



Ministry
of Justice



Court Statistics Quarterly April to June 2013

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

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Executive Summary

This report presents the latest statistics on cases that are received and processed through the court system of England and Wales in the second quarter of 2013 (April to June). These statistics focus on three main categories: civil (excluding family), family and criminal cases.

Civil (excluding family) cases

- The courts dealt with 351,000 new claims and 11,000 hearings or trials. These represent a reduction of around 28% and 36% respectively in caseload figures since the number of hearings and trials peaked in 2007.
- Consistently, between 3 and 3.5% of all claims issued go to hearing or trial.
- There was an average of 58 weeks between a claim being issued and the claim going to trial. This represents an increase of 10% since the low of 52 weeks in 2008.

Family cases

- The number of cases that started in family courts in England and Wales remained at around 70,000 in Q2 2013 with the largest proportion (45%) being for divorce applications.
- The average time for the disposal of a care or supervision application continued to drop to 41 weeks (down 21% from Q2 2012).
- The average duration for private law disposals where both parties were represented was 23 weeks (up 28% from Q2 2012). However, 79% of these disposals had start dates before 1 April 2013.

Criminal cases

- There was a 15% increase in the number of adult indictable or triable-either-way cases completing at the magistrates' courts compared to the previous quarter. Despite this, the time taken for cases to complete fell by 4 days – coinciding with the removal of committal hearings in magistrates' courts on 28th May 2013.
- This removal of committal hearings in magistrates' courts lead to a 27% increase in 'committed for trial' receipts at the Crown Court compared with the previous quarter.

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Introduction

This report presents statistics on activity in the county, family, magistrates' and Crown courts of England and Wales. It gives provisional figures for the latest quarter (April to June 2013) with accompanying commentary and analysis. The figures themselves give a summary overview of the volume of cases dealt with by these courts over time, with statistics also broken down for the main types of case involved. The statistics are used to monitor court workloads, to assist in the development of policy, and their subsequent monitoring and evaluation.

Information about the systems and data included in this publication can be found in the '**A Guide to Court and Administrative Justice Statistics**' which is published alongside this report. This guide also contains a **Glossary** section which provides brief definitions for the terms used in this report, along with information about statistical revisions and forthcoming changes. Information regarding the symbols and conventions used in the bulletin are given in the **Explanatory notes** section.

The structure and content of this report is continually being reviewed to reflect user requirements. Planned upcoming changes to the publications covered in this report are listed in [Annex B](#).

This edition of the report contains additional analysis on International Comparisons for divorce which can be found in [Annex C](#).

If you have any comments about these changes, or the report more generally, please contact the production team using the [contact details](#) at the back of this report.

Earlier editions of this publication can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/series/courts-and-sentencing-statistics

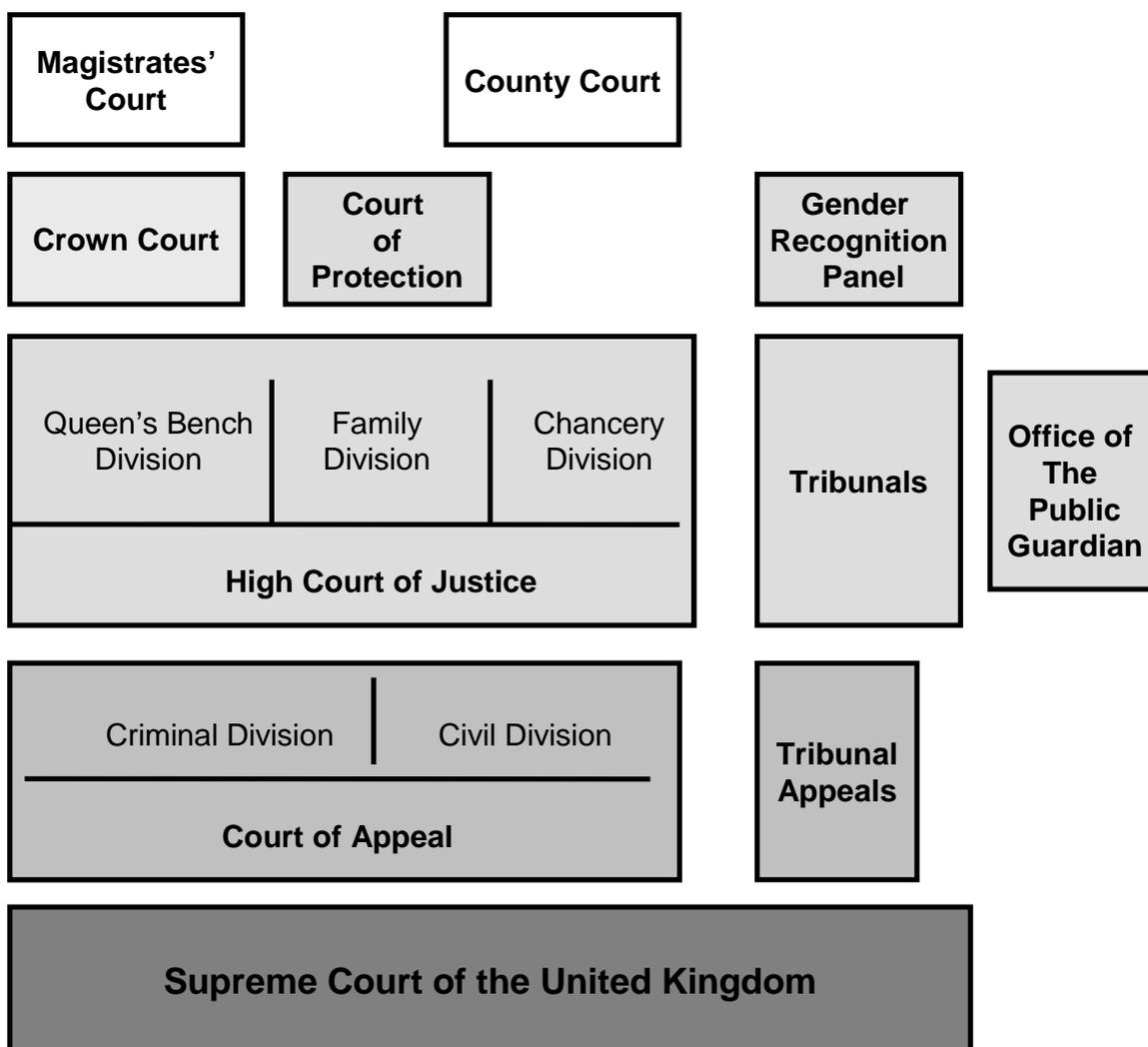
There are a number of csv files that support this publication, these include;

- Supporting information on Ancillary Relief
- Court level data for civil, family and criminal cases
- Breakdown of insolvency figures by court, local authority and region

The Justice System

The vast majority of criminal and civil cases in England and Wales are dealt with at the Crown, magistrates' and county courts (see Figure A for a simplified description of the Justice System in England and Wales).

Figure A: Simplified view of court and administrative Systems in England and Wales¹



The vast majority of civil cases, which do not involve family cases or failure to pay council tax or child maintenance, are handled in the county courts. These cases are typically related to debt, the repossession of property, personal injury and insolvency. Once a claim has been served, the usual options for the defendant are to do nothing, pay up, admit the claim and ask for more time to pay up, and/or dispute the claim. The vast majority of claims are either not defended, or they are settled or withdrawn before a hearing or trial. Particularly important, complex or substantial cases are dealt with in the High Court.

All family cases are dealt with at Family Proceedings Courts (which are part of the magistrates' courts), at county courts or in the Family Division of the High Court. Family courts deal with cases such as: parental disputes, local authority intervention to protect children, matrimonial cases such as divorce petitions, the financial provisions for children after divorce or relationship breakdown, domestic violence remedies and adoption.

¹ Some Tribunal cases can relate to other parts of the UK.

Virtually all criminal court cases start in a magistrates' court. The less serious offences are handled entirely in magistrates' courts. More serious offences are passed on to the Crown Court, either for sentencing after the defendant has been found guilty in a magistrates' court, or for a full trial with a judge and jury. The Crown Court also receives appeals against decisions of the magistrates' courts.

Cases in the magistrates' courts are heard by either two or three lay magistrates (local people who volunteer their services, who may not have formal legal qualifications but would have undertaken a training programme to develop the necessary skills) or by one District Judge (legally qualified, paid, full-time professionals, who are usually based in the larger cities and normally hear the more complex or sensitive cases). Crown Court cases may be heard by Circuit Judges, Recorders or a High Court Judge, depending on the seriousness of the offence.

Chapter 1: Civil (excluding family) cases

This chapter contains statistics relating to civil cases at county courts in England and Wales. These typically include debt (claims for a specified amount of money), the repossession of property, personal injury (claims for an unspecified amount of money), the return of goods and insolvency.

The statistics do not include civil cases that are dealt with at magistrates' courts, such as the failure to pay council tax (see Chapter 3) or family cases such as divorce or parental disputes.

Background

A civil claim against a person or a company (the defendant) starts when a person or company (the claimant) completes and submits a claim form to the County Court. This can be done either in person or online. A claimant who issues a large number of claims each year (such as banks, credit and store card issuers, utility companies and debt recovery companies) can also submit a form directly to the Claim Production Centre (CPC).

Whether the claim is issued online or through the county courts, a copy of the claim form along with a response pack is sent to (served on) the defendant who has 14 days to respond to the claim. The defendant can:

- do nothing;
- pay the full amount of the claim (in full or part);
- admit the claim and ask for more time to pay (in full or part); and/or
- dispute (defend) the claim (in full or part).

If the claim is defended, further information is usually provided by each of the parties, after which the case is allocated by a judge to one of three case-management tracks (small claims track, fast track or multi track). Allocated cases which are not settled or withdrawn generally result in a small claim hearing or trial². A judgment regarding the claim can be made at various stages of the process. There are various methods of enforcing a judgment through the county courts including warrants and orders.

Estimating case progression: In addition to providing results regarding the civil caseload of the courts, this bulletin contains estimates of the percentage of claims issued in a specific quarter or year that will progress to a defence, allocation or hearing or trial when the full amount of time has been allowed to pass for those claims to progress through the County Court system. These figures are different from the court caseload figures which

² For details of the way civil claims are processed please see **A Guide to Court and Administrative Justice Statistics**, Civil (excluding family).

show the total number of defences, allocations or hearings or trials in that quarter, irrespective of when the claim was issued.

These estimates include upper and lower estimates around them (a confidence interval) reflecting the uncertainty inherent in any estimation of the future. Claims from more recent periods will inherently have had less time for the case to be processed so there is more uncertainty around the final estimate, resulting in a wider confidence interval (Please see the methodology section of 'A Guide to Court and Administrative Justice Statistics' for more information on how this figure is calculated).

As supplementary information, we also provide the percentage of claims issued in a quarter or year that have already resulted in a defence, allocation or hearing or trial. Caution should be exercised when interpreting these figures for recent years. The information contained in the bulletin is based on the available data when the database was extracted; consequently a proportion of claims made in more recent quarters are still awaiting progression to the next stage of court action. Claims from earlier periods will have had longer for the case to be processed than those from more recent periods so a lower proportion of these earlier claims are likely to be still awaiting a defence, allocation or hearing or trial.

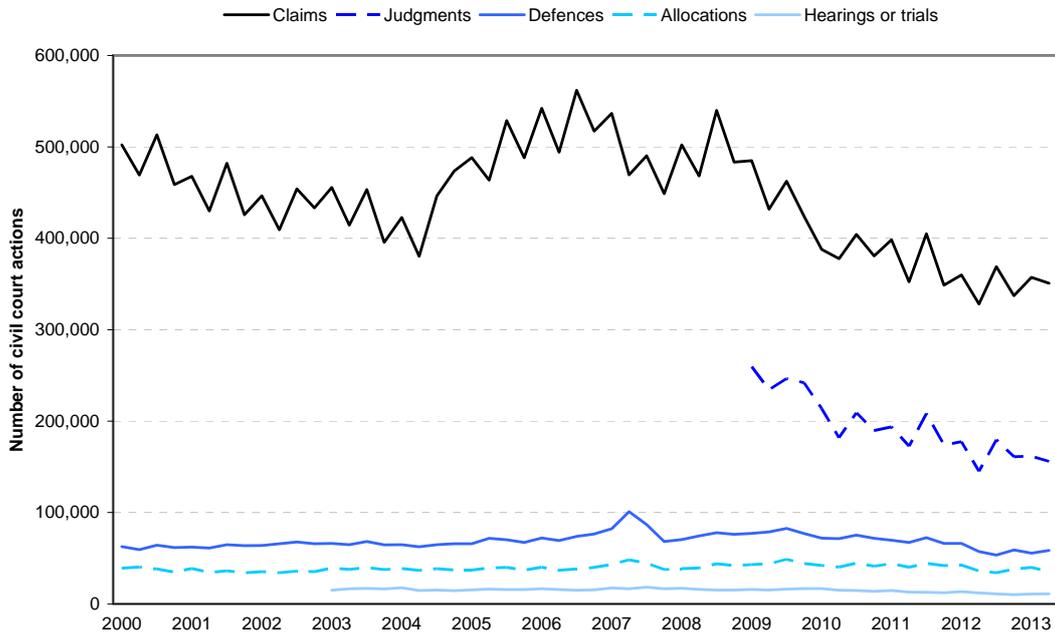
Results

Claims: Between April and June 2013 a total of 350,843 claims were issued (Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1). The latest results continue the downward trend in the number of claims issued since 2008. Nearly two-thirds of claims are specified money claims and the fall in overall claims reflects a decline in the number of specified money claims over the same period.

The fall in claims has caused a corresponding decrease in the number of defences, allocations, hearings or trials and judgments over the same time-period.

Petitions: There were 7,968 insolvency petitions (excluding those in the Royal Courts of Justice), continuing the downward trend seen since 2009, after more than doubling between 2001 and 2009 (Table 1.1). The large decrease since 2009 has been steepest among bankruptcy petitions made by debtors, then among bankruptcy petitions made by creditors, and least severe among petitions for company windings up.

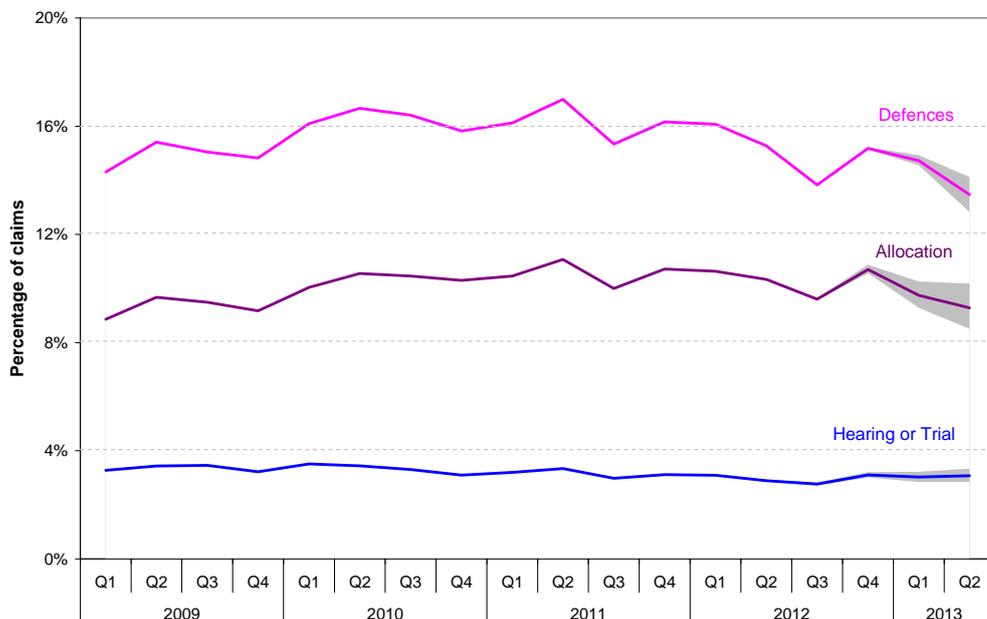
Figure 1.1: Civil claims, defences, allocations and hearings and trials, Jan-Mar 2000 to Apr-Jun 2013



Defences: Between April and June 2013 a total of 58,547 defences were made.

It is estimated that 13.5% of claims issued between April and June 2013 will end up being defended once all cases have progressed through the system, (with a range between 12.8% and 14.1%) (Table 1.2 and Figure 1.2). See the Methodology section in the ‘Guide to Court and Administrative Justice Statistics’ for a description of how the estimates were derived.

Figure 1.2: Estimated case progression of civil claims by court action, Jan-Mar 2009 to Apr-Jun 2013



Allocations: Between April and June 2013 a total of 35,490 allocations were made (Table 1.1).

It is estimated that 9.3% of claims issued in the second quarter of 2013 will end up being allocated (with a range between 8.5% and 10.2%).

Hearings and trials: Between April and June 2013 a total of 11,040 hearings or trials were carried out.

It is estimated that 3.1% of claims issued between April and June 2013 will end up going to hearing or trial (with a range between 2.8% and 3.3%).

On average, small claim hearings occurred 30 weeks after the claim was originally made and the time between issue and hearing has been around this level since 2008. Trials occurred on average 58 weeks after the claim was originally made, a figure which has been generally rising since 2008 (Table 1.3).

Judgments: Between April and June 2013 a total of 155,835 judgments were made.

Warrants: Between April and June 2013 a total of 50,549 warrants were issued. This figure has been generally falling since 2000. The decline has been visible across all types of warrant except possession, where the figures have remained more stable.

Orders: Between April and June 2013 a total of 31,584 enforcement orders were issued. This figure has been generally falling since 2008. The fall has been particularly concentrated in charging orders which have fallen by nearly 60% since 2008.

Civil proceedings in the Magistrates' Courts

Magistrates' courts deal with criminal and some civil cases, and cases are dealt with either by justices of the peace, who are unqualified and who are paid only expenses, or by District Judges who receive some payment. Magistrates can deal with a limited number of civil cases such as arrears of income tax, national insurance contributions, council tax or payments of child maintenance.

There were 18,675 completed civil proceedings in the Magistrates Court between April and June 2013, continuing the rough stability in numbers since April to June 2010. It should be noted that a proceeding can either relate to a single case or multiple cases, so the numbers of cases completed is greater than the number of completed proceedings.

Chapter 2: Family cases

Family cases are dealt with in England and Wales under the Children Act 1989 at Family Proceedings Courts (which are part of the Magistrates' Courts), at County Courts or in the Family Division of the High Court. Family courts deal with matters such as: local authority intervention to protect children, issues following the breakdown of a relationship such as divorce petitions and the domestic and financial provision for children, domestic violence remedies and adoption.

Total family court case caseload

Family courts deal with around 270,000 new cases each year. In the second quarter of 2013, there were 71,506 new cases started in family courts and 62,865 cases were concluded. Table 2.1 shows the total number of new cases starting and cases reaching a conclusion in family courts in each quarter. In the second quarter of 2013 divorce made up 45% of new cases in family courts, with private law contributing 22% and ancillary relief 16%. In total, relationship breakdown cases account for over four-fifths of the courts' caseload. A similar picture is also seen for the cases concluded.

- **Public law:** in the second quarter of 2013 there were 7,231 children involved in public law applications (fairly stable since 2011) and 10,865 children involved in orders made (continuing the upward trend). The average time for the disposal of care and supervision cases was 40.8 weeks.
- **Private law:** there were 32,581 children involved in public law applications made (the highest quarterly number since 2010) and 45,379 children involved in orders made (stable since 2011) in the second quarter of 2013.
- **Divorce:** there were 32,025 petitions filed for divorce and 28,264 decrees absolute made in the second quarter of 2013.
- **Ancillary relief:** there were 12,429 applications recorded for ancillary relief and 10,594 disposals made in the second quarter of 2013.
- **Domestic violence:** there were 5,749 applications made for domestic violence remedies and 6,095 orders made in the second quarter of 2013, both continuing the slow upward trend seen over recent years.
- **Forced marriage protection:** there were 40 applications for forced marriage protection orders, and 19 orders made in the second quarter of 2013, in line with earlier quarters.
- **Adoption:** there were 1,645 adoption applications made and 1,616 adoption orders issued in the second quarter of 2013, continuing the upward trend.

Figure 2.1: Total family court new cases, by case type, 2013 Apr-Jun

	Number of new cases starting	Proportion of total new cases starting
Divorce	32,025	45%
Annulments and judicial separations	196	<1%
Ancillary relief	11,272	16%
Domestic violence	4,713	7%
Private law	15,635	22%
Public law	3,818	5%
Adoption Act	3,808	5%
Forced marriage protection	39	<1%

Public Law

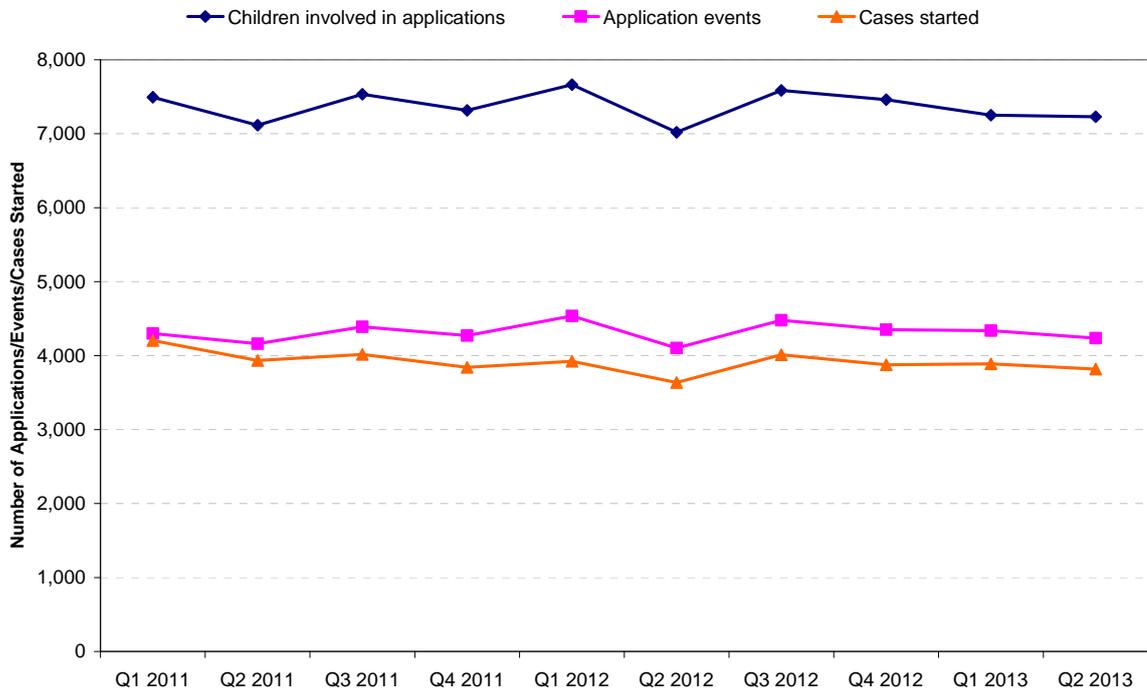
Public law cases are those brought by local authorities or very rarely an authorised person to protect the child and ensure they get the care they need. They can apply for a range of different orders. Types of order include a care or supervision order which determines whether the child should be looked after or supervised by the local authority, or an emergency protection order which allows an individual or local authority to take a child away from a place where they are in immediate danger to a place of safety.

Following the publicity surrounding the Baby P case, the number of children involved in public law applications made by local authorities jumped in 2009 from around 20,000 to almost 26,000 per year. This has subsequently increased in the past two years to about 30,000 per year, with the figures now stabilising at around 7,500 per quarter, with the latest figures showing that there were 7,231 children involved in public law applications made in the second quarter of 2013 (Figure 2.2).

The number of applications made, which can cover more than one child, has also been stable since Q1 2011, with between 4,000 and 4,500 applications per quarter. The trend in disposals tends to lag behind that for applications, due to the time taken for a decision to be reached in cases.

More than one application may be made during the life of a case. The numbers of cases starting in each quarter has also been fairly stable at just under 4,000 since 2011 (Table 2.2). Figures for applications and disposals by type of order as published in previous bulletin tables are now given in the csv file that accompanies this table.

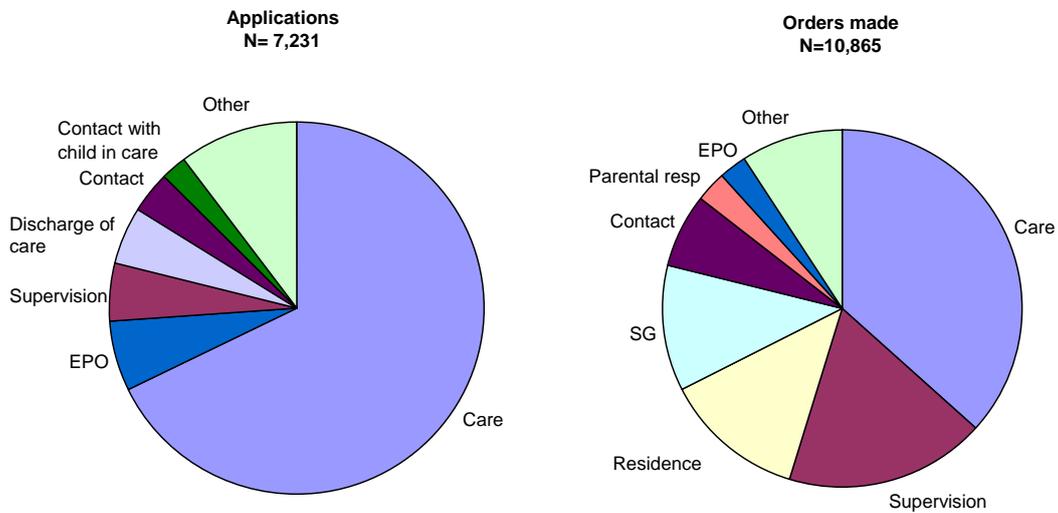
Figure 2.2: Public law applications, showing number of children involved, number of application events and number of cases starting, 2011 Q1 to 2013 Q2



The number of children involved in orders made jumped at the end of 2010 and has continued to increase. There were 10,865 children involved in public law orders made in the second quarter of 2013. The number of orders made is generally higher than the number of applications made, as some orders relate to applications made in an earlier time period, and an application for one type can result in an order or orders of a different type being made.

Figure 2.3 shows that the most common types of order applied for in the second quarter of 2013 were care (68% of children involved in applications), followed by emergency protection (6%) and supervision order and discharge of a care order (5% each). The spread of the proportions for the type of orders made are normally different as an application for one type can result in an order of a different type being made. So for example, for care orders per quarter although about 5,000 children are involved in applications, less than 4,000 children are involved in care orders made (37% of all orders made in quarter 2 2013).

Figure 2.3: Public law applications and orders made, showing proportion of children involved in each order type, 2013 Q2



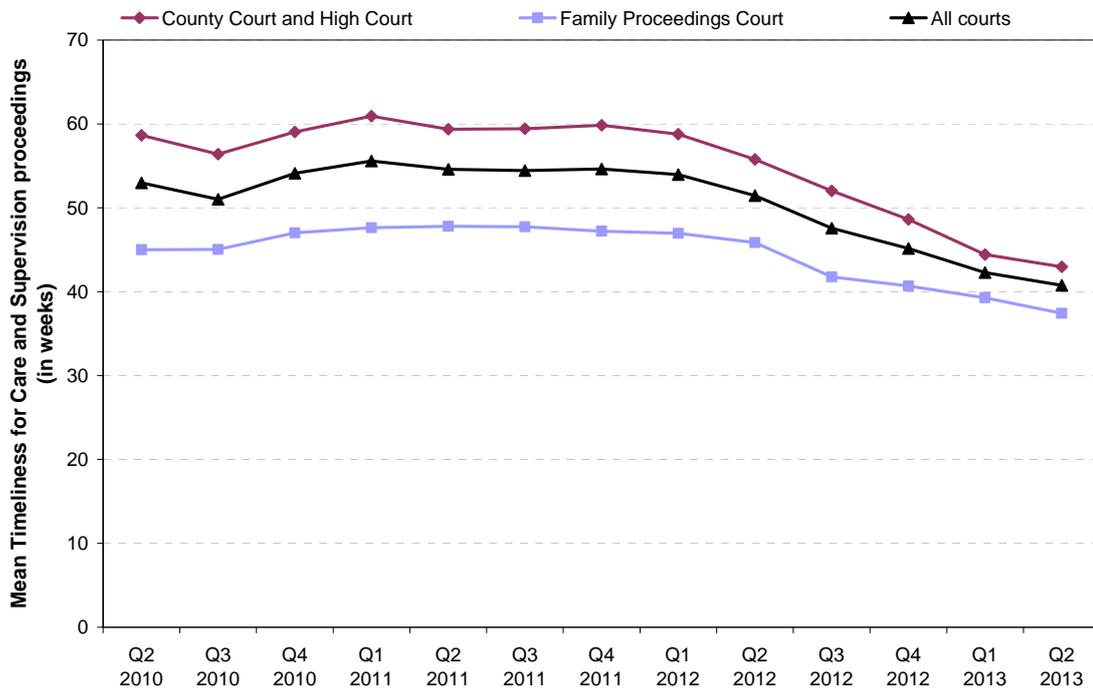
EPO = Emergency protection order, SG = Special guardianship order, Parental resp = Parental responsibility order

Timeliness of care proceedings

Statistics on the time taken to complete care and supervision cases in the family courts of England and Wales are given in Table 2.3. This table presents summary statistics showing the time, in weeks, between the date an application for a care or supervision order was lodged and the date the first care, supervision, or other substantive order was made in the case, for those cases disposed of during each quarter.

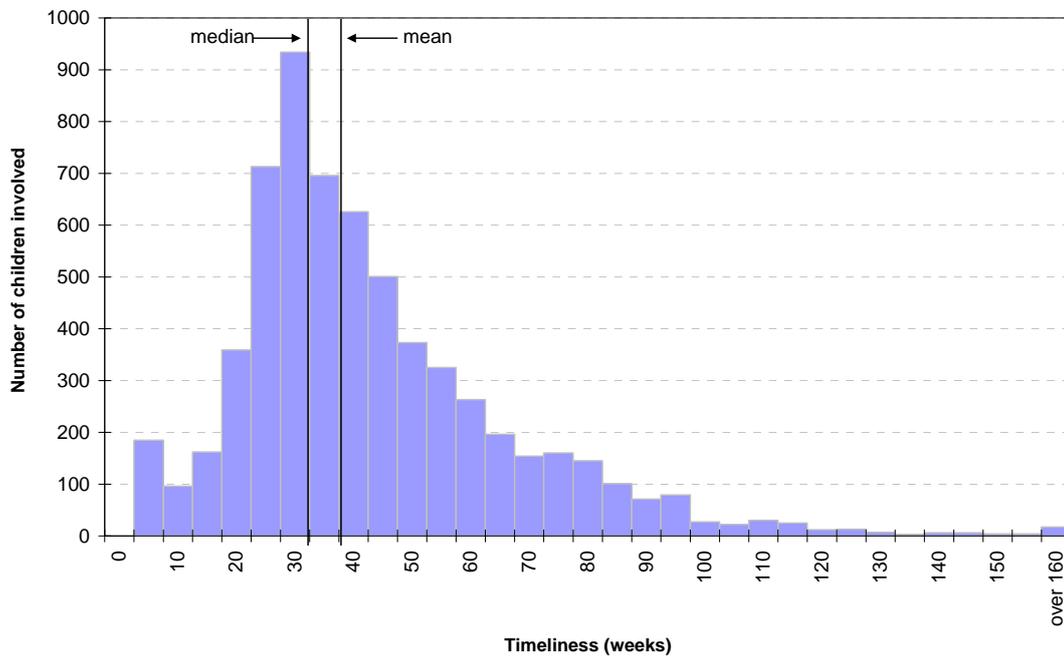
The average time for a disposal to be made in the second quarter of 2013 was 40.8 weeks, continuing the drop seen since the beginning of 2012, after timeliness had remained at about 55 weeks for over a year. Separate figures for county courts and the High Court, and family proceedings courts are shown in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Timeliness for Care and Supervision proceedings by tier of court, 2010 Q2 to 2013 Q2



The average time for a disposal can be skewed by cases that take a long time, thus the median time is also calculated. The median time to make a disposal in a case was 35.1 weeks in the second quarter of 2013. This means that for all children involved in care and supervision proceedings where a decision was reached during the second quarter of 2013, half of the children (or 3,157) waited 35.1 weeks or less from application to a substantive disposal, and the other half waited at least 35.1 weeks. This median value is different to the average (mean) quoted in the paragraph above as it is not influenced by the few very long case durations. Figure 2.5 shows how many children experienced each timeliness band in their case proceedings for cases disposed during the second quarter of 2013.

Figure 2.5: Timeliness for Care and Supervision proceedings showing number of children involved in each timeliness band, all court tiers, 2013 Q2



Private Law

The most common types of private law order applied for in the second quarter of 2013 were contact (41% of children involved in applications), residence (29%) and prohibited steps (13%). These were also the most common orders made, although the proportions differed as an application for one type can result in an order of a different type being made. In the second quarter of 2013 a contact order was made for 60% of the children involved in orders made, a residence order was made for 22% and a prohibited steps order was made for 9%.

There were 832 applications made for enforcement of a contact order in the second quarter of 2013. Only a small minority of these applications result in an enforcement order being made – courts usually deal with enforcement issues by other means, most commonly by issuing a new contact order. There were 22 enforcement orders made in the second quarter of 2013.

Legal representation

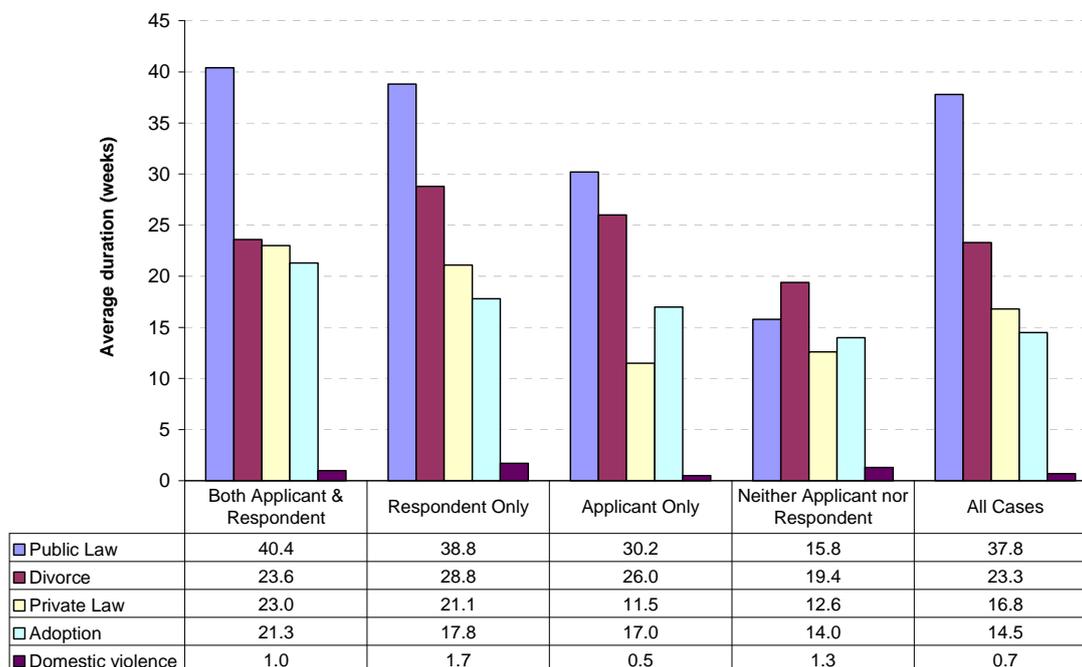
Figures on the legal representation of parties in family-related court cases are shown in Table 2.4. This gives the number of disposals made during each quarter and the average duration between application and first substantive disposal, for divorce, public law, private law, adoption and domestic violence cases, according to whether the applicant(s), respondent(s), both or neither had legal representation during the case. Since the introduction of changes to legal aid funding in April 2013 there has been a fall in the proportion of cases where both parties were legally

represented and a corresponding rise in the proportion of cases where neither party was represented, particularly for divorce and private law cases. This is primarily due to a fall in the numbers of respondents who are represented. For example, while the proportion of private law cases where the applicant(s) is represented has remained fairly stable at around 80%, the representation of respondents has fallen from over 70% for cases starting in the first half of 2012 to around 35% for cases starting in the first half of 2013.

The legal representation status reflects whether the applicant/respondent's legal representative has been recorded or left blank. Therefore, parties without legal representation are not necessarily self-represented. It is important to note that whether or not a case is contested may affect the legal representation status of the parties and thus the timeliness of the case.

In general, across all case types, cases where both parties or the respondent only had legal representation took longer than those cases where only the applicant was represented or where both parties were without legal representation. Figure 2.6 shows average duration for the various categories in the second quarter of 2013.

Figure 2.6: Timeliness of cases according to legal representation of participants, by case type, 2013 Q2



The average case duration for divorce cases across all representation categories has remained fairly constant over recent years, while for public law average duration has fallen since the end of 2011. Since the legal aid changes in April 2013 the duration for private law cases where both parties are represented has increased (up 28% from Q2 2012, to 23 weeks) while where neither party is represented duration has fallen. However the majority of these cases (79% of cases where both parties are represented and 56% where neither party is represented) commenced before 1 April 2013. As eligibility for legal aid funding has become more restricted it is likely that

cases where both parties are represented now are more complex, perhaps involving allegation of harm although there is not yet enough data to support this hypothesis, contributing to the longer duration.

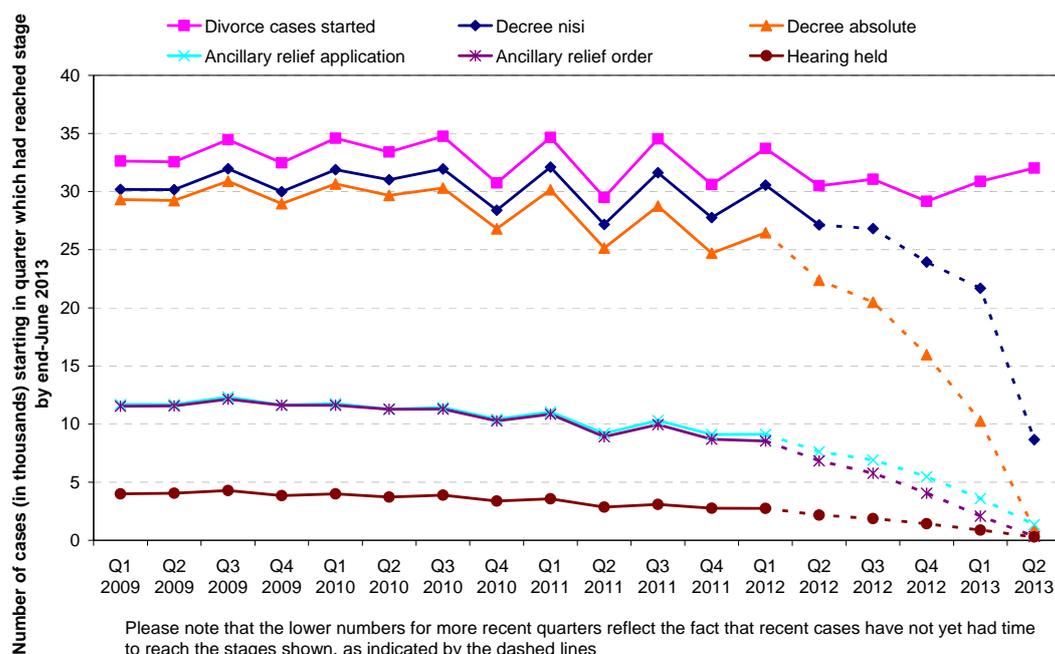
Matrimonial matters

The new divorce csv file accompanying this publication, which effectively replaces the summary table published previously, provides the numbers of petitions and decrees for divorce, annulment and judicial separation. It also provides a breakdown of whether the petitioner in each case was male or female, whether children were involved in the divorce petition, and whether the divorce was contested or not.

The international divorce comparison annex to this publication provides a comparison of divorce rates in England and Wales over the last decade with rates in other countries.

The new divorce case progression table (Table 2.5) accompanying this publication shows the number and proportion of divorce cases commencing in each quarter since 2003 that had reached certain stages by the end of June 2013. This indicates that around 90% of divorce petitions eventually proceed to a decree absolute. Ancillary relief applications and orders are eventually made in just over a third cases, and hearings take place in just over 10% of cases. Figure 2.7 illustrates these trends.

Figure 2.7: Progression of divorce cases showing numbers of cases started in quarter to have reached various stages by end-June 2013, 2009 Q1 to 2013 Q2



Forced Marriage Protection Orders

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 came into force on 25 November 2008. The Act amended Part IV of the Family Law Act to enable 15 designated county courts (as well as the High Court) to make Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs) to prevent forced marriages from occurring and to offer protection to victims who might have already been forced into a marriage.

The number of applications and orders made for FMPOs is small. For the second quarter of 2013 there were 40 applications, in keeping with the average of just over 30 applications per quarter since mid-2009. There were 19 orders made in the second quarter of 2013, a little below the average for the last four years of 33 orders per quarter.

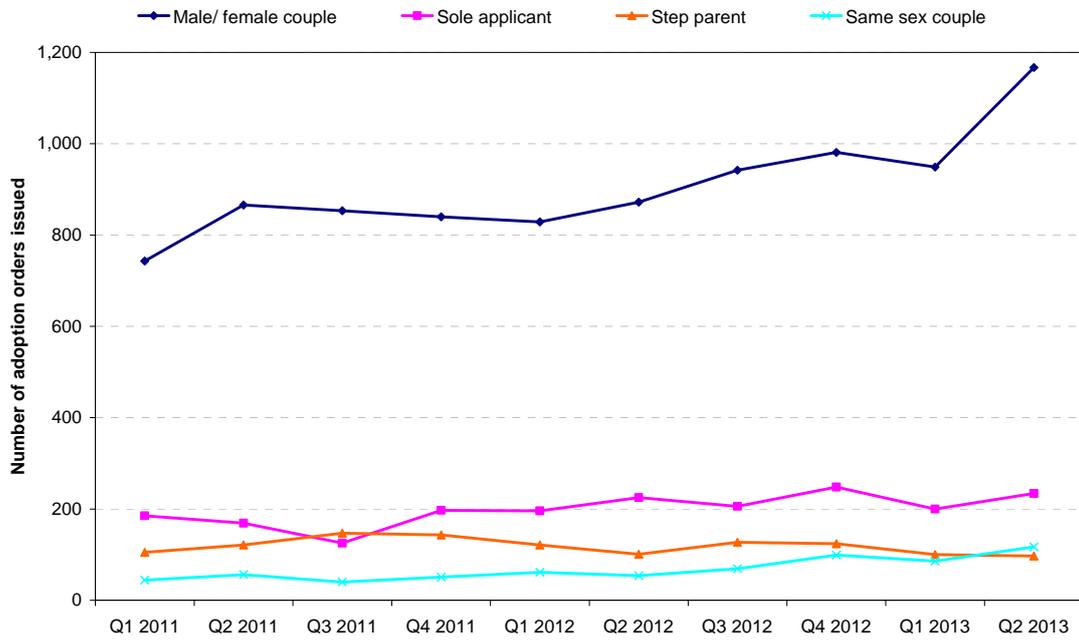
Adoptions

An adoption order made by a court extinguishes the rights, duties and obligations of the natural parents or guardian and vests them in the adopters. On adoption the child becomes for virtually all purposes in law the child of its adoptive parents and has the same rights of inheritance of property as any children born to the adoptive parents. Most adoptions in the UK are 'standard' adoptions. Data is also provided in the table on other adoptions, which include foreign adoptions, convention adoptions and standard adoptions that include a foreign element. An adoption order is preceded by a placement order which allows a local authority to place a child with prospective adopters, unless parental consent has been given for the placement.

In the second quarter of 2013, 1,890 applications were made for a placement order, a similar level to that seen during 2012. There were 1,645 applications made for an adoption order, continuing the upward trend over the last three years.

During the second quarter of 2013, 1,616 adoption orders were issued, up 29% from the same quarter of the previous year. In almost three-quarters of these, the adopters were a male/female couple, while in 14% the adopter was a sole applicant. In a further 6% the adopter was a step-parent and in 7% the adopters were a same-sex couple (Figure 2.8). Figures on the sex and age band of adopted children can be found in Table 2.10 and timeliness figures can be found in Table 2.4. A wider range of breakdowns for adoption applications and orders, for example by type of order, can be produced from the accompanying csv file.

Figure 2.8: Adoption orders issued, by adopter, 2011 Q1 to 2013 Q2



Chapter 3: Criminal cases

This chapter presents statistics on criminal cases dealt with in the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. At the end of the second quarter of 2013, there were around 240 magistrates' courts and 77 Crown Court locations across England and Wales.

On 28th May 2013 committal hearings were abolished nationally as part of wider measures to speed up justice and improve efficiencies in the justice system³. As a result, triable-either-way cases are now sent to the Crown Court as soon as it is clear that the matter is serious enough, without the need for a separate committal hearing.

Due to the timing and nature of the changes to court procedures the categorisation of information presented in this chapter will remain unchanged. For example receipts at the Crown Court will still refer to 'committed for trial cases' however this will now include triable-either-way offences which have been sent for trial under the new procedure.

Completed criminal cases in the magistrates' courts

Virtually all criminal court cases start in the magistrates' courts. The less serious offences are handled entirely in magistrates' courts, with over 90 per cent of all cases being dealt with in this way. The more serious offences are passed on to the Crown Court, either for sentencing after the defendant has been found guilty in the magistrates' court, or for full trial with a judge and jury.

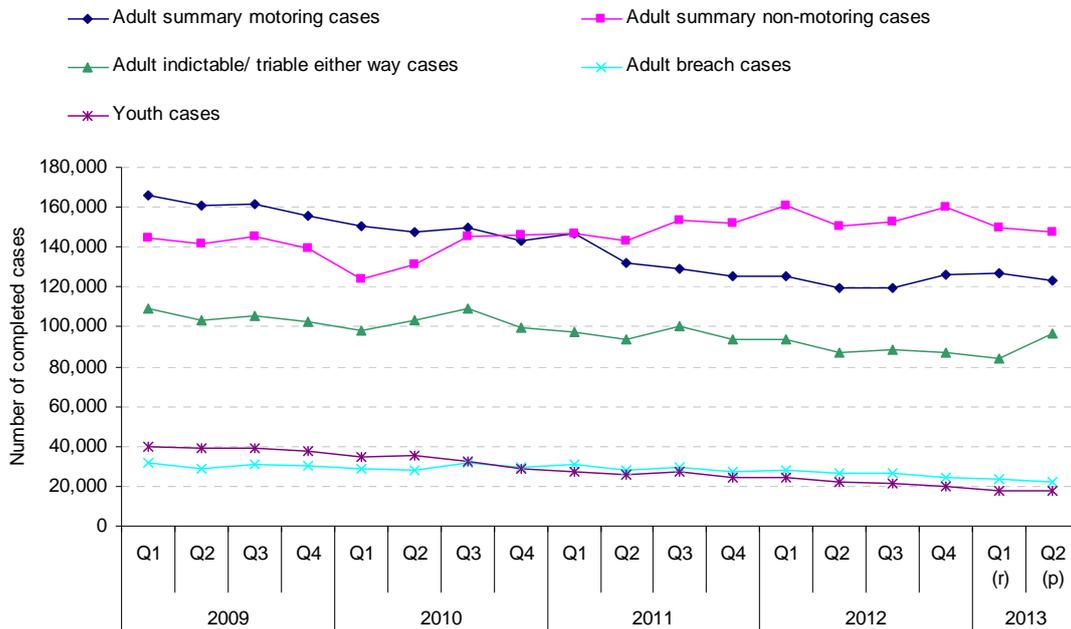
Statistics are only available for criminal cases completing in the magistrates' courts which no longer require further administration. It should be noted that every separate offence that is dealt with during the course of a case is counted in the analysis below. However, if two or more offences from a case are dealt with on the same day, then only one is counted (the most serious offence is selected) for statistics by case type.

The total number of completed cases in the magistrates' courts has remained relatively stable in the second quarter of 2013 – an increase of less than one per cent compared to the same quarter of the previous year and a one per cent increase on the previous quarter.

This is driven by increases in the number of adult indictable or triable-either-way cases, with 96,646 cases seen in the current quarter. This represents an 11% increase compared to the second quarter of 2012 (87,222) and a 15% increase compared to the first quarter of 2013 (84,338).

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/faster-justice-as-unnecessary-committal-hearings-are-abolished>

Figure 3.1: Criminal cases completed in the magistrates' courts, Q1 2009 to Q2 2013



Criminal cases in the Crown Court

Between 2004 and 2010 the number of cases received from the magistrates' courts increased by 25% (from 122,062 to 152,336) with a greater proportion of cases being committed and sent for trial.

Total receipts had been falling consistently since the third quarter of 2011 with 31,726 cases in the first quarter of 2013. However, the second quarter of 2013 saw a 10% increase in receipts compared to the previous quarter, which was mainly driven by the rise in receipts of committed for trial cases which coincides with the abolition of committal hearings.

Criminal cases committed for trial

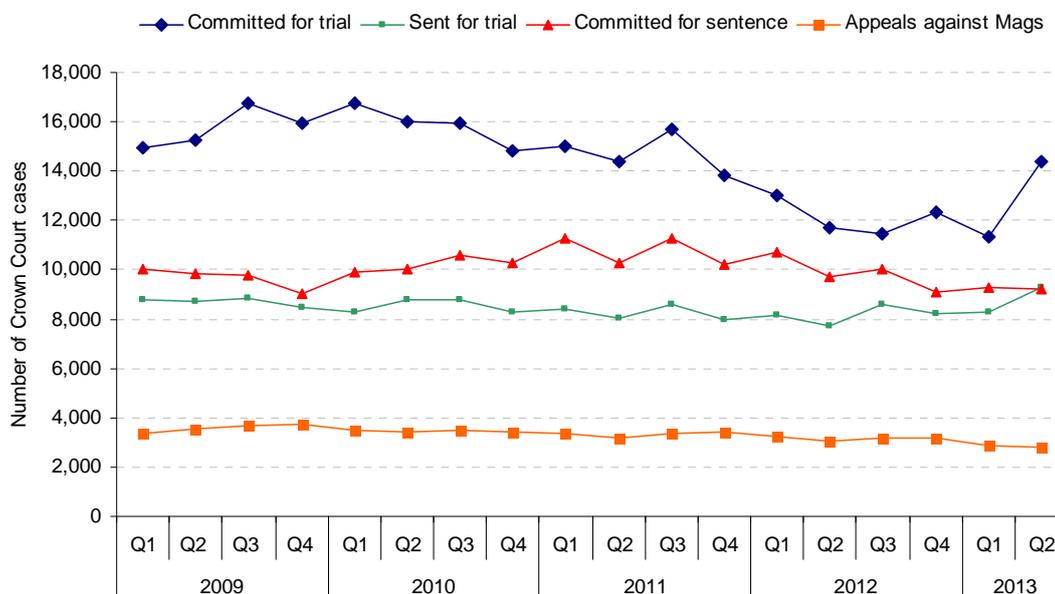
Triable-either-way cases are committed for trial if the defendant elects to be tried at the Crown Court or the magistrates' court decides that the circumstances of the case are sufficiently serious that it should be dealt with in the Crown Court.

Committed for trials cases are the largest single contributor to Crown Court receipts. As such any change in procedure relating to the way in which cases are committed for trial will heavily impact the overall level of receipts.

For example the decline in the number of cases committed for trial to the Crown Court seen since 2010 coincides with changes to the remuneration of Legal Aid for criminal cases. These changes were introduced on 3rd

October 2011⁴ and included a change to the fee for either way cases which were deemed suitable for summary trial but instead were committed for trial to the Crown Court by election of the defendant who then later changed their plea to guilty.

Figure 3.2: Crown Court receipts by case type, Q1 2009 to Q2 2013



Similarly the national rollout of the abolition of committal hearings⁵ coincides with a 23% increase in committed for trial receipts compared with the same period of the previous year and a 27% increase compared to the first quarter of 2013. This increase is mirrored in the number of outstanding cases as opposed to completions, as cases require time to reach an outcome.

Criminal cases sent for trial

Serious ‘indictable only’ cases such as murder or serious sexual offences are sent for trial to the Crown Court as they cannot be heard summarily at the magistrates’ courts.

The number of sent for trial receipts increased steadily from 2006 and peaked in 2009 at 34,869 cases. Since then, receipts have gradually decreased to 32,666 cases by 2012. In the second quarter of 2013 the number of cases sent for trial rose to 9,307 cases, the highest quarterly figure in the last four years.

⁴ www.justice.gov.uk/legal-aid/news/latest-updates/legal-aid-reform/february-2012-reforms

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/news/faster-justice-as-unnecessary-committal-hearings-are-abolished

Criminal cases committed for sentence

The Crown Court also deals with committed for sentence cases where the case is transferred to the Crown Court for sentencing only after a defendant has been convicted in a magistrates' court. This would occur where a magistrate believes that their sentencing powers are insufficient to apply an appropriate sanction to the defendant.

From 2000, the number of cases committed for sentence in the Crown Court following either a plea or trial in the magistrates' courts has increased by 63% to a peak of 42,981 cases in 2011. Since then there has been an 8% decline in the number of cases committed for sentence to 39,579 cases in 2012.

Effectiveness of trial hearings

Trials in the magistrates' courts

Between 2003 and 2006, there was a step change in the proportion of ineffective trials from 29% to 19%. The proportion of effective trials increased from 33% in 2003 to 44% in 2006. Since then rates of effective, cracked and ineffective trials in the magistrates' courts have all remained relatively stable.

The main reasons for ineffective trials (Table 3.4) in the magistrates' courts in the second quarter of 2013 were due to court administration problems⁶ (26% of all ineffective trials). Of these 72% (1,359 cases) were not heard due to over listing. Over listing occurs due to court staff seeking to strike a balance in the use of resources, by taking account of the proper use of the available courtrooms and the expected rate of cases completing. Over listing allows additional cases to be readily available to be heard on a given day.

Excluding over listing would result in a 3 percentage point decrease in the overall ineffective trial rate in the second quarter of 2013, from 17% to 14%.

Trials in the Crown Court

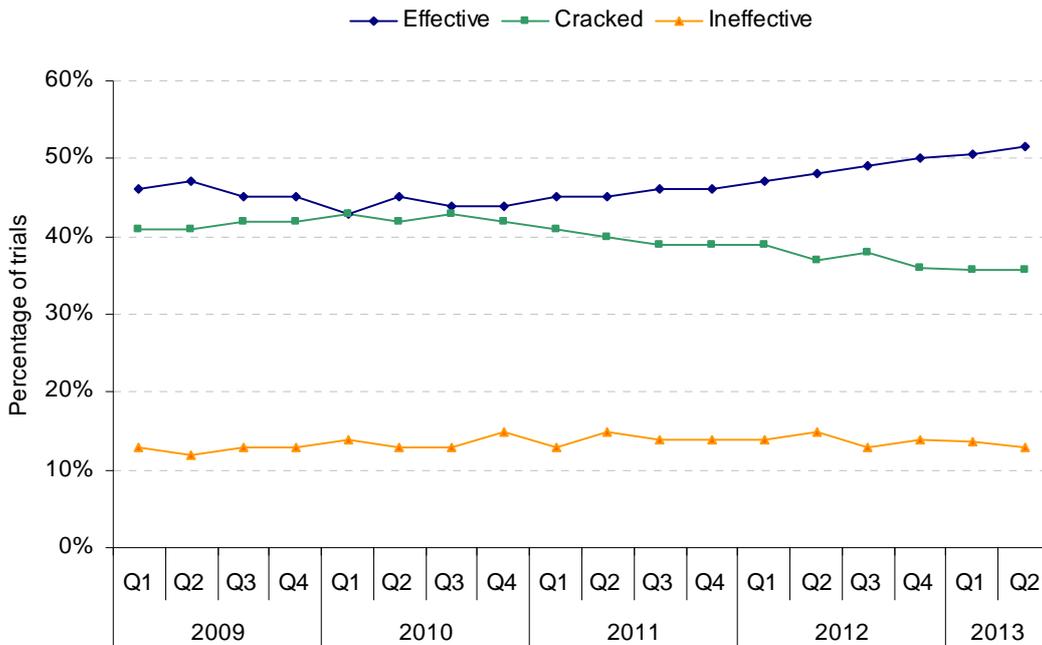
Not all committed or sent for trial cases necessarily lead to a trial by a judge and jury. A trial hearing is scheduled when a defendant enters a not guilty plea.

Between 2008 and 2010, the number of trials listed in the Crown Court increased by 20%. This was reversed by a decrease of 11% in 2012 and a downward trend has continued into the second quarter of 2013 with 8,489 trial listings – the lowest quarterly trial level seen in the last four years (Table 3.4).

⁶ Court administration problems covers all trials that are ineffective due to 'Another case over-ran', 'Judge / magistrate availability', 'over listing (insufficient cases drop out / floater / backer not reached', and 'equipment / accommodation failure'.

The proportion of trials that crack peaked in 2010 at 43%. This has fallen consistently to a low of 36% in the second quarter of 2013. The proportion of effective trials (e.g. those going ahead as scheduled on a given day) has subsequently increased steadily, reaching a peak of 52% in the second quarter of 2013.

Figure 3.3: Effectiveness of trial hearings in the Crown Court, Q1 2009 -Q2 2013

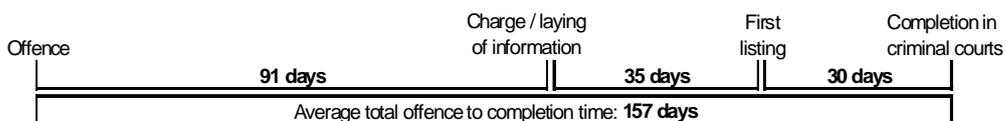


Timeliness of criminal cases

The timeliness figures present a measure of the average time taken from the initial committal of a criminal offence through to final case completion in the criminal courts. This includes a range of intermediate stages in the process in either the magistrates’ courts or the Crown Court.

For defendants acquitted or sentenced the average (mean) time from offence to completion of criminal cases at all courts has increased by a week between 2010 and 2012, with the largest increase seen from the point of charge to first listing in court.

Figure 3.4: End to end timeliness for all criminal cases, Q2 2013



Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

Summary cases

The average duration of a case from offence to completion varies substantially based on the type of offence committed and its relative seriousness will determine how and where a case can be heard.

Over 70% of the cases completed at the magistrates' courts were for summary offences. Summary proceedings cover less serious offences, with the majority completed at the first hearing. They are split into two categories; summary non-motoring proceedings, such as TV license evasion and less serious criminal damage and summary motoring proceedings, such as speeding and driving whilst disqualified.

The median number of days from first listing to completion for all summary cases (both motoring and non-motoring) is zero. For both summary motoring and summary non-motoring 70% of cases are completed on the same day as first listing at court.

Indictable/triable-either-way cases

This group includes both 'indictable only' offences, which can only be tried on indictment in the Crown Court by a judge and jury, and 'triable-either-way' offences which are triable-either summarily in a magistrate's court or on indictment in the Crown Court.

The number of defendants with completed indictable/triable-either-way cases has increased by 13% at the magistrates' court. This coincides with changes made to the way in which cases are committed and sent from the magistrates' court to the Crown Court at the end of May 2013.

Despite this increase in cases the overall duration from offence to completion has fallen by 4 days at the magistrates' courts (compared to the previous quarter). Almost all of this fall is accounted for by a decrease in the time taken between first listing and completion at court – suggesting that there are more cases being dealt with more quickly at the magistrates' courts.

In the second quarter of 2013 criminal cases involving sexual and fraud & forgery offences continued to take the longest time to conclude – this is despite both seeing decreases in timeliness compared to the same period of the previous year (down 21 and 48 days respectively). The decreases seen are mostly accounted for in changes to the time spent between offence and charge which can reflect the variation in when offences are committed and reported to the police.

The largest quarter on quarter fall in overall timeliness was seen in 'other indictable offences' which fell by a third (74 days), with the majority of the difference due to falls in the time taken from first listing to completion at the courts.

Average waiting times in the Crown Court

Average waiting time refers to the average time between the date of sending or committal of a case to the Crown Court and the start of the substantive Crown Court hearing.

Sent for trial cases tend to involve more serious offences and more time is usually allowed for the prosecution to prepare papers following the case being sent to the Crown Court from the magistrates' courts. Therefore, the average waiting time for sent for trial cases is generally higher than cases committed for trial.

For trial cases where a not guilty plea was entered (Table 3.13), the average waiting time for defendants has been increasing since 2000 (18.6 weeks) and peaked at 24.7 weeks in 2012.

Annex A: Enforcement of financial impositions

The following section provides updated management information on the collection of financial impositions through Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS).

Financial impositions are ordered by the criminal courts for payment by offenders at sentencing and include financial penalties such as motoring fines, prosecutors' costs, compensation orders and victim surcharge. Financial penalties are the most commonly used sentence and form a significant part of HMCTS' collection and enforcement business. Accounting centres also enforce penalty notices for disorder and fixed penalty notices transferred to HMCTS for enforcement as fines. The financial imposition statistics presented here do not include confiscation orders.

Due to the timing of this publication we are not yet able to report on the amount paid within twelve and eighteen months after the imposition month for the annual 2012 accounts and within six to eighteen months periods for 2013 accounts.

Financial impositions and amounts paid

Financial penalties can be imposed by both the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court; however they are all enforced by the magistrates' courts. Table B.1 presents the amount of financial penalties collected by the courts in a given period.

In the second quarter of 2013, the total value of financial penalties paid, regardless of the age of the imposition, was £70 million; a 7% decrease compared with the same quarter of 2012 (Table B.1).

Table B.2 presents the value of financial penalties imposed by the criminal courts and the amount collected.

In the second quarter of 2013, around £106 million worth of financial impositions were imposed by the criminal courts, of which 11% (£11 million) were paid within the imposition month.

Each year there are a number of financial penalties that are cancelled, either administratively or legally. Legal cancellations can be applied after the case has been reconsidered by a judge or a magistrate and usually follow a change in circumstances. Administrative cancellations are only applied in accordance with a strict write off policy e.g. where the defendant has not been traced, these can then be re-instated if the defendant is then traced. Figures produced at the end of June 2013 show that around £7 million (more than 6%) of the financial penalties imposed in the second quarter of 2013 had been remitted or cancelled.

Financial imposition accounts opened and closed

Table B.3 presents the number of financial penalty accounts opened and closed. An account is opened when a financial penalty is ordered in court and is closed when the imposition against the account has been paid or the imposition is cancelled. Where a defendant has more than one financial penalty and/or account, these can be consolidated into one account.

Around 307,800 accounts were opened in the second quarter of 2013, a 3% increase compared to the same period of the previous year.

Of the accounts opened in the second quarter of 2013, 12% (38,181) were closed within the month of imposition. Due to the timing of this publication we are not yet able to draw conclusions on the volume of accounts closed in 2013. However the proportion of accounts closed has remained relatively stable over since the second quarter of 2011.

Outstanding financial impositions

Table B.4 presents the total value of financial impositions outstanding. The amount outstanding is irrespective of the age of the imposition or the payment terms, and excludes all impositions already paid as well as both legal and administrative cancellations. Payment terms may include arrangements for offenders to pay amounts owed over a period of time.

In the second quarter of 2013, the total value of financial impositions outstanding in England and Wales was £576 million. This has remained unchanged compared to the first quarter of 2013 (less than 1% difference).

Annex B: Planned upcoming changes to publications

We are planning to make some changes to this bulletin, which are outlined below. If you would like to comment on any of these proposals or if you have any other feedback or questions about this statistical bulletin, or requests for further information, please direct them to the appropriate contact provided at the end of this report.

Family

More CSV files: We are planning to produce additional CSV files to the family files already published. These will not only provide the data given in the existing or now discontinued Excel tables, but also make much more data available than is possible in table format – in other words, breakdowns and variables that have not been published previously.

These CSV files will be at the national England and Wales level. The court-level information primarily covering applications and timeliness currently provided in one of the existing CSV files will be expanded to provide court level data on disposals as well.

As currently, these CSV files will be accompanied by a guide explaining the variables to support the user in getting the best out of the data provided.

Tables: As more detailed information is presented in the new CSV files mentioned above, the production of certain tables – such as those on ancillary relief and domestic violence – will be gradually discontinued.

More tables showing case progression, such as the new table for divorces included in this bulletin, for various other types of cases will also gradually be introduced, such as for ancillary relief and domestic violence cases.

Criminal

Crown Court data

This publication and Criminal Justice Statistics (CJS), both contain data on the number of proceedings heard in the Crown Court. The figures are derived from the same core source (the CREST system), but they are not directly comparable as there are known differences between them. These are due to a number of factors, including differences in the data collation methods and counting methodologies used, which reflect different underlying drivers of the analyses being performed. By way of a broad illustration, Criminal Justice Statistics counts numbers of defendants and focuses on the final outcomes of criminal court proceedings, whilst Court Statistics Quarterly counts numbers of cases and focuses on flows through the court system. Work is currently under way to investigate and review the differences between the two sets of statistics and their compilation processes with a view to aligning the two datasets in future.

In 2010/11 the Ministry of Justice, with the support of a methodologist from the Office for National Statistics, undertook work to better understand the differences between the two publications. Among the key differences between the two datasets are:

- Definition of final outcome: Court Statistics Quarterly includes cases ending as a result of all charges being quashed, discontinued by the prosecution, or where a bench warrant was issued or executed and other outcomes. These outcomes are not counted in Criminal Justice Statistics as the statistics focus on the final outcome of criminal cases and the sentences passed;
- Different validation rules;
- Timing of data extraction.

Magistrates' courts data

For magistrates' courts data the number of proceedings reported in Court Statistics Quarterly exceeds those in Criminal Justice Statistics because the former counts issuance of a bench warrant as the end of a set of proceedings. This implies that a case may be counted once by Criminal Justice Statistics but twice, as two sets of proceedings, by Court Statistics Quarterly.

Annex C: International divorce comparisons

Summary

This paper aims to put some context to the divorce figures regularly published in this Court Statistics Quarterly report and give a broader assessment of divorce in England and Wales. It uses data published in Court Statistics Quarterly, and data published by other organisations, to assess how divorce has changed in England and Wales over the last 10 years and how it compares to the rest of the UK and other G20, Commonwealth and European countries.

The crude divorce rate in England and Wales decreased from 2.9 divorces per 1,000 people in 2003 to 2.1 divorces per 1,000 people in 2012. This divorce rate puts England and Wales roughly in the middle of the selected group of comparable countries.

Introduction

In 2012 there were 125,116 applications made in matrimonial proceedings at Family Courts in England and Wales, a reduction of 36% since the overall peak of 195,180 applications in 1990⁷. Divorce applications represent 45% of the total family courts caseload and, as regards the central questions of whether the marriage should be broken up and why, the vast majority of divorces (around 98%) are by consent. This paper aims at putting some context to these figures by addressing two questions:

- Are divorces going down in England and Wales when population changes are taken into account?
- How do the England and Wales divorce figures compare internationally?

The paper also looks at how the England and Wales divorce figures compare to the divorce figures of the other parts of the UK: Scotland and Northern Ireland. These have separate civil justice systems but, for policy areas which are not devolved, share a government with England and Wales. Since these countries are so closely linked it is particularly useful to understand how their divorce rates and policies compare with those of England and Wales.

Statistics on the number of divorces occurring each year in England and Wales are also published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The Ministry of Justice's divorce statistics are sourced directly from the FamilyMan system, while the ONS data are compiled from 'D105' forms used by the courts to record decrees absolute, which are supplied to ONS for compiling the central index of decrees absolute. There are small

⁷ Judicial and Court Statistics (various editions between 1993 and 2000)

differences between the number of divorces as recorded by the two sets of statistics. Statisticians at the Ministry of Justice and ONS worked together with HM Courts and Tribunals Service to understand these differences and reconcile where possible. Please see the joint statement produced by the MoJ and ONS on the differences in these divorce statistics attached to Court Statistics Quarterly. For more information on the ONS figures please visit

www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob1/divorces-in-england-and-wales/index.html

Methodology – Background on Divorce Rates

The ideal measure of how common divorce is in a country would be to divide the number of divorces recorded by the country's relevant authority within a specified time by the country's married population at a particular point within the period; the number of divorces per member (or, when scaled up, per 1,000 members) of the married population.

However, because of the differences in the data available from different countries, agencies such as Eurostat (a Directorate-General of the European Commission responsible for providing statistical information to the institutions of the European Union) and the United Nations use a broader measure called the crude divorce rate to compare divorce between different countries. This divides the number of divorces by the country's total population, rather than the country's married population. While not ideal, as it includes unmarried people in the population figures who are not 'at risk' of a divorce, this crude divorce rate still allows countries to be compared on a more like-for-like basis than directly comparing the numbers of divorces as it takes account of the fact that a country with a smaller population is also likely to have fewer married couples and, hence, fewer potential divorces.

The crude divorce rate may be affected by a number of factors, including:

- The proportion of the population who choose to cohabit or remain single rather than marry (or remarry);
- The proportion of the population who are both unmarried and ineligible to marry and hence ineligible to divorce (e.g. children under the legal age of marriage). This can be mitigated by calculating the divorce rate using the population above the legal age of marriage (e.g. 16 or over for England and Wales case); and
- The social attitudes in the country towards family, divorce and marriage breakdown.

The England and Wales divorce figures consider divorce to be a judicial declaration that dissolves a marriage and releases both spouses from all matrimonial obligations and hence they show the number of decrees absolute, rather than decrees nisi which in England and Wales are provisional, as spouses are only released from all matrimonial obligations once the set conditions (e.g. the passage of a six week period in which any issues can be raised) are met and the decree nisi is made absolute.

However, the MoJ 'divorce' figures also include dissolutions of civil partnerships (672 in 2011⁸) as the MoJ data does not specifically distinguish between dissolutions of marriages and dissolutions of civil partnerships. Annulments are excluded as technically they formally invalidate a marriage, confirming that the marriage did not exist, as opposed to a 'divorce' which dissolves a valid marriage. Judicial separations are also excluded because, although they release the spouses from some matrimonial obligations (e.g. the expectation that they will live together), they do not dissolve the marriage and the spouses remain unable to remarry.

An alternative to the crude divorce rate would be to look at the proportion of a country's population who, in national surveys or censuses, give their marital status as 'divorced'. However, unlike the crude divorce rate, this doesn't take in to account the timing of the divorce, whether someone divorced years ago or only in the past few months. It also excludes those who have subsequently remarried and classify themselves as 'married'. Statistics for various countries on the proportion of the population giving their marital status as divorced can be found at

www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WMD2012/MainFrame.html.

Results

Table C.1 shows crude divorce rates for England and Wales, calculated using the whole population and then the over-16 population as the denominator.

⁸ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob2/civil-partnership-statistics--united-kingdom/2011/sb-civil-partnerships-in-the-uk--2011.html>

Table C.1: Crude divorce rates for England and Wales, annually 2003 - 2012

Year	Decrees absolute ¹	All Persons		Persons Aged 16 or Over	
		Population estimate (1,000s) ²	Crude divorce rate	Population estimate (1,000s) ^{2,3}	Crude divorce rate
2003	153,724	52,863	2.9	42,437	3.6
2004	153,263	53,152	2.9	42,760	3.6
2005	142,069	53,575	2.7	43,199	3.3
2006	132,741	53,951	2.5	43,583	3.0
2007	128,921	54,387	2.4	44,011	2.9
2008	122,629	54,842	2.2	44,430	2.8
2009	115,167	55,235	2.1	44,774	2.6
2010	121,272	55,692	2.2	45,177	2.7
2011	119,639	56,171	2.1	45,585	2.6
2012	120,702	56,568	2.1	45,881	2.6

Notes:

1) Divorce figures include dissolutions of marriages and civil partnerships.

2) Data taken from the ONS England and Wales mid-year population estimates.

(<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Population#tab-data-tables>) – Table-b-quinary-age-groups.

3) Over 16 population figures were calculated by subtracting the rounded under 16 population from the rounded total population and will be subject to rounding error.

The crude divorce rate in the whole England and Wales population in 2012 was 2.1 divorces per 1,000 people. This has decreased from 2.9 divorces per 1,000 people in 2004, but has remained fairly stable since 2008.

The crude divorce rate among the over-16 population in England and Wales in 2012 was 2.6 divorces per 1,000 people. This has decreased from 3.6 divorces per 1,000 people in 2004, but has remained fairly stable since 2009.

The difference between the crude divorce rate in the whole population and the rate in the over-16 population has been fairly constant since 2007, at around 0.5 divorces per 1,000 people.

Table C.2 shows the change in the England and Wales over-16 population and the married population between the 2001 census and the 2011 census, providing a good overlap with the 2003-2012 time period covered above.

Table C.2: Number¹ and proportion of the England and Wales population stating that they were married or in a civil partnership, 2001 and 2011

Year	Population Over 16	Population of Married or Civil Partnership	% Married or Civil Partnership	Decrees Absolute	Divorces per 1,000 married population ³
2001 ²	41,553,180	22,144,170	53.3%	137,270	6.2
2011	45,496,780	22,497,508	49.4%	119,610	5.3

Notes:

1) Figures taken from ONS census publications (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=KS103EW> for 2011 and <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=KS04> for 2001).

2) 2001 Decrees absolute figure taken from 2001 edition of Judicial and Court Statistics

3) These figures refer to divorces per married person, rather than divorces per married couple. The number of divorces per 1,000 married couples will be two times the numbers given here, each divorce affecting two people but only one couple.

The table shows two factors that impacted the crude divorce rate between 2001 and 2011. Firstly, there were fewer divorces among the married population: the number of decrees absolute per 1,000 people in the married population fell from 6.2 in 2001 to 5.3 in 2011. Secondly, the unmarried population in England and Wales grew faster than the married population and the proportion of the over-16 population who were in a marriage or civil partnership fell from 53.3% in 2001 to 49.4% in 2011. This means that in 2011 a smaller proportion of the England and Wales population were 'at risk' of a divorce.

Table C.3 and Figure C.1 compare the crude divorce rate in England and Wales with the rates in other parts of the UK.

Table C.3: Crude divorce rates in the UK, annually 2003 – 2011

Year	England and Wales	Scotland		Northern Ireland			
	Crude Divorce Rate	Divorces ^{1,2}	Population Estimate (1,000s) ^{3,4}	Crude Divorce Rate	Divorces ^{1,2}	Population Estimate (1,000s) ^{4,5}	Crude Divorce Rate
2003	2.9	10,834	5,057	2.1	2,319	1,705	1.4
2004	2.9	11,234	5,078	2.2	2,512	1,714	1.5
2005	2.7	10,875	5,095	2.1	2,362	1,728	1.4
2006	2.5	13,012	5,117	2.5	2,565	1,743	1.5
2007	2.4	12,781	5,144	2.5	2,913	1,762	1.7
2008	2.2	11,461	5,169	2.2	2,773	1,779	1.6
2009	2.1	10,395	5,194	2.0	2,176	1,793	1.2
2010	2.2	10,149	5,222	1.9	2,600	1,805	1.4
2011	2.1	9,862	5,300	1.9	2,343	1,814	1.3

Notes:

1) Data taken from ONS divorce figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/reference-tables.html?edition=tc%3A77-303066>).

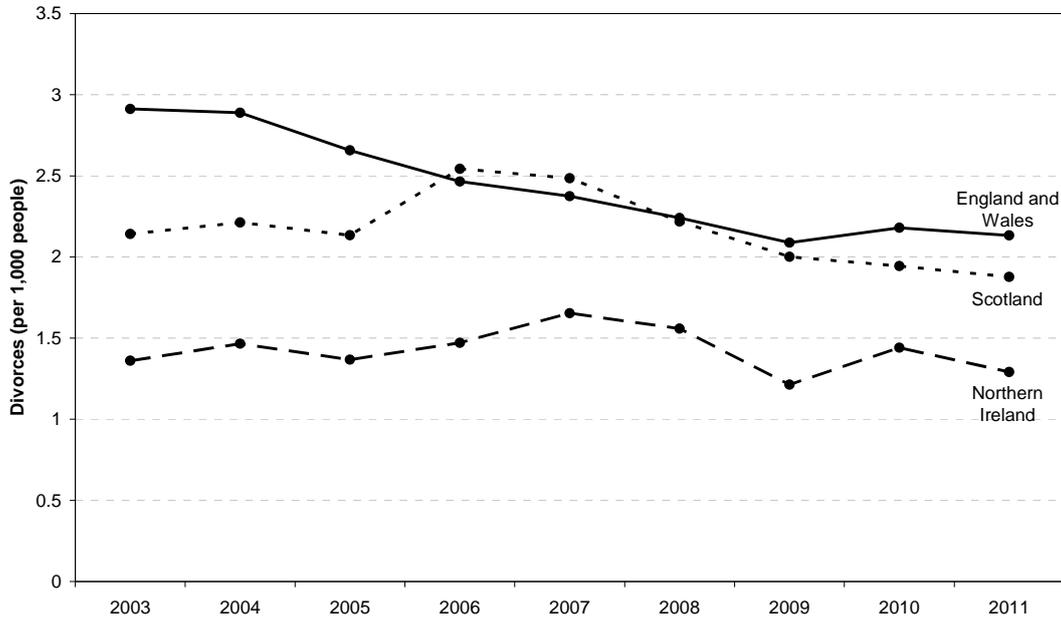
2) Divorces refers to decrees absolute and includes dissolutions and annulments of marriages, but excludes dissolutions and annulments of civil partnerships.

3) Data taken from General Register Office population estimates for Scotland (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/time-series.html>). Figures prior to 2011 have not been revised in light of the 2011 census.

4) Population estimates include all persons.

5) Data taken from Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency population estimates for Northern Ireland (<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp17.htm>). The figures used are the updated figures that have been revised in light of the 2011 census.

Figure C.1: Chart showing the trends in the crude divorce rates of the different parts of the UK between 2003 and 2011



Northern Ireland had the lowest crude divorce rate in the UK throughout the 2003 to 2011 period. The crude divorce rate in Northern Ireland has also been quite stable over the period at around 1.4 to 1.5 divorces per 1,000 people.

The crude divorce rate in Scotland was much lower than the crude divorce rate in England and Wales between 2003 and 2005. However, since the crude divorce rate in Scotland rose to 2.5 divorces per 1,000 people in 2006, the crude divorce rates have been broadly similar although the gap has widened slightly in 2010 and 2011.

Table C.4 puts the UK figures into a wider international context by comparing them with the crude divorce rates of selected European, G20 and Commonwealth countries.

Table C.4: Crude divorce rates in selected European, G20 and Commonwealth countries¹, annually 2007 - 2011

Country	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
G20					
Australia	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	...
China ²	1.6	1.7	1.9	2.0	...
France	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1 ²¹	2.0 ²¹
Germany	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3 ²¹
Italy	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9 ²¹	...
Japan ³	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	...
Russian Federation	4.8	5.0	4.9	4.5	4.7 ^p
Turkey ⁴	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.6 ^p
United Kingdom ⁵	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.1
England and Wales ⁶	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.1
Northern Ireland ^b	1.7	1.6	1.2	1.4	1.3
Scotland ⁶	2.5	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.9
United States of America ^f	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6
Other EU Countries					
Austria ⁸	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.1 ²¹
Belgium ⁹	2.8	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.9 ^p
Bulgaria ¹⁰	2.1	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.4
Croatia	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3 ²¹
Cyprus ¹¹	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.3 ²¹	2.3 ²¹
Czech Republic	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.7
Denmark ¹²	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6
Estonia	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.3
Finland ¹³	2.5 ¹⁸	2.5 ¹⁸	2.5 ¹⁹	2.5 ¹⁹	2.5
Hungary ¹³	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.3 ^p
Ireland (Republic of) ¹⁴	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7 ²¹
Latvia	3.3	2.7	2.3	2.2	4.0
Lithuania	3.4	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.2
Netherlands ¹⁵	2.0	2.0	1.9 ²⁰	2.0 ²⁰	2.0 ²⁰
Poland	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.7
Portugal	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6 ²¹	2.5 ²¹
Romania	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.7 ^p
Slovakia	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.1
Slovenia	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1 ^p
Spain	2.8	2.4	2.1	2.2	2.2 ²¹
Sweden	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5 ^{2u}	2.5 ^{2u}
Other Selected European/ Commonwealth Countries					
Iceland ¹⁶	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8
New Zealand	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.0	...
Norway ¹⁷	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
Switzerland	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.2 ^p

Notes:

1) Unless otherwise stated these figures are taken from the UN demographic yearbook publication which gives crude divorce rates for various countries (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2011.htm>)

2) Including annulments. For statistical purposes, the data for China do not include those for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong SAR), Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR) and Taiwan province of China.

3) Data refer to Japanese nationals in Japan only.

4) Data from MERNIS (Central Population Administrative System)

5) Excluding Channel Islands (Guernsey and Jersey) and Isle of Man, shown separately, if available.

6) Figures for the component parts of the UK are taken from Tables 1 and 2

7) US Data taken from figures published by the American 'National Center for Health Statistics' (http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage_divorce_tables.htm). Figures exclude data for California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, and Minnesota.

8) Excluding aliens temporarily in the area.

9) Including divorces among armed forces stationed outside the country and alien armed forces in the area.

10) Including nationals outside the country, but excluding foreigners in the country. Including annulments.

11) Data refer to government controlled areas.

12) Excluding Faeroe Islands and Greenland shown separately, if available.

13) Including annulments.

14) Data refer to events registered within one year of occurrence.

15) Based on the general office for civil registration.

16) Data refer to resident population only.

17) Excluding Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands shown separately, if available. Data refer to male residents of Norway only.

18) Including nationals temporarily outside the country.

19) Excluding Åland Islands.

20) Including same sex divorces.

21) Estimates taken from the Eurostat publication (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00013&plugin=1>), as the figures are unavailable from the UN publication

England and Wales had the 11th highest rate out of the 29 selected countries outside the UK for which 2011 figures are available, with 2.1 divorces per 1,000 people, the same as Austria, Slovakia and Norway. Looking at 2010, for which 34 of the selected countries outside the UK have data available, 16 of the countries had a crude divorce rate lower than in England and Wales (2.2 divorces per 1,000 people) and 14 had a crude divorce higher than in England and Wales. This places the crude divorce rate in England and Wales roughly in the middle of the crude divorce rates of the selected group of comparable countries.

The countries with the highest crude divorce rates in 2011 were Russia (4.7 divorces per 1,000 people), Latvia (4.0 divorces per 1,000 people) and USA (3.6 divorces per 1,000 people).

The countries with the lowest crude divorce rates in 2011 were Republic of Ireland (0.7 divorces per 1,000 people), Slovenia (1.1 divorces per 1,000 people), Croatia (1.3 divorces per 1,000 people) and Bulgaria (1.4 divorces per 1,000 people). Although no data was available for 2011 Italy also has a low crude divorce rate. The crude divorce rate in Italy between 2007 and 2010 was 0.9 divorces per 1,000 people.

Please note that comparisons between different countries are always difficult since divorces can be harder to get, for example different countries have different criteria for obtaining a divorce, and the population under the age of marriage can be substantially different.

Explanatory notes

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The statistics in this bulletin relate to cases in the county, family, Crown and magistrates' courts in England and Wales. Calendar year statistics are also provided.

Breakdowns of many of the summary figures presented in this bulletin, such as split by case type or by HMCTS area, are available in the Comma Separated Value (csv) files that accompany this publication.

Revisions

The statistics in the latest quarter are provisional, and are therefore liable to revision to take account of any late amendments to the administrative databases from which these statistics are sourced. The standard process for revising the published statistics to account for these late amendments is as follows:

An initial revision to the statistics for the latest quarter may be made when the next edition of this bulletin is published. Further revisions may be made when the figures are reconciled at the end of the year. If revisions are needed in the subsequent year this will be clearly annotated in the tables.

For more information please see the **Guide to Court and Administrative Justice Statistics**.

Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

- = Not applicable
- 0 = Nil
- (r) = Revised data
- (p) = Provisional data

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