



Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly, England and Wales, January to March 2018 (provisional)

Main points

In January to March 2018, the number of County Court claims, allocations and judgments increased against the same quarter of 2017. Other stages of county court activity (defences and trials) decreased across this period, but volumes remain in line with the overall increasing trend seen since April to June 2015. In the last two quarters, there has been volatility in the volume of claims received following the implementation of the Pre-Action Protocol for Debt in October 2017, however the number of claims at January to March 2018 are lower than the quarter before the protocol was introduced.

Increase in County court claims driven by specified money claims	↑	In January to March 2018, County Court claims increased by 5% to 534,400. Of these, 427,900 were specified money claims (up 9% on the same period in 2017). The number of claims are 5% lower than levels seen in the quarter prior to implementation of the Pre-Action Protocol for Debt.
Unspecified money claims were down 6% to 35,400	↓	The decrease in unspecified money claims was driven by a decrease in Personal Injury (down 7% to 33,500).
The number of Claims defended and gone to trial have decreased	↓	There were 71,800 claims defended and 15,300 claims that had gone to trial in January to March 2018, down 5% and 4% respectively.
Average time taken from claim to hearing has increased	↑	Average time taken for small claims to trial took 33 weeks and for multi/fast track claims 57 weeks, up 3 and 2 weeks on the same period in 2017 respectively. However, average time taken remains in line with range seen since 2011.
Judgments increased 5% compared to same quarter in 2017	↑	Judgments saw an increase in January to March 2018 to 353,000 when compared to the same period in 2017; the proportion that were default judgments also increased by 3 percentage points to 90%.
20,200 enforcement orders and 105,100 warrants were issued	↓	Enforcement orders fell by 7%, driven by a fall in attachment of earning orders (down 12%). Warrants issued increased by 7%, driven by warrants of control (up 12%).
The Home Office had the largest number of Judicial Reviews lodged against them in 2017	↓	The Home Office had 1,500 Judicial Reviews against them in 2017, down 18% on 2016. MoJ had the second largest with 1,400 JRs in 2017 (up 17% on 2016).

This publication gives civil county court statistics for the latest quarter (January to March 2018), compared to the same quarter the previous year. The judicial review figures cover the period January to March 2018, alongside annual figures for 2017 by defendant. The Royal Courts of Justice statistics (published annually) cover January to December 2017. For more details, please see the supporting document.

1. Claims Summary

County court claims are up 5% on the same quarter of 2017, with the increase driven by specified money claims. The number of claims are 5% lower than levels seen in the quarter prior to implementation of the Pre-Action Protocol for Debt.



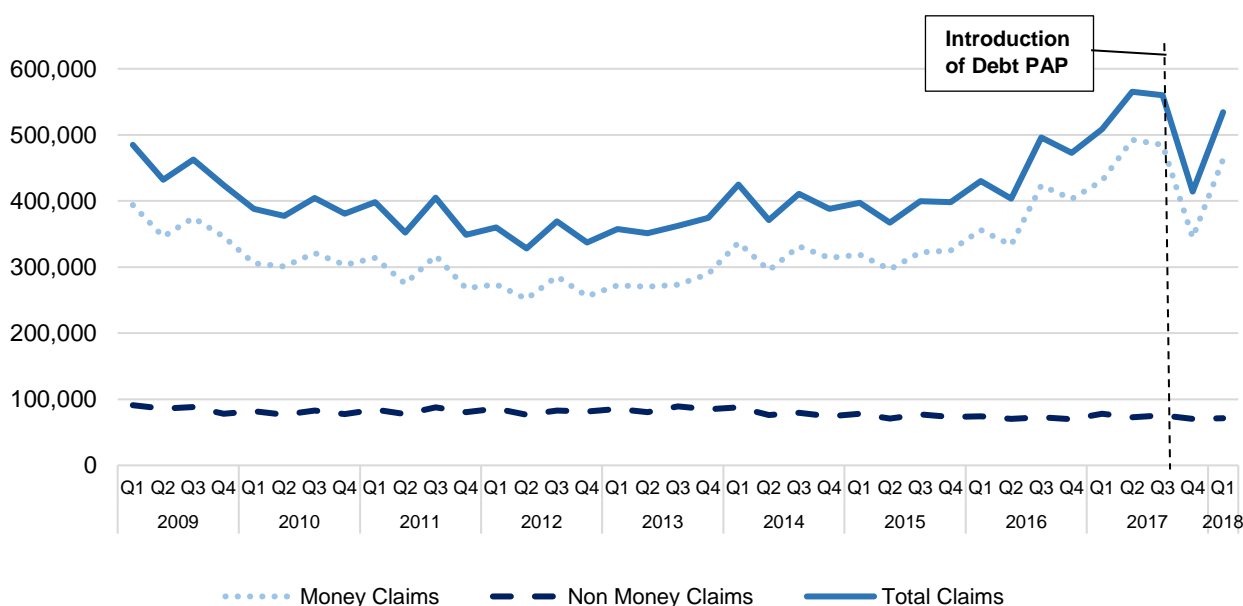
There were 534,400 County Court claims lodged in January to March 2018. Of these, 463,300 were money claims (up 8% from January to March 2017).

Non-money claims at 71,200, down 9% on the same quarter last year



Return of goods increased by 10% to 2,600 when compared to January to March 2017, whereas 'Other non-money' and Mortgage and Landlord Possession claims have decreased over this period (to 32,200 and 36,300 claims respectively).

Figure 1: County Court Claims by type, Q2 (April to June) 2009 to Q1 (January to March) 2018 (source: table 1.2)



County Court claims had been generally increasing since a low of 328,188 in April to June 2012, reaching a peak of 565,233 claims in April to June 2017. This increase was driven by a rise in money claims, which make up the majority of claims received. In October to December 2017, volumes fell, following the implementation of the Pre-Action Protocol for Debt¹ (PAP). In this most recent quarter, claims have increased by 5% to 534,436, compared to the same period in 2017. Of these, 463,264 were money claims (up 8% from January to March 2018). The number of overall claims however are 5% lower in January to March 2018 than July to September 2017; the quarter before the PAP was introduced.

The volume of claims received have been volatile for the last two quarters, likely to be result of the introduction of the PAP and the change to the process for making a claim that are still bedding down – this fluctuation in claim levels since the implementation of the protocol should be treated with caution, and trends of claims will be continued to be monitored. T

¹ The Pre-Action Protocol for Debt aims to encourage early engagement between parties to resolve disputes without the need to start court proceedings:

www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil/pdf/protocols/pre-action-protocol-for-debt-claims.pdf

Non-money claims have been generally decreasing since the peak of 89,309 claims in July to September 2013, to a low of 69,797 in October to December 2016. In January to March 2018, non-money claims have decreased by 9% to 71,172 when compared to the same period in 2017.

Within non-money claims, return of goods have been generally increasing quarter on quarter since July to September 2015. In January to March 2018, these types of claim increased by 10% to 2,631, when compared to the same period in 2017. Despite an overall increase in other non-money claims since a low of 25,940 in April to June 2014, in the most recent quarter, they decreased by 8% to 32,201 when compared to the same period in 2017.

The overall trend in Mortgage and Landlord Possession claims has been decreasing since a peak of 59,914 in January to March 2014. This claim type saw a drop of 11% in January to March 2018 to 36,340 claims, when compared to the same quarter last year.

2. Money Claims

Specified money claims increased by 9% to 427,900 claims in January to March 2018, driving the increase seen in money claims.

Specified money claims up to (and including) £15,000 increased over this period - these account for almost all (99%) specified money claims.



Unspecified claims have decreased by 6% to 35,400 when compared to the same quarter in 2017

Unspecified money claims have decreased for Personal Injury (down 7% to 33,500) and remained stable at 1,900 for unspecified money claims.

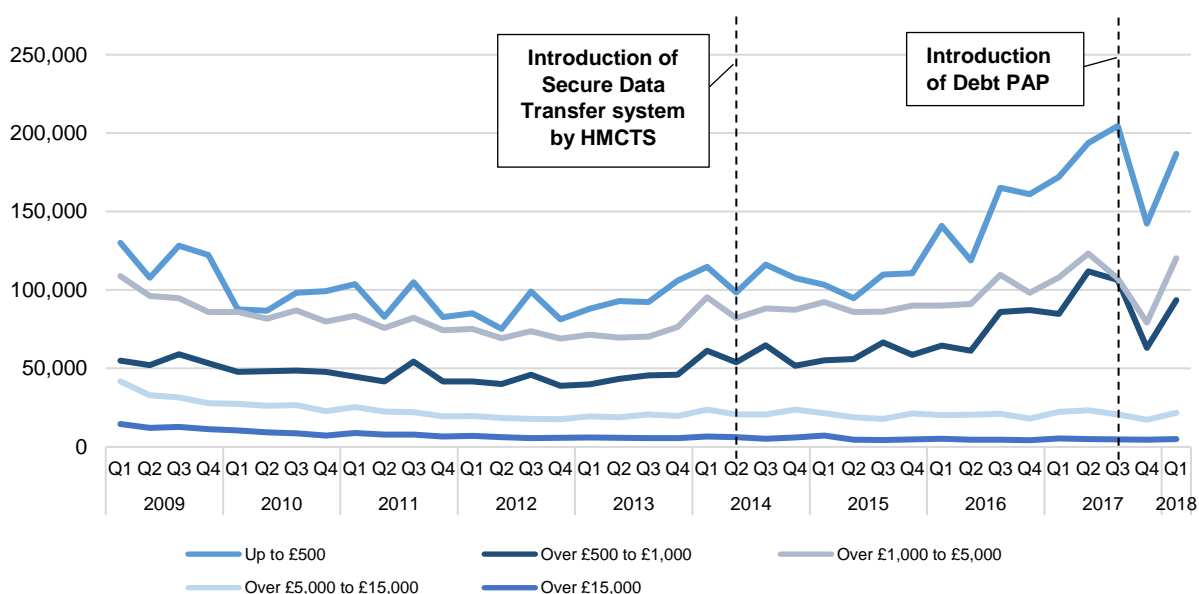


The majority (89%) of specified money claims are processed and issued at the County Court Business Centre (CCBC). There were 380,293 such claims at the CCBC in January to March 2018 (up 11% on the same quarter in the previous year).

Specified money claims had been on an increasing trend from a low in April to June 2012 (209,691 claims), until October to December 2017 where volumes fell, following the implementation of the Pre-Action Protocol for Debt claims. However, the most recent quarter (January to March 2018) has seen an increase of 9% to 427,875 claims compared to the same quarter the previous year. This fluctuation in claim levels since the implementation of the protocol should be treated with caution, and trends of claims will be continued to be monitored.

The increase can be seen across monetary claims of the value up to and including £5,000, with the greatest increase in the less than £1,000 claims (up by 9%) – these make up two thirds (66%) of the total specified money claims in the most recent quarter. Higher value claims (>£15,000) decreased over this period by 7% to 4,953 claims as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Specified money claims by monetary value, Q1 (Jan-Mar) 2009 to Q1 (Jan-Mar) 2018 (source: civil workload CSV)



Unspecified money claims have fluctuated between 33,000 and 40,000 claims each quarter over the last four years (since April to June 2014). In the most recent quarter, they decreased by 6% when compared to January to March 2017, to 35,389. Within this claim

group, personal injury decreased 7% to 33,527 and other unspecified money claims remained at the same level at 1,862.

Allocations

In January to March 2018, 42,161 money claims were allocated to track, 2% more than the same period in 2017². Of these allocations;

- 21,681 were allocated to small claims, an increase of 4% on the same quarter in 2017, accounting for 51% of all allocations;
- 17,467 were allocated to fast track, an increase of 3% on the same quarter in 2017, accounting for 41% of all allocations;
- 3,013 were allocated to multi-track, a decrease of 15% on the same quarter of 2017, accounting for 7% of all allocations.

² Note that allocation volumes are provisional and subject to uplift in subsequent publications due to relevant data being entered into the case management system after the date at which data were extracted to produce this bulletin.

3. Defences (including legal representation) and Trials

The number of claims defended decreased by 5% to 71,800

Of those claims defended, 58% had legal representation for both claimant and defendant (up one percentage point from January to March 2017), 21% had representation for claimant only (down two percentage points over the same period last year), and 3% for defendant only.



The number of trials have decreased while average time taken from claim to trial has increased

Average time taken for small claims has increased to 33.0 weeks and for multi and fast track claims to 56.7 weeks.



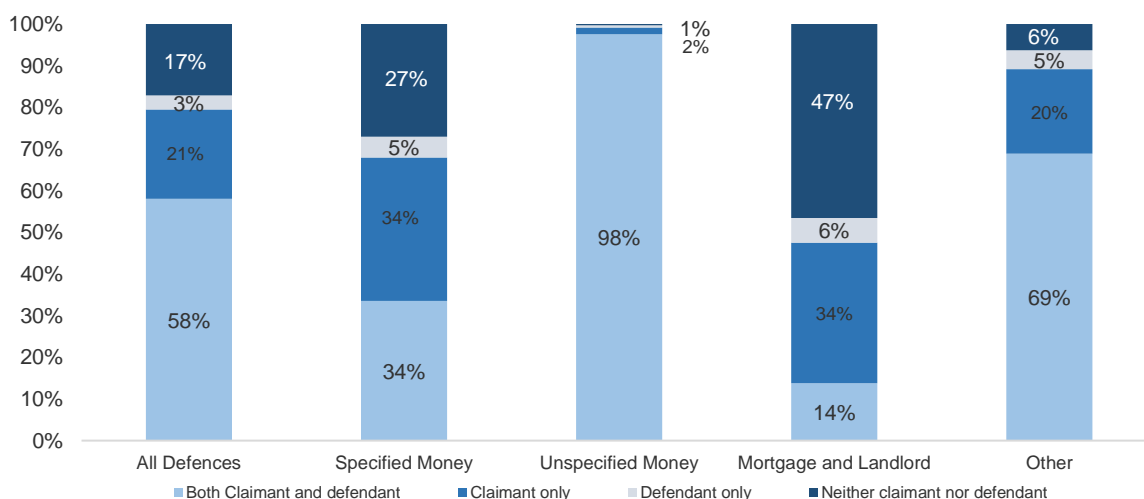
Claims defended

The overall trend for defences has increased since a low of 61,430 defences in July to September 2012. In January to March 2018, the number of claims defended decreased by 5% to 71,822 cases compared to the same quarter of the previous year³. Of these, over half (56%) were specified money claim defences, and 39% were unspecified money claim defences. The proportion of specified money claim defences has remained the same since the equivalent quarter of 2017, whereas unspecified money claims have increased by two percentage points, and mortgage and landlord possession defences have decreased by one percentage point.

Representation

The shift in proportion from claimant and defendant representation to claimant only is driven in part by the larger increase in specified money defences, as the proportion of legal representation differs depending on the type of claim (as figure 3 shows). In January to March 2018, almost all (98%) unspecified money defences had legal representation for both the respondent and claimant, compared with almost a third (34%) of specified money defences.

Figure 3: Proportion of civil defences and legal representation status, January to March 2018 (Source: table 1.6)

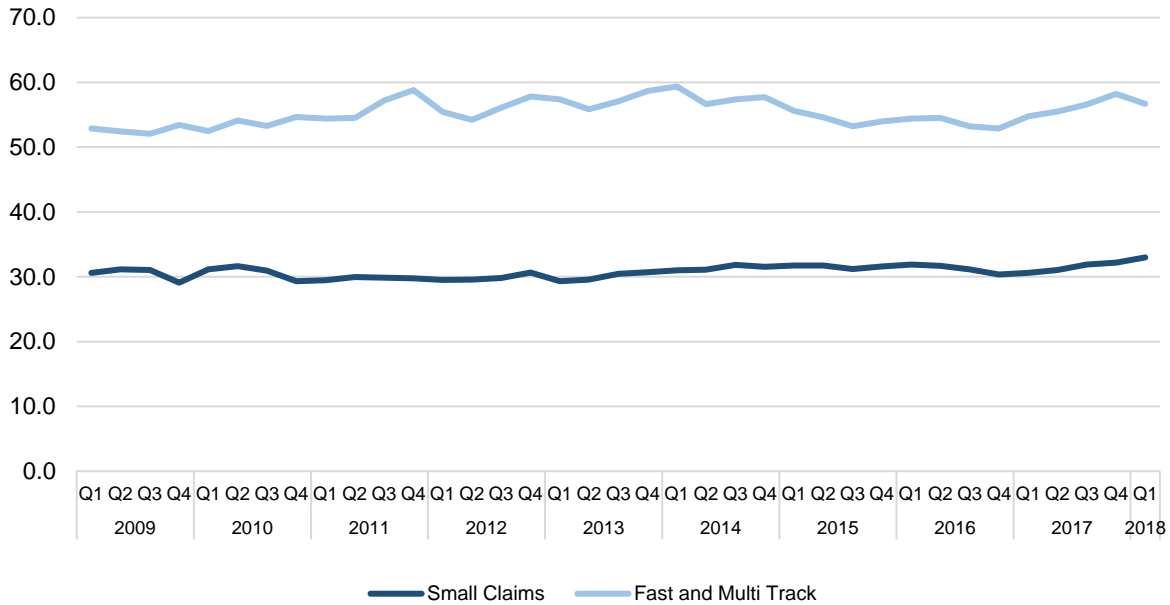


³ Note that defence volumes are provisional and subject to uplift in subsequent publications due to relevant data being entered into the case management system after the date at which data were extracted to produce this bulletin.

Trials and Time Taken to Reach Trial

Defended cases which are not settled or withdrawn generally result in a trial. In total, there were 15,313 trials in January to March 2018, down 4% on the same quarter in 2017. Of the claims that went to trial, 11,012 (72%) were small claims trials (down 1% on the same quarter in 2017) and 4,301 were fast and multi-track trials (down 9% on the same quarter in 2017).

Figure 4: Average number of weeks from claim being issued to initial hearing date, Q1 (Jan-Mar) 2009 to Q1 (Jan-Mar) 2018 (Source: table 1.5)



There was an average of 33.0 weeks between a small claim being issued and the claim going to trial in January to March 2018, just over than two weeks longer than the same period in the previous year. For multi/fast track claims the average was 56.7 weeks over the same period, just less than two weeks longer than in January to March 2018, although the average time taken remains in line with the long-term range (52-59 weeks).

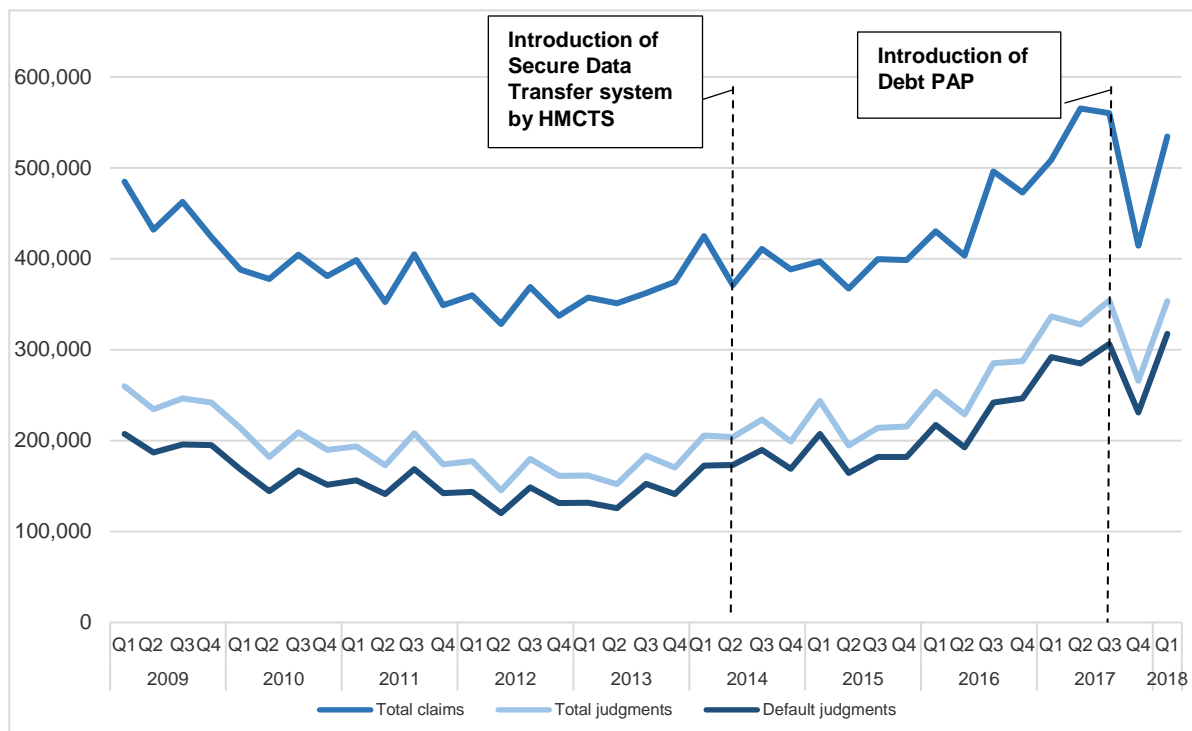
4. Judgments

Judgments increased by 5%, compared to same quarter in 2017

There were 353,500 judgments made in January to March 2018, of which 317,400 were default judgments. The proportion of default judgments also increased by 3 percentage points to 90% against the same quarter of 2017.



Figure 5: All claims, judgments and default judgments, Q1 (Jan-Mar) 2009 to Q1 (Jan-Mar) 2018 (Source: table 1.2 and 1.4)



There were 353,484 judgments made in January to March 2018, an increase of 5% against the same quarter of the previous year. Of these, 90% were default judgments, up 3 percentage points against the same quarter of the previous year. There has been a gradual increase in the proportion of default judgments since 2009, from 80% to 90% seen in the most recent quarter. The volume of default judgments also increased by 9% from January to March 2017.

The second largest type of judgment were 'admissions', of which there were 21,947 in January to March 2018, down 24% on the same quarter in 2017. Admission judgments accounted for 6% of all judgments, down 3 percentage points from January to March 2017.

5. Enforcements and Warrants

Enforcement applications down 19% and enforcement orders down 7% compared to same quarter in 2017



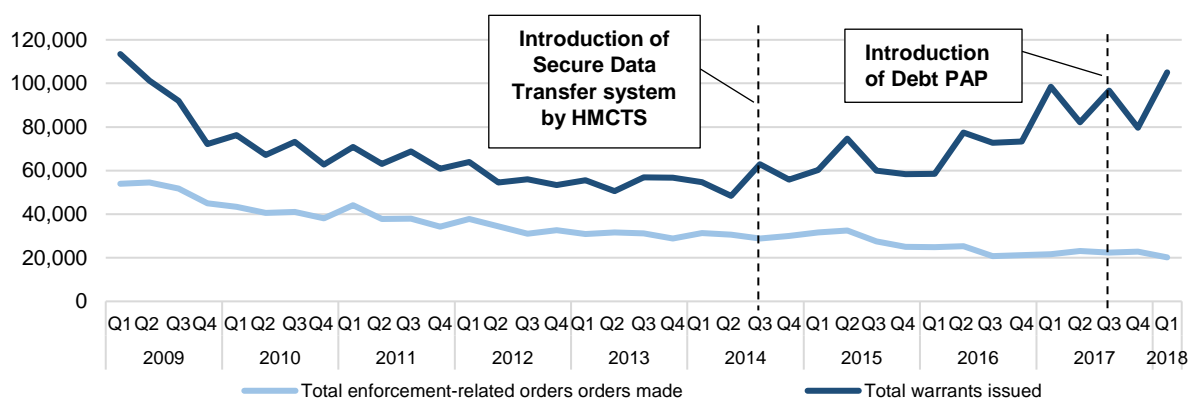
There were 25,900 applications and 20,200 orders made in January to March 2018. The decline in applications and orders were driven by charging order applications (down 59%) and attachment of earning orders made (down 12%), respectively.

Warrants issued increased by 7%, driven by warrants of control



In January to March 2018, 105,100 warrants were issued, three quarters (80%) of which were warrants of control which increased 12% on the same quarter in 2017.

Figure 6: Warrants and enforcements issued – Q1 (Jan–Mar) 2009 to Q1 (Jan–Mar) 2018
(Source: table 1.4)



Warrants

There were 105,102 warrants issued in January to March 2018, an increase of 7% on the same quarter in 2017. Over the longer term, issued warrants fell between 2000 and April to June 2014, to 48,394. They have since gradually increased, driven by warrants of control.

This increase is likely due to the introduction of the Secure Data Transfer system in July 2014 by HMCTS for the issue of warrants of control. This enables bulk customers to not only issue money claims digitally, but also the subsequent enforcement by a warrant; speeding up and simplifying the process, which has led to a customer preference for warrants over other types of enforcement.

Enforcements

There were 25,925 enforcement-related order applications (which include attachment of earnings orders, charging orders, third party debt orders, administration orders, and orders to obtain information) in January to March 2018 and 20,176 actual enforcement related orders made (down 19% and 7% respectively, compared to the same period last year). The fall in applications has been driven by a decrease in charging order applications (down 59%), whereas the decrease in orders has been driven by a decrease in attachment of earning orders made (down 12%). There is a delay between orders being applied for and subsequently being issued – this explains the different trends in applications and orders made in the year leading to January to March 2018.

Over the longer term, there has been a decreasing trend in enforcement related applications received and orders made since 2008, possibly due to claimants' preference for using warrants instead to retrieve money, property or goods (as warrants increased over this same period). Figure 6 highlights the increase in warrants issued since Q3 2014 and the decrease in enforcements issued across the time series.

6. Judicial Reviews⁴

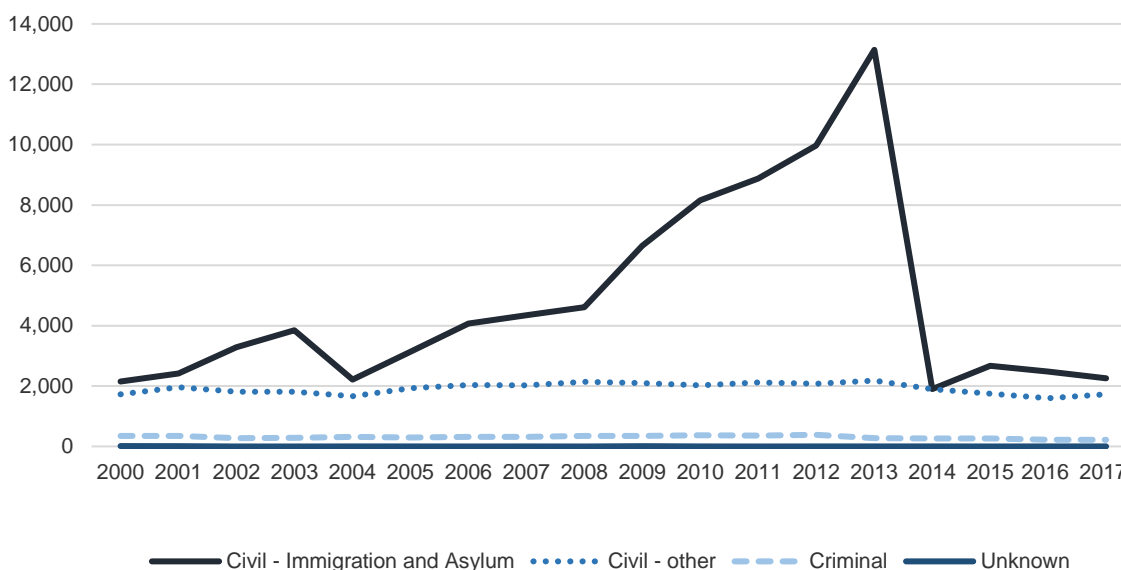
The Home Office had the largest number of Judicial review applications lodged against them in 2017

The Home Office had 1,500 Judicial Reviews against them in 2017, down 18% on 2016. The Ministry of Justice had the second largest with 1,400 JRs in 2017 (a 17% increase on 2016), the majority (65%) of which are Tribunal JRs, increasing 17% on 2016.



There were 949 judicial review applications received so far in 2018, down 17% on the same period in 2017.

Figure 7: Annual Judicial Review Application, by type calendar year 2000-2017 (Source: table 2.1)



Judicial review figures broken down by defendant type (i.e. individual government department or public body) are published annually. This information is derived from the 'defendant name' free text field, which is then grouped by defendant type. As this is a manually typed field, it is open to inputting errors and therefore should be used with caution.

The key findings from the 2017 figures are:

- The Home Office was the department/body with the largest number of JR applications lodged against them, with 1,498 (down 18% on last year). 288 applications were granted permission to proceed to the final hearing stage (19% of applications) and 13 were found in favour of the claimant.
- The second largest recipient of JR cases was the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), with 1,353 cases received (17% increase on the previous year) and of these, 878 were specifically against Tribunals (65% of all MoJ JRs). The number of JR cases against tribunals increased by 17% when compared to the number of applications lodged in 2016.
- Local Authorities had 713 applications lodged against them (third largest recipient), down 6% on the previous year. Of these cases, 216 were granted permission to proceed to final hearing (30% of applications), and of these, 33 were found in favour of the claimant.

⁴ The judicial review data are Official Statistics

7. Royal Courts of Justice

Annual court activity statistics for the various appeal courts that are administered by HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) - key findings are summarised below:

The Court of Appeal Criminal Division saw a 6% decrease over the year in the number of applications received, to 5,411 in 2017. Decreases were recorded in conviction, sentence and other¹ appeal applications (8%, 5% and 8% respectively).

Court of Appeal Civil Division had 914 appeals filed in 2017, down 10% on 2016. Of the appeals filed in 2017, the largest number came from the Immigration and Asylum Tribunal (24% of all appeals filed).

The High Court – The Queen’s Bench – had 4,319 proceedings started in 2017, 196 (5%) more than 2015. Of these proceedings, 78% were for money claims over £50,000 (compared to 71% in 2016). The most common type of claim was personal injury actions, which accounted for 39% of all proceedings started in 2017.

Days sat by Judge - there were 303,899 days sat by judges in 2017, down 1,322 (0.4%) compared to 2015. Across court types, the Civil Court of Appeal had the largest increase in sitting days (14% increase, 3,347 days sat), whereas the Criminal Court of Appeal had the largest decrease (11% decrease, 2,490 days sat).

For further information on these summarised figures or on the statistics available in relation to the appeals courts', please see the accompanying tables named 'Royal Courts of Justice, 2017'.

¹ See footnote on the Royal Courts of Justice table 3.7 for the full list of other receipt applications

Accompanying files

As well as this bulletin, the following products are published as part of this release:

- A supporting document providing further information on how the data is collected and processed, as well as information on the revisions policy and legislation relevant to civil justice.
- A set of overview tables and CSV files, covering each section of this bulletin.

Rounding convention

Figures greater than 10,000 are rounded to the nearest 1,000 and those between 1,000 and 10,000 are rounded to the nearest 100.

National Statistics status

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is the Ministry of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected for National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.



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