



Ministry  
of Justice



# **Family Court Statistics Quarterly, England and Wales**

October to December 2015

Ministry of Justice  
Statistics bulletin

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## Introduction

This statistical bulletin presents statistics relating to family courts, which were previously published within Court Statistics Quarterly.

It presents statistics on activity in the family courts of England and Wales and provides provisional figures for the latest quarter (October to December 2015) with accompanying commentary and analysis. The figures 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.

Figures on Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders (FGMPOs), which were introduced in July 2015, are published in this bulletin for the second time.

The statistics in this bulletin are used to monitor court workloads, to assist in the development of policy, and their subsequent monitoring and evaluation.

Information on civil cases can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-justice-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-justice-statistics)

Information on criminal cases can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly)

Information on publicly funding legal services is now published by the Legal Aid Agency and can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics)

There is also a separate **Guide to Family Court Statistics** published alongside this publication which provides definitions for the terms used in this report, information regarding the symbols and conventions used in the bulletin, as well as information about the systems and data sources used to compile the statistics.

The structure and content of this report are continually being reviewed to reflect user requirements. If you have any feedback about the report generally, please contact the production team using the [contact details](#) at the back of this report.

Earlier editions of the information presented in this bulletin are in the Family chapters of the Court Statistics Quarterly publications which can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/court-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/court-statistics-quarterly)

There are a number of CSV files that support this publication, in the accompanying zip file. Further information about these files can be found in the word document 'Guide to Family Justice - Guide to national and court-level information.doc', which is also included in the zip file. The CSV files contain:

- Selected summary of family cases by Designated Family Judge area and region.
- Additional breakdowns and further details for each of the 'main tables' published alongside this document.

The next edition of Family Court Statistics Quarterly is scheduled to be published on 30 June 2016, covering the period January to March 2016.

### **Users of the statistics**

The main users of these statistics are Ministers and officials in central government responsible for developing policy with regard to family justice. Other users include the central government departments, and various voluntary organisations with an interest in family justice. The data also feed into statistics produced by the Office for National Statistics, such as public sector productivity.

## Key Findings

This report presents statistics on activity in the family courts of England and Wales in the fourth quarter of 2015 (October to December).

- The number of cases that started in family courts in England and Wales in October to December 2015 was 62,456, up 6% compared to the equivalent quarter of 2014, but maintaining a fairly steady flat trend. Nearly half of new cases are divorce cases.
- The average time for the disposal of a care or supervision application made in October to December 2015 was 28 weeks, and the trend over the past year has remained stable at this level following the longer term downward trend seen since 2011.
- 60% of care or supervision proceedings were disposed of within 26 weeks, following on from the 26 week time limit for completing these cases introduced in the Children and Families Act 2014.
- There has been a decrease in the time taken for private law cases overall in the last year: down 1.3 weeks to 14.1 weeks – trend seen post-LASPO reforms during 2013 and early 2014 now seems to be reversing with timeliness returning to pre-LASPO levels.
- Following a rise in the number of applications for non-molestation domestic violence remedy orders during 2013, the trend has remained steady over the last two years.
- Following their introduction in July 2015, there were 47 applications and 32 orders made for Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders (FGMPOs) up to the end of December 2015.
- The recent downward trend in the number of adoption orders issued was maintained, with an 11% drop seen in October to December 2015 compared to the equivalent quarter for 2014, driven by the number of adoption orders issued to male/female couples falling by 16%.
- There has been a gradual upward trend in the total number of applications and orders made under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- Applications relating to deprivation of liberty increased from 109 in 2013 to 525 in 2014 to 1,499 in 2015. There were 489 applications made in the latest quarter October to December 2015. The overall upward trend follows the Supreme Court decision on 19 March 2014<sup>1</sup> whereby it was considered a person could be deprived of their liberty

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<sup>1</sup> *P v Cheshire West and Chester Council and P and Q v Surrey County Council* [2014] UKSC 19

in their own home, sheltered accommodation etc, and not just the nursing homes and hospitals which were previously covered.

- There were 134,363 Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) in October to December 2015, the highest quarterly figure so far and up 40% on the same quarter for 2014. This is largely due to increased publicity and new online forms which have been introduced to make it simpler and faster to apply for LPAs.
- There were nearly 275,000 grants of representation issued by the Probate Service in 2015, the highest annual figure since 2007.

## Section 1 - The Family Justice System

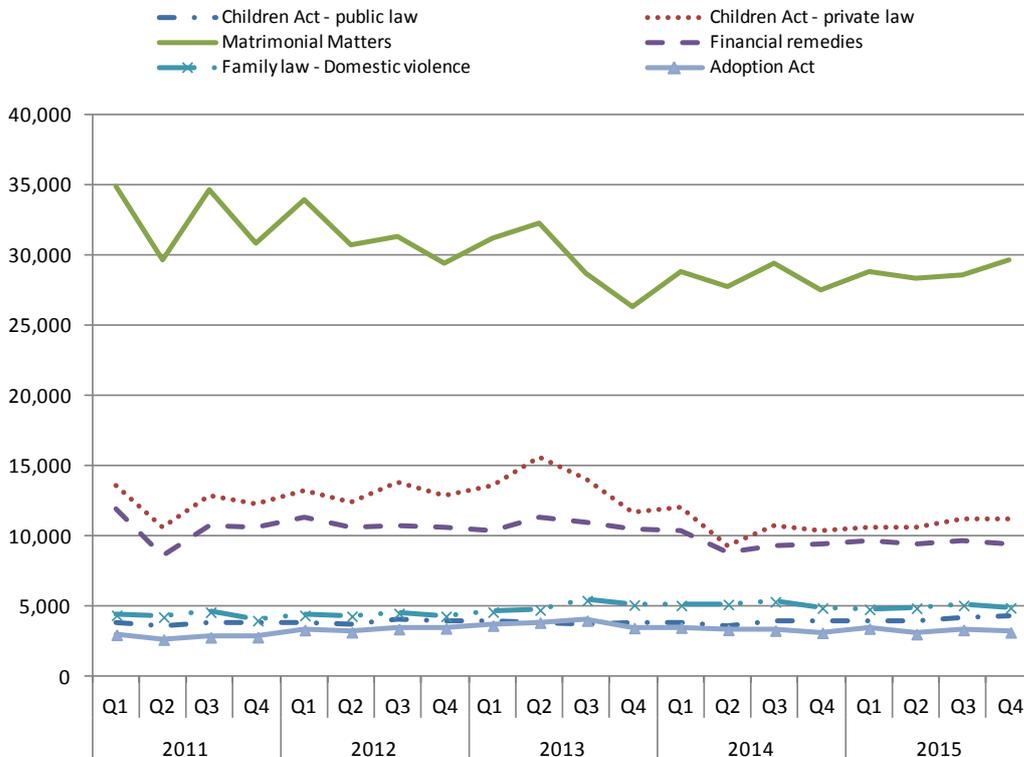
Until 22 April 2014, family cases were dealt with at Family Proceedings Courts (which were part of the magistrates' courts), at county courts or in the Family Division of the High Court. From 22 April 2014, all family cases are now dealt with in the Single Family Court.

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.

### Total family court case caseload (Table 1)

In October to December 2015, 62,456 new cases started in family courts and 52,404 cases were concluded. Table 1 shows the total number of new cases starting and cases reaching a conclusion in family courts in each quarter from 2011. Figure 1 below shows the trend in cases started over time by case type from January to March 2011 to October to December 2015.

**Figure 1: New family cases started, by case type, January to March 2011 to October to December 2015**



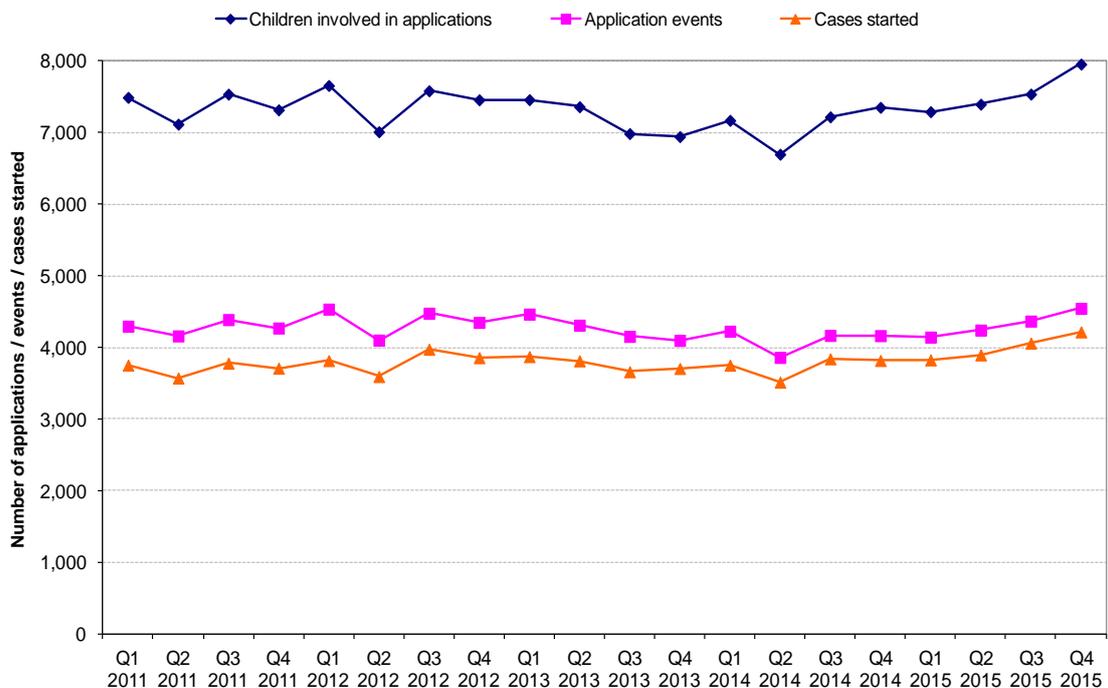
## Section 2 - Public Law

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 had subsequently increased to nearly 30,000 per year. Figures subsequently remained fairly steady at around 7,000 per quarter, but there has been an increase in the two most recent quarters, with 7,958 children involved in public law applications in October to December 2015 (Figure 2).

The number of applications made, which can cover more than one child, was 4,546 in October to December 2015 – on average, there were 1.75 children involved in each application. More than one application may be made during the life of a case. The numbers of cases started in October to December 2015 was 4,217 (Table 2).

**Figure 2: Public law applications: number of children involved, number of application events and number of cases started, January to March 2011 to October to December 2015**



There were 10,298 children involved in public law orders made in October to December 2015. 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.

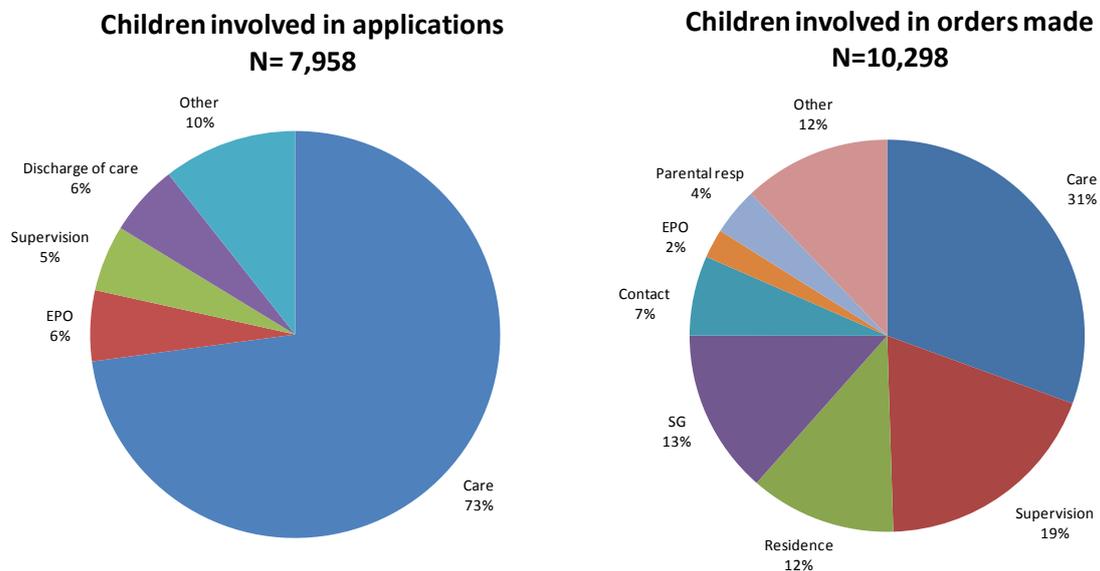
Figure 3 shows that the most common types of order applied for in October to December 2015 were for care (73% of children involved in applications). There is often a different pattern between the types of order applications and the orders that are given – this is because an application for one type can result in an order of a different type being made. For example, there were 419 children involved in applications for a supervision order in October to December 2015, compared to 1,945 children involved in supervision orders made in that same 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.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) also publishes data on the number of care applications, the latest edition of which can be found here:

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/leaflets-resources/organisational-material/care-and-private-law-demand-statistics/care-demand-statistics.aspx>

Case level care order figures are currently not produced by the MoJ and so comparisons between the two datasets cannot be made at this time.

**Figure 3: Public law applications and orders made, showing proportion of children involved in each order type, October to December 2015**



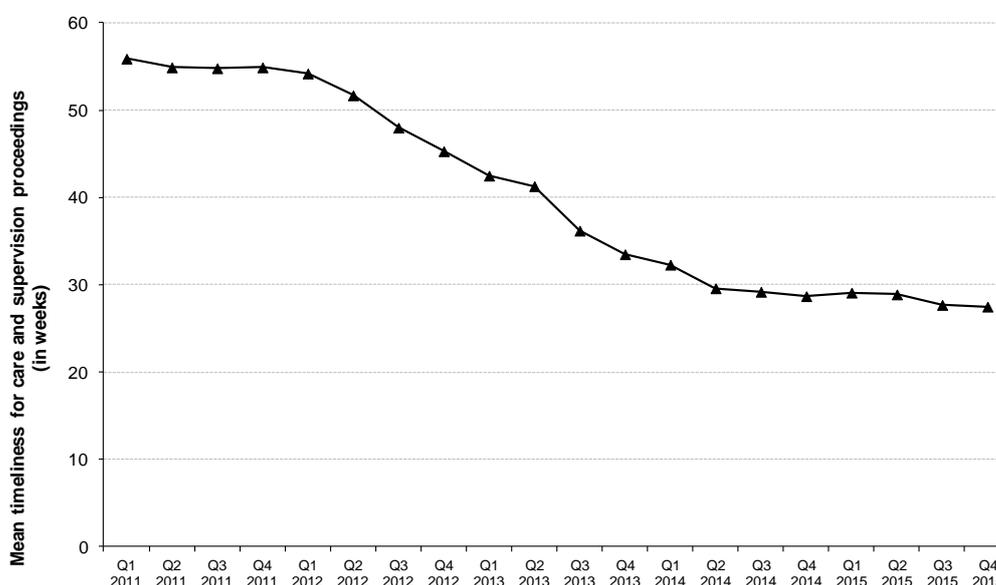
EPO = Emergency protection order, SG = Special guardianship order, Parental resp = Parental responsibility order

## 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 5. 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 long term downward trend seen since 2011 in the average time for a disposal to be made stabilised around 29 weeks from July 2014, and then dropped again slightly to 27.5 weeks in the latest quarter (October to December 2015) (Figure 4).

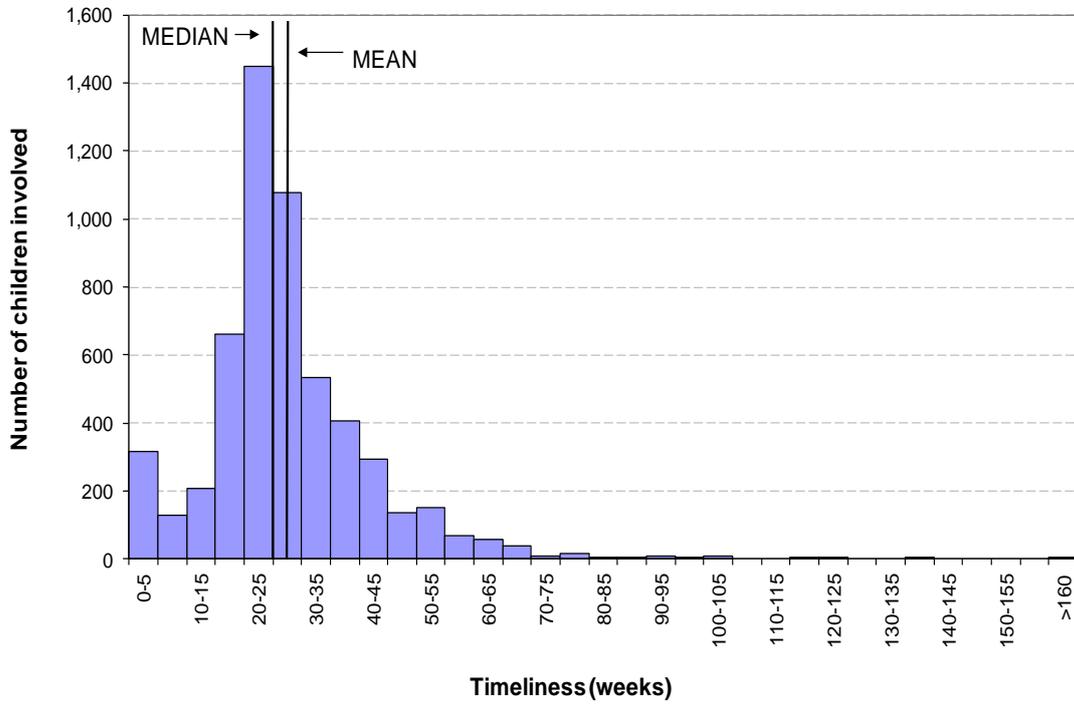
**Figure 4: Timeliness for care and supervision proceedings in the Family Court, January to March 2011 to October to December 2015**



The average time for a disposal can be skewed by cases that take a long time, and so the median time is also calculated. The median time to make a disposal in a case was 25 weeks in October to December 2015 for all children involved in care and supervision proceedings where a decision was reached during October to December 2015. This indicates that half of the children waited 25 weeks or less from application to a substantive disposal, and the other half waited at least 25 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 5 shows how many children were involved in each timeliness band in their case proceedings for cases disposed in October to December 2015.

**Figure 5: Timeliness for care and supervision proceedings showing number of children involved in each timeliness band, October to December 2015**



## Section 3 - Private Law

The number of Private law cases started in October to December 2015 was 11,180, up 8% from the equivalent quarter in 2014.

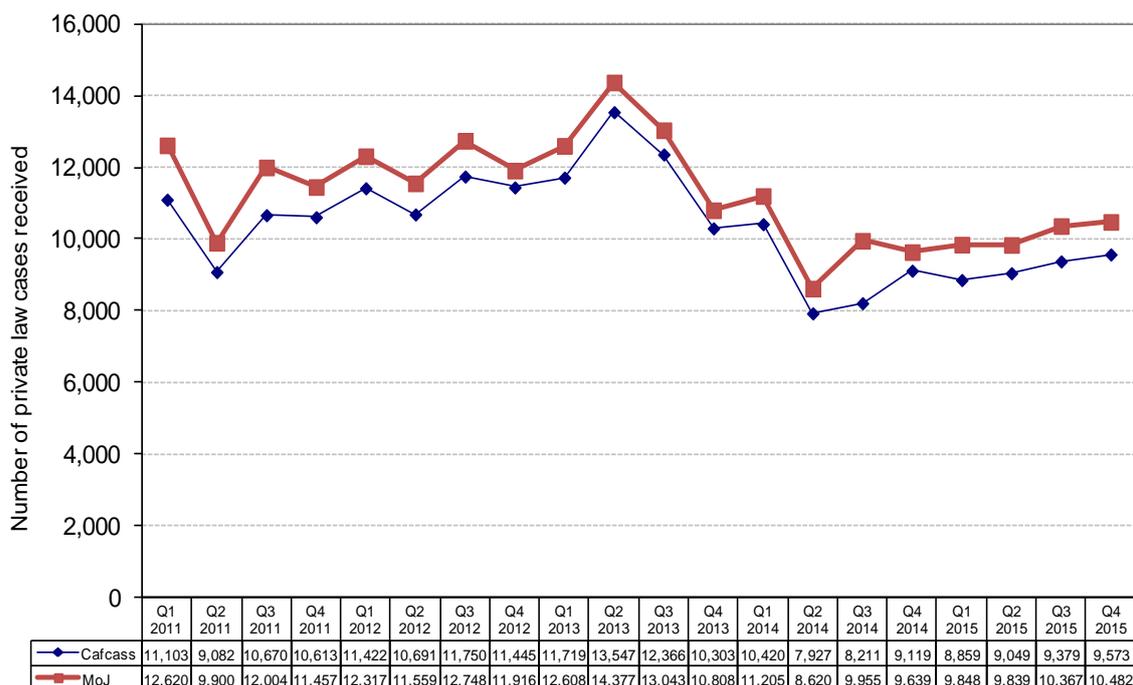
In comparison, for cases disposed in October to December 2015 there was a slight drop of 5% compared to the equivalent quarter in 2014.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) also publishes (England only) data on the number of private law cases started, the latest edition of which can be found here:

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/leaflets-resources/organisational-material/care-and-private-law-demand-statistics/private-law-demand-statistics.aspx>

These are compared against figures in this bulletin in Figure 6, which shows that the two trends are very similar.

**Figure 6: Comparison of the number of Private law cases received, as recorded by Cafcass and the MoJ (England only), January to March 2011 to October to December 2015**



For the last two years the difference between the two sets of figures has been 9%, and this is mostly due to Cafcass generally only receiving section 8 cases (contact, residence, prohibited steps and specific issue) from the courts. Other differences between the two data sets include the following:

- Section 8 cases where all of the issues are dealt with on the day (called 'urgent without notice' applications) should not be sent to Cafcass.

- Section 8 cases which are not listed within the Private Law Programme (PLP) and do not have a first hearing dispute resolution appointment (FHDRA) should also not be sent to Cafcass.
- Certain non-section 8 cases can be sent to Cafcass if the subject child is a party to ongoing proceedings (and a Cafcass officer has been appointed as the children's guardian) or the court is directed to do so by a judge or legal advisor.

This means that the two sets of figures cannot be accurately matched as it is impossible to identify the various situations described above from administrative data sources (particularly the 'urgent without notice' applications).

### **Timeliness of private law cases**

Table 6 shows that from the middle of 2012 to the end of March 2014, for private law cases overall the average time to first definitive disposal had been on a slight upward trend. In the most recent quarters, this trend has been reversing with the average time to first disposal at 14.1 weeks for October to December 2015 (down 1.3 weeks from the equivalent quarter in 2014).

For more details on the timeliness in private law cases please see Section 4 below.

## Section 4 - Legal representation

Figures on the legal representation of parties in family-related court cases are shown in Table 6. 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.

A further breakdown of Table 6 by region is published in the CSV files that accompany this publication.

The legal representation status reflects whether the applicant/respondent's legal representative has been recorded or left blank within FamilyMan, the family court case management system. Therefore, parties recorded as without legal representation are not necessarily self-representing litigants in person - for example, Table 6 suggests that for half of the divorce cases not involving financial remedies disposed, neither party had legal representation. However, further analysis shows that these were uncontested cases and almost all of them did not have a single hearing.

### **Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offender Act, 2012**

The implementation of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) in April 2013 made changes to the scope and eligibility of legal aid.

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA - formerly the Legal Services Commission) collects statistics on those applying for legal aid, and figures on the number applications received and certificates granted by various Family categories have been published in their annual and quarterly statistical reports which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics>

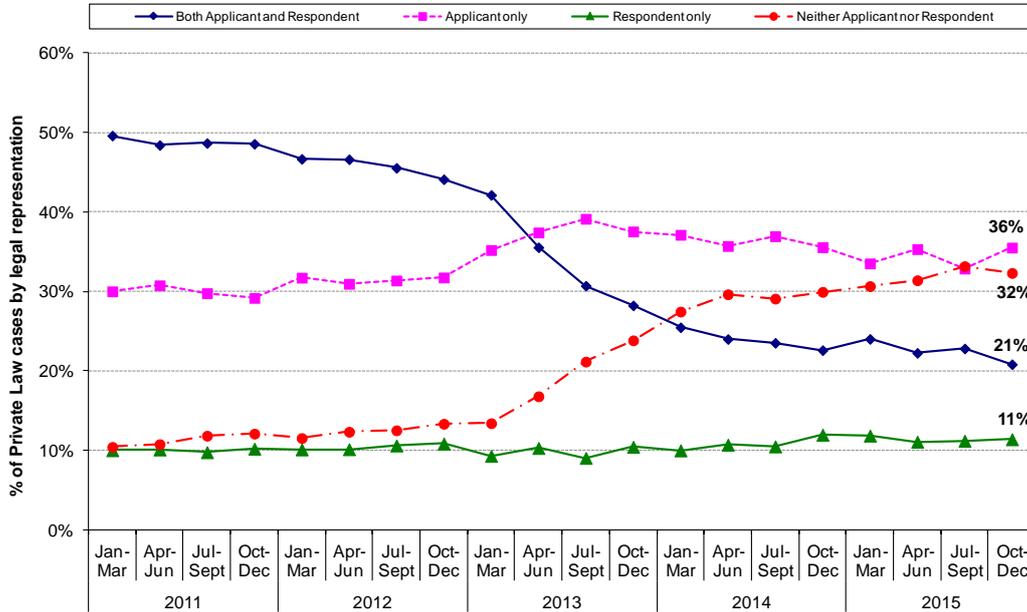
From April 2013, legal aid is now only available for private family law cases (such as contact or divorce) if there is evidence of domestic violence or child abuse and child abduction cases. Legal aid remains available for public family law cases (such as adoption).

The full details of the LASPO Act can be found here:  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/10/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/10/enacted)

The removal of legal aid for many private law cases has resulted in a change in the pattern of legal representation, and Figure 7 shows how this has changed over the time. Around the time that the LASPO reforms were implemented there was a marked increase in the number and proportion of cases where neither party are represented, with an equivalent drop in the proportion of those cases where both parties were represented. In the most recent quarters, there has been some volatility in the proportion of cases that have representation for the 'applicant only' and 'both applicant and

respondent' representation – both appear now to be in line with the overall general trend. Quarter on quarter changes should be treated with caution.

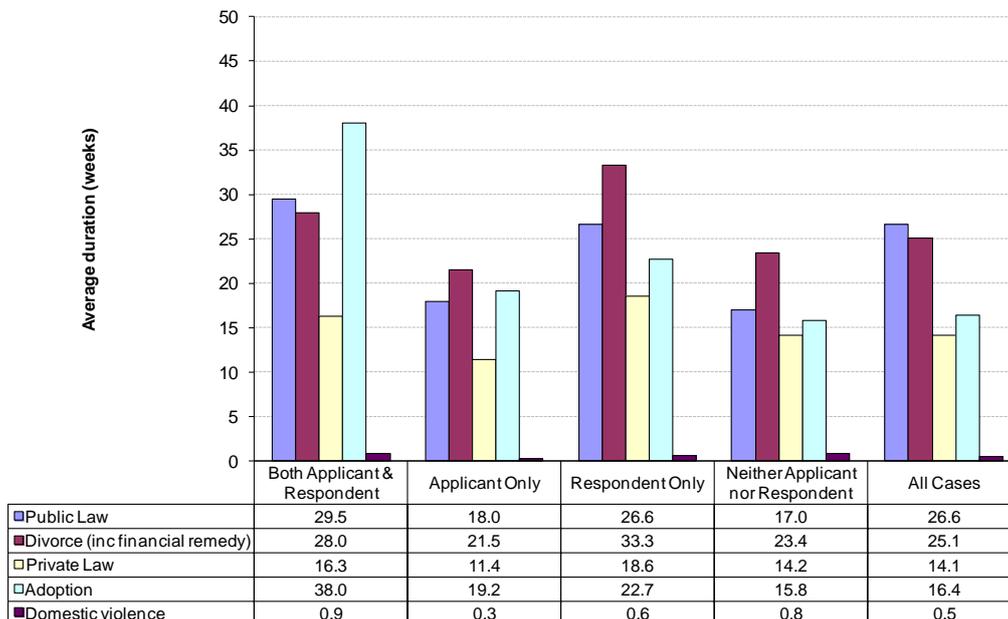
**Figure 7: Proportion of parties in private law cases with legal representation, January to March 2011 to October to December 2015**



**Timeliness of cases by legal representation**

In general, across all case types, cases where either 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 8 shows the average duration by case type in October to December 2015.

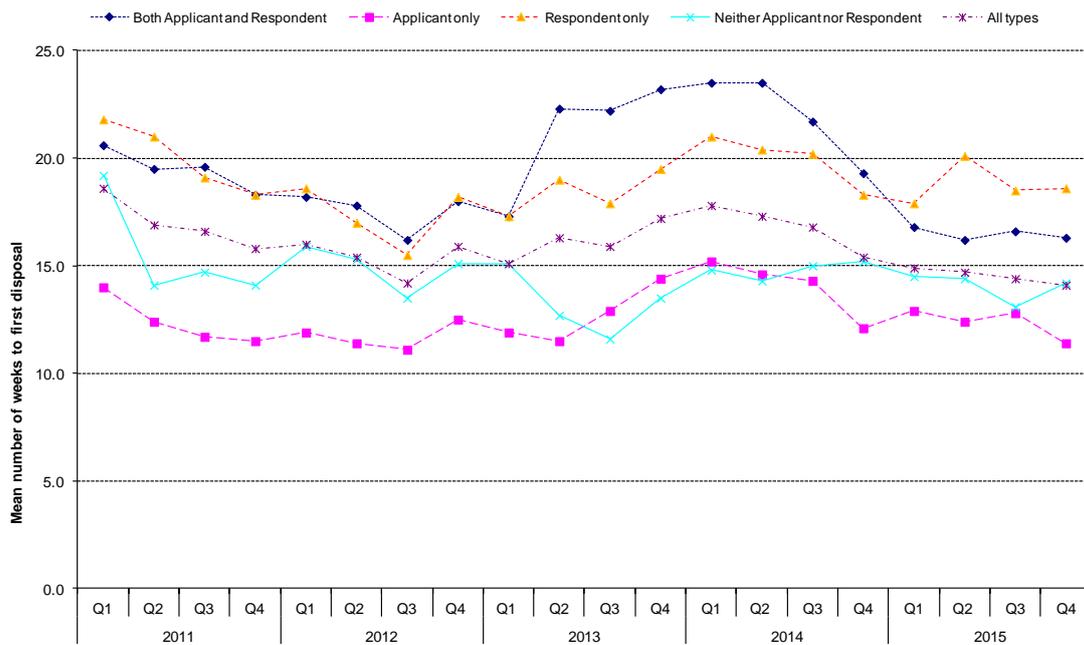
**Figure 8: Timeliness of cases according to legal representation of participants, by case type, October to December 2015**



The average duration for public law disposals overall fell steadily from the middle of 2012 until the beginning of 2014 since when it has remained fairly steady. For adoption cases overall average duration has remained fairly constant over recent years. Note that adoption timeliness in Q3 2014 was higher because of a data cleansing exercise in some regions which administratively closed old cases.

For private law cases, the average time to first disposal was generally falling until it started to increase during 2013. This rise was driven by increases for all representation groups, but particularly in the timeliness of cases where both parties were represented. In recent quarters there has been a decrease in the timeliness for private law cases overall (Figure 9) with timeliness falling for all types of representation, aside from 'respondent only', which accounts for around 10% of cases resulting in a volatile time series. Quarter on quarter changes should therefore be treated with caution.

**Figure 9: Average time to first disposal in private law cases, January to March 2011 to October to December 2015**



## Section 5 - Matrimonial matters

Table 7 provides the numbers of petitions and decrees granted for divorce, annulment and judicial separation in England and Wales. The National CSV file that accompanies this publication provides additional information on matrimonial proceedings such as gender of petitioner and whether children were involved or not.

Eleven centralised divorce centres were introduced throughout 2014 and 2015 in England and Wales, with the vast majority of uncontested decree nisi applications being considered by Legal Advisers (rather than district judges) at those centres. This should be noted when looking at the relevant figures given in the DFJ and Region level CSV file.

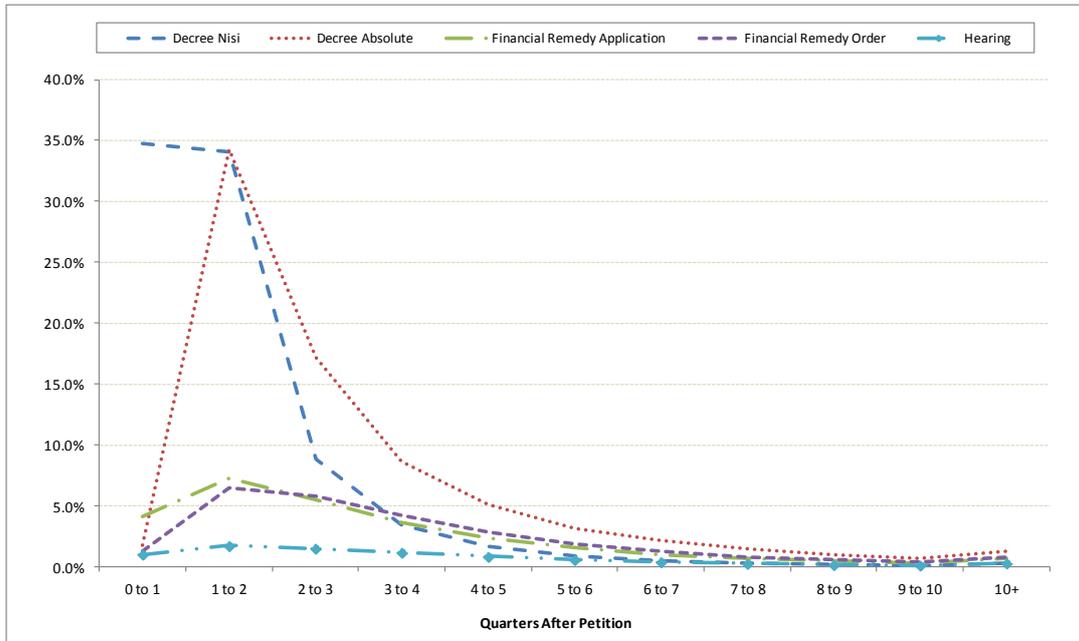
Over 99% of petitions filed for matrimonial proceedings are for divorce. There are very small numbers for annulments and judicial separations. There were 29,480 petitions in October to December 2015, up 8% compared to the same quarter for 2014. However, there were 22,519 divorces in Q4 2015, down 17% from Q4 2014, and continuing the recent downward trend (Table 7).

In addition to caseload, there are also divorce case progression figures presented in this publication. A summary of divorce case progression can be found in Table 8 – it shows the number of divorce cases commencing in each year since 2003 and in each quarter since 2009, together with the proportion of those cases that had reached certain stages by the beginning of February 2016 (when the data was extracted for producing this bulletin).

As mentioned in the previous bulletin, following consultation, two alternatives for measuring and presenting timeliness are now produced. The first looks at how long it has taken (in weeks) to get to certain stages in the relevant court process from the date when the petition was made (and this is included in Table 7). The second reports how long it takes, on average, for petitions to reach each stage in the process, counted by the number of quarters elapsed (Table 9 and Figure 10).

These methods of presentation provide a better indication of case progression as they address the weaknesses identified with the previous methodology e.g. they now take account of the correlations between the percentages of claims reaching the milestones in different quarters. They also incorporate previous quarters' data, which will reflect any recent economic or policy changes.

**Figure 10: Percentage of divorce cases started between Q1 2011 to Q4 2015 reaching certain stages, by the number of quarters since petition, England and Wales**



## Financial remedy

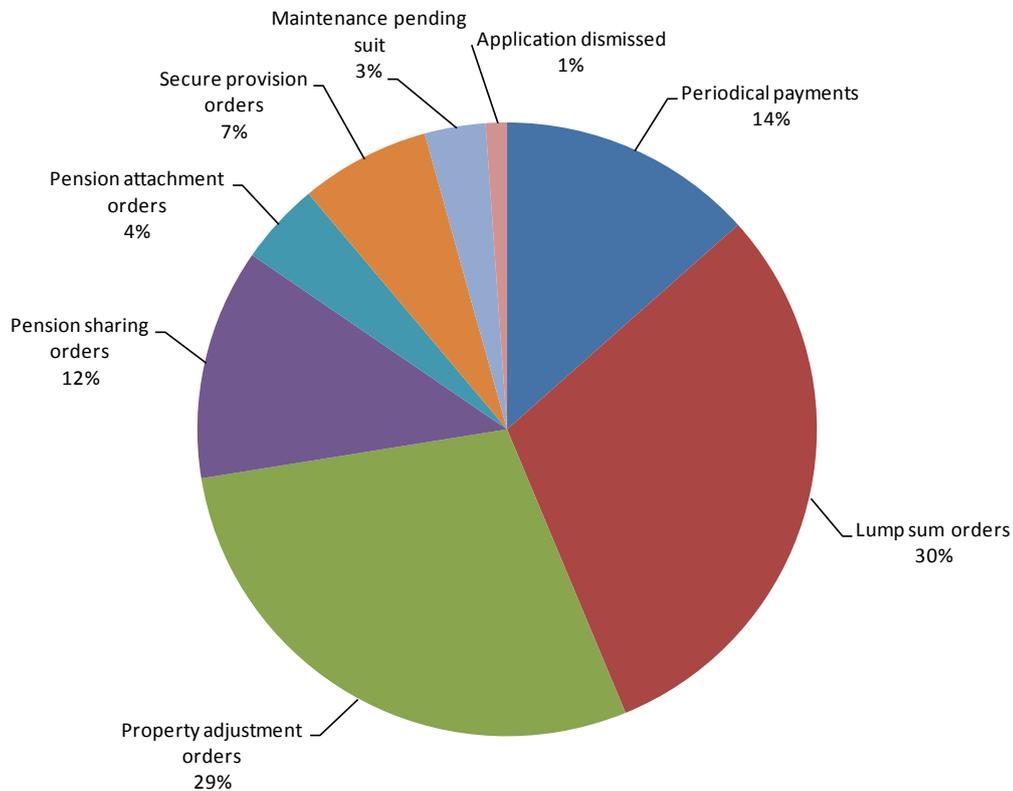
During a divorce, a marriage annulment, or a judicial separation, or the dissolution of a civil partnership, there may still be a need for the court to settle disputes over money or property. The court can make a financial remedy order, formerly known as 'ancillary relief'. These orders include dealing with the arrangements for the sale or transfer of property, maintenance payments, a lump sum payment or the sharing of a pension. Orders for financial provision other than for financial remedy are not dependent upon divorce proceedings and may be made for children.

There were 10,529 applications in October to December 2015, unchanged from a year earlier (Table 10).

In October to December 2015, there were 9,062 financial remedy disposals, down 10% on the equivalent quarter in 2014, and continuing the recent downward trend. During this latest period, 65% of disposals were uncontested, 26% were initially contested, and 9% were contested throughout.

In October to December 2015, property adjustment orders and lump sum orders each accounted for about a third of the total financial remedy disposal types (Table 11). Figure 11 provides a breakdown of all disposal types for the latest quarter.

**Figure 11: Financial remedy disposal types, October to December 2015**



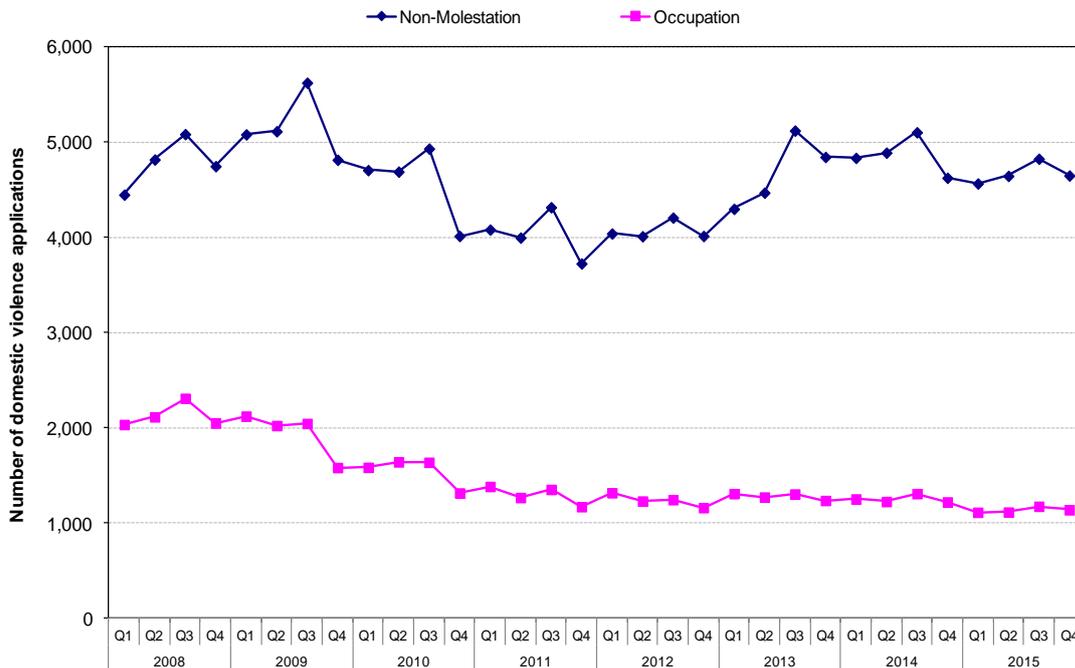
## Section 6 - Domestic violence remedy orders

A range of people can apply to the court for a domestic violence remedy order: spouses, cohabitants, ex-cohabitants, those who live or have lived in the same household (other than by reason of one of them being the other's employee, tenant, lodger or boarder), certain relatives (for example, parents, grandparents, in-laws, brothers, sisters), and those who have agreed to marry one another.

Two types of order can be granted:

- a non-molestation order, which can either prohibit particular behaviour or general molestation by someone who has previously been violent towards the applicant and/or any relevant children; and,
- an occupation order, which can define or regulate rights of occupation of the home by the parties involved.

**Figure 12: Applications for domestic violence remedy orders, January to March 2008 to October to December 2015**



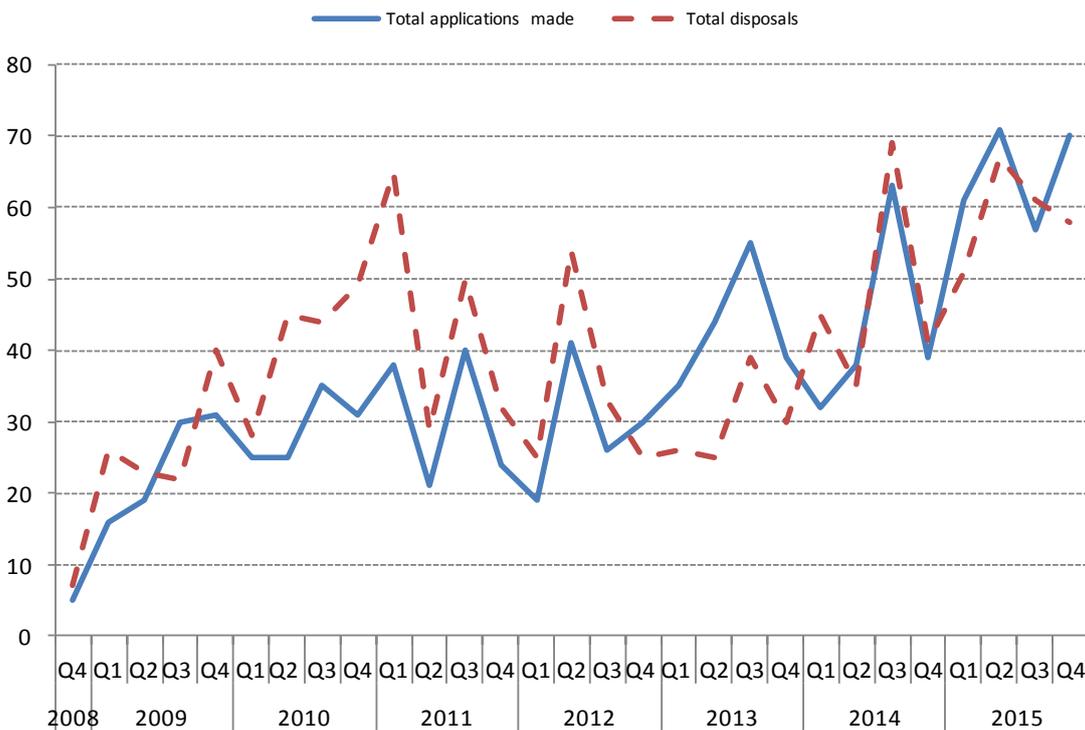
As shown in Figure 12, since 2011 the number of occupation applications is showing a fairly steady trend, whilst the trend in the number of non-molestation applications was generally upward although is now showing signs of stabilising over the most recent quarters.

## Section 7 - 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 courts 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 very small. In October to December 2015, there were 70 applications and 51 orders made (Table 13). The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 came into force on 16 June 2014 and made it an offence to force a person to marry against their will, or to breach a FMPO, such that courts can no longer attach a power of arrest to an FMPO.

**Figure 13: Applications and disposals of Forced Marriage Protection Orders, November 2008 to October to December 2015**



## Section 8 – Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders

Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders (FGMPOs) are intended to safeguard girls who are at risk of FGM at home or abroad, or who are survivors. They came into effect on 17 July 2015, and figures for these orders are presented in this bulletin for the second time (Table 14).

In October to December 2015, there were 19 applications and 14 orders made for FGMPOs. In total there have been 47 applications and 32 orders made since their introduction.

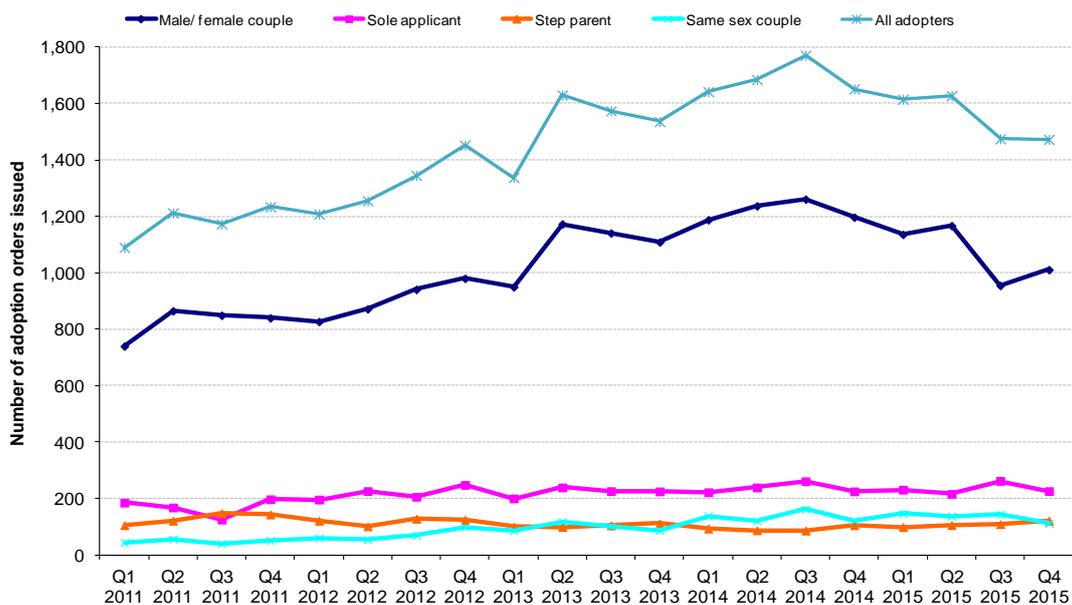
## Section 9 - Adoptions

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 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 October to December 2015, there were 1,378 applications made for a placement order and 1,450 applications made for an adoption order (Table 15).

During October to December 2015, there were 1,473 adoption orders issued, down 11% for the equivalent quarter in the previous year. In 69% of these, the adopters were a male/female couple, while in 15% the adopter was a sole applicant. In a further 8% of orders, the adopter was a step-parent and in 8% the adopters were a same-sex couple (Figure 14). Figures on the sex and age band of adopted children can be found in Table 16 and timeliness figures can be found in Table 6. 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 14: Adoption orders issued, by adopter, January to March 2011 to October to December 2015**



## Section 10 – The Mental Capacity Act

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a statutory framework to empower and protect vulnerable people who are not able to make their own decisions. The Act makes it clear who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this. It enables people to plan ahead for a time when they may lose capacity.

When the Mental Capacity Act 2005 came into force on 1 October 2007, the role and function of the Court of Protection (CoP) changed, and in addition, the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) was established. The OPG, an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice, supports the Public Guardian in registering Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPA), Lasting<sup>2</sup> Powers of Attorney (LPA) and supervising Court of Protection appointed Deputies.

For more information on the roles of these specialised courts please see **A Guide to Family Court Statistics** that is published alongside this publication.

### **Court of Protection**

In October to December 2015, there were 6,821 applications made under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, up 7% on the equivalent quarter in 2014. The majority of these (54%) related to applications for appointment of a property and affairs deputy (Table 17).

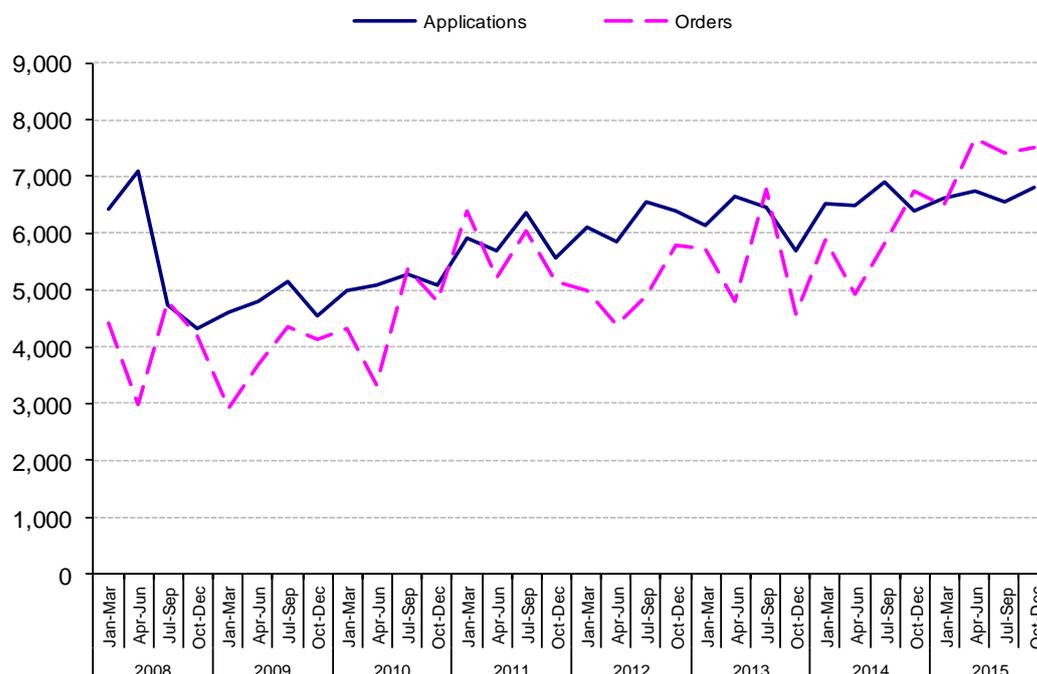
Following the introduction of new forms in July 2015, applicants must make separate applications for 'property and affairs' and 'personal welfare'. This is why there were fewer hybrid applications compared to previous years.

There were 7,508 orders made, an increase of 11% on October to December 2014: most (55%) of the orders related to the appointment of a deputy for property and affairs (Table 18). The trend in orders made mirrors that of applications and has been steadily increasing since 2010 albeit at a faster rate, as Figure 15 below illustrates.

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<sup>2</sup> An LPA is a legal document that someone (the Donor) makes using a special form. It allows that person to choose someone in the present time, called the "Attorney", that they trust to make decisions on their behalf, at a time in the future when they either lack the mental capacity or no longer wish to make those decisions themselves

**Figure 15: Applications and orders made under the Mental Capacity Act, January to March 2008 to October to December 2015**



Applications relating to deprivation of liberty increased from 109 in 2013 to 525 in 2014 to 1,499 in 2015. There were 489 applications made in the latest quarter October to December. The overall increase follows the Supreme Court decision on 19 March 2014<sup>3</sup> whereby it was considered a person could be deprived of their liberty in their own home, sheltered accommodation etc, and not just the nursing homes and hospitals which were previously covered. Of the 489 applications made in October to December 2015, 317 (65%) came from a Local Authority, 147 (30%) from solicitors and 25 (5%) from others including clinical commission groups, other professionals or applicants in person. Over a third (39%) of the applications were made under the streamlined process set out in *Re X and others* [2014] EWCOP25.

The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) collects data from councils with social services responsibilities on deprivation of liberty at a case level on an annual<sup>4</sup> and quarterly<sup>5</sup> basis. Section 16 of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and *Re X* cases are new and considered by the court but not by Local Authorities first. Those cases which come under section 21A of the MCA 2005 are seen as appeals to the court of those who have already been assessed for deprivation of liberty and are likely to have been included in HSCIC figures.

<sup>3</sup> *P v Cheshire West and Chester Council and P and Q v Surrey County Council* [2014] UKSC 19

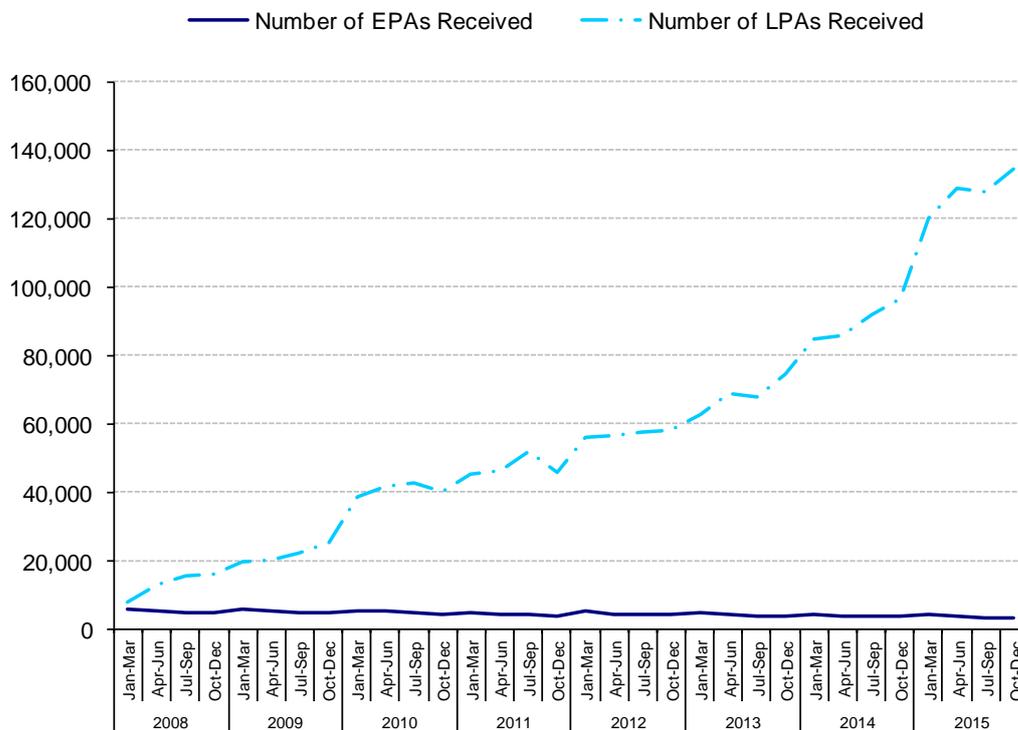
<sup>4</sup> [www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB14825](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB14825) Mandatory collection

<sup>5</sup> [www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17509](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17509) Voluntary collection of number of DoLs applications, the number granted and the number not granted

### Office of the Public Guardian

There were 134,363 Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) in October to December 2015, the highest quarterly figure so far and up 40% on the same quarter for 2014 as shown in Figure 16 and Table 19. The recent increases are largely due to increased publicity and new online forms which have been introduced to make it simpler and faster to apply for LPAs. There were 3,261 EPAs in October to December 2015, down 13% on Q3 2014. There were 4,353 Deputyships<sup>6</sup> appointed in October to December 2015, an increase of 8% on the equivalent quarter in 2014.

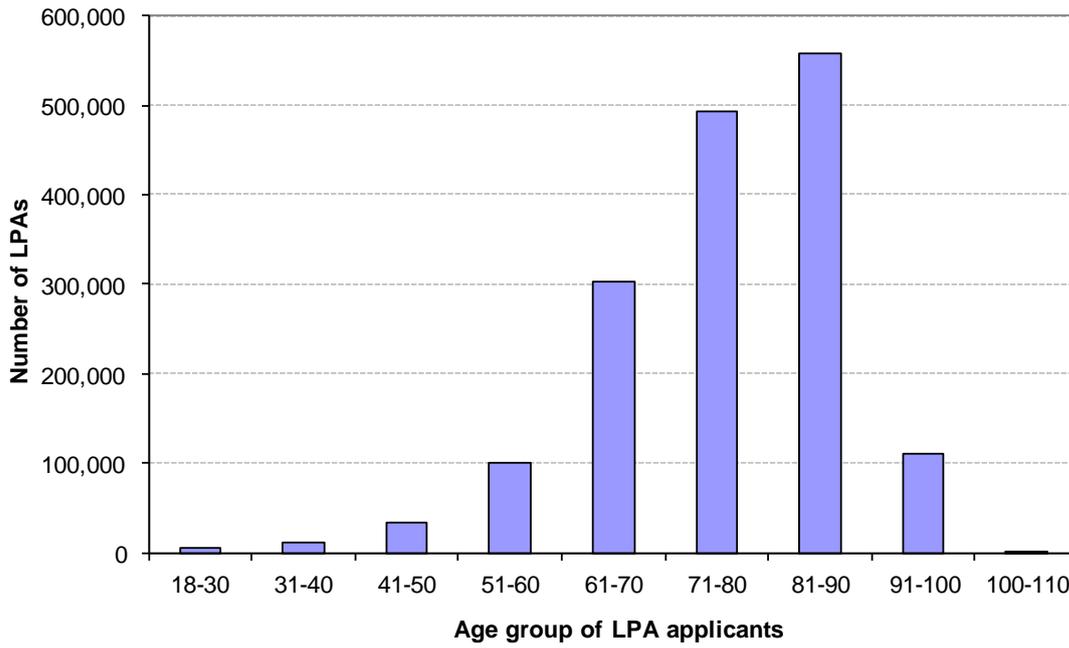
**Figure 16: Powers of attorney received, January to March 2008 to October to December 2015**



Of LPAs registered in October to December 2015, 40% were for males – see Table 20. The most common age group applying for an LPA is 81-90 years, as shown in Figure 17 below.

<sup>6</sup> Deputyships - A Deputy is legally responsible for acting and making decisions on behalf of a person who lacks capacity to make decisions for themselves. The Deputy order sets out specific powers in relation to the person who lacks capacity.

**Figure 17: Age of LPA donors registered as at end of December 2015**



## Section 11 – The Probate Service

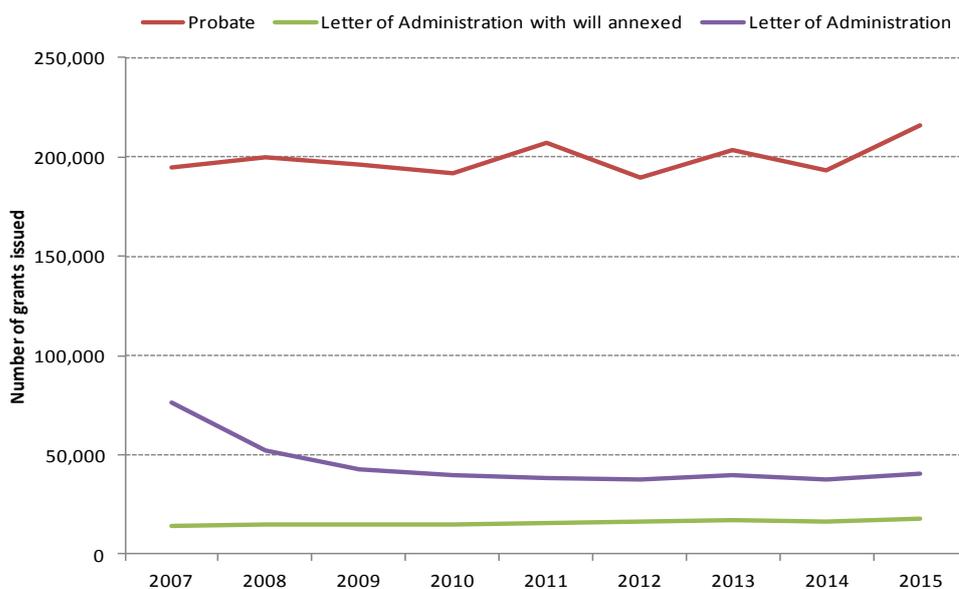
When a person dies somebody has to deal with their estate (money property and possessions left) by collecting in all the money, paying any debts and distributing what is left to those people entitled to it. Probate is the court’s authority; given to a person or persons to administer a deceased person’s estate and the document issued by the Probate Service is called a Grant of Representation<sup>7</sup>. This document is usually required by the asset holders as proof to show the correct person or persons have the Probate Service’s authority to administer a deceased person’s estate.

In October to December 2015, 64,293 grants of representation were issued (Table 21). Grants of representation are known as either:

- Probate (when the deceased person left a valid will and an executor is acting). These made up 78% of grants in October to December 2015.
- Letters of administration with will (when a person has left a valid will but no executor is acting). These made up 7% of grants in October to December 2015.
- Letters of administration (usually when there is no valid will). These made up 15% of grants in October to December 2015.

These different types of grants of representation appoint people known as personal representatives to administer the deceased person’s estate.

**Figure 18: Grants of representation issued by the Probate Service, 2007 to 2015**



<sup>7</sup> [www.justice.gov.uk/courts/probate/gor](http://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/probate/gor)

In October to December 2015, 62% of applications were made by solicitors and 38% were personal applications.

### **Current structure of the Probate Service**

The Probate Service is currently made up of:

- The Principal Registry in London
- 11 District Probate Registries
- 18 Probate Sub-Registries situated throughout England and Wales

In October to December 2015, 7% of grants were issued by the Principal Registry and 93% by District Registries and Sub-Registries.

When a probate case is contested, the Chancery Division of the High Court deals with the matter. See the Guide to Court and Administrative Justice Statistics for more information on The Chancery Division. There were 28 contested cases in October to December 2015, and 164 for the whole of 2015.

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General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from [statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system](http://statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system)

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