294
Drugs	30,045	17,073	1,030	20,363	3,157
Sexual	3,212	635	70	152	2,741
Larceny/fraud/robbery	30,692	13,750	5	20,863	6,385
Public order/assault	44,917	26,387	33,671	2,791	2,406
Other	47,990	32,995	32,653	7,310	6,975
Total	338,825	213,402	214,766	52,156	21,958

*Note: There is usually only one order made when an offence is being sent forward for trial

Summary Offences: Outcomes: Orders Made: District Court													
	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	Fixed	Total
Road traffic	4,155	46,893	15,698	34,948	38	9,465	270	672	1,200	1,288	17,106	15,604	147,337
Drugs	57	278	186	135	7	2	10	77	71	69	138	0	1,030
Sexual	1	11	6	14	1	0	0	4	16	10	7	0	70
Larceny/ fraud/ robbery	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1		0	5
Public order/ assault	1,132	7,789	7,837	6,453	428	2	239	2,911	1,509	1,215	4,156	0	33,671
Other	1,094	10,966	4,243	8,709	102	49	102	1,752	1,000	708	3,928	0	32,653
Total	6,439	65,939	27,971	50,260	576	9,518	621	5,416	3,796	3,291	25,335	15,604	214,766

Note: There is usually only one order made when an offence is dismissed, struck out or taken into consideration. There may be more than one order made when the penalty imposed in respect of an offence is a fine, bond, disqualification, community service, probation, imprisonment/detention, or sentence suspended.

Key: Dis = dismiss. S/O = strike out TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified

C/S = community service Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention*

Susp = suspended sentence

Fixed = fixed penalty

* refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre

**Indictable Offences Dealt With Summarily: Outcomes: Orders Made: District Court**

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/O	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	Total
Road traffic	34	190	82	43	3	45	8	34	114	32	92	677
Drugs	507	5,571	2,639	3,459	80	7	223	1,885	686	883	4,423	20,363
Sexual	5	37	6	5	0	1	0	22	7	29	40	152
Larceny/ fraud/ robbery	571	4,680	4,753	1,563	171	19	244	2,031	3,045	1,636	2,150	20,863
Public order/ assault	207	996	129	137	53	8	48	243	159	276	535	2,791
Other	322	2,153	1,156	529	89	2	65	663	678	438	1,215	7,310
Total	1,646	13,627	8,765	5,736	396	82	588	4,878	4,689	3,294	8,455	52,156

Note: There is usually only one order made when an offence is dismissed, struck out or taken into consideration. There may be more than one order made when the penalty imposed in respect of an offence is a fine, bond, disqualification, community service, probation, imprisonment/detention, or sentence suspended.

Key: Dis = dismiss. S/O = strike out TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified
C/S = community service Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention*
Susp = suspended sentence

* refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre

Specific Road Traffic Offences: Orders Made: District Court

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	Fixed	Total
Dangerous driving	210	1,255	603	507	1	768	40	49	162	106	1,394	0	5,095
Drink driving	619	1,182	138	3,055	2	3,651	27	24	145	194	503	0	9,540
Offences attracting penalty points	1,676	13,421	1,740	16,033	12	4,547	147	188	613	809	4,268	10,753	54,207
Total	2,505	15,858	2,481	19,595	15	8,966	214	261	920	1,109	6,165	10,753	68,842

Note: There is usually only one order made when an offence is dismissed, struck out or taken into consideration. There may be more than one order made when the penalty imposed in respect of an offence is a fine, bond, disqualification, community service, probation, imprisonment/detention, or sentence suspended.

Key: Dis = dismiss. S/O = strike out TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified
C/S = community service Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention*
Susp = suspended sentence
Fixed = fixed penalty

* refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre



Juvenile crime

The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years (section 52 Children Act 2001, as amended by section 129 Criminal Justice Act 2006). Children who have not reached the age of 12 years cannot be charged with an offence. There is an exception for children aged 10 or 11 who can be charged with murder, manslaughter, rape, rape under section 4 of the Criminal Law (Rape)(Amendment) Act 1990 or aggravated sexual assault. In addition, where a child under 14 years of age is charged with an offence, no further proceedings can be taken without the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The majority of children who come before the Courts are aged between 15 and 17 years.

Juvenile Crime: Orders Made: District Court													
	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	Fixed	Total
Road traffic	59	276	168	66	6	90	16	93	33	2	78	2	889
Drugs	43	142	83	28	1		5	114	8	1	37	0	462
Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	8	0	13
Larceny/ fraud/ robbery	68	266	242	18	14	1	13	262	67	19	79	0	1,049
Public order/ assault	79	311	241	45	9	2	17	289	38	16	103	0	1,150
Other	42	136	113	34	14	1	12	130	35	7	58	0	582
Total	291	1,131	847	191	44	94	63	893	181	45	363	2	4,145

Note: There is usually only one order made when an offence is dismissed, struck out or taken into consideration. There may be more than one order made when the penalty imposed in respect of an offence is a fine, bond, disqualification, community service, probation, imprisonment/detention, or sentence suspended.

*Key: Dis = dismiss. S/O = strike out TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified
C/S = community service Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention*
Susp = suspended sentence*

** refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre*



Circuit Court

The Circuit Court deals with all indictable offences except murder, rape, aggravated sexual assault, treason, piracy and related offences. This jurisdiction is exercisable in the area where the offence has been committed or where the accused person has been arrested or resides. In Circuit Courts outside Dublin, the trial judge may transfer a trial to the Dublin Circuit Criminal Court on application by the prosecution or the defence and if satisfied that it would be unjust not to do so. Criminal cases dealt with by the Circuit Criminal Court begin in the District Court and are sent forward to the Circuit Court for trial or sentencing. Where a person is sent forward to the Circuit Criminal Court for trial the case is heard by judge and jury although a person can change their plea to guilty and dispense with a trial. Certain Indictable offences of a minor nature can be heard in the District Court where the Director of Public Prosecutions and or the accused consents.

Offences: Circuit Court	Incoming		Resolved: offences						
	Offences	Defendants*	Guilty	Trials		N/P	TIC	Quash	Dec
				Convicted	Acquitted				
Road traffic	372	203	647	14	7	242	217	0	8
Drugs	3,151	813	2,551	25	18	1,039	596	0	18
Sexual	1,799	282	669	273	126	469	207	19	6
Firearms	847	647	582	24	30	250	188	0	6
Larceny/ fraud/robbery	6,726	1,231	4,006	45	90	1,429	1,590	0	9
Assault	1,428	961	1,797	70	77	419	161	0	4
Child abuse	72	17	82	4	7	15	6	0	3
Manslaughter	2	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other	3,537	1,732	2,295	113	158	790	625	3	17
Total	17,934	5,888	12,633	568	514	4,653	3,590	22	71

* Note: There is usually only one order made when an offence is being sent forward for trial


Offences: Outcomes Following Convictions: Circuit Court

	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	Total
Road traffic	106	14	96	160	6	11	182	61	43	679
Drugs	177	14	632	3	20	106	362	446	860	2,620
Sexual	89		255			30	408	90	76	948
Firearms	56	1	166	1	3	38	148	115	86	614
Larceny/fraud/robbery	526	7	1,107	2	47	224	1,171	567	294	3,945
Assault	79	9	614	9	38	105	534	348	130	1,866
Child abuse		3	31			2	16	24	18	94
Manslaughter			1				2		1	4
Other	187	39	700	16	38	114	684	407	211	2,396
Total	1,220	87	3,602	191	152	630	3,507	2,058	1,719	13,166

Key: TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified C/S = community service

Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention* Susp = suspended sentence

* refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre

Appeals From District Court: Circuit Court

Categories	Incoming		Resolved: offences				
	Off	Def	Aff	Var	Rev	S/O	S/O N/A
Road traffic	7,950	4,891	1,483	2,355	1,994	1,297	1,363
Drugs	977	489	158	388	66	214	209
Sexual	38	23	2	7	3	2	1
Larceny/fraud/robbery	2,184	758	295	526	35	626	625
Public order/assault	2,091	1,014	283	654	134	504	598
Other	1,950	1,155	298	593	240	380	518
Total	15,190	8,330	2,519	4,523	2,472	3,023	3,314

Key: Off = offences Def = defendants Aff = affirmed Var = varied Rev = reversed

S/O = struck out

S/O N/P = struck out no appearance



Special Criminal Court

The Offences Against the State Act 1939 provides for the establishment of Special Criminal Courts. The Special Criminal Court sits with three judges and no jury. The rules of evidence that apply in proceedings before the Court are the same as those applicable to trials in the Central Criminal Court. The Court is authorised by the 1939 Act to make rules governing its own practice and procedure.

There were 7 trials in the Special Criminal Court involving 9 defendants in 2022.

Special Criminal Court		
Categories	Incoming	
	Offences	Defendants
Membership of illegal organisation	0	0
Possession of firearms/ ammunition/explosive substance	6	4
Murder	2	2
Theft	0	0
Threaten to kill	0	0
Other	61	22
Total	69	28

* there may be more than one offence brought against a defendant

Categories	Offences: (All Outcomes)					
	Conviction (Guilty plea)	Conviction (trial)	Acquittal	TIC	Nolle Prosequi	Total Offences resolved
Membership of illegal organisation	0	1	0	0	0	1
Possession of firearms/ ammunition/ explosive substance	0	4	1	0	0	5
Murder	0	4	0	0	1	5
Theft	1	5	1	0	0	7
Threaten to kill	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	12	14	2	3	8	39
Total	13	28	4	3	9	57

Offences: (Convictions)			
Categories	Imprisonment	Suspended Sentence	Total Convictions
Membership of illegal organisation	1	0	1
Possession of firearms/ ammunition/explosive substances	4	0	4
Murder	4	0	4
Theft	6	0	6
Threaten to kill	0	0	0
Other	26	0	26
Total	41	0	41



High Court: Central Criminal Court

The High Court exercising its criminal jurisdiction is known as the Central Criminal Court. It consists of a judge or judges of the High Court. The Court sits at such time and in such places as the President of the High Court may direct and tries criminal cases which are outside the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court. The Court mainly hears murder and rape trials and criminal trials under the Competition Act 2002. An appeal against conviction or sentence by the Central Criminal Court may be taken to the Court of Appeal.

In 2022, there were 124 trials in the Central Criminal Court against 147 defendants involving many counts as set out beneath. Of those trials, 21 included at least one count of murder and 102 included at least one count of rape. This is an increase on 71 trials in 2021 which was a slight increase on the 65 trials in 2020.

The below table relates to offences in the Central Criminal Court not actual trials, please note often there are many offences attaching to one trial.

Offences: Trials And Defendants: Central Criminal Court	Trials	Defendants
Murder (including attempted murder)	21	22
Rape (including attempted rape)	310	115
Sexual Offences	393	75
Assault	33	10
Other	57	24
Total	814	246



Central Criminal Court	Incoming		Resolved					
	Off	Defendants	Guilty Pleas	Trials	Nolle Prosequi	TIC **	Quash	Dec'd
Murder (including attempted murder)*	43	33	8	21	11	0	0	3
Rape (including attempted rape)	1,112	168	99	310	142	81	0	43
Sexual Offences***	1,730	113	274	393	282	209	0	19
Assault	67	27	55	33	6	0	0	0
Other ****	69	38	38	57	20	21	0	1
Total	3,021	379	474	814	461	311	0	66

* includes four pleas of guilty to the lesser charge of manslaughter accepted by DPP previously reported under 'manslaughter' and now reported under 'murder' as per the indictments in each case

** TIC – 'taken into consideration' – offences may be taken into consideration where an offender is sentenced on other multiple offences.

*** includes serious offences such as sexual assault and sexual offences against children, previously reported under 'other'

**** includes impeding a prosecution, accessory to manslaughter, false imprisonment, criminal damage, possession of a knife, burglary

Key: Off = offences Def = defendants G/P = guilty pleas N/P = nolle prosequi
Dec'd = accused deceased


Offences: Resolved: Outcome Of Trials: Central Criminal Court

Offence type	Convicted	Acquitted	Disagreed	Committal: not guilty by reason of insanity	Prohibited	Total
Murder (including attempted murder)*	14	2	3	2	0	21
Rape (including attempted rape)	163	83	64	0	0	310
Sexual Offences	269	93	31	0	0	393
Assault	28	5	0	0	0	33
Other	46	8	3	0	0	57
Total	520	191	101	2	0	814

*includes one conviction by jury to the lesser charge of manslaughter

Offences: Resolved: Penalties Imposed On Conviction: Central Criminal Court

	Fines	Det (minors)	Imp F/S	Imp P/S	Imp	Total
Murder*	0	0	0	0	11	11
Manslaughter	0	0	0	11	0	11
Rape**	0	11	1	151	99	262
Sexual Offences	0	12	2	61	468	543
Assault	0	2	0	11	70	83
Other	2	3	1	15	63	84
Total	2	28	4	249	711	994

Key: Det (minors) = detention of a person under 18 years in a detention centre Imp F/S = imprisonment fully suspended Imp P/S = imprisonment/detention* part suspended

* includes attempted murder

** includes attempted rape

Offences: Resolved: Length Of Sentences Imposed On Conviction*: Central Criminal Court

	Up to 2 years	Over 2 years to 5 years	Over 5 years to 10 years	Over 10 years	Life
Murder**	0	0	0	0	11
Manslaughter	0	1	2	8	0
Rape***	0	22	114	115	0
Sexual Offences	75	249	196	11	0
Assault	2	70	9	0	0
Other	10	40	25	4	0

* includes suspended sentences

** includes attempted murder

*** includes attempted rape

**Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017**

The Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017 gives effect to provisions of Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25th October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA. The Courts Service commenced the collection of statistical information in compliance with section 30 of the Act during 2018.

Central Criminal Court: Victims

Evidence given by video link	Evidence given behind a screen	Intermediaries used
30	2	15

Court Of Appeal**Court of Appeal: Civil**

The Court of Appeal hears appeals in civil proceedings from the High Court except for those cases in which the Supreme Court has permitted an appeal to it on being satisfied that the appeal meets the threshold set out in Article 34.5.4° of the Constitution. The Court also determines questions of law referred to it by the Circuit Court and the High Court. In addition the Court of Appeal determines appeals and other applications from military proceedings. The Court also continues to deal with appeals transferred from the Supreme Court which had been initiated before the establishment of the Court on 28th October 2014 and had not been fully or partly heard by the Supreme Court by that date (Article 64 appeals). The remaining Article 64 legacy appeals which had not been resolved were again actively managed in 2022. Of the 1,360 appeals which had been transferred from the Supreme Court to the Court of Appeal in 2014 the number of such appeals still pending was reduced to 20. However, it should be noted that dates for hearing have been offered by the Court of Appeal in respect of the majority of these legacy appeals. The Court operates a weekly directions list for new appeals which allows the Court to case manage every new appeal lodged through the use of both physical attendance and Virtual/Hybrid attendance. There was a small decrease (less than 1%) in the number of Appeals issued when compared to 2021.

1. New appeals**New Appeals: Court Of Appeal**

Pending at 01/01	Incoming	Resolved	Pending at 31/12
420	311	362	369



New Appeals: Court Of Appeal

Case type	Pending at 01/01	Incoming	Resolved			Pending at 31/12
			In court		Out of court	
			Determined	Withdrawn	Withdrawn	
Article 40/Habeas Corpus	15	3	5	1	0	12
Bail	2	6	3	3	0	2
Chancery	86	53	42	11	3	83
Commercial	27	27	24	10	1	19
Company	14	14	12	3	0	4
Constitution	1	1	0	0	0	2
Contract	8	1	4	0	0	5
Criminal	15	16	13	3	0	15
Extradition	7	0	2	1	0	4
Family	8	12	6	4	0	10
Insolvency (Corporate)	2	1	2	1	0	0
Insolvency (Personal)	11	5	7	3	0	6
Judicial Review (asylum-related)	15	10	8	3	7	7
Judicial review (other)	59	38	23	15	7	52
Personal injury	32	19	23	13	4	11
Plenary	26	26	18	3	0	31
Proceeds of Crime Act	0	6	3	0	0	3
Security for costs	4	1	3	1	0	1
Summary judgment	40	27	13	8	1	45
Other	48	54	34	8	3	57
Total	420	311	245	91	26	369



2. Article 64 appeals

Article 64 Appeals (Appeals Transferred From Supreme Court)			
Pending at 01/01	Resolved	Transferred	Pending at 31/12
24	4	0	20

Article 64 Appeals: Court Of Appeal								
Case type	Pending at 01/01	Incoming	Resolved			Transferred*	Pending at 31/12	
			In court		Out of court			
			Determined	Withdrawn	Withdrawn			
Article 40/ Habeas Corpus	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Bail	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Chancery	7	~	3	0	0	0	4	
Commercial	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Company	1	~	0	0	0	0	1	
Contract	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Criminal	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Extradition	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Family	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Insolvency (Corporate)	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Insolvency (Personal)	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Judicial Review (asylum- related)	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Judicial review (other)	2	~	0	0	0	0	2	
Personal injury	1	~	0	0	0	0	1	
Plenary	4	~	1	0	0	0	3	
Proceeds of Crime Act	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Security for costs	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	
Summary judgment	1	~	0	0	0	0	1	
Other	8	~	0	0	0	0	8	
Total	24	~	4	0	0	0	20	



3. Cases stated

Cases Stated: Court Of Appeal		
	Received	Orders made
Circuit Court to Court of Appeal	3	2
High Court to Court of Appeal	0	0
Military Judge to Court of Appeal	0	0
Total	3	2

4. Additional matters

Additional Matters: Court Of Appeal		
	2022	2021
Motions listed before the Court	115	101
Appeals from appellants in person	85 (27%)	50 (16%)
Applications for directions in Article 64 appeals	0	0
Written judgments delivered	315	352
Length of appeal hearing:		
• One day or less	284	391
• Greater than one day but less than two days	2	18
• Two days or more	2	14

**Court of Appeal: Criminal**

The Court of Appeal deals with appeals from the Circuit Criminal Court, Central Criminal Court and Special Criminal Court. Hearing dates are allocated during the subsequent legal term for the majority of cases included in the List to Fix Dates which is held once a term. Appeals are actively managed on a weekly basis by the judge assigned to management of criminal lists to ensure that cases are dealt with as efficiently as possible and delays in cases progressing to the List to Fix Dates due to procedural issues arising are kept to a minimum. Applications for priority may be made at the weekly management list.

In addition, Civil appeals with a custody/criminal element (bail, Article 40/habeas corpus, judicial review and extradition) were accommodated as required without impacting on the waiting time for criminal appeals. There were 261 appeals in respect of 2,022 offences lodged in the Court of Appeal (Criminal) in 2022. Comparable figures in 2021 were 248 appeals in respect of 1,391 offences. The Court disposed of 270 appeals in respect of 1,872 offences (282 appeals in respect of 1,222 offences in 2021).

Appeals: Criminal					
Pending at 01/01	Incoming	Resolved			Pending at 31/12
		In court		Out of court	
		Determined	Withdrawn	Withdrawn	
388	261	168	63	39	379

Court of origin	Appeals		Percentage of appeals	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Central Criminal Court	73	44	28%	17%
Circuit Criminal Court	175	195	67%	79%
Special Criminal Court	13	9	5%	4%
Total	261	248	100%	100%

Appeals: Criminal					
Court of origin	Conviction	Sentence (severity)	Sentence (leniency)	Other	Total
Central Criminal Court	47	9	5	1	62
Circuit Criminal Court	35	129	31	2	197
Special Criminal Court	3	7	1	0	11
Total	85	145	37	3	270



Appeals - Incoming (By Court Of Origin): Court Of Appeal

Categories (by offence)	Incoming			Total
	Central Criminal Court	Circuit Criminal Court	Special Criminal Court	
Assault	21	77	2	100
Drugs/Misuse of Drugs	0	144	0	144
Firearms/weapon/possession of explosives/ ammunition	10	46	4	60
Manslaughter	0	0	0	0
Murder	12	0	2	14
Public Order	1	14	0	15
Rape	289	34	0	323
Road Traffic	0	86	0	86
Sexual Offences	495	212	0	707
Theft/Fraud/Robbery	7	249	10	266
Other	55	226	26	307
Total	890	1,088	44	2,022

Appeals: Outcomes: Court Of Appeal

Categories (by offence)	Resolved			Total
	Central Criminal Court	Circuit Criminal Court	Special Criminal Court	
Assault	9	98	0	107
Drugs/Misuse of Drugs	0	122	0	122
Firearms/weapon/possession of explosives/ammunition	1	29	7	37
Manslaughter	0	4	0	4
Murder	15	0	1	16
Public Order	2	6	0	8
Rape	321	8	0	329
Road Traffic	0	41	0	41
Sexual Offences	256	222	0	478
Theft/Fraud/Robbery	1	574	0	575
Other	7	103	45	155
Total	612	1,207	53	1,872



Appeals - Resolved (By Offence): Court Of Appeal								
Categories (by offence)	Resolved							Total
	Conviction	Sentence (severity)	Conviction and Sentence	Sentence (leniency)	DPP (dismissal)	MC*	Other	
Assault	12	48	17	26	0	0	0	103
Drugs/Misuse of Drugs	5	89	5	23	0	0	0	122
Firearms/ weapon/ possession of explosives/ ammunition	3	19	10	5	0	0	0	37
Manslaughter	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Murder	13	2	0	1	0	0	0	16
Public Order	1	6	0	1	0	0	0	8
Rape	40	58	165	62	4	0	0	329
Road Traffic	6	33	2	0	0	0	0	41
Sexual Offences	106	104	160	107	1	0	0	478
Theft/Fraud/ Robbery	8	407	3	156	1	0	0	575
Other	13	71	15	60	0	0	0	159
Total	207	841	377	441	6	0	0	1,872

* miscarriage of justice



Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the Court of final appeal in civil and criminal matters. Appeals may be made only where the Court grants permission in limited circumstances as set out in the Constitution. The Court therefore concentrates on cases raising important constitutional and legal questions that have far reaching consequences for individuals and have systemic implications for the administration of justice as a whole.

The number of applications for leave and new appeals lodged in the Supreme Court by year-end continued to be on trend with 2020 and 2021. Average waiting times for leaves to appeal being determined were maintained at 5 weeks throughout the year. The time from leaves to appeal being granted to being listed is at 16 weeks at year-end, compared with 17 weeks at end of 2021 and 21 weeks at the end of 2020. Pending cases at year-end was 57. In this respect the Court has no significant backlog and appeals get a hearing date as soon as they are ready.

Incoming: Origin Of Applications For Leave To Appeal	2022	2021
High Court to Supreme Court	60	41
Court of Appeal to Supreme Court	85	108
Total	145	149

Overview: Supreme Court											
Pending 01/01			Incoming			Resolved			Pending 31/12		
Applications for leave			Applications for leave			Applications for leave			Applications for leave		
Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total
6	54	60	24	121	145	18	130	148	12	45	57
Appeals (legacy)			Appeals (legacy)*			Appeals (legacy)			Appeals (legacy)		
Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total
1	10	11	0	0	0	1	10	11	0	0	0

**Overview: Supreme Court (Continued)**

Appeals (current)			Appeals (current)			Appeals (current)			Appeals (current)		
Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total
9	35	44	9	37	46	10	45	55	8	27	35

Total cases			Total cases			Total cases			Total cases		
Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total
16	99	115	33	158	191	29	185	214	20	72	92

**transferred back from Court of Appeal*

Other Matters: Supreme Court	2022	2021
Motions listed before the court	5	10
Reserved judgments delivered	80	101
Applications for leave to appeal from appellants in person	53	43
• One day or less	26	39
• Two days or more	16	7
Commissioners for Oaths appointed	15	15
Notaries Public appointed	12	6

Case analysis**1. Cases appealed (from first instance courts)****Civil: Cases Appealed (From First Instance Courts)**

High Court to Supreme Court		High Court to Court of Appeal		Circuit Court to High Court		District Court to Circuit Court	
2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
0.25%	0.18%	1.39%	2.4%	2.7%	1.29%	2.4%	1.17%

Criminal: Appeals (From First Instance Courts) (By Offence)	2022	2021
Special Criminal Court, Central Criminal Court and Circuit Court to Court of Appeal	14.4%	12.3%
District Court to Circuit Court	5.7%	6.9%

2. Applications for leave to appeal/appeals (from second instance courts)

Civil: Court Of Appeal To Supreme Court	2022	2021
Applications for leave to appeal	33%	24.5%
Appeals after leave granted	10.5%	7.6%

Criminal: Court Of Appeal To Supreme Court	2022	2021
Applications for leave to appeal	5.5%	4%
Appeals after leave granted	5.3%	3.5%



3. Average length of proceedings - first instance courts

Civil: In Days - From Issue To Disposal		
	High Court	
	2022	2021
All	871	797
Employment (dismissal)	444	713
Divorce	537	238
Commercial	665	650
Personal Injury	1,325	1188
Judicial review	406	339

*excludes licensing

n/a = not applicable

Criminal: In Days - From Issue To Disposal - By Offence: District Court					
Summary		Indictable dealt with summarily		Return for trial	
2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
369	371	440	419	117	113

Summary: time from issue of summons to disposal of offence in the District Court

Indictable dealt with summarily: time from lodgement of charge sheet to disposal of offence in the District Court

Return for trial: time from lodgement of charge sheet to transfer of offence to higher Court for trial.

Criminal: Circuit Court - Average Length In Days *		
	2022	2021
All	569	732

* time from receipt of return for trial in Circuit Court to final order

Criminal: Central Criminal Court - Average Length In Days *		
	2022	2021
All	738	668

* time from receipt of return for trial to final order

Criminal: Special Criminal Court - Average Length In Days *		
	2022	2021
All	464	423

* time from receipt of charge sheet to final order



4. Average length of proceedings (in days) (from issue to disposal) (second instance courts)

Civil: Court Of Appeal – Appeals*		
	2022	2021
All (new appeals and Article 64 appeals)	527 days	529 days

* time from issue of notice of appeal to final order

Criminal: Court Of Appeal – Appeals*		
	2022	2021
All	461 days	420 days

* time from issue of notice of appeal to final order

5. Average length of proceedings (in weeks) (from issue to disposal) (highest instance courts)

Supreme Court	2022	2021
Application for Leave Determined (issue to determination date)	18	23
Application for Leave Determined (from papers being ready to determination)	5	5
Appeals	63	52



Waiting times

District Court – criminal, civil and family

Criminal: Waiting Time

Summons:

The time from receipt of summons application to scheduled date for hearing.

There is an agreement with An Garda Síochána as part of Criminal Justice Interoperability Project that a period of 12-14 weeks will be allowed between the issuing of a summons and the first court date to allow time for service of the summons. The waiting times for criminal summonses generally reflect this agreement. Summonses may not be disposed on the first scheduled hearing date.

Charge sheets:

The time from receipt of a charge sheet to the first court date.

Charge sheet cases are initially listed before the Court usually within a day of the person being charged by An Garda Síochána. The first listing may not be the date of the hearing of the matter as the Court may adjourn/postpone the hearing for a variety of reasons. The time between the first appearance before the Court and the final disposal of the case is outside the control of the Courts Service.

Civil: Waiting Time

Applications:

The time from receipt of application to date when application is listed for hearing.

This may not be the date that the matter is disposed of. A waiting time of up to 12 weeks is maintained in most offices with no waiting times of more than six months in recent years.

Family: Waiting Time

Applications:

The time from receipt of application to date when application is listed for hearing.

This may not be the date that the matter is disposed of. Emergency domestic violence applications are dealt with on the date of first application to the Court. In the majority of District Court Districts, waiting time for the hearing of these applications have not increased despite an ongoing increase in the volume and complexity of cases. Cases are listed for hearing in most instances within four to eight weeks of the date of the initial application.



**District Court: Waiting Times Shown In Weeks
(Unless Otherwise Stated) As At 31 December**

Office	Criminal		Civil	Family Law	
	Summonses	Charge sheets	Applications	Domestic violence applications *	Maintenance /guardianship applications
	1	2	3	4	5
Athlone	16	Next sitting	6-8	Next sitting	6-8
Ballina	16	Next sitting	20	Next sitting	12
Bray	16	Next sitting	26-52	4-8	8-12
Carlow	16	Next sitting	8	12	12
Carrick-on-Shannon	16	Next sitting	12-16	Next sitting	12-16
Castlebar	16	Next sitting	16	Next sitting	26
Cavan	16	Next sitting	2	12	3
Clonakilty	16	Next sitting	8	2	4
Clonmel	16	Next sitting	8	4	6-8
Cork	16	Next sitting	8	Next sitting	13
Donegal	16	Next sitting	8	1	8
Dublin	16	Next sitting	10	15	20
Dundalk	16	Next sitting	4-6	4-6	4-6
Ennis	16	Next sitting	12	4	8
Galway	16	Next sitting	4	Next sitting	12
Kilkenny	16	Next sitting	4-6	8	10-12
Letterkenny	16	Next sitting	4	4-6	8
Limerick	16	Next sitting	8	4-8	8-12
Longford	16	Next sitting	8-12	Next sitting	8-12
Loughrea	16	Next sitting	8	Next sitting	8
Mallow	16	Next sitting	4- 6	Next sitting	4-6
Monaghan	16	Next sitting	Next sitting	Next sitting	4
Mullingar	16	Next sitting	6-8	Next sitting	6-8
Naas	16	Next sitting	13	1	23
Nenagh	16	Next sitting	10	12	26
Portlaoise	16	Next sitting	24	8	8
Roscommon	16	Next sitting	4	8	8
Sligo	16	Next sitting	8	4	8
Tralee	16	Next sitting	4	Next sitting	4
Trim	16	Next sitting	9	3	5
Tullamore	16	Next sitting	6	8	8
Waterford	16	Next sitting	9	11	13
Wexford	16	Next sitting	8	4	4
Youghal	16	Next sitting	20	Next sitting	12



* Urgent interim applications are dealt with immediately i.e. on next sitting day in every District

- (1) Time from scheduling of summons application to scheduled date for hearing. COVID-19 restrictions require controlled summons scheduling to ensure social distancing can be managed in Courtrooms
- (2) Time from receipt of charge sheet to first court date
- (3) Time from receipt of application to date when it is actually heard - not just listed for adjourning or fixing a date
- (4) Time from receipt of application to listing for hearing in domestic violence matters
- (5) As (4) but for other family law applications

Circuit Court – criminal, civil and family

Criminal

Waiting times for criminal cases vary, depending on whether the accused is on bail or in custody; on whether the plea is 'guilty' or 'not guilty'; on whether the trial is scheduled to last 2 days or 2 weeks. In most Circuit Courts outside Dublin, the majority of guilty pleas will be dealt with at the next criminal session – making the waiting time approximately 3 months. Defendants who are in custody take precedence so their trials are dealt with first, followed by trials of those who are on bail.

Waiting times in Dublin Circuit Court have been impacted in recent years by the number of so-called 'white collar' cases taken by the State in the wake of the financial collapse that followed the global recession in 2008. The complicated nature of the evidence in these cases together with the number of witnesses called and the additional legal argument required has lengthened the trials with a resulting impact on the number of trial Courts available for other cases.

Measures introduced to address this situation include the allocation of the additional judges (subject to the availability of courtrooms) and the listing of only one long trial at any one time.

Nature Of Matter	Waiting Time
Trials	The time from receipt of return for trial to hearing date of trial
Sentences	The time from receipt of return for trial to sentence hearing (where plea of guilty entered)
Appeals	The time from receipt of District Court appeal to date of appeal hearing



Civil

Waiting times for civil cases vary with precedence given to criminal and family law cases where resources are limited. The nature of civil business has changed in recent years with fewer short cases and an increase in longer contested cases. Waiting times for longer cases tend to be longer than for so-called 'ordinary' cases and can distort waiting times. Some longer cases are dealt with by the allocation of additional sittings to the circuit.

Nature Of Matter	Waiting Time
Trials	The time from receipt of notice of trial to hearing date
Appeals	The time from receipt of District Court appeal to date of appeal hearing

Family

Waiting times are generally less than those for civil cases due to the priority afforded to family law cases. In most circuits, consent matters are heard in the 'next session' (a waiting time of three months or less). Additional sittings are arranged for long cases.

Nature Of Matter	Waiting Time
Cases	The time from receipt of notice of trial/notice of motion to hearing date
Appeals	The time from receipt of District Court appeal to date of appeal hearing




Circuit Court: Waiting Times Shown In Months (Unless Otherwise Stated) As At 31 December

Office	Criminal			Civil		Family Law		
	Trials	Sentences	Appeals	Trials	Appeals	Contested cases	Non-contested cases	Appeals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Carlow	9	3	6	6	6	5	5	5
Carrick-on-Shannon	18-24	12-18	24-36	12-18	24-30	18-24	3-6	06-12
Castlebar	10	3	5	3	3	3	3	3
Cavan	24-36	Next sitting	24	24	Next sitting	24	Next sitting	Next sitting
Clonmel	24	6	6-12	9	3-6	6-9	1	3-6
Cork	Next sitting	Next sitting	Next sitting	9-12	6-9	15	3-6	3-6
Dublin	24	2.5	9	11	2.5	6	1	1
Dundalk	24 - 30	6	6-12	9-12	6	3-6	3	3-6
Ennis	18	6	3	9	9	9	6	9
Galway	24 -36	5	3	8	6	8	1	6
Kilkenny	9	9	6	4	4	6	Next sitting	6
Letterkenny	18	3	12	18 - 24	18 - 24	9-12	Next sitting	9-12
Limerick	29	10	5	30	6	7.5	2	6
Longford	18 - 48	3-6	6-12	18-36	Next sitting	6-9	Next sitting	Next sitting
Monaghan	36	9	12	9	6	6	3	6
Mullingar	12-18	Next sitting	Next sitting	9-12	9-12	9-12	Next sitting	9-12
Naas	18	18	4	26	Next sitting	30	Next sitting	Next sitting
Portlaoise	18	9-12	6	6	3	5	3	3
Roscommon	32	12	12	12	9	9	3	9
Sligo	12	Next sitting	Next sitting	1	Next sitting	8	Next sitting	Next sitting
Tralee	18	12	12	12	10	9	3	9
Trim	12	12	2	12	4	12	6	4
Tullamore	18 - 24	Next sitting	Next sitting	11	11	11	7	7
Waterford	6	9	3	9	9	9-12	3-6	9-12
Wexford	24	Next sitting	Next sitting	15	Next sitting	9	Next sitting	Next sitting
Wicklow	12-18	6-12	3	9-12	6-12	12-18	6-12	6-12



- (1) Time from receipt of return for trial to hearing date of trial
- (2) Time from receipt of return for trial to sentence hearing where plea of guilty entered
- (3), (5), (8) Time from receipt of District Court Appeal to date of appeal hearing
- (4) Time from receipt of notice of trial to hearing date
- (6) Time from receipt of notice of trial/notice of motion to listing for hearing in contested matter
- (7) As (6) but for uncontested matters Details of the sittings of the Circuit Court are available on the website of the Service (www.courts.ie).

High Court – civil and family

High Court: Personal Injury

Waiting time: Dublin

The High Court tries personal injury cases in Dublin every week during court sittings. Cases that are ready for hearing can obtain a date within four weeks

Waiting time in other venues

The High Court tries personal injury cases for a limited number of weeks in each of the venues below. The time from when a case is set down for trial to the date on which it is listed in the selected venue is shown below in months for each venue

Venue	2022	2021
Cork	12 months	24 months
Dundalk	4 months	4 months
Galway	2 months	2 months
Kilkenny/Waterford	7 months	7 months
Limerick	24 months	24 months
Sligo	12 months	12 months

High Court: Insolvency (Corporate)

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
Applications to appoint examiner	The time from the issue of a petition to the allocation of the first return date before the High Court	Date immediately available	Date immediately available
Applications to wind up company	The time from the issue of a petition to the allocation of the first return date before the High Court	2 weeks	3 weeks

High Court: Other Corporate Applications

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
Restrict directors	The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the High Court	2 weeks	4 weeks



High Court: Insolvency (Personal)

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
Applications to issue summons	The time from the issue of a summons/ petition to the first return date before the High Court	2 weeks	2 weeks
Applications for adjudication	The time from the issue of a summons/ petition to the first return date before the High Court	2 weeks	2 weeks

High Court: Commercial List (Proceedings Defined In Order 63a Rule 1 Rules Of The Superior Courts)

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
Liberty to enter list (motion)	The time from the issue of a summons to the first return date before the High Court	Date immediately available	Date immediately available
Full hearing	The time from the first return date to the date of the full hearing	2 week to 6 months depending on time required for a hearing and availability of judges	2 week to 6 months depending on time required for a hearing and availability of judges

High Court: Competition List

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
Monday motion list	The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the High Court	3 weeks	3 weeks

High Court

Chancery Matters commenced by plenary summons or special summons (including injunction applications, company law matters, specific performance/rescission of contracts, administration of estates of deceased persons, trust actions)

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
Monday motion list	The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the High Court	3 weeks	3 weeks
Hearing of certified cases	The time from when a case is certified ready for hearing to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court	4 months	5 months
Special summonses (Master's Court)	The time from the issue of a summons to the first return date before the Master of the High Court	7 weeks	7 weeks
Special summonses (High Court)	The time from the date of transfer from the Master's Court to the first return date before the High Court	3 weeks	7 weeks

**High Court: Mortgage Suits**

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
		Special summons for well charging order	The time from the issue of a summons to the first return date before the Master of the High Court
Full hearing	The time from the date of transfer from the Master's Court to the first return date before the High Court	3 weeks	7 weeks

High Court: Non-Jury (Breach Of Contract, Professional Negligence, Debt Collection)

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
		Miscellaneous (motions that require more time than they can be given in the Monday list)	The time between listing in the common law list and hearing in the non-jury List
	The time between listing in the common law list and hearing in the non-jury List	7 weeks	25 weeks
Full hearing – cases less than one week in duration	The time from when a case is certified ready for hearing to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court	7 months	7 months
Full hearing – cases more than one week in duration	As above	7 months	7 months

High Court: Appeals From The Circuit Court

Nature of application	Waiting time	
	2022	2021
Full hearing - cases less than one week in duration	The time from the lodgement of the books of appeal to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court	The time from the lodgement of the books of appeal to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court
Full hearing - cases more than one week in duration	As above	As above



High Court: Judicial Review: Asylum-Related

Nature of application	Waiting time	
	2022	2021
Pre-leave	2 weeks	Date available within 1/2 weeks
Post-leave	1 month	2 months

High Court: Judicial Review: Other

Nature of application	Waiting time	
	2022	2021
Pre-leave	7 weeks to make ex parte application	2 weeks to make ex parte application
Post-leave	2 months	2 months
	Urgent applications are prioritised both at the pre leave and post leave stage	

High Court: Jury (Defamation: False Imprisonment: Assault)

Waiting time	2022	2021
The time from when a case is certified ready for hearing to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court	9 months	9 months

High Court: Garda Compensation Act

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
Full hearing	The time from the date of transfer from the Master's Court to the first return date before the High Court	5 weeks	5 weeks

High Court: Proceeds Of Crime Act

Waiting time	2022	2021
The time from receipt of application to hearing	Date immediately available	Date immediately available

High Court: Master's Court

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
Motions	The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the Master	9 weeks*	3 weeks

**due to increase in discovery motions and summary judgments are all now being heard by the Master*

High Court: Common Law Motions

Waiting time	2022	2021
The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the High Court	10 weeks	11 weeks



High Court: Family		
Nature of application	Waiting time	
	2022	2021
Urgent applications	Within 1 week	Within 1 week
Non-contested cases	Within 3 weeks	Within 2 weeks
Contested cases	Within 3 months	Within 2 months
Applications under Hague Luxembourg Convention	1 week	Date available immediately
Appeals from Circuit Court	Within 3 weeks	Within 2 months

High Court – Criminal

High Court – Central Criminal Court		
Murder and rape trials (Central Criminal Court)	The time from the first listing of a case before the Central Criminal Court on return for trial from the District Court, to the trial date	
Bail applications	The date from the issue of a notice of motion to the date the matter is first listed before the High Court	
	2022	2021
Murder and rape trials	24 Months	24 Months
Bail	Date immediately available	Date immediately available

** Time from receipt of return for trial to the date fixed for trial (earlier dates for trial are made available for trials involving a child and/or other vulnerable witnesses)*

Waiting time:	2022	2021
The time from when a charge sheet is received to the trial date	18 Months	10 months

Court Of Appeal - Civil

Waiting time:		
The time from when an appeal is entered into the court list to the date of hearing		
	2022	2021
Appeals*	24 weeks	25 weeks
Fast tracked short appeals**	3 weeks	3 weeks

** appeals requiring more than two hours*

***depends on time available*



Court Of Appeal - Criminal

Waiting time		
The time from when an appeal is entered into the court list to the date of hearing		
	2022	2021
Appeals	29 weeks	20 weeks
Article 40/habeas corpus appeals	3 weeks	3 weeks
European Arrest Warrant / Judicial Review appeals	During the subsequent legal term (if no time available within the current legal term)	During the subsequent legal term (if no time available within the current legal term)

Supreme Court

Nature of application	Waiting time	2022	2021
Applications for leave to appeal	The time from the filing of complete documentation to the determination of the application	5 weeks	5 weeks
Appeals	The time from the determination of the leave application to the disposal of the appeal	62 weeks	52 weeks



4

Governance and transparency



About this Chapter

Governance can be described as the set of responsibilities, practices, policies, and procedures that provide strategic direction to an organisation. Good governance therefore supports the organisation to realise the intended outcomes for members of the public, manage risks and use its resources in an effective, efficient and ethical manner.

In this chapter we outline compliance with the various standards, we provide an overview on our governance and reporting measures across the organisation, the Courts Board, and its various Committees. We also provide an update on our audit and assurance arrangements, requests for information, data protection, customer complaints and compliments, and our Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

Governance standards and practices

The Courts Service continues to strive for effective governance arrangements at organisational and Board level. The arrangements follow the legislative framework set out in the Courts Service Act 1998, the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (CPGSB), and developments in the Civil Service Renewal Plan and the Civil Service Code of Standards of Behaviour. We benchmark our governance arrangements against the principles developed by the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform (DPENDPDR) to ensure they are effective and robust.

Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service

Published in December 2018 by DPENDPDR, the Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service is to be used by each department and office to guide the development of their individual governance frameworks.

The Courts Service's framework document is in line with the Corporate Governance Standard. It sets out the statutory basis for the organisation, as described in legislation, as well as providing information on:

- organisational structure,
- the roles of the Board and its Committees,
- the roles and responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Management Team and
- the governance and accountability/ assurance arrangements in place.

Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (CPGSB)

The CPGSB provides a framework setting out best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non-commercial State bodies. It details both the internal practices of the State bodies and their external relations with Government, the relevant Minister under whose aegis they fall, the Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform and their respective parent departments.

The revised and updated code, introduced in 2016, placed additional obligations on State bodies. It placed significant emphasis on the responsibility and accountability of Board members, the role of management and the importance of the Audit and Risk Committee in the governance of State bodies. We have put additional governance arrangements in place, both in relation to the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee, to enhance the governance of the organisation. The Chief Executive Officer provides an annual report on behalf of the Board to the Minister for Justice providing assurance on compliance with the code.



Agency Framework Agreement between the Courts Service and the Department of Justice

In accordance with best corporate governance practice and the requirements of the CPGSB, the Courts Service and the Department of Justice signed a three-year oversight agreement in 2020 to cover the period to 2020-2022.

This agreement is supported by annual performance delivery agreements. The agreements aim to enhance the working relationship between us and the Department and to support us in carrying out our functions. The agreements recognise the status of the Courts Service as an independent State agency governed by its Board. They encompass all of the legal and other obligations we face, as well as providing the necessary accountability and oversight for the Minister.

Organisation Overview

Courts Service Board

The Courts Service is governed by a Board consisting of a Chairperson and 17 other members. The Board is responsible for determining organisational policies and for overseeing their implementation. It performs these functions directly and through the committees of the Board. In accordance with the Courts Service Act, 1998 the term of office of the Board is three years. The current Board was established on 9 November 2020.

Standing items on the agenda for Board meetings include minutes of meetings and reports from the committees of the Board, financial reports, reports from the Chief Executive Officer, reports from the Chief Risk Officer and Head of Corporate Services, and details of all new contracts (over €25,000) entered into by the Courts Service and recorded on the contract register.

The Board monitors the implementation of the Courts Service Strategic Plan and provides strategic direction to the executive.

It also approves an annual corporate business plan which it reviews twice yearly with performance assessed by reference to the Corporate Strategic Plan 2021-2023. The Board approves the annual budget for the organisation and regularly considers reports on budgets and expenditure. Annual corporate documents considered or approved by the Board in 2022 included:

- Corporate Business Plan 2022
- Risk Management Policy for 2022
- Annual Report of the Audit & Risk Committee 2021
- Annual Budget 2023
- Annual return to Minister for Justice under the CPGSB

The Board approves proposals for contracts and arrangements, including the acquisition or disposal of any interest in land or property with a value more than €5m; leases for periods more than four years and nine months irrespective of value; and contracts for consultancy in excess of €500,000. In 2022, the Board considered and approved no contracts in excess of €5m.

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest & Declaration of Interest

Prior to the consideration of any procurement proposals by the Board or committees of the Board, the Chairperson, as a matter of good governance, requests that any member who considers that they have an interest which might represent a conflict absent themselves from discussion on the matter. The minutes record any such declarations or abstentions. Following the requirements of the CPGSB the Board also makes periodic disclosure of interests which they, or a family member, may hold which could represent a conflict of interest for them in their role as members of the Board.



Board Meetings

The Board receives regular reports from the Chief Executive Officer on the operation of the Courts Service, the implementation of Board policy, the implementation of the annual Corporate Business Plan, expenditure and budgetary matters and other relevant issues and/or developments. The Board regularly receives reports in relation to the implementation of risk management systems.

During 2022, the Board monitored progress of the implementation of the Courts Service Strategic Vision 2030; progress being made towards the development of Hammond Lane Family Law Complex; the corporate response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and the development of an Estates Strategy.

The Board held meetings on 17 January, 28 February, 14 March, 28 March, 13 June, 18 July, 26 September, 7 November, 12 December with an overall attendance rate of 95.7%. Information on individual attendance at Board meetings is in the schedule at the end of this chapter.

Five committees supported the Board in its work in 2022:

- the Finance Committee
- the Audit and Risk Committee
- the Building Committee
- the Modernisation Committee
- the Family Law Court Development Committee

(see Chapter 1: About the Courts Service for membership details).

Meetings of Committees of the Board continue to be held in advance of, and close to, the date of Board meetings where possible, to allow any issues which require Board consideration to be brought to the attention of the Board without any undue delay.

Meetings of Committees of the Board 2022

Audit and Risk Committee	14 February, 21 March, 16 May, 4 July, 17 October, 28 November
Building Committee	15 February, 15 March, 10 May, 12 July, 8 November, 29 November
Family Law Court Development Committee	17 January, 14 February, 28 March, 25 April, 16 May, 4 July, 10 October, 21 November
Finance Committee	14 February, 21 March, 16 May, 7 July, 17 October, 28 November
Modernisation Committee	26 January, 31 May, 27 July, 26 October, 7 December

An annual fee is payable to non-judicial members of the Board (except for the Chief Executive Officer) in the sum of €11,970 together with travel and subsistence expenses at rates sanctioned by the Department of Finance. In accordance with Department of Finance regulations, fees are not paid to Board members who are public servants.

Minutes of meetings of the Board, are published on www.courts.ie and on the intranet to provide information on matters considered by the Board and decisions made.

Board Effectiveness Review

Demonstrating an ongoing commitment to performing its functions in accordance with best practice governance standards, in 2020, the Courts Service engaged the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the Board and its committees. In 2022, several recommendations made by the IPA in its review were adopted.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of policies approved by the Board, and the day-to-day management of the staff, administration,



and business of the Courts Service. She prepares an annual budget for approval by both the Finance Committee and the Board with support from the Senior Management Team. She provides regular updates to the Board, the Finance Committee, and other Committees of the Board, detailing the management of the organisation, implementation of policies, progress on the strategic plan and the modernisation agenda.

The Chief Executive Officer provides an annual report on behalf of the Board to the Minister for Justice providing assurance on compliance with the CPGSB. The report outlines the organisation's system of internal controls and confirms compliance across a range of headings. In particular, the report affirms compliance with:

- appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, travel,
- procurement, and asset disposals
- inclusion of a statement on the system of internal financial control
- adherence to Codes of Business Conduct for Board members and employees
- compliance with Government guidelines on the payment of Board members' fees
- provision of a draft strategic plan to the relevant Minister prior to the plan being finalised and adopted by the Board.

As Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive Officer is also responsible for the signing the Annual Appropriation Account of the Courts Service together with a Statement of Internal Financial Controls providing assurance on the internal financial controls in place across the organisation.

Appropriation Account

The Appropriation Account is the annual financial account of the Courts Service and is furnished to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) on or before 31 March

each year. It is compiled on foot of approved estimates by the Oireachtas and is prepared by the Chief Executive Officer, who is the Accounting Officer. An extract from the Appropriation Account 2022 submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General can be found in Chapter 6: Financial Statements.

Internal Financial Control

The Board has overall responsibility for the internal financial control of the Courts Service. It delegates responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of risk management and the internal controls in place to the Audit and Risk Committee. The Committee receives regular reports from management, the Chief Risk Officer, Internal Audit, and external auditors. Such arrangements are designed to manage rather than eliminate the risks facing the Courts Service.

To maintain effective systems of internal controls, the changes made because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continued in 2022. Key payment controls were revised to allow remote approval of invoices and payment forms by email where necessary. We established secure remote access for our people to existing systems when working remotely. All changes adhered to the Comptroller and Auditor General guidance on the potential impacts of COVID-19 on the control environment.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC), signed by the Chief Executive Officer for the purpose of the Appropriation Account, addresses the internal control environment within the Courts Service with regard to the financial control environment, the framework of administration, management reporting and internal control. It includes a statement of compliance with procurement guidelines and confirmation that the Courts Service has an Audit and Risk Committee and Internal Audit function.

The National Shared Services Office (NSSO) continues to perform a number of administrative functions of the Courts Service, including payroll, travel and subsistence and human resource services.



Furthermore, the Courts Service is a client of the Financial Management Shared Service Centre (FMSSC), Killarney. The FMSSC provides financial and accounting services and other ancillary activities for the Courts Service. As part of the Appropriation Account process and for the signing of the SIFC by the Chief Executive Officer, the Accounting Officers for both the NSSO and the FMSSC provide letters of assurance as to the adequacy of controls systems in place within the NSSO for the provision of shared services to the Courts Service.

In the case of internal controls, systems can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss. Breaches of controls, in particular instances of fraud or irregularity, must be brought to the attention of the Comptroller and Auditor General in accordance with public financial procedures. The Courts Service has a policy statement on the prevention and detection of fraud with all cases irrespective of value being reported to the Head of Corporate Services, the Senior Management Team, and the Audit and Risk Committee.

Financial Management

The Courts Service is represented on the Financial Management Committee as part of the governance arrangement for budget management within the justice sector. The Committee is comprised of representatives from the main justice group of votes including, amongst others, the Department of Justice, An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service and the Courts Service. It provides for a further level of assurance to the Department regarding vote management, adherence to Government financial guidelines and ensuring that value for money is achieved in the expenditure of public funds.

Budget Management

The Chief Executive Officer and the Senior Management Team prepare an annual budget based on the funding allocation contained in the annual estimates approved by the Oireachtas. The Finance Committee

recommends the annual budget for approval by the Board. Day-to-day responsibility for managing expenditure within budgetary limits is assigned to the Assistant Secretaries responsible for each directorate. Budgets are monitored closely with monthly reports furnished to the Senior Management Team. Quarterly financial reports are submitted to the Finance Committee and the Board.

Performance budgeting

Performance budgeting forms part of the Published Estimates and attempts to link funding provided to measurable results. The Courts Service complies with the performance budgeting format which identifies key outputs, context, and impact indicators. The expanded performance budgeting targets for 2022 were set out in the Revised Estimates Volume.

Risk Management

The Board has overall responsibility for overseeing the management of risk within the Courts Service. To support good governance, we continue to use a risk management framework which clearly defines roles and responsibilities at the Board, Audit and Risk Committee, and at all levels of management.

The Board recognises that the effective management of risk is the responsibility of all staff of the Courts Service and seeks to encourage and promote a culture of risk management through the operation of a formal risk management process.

We have adopted key principles of the CPGSB and the Risk Management Guidance for Government Departments and Offices. A risk management policy is approved by the Board and defines the risk appetite of the organisation. This, in turn, is supported by risk management guidelines aligned to the policy.

The risk management framework and policy provide for a planned and systematic approach to identifying and managing a range of risk categories:



- Financial
- Service delivery
- Buildings
- ICT
- People
- Compliance and governance
- Reform
- External

The Chief Risk Officer is a member of the Senior Management Team and reports directly to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board. Risks are identified at corporate and business unit level and managed accordingly by assigning responsibility to the relevant directorate and office manager.

The Courts Service maintains a corporate risk register that is reviewed regularly by the Chief Executive Officer, Senior Management Team, Audit and Risk Committee and the Board. The Corporate Risk Register is refreshed at the start of each year.

Strategic risks are rated based on their impact and likelihood of occurrence, with new and emerging risks being added as they arise. The Risk Register is linked to the annual business planning process and is a key document in enabling the organisation deal with the challenges it faces. It sets out the major risks facing the Courts Service together with existing controls and actions to mitigate them and identifies owners and target dates for completion. It also provides the context through which each Assistant Secretary prepares risk registers for their respective directorates. In particular, we recognise the importance of cyber-security and the impact an adverse ICT event could have on the operation of the Courts. We continuously review our ICT security systems and processes, taking action to further protect the organisation where appropriate.

The changes to the working and control environment with remote and virtual working that came about in 2020 as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continued into 2022. As a front-line service, the

primary objective in managing the pandemic continued to ensure appropriate measures were in place to provide a safe environment for our people, the judiciary, and court users, while complying with guidance and instruction from National Public Health Emergency Team and the HSE.

As part of the initial response to the pandemic in 2020, a COVID-19 Response Management Team was established to develop a business response plan. A COVID-19 safety management programme was central to the plan. This team continued to operate throughout 2022, which included communications with the Senior Management Team, the judiciary, and key stakeholders.

Procurement

The Courts Service seeks to comply with the principle of competitive tendering in respect of the expenditure on works, supplies and service contracts. The Public Procurement Guidelines provide direction for all procurement policy activity of the organisation. They ensure the objectives and key principles of competition, equality of treatment and transparency, which underpin national and EU rules, are complied with, and observed.

Procurement within the Courts Service is informed by the Office of Government Procurement public procurement guidelines for goods and services.

We avail of centralised managed contracts put in place by the Office of Government Procurement and continue to engage with the Office for advice on current and future procurement requirements.

Responsibility for procurement is devolved to each Assistant Secretary responsible for their Directorate, with the Corporate Services Directorate taking a lead co-ordination role in promoting awareness of obligations at both national and EU level. The Directorate provides training for all colleagues, maintains a contract register and a procurement plan, and monitors the expenditure subject to the procurement



process. The annual procurement plan is approved by the Senior Management Team.

During 2022, the Courts Service entered into 12 new contracts (each over €25,000) across all directorates for services including Cleaning and Caretaking Services, Courier Services and Employee Engagement Survey contracts.

The Board approves proposals for contracts and arrangements, including the acquisition or disposal of any interest in land or property with a value more than €5m; leases for periods more than four years and nine months irrespective of value; and contracts for consultancy in excess of €500,000. In 2022, the Board considered and approved no contracts in excess of €5m.

Protected Disclosures Act 2014

The Board maintains a role in relation to oversight of the operation of the policy of the Courts Service under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014. 'No protected disclosures, as set out in the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, were made in 2022.

Audit and Assurance Arrangements

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is chaired by a member of the Board and includes a judicial representative from the Court of Appeal, Circuit Court and District Court, and members with significant business expertise and experience within the public and private sectors. The Committee plays a fundamental role in ensuring that the Courts Service functions according to good governance, accounting and auditing standards and adopts appropriate management and risk arrangements. The Committee held six meetings in 2022 at which it reviewed and considered a wide range of reports including the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee 2021 and the Annual Report of the Internal Audit Unit for 2021.

Internal Audit Function

Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function whose role is to provide assurance to the Board, Audit and Risk Committee, Chief Executive Officer and all levels of management as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems on governance, risk and internal controls operating within the Courts Service.

The Internal Audit Unit operates in accordance with an audit charter approved by the Board and an annual audit plan approved by the Chief Executive Officer and the Audit and Risk Committee. In carrying out audits, the Unit complies with the Institute of Internal Audit Standards, as adapted by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for use in Government Departments.

All audit reports are submitted directly to the Chief Executive Officer and to the Audit and Risk Committee who also receive periodic reports showing progress against the plan. The Unit completed eleven audits during the year.

External audit

The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) performs the external audit of voted funds. The C&AG's authority extends to the audit of public funds and therefore does not include court funds managed by the Courts Service on behalf of Minors and Wards of Court. The audit of court funds managed by the Accountant's Office to financial year end 30 September 2022 was carried out by external auditors, Mazars.

Requests for information

The Courts Service continued to respond to requests for information from the public, government departments and parliamentary representatives during the year. We provided material for responses to 221 parliamentary questions tabled by members of the Oireachtas. Our Office of the Chief Executive Officer dealt with 286 letters/representations from other government departments, TDs, senators, and members of the public.



Freedom of Information (FOI)

In 2022, the Courts Service received 136 requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Many of these requests related to personal information contained in court records, which are not covered by Freedom of Information legislation.

The Courts Service continues to meet its legal obligations in relation to responding to FOI requests and maintaining a well-informed network of decision makers and internal reviewers. The Freedom of Information Officer continues to participate in the FOI Public Service User Network.

FOI Requests and Decisions are outlined below:

Freedom of Information Requested 2022

On hand 01/01/2022	3
Received	136
Dealt with	137
On hand 31/12/2022	2

Outcomes

Access granted/part granted	35
Refused*	79
Transferred/withdrawn	12
Handled outside of FOI	11

* includes access requests for court records which are exempt under Freedom of Information legislation (section 42(a)(i) of the 2014 Act)

Data Protection

The Courts Service is committed to fulfill its data protection obligations and process personal data in accordance with relevant legislation. The Data Protection Unit continues to work with managers and staff to achieve full regulatory compliance by ensuring data protection is embedded into business practices from the outset. The Data Protection Officer participates in the Civil Service Data Protection Officer Network.

In 2022, the Data Protection Unit dealt with 48 data subject access requests for personal data held on CCTV, personnel files, and court records under Data Protection legislation.

In the case of personal data processed by or on behalf of a Court when acting in a judicial capacity, the data protection rights of data subjects are restricted in law to the extent that the restrictions are necessary and proportionate to safeguard judicial independence and court proceedings. Access requests for personal information held on the court record must be addressed to the relevant court office under the rules of Court.

Customer complaints and compliments

The Customer Comments Co-ordination Office, supported by Directorate Liaison Officers, manages formal complaints as well as compliments received from members of the public. It is important for the Courts Service to understand services that are valued and appreciated by our customers as well as services or actions that need to be improved. Feedback, both positive and negative, can provide unique insights into the standards of service being provided to court users.

Conduct or decisions in relation to court business are matters for the judiciary and are therefore not dealt with under the formal complaint procedure. We received 207 formal customer complaints during 2022.

Business Continuity Planning

The importance of Business Continuity Planning (BCP) became clear during the pandemic. Throughout 2022, we developed, tested and refined our BCP processes. Disaster recovery processes also took a step forward with the completion of new enterprise backup service. This is a significant step forward in increasing the resilience of court operations.

We also established an Energy Planning Group to look at how to best manage the current energy shortage. The BCP



Unit works closely with the Energy group to manage any business/operations implications arising from the energy crisis and to develop an overall Emergency Response and Crisis Management approach.

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 establishes a positive duty on public bodies to try to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect the human rights of staff and persons to whom services are provided.

The Court Service published a Public Duty Action Plan in November 2021. This work aligns with the Courts Service's commitment to the modernisation agenda, which is aimed at providing a modern Courts Service to meet the needs of everyone who lives in Ireland. The goals of our Public Sector Duty Action Plan in 2022 included:

- Incorporating our commitment to embed Human Rights into how we conduct our business; and lead, develop and manage our people through the inclusion of our Public Sector Duty in our People and Organisation Strategy
- Developing a framework of living and behaving in a manner that underpins Human Rights and our Public Service Duty,
- Developing a culture in which the Public Sector values are embedded by ensuring the values are known by all;

how they are demonstrated is informed by our stakeholder engagement and our people are trained and developed to live these in the course of their work,

- Creating an awareness of diversity and inclusion and how individual views may be challenged.

The targets set out for 2022 were largely implemented and will be updated in a plan to be developed in 2023.



Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021

The Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 was enacted in December 2021, to introduce changes to the Official Languages Act of 2003.

The Act expands on the existing obligations of public bodies to promote the use of the Irish language and improve the services we deliver through Irish. We are working to increase the use Irish in official forms, signage and digital media, while adhering to new rules on budget spending for advertising and our growing our Irish language skills as well as number of Irish speakers. As a result measures under the

Act are being introduced on a phased basis.

Like many government agencies we commit to implementing a language scheme in the organisation - we signed our 4th Scheme with An Coimisinéir Teanga in 2021. These schemes are now to be phased out and replaced with a system of language standards.

In 2022, we initiated changes to our branding by enhancing the Irish language element of our logo, which will launch in 2023 as part of our new style guide for the Courts Service.

Name	Attendances
Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell, Chief Justice and Chairperson	9/9
Mr. Justice George Birmingham	9/9
Ms. Justice Mary Irvine *	5/5
Mr. Justice David Barniville *	4/4
Ms. Justice Elizabeth Dunne	7/9
Mr. Justice Patrick McCarthy	8/9
Mr. Justice Tony O'Connor	9/9
Ms. Justice Patricia Ryan	9/9
Her Honour Judge Alice Doyle	9/9
His Honour Judge Paul Kelly	9/9
Judge Conal Gibbons **	6/6
Judge Alan Mitchell **	3/3
Ms. Angela Denning	9/9
Ms. Maura McNally SC ***	6/7
Ms. Sara Phelan ***	2/2
Ms. Michele O'Boyle	9/9
Ms. Hilary McSweeney	9/9
Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan	8/9
Ms. Karen Kiernan	8/9
Ms. Patricia King	9/9
Ms. Deirdre Kiely	8/9



Board member attendance at meetings in 2022

*Ms. Justice Irvine retired July 2022 as President of the High Court and was replaced by Mr. Justice Barniville

**Judge Conal Gibbons retired in September 2022 and was replaced by Judge Alan Mitchell as the District Court representative

***Ms. Maura McNally's term as Chairperson of Council of the Bar of Ireland came to an end in July 2022 and she was replaced on the Board by Ms. Sara Phelan as the Bar Council representative

Additional Information

Solicitors

Byrne Wallace LLP, 88 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2.

McCann FitzGerald LLP, Riverside One, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2.

Auditors

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, Treasury Block, Lower Yard, Dublin Castle, Dublin 2. (Appropriation Accounts)

Mazars

Block 3 - Harcourt Centre Harcourt Road D02 A339 Dublin 2



5

**Legislative
Provisions and
Reports of the Rules
Committees**



About this Chapter

In this chapter we provide an update on the work of our legal unit which includes working on and preparing for new legislation. We also provide annual reports from each of the Rules Committees across the various jurisdictions.

The implementation of new legislation impacting on criminal proceedings and civil actions can place significant demands on the resources of the Courts Service. The Courts Service reviews the content of, and provides input into, proposed legislation to ascertain whether provisions affect court operations or impact or require new court procedures. Legislation in this context includes schemes of bills, bills, draft statutory instruments and draft EU legal instruments.

It is important that the Service is afforded the opportunity to assess the impact of proposed legislative initiatives at an early stage. This is particularly relevant in the context of the development of strategies across a range of areas including ICT, buildings and human resources. The following are examples of legislation, or proposed legislation, which impacted on the work of the Courts or the Service or into which the Service provided input in 2022:

Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, 2015

In 2022 the Courts Service continued to make preparations for the commencement of the main provisions of this Act. The Service is represented on an Inter-Departmental Steering Group to support the Act's commencement. An internal working group was established to oversee the implementation of the 2015 Act in court offices. The bulk of the Act was commenced on 26 April 2023. Some sections were commenced on 17 October 2016.

Additional sections were commenced on 17 December 2018. This Act will make significant changes to the law relating to capacity and decision-making arrangements. It provides for the repeal of the legislation regulating wardship and the replacement of wardship for adults with a new regime of decision-making assistance, support and representation. Jurisdiction under the Act will be exercised primarily by the Circuit Court, with certain jurisdiction being reserved to the High Court.

Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act, 2022

This Act, which contains a number of amendments to the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, 2015, was signed on 17 December 2022 and along with the 2015 Act commenced on 26 April 2023. This act increased the number of ordinary Circuit Court judges from 37 to 40. Also, from date of commencement, applications for appointment as care representative under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act 2009 can no longer be made and applications relating to matters contained in section 21 of the 2009 Act must be made to the Circuit Court under Part 5 of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, 2015.

District Court (Fees) (Amendment) Order 2022

This S.I. amended the District Court (Fees) Order 2014 and provided that no fee was payable in respect of applications for special exemption orders from the 26 of January 2022 to 1 May 2022.



District Court (Fees) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2022

This S.I. amended the District Court (Fees) Order 2014 and reduced the court fees payable in respect of applications for special exemption orders by 50% with effect from the 28 of September 2022.

Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill

The Courts Service continues to provide observations on a Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. This Bill will provide for centralised court offices, the use of electronic registers and the amendment of the qualification period for certain officers, such as the Master and Deputy Master of the High Court. It is hoped that this Bill will be enacted in 2023.

Family Courts Bill

The Courts Service continues to provide observations on the Family Courts Bill. This Bill provides for a dedicated family law jurisdiction and the appointment of dedicated family court judges for the District Court, Circuit Court and the High Court.



Annual Report Superior Courts Rules Committee

Report for year ending 31 December 2022

The Superior Courts Rules Committee was established by Section 67 of the Courts of Justice Act 1936. Under Section 68 of the 1936 Act the power to make, annul or alter rules of Court is exercisable by the Committee with the concurrence of the Minister for Justice.

Membership of the Committee at year ending 31 December 2022

- The Chief Justice, the Hon. Mr Justice Donal O'Donnell (Chairperson)
- The President of the Court of Appeal, the Hon. Mr Justice George Birmingham (Vice Chairperson)
- The President of the High Court, the Hon. Mr Justice David Barniville
- The Hon. Ms Justice Elizabeth Dunne, Judge of the Supreme Court
- The Hon. Mr Justice Brian Murray, Judge of the Supreme Court
- The Hon. Mr Justice John A. Edwards, Judge of the Court of Appeal
- The Hon. Ms Justice Maire Whelan, Judge of the Court of Appeal
- The Hon. Ms Justice Deirdre Murphy, Judge of the High Court
- The Hon. Mr Justice Richard Humphreys, Judge of the High Court
- The Master of the High Court, VACANCY
- Ms Yvonne McNamara S.C., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
- Ms Grainne Larkin B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
- Mr Liam Kennedy, Solicitor, nominated by the Council of the Law Society of Ireland
- Ms Michele O'Boyle, Solicitor, nominated by the Council of the Law Society of Ireland
- Mr James Finn, Strategy and Reform Directorate, Courts Service, to whom membership has been delegated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under section 67(9)(c) Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Ms Mary Cummins, Office of the Chief State Solicitor – appointed to act in place of the Attorney General under section 67(9)(d) Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Mr John Mahon, Registrar of the Supreme Court

The Committee met remotely on 3 occasions during 2022. The following rules of the Superior Courts were concurred in by the Minister for Justice between 1st January 2022 and 31st December 2022

S.I. number	Title	Date signed by Committee	Operative date
122 of 2022	RSC (Criminal Procedure Act 2021) 2022	31st January 2022	16th March 2022
185 of 2022	RSC (Powers of Attorney) 2022	31st January 2022	26th April 2022
186 of 2022	RSC (Lodgment and Tender) 2022	31st January 2022	26th April 2022
218 of 2022	RSC (Companies Act 2014, Part 10A) 2022	28th February 2022	9th May 2022
454 of 2022	RSC (Procedure on Default) 2022	14th March 2022	16th September 2022



Secretary - Liz Hughes, Strategy and Reform Directorate, Courts Service

Drafting Services - Mr Sean Barton of McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors

The Committee met remotely on 3 occasions during 2022. The following rules of the Superior Courts were concurred in by the Minister for Justice between the 1 January 2022 and the 31 December 2022:-

At year end no Rules are awaiting the concurrence of the Minister and the following matters were under consideration by the Committee:

- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015) 2022
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (section 459, Companies Act 2014) 2022
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Order 19) 2022
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Subpoena) 2022
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Order 36) 2022
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Garda Síochána (Compensation) Act 2021) 2022
- Review of the Administration of Civil Justice

Liz Hughes
Secretary

27th April 2023



Annual Report Circuit Court Rules Committee

Report for year ending 31 December 2022

The rule-making authority for the Circuit Court is the Circuit Court Rules Committee established under section 69 of the Courts of Justice Act 1936. The remit of the Committee is fixed partly by section 66 of The Courts of Justice Act 1924 which empowers it to annul or alter rules and make new rules with the concurrence of the Minister for Justice, including rules for regulating the sessions, vacations and circuits of the Circuit Judges and the practice, pleading and procedure generally (including liability of parties as to costs and also the entering-up of judgement and granting of summary judgement in appropriate cases) of the Circuit Court and the use of the national language therein amongst other things.

The members of the Committee at 31 December, 2022 were:

- The Hon. Ms. Justice Patricia Ryan, President of the Circuit Court (Chairperson)
- Her Honour Judge Sarah Berkeley, Judge of the Circuit Court
- His Honour Judge John Aylmer, Judge of the Circuit Court
- Mr. Tomás Keys B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
- Ms. Tracy Ennis Faherty B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland

- Ms. Michele O'Boyle, Solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
- Ms. Siún Hurley, Solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
- Ms. Sabina Purcell, Principal Solicitor, Office of the Chief State Solicitor – appointed to act in place of the Attorney General under section 69(9)(c), Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Mr James Finn, Principal Officer, Courts Service, to whom membership has been delegated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under section 69(9)(b), Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Ms. Rita Considine, County Registrar, Dublin
- Ms. Bridín Concannon, County Registrar, Meath and Westmeath, nominated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under Section 69(4)(d) of the Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended.

Secretary: Liz Hughes, Strategy and Reform Directorate, Courts Service

Drafting Services: Mr Sean Barton of McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors

At year end there were no Rules awaiting the concurrence of the Minister and the

The Committee met remotely on two occasions during 2022. The following Rules of the Circuit Court were signed by the Minister for Justice between the 1 January 2022 and the 31 December 2022

S.I. number	Title	Date signed by Committee	Date effective from
453 of 2022	Circuit Court Rules (Criminal Procedure Act 2021) 2022	26th April 2022	16th September 2022



following Rules were under consideration by the Committee:-

- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Affidavits) 2022
- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Combined Court Offices) 2022
- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Costs) 2022
- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Personal Insolvency) 2022
- Review of the Administration of Civil Justice

Liz Hughes Secretary
28 March 2023



Annual Report District Court Rules Committee

Report for year ending 31 December 2022

The rule making authority for the District Court is the District Court Rules Committee established under section 71 of the Courts of Justice Act, 1936. The Committee may annul or alter rules and make new rules with the concurrence of the Minister for Justice.

Members of the Committee at 31 December, 2022:

- The President of the District Court, His Honour Judge Paul Kelly (Chairperson)
- Judge Brian Sheridan, Judge of the District Court
- Judge Anne Watkin, Judge of the District Court
- Judge Alan Mitchell, Judge of the District Court
- Judge Marie Quirke, Judge of the District Court
- Dr. Shane McCarthy, Solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
- Ms. Ann McGarry, Solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
- Mr. Eoin Martin, B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
- Ms. Ciara McMahon, Chief State Solicitor's Office, appointed to act in place of the Attorney General under section 71(9)(c) of the Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended

- Mr. James Finn, Strategy and Reform Directorate, Courts Service, to whom membership has been delegated by the Chief Executive Officer under section 71(9)(b), Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Eoin Manning, Deputy Chief Clerk, Dublin Metropolitan District Court, nominated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under section 71(3)(d) of the Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended

Secretary: Liz Hughes, Strategy and Reform Directorate, Courts Service Drafting Services: Mr Sean Barton of McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors

The Committee met remotely on two occasions during 2022. No new Rules of the District Court were signed by the Minister for Justice and Equality between the 1st January 2022 and the 31 December 2022.

At year end the following Rules signed by the Committee were awaiting the concurrence of the Minister:-

- District Court (Costs) Rules 2022
- District Court (Service of Book of Evidence) Rules 2022

The following matters were under consideration by the Committee at year end:

- Draft District Court (Mutual Recognition of Decisions on Supervision Measures) Rules 2022
- Review of the Administration of Civil Justice

Liz Hughes Secretary
25th June 2023



6

Financial Statements



Financial Highlights

About this Chapter

In this Chapter we present our financial outturn for 2022 which details our funding for the year as provided to meet our statutory obligations and the financial position at year end for expenditure and income. We provide a financial overview for 2022, an analysis of our sources of funding, court fees in addition to providing a detailed analysis of expenditure and income comparing 2022 with 2021. Finally, we outline information on prompt payment interest and an extract from the financial statements relating to court Funds.

Expenditure & Income	2022 €'000	2021 €'000
Current Expenditure		
Pay	62,952	59,425
Non-Pay	38,861	37,026
Total Current	101,813	96,451
Capital expenditure	61,750	57,641
Total Gross Expenditure	163,564	154,092
Total Income	35,836	27,011
Expenditure Net of Income	127,728	127,081

Staff	2022	2021
Full Time Equivalent	1,224	1,120

Court funds	2022	2021
Funds managed on behalf of court, minors and other beneficiaries at 30 September	2.337 billion	2.219 billion

Financial Operations	2022 €'000	2021 €'000
Fines collected	11,330	8,080
Family law receipts	14,089	14,969
Bail receipts	2,167	3,037
Court fees collected (and retained)*	15,196	11,906
Poor box receipts	2,331	1,720
Civil court and small claims receipts	778	920
Total	45,891	40,632

*Excludes miscellaneous income and the pension levy



Financial Overview

The funding of the Courts Service is from two main sources, direct Exchequer funding and Appropriations-in-Aid (income) primarily generated through court fees. For 2022 total funding net of receipts was €129.333m (2021, €127.495m). This reflects a gross allocation of €163.966m (2021, €162.128m) combined with total receipts of €34.633m (2021, €34.633m). Operating within the funding parameters and the achievement of a balanced budget is a requirement under Government accounting guidelines.

The composition of funding reflects that 39% (2021, 37%) is attributable to Pay, with 25% (2021, 25%) relating to the day-to-day operation of the Service, 24% (2021, 24%) to the Unitary Charges for the CCJ and Regional PPPs and the balance of 12% (2021, 14%) for both ICT and courthouse Capital.

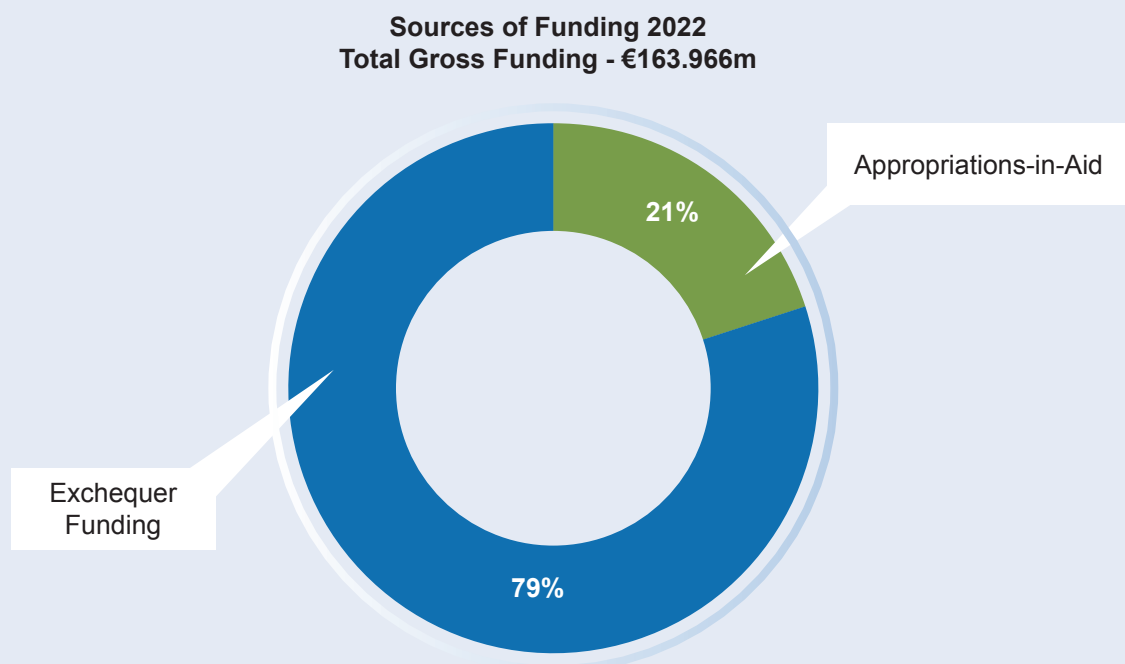
The figures above exclude any capital carryover from prior years which for 2022 was €3.648m (2021, €4.895m).

The outturn for 2022 saw the achievement of a balanced budget, with total gross expenditure for the running of the Service of €163.564m. This compares with €154.092m in 2021. Expenditure for 2022 compared with that of 2021 can be broken down between total current expenditure, totalling €101.813m (€96.451m for 2021), and total capital expenditure, including PPP of €61.750m (€57.641m in 2021).

The funding of the Service is supplemented by Appropriations-in-Aid, of which Court Fee Income represents the main source of receipts. Court Fee Income relates to the administrative charge for the processing of civil cases. In 2022 this amounted to €33.476m (€24.770m in 2021). In addition to Court Fee Income, Appropriations-in-Aid include Miscellaneous Income and a Pension Levy.

Appropriations-in-Aid represents 21% (17% in 2021) of the total cost of running the Service in 2022.

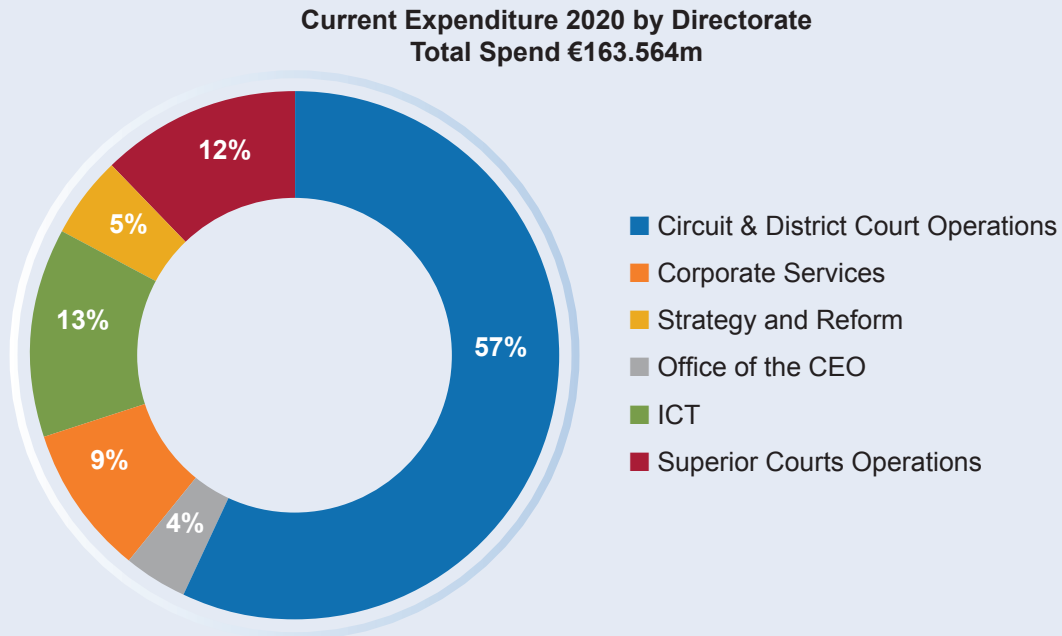
Diagram 1: Sources of Funding





The Courts Service is broken up into 6 Directorates, each with a distinct function. Diagram 2 below represents the spend across each directorate in the Courts Service.

Diagram 2: Current Expenditure by Directorate



Capital expenditure represents 38% of overall expenditure in the Courts Service. Diagram 3 below sets out how capital expenditure was spent in the Courts Service.

Diagram 3: Capital Expenditure 2022

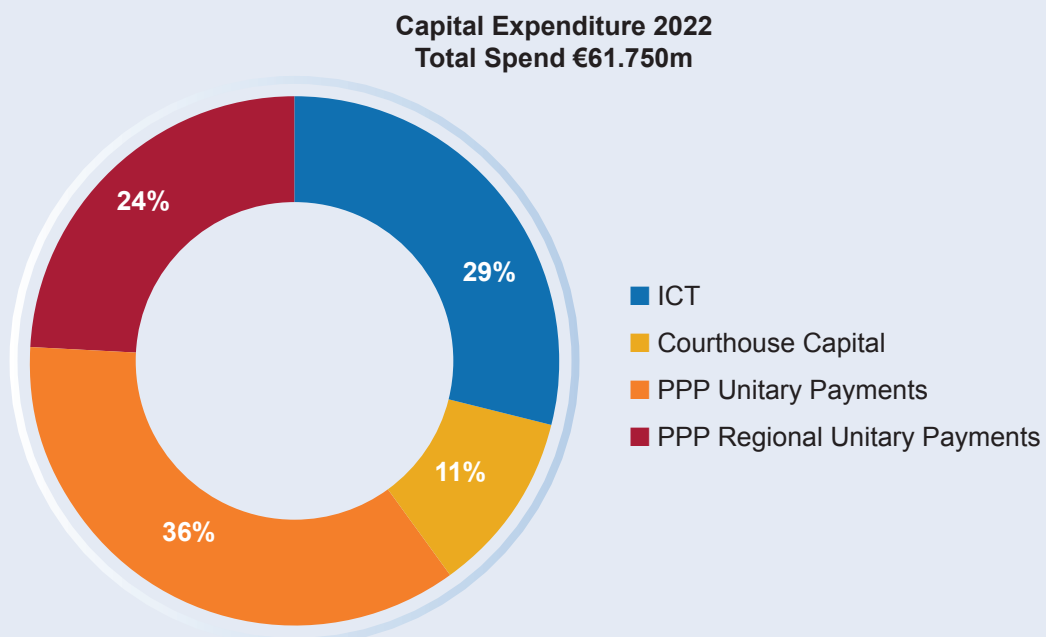
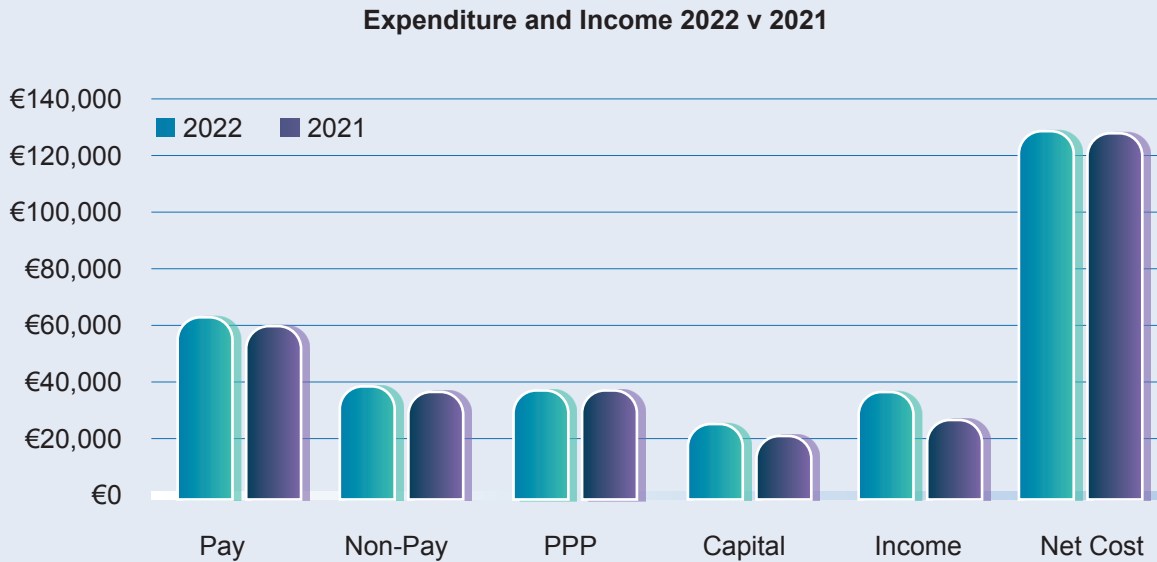


Diagram 4 below compares Courts Service expenditure and income in 2022 against 2021

Diagram 4: Expenditure and Income 2022 v 2021



Court Fees

Court fees are charged in respect of legal documents lodged and services provided in court offices.

The Service also collects fees on behalf of the Revenue Commissioners and the Property Registration Authority. The fees collected on behalf of the Revenue Commissioners include excise duties on certain licensing applications.

Court Fees	2022 €'000	2021 €'000	2020 €'000
Retained by the Courts Service	33,476	24,770	24,613
The Office of the Revenue Commissioners*	2,380	-	1,200
Total	35,856	24,770	25,813

* There was no payments made to the Revenue Commissioners for Excise Duty in 2021 as there were no licensing applications received into the Courts Service due to the pandemic



Expenditure and Income

Expenditure & Income	2022 €'000	2021 €'000
Current Expenditure		
Salaries and wages	62,952	59,425
Travel and subsistence	3,027	2,433
Staff and judicial training	1,052	769
Incidental/miscellaneous costs	8,483	8,052
Digital audio recording and other fees	2,943	2,477
Legal services	1,016	716
Postal services	1,990	1,927
Telecommunications	1,461	1,481
Photocopying materials & Equipment	207	194
Office equipment and materials	745	373
Courthouse maintenance	6,555	7,122
Heat, light and fuel costs	3,761	2,634
Furniture and fittings	321	328
General Premises	2,108	2,308
Leases	5,060	6,043
Consultancy (non-I.T related)	132	167
Total Current Expenditure	101,813	96,451
Capital Expenditure		
Computer and telecommunications systems	17,897	14,628
Courthouses and other buildings	6,837	6,058
PPP - Unitary payment	22,277	21,269
PPP - Regional Unitary Payments	14,739	15,687
Total Capital Expenditure	61,750	57,641
Total Gross Expenditure	163,564	154,092
Income (Appropriations-in-Aid)		
Fees	33,476	24,770
Miscellaneous	694	658
Pension levy	1,666	1,583
Total Income	35,836	27,011
Total Net Expenditure	127,728	127,081

Note: The figures are provisional and subject to the audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

**Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997 Payment practices**

Prompt payment interest provides for the payment of interest to suppliers for invoices not paid within 30 days. The Service has procedures in place to ensure that all invoices are paid within the time limits identified on the invoices or, if no time limit is specified, within the statutory time limit. While the procedures have been designed to ensure compliance with the Act, they only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non-compliance with the Act.

Prompt payment interest

Prompt payment interest and compensation is paid to suppliers in respect of invoices not paid within 30 days of receipt. In 2022, the total amount paid out in respect of late payments was €16,786 (€13,440 in 2020).

Late payments			
Year	Interest amount	Compensation amount	Total
2022	€3,706	€13,080	€16,786
2021	€2,130	€11,310	€13,440
2020	€1,508	€8,250	€9,758

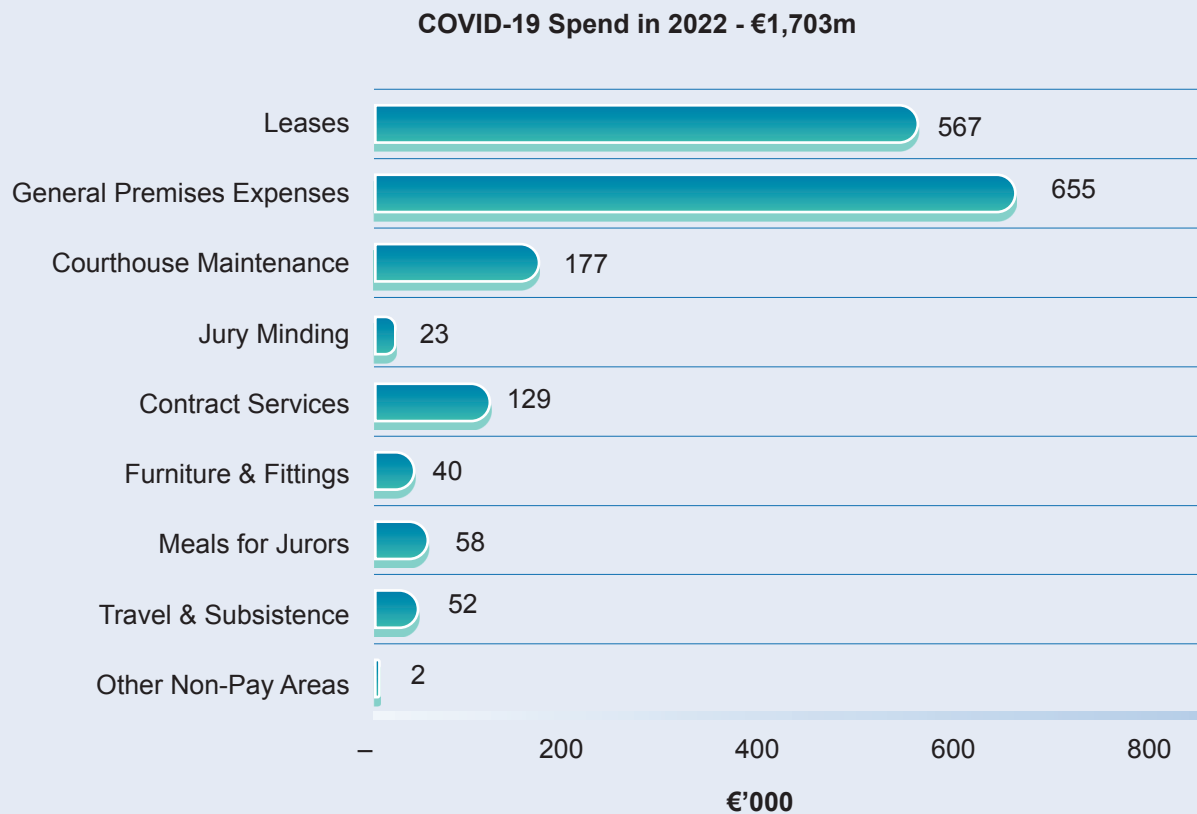
15-day payment requirement

The Service makes every effort, consistent with proper financial procedures, to ensure that all suppliers are paid within 15 days.

Prompt Payment Quarterly Returns by Government Departments Agency: Courts Service				
Year	% of overall total value paid within 15 days	Value of payments within 15 days	% No. of payments within 15 days	No. of payments within 15 days
2022	72%	€61,898,915	62%	5,734
2021	72%	€57,707,213	68%	5,968
2020	74%	€63,804,612	64%	5,391

COVID-19-related expenditure

A total of €1.703m was incurred on COVID-19 related expenditure in 2022, primarily in relation to leases, general premises expenses and courthouse capital which made up 82% of the total COVID-19 related expenditure. COVID-19 had a significant impact on fee income in 2020 and 2021, however, with the lifting of restrictions in early 2022, we have seen an increase. 2022 fee income was 26% higher than 2021, however it is still 24% down against 2019.

**Diagram 5:** COVID-19 related expenditure 2022

Court Funds Office

The Courts Service, in accordance with the Courts Service Act 1998, is responsible for the management and administration of the Courts and the provision of support services for judges. It is in this capacity that the Courts Service has a role in the management and investment of court funds, which are held in trust by the Courts. These funds are invested in line with the provisions of the Trustee (Authorised Investments) Act, 1958 and subsequent orders.

At the 30 September 2022, the Accountants Office was managing €2.337 billion in a fiduciary capacity (2021: €2.219 billion) on behalf of 22,345 beneficiaries. Of which 2,901 beneficiaries are persons who have been declared wards of Court (2021: 2,784) with funds valued at €1.750 billion as at 30 September 2022 (2021: €1.657 billion). A further 18,069 are minors (2021: 18,504) with funds valued at €356 million (2021: €363 million). The remainder mostly consist of cases pending further Court Orders, residential redress board cases and lodgements with defence case types. The increase in the total value of funds by €118 million is attributable to a net increase from net capital transactions of €156 million (i.e. net excess receipts over disbursements) for the year and a decrease in investment performance of €38 million.



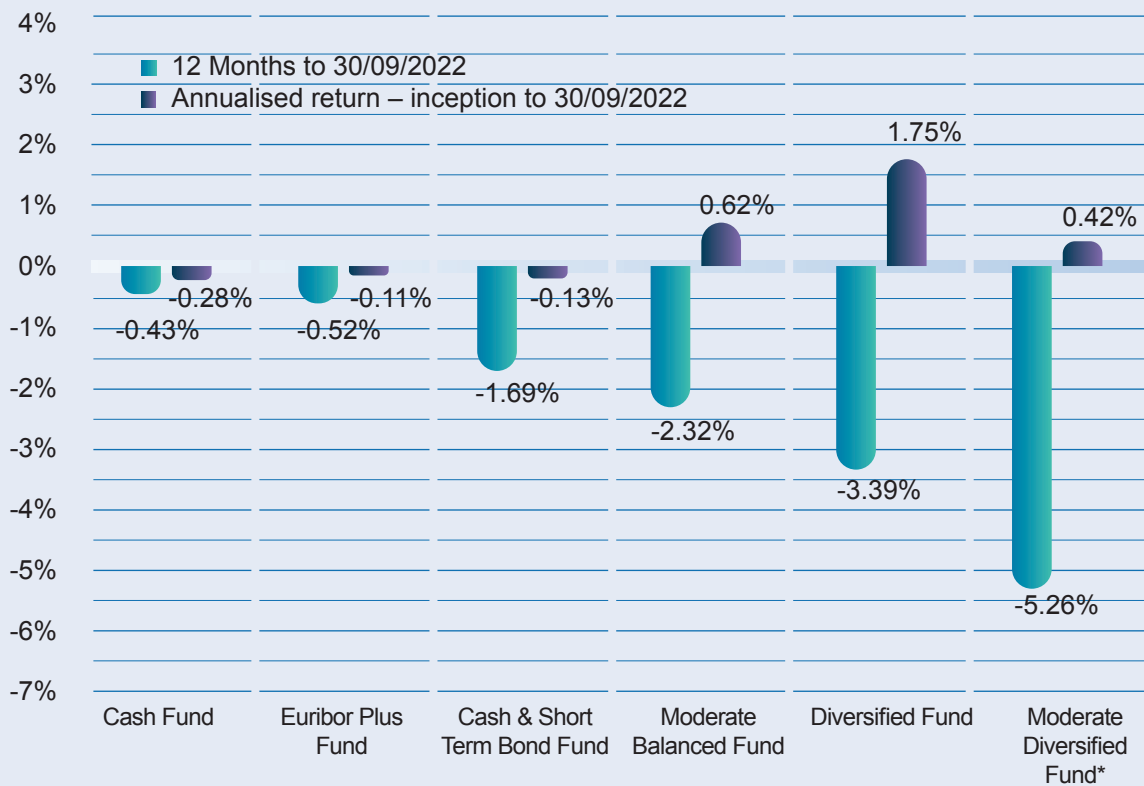
Table 1: Total Net Assets under Management, by Jurisdiction as at 30 September 2022

Jurisdiction	Net Assets € at 30/09/2021	%	Net Assets € at 30/09/2022	%	% Increase / (Decrease) in Net Assets
High Court	1,990,678,809	89.7%	2,120,585,883	90.7%	1.0%
Circuit Court	195,597,534	8.8%	183,497,691	7.9%	-0.9%
District Court	32,960,051	1.5%	32,913,224	1.4%	-0.1%
Total	€2,219,236,394	100%	€2,336,996,798	100%	5.3%

Table 2 shows the investment performance gross of fees for all strategies for the current financial year, covering the period from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022 and the annualised return since inception. The gross returns, before management, custodian, and administration fees, for the year ending 30 September 2022 were as follows: Cash Fund -0.43%, Euribor Plus Fund -0.52%, Cash and Short Term Bond Fund -1.69%, Moderate Balanced Fund -2.32%, Diversified Fund -3.39%, and Moderate Diversified Fund -5.26%.

Note: Full details are contained in the annual report of the Financial Statements of the Accountant of the Courts of Justice for the year ending 30 September 2022 available on www.courts.ie.

Table 2: SSGA Spectrum Funds Cumulative Investment Performance (Gross of Fees) to 30 September 2022



*Moderate Diversified Fund established March 2019,

Note - Growth Fund ceased in October 2021 as part of the de-risking measures put in place in advance of Assisted Decision Making.



ECB negative interest rates continued to be a challenge for the best part of the financial year end 30 September 2022 for the management of Court Funds. Negative interest rates have been the norm in recent years as a result of the ECB monetary policy, this is a feature of the market globally and not unique to Court Funds. This is particularly relevant as a large proportion of funds continue to be held in cash-based asset classes. The annualised returns of the current range of funds since inception have been in line with the expected performance against the relevant benchmark. On a more positive note, negative interest rates were reversed in the second half of 2022 the impact of which will be more evident in next years' financial statements.



2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030



Statement of Financial Position At 30 September 2022

	30/09/2022 €	30/09/2021 €
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	2,227,493,245	2,147,373,170
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	50,797,337	58,729,205
Cash and cash equivalents	60,988,106	14,404,974
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	111,785,443	73,134,179
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors	(2,281,890)	(1,270,955)
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	(2,281,890)	(1,270,955)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	109,503,553	71,863,224
TOTAL NET ASSETS	2,336,996,798	2,219,236,394
Represented by:		
Funds held for beneficiaries	2,336,996,798	2,219,236,394



Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 September 2022

	30/09/2022 €	30/09/2021 €
NET REALISED AND UNREALISED (LOSSES) / GAINS		
Net realised gains on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	13,432,052	10,174,706
Net change in unrealised (losses) / gains on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(49,331,851)	103,788,125
Net (losses) / gains realised on transfers of assets	(620,869)	(91,688)
NET REALISED AND CHANGE IN UNREALISED (LOSSES) / GAINS	(36,520,668)	113,871,143
Investment income	68,933	55,886
	(36,451,735)	113,927,029
Expenses	(1,878,164)	(1,967,782)
(DECREASE) / INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS	(38,329,899)	111,959,247



Statement of Changes in Net Assets for the year ended 30 September 2022

	30/09/2022 €	30/09/2021 €
(DECREASE) / INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS		
Investment income less expenses	(1,809,231)	(1,911,896)
Net realised gains on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	13,432,052	10,174,706
Net change in unrealised (losses) / gains on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(49,331,851)	103,788,125
Net (losses) realised on transfers out during year	(620,869)	(91,688)
(DECREASE) / INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS	(38,329,899)	111,959,247
CAPITAL TRANSACTIONS		
Receipts	410,533,468	300,942,457
Disbursements	(254,443,165)	(174,449,079)
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM CAPITAL TRANSACTIONS	156,090,303	126,493,378
Total increase in net assets for the year	117,760,404	238,452,625
Net assets at beginning of year	2,219,236,394	1,980,783,769
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	2,336,996,798	2,219,236,394



Court Funds Office – Court Accounts Section

The Courts Accounts Section of the Courts Funds Office operates as a shared service centre for the processing of all financial transactions for the Combined Court Offices of the Courts Service. In 2022, the total volume of transactions (both receipts and payments) was €503,395 (2021, 508,700) with a monetary value of €90.7m (2021, €79.1m).

Fines

The Courts Service manages receipts and fines imposed by the Courts. Court fines received are transferred to the Exchequer and a number of other government departments and agencies. Compared to the previous year, court fines have shown a recovery, following two years where reduced social and economic activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, contributed to a decline in court fines collected and transferred to the Exchequer.

Table 3: Court Fines collected and transferred

	2022 €'000	2021 €'000
Exchequer (motor fines)	5,593	3,958
Exchequer (general)	3,783	3,159
The Office of the Revenue Commissioners	556	456
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	29	23
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	1	171
Total	9,962	7,767

Fines (Payments and Recovery) Act 2014

The Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014 allows for the payment of fines by instalment over a twelve-month period, subject to certain conditions. Where a person defaults in making payment the matter will be brought back to Court. This may result in the making of an attachment of earnings order or a community service order. Where the unpaid fine is in excess of €500, the Court may appoint a receiver.

Table 4: Number and value of fines imposed and recorded on CCTS in 2022 and 2021

	2022	2021
Number of fines imposed	60,024	55,313
Value of fines imposed	€18,767,103	€17,014,209



Family Law

The Courts Service processes Family Law payments for maintenance debtors and creditors.

Table 5: Family Law receipts and payments

	2022		2021	
	€'000	Volume	€'000	Volume
Receipts	€14,444	166,555	€15,363	181,720
Payments	€14,137	196,386	€15,076	215,725

The Courts Service continues to encourage users to avail of electronic funds transfer as the preferred method of payment with 93% of Family Law maintenance creditors paid by EFT in 2022, and 84% of such debtors making payment by standing order. The Courts Service processes Family Law payments for maintenance debtors and creditors.

Poor Box

The Court may direct that money be paid into the Court Poor Box in lieu of, or in conjunction with, another penalty. Payments can be made via the Courts Service for onward payment to a charity as directed by the Court.

The primary responsibility of the Courts Service in relation to the Poor Box is to ensure that:

- all monies paid into, and payments made from the Poor Box are carried out in accordance with the direction of the judge
- there are adequate and effective systems and procedures in place for recording court orders and accounting for Poor Box receipts and payments.

Table 6: Poor Box returns 2022

	Balance At 01/01/2022	Receipts	Payments	Balance At 31/12/2022
District Court	€1,127,585.11	€1,510,939.85	€2,287,075.45	€351,449.51



Glossary of Terms

Appeal – a proceeding, taken by a party to a case who is dissatisfied with a decision made, to a Court having authority to review or set aside that decision.

Barring order – an order preventing the person against whom the order is made ('the respondent') from entering the family home or using or threatening violence against the person who applied for the order ('the applicant') or other family members.

Care order – an order placing a child in the care of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) until he or she reaches the age of eighteen or a shorter period as determined by the Court.

Certified list – a list of cases certified by counsel as being ready for hearing.

Civil Bill – a document used to commence a civil case in the Circuit Court, it gives details of the parties to the case and details of the claim being made.

Claim Notice – a document used to commence a civil case in the District Court, it gives details of the parties to the case and details of the claim being made.

Debt relief notice – one of three debt resolution mechanisms introduced by the Personal Insolvency Act, (2012) to help mortgage-holders and others with unsustainable debt to reach agreements with their creditors. It allows for the write-off of qualifying debt up to €20,000, subject to a three-year supervision period.

Debt settlement arrangement – one of three debt resolution mechanisms introduced by the Personal Insolvency Act, (2012) to help mortgage-holders and others with unsustainable debt to reach agreements with their creditors. It applies to the agreed settlement of unsecured debts, usually over a period of five years.

Defence – a document delivered by the defendant to the plaintiff in response to a civil bill in the Circuit Court or a plenary summons in the High Court.

Defendant – a person against whom an action is brought; a person charged with a criminal offence.

Emergency care order – an order placing a child under the care of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) for a maximum period of eight days if the Court considers that there is a serious risk to the health or welfare of a child.

Indictment – (a) a formal document setting out certain kinds of charges against an accused person or (b) the process by which those charges are presented against the accused.

Indictable offence – an offence which, if committed by an adult, is triable on indictment.

Injunction – an order of the Court directing a party to an action to do, or to refrain from doing, something.

Interim barring order – an immediate order, requiring the person against whom the order is made ('the respondent') to leave the family home, pending the hearing of an application for a barring order.

Interim care order – an order, granted when an application for a care order has been or is about to be made, requiring that the child named in the order be placed in the care of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA).

Intestate – dying without making a valid will.

Judicial review – a legal remedy available in situations where a body or tribunal is alleged to have acted in excess of legal authority or contrary to its duty.

Judicial separation – a decree granted by the Court relieving spouses to a marriage of the obligation to cohabit.

Jurisdiction – (a) the power of a Court or judge to hear an action, petition, or other proceeding, or (b) the geographical area within which such power may be exercised.

Liquidated debt – a claim for a specified amount of money.



Mortgage suit – a form of proceeding to recover a debt owed to the holder of security on property – by forcing the sale of the property (usually on foot of a judgment mortgage or an equitable mortgage).

National Development Finance Agency

- The NDFA is an integrated finance, procurement and project delivery model established within the National Treasury Management Agency to bring a unified commercial approach to the procurement and project management of new public sector projects, including Public Private Partnerships.

Noelle prosequi – the entering by the prosecution of a stay on criminal proceedings (not to be confused with an acquittal).

Personal insolvency arrangement – one of three debt resolution mechanisms introduced by the Personal Insolvency Act, 2012 to help mortgage-holders and others with unsustainable debt to reach agreements with their creditors. It applies to the agreed settlement and/or restructuring of secured debts up to a total of €3 million (as well as unsecured debts) over a period of six years.

Petition – document used to commence certain civil proceedings in the High Court (e.g., application to wind up a company, have a person adjudicated bankrupt).

Plaintiff – a person who brings a legal action against another.

Plenary summons – document used to commence certain civil proceedings (e.g., claims for non-specific damages, libel, nuisance) in the High Court where pleadings and oral evidence are required.

Protection order – an interim order, granted when an application for a safety/ barring order has been made, prohibiting the person against whom the order is made ('the respondent') from committing further acts of violence or threatening violence

Safety order – an order prohibiting the person against whom the order is made ('the respondent') from committing further acts of violence or threatening to do so. It does not prevent the respondent from entering the family home.

Special exemption order – an order allowing a licensee to sell alcohol outside the normal licensing hours subject to certain conditions.

Special summons – document used to begin certain civil proceedings (e.g., equity claims, mortgage enforcement, administration of trusts) in the High Court to be heard on affidavit (i.e., not oral evidence).

Specific performance - an order of a Court which requires a party to perform a specific act, usually what is stated in a contract e.g., contracts for the sale, purchase, or lease of land. It is an alternative to awarding damages and is a discretionary equitable remedy.

Summary judgment – judgment for a claim in respect of a debt or specific monetary demand. The judgment is given to the plaintiff against the defendant in a court office without the need to bring the claim to Court.

Summary summons – document used to commence certain civil proceedings (e.g., claims for a specific amount of money, recovery of possession by a landlord) in the High Court, to be heard on affidavit.

Supervision order – an order allowing the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) to monitor a child considered to be at risk. The child is not removed from his or her home environment. A supervision order is for a fixed period of time not longer than 12 months initially.



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service