

Family Court Statistics Quarterly, England and Wales

July to September 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 (July to September 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 first 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

Information on criminal cases can be found here:

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

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.

Divorce case timeliness

In May 2015, we proposed a change to the presentation and calculation of divorce case progression estimates included in this statistical bulletin and requested feedback from users on these proposals.

A summary of user feedback is published in the following location;

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/changes-to-moj-statistics-case-progression

All users that provided a response to the proposals agreed that the previous methodology, which purely used a statistical model, should be removed. These have now been incorporated, and more details can be found in Section 5.

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

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 31 March 2016, covering the period October to December 2015.

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 third quarter of 2015 (July to September).

- The number of cases that started in family courts in England and Wales in July to September 2015 was 61,499, nearly the same as that for the equivalent quarter of 2014, maintaining a steadily flat trend. Nearly half of new cases are divorce cases.
- The average time for the disposal of a care or supervision application made in July to September 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 timeliness for private law cases overall in the last year – trend seen post-LASPO reforms during 2013 and early 2014 now seems to be reversing with timeliness returning to pre-LASPO levels.
- There has been a general upward trend in the number of applications for non-molestation domestic violence remedy orders since the end of 2012, and following the drop seen at the end of 2014, there was a slight increase in the latest quarter.
- There were 28 applications and 18 orders made for Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders (FGMPOs) in July to September 2015, following their introduction on 17 July 2015.
- The recent drop in the number of adoption orders issued has continued, with a 17% drop seen in July to September 2015 compared to the equivalent quarter for 2014, driven by the number of adoption orders issued to male/female couples falling by a quarter.
- 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. There were 386 applications made in the latest quarter July to September, similar to the 388 for the previous quarter. The overall upward trend follows the Supreme Court decision on 19 March 2014¹ whereby it was considered a person could be deprived of their liberty in their own home, sheltered accommodation etc, and

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

not just the nursing homes and hospitals which were previously covered.

- There were 127,748 Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) in July to September 2015, similar to the high seen in the previous quarter and up nearly 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.

Section 1 - The Family Justice System

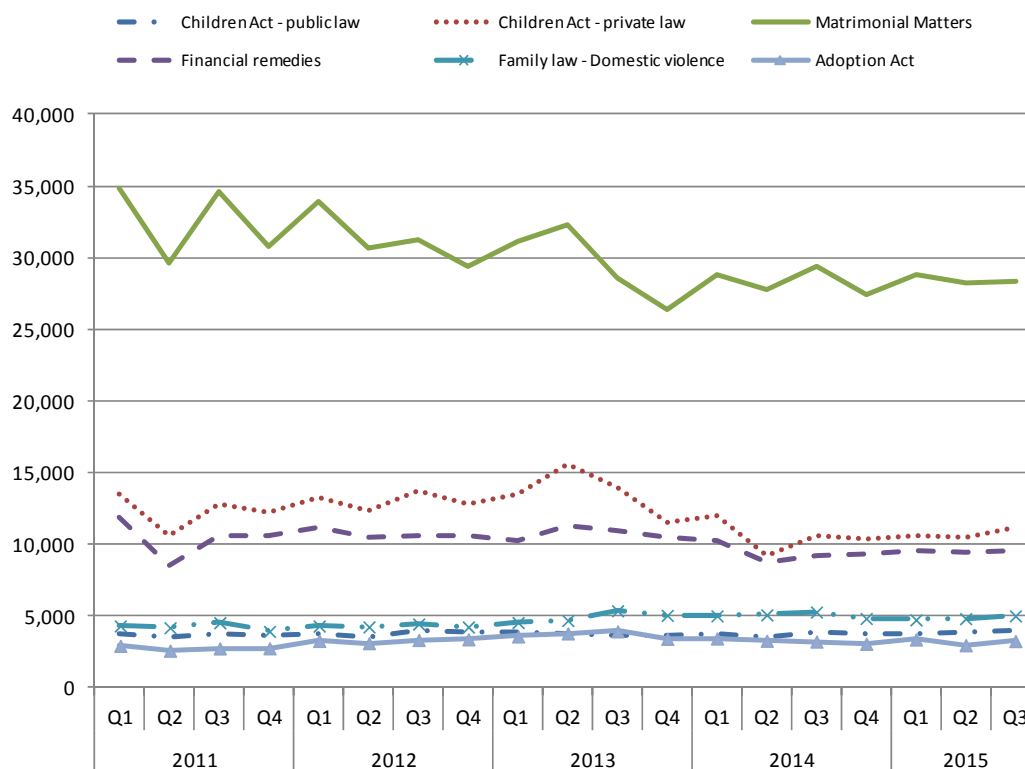
Until 22 April 2014, family cases were dealt with at Family Proceedings Courts (which were part of the magistrates' courts), at county courts or in the Family Division of the High Court. From 22 April 2014, all family cases are now dealt with in the Single Family Court.

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 July to September 2015, 61,499 new cases started in family courts and 57,938 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 July to September 2015.

Figure 1: New family cases started, by case type, January to March 2011 to July to September 2015



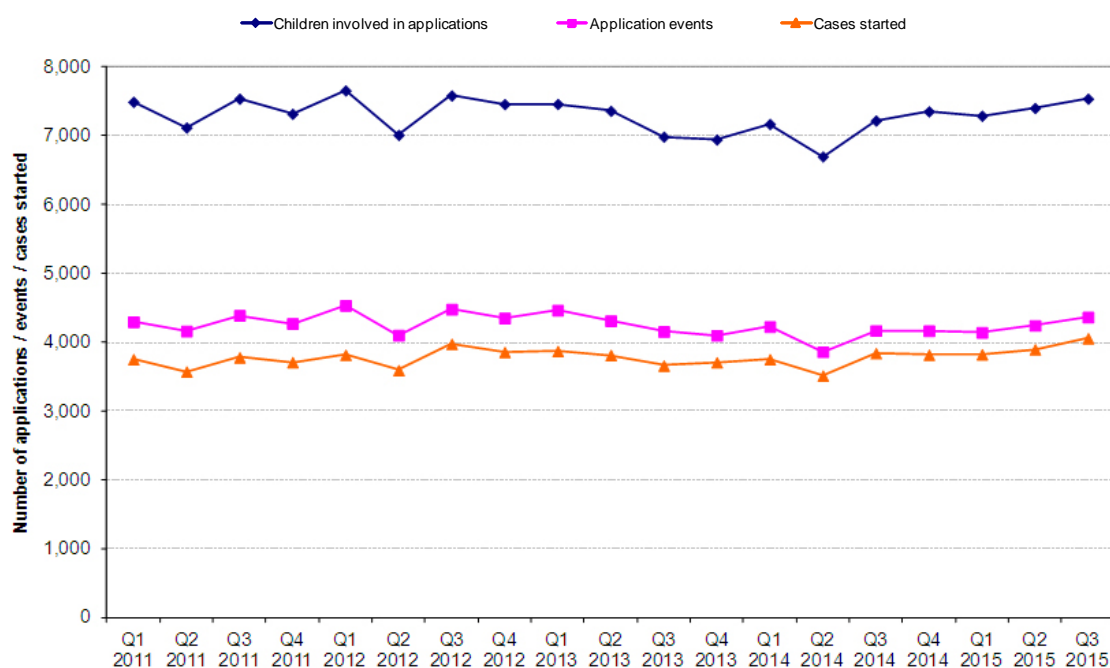
Section 2 - Public Law

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 have remained fairly steady at around 7,000 per quarter, with 7,539 children involved in public law applications in July to September 2015 (Figure 2).

The number of applications made, which can cover more than one child, was 4,365 in July to September 2015 – on average, there were 1.7 children involved in each application. More than one application may be made during the life of a case. The numbers of cases started in July to September 2015 was 4,057 (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 July to September 2015



There were 10,172 children involved in public law orders made in July to September 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.

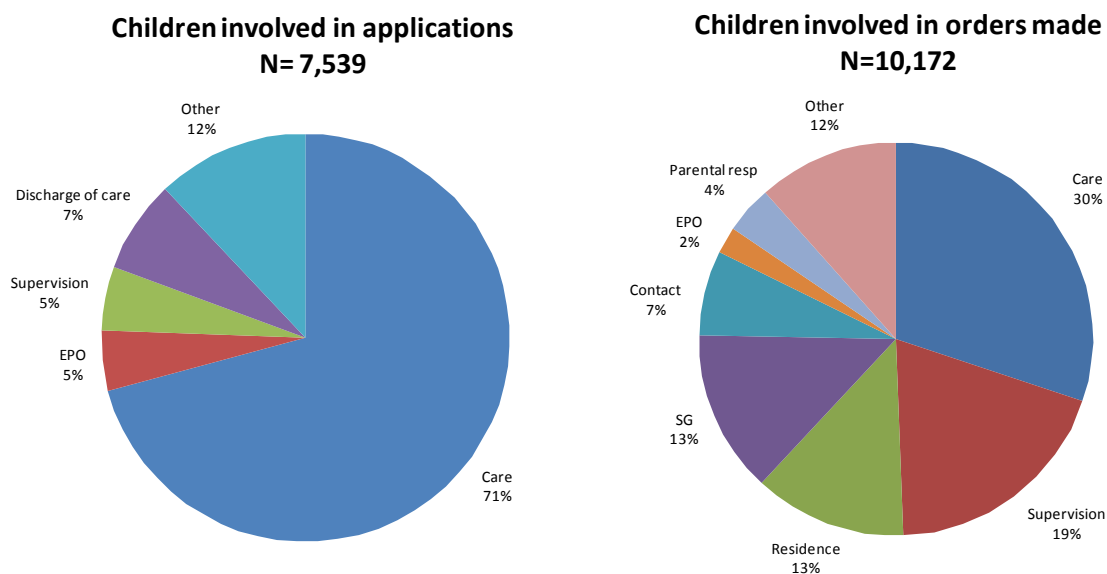
Figure 3 shows that the most common types of order applied for in July to September 2015 were care (71% of children involved in applications), followed by discharge of a care order (7%). There is often a different pattern between the types of order applications and the orders that are given – this is because an application for one type can result in an order of a different type being made. For example, there were 382 children involved in applications for a supervision order in July to September 2015, compared to 1,960 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:

www.cafcass.gov.uk/news/2015/november/october-2015-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, July to September 2015



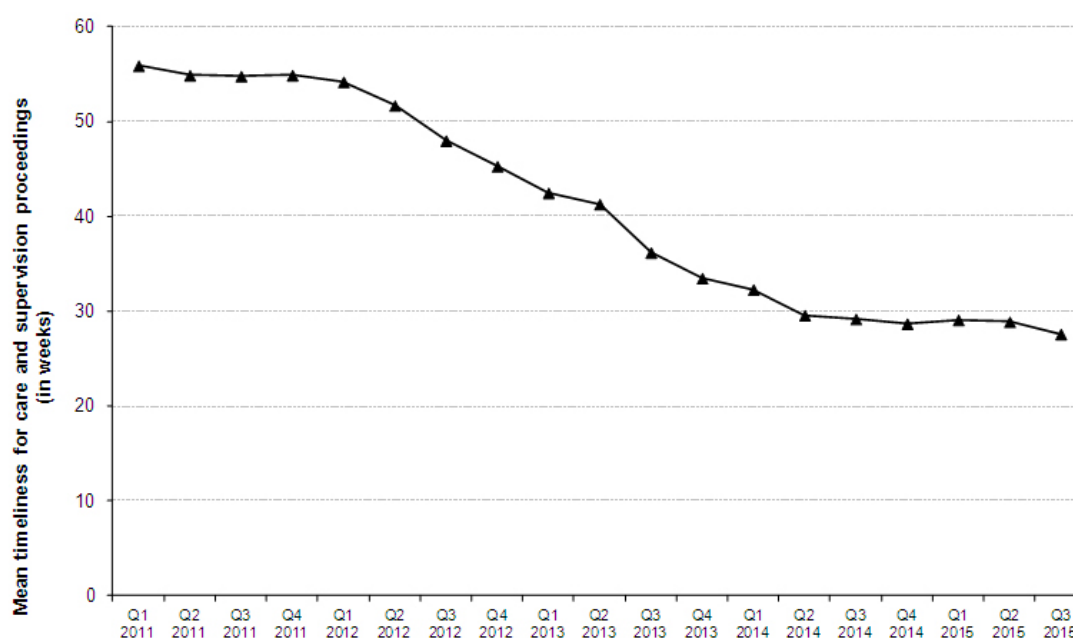
EPO = Emergency protection order, SG = Special guardianship order, Parental resp = Parental responsibility order

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 until the latest quarter (July to September 2015) where it has fallen slightly to 28 weeks. (Figure 4).

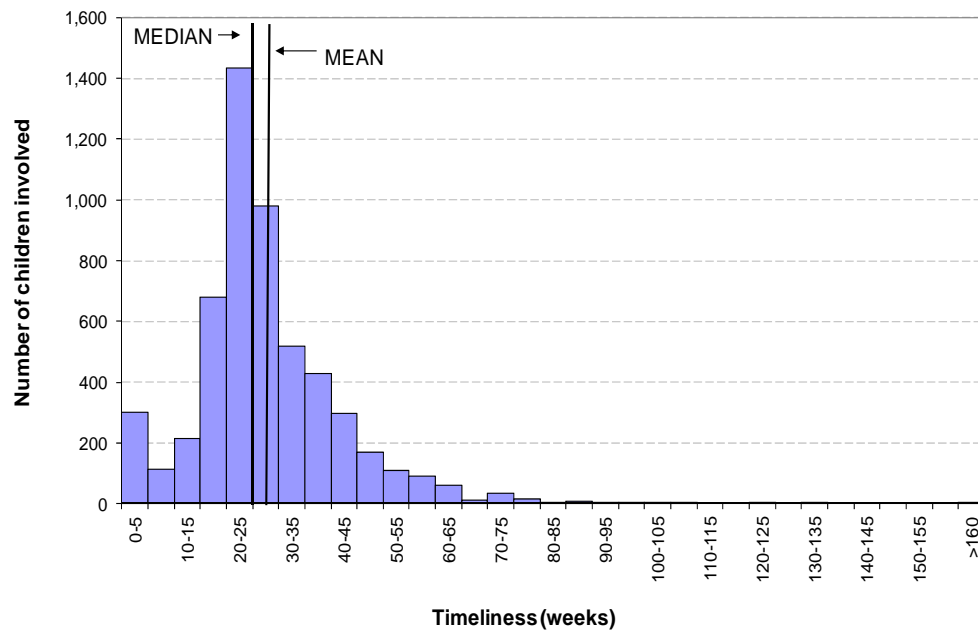
Figure 4: Timeliness for care and supervision proceedings in the Family Court, January to March 2011 to July to September 2015



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 July to September 2015 for all children involved in care and supervision proceedings where a decision was reached during July to September 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 July to September 2015.

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



Section 3 - Private Law

The number of Private law cases started in July to September 2015 was 11,157, up 5% compared to the equivalent quarter in 2014.

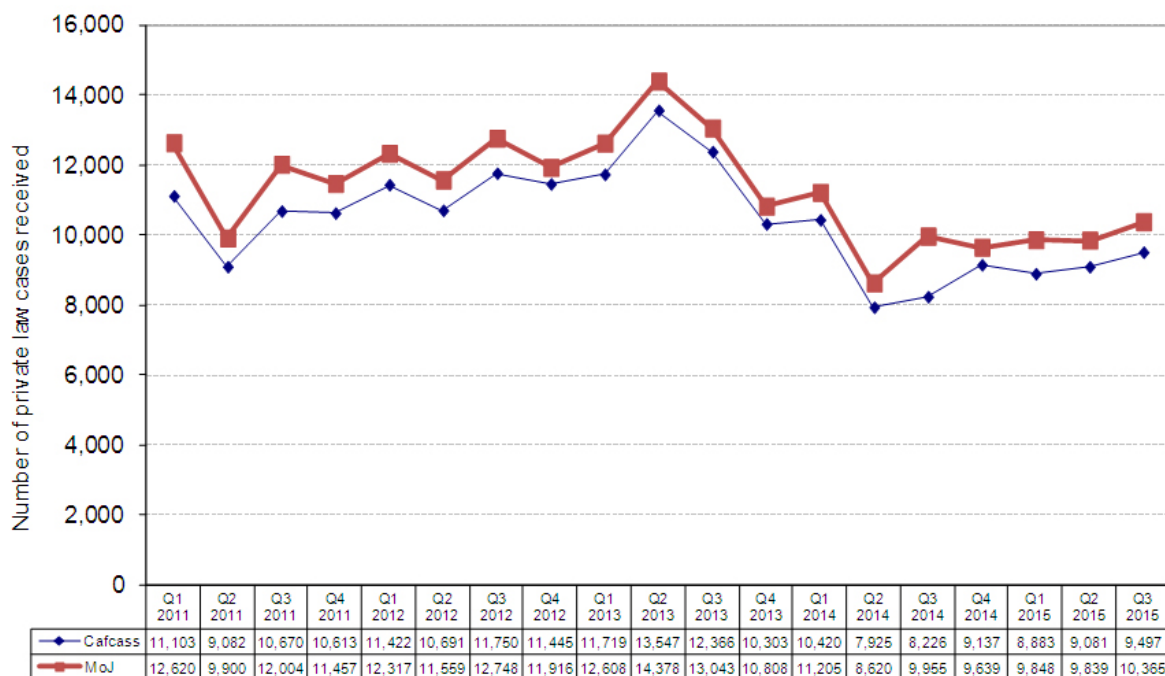
In comparison, for cases disposed in July to September 2015 there was an apparent decrease of 50% compared to the equivalent quarter in 2014 (from 24,371 to 12,255). However, this is because there was a one-off increase in the number of private law cases in July to September 2014 due to an audit by HMCTS of all open private law cases.

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:

www.cafcass.gov.uk/news/2015/november/october-2015-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 July to September 2015



For the last three years the difference between the two sets of figures is usually between 6% and 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 July to September 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 appears to be reversing with the average time to first disposal at 14.3 weeks for July to September 2015 (down 2.5 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 accompanies 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 about 98 to 99% 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:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics

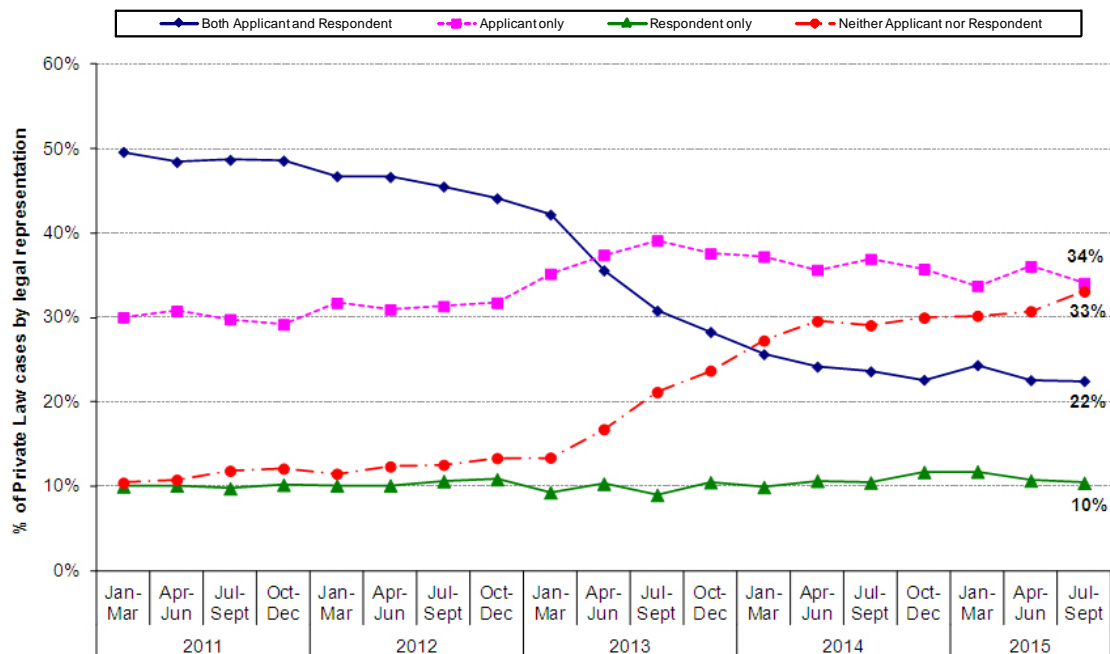
From April 2013, legal aid is now only available for private family law cases (such as contact or divorce) if there is evidence of domestic violence or child abuse and child abduction cases. Legal aid remains available for public family law cases (such as adoption).

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

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.

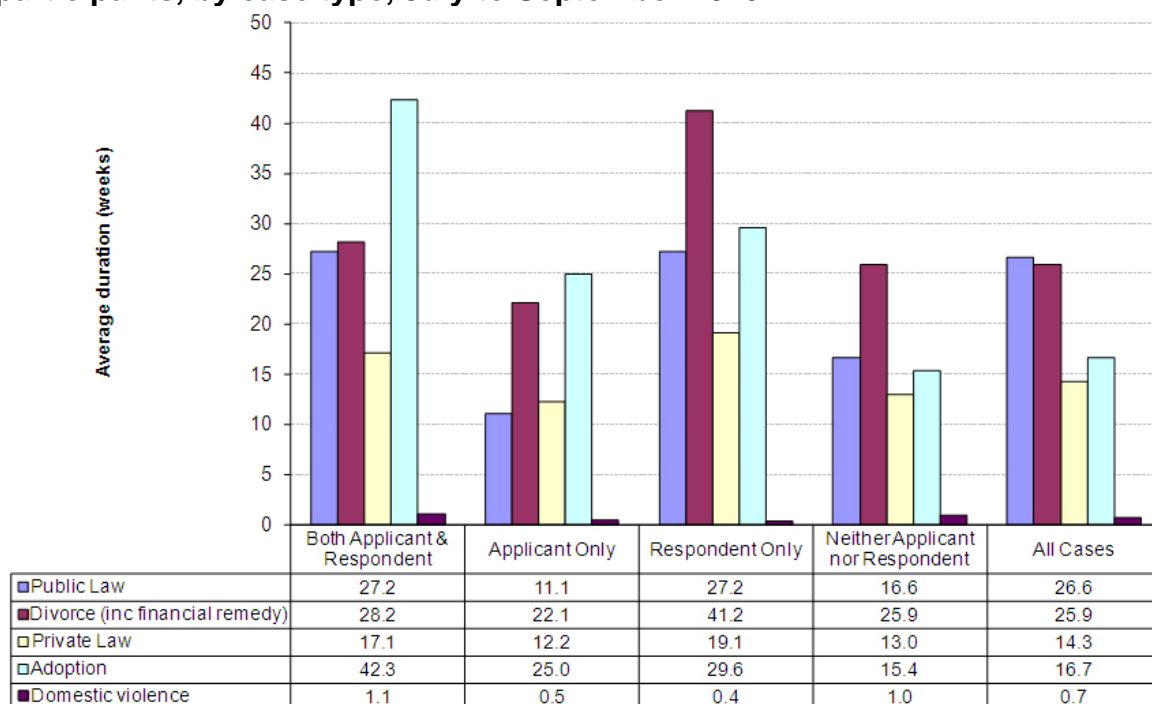
Figure 7: Proportion of parties in private law cases with legal representation, January to March 2011 to July to September 2015



Timeliness of cases by legal representation

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 8 shows the average duration by case type in July to September 2015.

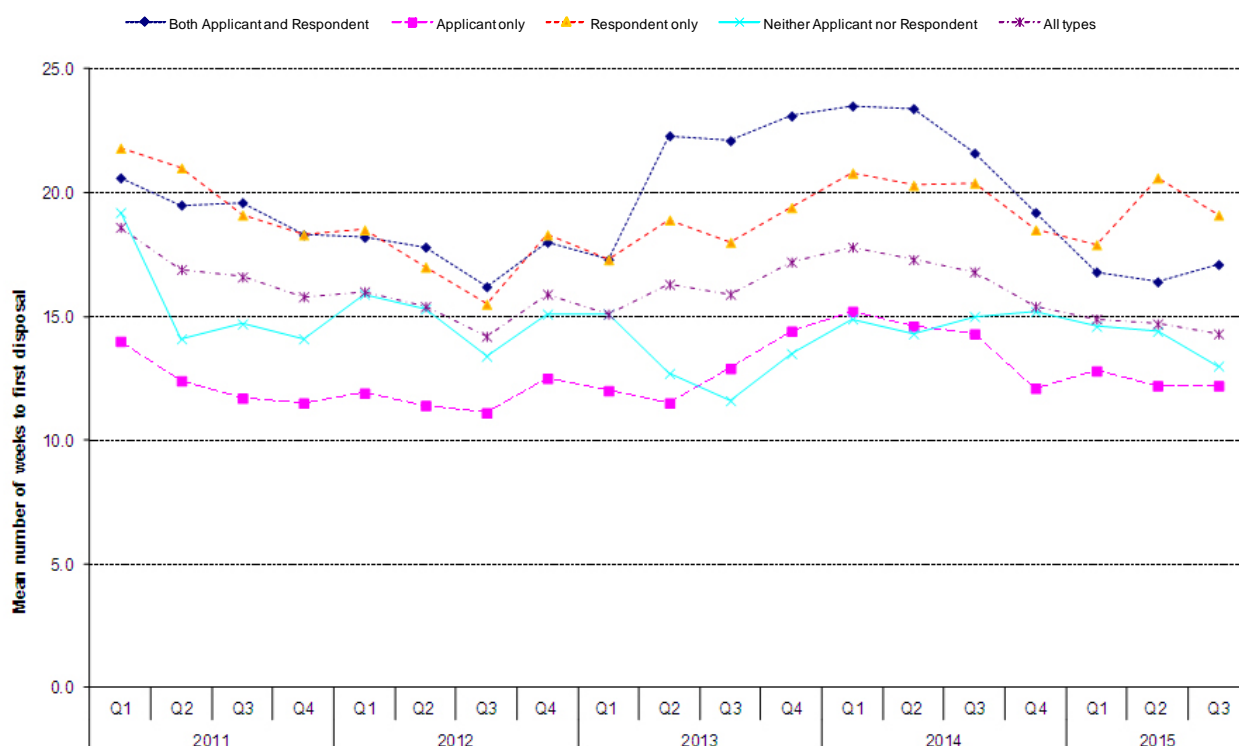
Figure 8: Timeliness of cases according to legal representation of participants, by case type, July to September 2015



The average duration across the representation groups for public law steadily fell since the middle of 2012 until the last twelve months 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 account 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 July to September 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 CSV file that accompanies this publication provides additional information on matrimonial proceedings such gender of petitioner and whether children were involved or not.

Over 99% of petitions filed for matrimonial proceedings are for divorce. There are small numbers of annulments and judicial separations. The number of divorces has been fairly stable at around 30,000 per quarter, but has shown a drop in recent quarters (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 November 2015 (when the data was extracted for producing this bulletin).

As mentioned in the previous bulletin, in May 2015, we proposed a change to the presentation and calculation of the case progression estimates included in this statistical bulletin and requested feedback from users on these proposals:

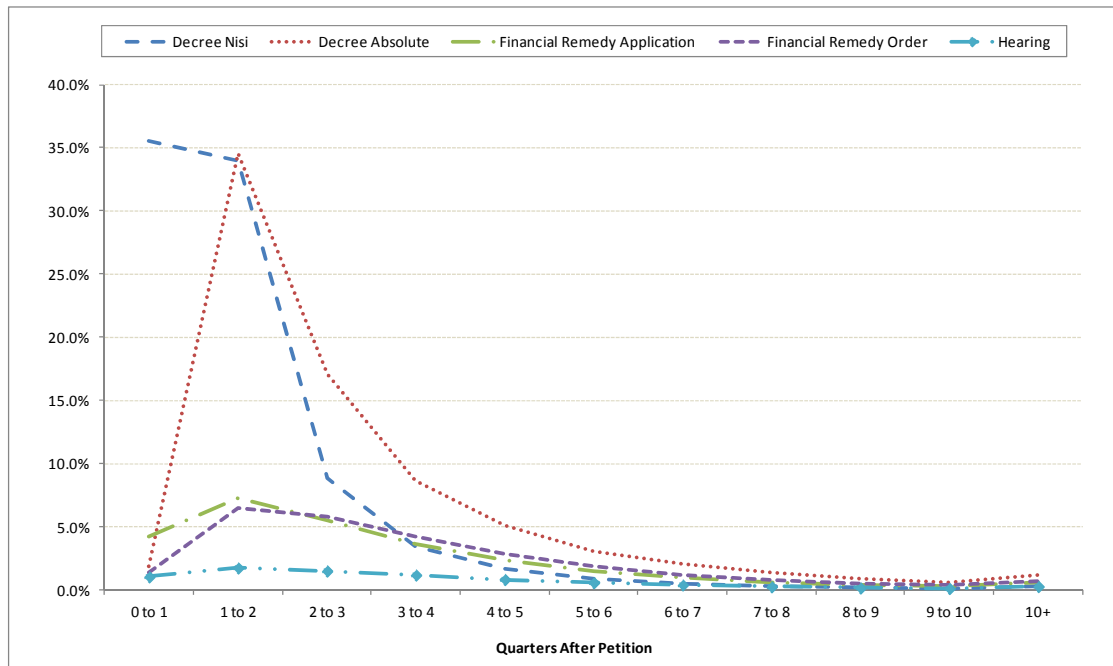
www.gov.uk/government/statistics/changes-to-moj-statistics-case-progression

All users that provided a response to the proposals agreed that the previous methodology, which used a purely a statistical model, should be replaced.

Two alternatives for measuring and presenting timeliness are now included in this bulletin as a means of improving the quality and reliability of the published statistics. 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 Q3 2015 reaching certain stages, by the number of quarters since petition, England and Wales



Financial remedy

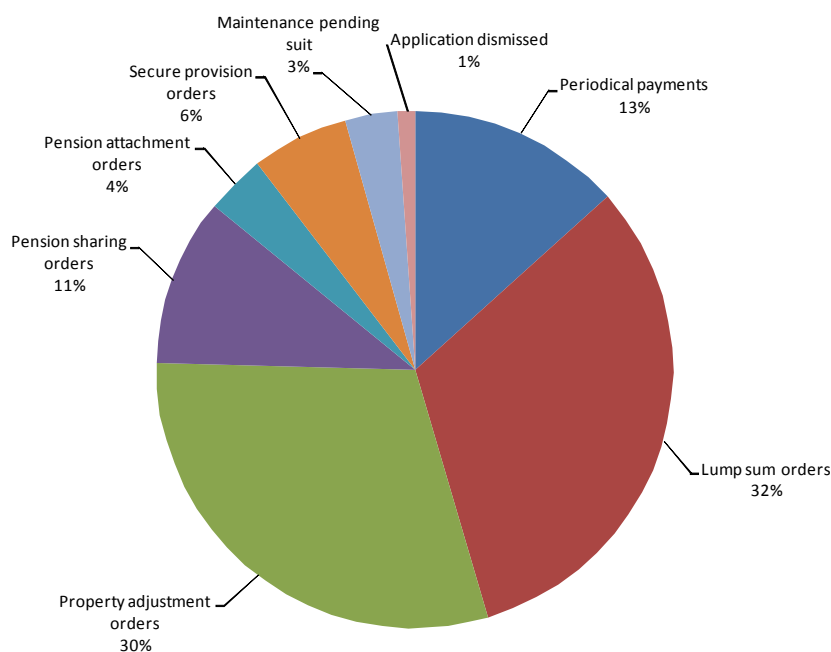
During a divorce, a marriage annulment, or a judicial separation, or the dissolution of a civil partnership, there may still be a need for the court to settle disputes over money or property. The court can make a financial remedy order, formerly known as ‘ancillary relief’. These orders include dealing 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 10,663 applications in July to September 2015, 4% higher than a year earlier (Table 10).

In July to September 2015, there were 9,713 financial remedy disposals, down 6% on the equivalent quarter in 2014, continuing the recent downward trend. During this latest period, 66% of disposals were uncontested, 26% were initially contested, and 8% were contested throughout.

In July to September 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, July to September 2015



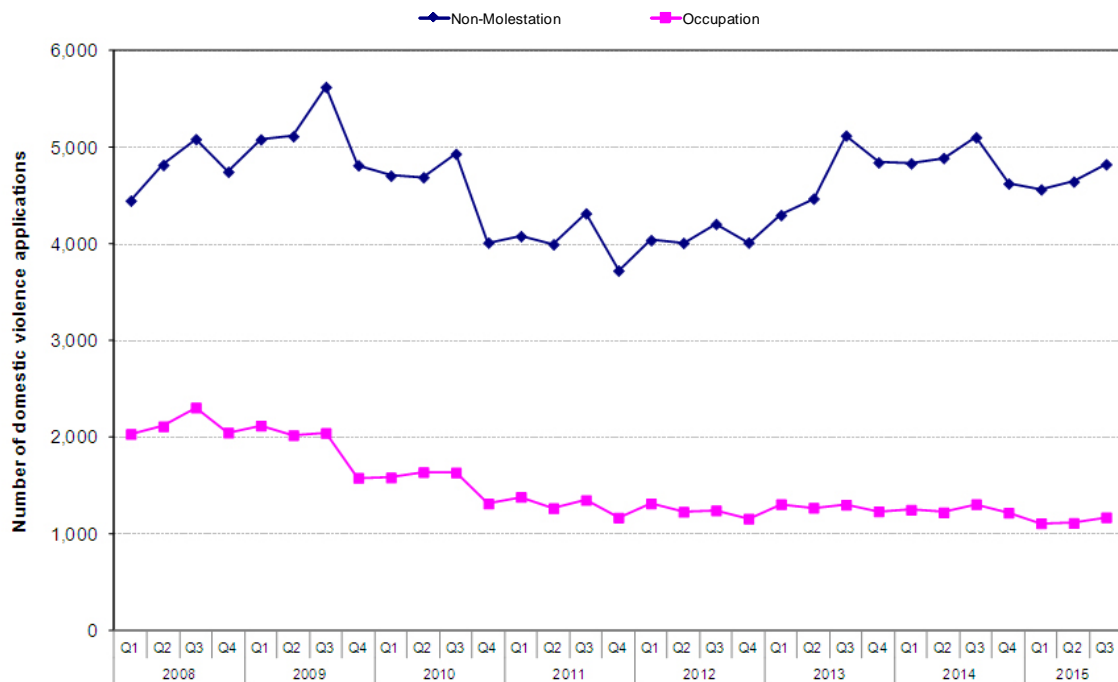
Section 6 - Domestic violence remedy orders

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 July to September 2015



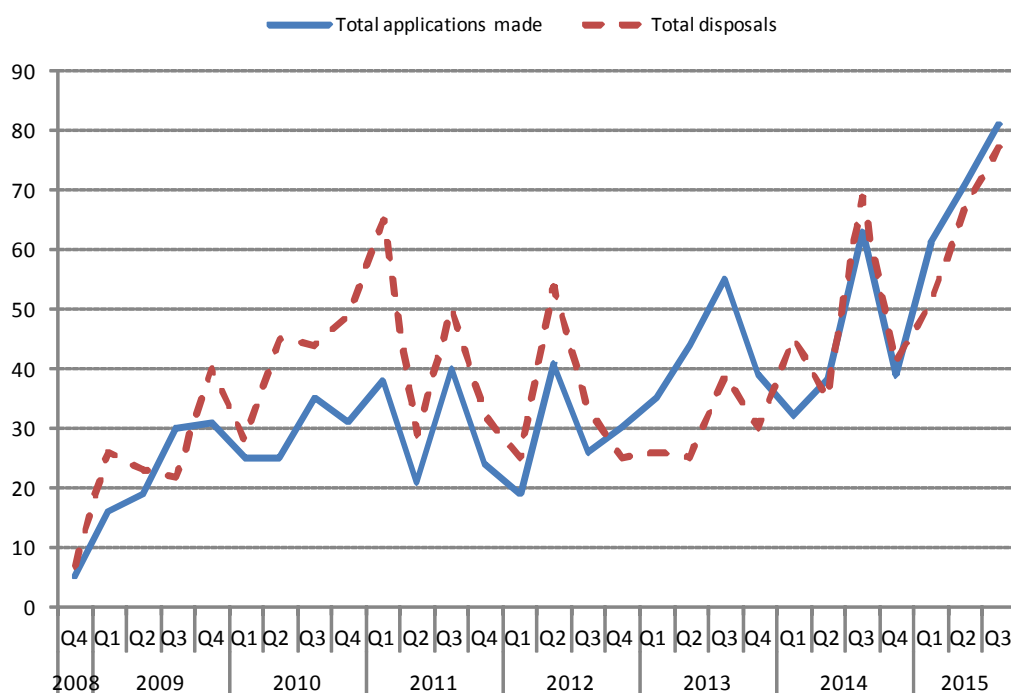
As shown in Figure 12, the number of occupation applications is showing a fairly steady trend, whilst the trend in the number of non-molestation applications is generally upward despite the drop seen in some of the recent quarters.

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 July to September 2015, there were 81 applications and 77 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.

Figure 13: Applications and disposals of Forced Marriage Protection Orders, November 2008 to July to September 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. FGMPOs, and so figures for these orders are presented in this bulletin for the first time, covering July to September 2015 (Table 14).

In July to September 2015, there were 28 applications and 18 orders made for FGMPOs.

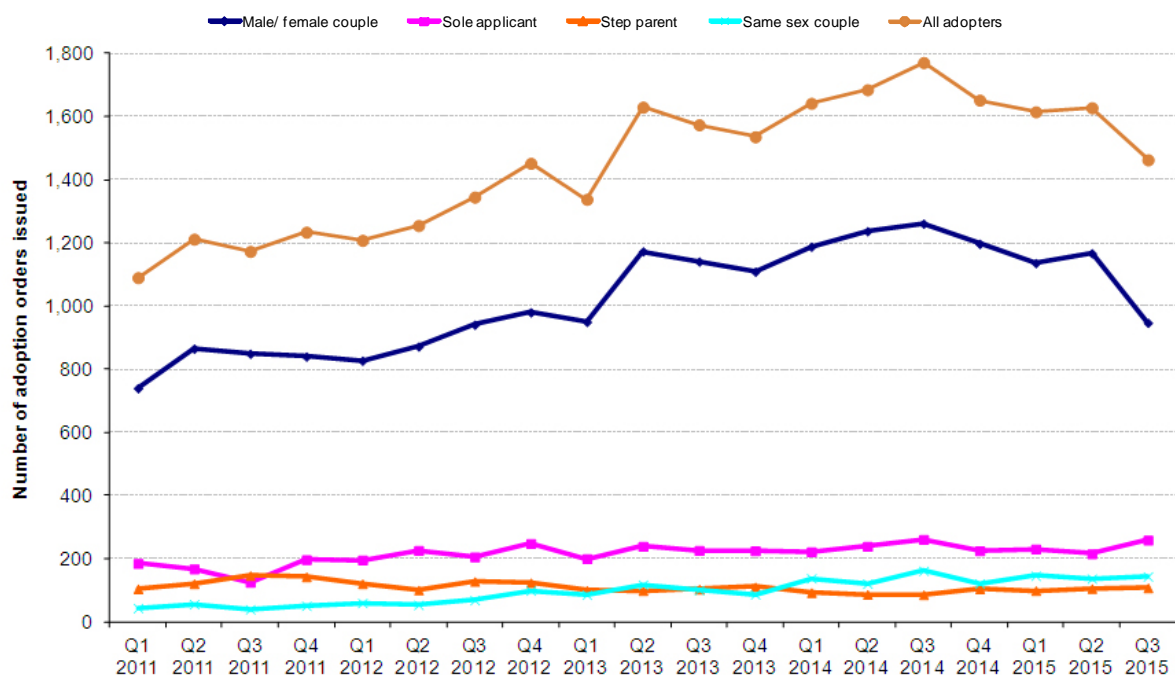
Section 9 - Adoptions

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 July to September 2015, there were 1,370 applications made for a placement order and 1,563 applications made for an adoption order (Table 15).

During July to September 2015, there were 1,463 adoption orders issued, down 17% for the equivalent quarter last year. In 65% of these, the adopters were a male/female couple, while in 18% the adopter was a sole applicant. In a further 7% of orders, the adopter was a step-parent and in 10% 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 July to September 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), Lasting² 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 (Tables 17 and 18)

In July to September 2015, there were 6,545 applications made under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, down slightly on the equivalent quarter in 2014. The majority of these (57%) relate to applications for appointment of a property and affairs deputy.

There were also 7,409 orders made, an increase of 27% on July to September 2014 – the trend in orders made mirrors that of applications and has been steadily increasing since 2010. The majority (53%) of orders related to appointing a deputy for property and affairs.

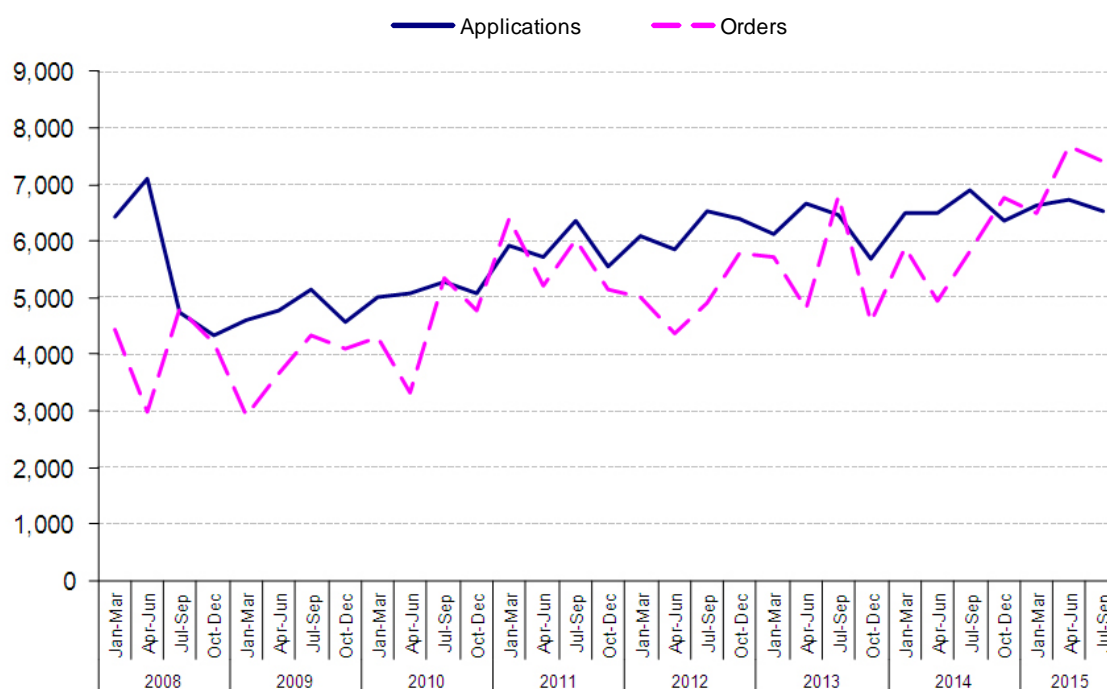
Applications relating to deprivation of liberty increased from 109 in 2013 to 525 in 2014. There were 386 applications made in the latest quarter July to September, similar to the 388 for the previous quarter. The overall increase follows the Supreme Court decision on 19 March 2014³ whereby it was considered 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 386 applications made in July to September 2015, 246 (64%) came from a Local Authority, 118 (31%) from solicitors and 22 (5%) from others including clinical commission groups, other professionals or applicants in person. Over a third (37%) of the applications were made under the streamlined process set out in *Re X and others [2014] EWCOP25*.

² 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

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

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 annual⁴ and quarterly⁵ 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.

Figure 15: Applications and orders made under the Mental Capacity Act, January to March 2008 to July to September 2015



Office of the Public Guardian (Tables 19 and 20)

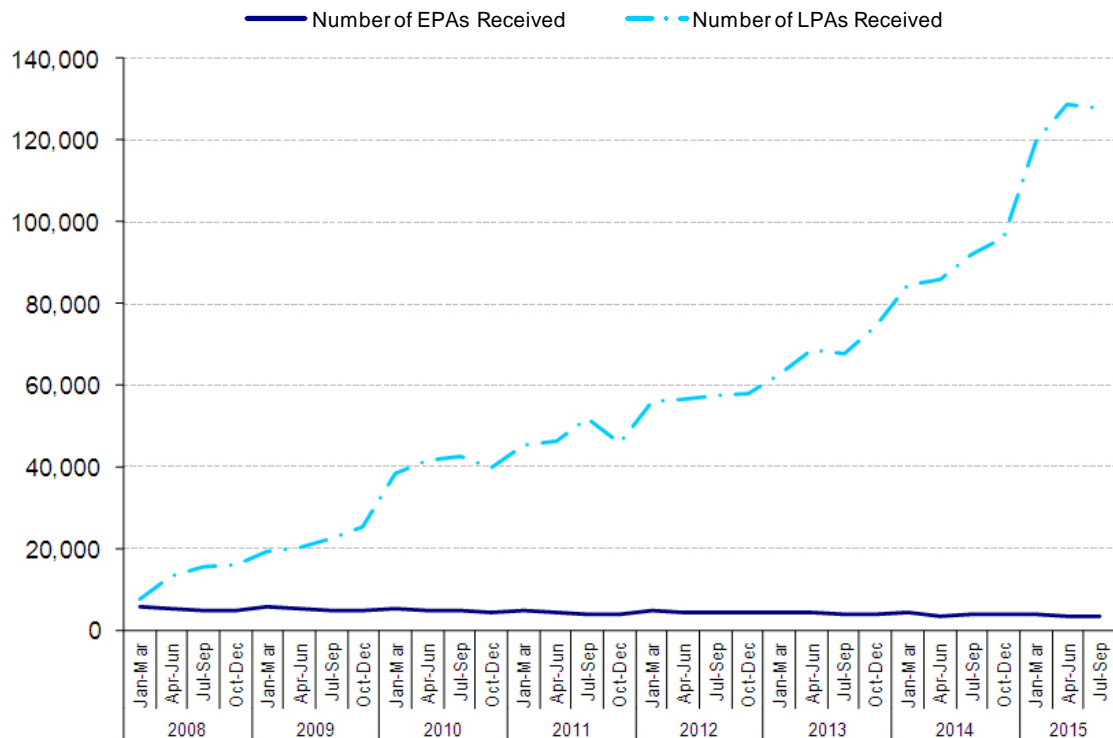
There were 127,748 Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) in July to September 2015, similar to the high seen in the previous quarter and up nearly 40% on the same quarter for 2014. This is largely due to increased publicity and new online forms which have been introduced to make it simpler and faster to apply for LPAs. There were 3,395 EPAs in July to September 2015, down slightly on Q3 2014. There were 4,390 Deputyships⁶ appointed in July to September 2015, an increase of 33% on the equivalent quarter in 2014.

⁴ www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB14825 Mandatory collection

⁵ www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17509 Voluntary collection of number of DoLs applications, the number granted and the number not granted

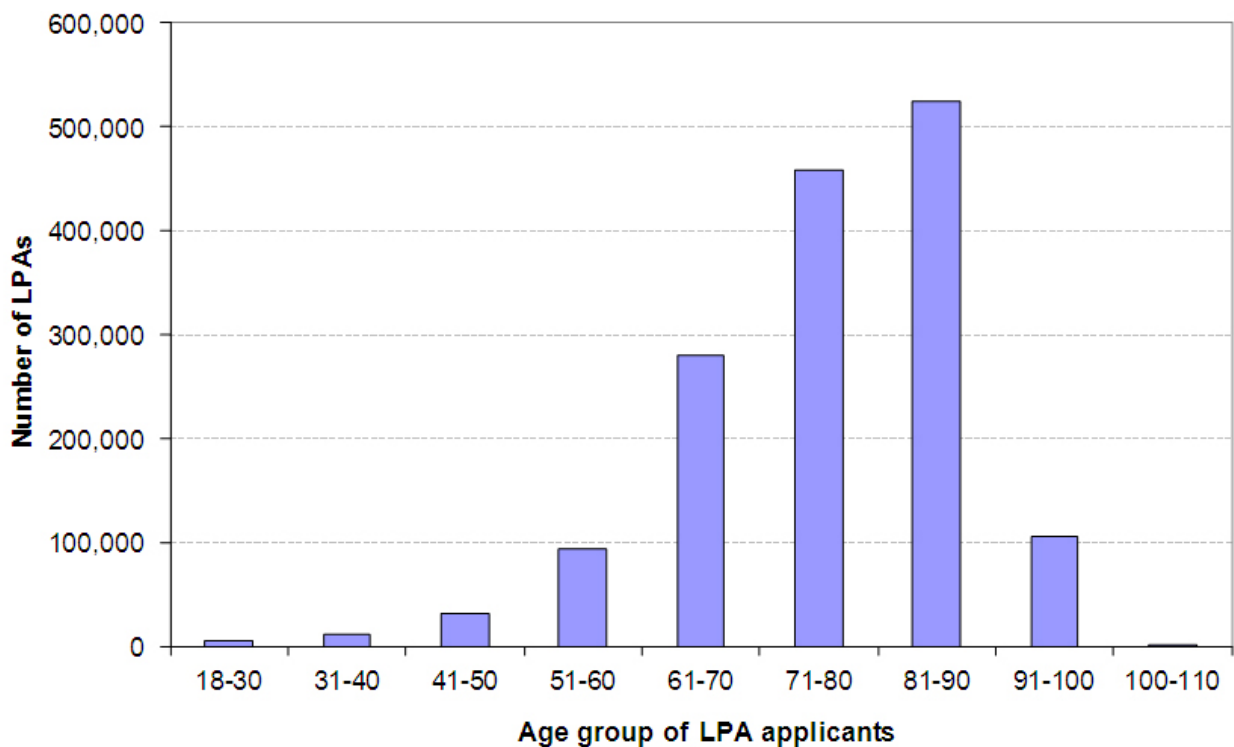
⁶ Deputyships - A Deputy is legally responsible for acting and making decisions on behalf of a person who lacks capacity to make decisions for themselves. The Deputy order sets out specific powers in relation to the person who lacks capacity.

Figure 16: Powers of attorney received, January to March 2008 to July to September 2015



Of LPAs registered in July to September 2015, 39% were for males – see Table 20. The most common age group applying for an LPA is 81-90 years, as shown in Figure 17.

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



Section 11 – The Probate Service

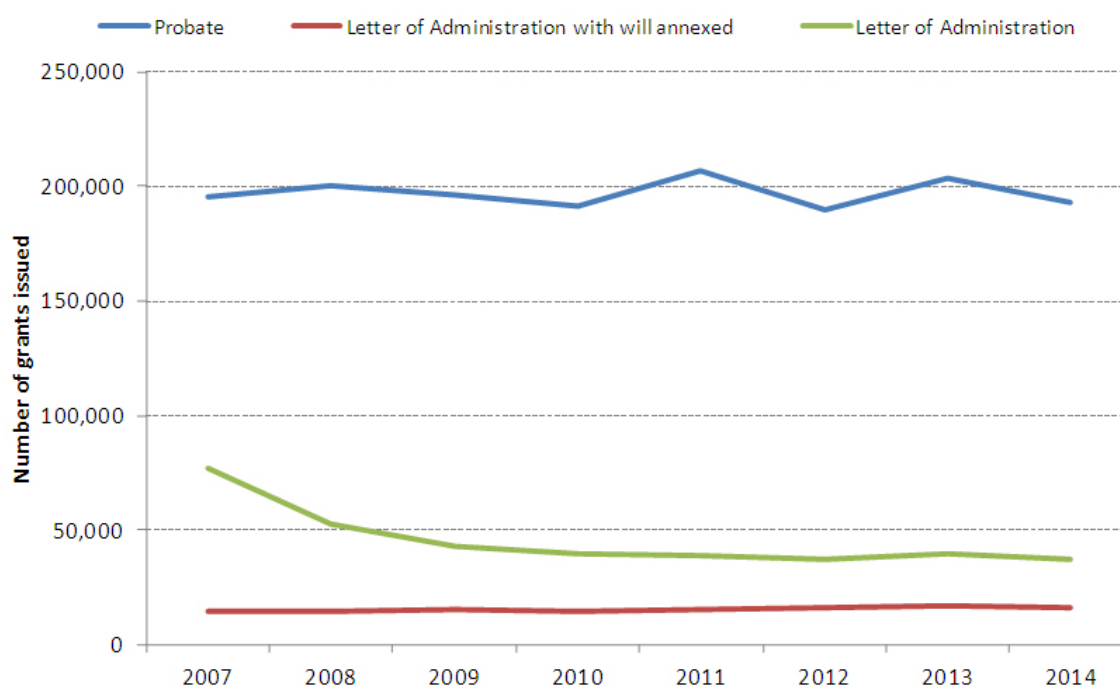
When a person dies somebody has to deal with their estate (money property and possessions left) by collecting in all the money, paying any debts and distributing what is left to those people entitled to it. Probate is the court's authority; given to a person or persons to administer a deceased person's estate and the document issued by the Probate Service is called a Grant of Representation⁷. 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 July to September 2015, 74,676 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 79% of grants in Q3 2015.
- Letters of administration with will (when a person has left a valid will but no executor is acting). These made up 6% of grants in Q3 2015.
- Letters of administration (usually when there is no valid will). These made up 14% of grants in Q3 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 2014



⁷ www.justice.gov.uk/courts/probate/gor

In July to September 2015, 64% of applications were made by solicitors and 36% 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 July to September 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 26 contested cases in July to September 2015.

Contacts

Press enquiries on the contents of this bulletin should be directed to the MoJ or HMCTS press offices:

Sebastian Walters

Tel: 020 3334 3529

Email: sebastian.walters@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Mark Kram

Tel: 020 3334 6697

Email: mark.kram@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to the Justice Statistics Analytical Services division of the MoJ:

Bridgette Miles

Ministry of Justice

102 Petty France

London

SW1H 9AJ

Tel: 020 3334 4571

Email: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

General enquiries about the statistics work of the MoJ can be emailed to statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system

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