



Ministry
of Justice

Civil Justice in the county courts

**Guide to national and court-level
information**

Background

The court-level information provide the user with court-level breakdowns of claims, insolvency petitions, defences, allocations, hearings and trials, judgments, warrants, county court bailiff reposessions and enforcement orders for the full amount of time for which data is available. The aim is to maximise the usage of data by users so analytical work can be carried out independently.

The data is provided in a comma separated value (CSV) machine-readable format so that it can easily be imported into analytical software packages. These packages include R, Access, SQL, SAS, up-to-date versions of Excel but not versions of Excel prior to 2010 (because of insufficient number of rows). This format enables the user to manipulate and aggregate the published data in different ways.

Below are full descriptions of the variables and the list of possible values for each dataset provided.

National caseload data

The national caseload data-set (called “CSV_caseload_national.txt”) provides information on the court actions carried out by the county court system in England and Wales. It accompanies Table 1.1 of the main tables. It consists of the following variables:

year: This is the calendar year to which the data relates e.g. 2000 would refer to January to December 2000. The earliest year from which any of the data is available is 2000 for claims and orders but in some cases data is only available from a later date.

quarter: Each year is divided into four quarters and this is the quarter to which the data relates. These are based on calendar years:

Q1 refers to January to March,

Q2 refers to April to June,

Q3 refers to July to September; and

Q4 refers to October to December

category, sub_category1, sub-category2: The variable **category** describes the type of court action that is being described e.g. claim, insolvency petition, defence etc. The **category** variable is largely the same as the columns in Table 1.1 of the main tables. The variables **sub_category1** and **sub-category2** provide extra detail regarding the type of claim or court action, and vary depending on the category as shown in Table 1 below:

value: This provides the number e.g. the number of claims of the type described in **category, sub_category1** and **sub_category2**, that were issued during that quarter. Where the value is actually less than 3, the value is given as 0, to protect

the confidentiality of those involved. For this reason, the national total number of claims, etc from this data-set may not match the total shown in the main tables, although the differences are generally small.

Table 1: possible values of category, sub_category1 and sub_category2 in the national caseload data-set

category	sub_category1	sub_category2
01. Claim	01. Specified money	01. £0 < Amount claimed <= £500
01. Claim	01. Specified money	02. £500 < Amount claimed <= £1,000
01. Claim	01. Specified money	03. £1,000 < Amount claimed <= £5,000
01. Claim	01. Specified money	04. £5,000 < Amount claimed <= £15,000
01. Claim	01. Specified money	05. £15,000 < Amount claimed <= £50,000
01. Claim	01. Specified money	06. Amount claimed > £50,000
01. Claim	01. Specified money	07. Other/Unknown
01. Claim	01. Specified money	NA
01. Claim	02. Unspecified money	01. £0 < Amount claimed <= £500
01. Claim	02. Unspecified money	02. £500 < Amount claimed <= £1,000
01. Claim	02. Unspecified money	03. £1,000 < Amount claimed <= £5,000
01. Claim	02. Unspecified money	04. £5,000 < Amount claimed <= £15,000
01. Claim	02. Unspecified money	05. £15,000 < Amount claimed <= £50,000
01. Claim	02. Unspecified money	06. Amount claimed > £50,000
01. Claim	02. Unspecified money	07. Other/Unknown
01. Claim	02. Unspecified money	NA
01. Claim	03. Mortgage and Landlord possession	01. Mortgage repossession
01. Claim	03. Mortgage and Landlord possession	02. Social landlord repossession
01. Claim	03. Mortgage and Landlord possession	03. Private landlord repossession
01. Claim	03. Mortgage and Landlord possession	04. Accelerated repossession
01. Claim	04. Return of goods	NA
01. Claim	05. Other non-money	01. Housing (not Landlord or Mortgage possession)
01. Claim	05. Other non-money	02. Injunctions
01. Claim	05. Other non-money	03. Enforcement
01. Claim	05. Other non-money	04. Pre-issue Applications
01. Claim	05. Other non-money	05. Other
02. Insolvency petition	01. Company windings up	01. District Registries of the High Court and county courts
02. Insolvency petition	01. Company windings up	02. Royal Courts of Justice
02. Insolvency petition	02. Individual bankruptcy Creditor's petitions	01. District Registries of the High Court and county courts
02. Insolvency petition	02. Individual bankruptcy Creditor's petitions	02. Royal Courts of Justice
02. Insolvency petition	03. Individual bankruptcy Debtor's petitions	01. District Registries of the High Court and county courts
02. Insolvency petition	03. Individual bankruptcy Debtor's petitions	02. Royal Courts of Justice
03. Defence	NA	NA

Table 1 (continued): possible values of category, sub_category1 and sub-category2

category	sub_category1	sub_category2
04. Allocation	01. Small Claim	NA
04. Allocation	02. Fast Track	NA
04. Allocation	03. Multi track	NA
05. Hearing	01. Small Claim	01. Specified money
05. Hearing	01. Small Claim	02. Unspecified money
05. Hearing	01. Small Claim	03. Other
05. Hearing	02. Fast and Multi track trials	01. Specified money
05. Hearing	02. Fast and Multi track trials	02. Unspecified money
05. Hearing	02. Fast and Multi track trials	03. Other
06. Judgement	01. Default	NA
06. Judgement	02. Admission	NA
06. Judgement	03. Determination	NA
06. Judgement	04. Consent	NA
06. Judgement	05. Judge	NA
07. Warrant issued	01. Execution	NA
07. Warrant issued	02. Delivery	NA
07. Warrant issued	03. Possession	NA
07. Warrant issued	04. Committal	NA
08. Repossessions of property by county court bailiff	01. Mortgage repossession	NA
08. Repossessions of property by county court bailiff	02. Social landlord repossession	NA
08. Repossessions of property by county court bailiff	03. Private landlord repossession	NA
08. Repossessions of property by county court bailiff	04. Accelerated repossession	NA
08. Repossessions of property by county court bailiff	05. Other	NA

Notes on the caseload data to aid interpretation

All categories:

- Figures displayed are different from previously published due to improvements in data processing.
- Data is from 2000 unless specified otherwise.
- The user should note that the number of cases that result from some breakdowns may be quite small. Where the value is actually less than 3, the value is given as 0, to protect the confidentiality of those involved in the claim, order, warrant or repossession. For this reason, the national total number of claims, etc from these data-sets may not match the total shown in the main tables although the differences are generally small.

Claims:

- Excludes claims that are re-issued
- For unspecified money claims, the claim value breakdown is derived from the claim issue fee paid.
- For further information on mortgage and landlord possession claims please see www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/civil-justice/mortgage-possession.
- Housing claims that are not mortgage or landlord possession claims include landlord and tenancy applications generally for a new tenancy agreement, claims to evict trespassers and claims for interim possession orders.
- Injunctions require that somebody do something or that they do not do it.
- Enforcement claims relate to the enforcement of a tribunal award or order made in a Magistrates' court.
- Pre-issue applications obtain an order for disclosure of information prior to issue of a claim.
- "Other" non-money claims includes personal injury claims relating to road traffic accidents that are issued under the new protocol and orders for costs only (also known as Part 8 claims).

Insolvency petitions:

- Data is from 1999.
- Winding-up is the process by which a company's existence is terminated, whether due to insolvency or for another reason.

- Individual bankruptcy is where an individual has debts that s/he is unable to pay.

Defence and allocation:

- There may be more than one defence or allocation in a case.
- A new and higher claim value limit was introduced for fast track cases on 6 April 2009. Before then, claims were generally allocated to the fast track which have a value exceeding the limit of the small claims track (£5,000 for most claim types) but not more than £15,000 (those with a value over £15,000 generally being allocated to the multi track). For all proceedings issued on or after 6 April 2009, the limit has been raised from £15,000 to £25,000.
- From 1st April 2013, a new and higher claim limit was introduced for small claim hearings from £5,000 to £10,000, excluding claims relating to personal injury and housing disrepair claims. A further amendment is made which removes the necessity for both parties to consent to a higher value case being allocated to the more suitable small claims track.

Hearing:

- Data is from 2003 because data was collated from manual counts before then.
- The number of trials/small claim hearings is much lower than the number of allocations to track because most cases allocated to track are settled/withdrawn before a hearing.
- There may be more than one trial or small claim hearing in a case.

Judgment:

- Data is from 2009.
- Judgment by default is a judgment entered against a party who has failed to defend against a claim that has been brought by another party.
- Judgment by admission is where the defendant admits the truth of the claim made.
- Judgment by determination is where a defendant has accepted liability but disputes the amount of the claim.
- Judgment by consent is a judgment issued by a judge based upon an agreement made by the claimant and defendant to settle the claim.
- Judgment by judge is where the claim is settled by the decision of a judge following a hearing or trial.

Warrant issued:

- Excludes the re-issuing of warrants.
- Includes warrants issued in the County Court Bulk Centre and via Money Claim Online (www.moneyclaim.gov.uk/web/mcol/welcome) and Possession Claim Online (www.possessionclaim.gov.uk/pcol/).
- A warrant of execution allows saleable items owned by the debtor to be sold unless the amount due under the warrant is paid.
- A warrant of delivery allows for the return of goods or items.
- A warrant of possession allows for the repossession of property.
- A warrant of committal allows for enforcing an order where the penalty for failing to comply is imprisonment. It authorises the bailiff to arrest and deliver the person to prison or the court.

Repossessions of property by county court bailiff:

- Data is from 1998
- Includes warrants issued via Possession Claim Online (www.possessionclaim.gov.uk/pcol/).
- These figures differ from actual repossessions figures provided by Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) www.cml.org.uk for a number of reasons, the biggest being that the latter include 'voluntary' repossessions (where the property has been repossessed without the need for a bailiff). In addition the CML cover the UK rather than England and Wales only, and exclude repossessions by lenders who are not CML members.
- "Other" repossessions includes repossessions from trespassers.

Court Caseload Data

The court-level data (called “CSV_caseload_court.txt”) includes the variables in the national-level data-sets. In addition, they include the code of the court where the court action occurred. An additional table “Courts and regions” gives the name of the court with that code. It also gives the county and region where the court is located.

The user should note that for because of the court-level breakdowns the number of cases which fall into a particular type may be quite small. Where the value is actually less than 3, the value is given as 0, to protect the confidentiality of those involved in the claim, order, warrant or repossession. For this reason, the national total number of claims, etc from these data-sets may not match the total shown in the main tables or the national-level CSV, although the differences are generally small.

National case-progression data

The national case-progression data-set (called “CSV_progression_national.txt”) provides information on claims as they progress through the County Court system. The figures in this data-set differ from those in the Caseload data-set because the case-progression data are the number of the claims issued by year or quarter which have been defended/allocated/gone to hearing or trial as of the most recent quarter being published. The Caseload data shows the total number of defences/allocations/hearings or trials in a given period, regardless of when the original claim was issued.

Also the figures in the Caseload data-set count each defence/allocation/hearing or trial even if there is more than one per claim.

The case-progression data accompanies Table 1.2 of the main tables. It consists of the following variables:

yr_claim: This is the calendar year in which the original claim was issued, eg 2000 would refer to January to December 2000. The earliest year from which any of the data is available is 2000 for claims and orders but in some cases data is only available from a later date.

Qtr_claim: Each year is divided into four quarters and this is the quarter in which the original claim was issued. These are based on calendar years:

Q1 refers to January to March,

Q2 refers to April to June,

Q3 refers to July to September; and

Q4 refers to October to December

category and sub_category1: The variable **category** describes the type of claim that is being tracked. The variable **sub_category1** provides extra detail regarding the type of claim, and varies depending on the category as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: possible values of category and sub_category1 in the national case-progression data-set

category	sub_category1
01. Specified money	01. £0 < Amount
01. Specified money	02. £500 < Amount
01. Specified money	03. £1,000 < Amount
01. Specified money	04. £5,000 < Amount
01. Specified money	05. £15,000 <
01. Specified money	06. Amount claimed
01. Specified money	07. Other/Unknown
02. Unspecified money	01. £0 < Amount
02. Unspecified money	02. £500 < Amount
02. Unspecified money	03. £1,000 < Amount
02. Unspecified money	04. £5,000 < Amount
02. Unspecified money	05. £15,000 <
02. Unspecified money	06. Amount claimed
02. Unspecified money	07. Other/Unknown
03. Mortgage and Landlord	01. Mortgage
03. Mortgage and Landlord	02. Social landlord
03. Mortgage and Landlord	03. Private landlord
03. Mortgage and Landlord	04. Accelerated
04. Return of goods	NA
05. Other non-money	01. Housing (not
05. Other non-money	02. Injunctions
05. Other non-money	03. Enforcement
05. Other non-money	04. Pre-issue
05. Other non-money	05. Other

stage: This describes the four different stages in the court process a claim can pass through outlined in table 1.2 of the main tables: it begins with a claim being made, then there is a defence, then allocation, and finally a hearing or trial.

value: This provides the number e.g. the number of claims/defences/allocations/hearings or trials that resulted from claims of the type described in **category** and **sub-category1** and that issued in the year and quarter stated in **yr_claim** and **qtr_claim**.

Notes on the data to aid interpretation

Please note that cases “fall-out” of the system at every stage. So the number of defences is generally less than the number of claims, the number of allocations is generally less than the number of defences, and the number of hearings and trials is generally less than the number of allocated claims.

This data-set consists of the number of claims issued in each quarter that have been defended/allocated/gone to hearing or trial. Figures will be revised in each future publication as more time is allowed for claims to progress through the County Court system. Figures relating to claims issued recently are likely to be revised more heavily than figures relating to claims issued longer ago. This explains why the number of claims defended/allocated/gone to hearing or trial in the most recent quarters is lower than in earlier time-periods.

The user should note that the number of cases that result from some breakdowns may be quite small. Where the value is actually less than 3, the value is given as 0, to protect the confidentiality of those involved in the claim, order, warrant or repossession. For this reason, the national total number of claims, etc from this data-set may not match the total shown in the main tables although the differences are generally small.

Court-level case-progression data has not been produced. This is because the number of cases where the value is less than 3 was quite extensive, so the data-set was not considered to be useful.

National timeliness data:

For those cases that went to hearing or trial, timeliness data (called “CSV_timeliness_national.txt”) provides information on the amount of time between the original claim being issued and the hearing or trial commencing. Data is from 2003 because data was collated from manual counts before then.

It accompanies Table 1.3 of the main tables and consists of the following variables:

year: This is the calendar year in which the hearing or trial commenced, eg 2000 would refer to January to December 2000. The earliest year from which any of the data is available is 2000 for claims and orders but in some cases data is only available from a later date.

quarter: Each year is divided into four quarters and this is the quarter in which the hearing or trial commenced. These are based on calendar years:

Q1 refers to January to March,

Q2 refers to April to June,

Q3 refers to July to September; and

Q4 refers to October to December

category: This divides the data into small claim hearings or into fast-track and multi-track trials.

sub-category1: This relates to the particular time-period being described: the time from the claim being issued to the hearing or trial commencing, the time from the claim being issued to the case being allocated, the time from the case being allocated to the hearing or trial commencing. For small claim hearings only the time from the claim being issued to the hearing or trial commencing is available, but for fast-track and multi-track trials all three time-periods are available.

value: This is the average time-period in weeks. Please note that because it is an average it cannot be aggregated. In other words, the average applied to that year and quarter, category and sub-category. If any of those variables is omitted the variable will not provide the correct average.

Figures displayed may be different from those shown in previous publications due to improvements in data processing.

Court-level timeliness data:

The court-level data (called “CSV_timeliness_court.txt”) includes the variables in the national-level data-sets. In addition, they include the code of the court where the court action occurred. An additional table “Courts and regions” gives the name of the court with that code. It also gives the county and region where the court is located.

The user should note that for because of the court-level breakdowns the number of cases which fall into a particular type may be quite small. Where the value is actually less than 3, the value is given as 0, to protect the confidentiality of those involved in the claim, order, warrant or repossession. For this reason, the national total number of claims, etc from these data-sets may not match the total shown in the main tables or the national-level CSV, although the differences are generally small.

National Enforcement Caseload data

The national enforcement caseload data (called “CSV_enforcement_national.txt”) provides information on the number of applications and orders made at the national level of different types of enforcement orders.

The CSV has the following variables:

year: This is the calendar year in which the order was applied for or was made, eg 2000 would refer to January to December 2000. The earliest year from which any of the data is available is 2000 for claims and orders but in some cases data is only available from a later date

quarter: Each year is divided into four quarters and this is the quarter in which the hearing or trial commenced. These are based on calendar years:

Q1 refers to January to March,

Q2 refers to April to June,

Q3 refers to July to September; and

Q4 refers to October to December

Quarterly information is only available from 2009 onwards.

attachment of earnings orders_applications: Attachment of earnings orders oblige the debtor’s employer to deduct a set sum from the debtor’s pay and forward it to the court.

attachment of earnings orders_orders made: The same as above but numbers relates to orders made rather than applications.

third party debt orders_applications: Third party debt orders secure payment by freezing and then seizing money owed or payable by a third party to a debtor.

third party debt orders_orders made: The same as above but numbers relates to orders made rather than applications.

charging orders_applications: Charging orders obtain security for the payment against an asset(s) owned by the debtor, typically property.

charging orders_orders made: The same as above but numbers relates to orders made rather than applications.

orders for sale: A court order forcing the debtor to sell an asset(s), typically a property, following a charging order. These data are only available from July 2009.

administration orders_applications: These enable a debtor to combine a judgement debt and at least one other debt (with total indebtedness not exceeding £5,000) into a single order for the making of regular payments into court to be distributed to the creditors in the appropriate proportions listed by the debtor

administration orders_orders made: Multiple orders may be made following an application e.g. where an original order is revoked and then re-instated.

orders to obtain information from judgment debtors: Formerly known as the oral examination procedure which was changed on 26 March 2002, the process was streamlined and standardised to enable information to be obtained faster