

Legal Aid in Northern Ireland: Annual Statistics to March 2024

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Key Findings:

- In 2023/24, a total of 63,881 cases were granted legal aid. Of these, over two-thirds (69%; 44,260) were criminal cases with 31% (19,621) representing civil cases granted by the Agency. This represents a small decrease of 0.1% (95) on the previous year (2022/23; 63,976).
- At 63,881, the number of legal aid cases granted in 2023/24 represents the lowest annual total over the last five years and reflects more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the financial eligibility test associated with applications for civil legal services.
- A total of £114,007,192 was authorised from the legal aid fund in 2023/24, an increase of 12% from the previous year (2022/23) when authorised expenditure totalled £101,767,269.
- While the majority of legal aid cases granted in 2023/24 were criminal (69%, compared with 31% for civil), the majority of expenditure was authorised for civil cases, with criminal authorisations accounting for 46% of total expenditure and civil 54%.
- During 2023/24, the legal aid grant rate for males (48.8 grants per 1,000 population) was almost three times that of females (18.5 per 1,000 population). Despite displaying similar grant rates for civil cases (10.6 and 10.0 respectively), males were over four times more likely to be the recipient of legal aid in criminal cases (38.2 v 8.5).
- In 2023/24, a total of 457 solicitor firms registered on LAMS to provide legal aid services in Northern Ireland. This equates to a rate of 24 firms per 100,000 population. At 603 registrations, the equivalent rate for barristers was 32 per 100,000 population.
- Focusing on profit costs alone (excluding VAT and disbursements), total authorised expenditure in 2023/24 was almost evenly split between solicitors (50.2%) and barristers (49.5%), with the remaining profit costs attributed to third party providers.



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1. INTRODUCTION

This official statistics publication is the second in a series to be released by the Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI). With an immediate focus on the 2023/24 year, it builds upon the inaugural release where comparisons were made back to 2019/20 - the year in which LSANI launched its new digital case management system (LAMS) as part of an extensive transformation program. While LAMS went live on 1 July 2019, information covering the first quarter (April to June 2019) has been compiled to complete the 2019/20 year in terms of applications granted.

During April to June 2019, the previous case management system (Phoenix) supplemented information held on paper files, thus the availability and extent of data is more limited for those months. This dual system approach has presented complexities in reconciling detailed expenditure information for the full financial year meaning that, at the time of release, expenditure figures for the complete 2019/20 period are not available at the level of granularity required. Headline expenditure figures covering 2019/20 have however been presented in the Agency's [Annual Report and Accounts](#).

To address this issue, certain information is presented on a quarterly basis to facilitate inclusion of the final three quarters of 2019/20.

As this five-year timeframe also incorporates the COVID-19 pandemic, looking at key information on a quarterly basis allows the presentation of pre-covid levels of business, and demonstrates the extent and unique impact that it, along with the subsequent measures that were implemented to control and “flatten the curve”, had on the uptake and progression of legal services during these months.

1.1 About the Legal Services Agency NI

As an executive agency of the Department of Justice (DoJ), the core function of LSANI, as an operational arm of the Department, is to administer publicly funded legal services in Northern Ireland through the:

- processing of applications for civil legal services and authorising of independent legal representation for litigants;
- assessing and payment of bills for the provision of civil legal services and criminal legal aid; and
- provision of a sound evidence base to provide assurances to the Agency's governance arrangements while supporting wider Departmental policy-led reform projects.

Within Northern Ireland, legal aid is administered and operates across five levels of services: Criminal, Advice and Assistance, Exceptional Funding, Representation Lower and Representation Higher (with the court tier determining the distinction).

Each of these levels of service consists of a range of [natures and matters](#) that are used to distinguish between cases. Throughout this report, these natures and matters have further been used to break civil cases into family and non-family cases, with further differentiation of family cases into matrimonial and non-matrimonial cases.

They have also been used to partition Advice and Assistance into criminal advice (PACE) and civil advice (non-PACE).

1.2 Definitions

There are different metrics by which to measure trends in legal services over time, both in terms of caseload and cost. These will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

1.2.1 Caseload

Caseload can be quantified in terms of the number of applications **received** by the Agency in a given time period, or equally by the number of applications **granted**, or cases that have progressed to conclusion and have been subsequently **closed**. The caseload statistics contained in this report focus on grants of legal services as this best represents current and future demands on both the Agency itself and the public legal aid fund.

While the Agency is responsible for adjudicating on applications for civil services, the grant of criminal legal aid is a judicial function. This is further detailed in [Section 3.1](#).

It is worth noting that civil applications that are initially rejected and fall outside the scope of this definition are open to a review process, both internally and via an independent appeals panel. Therefore, a small number of these cases may subsequently be granted on appeal, potentially within a different reporting year, following the provision of additional and more complete information.

1.2.2 Expenditure (Authorised Payments)

There are several ways to consider legal aid expenditure, each with subtle differences suited to particular purposes.

Authorised payment expenditure is the measure used to represent expenditure figures throughout these statistics. It represents the total value of bills assessed and approved for payment to legal aid providers in accordance with remuneration legislation for blocks of work that have been completed within a particular reporting timeframe. While this measure is broadly comparable to volumes of work to which it relates and allows for expenditure to be broken down into more granular areas of legal aid, there can be multiple authorisations relating to a single legal aid case. For example, there can be more than one bill from a single registered supplier (e.g. an Interim bill, a Report on Case, and/or an Additional Payment) as well as bills from more than one provider attached to the case (e.g. a Solicitor, Counsel and Third Party) within the respective timeframe.

An alternative measure is **closed case expenditure**. This approach takes account of all bills from all suppliers, including any subsequent recoupments or adjustments, across multiple years spanning the duration of the case. This measure is appropriate when considering the real average cost of a legal aid case and is fundamental to financial provisions modelling within the Agency.

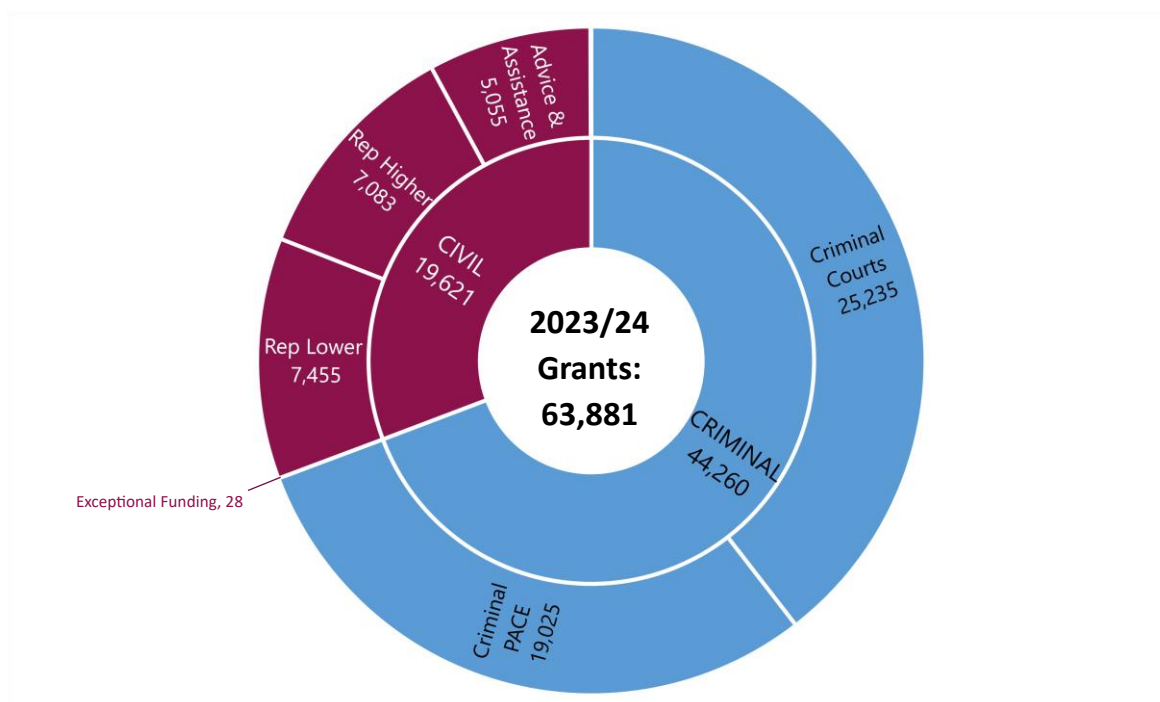
A third measure, **RDEL (Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits) expenditure** is how annual legal aid spend is formally reported through Account NI, the Agency's financial reporting system. This measure factors in a very small degree of legal aid expenditure that isn't captured via the authorised payment expenditure measure. This will account for any nominal variance between expenditure figures quoted in these statistics and the applicable legal aid expenditure figures quoted in the annual accounts.

2. OVERVIEW OF CASELOAD AND EXPENDITURE, 2019/20 TO 2023/24

2.1 Applications Granted

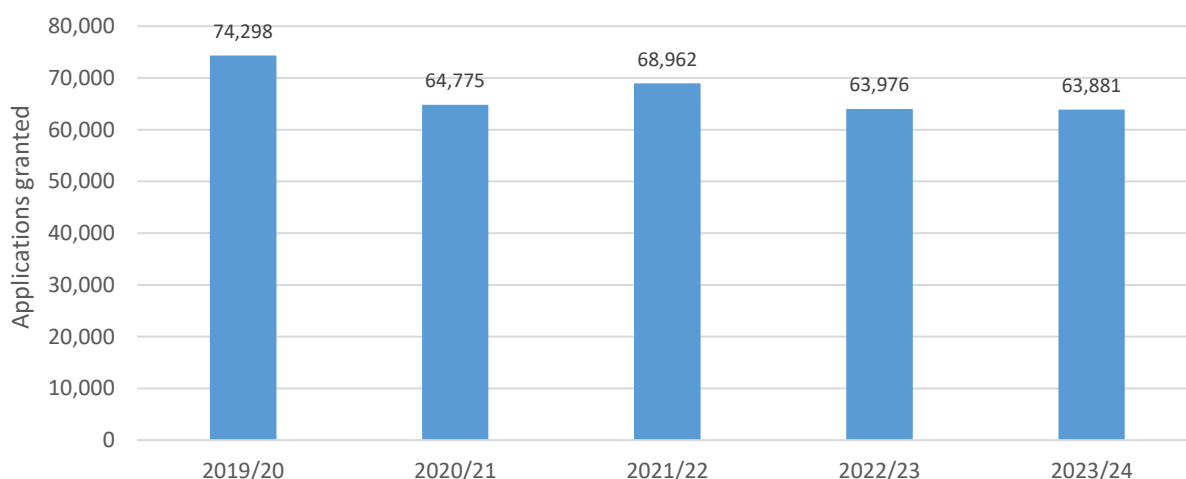
A total of **63,881** legal aid applications were granted in 2023/24. Of these, over two-thirds (69%; 44,260) were criminal cases with 31% (19,621) representing civil cases granted by the Agency (Figure 2.1; Table A1).

Figure 2.1: Breakdown of legal aid applications granted in 2023/24



The number of legal aid cases granted in 2023/24 (63,881) is at its lowest of the past five years. While this latest figure is only 0.1% (95) down on the previous year (2022/23; 63,976), it is 14% (10,417) lower than 2019/20 (74,298) and is still 1% (894) lower than 2020/21 (64,775) when the global COVID-19 pandemic and associated national lockdowns were at their peak (Figure 2.2; Table A1).

Figure 2.2: Annual applications granted, 2019/20 to 2023/24



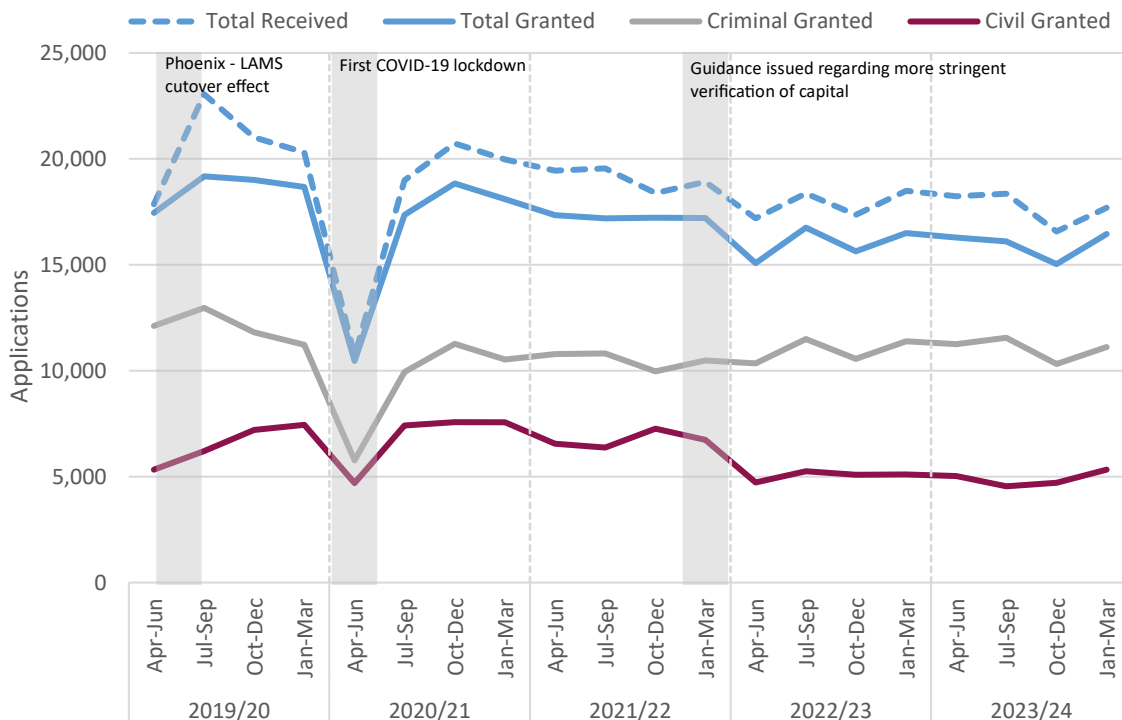
The trends in granted applications since 2019/20 closely mirror the trends in the volume of applications being submitted over this same period (Figure 2.3).

Firstly, the apparent surge in applications received between the first two quarters of 2019/20 is the direct impact of changing case management system during the year. During quarter one, the old case management system (Phoenix) was closed for a three-week period in June 2019 to enable a data migration exercise to be undertaken for cases that would continue to be administered in the new digital system (LAMS) once it went live in July 2019. During this three-week cutover period, suppliers were unable to submit new applications for legal services except for emergencies when an offline system operated temporarily. This cutover suppressed the number of applications being received in quarter one, before inflating the volume of applications in quarter two when a backlog of requests were submitted alongside business as usual volumes. Taking an average of these two quarters suggests a quarterly intake of just under 20,500 applications, which aligns with the average of the final two quarters in 2019/20.

While both criminal and civil applications granted saw a decline over the quarter to Q1 2020/21, the decline was greater for the criminal category, with criminal applications accounting for two thirds (66%) of the overall quarterly decline. This decrease coincides with the introduction of various restrictions and social distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had an impact on recorded crime levels and therefore the demand for legal aid services.

The recent declining trend in overall applications granted has been largely driven by civil applications and coincides with the enforcing of more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the financial eligibility test associated with applications for civil legal services. This concept, together with its impact, will be explored and presented further in [Section 3](#) (Criminal) and [Section 4](#) (Civil).

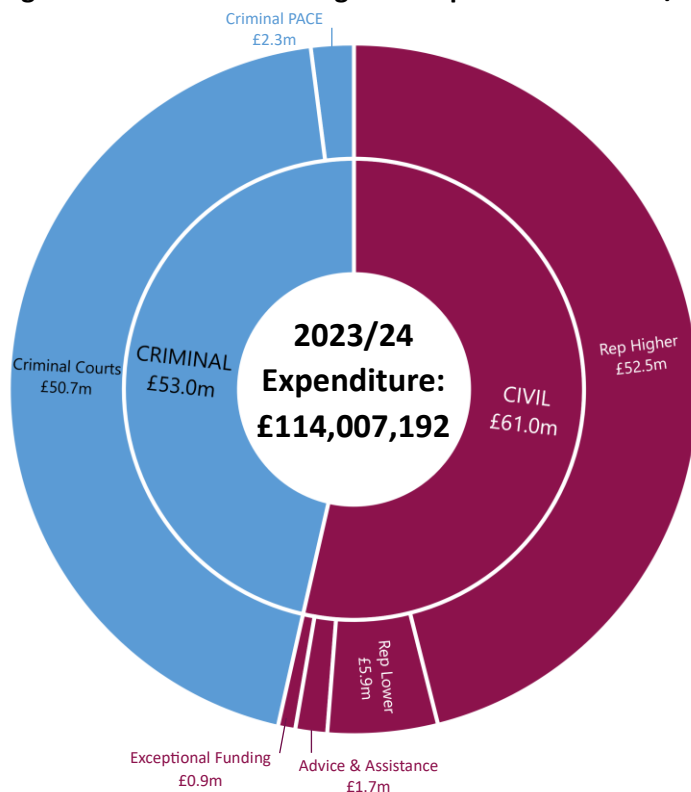
Figure 2.3: Applications received and granted, by Quarter, 2019/20 to 2023/24



2.2 Authorised Expenditure

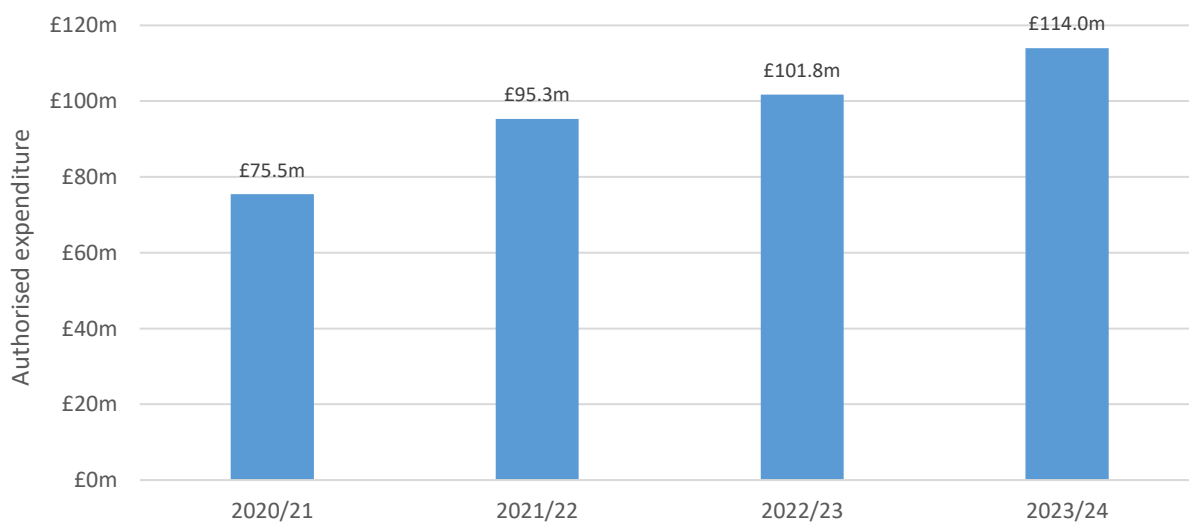
In terms of expenditure, a total of **£114.0m** was authorised in 2023/24. While the majority (69%) of legal aid cases granted in 2023/24 were criminal (Figure 2.1), the majority of expenditure was authorised for civil cases, although the split in expenditure was more equal, with criminal authorisations totalling £53.0m (46%) and civil totalling £61.0m (54%; Figure 2.4; Table A4).

Figure 2.4: Breakdown of legal aid expenditure in 2023/24



Authorised expenditure continued to rise in 2023/24, up 12% (£12.2m) on the previous year (2022/23; £101.8m), to a level that is 51% (£38.5m) higher than that in 2020/21 (Figure 2.5).

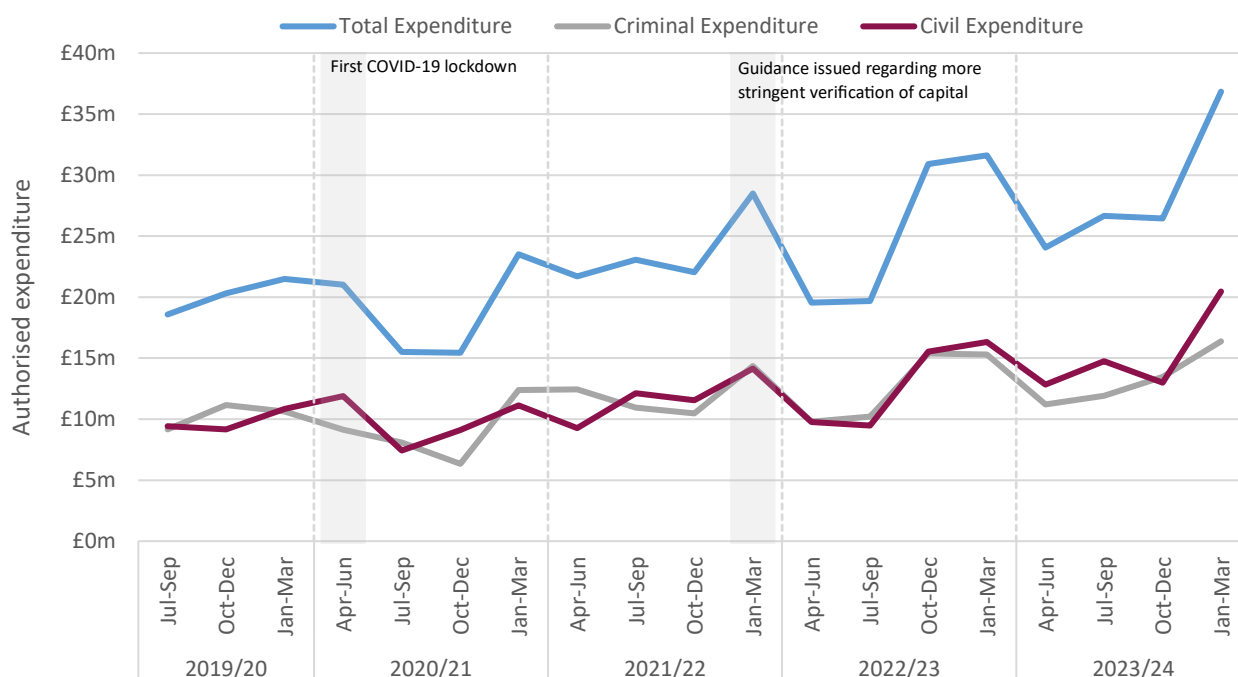
Figure 2.5: Annual authorised expenditure, 2020/21 to 2023/24



Expenditure authorised in the latest quarter is the highest in the series (£36.8m; Q4 2023/24) and is 16% (£5.2m) higher than the same quarter in the previous year (£31.6m; Q4 2022/23) (Figure 2.6). It should be noted that the quarterly fluctuation in legal aid expenditure apparent in Figure 2.6 is a direct result of budget availability at each particular timepoint. During the year, additional budget may be made available to the legal aid fund that directly influences the Agency’s ability to pay bills at certain points in the year. This explains why authorised expenditure tends to peak in the final quarter of each financial year, before dropping back to default budget levels at the beginning of the next.

Quarterly expenditure has followed very similar trends for both criminal and civil cases since July 2019.

Figure 2.6: Authorised expenditure, by Quarter, Q2 2019/20 to Q4 2023/24



While the volume of new bills received by the Agency fell during the COVID-19 lockdown, expenditure levels were not immediately impacted. The Agency had a backlog of unpaid bills and, as an essential service, was working to assess and authorise payments during this period. In addition, the Agency also launched a temporary COVID-19 Interim Payment Scheme to boost the provider’s cashflow. The net result was that, as less new bills were being paid, the unassessed backlog reduced.

2.3 Applications Granted versus Authorised Expenditure

Criminal Courts cases accounted for the largest proportion of granted applications (40%; 25,235) and the second largest proportion of legal aid expenditure (44%; £50.7m) in 2023/24 (Figure 2.7).

While Criminal PACE cases represented almost a third (30%; 19,025) of all legal aid applications granted in 2023/24, they accounted for a much smaller proportion of the expenditure, at 2% (£2.3m) of the total 2023/24 legal aid expenditure.

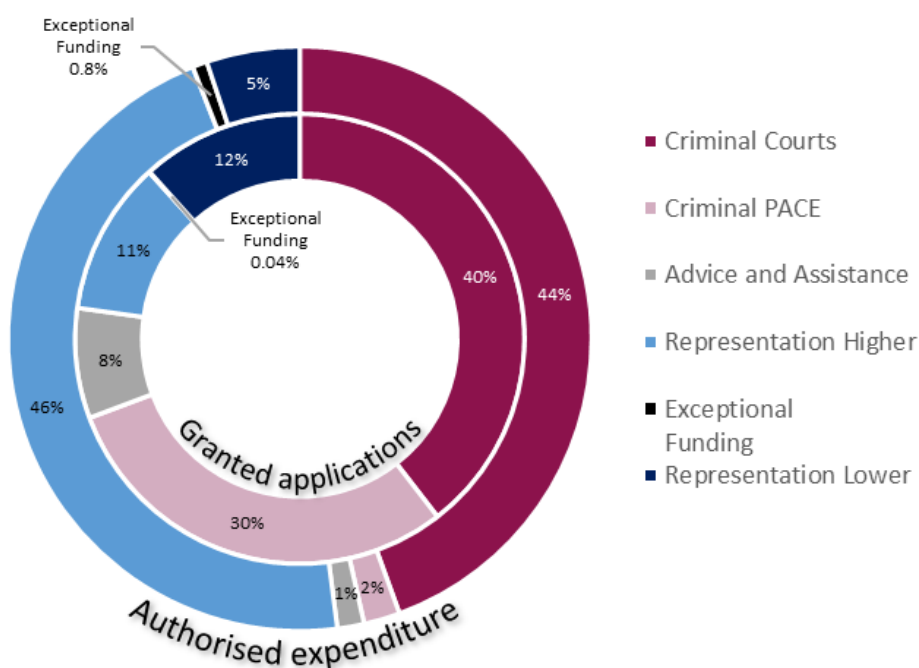
Civil Advice and Assistance cases accounted for less than a tenth (8%; 5,055) of legal aid applications granted in 2023/24, and represented an even smaller proportion of total legal aid expenditure in 2023/24 at 1% (£1.7m).

While Representation Higher cases accounted for just over a tenth (11%; 7,083) of all applications granted in 2023/24, they accounted for almost half (46%; £52.5m) of the total 2023/24 authorised expenditure.

Representation Lower cases also comprised for around a tenth (12%; 7,455) of total applications granted in 2023/24, however, at 5% (£5.9m) they accounted for a much smaller proportion of total authorised expenditure.

Exceptional Funding cases accounted for both the smallest proportion of granted applications (0.04%; 28) and the smallest proportion of the total legal aid expenditure in 2023/24 (0.8%; £0.9m).

Figure 2.7: Proportions of total granted applications and authorised expenditure by category of service, 2023/24



3. CRIMINAL LEGAL AID, 2019/20 TO 2023/24

This section looks specifically at criminal legal aid, both in terms of the volume of cases granted as well as the respective expenditure from the legal aid fund authorised to criminal cases, the latter of which may partly relate to cases granted in previous years. This section incorporates criminal advice that is administered as part of the wider Advice and Assistance category of service.

3.1 Criminal grants of legal aid

The grant of criminal legal aid is a judicial function. The statistics in relation to criminal legal aid contained within this bulletin refer to criminal cases in which the Legal Services Agency NI (LSANI) has been advised by the courts that legal aid has been granted.

As criminal legal aid has already been granted (by the judiciary) by the time LSANI are first aware of the case, these statistics consider the date at which the case enters the LAMS system and a legal aid certificate is issued to the respective solicitor firm, as the date that legal aid has been granted. In the majority of cases, this will simply be the next working day.

While criminal legal aid is administered as a distinct category of service within LSANI, there is also an element of Advice and Assistance (a separate category of service) that is considered criminal. Advice and Assistance consists of a range of natures and matters that are used to distinguish between criminal and civil cases. Essentially, legal advice and representation given to those in custody at a police station (under the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984)*; PACE) constitutes the criminal side of advice and assistance, with the remaining natures and matters representing civil cases.

3.1.1 Criminal Courts

Legal aid for **Criminal Court** cases allows representation in a criminal case. These cases usually take place in the Magistrates' Courts or Crown Court.

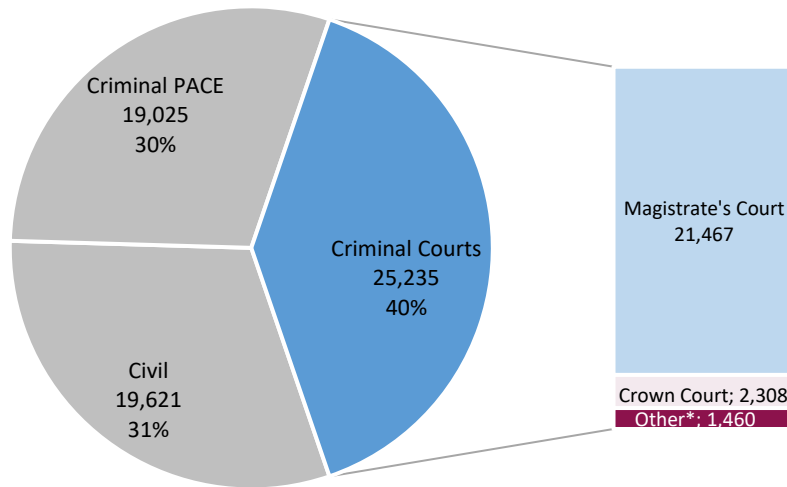
For presentational purposes, County Court of Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal have been grouped together in an 'Other' category within the following sections. A full breakdown of criminal court applications granted by court tier can be found in Tables A1 and A2.

Criminal Court applications represented the largest proportion (**40%; 25,235**) of all legal aid applications granted in 2023/24 (Figure 3.1; Table A1).

The vast majority of these grants were in relation to Magistrate's Court cases (85%; 21,467). In contrast, under one-in-ten (9%; 2,308) criminal cases awarded legal aid took place in the Crown Court; with the remaining 6% (1,460) taking place in Other* courts.

*Includes County Court Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

Figure 3.1: Legal aid applications granted by case type and Criminal Courts tier, 2023/24

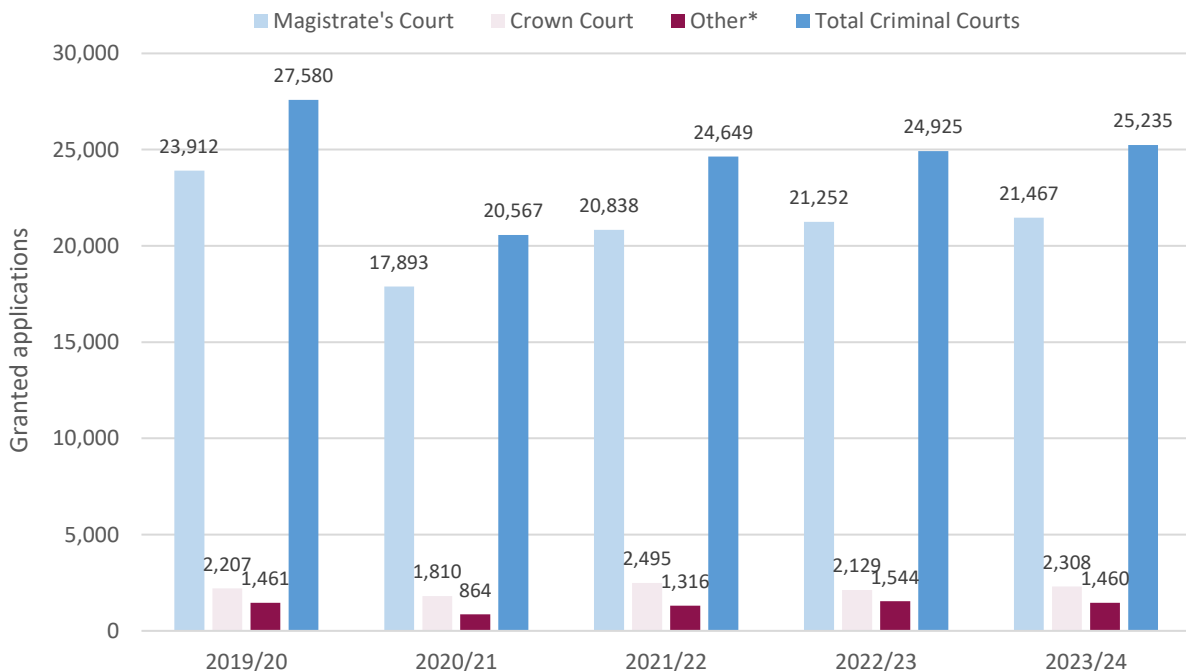


Annual Criminal Courts Applications Granted

Following a 25% (7,013) decline in Criminal Courts applications granted between 2019/20 and 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Criminal Courts applications granted has seen an increase since 2020/21 (Figure 3.2; Table A1). While the increase between 2020/21 and 2021/22 was considerable at 20% (4,082) as part of the post-COVID recovery, the increases between 2021/22 to 2022/23 and 2022/23 to 2023/24 have been small at 1% (276 and 310 respectively).

The granting of Magistrate’s Court applications continue to dominate the overall volume of Criminal Court grants on an annual basis, accounting for between 85% to 87% since 2019/20.

Figure 3.2: Annual Criminal Courts applications granted, 2019/20 – 2023/24



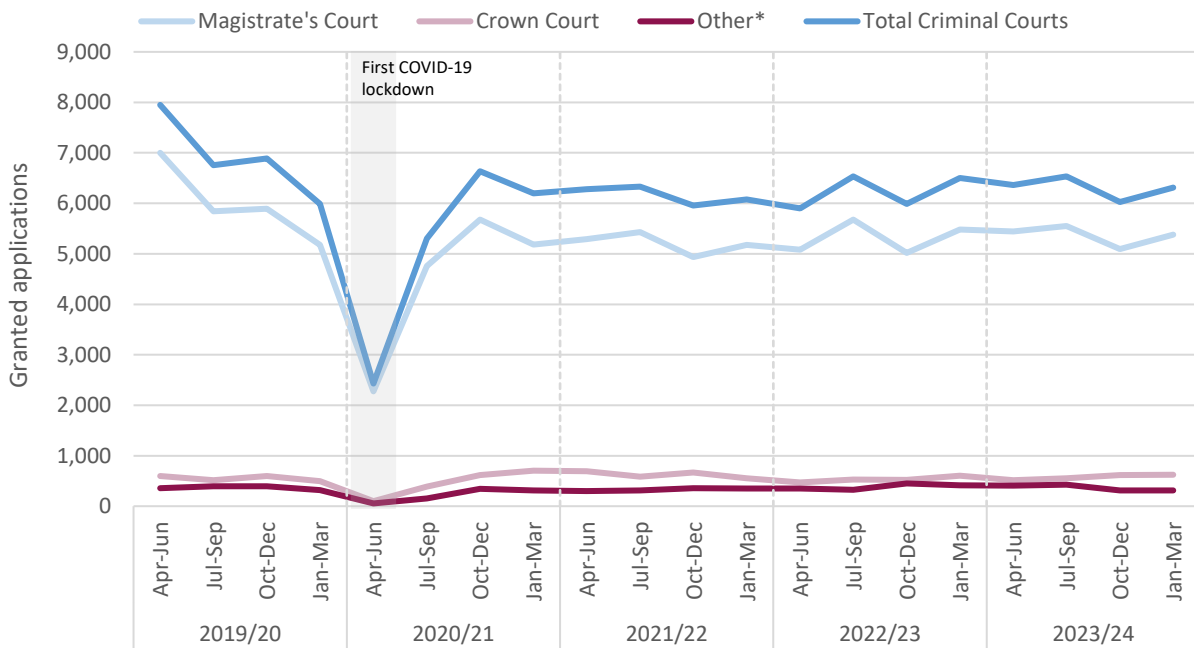
*Includes County Court of Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

Quarterly Criminal Courts Applications Granted

Criminal Courts applications granted reached a series low in Q1 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, but had returned to pre-pandemic levels by Q3 2020/21 and have been on a relatively consistent trend since this point (Figure 3.3; Table A2).

As Criminal Courts applications granted are heavily dominated by Magistrate’s Court cases, the overall Criminal Courts trend closely follows that of the Magistrate’s Court. Applications granted in relation to Crown and Other* courts have also remained on a relatively consistent trend since the post-COVID recovery in Q3 2020/21.

Figure 3.3: Quarterly Criminal Courts applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



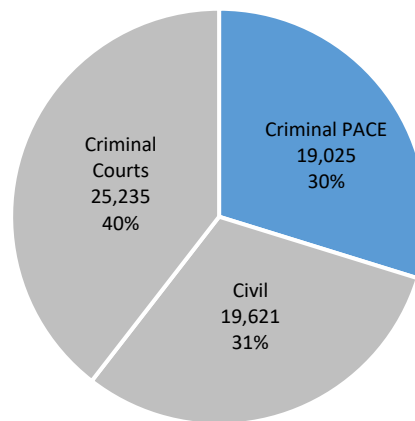
*Includes County Court of Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

3.1.2 Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)

Legal advice and representation given to those in custody at a police station (under the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984)*; PACE) constitutes the criminal side of Advice and Assistance.

Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications accounted for **30% (19,025)** of all legal aid applications granted in 2023/24 (Figure 3.4; Table A1).

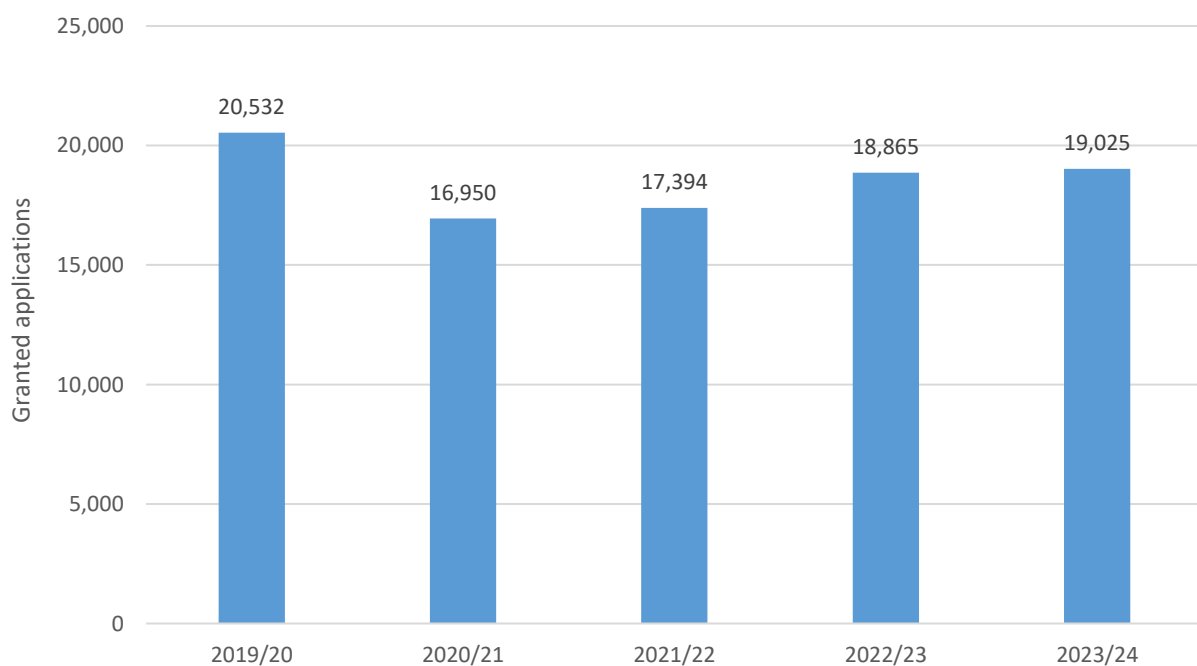
Figure 3.4: Legal aid applications granted by case type, 2023/24



Annual Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) Applications Granted

Following a notable increasing trend in Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications from 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, 2023/24 only recorded a 1% (160) increase from 2022/23 compared to an increase of 8% (1,471) the year before.

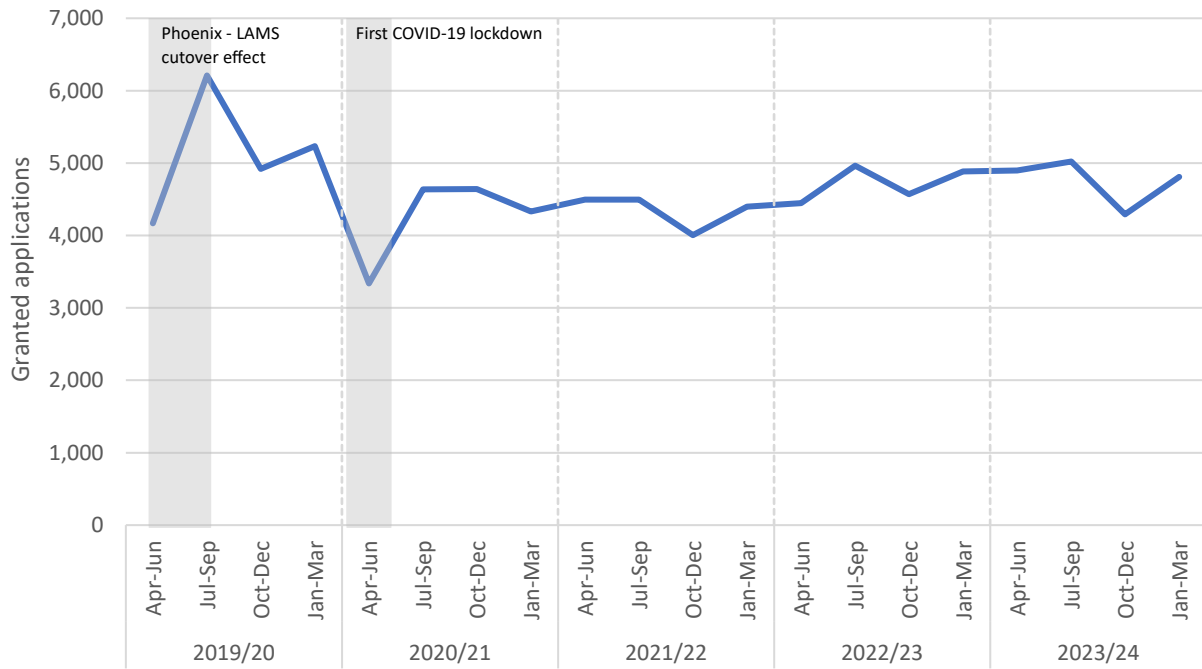
Figure 3.5: Annual Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications granted, 2019/20 – 2023/24



Quarterly Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) Applications Granted

Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications granted reached a series low in Q1 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 3.6; Table A2), but saw a considerable increase (39%; 1,301) to Q2 2020/21 and have remained on a relatively consistent trend since this point. PACE applications granted increased by 12% (517) over the quarter to Q4 2023/24, with a total of 4,811 applications granted in this latest quarter.

Figure 3.6: Quarterly Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



3.2 Criminal Authorised Expenditure

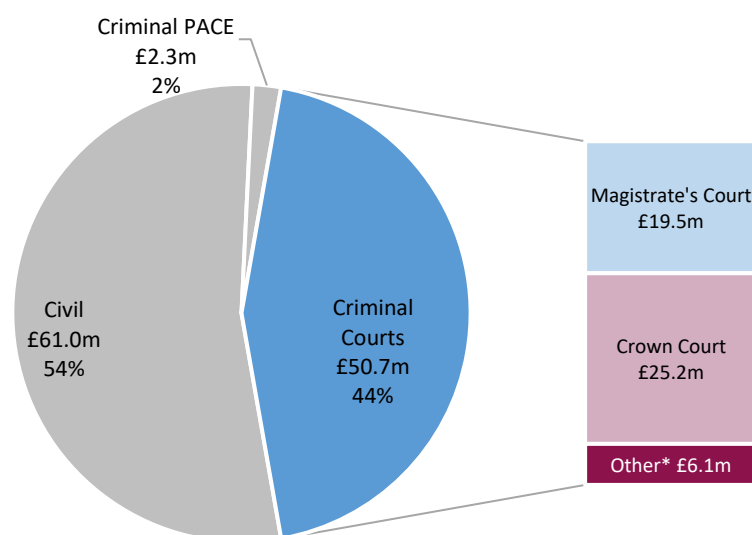
3.2.1 Criminal Courts

For presentational purposes, County Court of Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal have been grouped together in an 'Other' category within the following sections. A full breakdown of criminal court expenditure by court tier can be found in Tables A4 and A5.

While Criminal Courts cases accounted for 40% of all legal aid applications granted in 2023/24 (Section 3.1.1), they accounted for a larger proportion of the legal aid expenditure with **44% (£50.7m)** of the total authorised expenditure in 2023/24 (Figure 3.7; Table A4).

While the majority (85%) of Criminal Courts applications granted in 2023/24 were in relation to cases heard in the Magistrate's Court (Section 3.1.1), the largest proportion of Criminal Courts expenditure was in relation to Crown Court cases (50%; £25.2m). Magistrate's Court cases accounted for 38% (£19.5m) of Criminal Courts expenditure in 2023/24, with cases heard in Other* courts accounting for 12% (£6.1m).

Figure 3.7: Authorised expenditure by case type and Criminal Courts tier, 2023/24



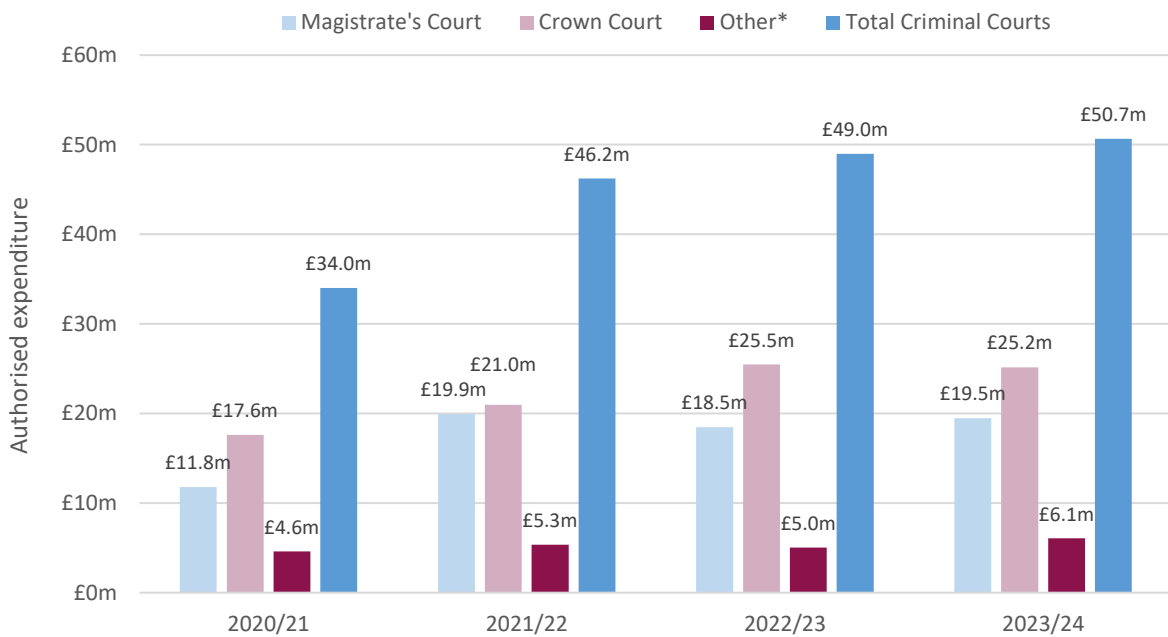
Annual Criminal Courts Authorised Expenditure

Legal aid expenditure on Criminal Courts cases has seen three consecutive years of increase between 2020/21 and 2023/24 (Figure 3.8; Table A4). The increase over the year to 2021/22 was larger at 36% (£12.2m), while Criminal Courts expenditure increased by 4% (£1.7m) between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Expenditure on Crown Court cases in 2023/24 remained relatively stable when compared to 2022/23, showing a slight decrease of 1% (£0.3m) in 2023/24 to £25.2m. In 2023/24, Magistrates Court case expenditure rose by 5% to £19.5m and expenditure on cases heard in Other* courts saw an increase of 20% to £6.1m when compared to 2022/23.

*Includes County Court of Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

Figure 3.8: Annual Criminal Courts legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2023/24

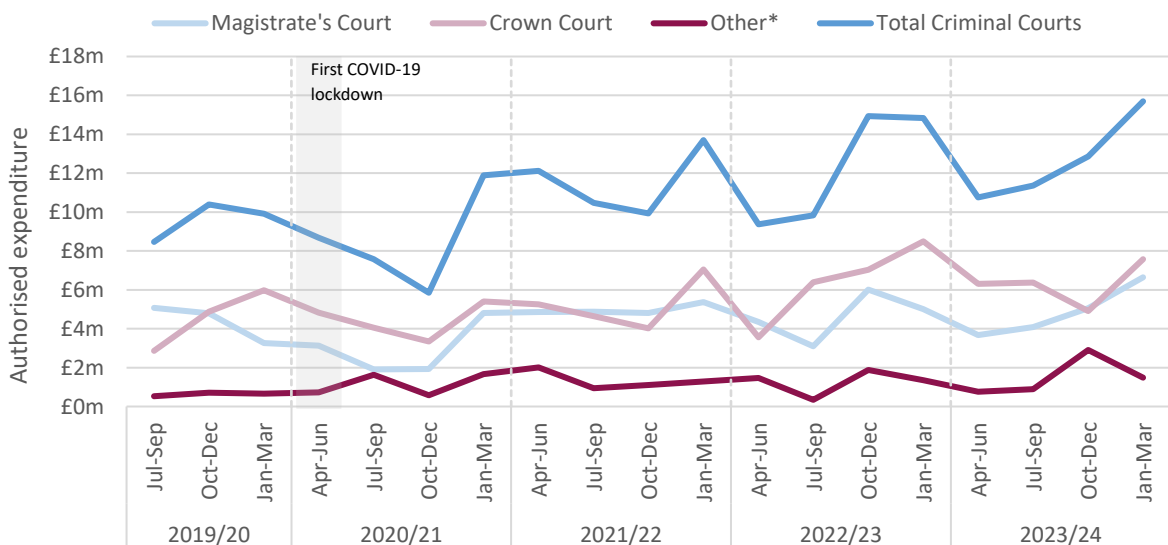


Quarterly Criminal Courts Authorised Expenditure

Total expenditure on Criminal Courts cases experienced four consecutive quarters of decline from Q3 2019/20 to Q3 2020/21; with a decrease of 44% (£4.5m) between these quarters (Figure 3.9; Table A5). This can be largely explained by the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic, when court sittings were limited and many court cases were delayed. Expenditure on Criminal Courts cases has continued to surpass pre-pandemic levels with a series high recorded in the latest quarter (£15.7m; Q4 2023/24).

During 2023/24, the average quarterly expenditure on Crown Court cases (£6.3m) remained similar to 2022/23 levels (£6.4m). Expenditure on Magistrate's Court cases showed a steady rise from Q1 2023/24 to a series high in Q4 with £6.6m.

Figure 3.9: Quarterly Criminal Courts legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24

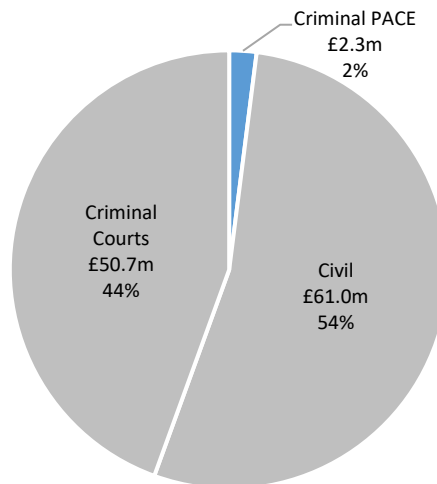


* Includes County Court of Appeal, Extradition and Criminal Court of Appeal.

3.2.2 Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)

While Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) applications accounted for 30% of all legal aid applications granted in 2023/24 ([Section 3.1.2](#)), PACE cases accounted for only **2% (£2.3m)** of the total legal aid expenditure in 2023/24 (Figure 3.10; Table A4).

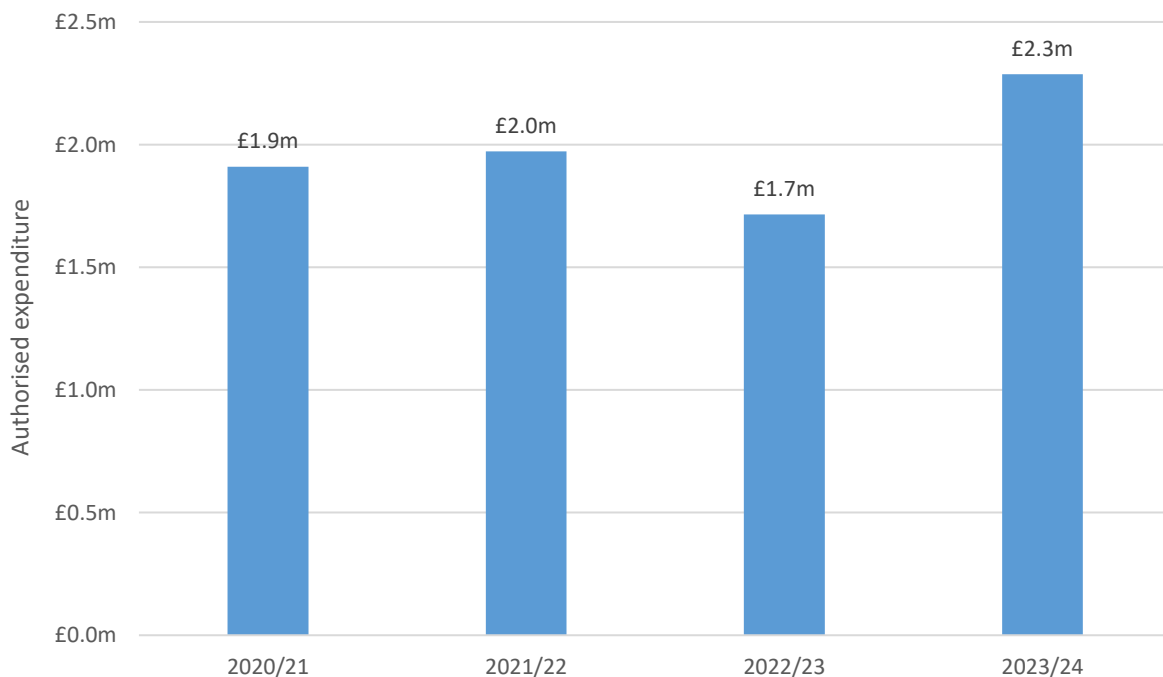
Figure 3.10: Authorised expenditure by case type, 2023/24



Annual Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) Authorised Expenditure

Following a 13% (£0.3m) decrease in PACE legal aid expenditure from 2021/22 to 2022/23, PACE expenditure increased by 33% (£0.6m) to a series high of £2.3m in 2023/24 (Figure 3.11; Table A4).

Figure 3.11: Annual Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2023/24

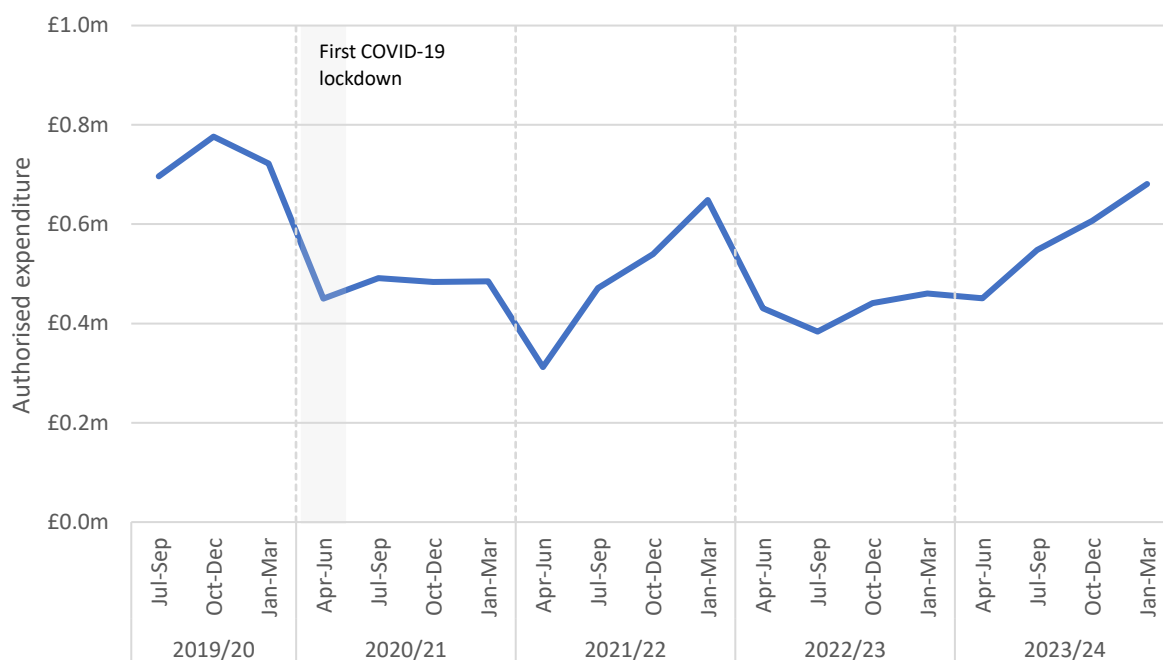


Quarterly Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) Authorised Expenditure

Quarterly expenditure on PACE cases reached a series high of £0.8m in Q3 2019/20 (Figure 3.12; Table A5). This was followed by two consecutive quarters of decline, with PACE expenditure decreasing by 42% (£0.3m) between Q3 2019/20 and Q1 2020/21. This can largely be explained by the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic; however, the quarterly trend does show that PACE expenditure usually tends to decrease in quarter one as a direct result of budget capacity.

Unlike trends seen in Criminal Courts (Figure 3.9), post-COVID levels of expenditure on PACE have not returned to pre-COVID levels. This may be due to initiatives introduced during the pandemic to comply with social distancing measures, for example video conferencing, that have remained in place while indirectly reducing costs.

Figure 3.12: Quarterly Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE) legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



4. CIVIL LEGAL AID, 2019/20 TO 2023/24

This section looks specifically at civil legal aid, both in terms of the volume of cases granted as well as the respective expenditure from the legal aid fund authorised to civil cases, the latter of which may partly relate to cases granted in previous years.

4.1 Civil grants of legal aid (family vs non-family)

4.1.1 Advice and Assistance

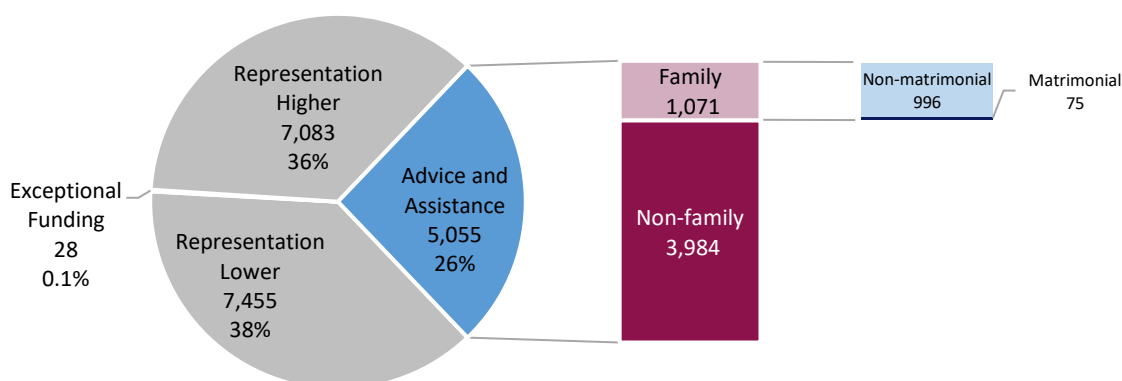
Advice and Assistance allows advice from a solicitor on any point of Northern Ireland law. It can cover many legal problems such as personal injury, divorce, disputes over children, employment matters and housing. Civil advice and assistance **excludes** criminal PACE.

Advice and Assistance applications accounted for **26% (5,055)** of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2023/24 (Figure 4.1; Table A1).

At 79% (3,984), non-family matters made up the majority of all civil Advice and Assistance applications granted in 2023/24.

In contrast, applications granted in relation to Advice and Assistance on family matters represented just over a fifth (21%; 1,071) of the total civil Advice and Assistance applications granted in 2023/24. Of these family matter grants, the vast majority (93%; 996) were in relation to non-matrimonial matters.

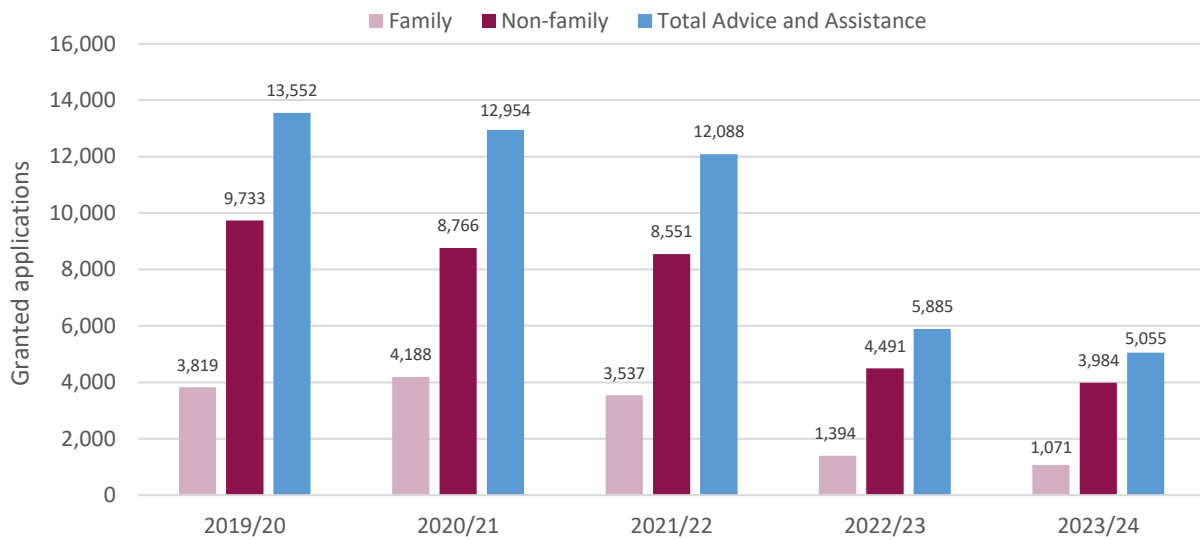
Figure 4.1: Civil legal aid applications granted by Category of Service, 2023/24



Annual Advice and Assistance Applications Granted

At 5,055, grants of civil Advice and Assistance in 2023/24 continue to display a downward trend of year-on-year decreases since 2019/20 (Figure 4.2; Table A1). The largest decrease during this period is seen between 2021/22 and 2022/23, when granted applications fell by over half (51%; 6,203) from 12,088 to 5,885. This decrease coincided with [new guidance](#) issued with effect from 21st February 2022 in respect of more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the Advice and Assistance financial eligibility test, which has led to a reduction in Advice and Assistance applications being submitted. Both family and non-family matters have seen continued reductions in the number of applications granted during 2023/24, with the decrease more pronounced within family matters (-23%) than non-family matters (-11%).

Figure 4.2: Annual Advice and Assistance applications granted, 2019/20 – 2023/24



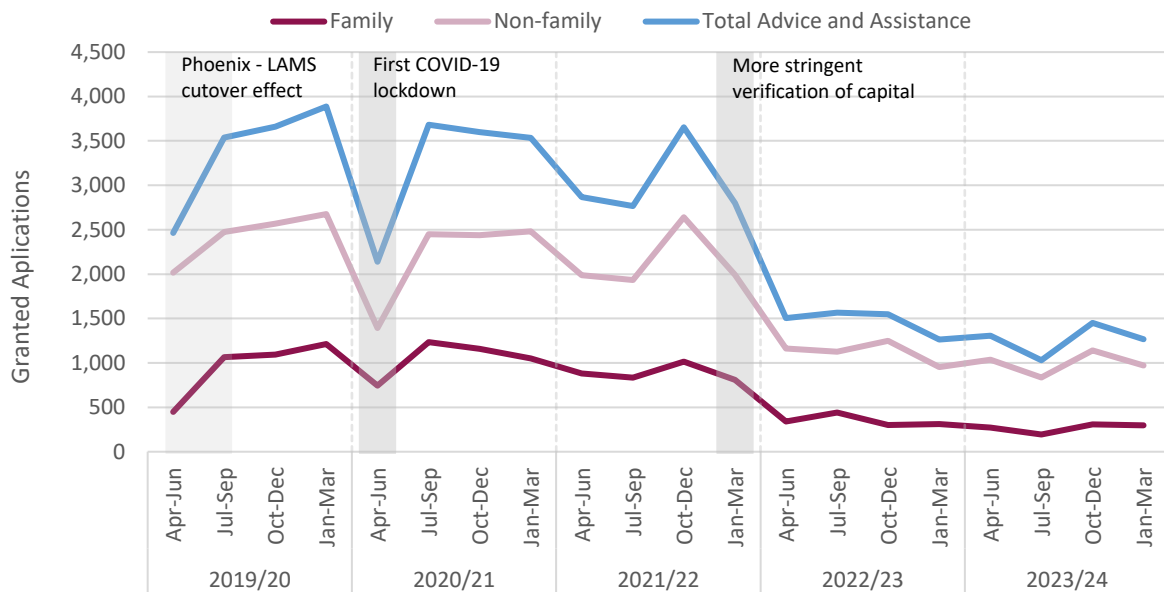
Quarterly Advice and Assistance Applications Granted

Advice and Assistance applications granted reached a series high in Q4 2019/20 (3,887) before decreasing by 45% (1,749) over the quarter to Q1 2020/21 as a result of restrictions on services in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 4.3; Table A2). Grants of Advice and Assistance applications instantly returned to near pre-COVID levels by Q2 2020/21 (3,683) and, despite a slight dip in early 2021/22, remained relatively stable until Q3 2021/22 (3,654). Since this point there has been a sharp decline, falling by 59% to 1,505 by Q1 2022/23 which coincides with [new guidance](#) issued with effect from 21st February 2022 in respect of more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the Advice and Assistance financial eligibility test.

While this drop-off in grants continued into 2023/24, resulting in a series low of 1,030 recorded in Q2, it appears that the full impact of this more stringent guidance may have been reached with a break in the overall downward trend as the number of grants stabilized in the final two quarters, finishing the year at 1,268 in Q4.

While non-family matters account for a higher proportion of the total Advice and Applications granted, it is notable that both non-family and family matters have displayed very similar trends throughout the five years ending 2023/24.

Figure 4.3: Quarterly Advice and Assistance applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



Advice and Assistance Applications Granted by Primary Nature

With the exception of Parole Matters, the impact of the more stringent financial eligibility testing on the number of civil Advice and Assistance applications granted can be seen throughout all primary natures, with evident decreases in the number of grants since 2021/22 (Figure 4.4; Table A3).

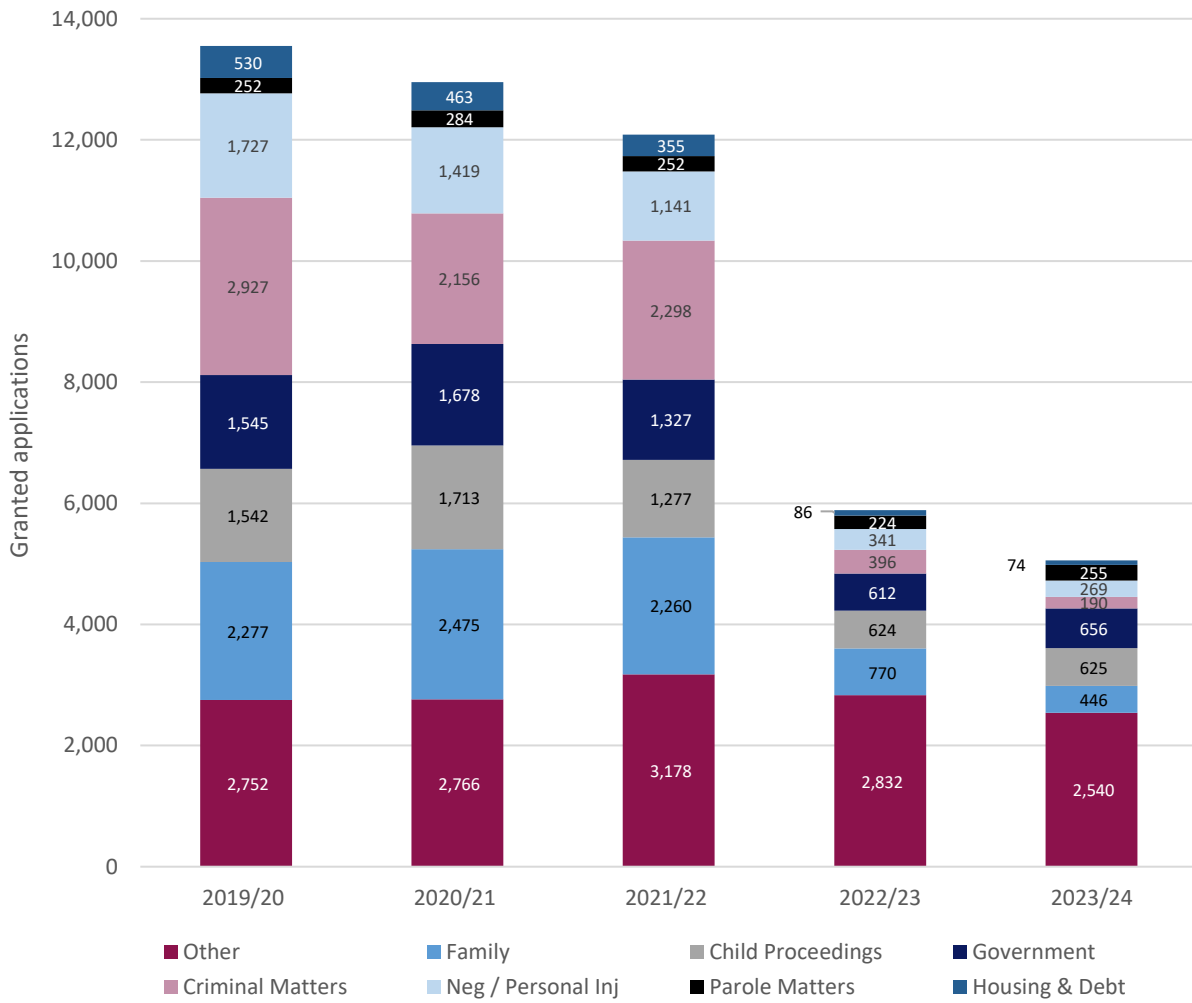
While grants for Parole Matters remained unaffected (255 in 2023/24 compared with 252 in 2021/22), the greatest impacts can be seen in applications granted for Criminal Matters and Family natures, which fell by 92% and 80% (respectively) between 2021/22 and 2023/24.

The impact is least evident in the 'Other' nature (falling by a cumulative 20% since 2021/22), within which the largest matter is Immigration (78% of 'Other' Advice and Assistance applications granted in 2023/24). Applications granted in relation to Immigration recorded two consecutive years of increase between 2020/21 and 2022/23, however they decreased by 12% (259) over the year to 2023/24.

Over the past year to 2023/24, there have been moderate increases in grants within Parole Matters (+31) and Government (+44) natures, while five natures continue to show a decline in the number of grants, with the largest declines shown within Family (-324), 'Other' (-292) and Criminal Matters (-206).

A full breakdown of civil grants, by primary nature, since 2019/20 is detailed in Table A3.

Figure 4.4: Advice and Assistance applications granted by Primary Nature, 2019/20 – 2023/24



4.1.2 Representation Lower

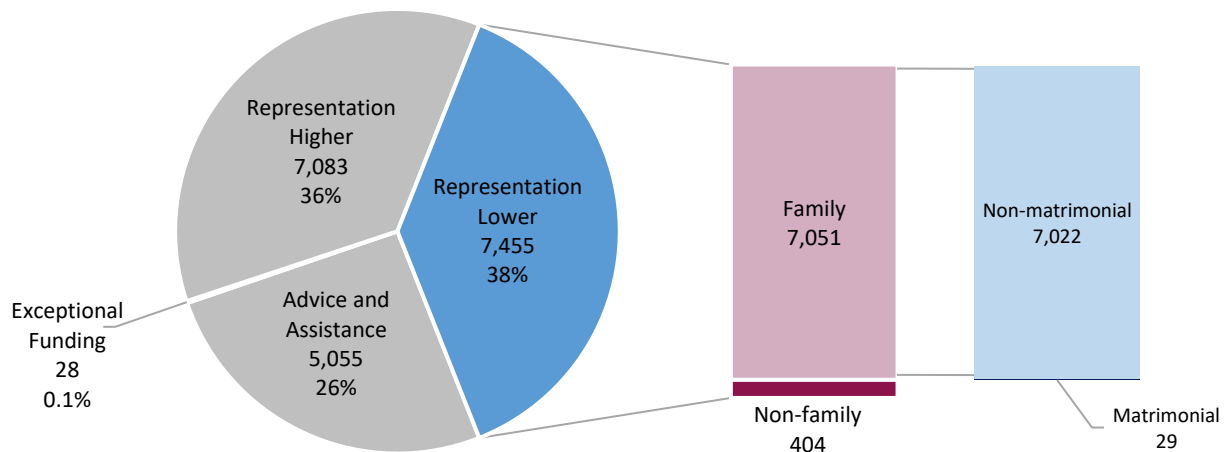
Representation Lower means representation in proceedings in the lower courts, usually the Magistrate’s Court. The types of cases heard in the Magistrates’ Courts include separation, maintenance, cases involving children, protection orders like a Non-molestation Order and paternity cases.

Representation Lower applications accounted for **38% (7,455)** of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2023/24 (Figure 4.5; Table A1).

The vast majority (95%; 7,051) of Representation Lower applications granted in 2023/24 were in relation to family matters. Of these family applications, only 0.4% (29) were in relation to matrimonial matters.

Non-family matters made up 5% (404) of all Representation Lower applications granted in 2023/24.

Figure 4.5: Civil legal aid applications granted by Category of Service, 2023/24



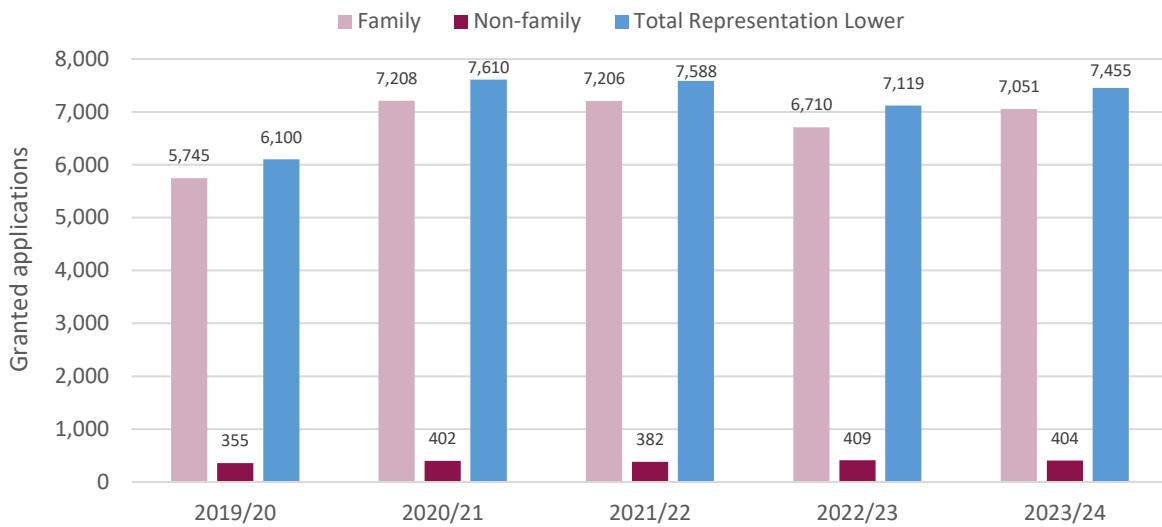
Annual Representation Lower Applications Granted

While the guidance around verification of capital that impacted upon Advice and Assistance applications also applied to Representation Lower applications, its impact within Representation Lower has been much less. While the number of civil Advice and Assistance applications granted decreased by over half (51%; 6,203) between 2021/22 and 2022/23 ([Section 4.1.1](#)), the number of Representation Lower applications granted decreased by only 6% (469) during this period (Figure 4.6).

Despite this slight dip in Representation Lower grants in 2022/23, which was driven by a reduction in granted applications for family matter cases, 2023/24 figures saw the number of grants return to near 2021/22 levels, with grants of family matter applications increasing by 5% (341) since 2022/23.

Family cases have consistently comprised between 94-95% of the total annual Representation Lower applications granted between 2019 and 2024.

Figure 4.6: Annual Representation Lower applications granted, 2019/20 – 2023/24

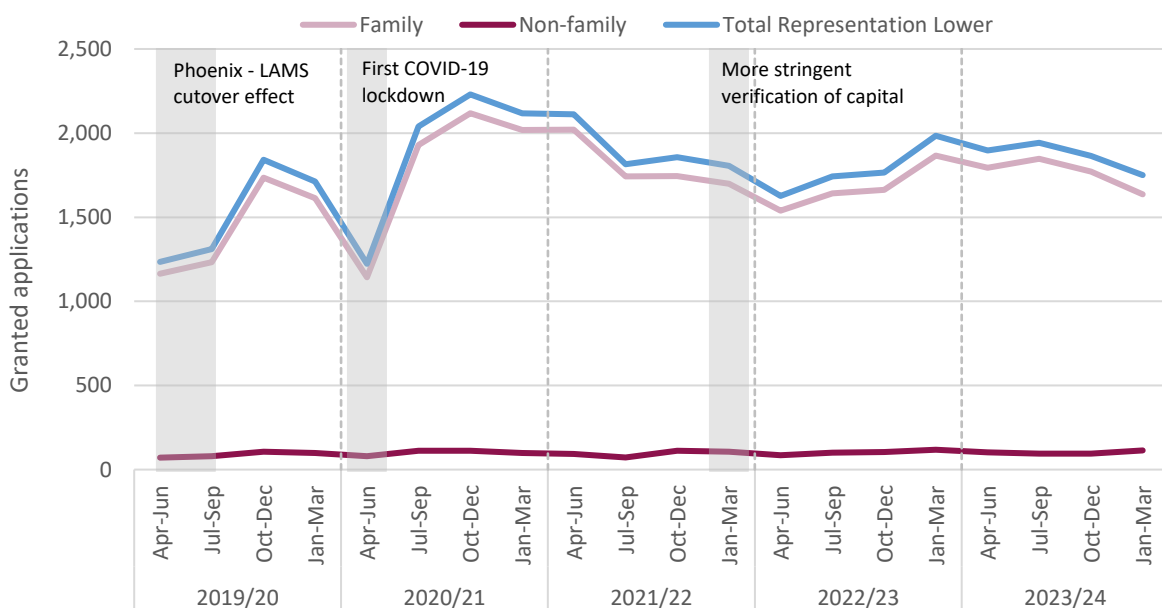


Quarterly Representation Lower Applications Granted

Similar to trends seen in the total number of legal aid applications (Figure 2.3), Representation Lower applications granted reached a series low in Q1 2020/21 as a result of a restriction on services in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. By Q2 2020/21, grants of Representation Lower applications had surpassed pre-COVID levels and remained high through the rest of that year, reaching a series high in Q3 (2,230).

While grants declined steadily throughout 2021/22, the introduction of more stringent verification of capital in the financial eligibility test does not appear to have had a meaningful impact on grants of Representation Lower applications, as the number of grants increased steadily quarter on quarter during 2022/23. There has, however, been a declining trend throughout the latest year, with total grants in Q4 2023/24 (1,750) on a par with the same quarter in 2021/22 (1,805).

Figure 4.7: Quarterly Representation Lower applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



Representation Lower Applications Granted by Primary Nature

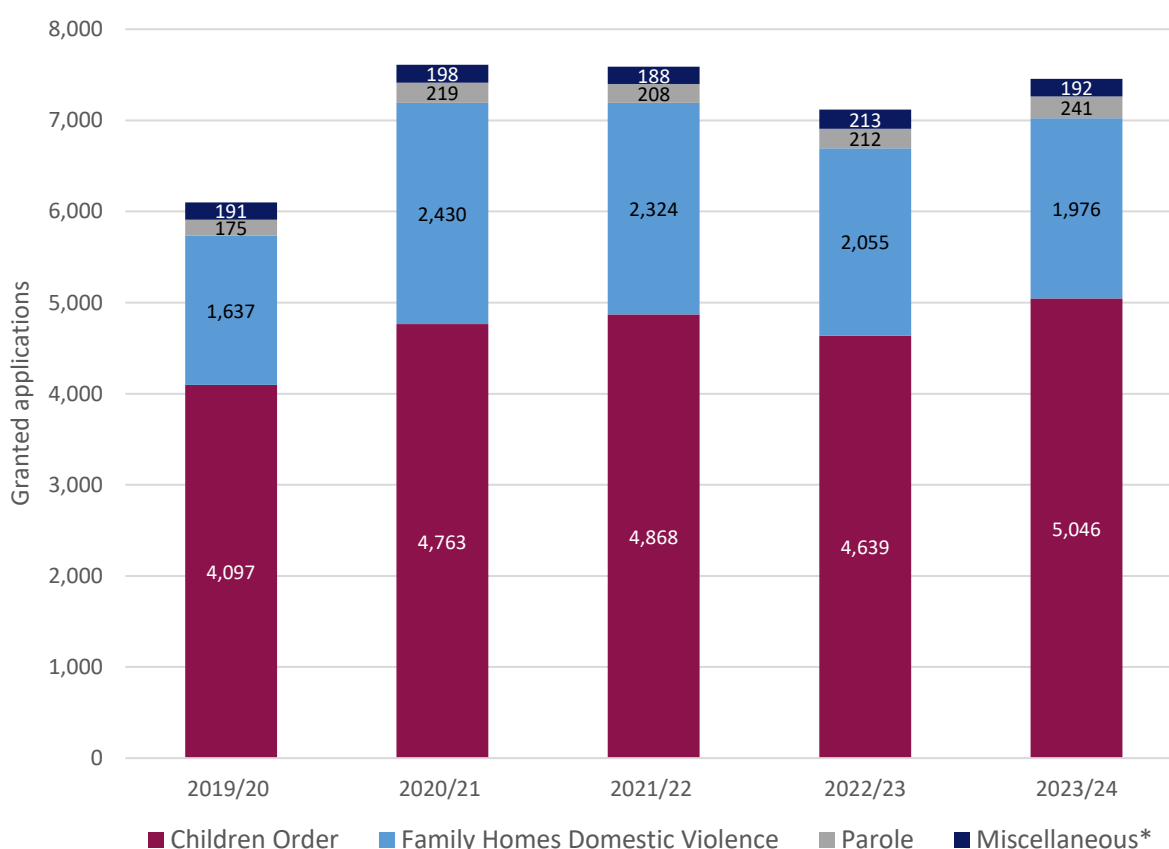
For presentational purposes, the four Representation Lower Children Order primary natures have been grouped into one category, and four primary natures (Tribunal, Quasi criminal, Maintenance and Debt / Ejectment) with small numbers of applications granted have been grouped into a ‘Miscellaneous’ category in the following section. A full breakdown of applications granted by primary natures is available in Table A3.

Applications granted for Children Order matters typically comprised around two-thirds of all annual Representation Lower grants between 2019/20 and 2023/24 (Figure 4.8) and have increased by almost a quarter (23%; 949) over this five year period to a series high of 5,046 grants in 2023/24.

Grants in relation to Family Homes Domestic Violence matters comprised between 27% and 32% of all Representation Lower applications granted between 2019/20 and 2023/24. While the number of such grants has increased in net terms by 21% (339) since 2019/20, the number granted in 2023/24 (1,976) represents the third consecutive annual decrease since a high of 2,430 was observed in 2020/21.

In contrast, Parole and Miscellaneous* natures each comprised around 3% of all Representation Lower applications granted in each year between 2019/20 and 2023/24.

Figure 4.8: Representation Lower applications granted by Primary Nature, 2019/20 – 2023/24



*Includes: Tribunal, Quasi criminal, Maintenance and Debt / Ejectment

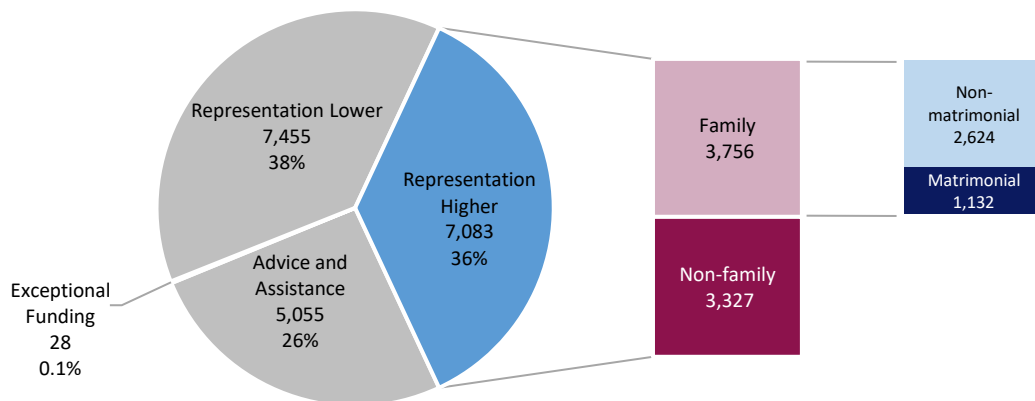
4.1.3 Representation Higher

Representation Higher means representation in proceedings in the higher courts like the County Court, High Court and Supreme Court.

Representation Higher applications accounted for **36% (7,083)** of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2023/24 (Figure 4.9; Table A1).

At 53% (3,756) a slightly higher proportion of Representation Higher grants in 2023/24 were for family matters, with the remaining 47% (3,327) for non-family cases. Within family grants, the majority (70%) related to non-matrimonial matters, with 30% granted in relation to matrimonial proceedings.

Figure 4.9: Civil legal aid applications granted by Category of Service, 2023/24

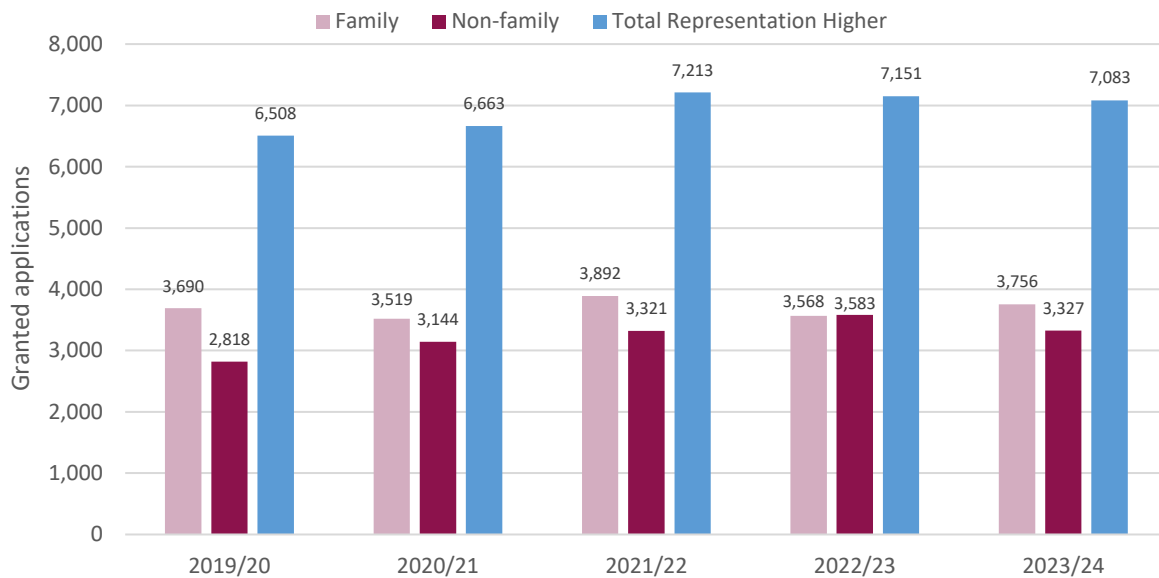


Annual Representation Higher Applications Granted

Following two consecutive years of increase in Representation Higher applications granted between 2019/20 and 2021/22 (in net terms from 6,508 to 7,213; 11%), the number of Representation Higher grants since 2021/22 shows two consecutive annual decreases, with minor falls of 1% each year to 7,083 in 2023/24 (Figure 4.10; Table A1).

While the proportion of Representation Higher grants in relation to family and non-family cases has fluctuated slightly year on year, family cases have outnumbered non-family grants in four of the last five years. While the proportions of family and non-family grants were split evenly (at 50% each) in 2022/23, the gap widened over the latest year to 53% and 47% respectively, in 2023/24, as the number of non-family grants fell (by 256; -7%) for the first time in the series and, in contrast, the number of family grants increased (by 188; 5%).

Figure 4.10: Annual Representation Higher applications granted, 2019/20 – 2023/24



Quarterly Representation Higher Applications Granted

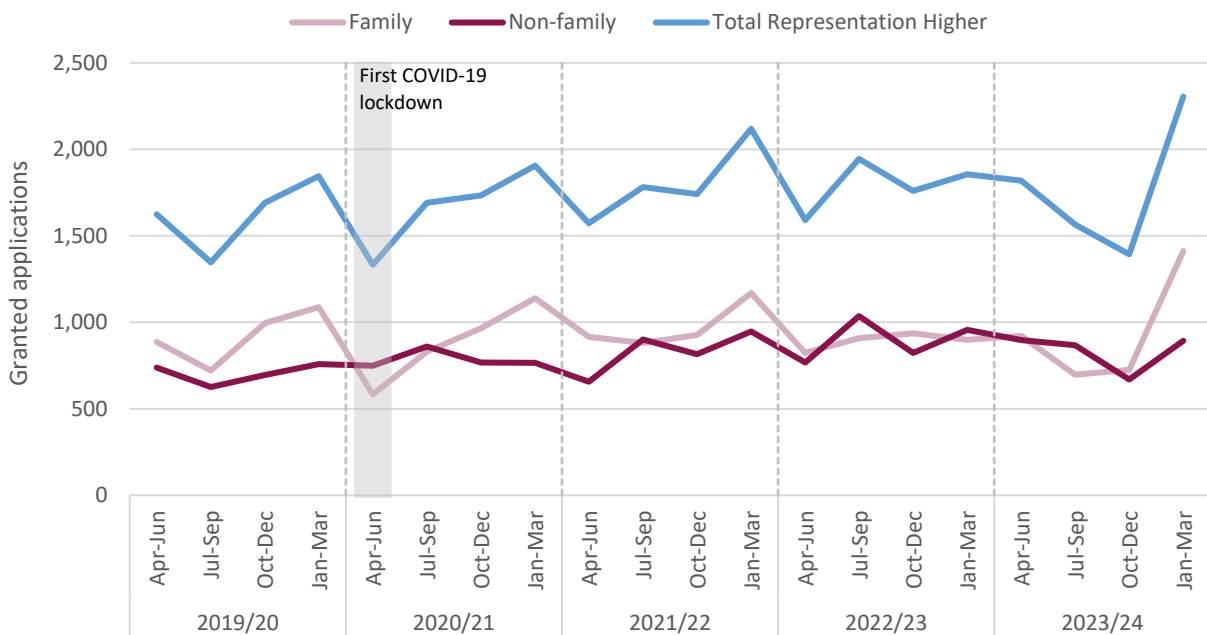
Figure 4.11 shows the quarterly distribution of Representation Higher applications granted since Q1 2019.

It is notable that the most recent year ended with a series high number of applications being granted in Q4 2023/24 (2,305), reflecting a 24% increase on the same period in the previous year (1,856 in Q4 2022/23). This overall increase was primarily driven by a near doubling in the number of family cases granted between Q3 and Q4 which increased by 95% (687), also to a series high, of 1,412 (Figure 4.11 and Table A2).

These sharp increases apparent across family and overall Representation Higher grants in the final quarter of 2023/24 immediately followed notably low numbers of grants in the previous quarter (Q3 2023/24), which was the lowest seen since Q1 2020/21, during the COVID-19 lockdown. These contrasting quarters nullify the overall impact once aggregated at an annual level as depicted in Figure 4.10 (above).

The 95% increase in the number of family cases granted between Q3 and Q4 2023/24 was dominated by Matrimonial / Civil Partnership natures which accounted for almost four-fifths (79%) of this rise and demonstrates the in-year variability underpinning annual totals.

Figure 4.11: Quarterly Representation Higher applications granted, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



Representation Higher Applications Granted by Primary Nature

For presentational purposes, the four Representation Higher Children Order primary natures have been grouped into one category, and various primary natures with small numbers of applications granted (Parole, Maintenance, Land/Property, Quasi criminal, Debt/ejectment, Family Homes Domestic Violence and Asylum & Immigration) have been grouped into a ‘Miscellaneous’ category in the following section. A full breakdown of applications granted by primary natures is available in Table A3.

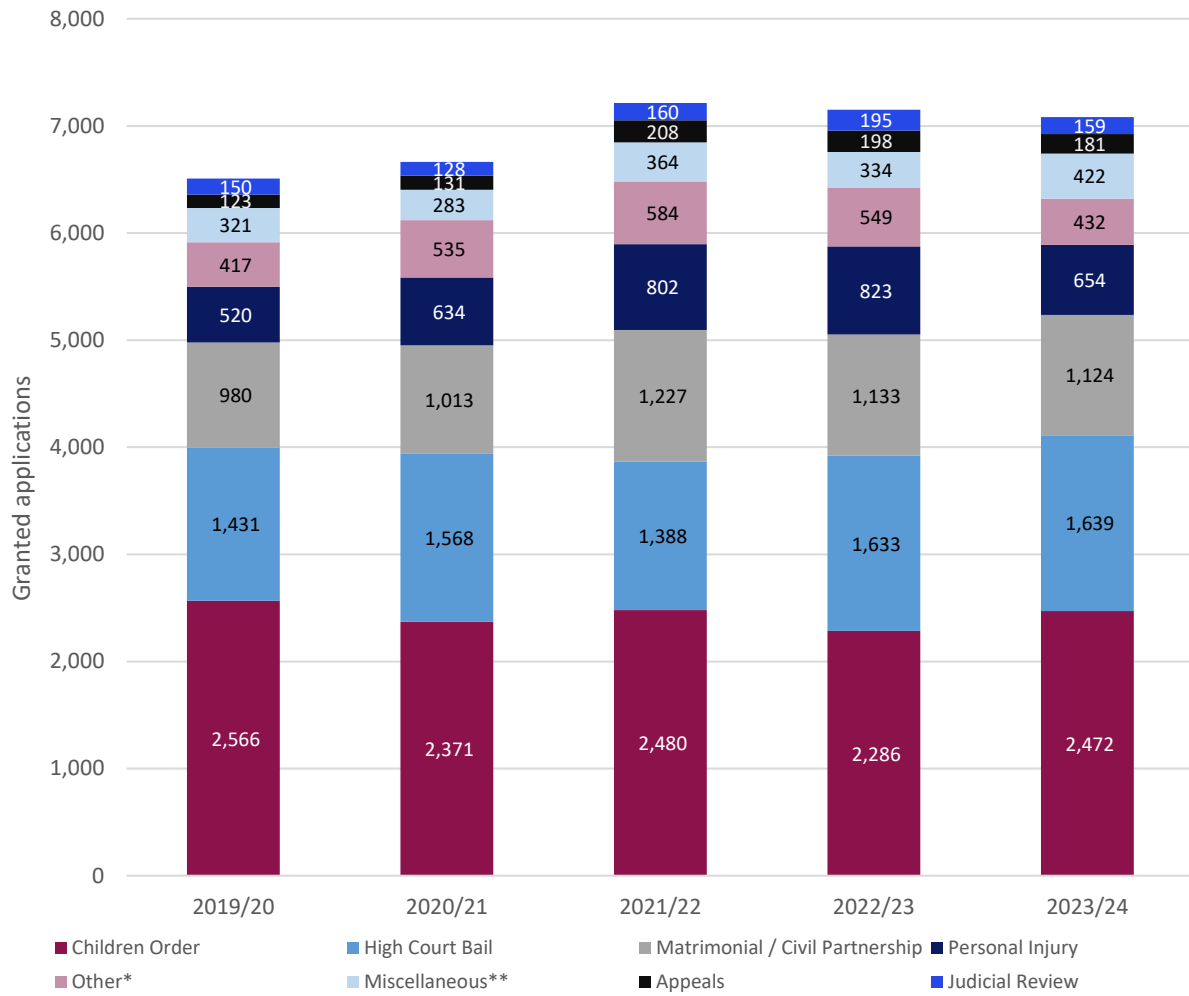
The composition of Representation Higher granted applications by Primary Nature (Figure 4.12; Table A3) has remained relatively unchanged in recent years, with around three-quarters of all Representation Higher grants being in relation to Children Order, High Court Bail and Matrimonial/Civil Partnership natures, since 2019/20.

In 2023/24, over one-third (35%) of grants were Children Order related, with almost a quarter (23%) accounting for High Court Bail.

It is apparent that Judicial Reviews and Appeals comprise the smallest proportions of Representation Higher applications granted, at 2% (159) and 3% (181), respectively, in 2023/24.

As outlined previously, the spike in Matrimonial / Civil Partnership grants seen in Q4 2023/24 did average out across the year resulting in total grants of 1,124 in 2023/24, consistent with 1,133 granted in 2022/23.

Figure 4.12: Representation Higher applications granted by Primary Nature, 2019/20 – 2023/24



*Includes matters such as injunctions and breach of order/contract.

**Includes: Parole; Maintenance; Land/property; Quasi criminal; Debt/ejectment; Family Homes Domestic Violence; and Asylum & Immigration

4.1.4 Exceptional Funding

Exceptional funding allows representation in cases (such as inquests) which are not covered by any other legal aid scheme.

Grants of Exceptional Funding applications accounted for only **0.1% (28)** of the total civil legal aid grants in 2023/24. Of these 28, over four fifths (82%; 23) were in relation to Inquests; while the remaining five were in relation to A breach of the Human Rights Act or enforceable EU rights (Table A1).

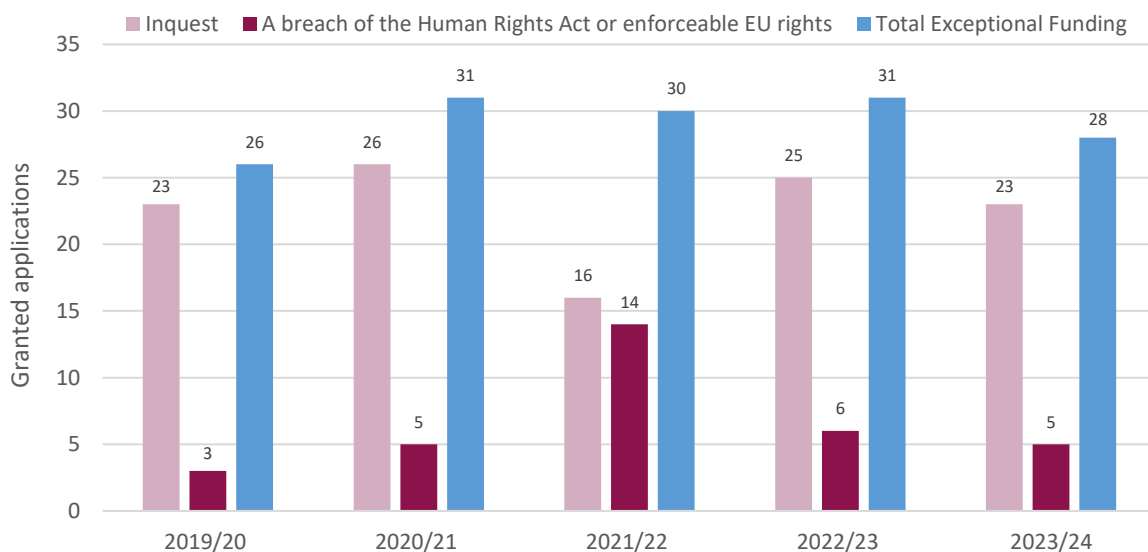
Annual Exceptional Funding Applications Granted

The number of Exceptional Funding grants has remained relatively consistent over the past five years, ranging from 26 to 31 (Figure 4.13; Table A1), equating to an annual average of 29.

While Exceptional Funding is much more likely to be granted for Inquests than A Breach of the Human Rights Act or enforceable EU rights, typically by a ratio of at least 4:1, it is notable that in 2021/22, this disparity was almost non-existent when 16 and 14 applications (respectively) were granted.

Due to the small numbers of Exceptional Funding applications, it is not appropriate to look for trends at a quarterly level, however a quarterly breakdown is included within Table A2.

Figure 4.13: Annual Exceptional Funding applications granted, 2019/20 – 2023/24



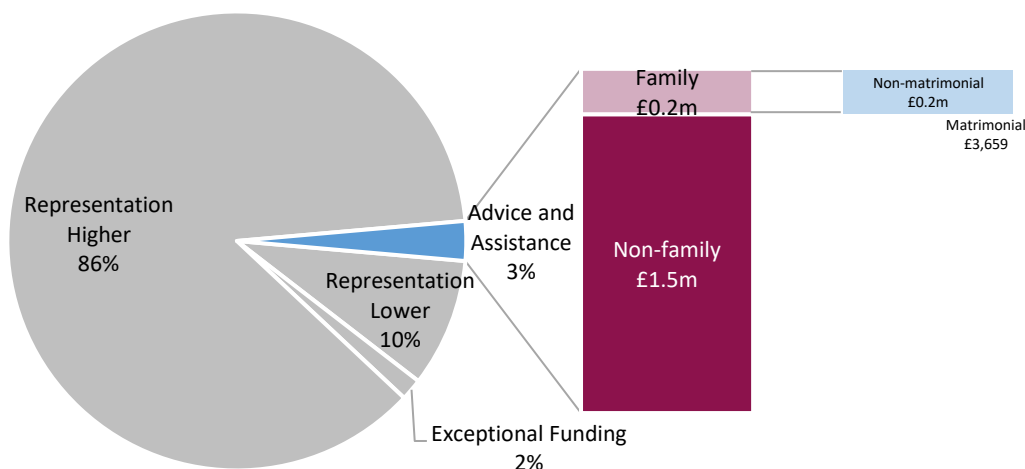
4.2 Civil authorised expenditure (family vs non-family)

4.2.1 Advice and Assistance

While Advice and Assistance cases accounted for 26% of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2023/24 ([Section 4.1.1](#)), they accounted for a much smaller proportion of the expenditure at **3% (£1.7m)** of the total civil legal aid expenditure in 2023/24 (Figure 4.14; Table A4).

Advice and Assistance non-family cases made up the majority (87%; £1.5m) of the total Advice and Assistance legal aid expenditure in 2023/24 with a £0.2m spend on family matters. Of the expenditure on family matters, 2% (£4k) was in relation to matrimonial matters.

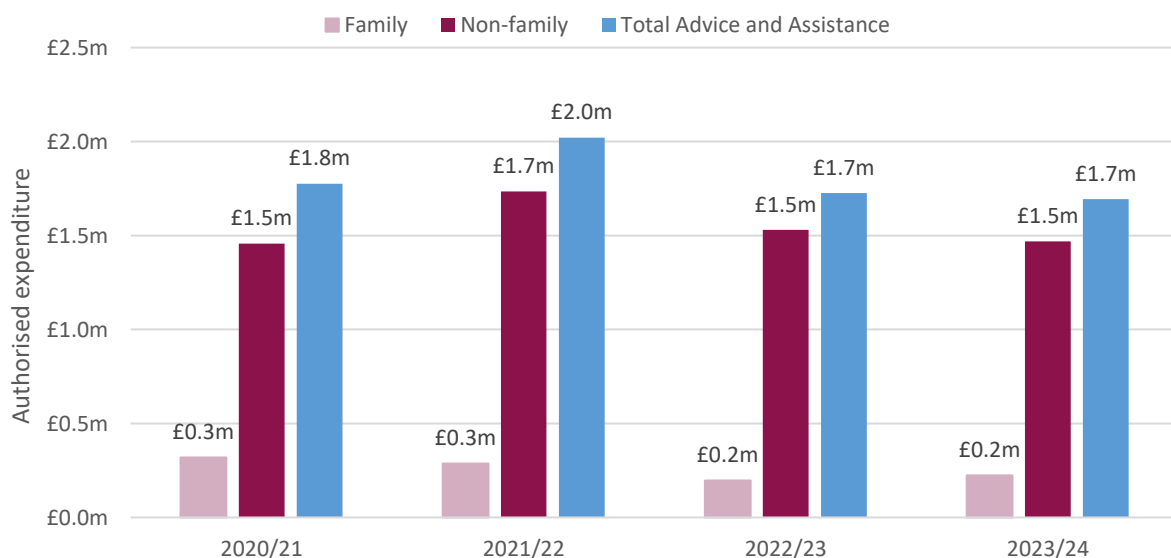
Figure 4.14: Civil authorised expenditure by Category of Service, 2023/24



Annual Advice and Assistance Authorised Expenditure

Following a 15% decrease in expenditure in relation to Advice and Assistance between 2021/22 and 2022/23, 2023/24 showed a broadly consistent spend when compared to 2022/23 with an overall expenditure of just under £1.7m. Non-family expenditure accounted for just under £1.5m with Family spend just over £0.2m in 2023/24.

Figure 4.15: Annual Advice and Assistance legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2023/24

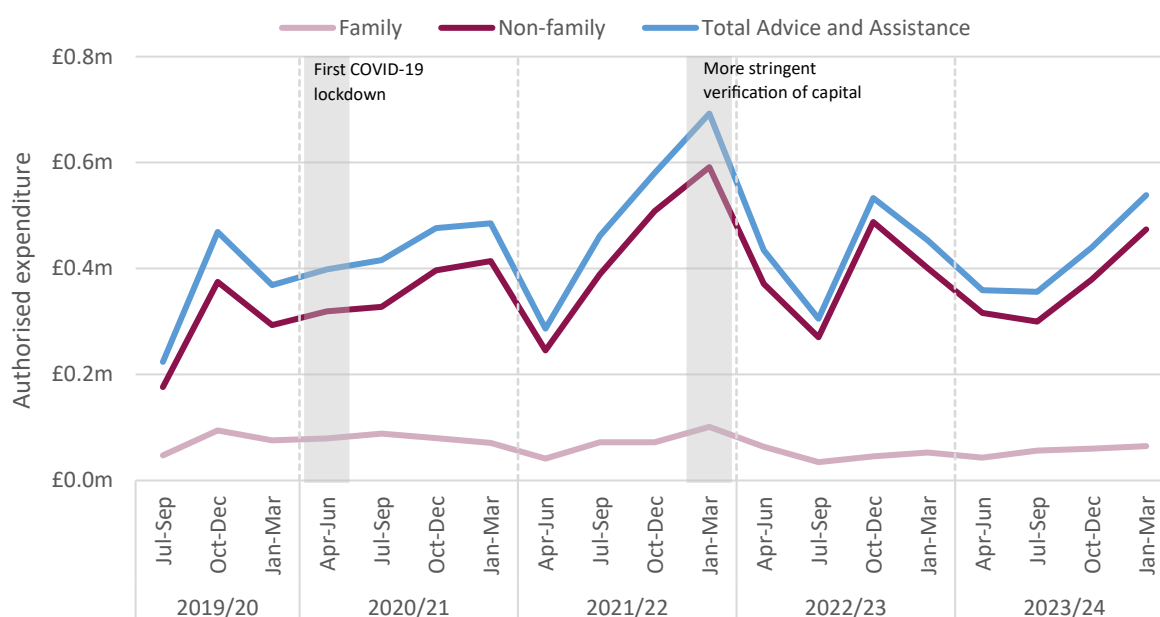


Quarterly Advice and Assistance Authorised Expenditure

Advice and Assistance expenditure in Q4 2023/24 was 46% (£0.2m) higher than in Q4 2019/20; however it was over a fifth lower (22%; £0.2m) than the series high recorded in Q4 2021/22 (Figure 4.16; Table A5). Three consecutive quarters of increase in Advice and Assistance expenditure were recorded between Q1 2021/22 and the series high in Q4 2021/22. During Q4 2021/22, new guidance was issued in respect of more stringent verification of capital threshold as part of the Advice and Assistance financial eligibility test which led to a reduction in Advice and Assistance applications (see [Section 4.1.1](#)).

As Advice and Assistance expenditure is predominantly comprised of costs for non-family cases, as expected, the overall trend in Advice and Assistance expenditure mirrors that of non-family.

Figure 4.16: Quarterly Advice and Assistance legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24

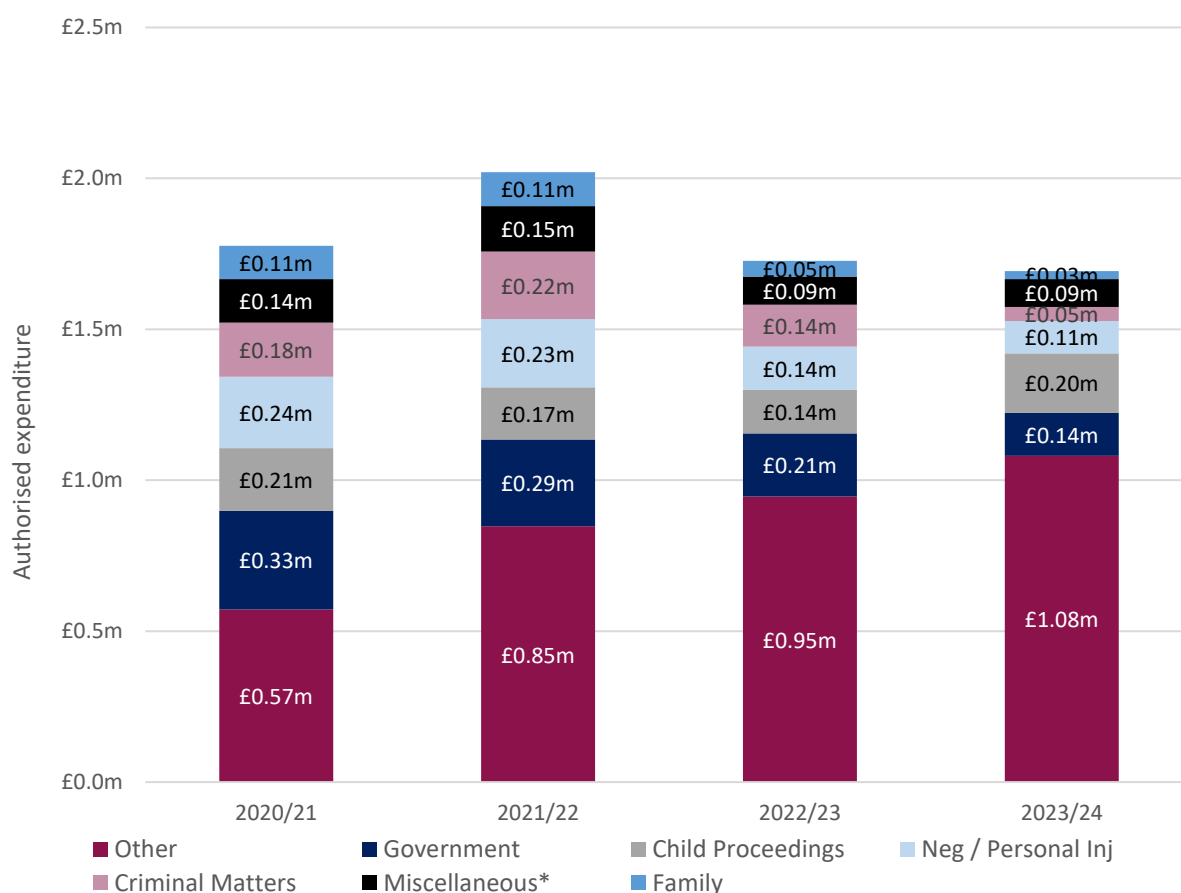


For presentational purposes, two primary natures (Parole Matters and Housing & Debt) with relatively small expenditure have been grouped into a 'Miscellaneous' category in the following section. A full breakdown of expenditure by primary natures is available in Table A6.

Expenditure on 'Other' Advice and Assistance cases has been on a continually increasing trend from 2020/21 to 2023/24 (Figure 4.17; Table A6). Over two thirds (67%; £0.7m) of Advice and Assistance 'Other' nature expenditure in 2023/24 was in relation to Immigration matters which has seen a 125% (£0.4m) increase on expenditure from 2020/21. Advice and Assistance Child Proceedings expenditure increased by 36% (£52k) in 2023/24 when compared to the previous year.

Conversely, expenditure on Advice and Assistance Government and Negligence/Personal Injury cases experienced three consecutive years of decrease between 2020/21 and 2023/24. Advice and Assistance expenditure on Government matters decreased by 56% (£0.2m) between 2020/21 and 2023/24; while expenditure on Negligence/Personal Injury cases decreased by 55% (£0.1m) during this period.

Figure 4.17: Advice and Assistance expenditure by Primary Nature, 2020/21 – 2023/24



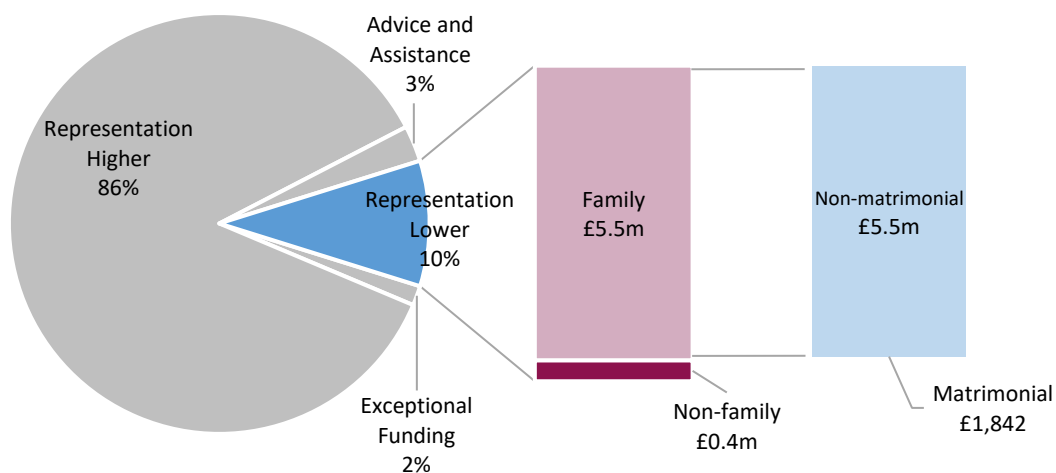
*Includes Parole Matters and Housing & Debt

4.2.2 Representation Lower

While Representation Lower cases accounted for 38% of all civil legal aid applications granted in 2023/24 (Figure 4.5), they represented a smaller proportion of the expenditure, at **10% (£5.9m)** of the total 2023/24 civil legal aid authorised expenditure (Figure 4.18; Table A4).

Of the Representation Lower expenditure in 2023/24, the vast majority (93%; £5.5m) was in relation to family cases; while just 7% (£0.4m) was in relation to non-family cases. Of the Representation Lower family expenditure, almost all was in relation to non-matrimonial cases.

Figure 4.18: Civil authorised expenditure by Category of Service, 2023/24

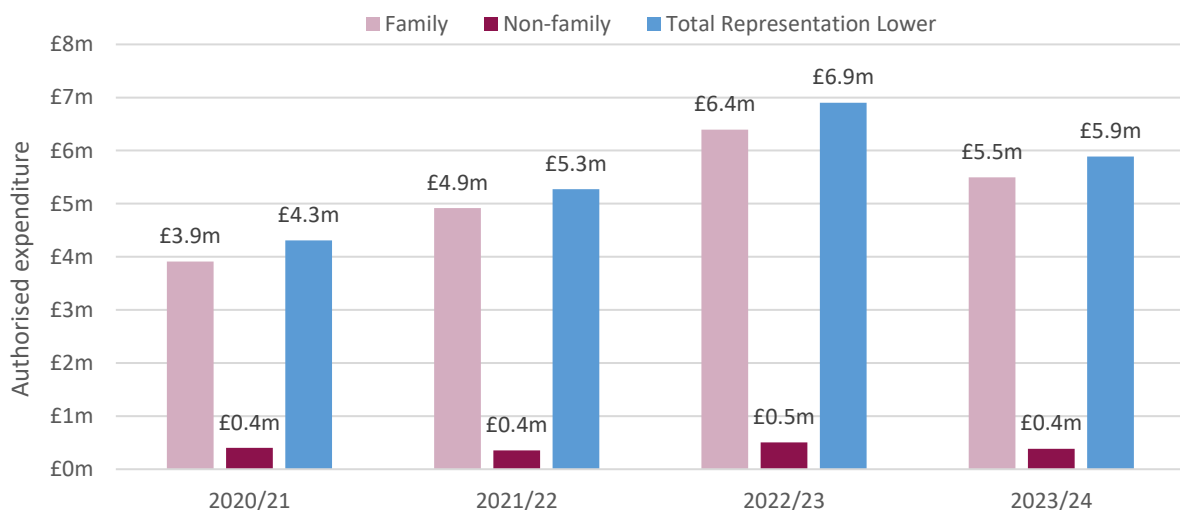


Annual Representation Lower Authorised Expenditure

Following two consecutive years of increases in expenditure on Representation Lower cases between 2020/21 and 2022/23, expenditure on these case types decreased by 15% (£1.0m) over the year to 2023/24 (Figure 4.19). This has been largely driven by a decrease in expenditure on family cases between 2022/23 and 2023/24 (-£0.9m; -14%).

Expenditure on non-family Representation Lower cases has remained relatively stable throughout the time series.

Figure 4.19: Annual Representation Lower legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2023/24

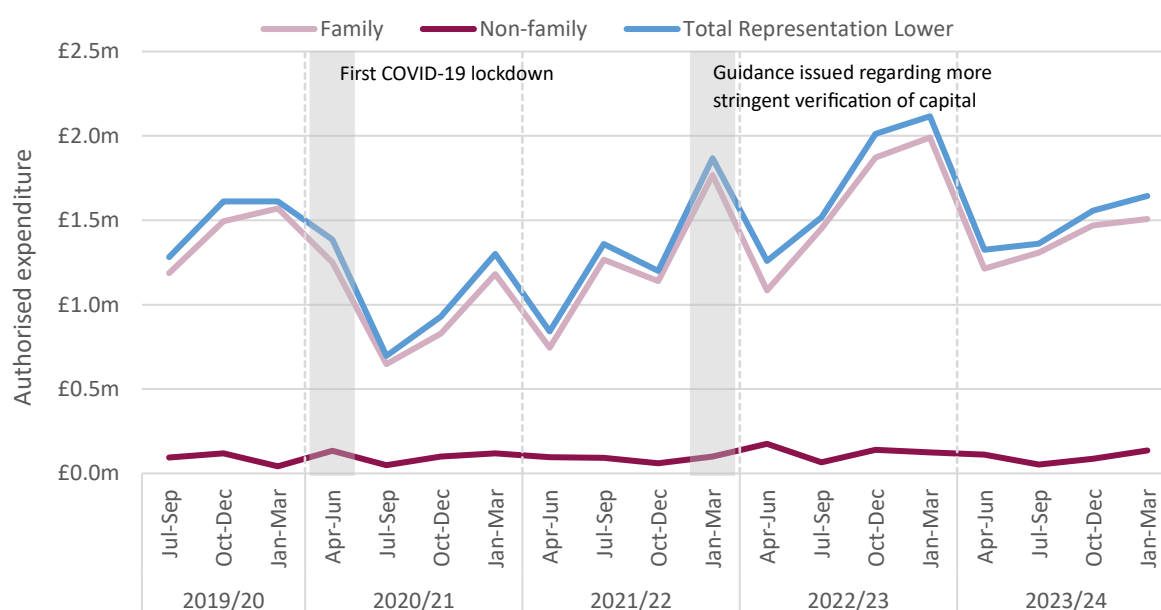


Quarterly Representation Lower Authorised Expenditure

Throughout the quarterly series, Representation Lower authorised expenditure has recorded decreases in quarter one. The decrease over the quarter to quarter one 2023/24 was the largest in this series at 37% (-£0.8m). This was followed by three consecutive quarters of increase in Representation Lower expenditure to quarter four 2023/24. The latest estimate is however 22% (£0.5m) lower than the same quarter in the previous year.

As Representation Lower expenditure is largely comprised of costs for family cases, the overall trend in Representation Lower expenditure mirrors that of family expenditure. Quarterly expenditure on non-family Representation Lower cases has remained relatively consistent throughout the time series.

Figure 4.20: Quarterly Representation Lower legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



Representation Lower Authorised Expenditure by Primary Nature

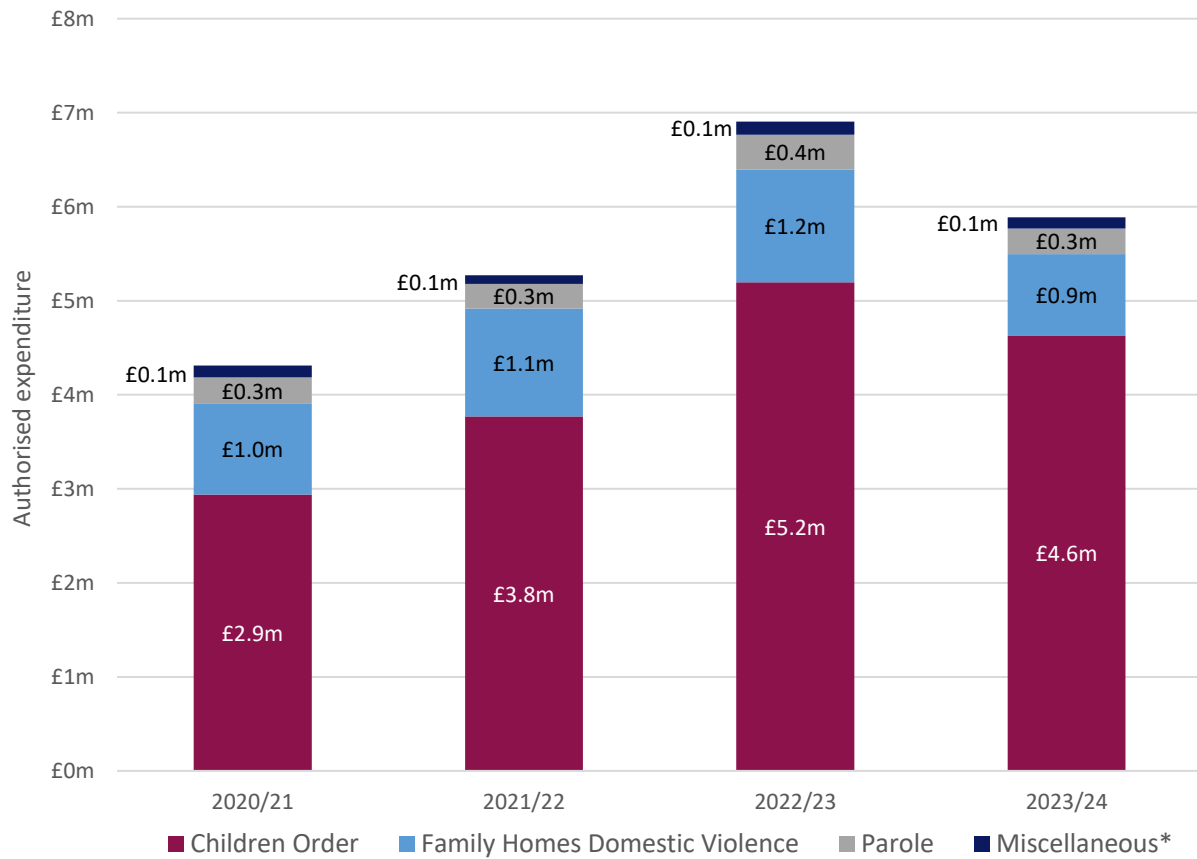
For presentational purposes, the four Representation Lower Children Order primary natures have been grouped into one category, and three primary natures (Tribunal, Quasi criminal and Maintenance) with relatively small expenditure have been grouped into a 'Miscellaneous' category in the following section. A full breakdown of expenditure by primary natures is available in Table A6.

Almost four fifths (79%; £4.6m) of the 2023/24 Representation Lower expenditure was in relation to Children Order cases (Figure 4.21). While there were two consecutive years of increases in expenditure on Representation Lower Children Order cases between 2020/21 and 2022/23, the overall decrease in Representation Lower expenditure over the year to 2023/24 (-£1.0m) has been largely driven by a decrease in expenditure on Children Order cases (-11%; -£0.6m).

Following two consecutive years of increases in expenditure on Representation Lower Family Homes Domestic Violence cases between 2020/21 and 2022/23, expenditure on these case types decreased by 28% (£0.3m) over the year to 2023/24.

Expenditure on Representation Lower parole and miscellaneous* cases both saw decreases over the year to 2023/24; with parole expenditure decreasing by 27% (£0.1m) and miscellaneous expenditure decreasing by 14% (£0.02m).

Figure 4.21: Representation Lower expenditure by Primary Nature, 2020/2021 – 2023/2024



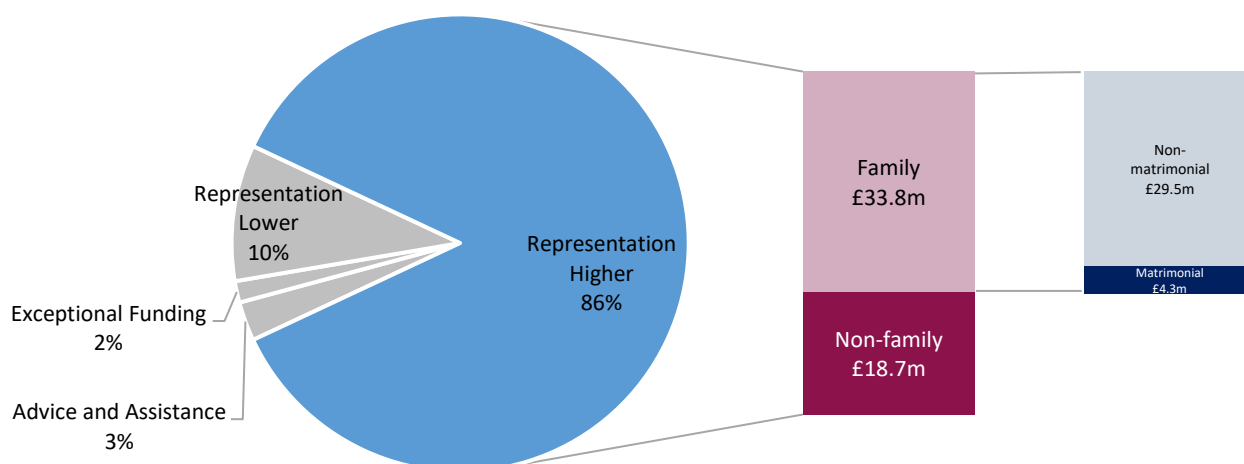
* Includes Tribunal, Quasi criminal and Maintenance.

4.2.3 Representation Higher

Although Representation Higher cases accounted for 36% of all civil granted applications in 2023/24 (Figure 4.9), they accounted for a larger proportion of the expenditure, at **86% (£52.5m)** of civil legal aid expenditure in this year (Figure 4.22; Table A4).

Almost two thirds (64%; £33.8m) of Representation Higher authorised expenditure in 2023/24 was in relation to family cases; with the remaining 36% (£18.7m) relating to non-family cases. In terms of Representation Higher family expenditure, the majority (87%; £29.5m) was in relation to non-matrimonial cases, while 13% (£4.3m) was in relation to matrimonial cases.

Figure 4.22: Civil authorised expenditure by Category of Service, 2023/24

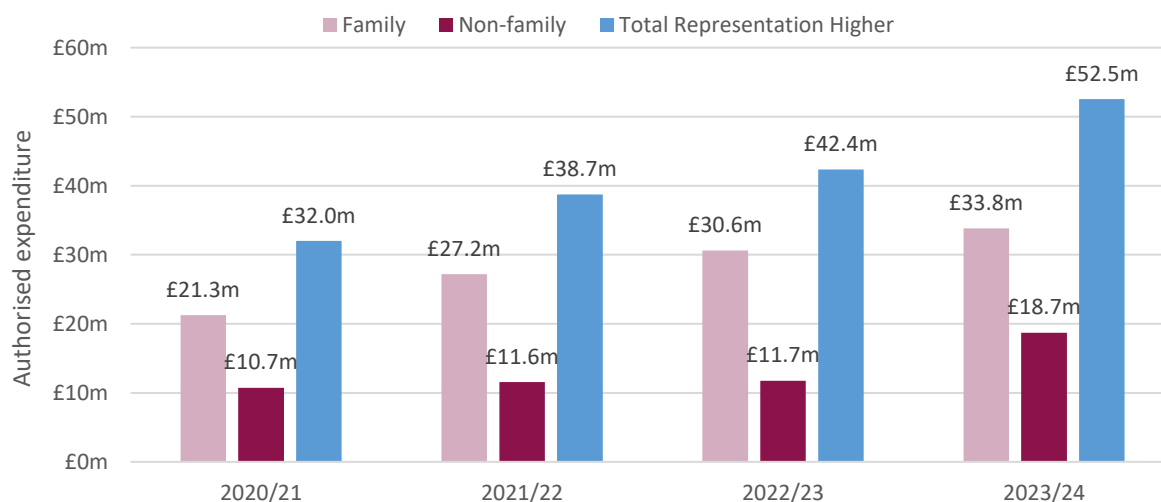


Annual Representation Higher Authorised Expenditure

Expenditure on Representation Higher cases has been on a continually increasing trend between 2020/21 and 2023/24 when considering the total annual expenditure (Figure 4.23; Table A4).

Expenditure on Representation Higher cases increased by almost a quarter (24%; £10.2m) between 2022/23 and 2023/24. This was largely driven by an increase in expenditure on non-family cases (+59%; +£7.0m) from 2022/23 to 2023/24. Annual Representation Higher expenditure on family cases increased by a tenth (10%; £3.2m) between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

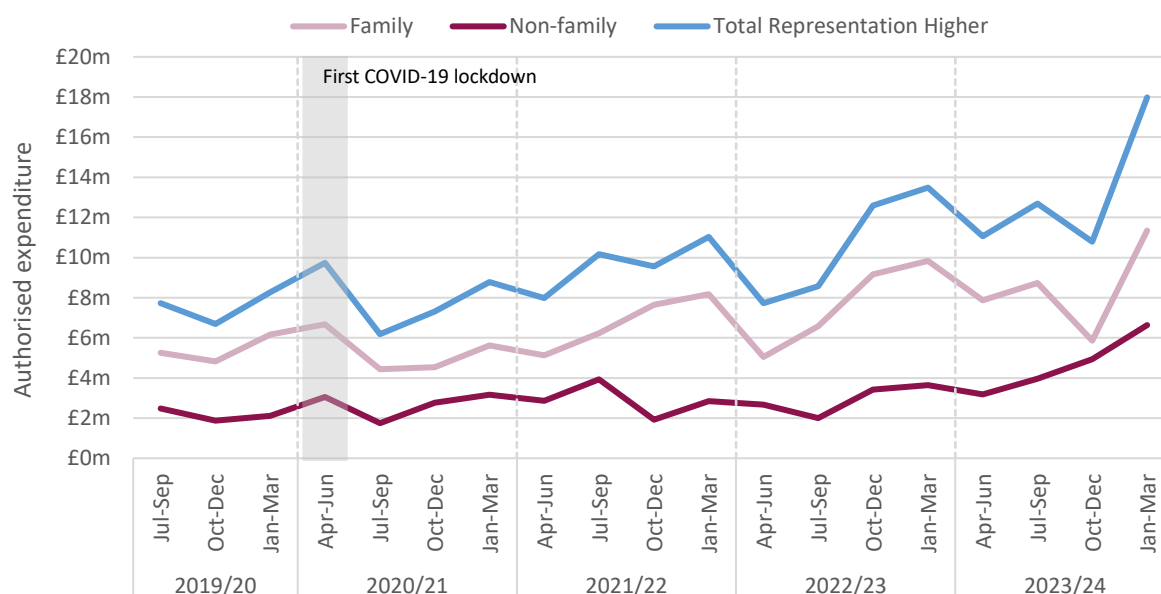
Figure 4.23: Annual Representation Higher legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2023/24



Quarterly Representation Higher Authorised Expenditure

Overall, Representation Higher expenditure has been on an increasing trend between Q2 2019/20 and Q4 2023/24 (Figure 4.24; Table A5), with the series high recorded in the most recent quarter (£18.0m; Q4 2023/24). There has been an increase of a third (33%, £4.5m) in Representation Higher expenditure between Q4 2022/23 and Q4 2023/24 – this has been largely driven by increases in non-family expenditure over this time period (+82%; +£3.0m). Representation Higher non-family expenditure has experienced quarter-on-quarter growth throughout 2023/24.

Figure 4.24: Quarterly Representation Higher legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



Representation Higher Authorised Expenditure by Primary Nature

For presentational purposes, the four Representation Higher Children Order primary natures have been grouped into one category, and various primary natures with relatively small expenditure (Parole, Maintenance, Land/property, Quasi criminal, Debt/ejectment, Family Homes Domestic Violence and Asylum & Immigration) have been grouped into a ‘Miscellaneous’ category in the following section. A full breakdown of expenditure by primary natures is available in Table A6.

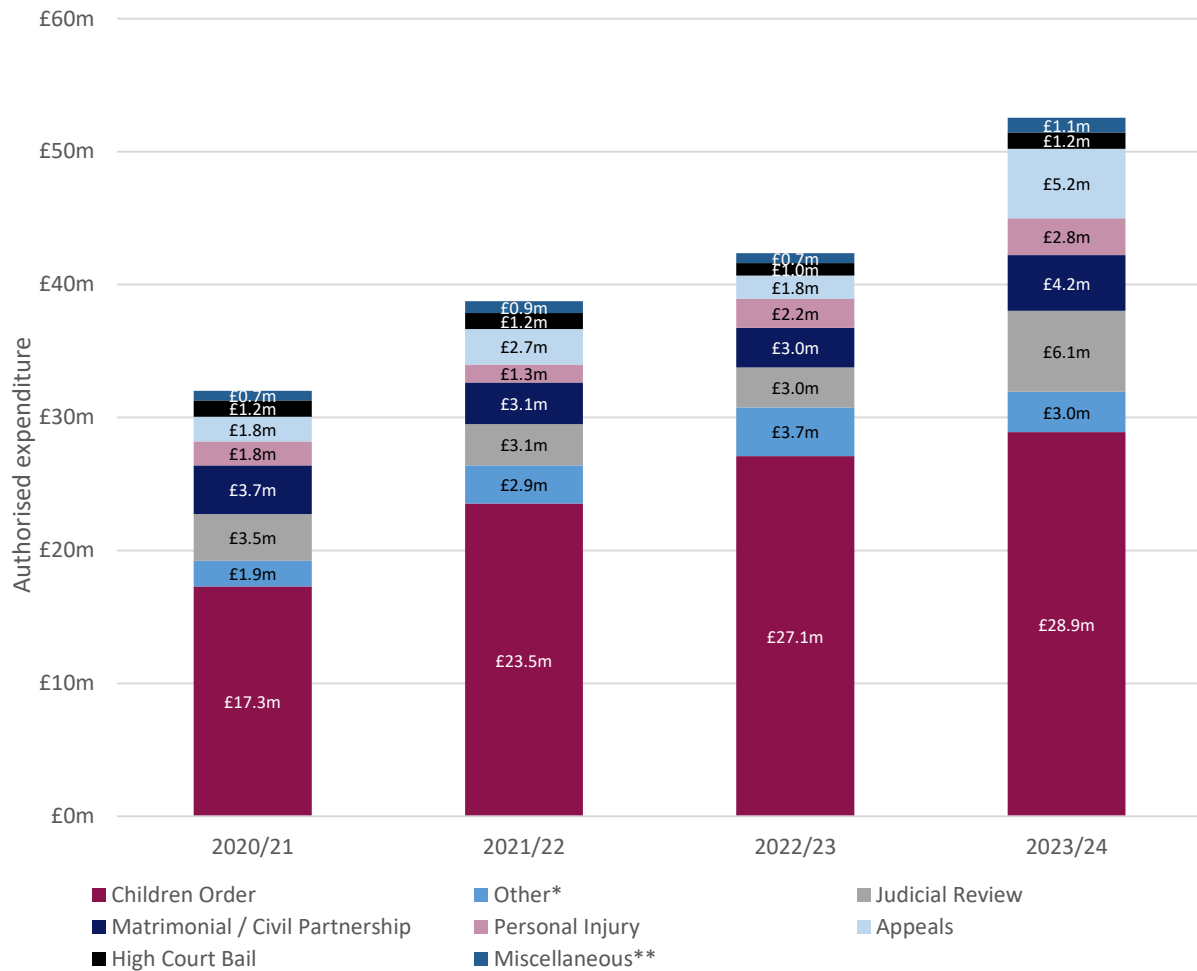
While around one third (35%) of Representation Higher applications granted in 2023/24 were in relation to Children Order cases (Figure 4.12), these cases accounted for over half (55%; £28.9m) of the total Representation Higher legal aid expenditure in 2023/24 (Figure 4.25; Table A6). Expenditure on Children Order cases increased year on year from 2020/21 to 2023/24, and was 67% (£11.6m) higher in 2023/24 than in 2020/21.

While expenditure on Representation Higher Judicial Reviews was on a continually decreasing trend from 2020/21 to 2022/23, expenditure on these case types has more than doubled over the year to 2023/24 (+£3.1m).

Representation Higher expenditure on Appeals in 2023/24 almost trebled in comparison with 2022/23 (+£3.5m). Representation Higher expenditure on Matrimonial/Civil Partnership cases also experienced a considerable increase over the year to 2023/24 (+40%; +£1.2m).

While High Court Bail accounted for almost a quarter (23%) of Representation Higher applications granted in 2023/24 (Figure 4.12), these case types accounted for only 2% (£1.2m) of the Representation Higher legal aid expenditure in 2023/24.

Figure 4.25: Representation Higher expenditure by Primary Nature, 2020/2021 – 2023/2024



*Includes matters such as injunctions and breach of order/contract.

**Includes: Parole; Maintenance; Land/property; Quasi criminal; Debt/ejectment; Family Homes Domestic Violence; and Asylum & Immigration

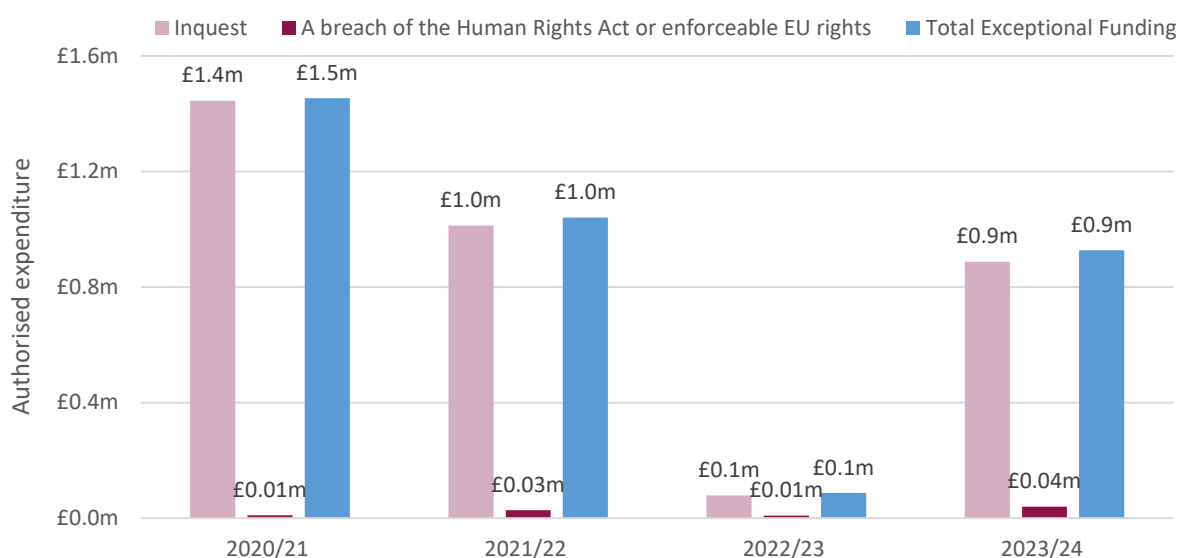
4.2.4 Exceptional Funding

Exceptional Funding accounted for 0.1% of civil applications granted in 2023/24 (Section 4.1.4) and represented **2% (£0.9m)** of the civil legal aid expenditure for 2023/24. The vast majority (96%; £887,109) of Exceptional Funding expenditure in 2023/24 was related to inquests, while the remaining 4% (£39,928) was in relation to A breach of the Human Rights Act or enforceable EU rights.

Annual Exceptional Funding Authorised Expenditure

Annual Exceptional Funding authorised expenditure recorded two consecutive years of decrease from 2020/21 to 2022/23 (Figure 4.26). The decrease of 92% (£952,811) between 2021/22 and 2022/23 can be attributed to a large recoupment of legal aid funds following settlement of legacy inquest cases. Following this, Exceptional Funding expenditure in 2023/24 returned to levels comparable to 2021/22.

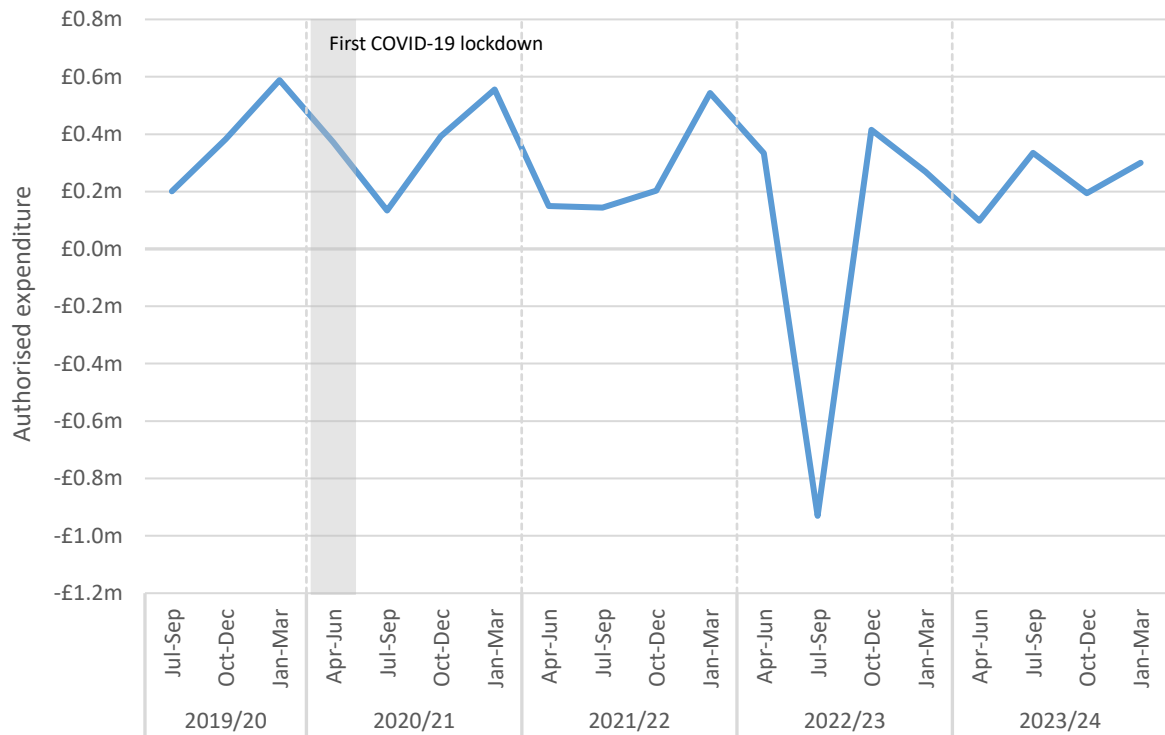
Figure 4.26: Annual Exceptional Funding legal aid expenditure, 2020/21 – 2023/24



Quarterly Exceptional Funding Authorised Expenditure

Exceptional Funding authorised expenditure showed a seasonal pattern between 2019/20 and 2021/22, with expenditure experiencing two consecutive quarters of growth between quarters two and four in each of the three years (Figure 4.27). Exceptional Funding authorised expenditure in 2022/23 was affected by a large recoupment of legal aid funds following settlement of legacy inquest cases. Quarterly Exceptional Funding expenditure returned to usual levels in 2023/24.

Figure 4.27: Quarterly Exceptional Funding legal aid expenditure, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



4.3 Children Order cases, Public v Private Law

Representation Lower and Representation Higher Children Order cases can be further broken down into public and private law. Public law applications are those brought by local authorities and include matters such as care, supervision and emergency protection orders. Private law applications are those brought by private individuals, generally in connection with divorce or the parents' separation. This section of the report details current levels and historical trends in public and private Children Order granted applications and expenditure.

It should be noted that there are a small number of Children Order cases within the Advice and Assistance scheme, however it is not possible to determine whether these are public or private cases. Therefore, these cases have been excluded from this section of the report. For information, there were 187 Advice and Assistance Children Order applications granted in 2023/24, and a total expenditure of £10,054 on these case types in 2023/24.

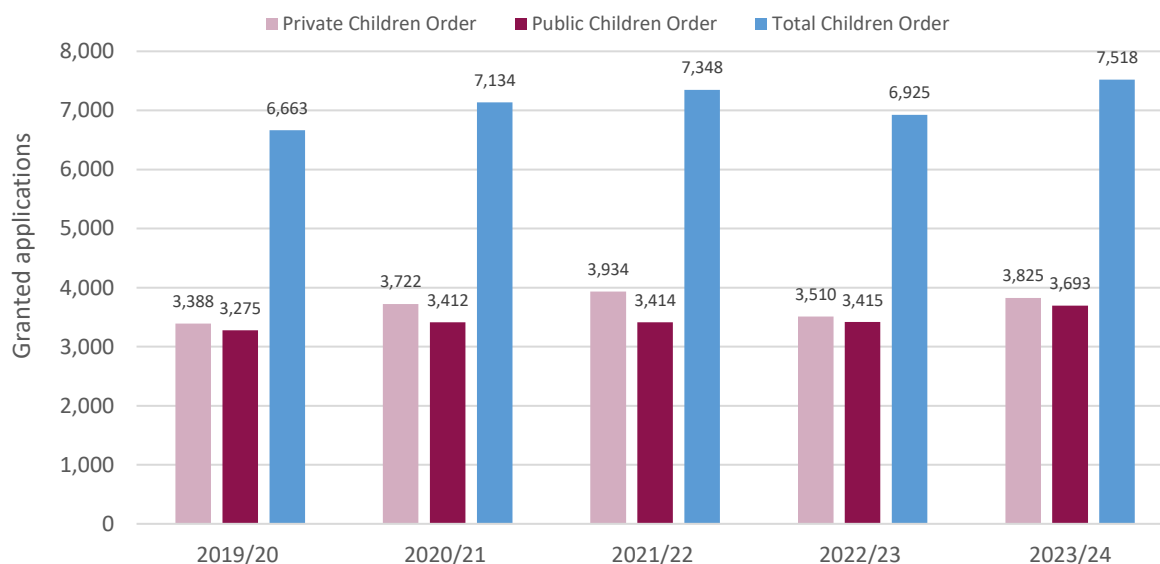
4.3.1 Children Order Applications Granted

Annual Children Order Applications Granted

Following a slight decrease (6%; 423) in the number of Children Order applications granted between 2021/22 and 2022/23, there has been an increase of 9% (593) over the year to 2023/24. The number of Children Order applications granted reached the series high (7,518) in 2023/24.

Throughout the time period 2019/20 to 2023/24, there was a fairly even split of private and public Children Order applications granted. In 2023/24, 51% (3,825) of Children Order applications granted were in relation to private cases; with 49% (3,693) representing public cases.

Figure 4.28: Annual Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order applications granted by public/private split, 2019/20 – 2023/24



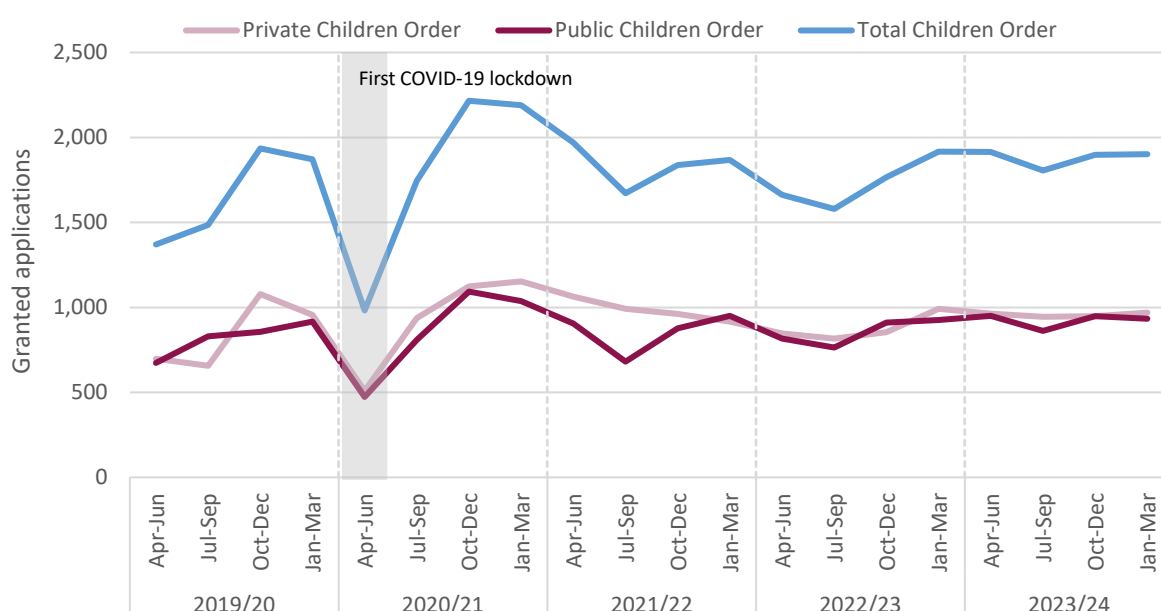
Quarterly Children Order Applications Granted

Children Order applications granted reached a series low of 982 in Q1 2020/21 as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 4.29; Table A8). Children Order applications granted had surpassed pre-COVID levels by Q3 2020/21, reaching a series high of 2,216 in this quarter. Following the high in Q3 2020/21, Children Order applications granted recorded three consecutive quarters of decline to Q2 2021/22, primarily driven by decreases in public Children Order matters.

Quarterly Children Order applications granted have remained relatively stable since this point - particularly throughout 2023/24, when the numbers granted ranged between 1,805 and 1,914.

Both the public and private Children Order series have followed very similar trends throughout 2019/20 to 2023/24.

Figure 4.29: Quarterly Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order applications granted by public/private split, Q1 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24

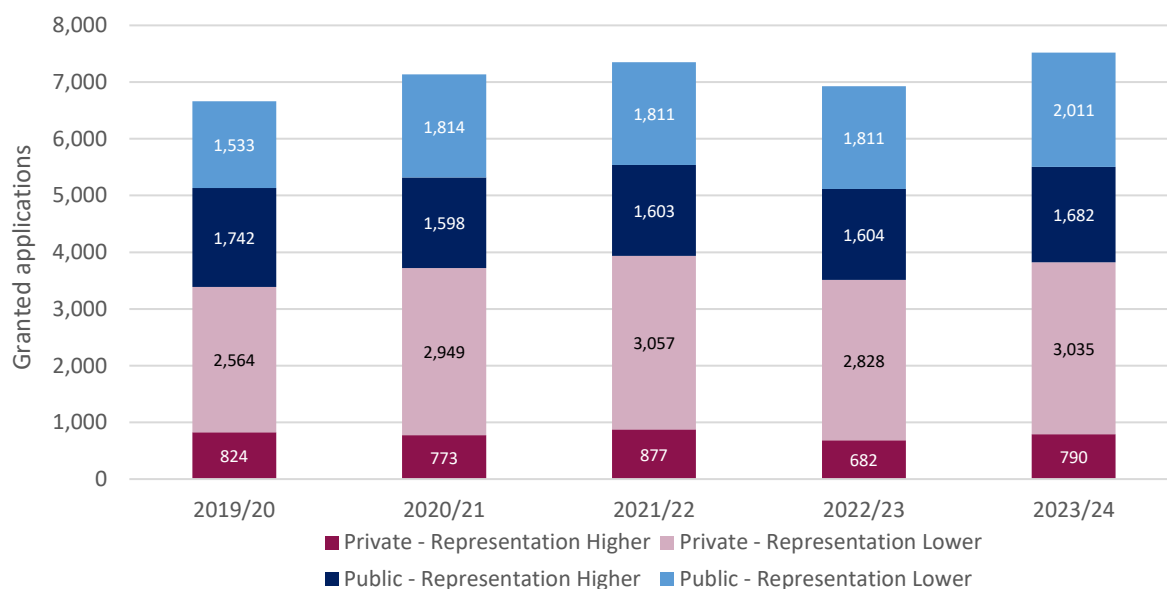


Children Order Applications Granted by Category of Service

The largest proportion of Children Order applications granted in each year between 2019/20 and 2023/24 was in relation to private Representation Lower Children Order cases (Figure 4.30; Table A7). In 2023/24, these applications accounted for 40% (3,035) of all Children Order applications granted.

Public and private Children Order applications granted within both Representation Higher and Representation Lower experienced increases over the year to 2023/24, with the largest annual increase recorded within the private Representation Lower category (+207; +7%).

Figure 4.30: Annual Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order applications granted by Category of Service, 2019/20 – 2023/24



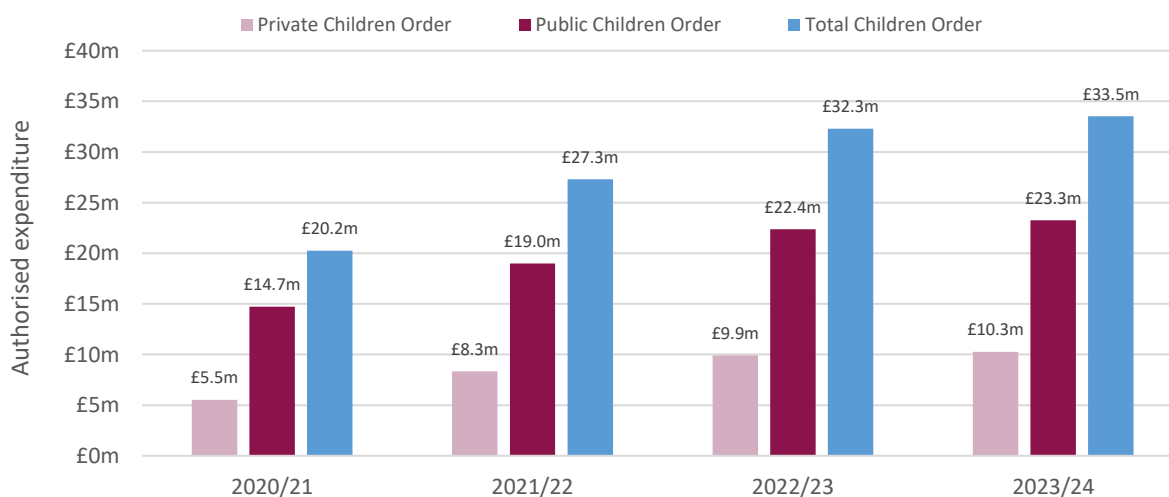
4.3.2 Children Order Authorised Expenditure

Annual Children Order Authorised Expenditure

While total Children Order applications granted have been fairly evenly split between public and private Children Order applications in recent years (Figure 4.28), the majority of Children Order expenditure from 2020/21 to 2023/24 was in relation to public Children Order cases. Public Children Order expenditure represented over two thirds (69%; £23.3m) of the total Children Order expenditure in 2023/24 (Figure 4.31; Table A9).

Children Order expenditure recorded three consecutive years of increase from 2020/21 to 2023/24, reaching a series high in the latest year (£33.5m; 2023/24). Expenditure on Children Order cases has increased by two-thirds (66%; £13.3m) from 2020/21 to 2023/24. Both public and private Children Order expenditure have increased year-on-year throughout the series.

Figure 4.31: Annual Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order authorised expenditure by public/private split, 2020/21 – 2023/24



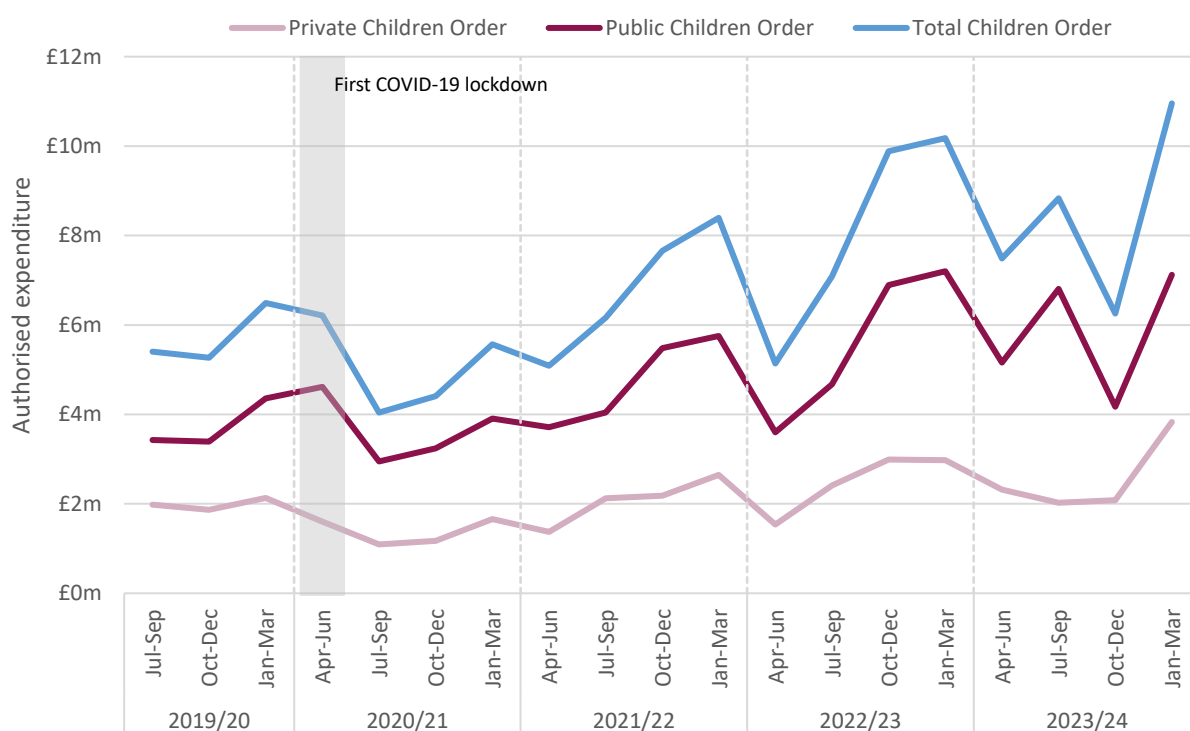
Quarterly Children Order Authorised Expenditure

Quarterly Children Order expenditure reached a series low in Q2 2020/21 (£4.0m) before displaying a generally increasing trend from this point to a series high in Q4 2023/24 (£11.0m; Figure 4.32; Table A10).

Total Children Order expenditure in Q4 2023/24 was 8% (£0.8m) higher than the same quarter in the previous year (£10.2m; Q4 2022/23), and 69% (£4.5m) higher than in Q4 2019/20 (£6.5m).

Both public and private Children Order expenditure have followed similar trends throughout the time series; however, the overall increase in the latest quarter has been largely driven by an increase in public Children Order expenditure.

Figure 4.32: Quarterly Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order authorised expenditure by public/private split, Q2 2019/20 – Q4 2023/24



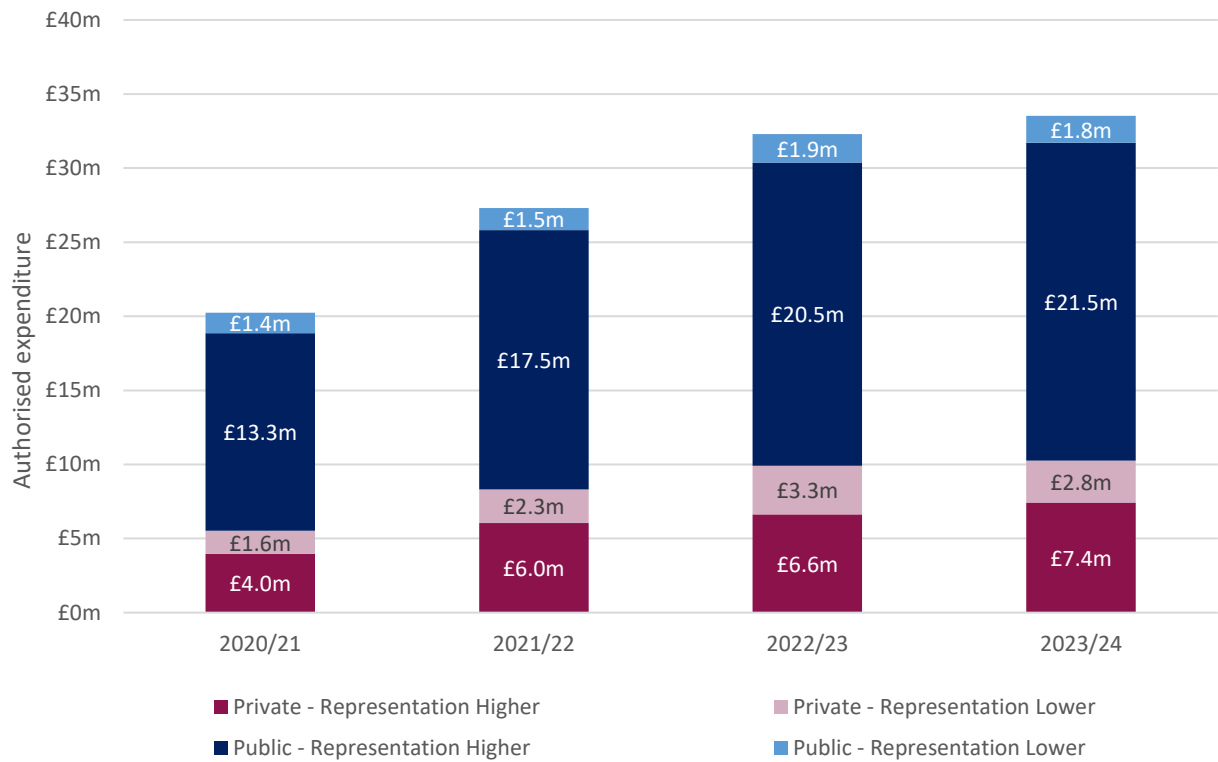
Children Order Authorised Expenditure by Category of Service

While private Representation Lower Children Order cases accounted for 40% of all Children Order applications granted in 2023/24 (Figure 4.30), they accounted for a much smaller proportion of the expenditure, at 8% (£2.8m) of the 2023/24 Children Order expenditure (Figure 4.33; Table A9).

Public Representation Higher Children Order cases accounted for the majority of Children Order expenditure in each year between 2020/21 and 2023/24. This category accounted for almost two thirds (64%; £21.5m) of 2023/24 Children Order expenditure; whereas it represented around one fifth (22%) of the Children Order applications granted in this year (Figure 4.30).

Private Representation Higher Children Order cases accounted for around a fifth (22%; £7.4m) of 2023/24 Children Order expenditure; while Public Representation Lower cases accounted for the smallest proportion of Children Order expenditure, at 5% (£1.8m) of 2023/24 Children Order expenditure.

Figure 4.33: Annual Representation Higher and Representation Lower Children Order authorised expenditure by Category of Service, 2020/21 – 2023/24



5. ASSISTED PERSONS, 2023/24

This section provides an overview of the characteristics of applicants to whom legal aid was granted in 2023/24, either by the Courts or the Agency, with a focus on age, gender and geographic location.

The figures in this section are derived from personal information recorded as part of the formal application process. In cases where such information is unknown or not available, they have been excluded from the respective analyses.

As legal aid is awarded and administered on a case-level basis, it is not possible to examine applications on an individual (person) basis. If the same individual is granted legal aid on multiple occasions within the reporting period, their characteristics will feature several times within the data.

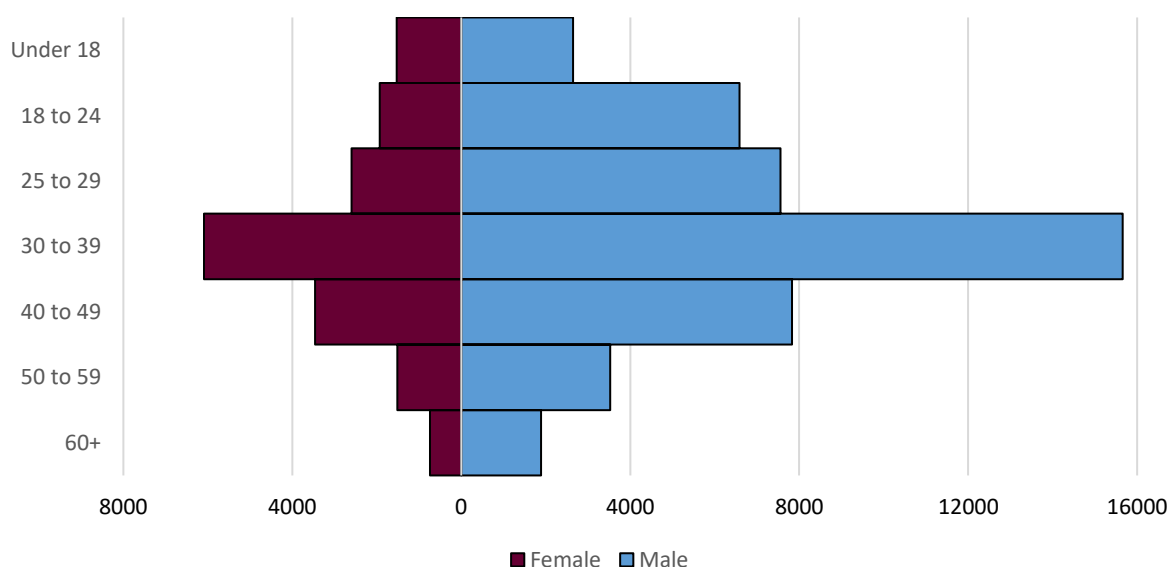
5.1 Age and Gender of Assisted Persons

In 2023/24, there were 313 legal aid cases granted where the gender and/or age (at date of application) of the assisted person is unknown. These cases have been excluded from the following analysis where the relevant information is missing.

It is evident from Figure 5.1 and Table A11 that legal aid is more likely to be granted to a male recipient than a female. In 2023/24, just over a quarter (28%; 17,956) of all applications were granted to females, compared with 72% to males (45,828).

For both genders, the age band with the highest volume of granted applications was 30-39 years, accounting for just over a third (34%) of both female and male applications granted in 2023/24. The 40-49 year olds category accounted for the next highest age group for both male and female applicants with 7,829 (17%) and 3,460 (19%) respectively.

Figure 5.1: Applications granted by age and gender, 2023/24



When these figures are standardised using the latest Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates of each group, it is apparent that 25 to 39-year-olds are more likely to utilize legal aid regardless of gender. Males aged 25-29 display an overall rate of 130.6 grants per 1,000 population, followed closely

by males aged 30 to 39 (127.5 grants per 1,000 population). Among females, these rates fall by around two-thirds to 45.2 and 46.6 respectively (Table A11).

During 2023/24, the legal aid grant rate for males (48.8 grants per 1,000 population) was almost three times that of females (18.5 per 1,000 population). Despite displaying similar grant rates for civil cases (10.6 and 10.0 respectively), males were over four times more likely to be the recipient of legal aid in criminal cases (38.2 v 8.5). This contrast is exemplified among assisted persons aged 25-29 where males displayed a criminal grant rate five times that of their female counterparts (105.8 v 21.3; Table A11).

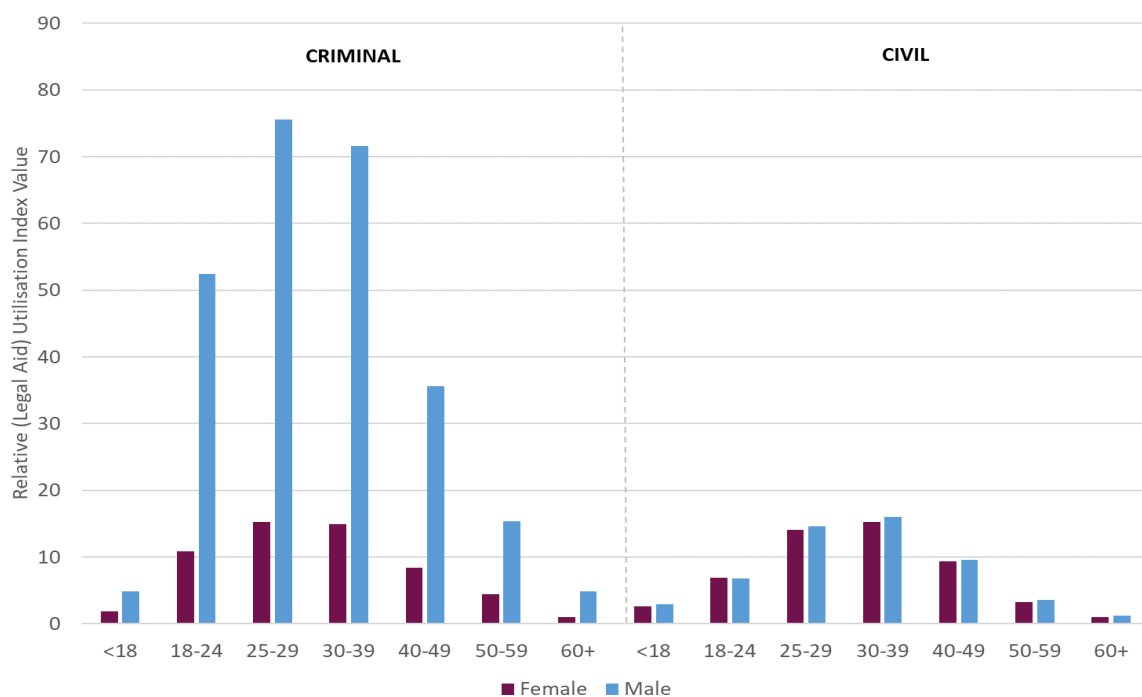
The relationship between age and gender in the uptake of legal aid can also be examined and presented using a relative index. In this analysis, index values have been calculated by dividing the volume of granted applications to each age-gender group by the equivalent mid-year population estimate. These scores are then divided by the reference group with the lowest utilisation - in this case females aged 60+, meaning the weight for this group is set to 1.

These index values show that a male aged 25-29 is 42.1 times more likely than a female aged 60+ to use legal aid, while a female aged 30-39 is 15.0 times more likely. These groups are followed closely by those aged 30-39 for males (41.1) and females aged 25 to 29 (14.6; Table A11).

While the level of legal aid uptake is similar for males and females across all age groups in regard to civil matters, the gender difference becomes apparent within criminal proceedings, where the granting of legal aid is multiple times more likely to be to a male across all age bands.

This trend is visualized in Figure 5.2 where the relative index values are broken into criminal and civil distributions. While males and females aged 25-29 display similar index values equating to being 14.6 and 14.1 times (respectively) more likely to avail of civil legal aid than females aged 60+ are, these scores change drastically to 75.6 versus 15.2 to contrast the gender difference when it comes to criminal legal aid (Figure 5.2 and Table A11).

Figure 5.2: Relative (legal aid) utilisation index values by age-gender bands, 2023/24



As civil legal aid is dominated by family matters, it is perhaps to be expected that these particular (middle) age groups display the higher indexes as the presence of children are a core component within these cases. This also explains the similar uptake rates across both males and females who are both likely to be opponents in the one case.

Likewise, the distinct gender contrast in the award of criminal legal aid is reflective of Northern Ireland's [Public Prosecution Service \(PPSNI\) figures](#). Latest available PPSNI annual statistics for 2022/23 show that over three in four (77%) suspects on files received were recorded as male, with the largest proportion of suspects (30%), regardless of gender, within the 26-35 age category and 71% between the ages of 18 and 45. These figures are consistent with the granting of criminal legal aid to fund the defence.

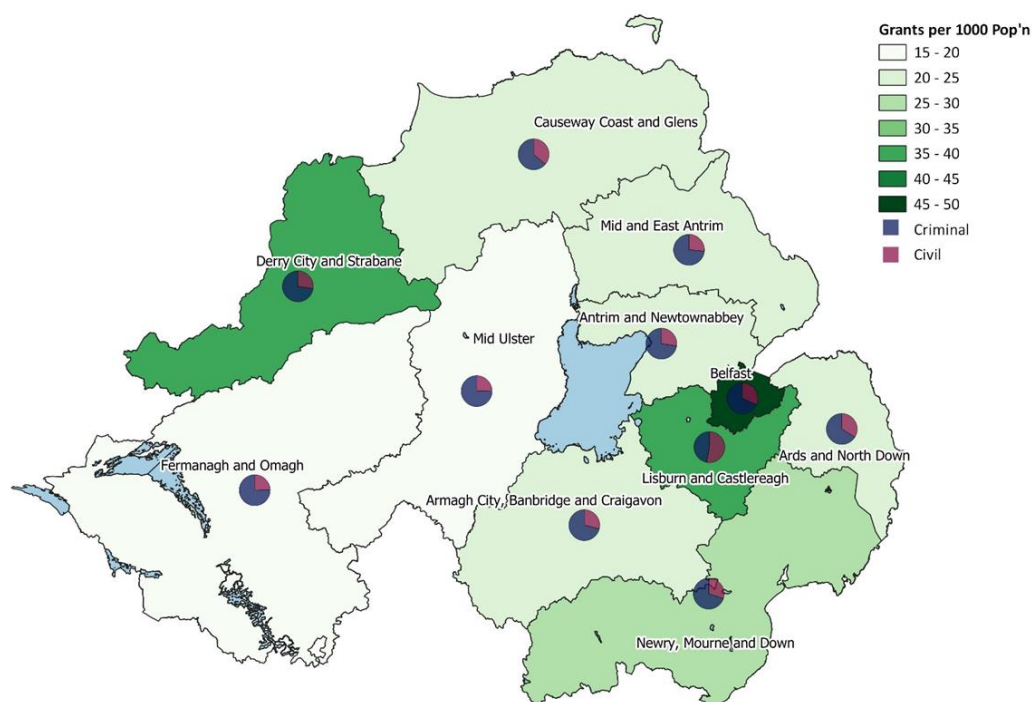
5.2 Geographic Location of Assisted Persons

Northern Ireland is comprised of 11 Council Areas, formally referred to as Local Government Districts (LGDs). Where a valid postcode has been provided as part of the application process, this has been used to assign a LGD (council area).

From Table A12 it is apparent that, in 2023/24, the greatest volume of legal aid applications were granted to applicants in the Belfast LGD. At 16,736, grants to those in Belfast were almost three times that of the second highest district (Lisburn and Castlereagh; 5,960).

However, once standardised by the resident population of each LGD (to produce comparable statistics), the picture changes and while Belfast still displays the highest rate of grants (48.1 per 1,000 population), it is followed more closely by Lisburn and Castlereagh (39.8) and Derry City and Strabane (37.9) LGDs (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Applications granted per 1,000 population, by Local Government District, 2023/24



In terms of criminal cases, Belfast displays the highest rate of grants at 32.9 per 1,000 population. This is almost 50% higher than the Northern Ireland average (23.2) and compares with the second highest rate of 27.5 in Derry City and Strabane. However, when it comes to civil legal aid, Lisburn & Castlereagh LGD displays the highest rate at 21.0 per 1,000 population, with Belfast second highest at 15.2.

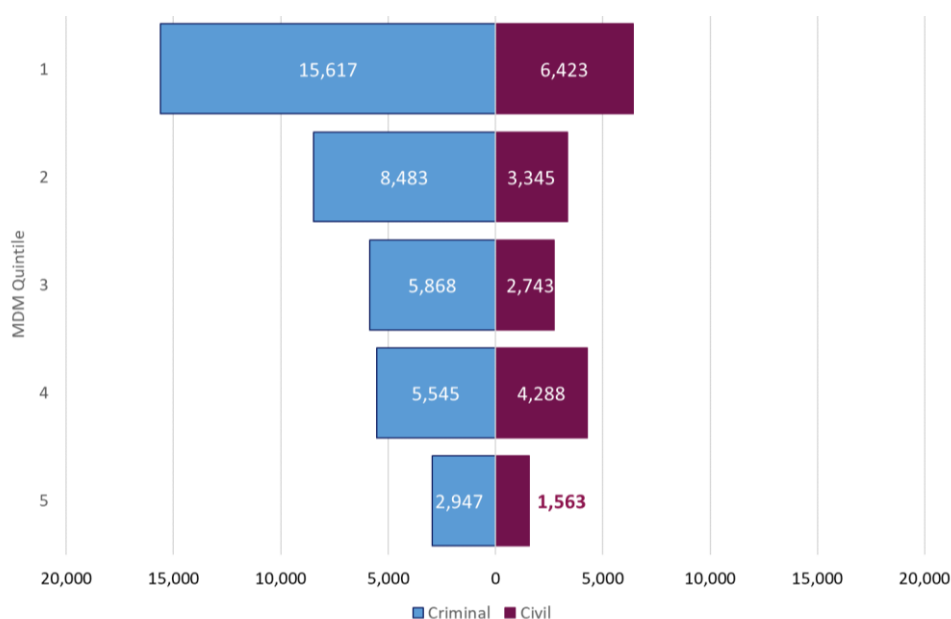
Not only does Lisburn & Castlereagh display the highest rate of civil grants per 1,000 population across NI (21.0), and a rate that is over double the NI average (10.3), but interestingly, it is also the only council area in Northern Ireland where civil grants exceeded criminal grants in 2023/24 (Figure 5.3 and Table A12). While the rate of criminal grants is comparable with other regions, it is the particularly high rate of civil grants to applicants within this LGD that causes this distortion. This is driven by the unique make-up of the local resident population that incorporates both HM Prison Maghaberry and Hydebank Young Offenders Centre. Of the 3,152 civil applications granted to those in the Lisburn & Castlereagh LGD, over 70% were granted to applicants registered in these establishments in 2023/24. It has been estimated that removing these cases from the analysis would generate an equivalent civil grant rate at around half the NI average and result in around three-quarters of all grants in this council area being of a criminal nature.

Finally, the 2023/24 legal aid grant rate is lowest for applicants living in Mid Ulster (18.7 per 1,000 population) and Fermanagh and Omagh (18.8), with both LGDs displaying similar rates for both criminal (14.1 and 14.2 respectively) and civil (both 4.6) grants (Table A12).

5.3 Grants by area of deprivation

As financial eligibility is a key factor in assessing an applicant’s entitlement to legal aid, it is to be expected that grants would correlate with an area’s level of deprivation. As depicted in Figure 5.4, grants of legal aid during 2023/24 were highest in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland (MDM Quintile 1), for both criminal and civil cases (Table A13). Similarly, they were at their lowest in least deprived areas (MDM Quintile 5). Overall, grants show a linear trend whereby the number of grants decrease as the level of deprivation falls. This is particularly evident in criminal cases, with civil grants displaying a distortion in Quintile 4, which may be a reflection of the specific nature of civil cases and also the influence of HM Prison Maghaberry within this quintile.

Figure 5.4: Applications granted by multiple deprivation, 2023/24



6. PROVIDERS OF LEGAL AID SERVICES, 2019/20 TO 2023/24

This section explores the distribution of legal aid services throughout Northern Ireland by registered providers, mostly consisting of legal practitioners. Insight into registrations over time, as well as geographical location of solicitor firms with attributed legal aid expenditure, is presented to the year ending March 2024.

Legal aid services in Northern Ireland are delivered to assisted persons through three main providers who must first register with the Agency to create an account on the Legal Aid Management System (LAMS):

- **Solicitors** – generally the first point of contact for legal aid applicants providing advice and legal representation in matters dealt with in the lower courts;
- **Barristers** – provide legal representation for applicants in the higher courts; and
- **Third Party Payees** – interpreting/translation related services paid directly by LSANI.

6.1 Registered Providers

6.1.1 Solicitor Firms

During 2023/24, there were **457** solicitor firms registered on LAMS to provide legal aid services. This represents an overall net 3% increase since LAMS went live in 2019/20, but a slight reduction of 2 solicitor firms compared with registrations in 2022/23. The total number of solicitor firms receiving payment during 2023/24 reduced by 9% from the previous year, to **373** (Figure 6.1; Table A14).

- Factoring in the Northern Ireland population of just over 1.9m, the number of firms registered in 2023/24 equates to 24 firms per 100,000 population.

Figure 6.1: Registered Solicitor Firms and Solicitor Firms receiving payment, 2019/20 to 2023/24

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Registered Solicitor Firms	443	455	472	459	457
Solicitor Firms receiving payment	393	398	410	410	373

6.1.2 Barristers

As can be seen in Figure 6.2 (Table A14), a total of **603** barristers registered during 2023/24 to provide legal services. Whilst this equates to a 3% decrease compared with 2022/23, it represents a 3% increase since 2019/20 when LAMS registrations were first introduced.

- At 603 registrations, the rate of barristers providing legal aid services in Northern Ireland is 32 per 100,000 population.

The number of barristers receiving payment for legal services has remained relatively stable since 2020/21, with the latest figure for 2023/24 (**483**) showing a 7% increase since 2019/20 (453; Figure 6.2; Table A14).

Figure 6.2: Registered Barristers and Barristers receiving payment, 2019/20 to 2023/24

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Registered Barristers	585	632	667	621	603
Barristers receiving payment	453	488	495	492	483

6.1.3 Third Party Payees

With over 99% of registered providers being either solicitors or barristers, the numbers of third party payees are relatively low. These annual registrations for third party payees are presented in Figure 6.3 (Table A14).

Figure 6.3: Registered Third Party Payees and Third Party Payees receiving payment, 2019/20 to 2023/24

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Registered Third Party Payees	4	4	4	7	6
Third Party Payees receiving payment	3	4	4	6	4

6.2 Registered Solicitor Firms by Location

With a solicitor being the first point of contact for legal aid applicants it is useful to consider the location of solicitor firms to help understand access to justice for the NI population. However, it should be noted that proximity of a residing population to a solicitor firm will provide a partial indication to how well an area is serviced for access to legal aid. Other factors such as proximity to court venue, number of solicitors per firm and area deprivation levels would need to be considered to get a fuller picture.

Figure 6.4 (Table A15) shows the number of solicitor firms registered during 2023/24 by Local Council area (LGD), number of firms per 100,000 population as well as average minimum distance to nearest solicitor firm.

Figure 6.4: Registered Solicitor Firms, Firms per 100,000 population and average minimum distance to nearest Firm (miles) by Local Government District (LGD), 2023/24

Local Government District (LGD)	Solicitor Firms	Solicitor Firms per 100,000 population	Average minimum distance to nearest Firm (miles)
Belfast	162	46.6	0.4
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	52	23.6	2.1
Newry, Mourne and Down	43	23.5	2.9
Mid Ulster	36	23.8	2.7
Fermanagh and Omagh	35	29.9	3.8
Derry City and Strabane	33	21.9	2.5
Ards and North Down	24	14.6	1.8
Causeway Coast and Glens	22	15.6	3.7
Mid and East Antrim	22	15.8	2.4
Antrim and Newtownabbey	14	9.6	1.6
Lisburn and Castlereagh	14	9.3	1.8
Total	457	23.9	2.1

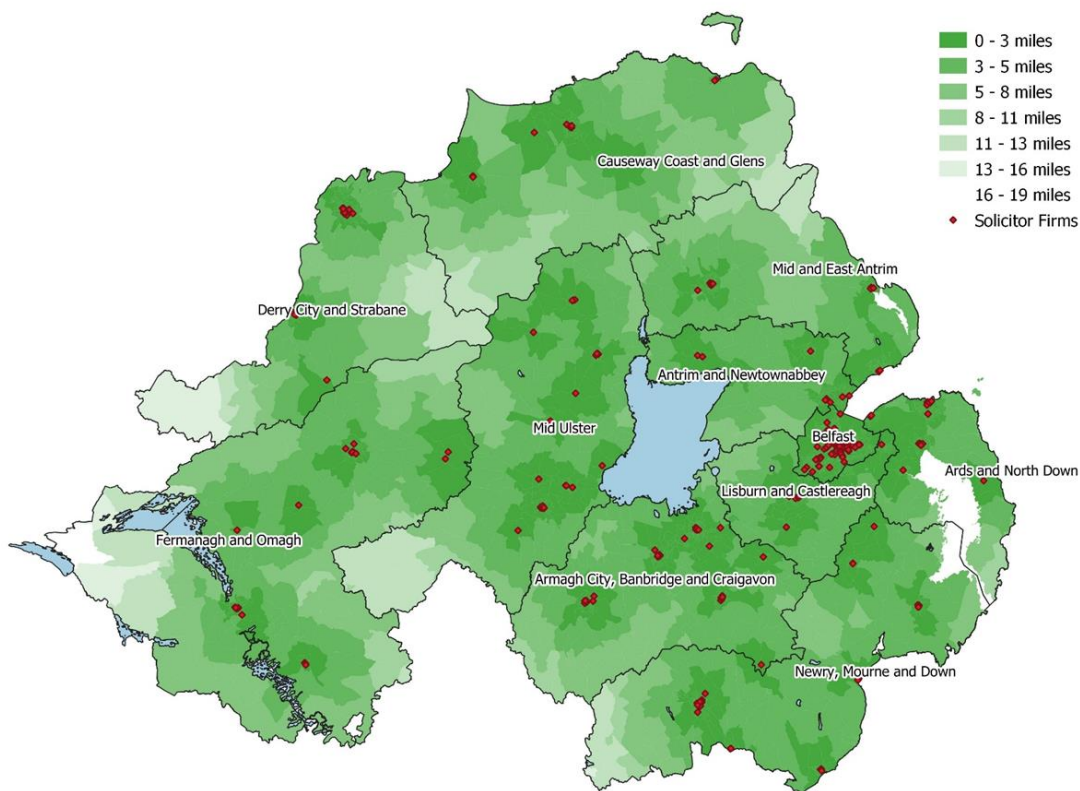
Looking at the distribution of registered solicitor firms in 2023/24 across NI by Local Council area shows that the largest proportion (35%) is located in Belfast council area with 162 firms, followed by 11% (52) in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, and 9% (43) in Newry, Mourne and Down. The lowest

proportion of solicitor firms are seen in Antrim and Newtownabbey and Lisburn and Castlereagh LGDs, both having 3% (14) each.

Across Local Council areas, Belfast also displays the highest number of firms per 100,000 population with 46.6, followed by Fermanagh and Omagh with 29.9. The remaining 9 Local Council areas display a rate lower than the overall NI level (23.9). Lisburn and Castlereagh shows the lowest level with 9.3 firms per 100,000 population, followed by Antrim and Newtownabbey with 9.6.

The NI average minimum distance to the nearest solicitor firm is 2.1 miles. With Belfast having the largest urban population of all council areas it is unsurprising that it displays the lowest average proximity at 0.4 miles. This is followed by Antrim and Newtownabbey at 1.6 miles. The highest average proximity to solicitor firms is seen in Fermanagh and Omagh at 3.8 miles which is reflective of its large rural population. For illustrative purposes, Figure 6.5 presents a map of NI indicating the location of solicitor firms along with the population average proximity to nearest solicitor firm by the latest [Census Data Zones](#), where the darker shading indicates areas with a closer average proximity to solicitor firms.

Figure 6.5: Registered Solicitor Firms and average minimum distance to nearest Solicitor Firm, 2023/24



6.3 Authorised Expenditure by Provider

Looking at overall authorised expenditure provides a fuller picture of the cost of legal aid to the public purse. However, it is worth noting that although the information in this section presents expenditure by provider type, not all of the remuneration value will be for work carried out by the provider. Authorised expenditure can consist of:

Profit Costs – Professional fees paid to providers for the legal services they provide;

VAT – Value Added Tax added to the cost of the service delivered by the provider; and

Disbursements – Predominantly solicitor remuneration for payment made on behalf of their client for third party services e.g. Medical Expert Report.

Section 6.3.3 will separately present a breakdown of these costs by **provider** and **expenditure type**. By way of context, disbursements made to solicitor firms in 2023/24 totalled £10.7m, equating to 17% of total authorisations to solicitor firms.

6.3.1 Authorised Expenditure by Provider Type

Figure 6.6 (Table A16) presents the authorised expenditure by provider type for each financial year from 2020/21 to 2023/24.

While there has been a significant increase in authorised expenditure to both solicitor firms and barristers since 2020/21, this is largely attributable to the post-Covid recovery impact. However, the 12% (£12.2m) increase in overall expenditure from 2022/23 to 2023/24 reflects a real increasing demand for legal services.

Figure 6.6: Authorised expenditure by Provider Type, 2020/21 to 2023/24

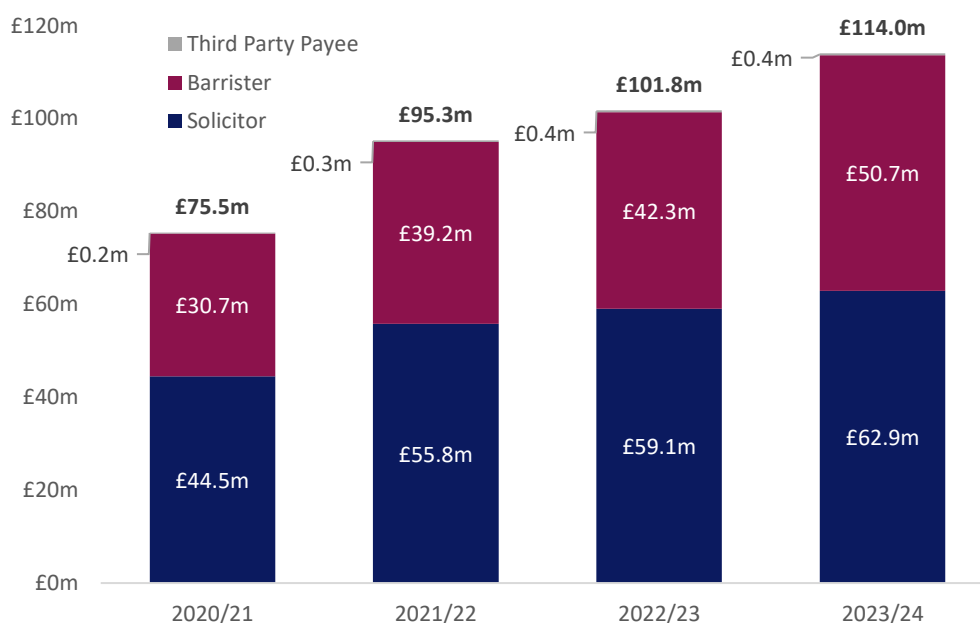
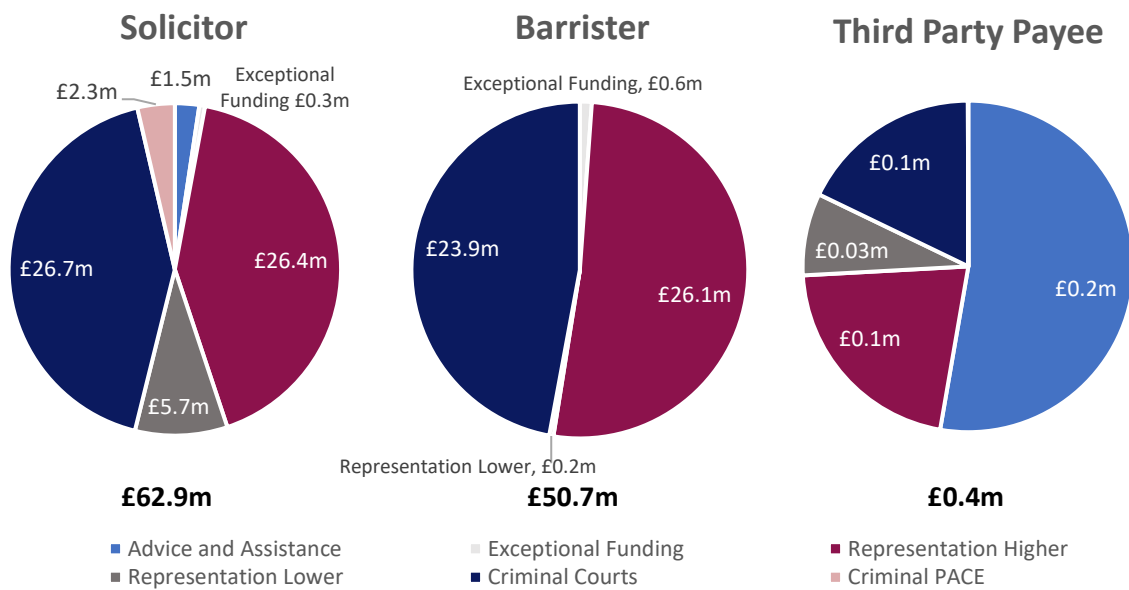


Figure 6.7 (Table A17) provides further insight into the areas of legal assistance delivered by each provider type in 2023/24. For solicitor firms and barristers, the majority of their authorised expenditure is related to activity in Criminal Courts and Representation Higher cases. With solicitors being the first point of contact in all legal aid cases, around 15% of their total expenditure is attributed to Advice and Assistance, Criminal PACE and Representation Lower cases where counsel is unlikely to be required.

Figure 6.7: Authorised expenditure by Provider Type and Category of Service, 2023/24



6.3.2 Authorised Expenditure by Solicitor Firm Location 2023/24

Looking at authorised expenditure by geographical location of solicitor firms provides additional insight into Legal Aid utilisation across Northern Ireland.

Figure 6.8 (Table A18) illustrates the proportionate distribution of 2023/24 expenditure by the Local Council Area of solicitor firms. With the largest proportion of registered solicitor firms, almost half of solicitor expenditure (47%; £29.4m) went to firms in Belfast. This is followed by Derry City and Strabane £6.7m (11%), Newry, Mourne and Down £6.6m (11%) and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon £5.0m (8%). Solicitor firms in Lisburn and Castlereagh had the lowest expenditure with £1.0m (2%).

Figure 6.8 Distribution of authorised expenditure to Solicitor Firms by Local Government District, 2023/24

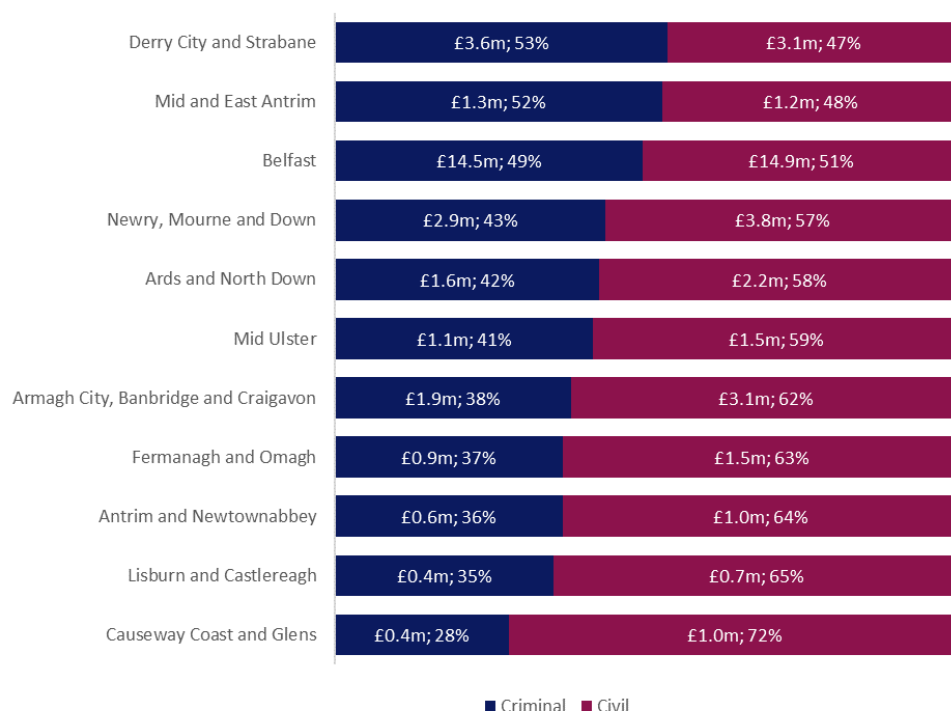


Figure 6.9 (Table A18) provides a breakdown of overall solicitor firm expenditure within each local council area by criminal and civil groupings.

In 2023/24, only solicitor firms in both Derry City and Strabane as well as Mid and East Antrim council areas received a higher proportion of criminal expenditure (53% and 52% respectively) than civil expenditure. Authorised expenditure to firms in the remaining nine council areas was comprised more of civil payments, exemplified with firms in Causeway Coast and Glens where almost three-quarters (72%) of authorisations in 2023/24 were made in relation to civil cases.

From Figure 6.9 a general pattern emerges across council areas in the proportionate split between criminal and civil expenditure. While this is likely to reflect a range of factors it is apparent that the proportion of criminal expenditure tends to show an inverse correlation with levels of rurality. However, contrary to this, Antrim and Newtownabbey as well as Lisburn and Castlereagh areas present high proportions of civil expenditure at 64% and 65% respectively, despite their predominant urban populations. This can be explained by an initial analysis which indicates that, in both of these districts, the majority of assisted person applications were granted to a firm in the Belfast council area.

Figure 6.9 Distribution of authorised expenditure to Solicitor Firms by Local Government District and Criminal/Civil proceedings, 2023/24

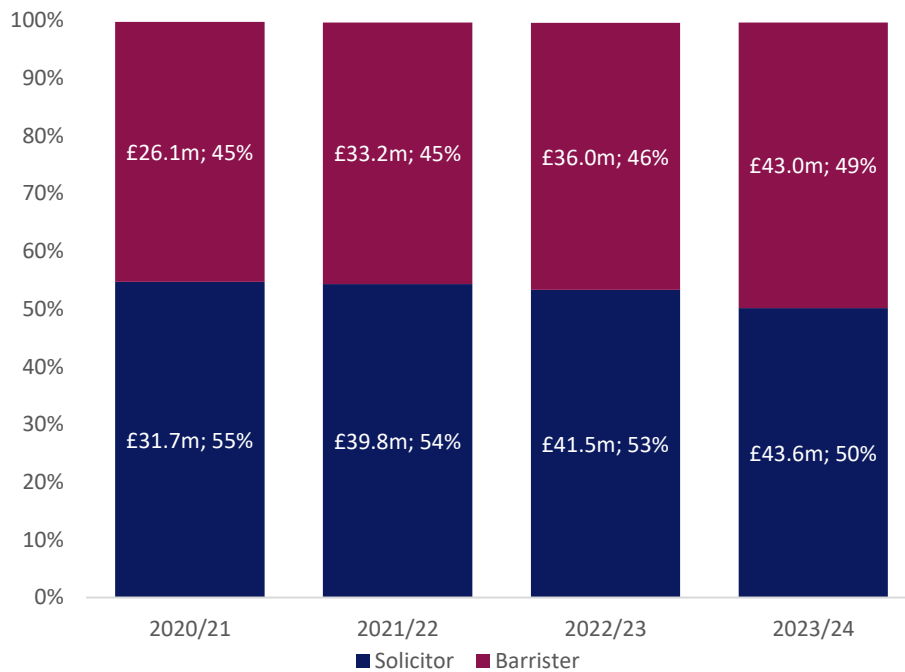


6.3.3 Authorised Expenditure by Provider and Expenditure Type

While expenditure in Section 6 has so far focused on overall expenditure to providers of legal aid, Table A19 disaggregates these amounts to a more granular level, to separate out profit costs, VAT and disbursements. This can provide a more accurate view on the amount of money that solicitor firms and barristers are paid to deliver legal aid, as opposed to the distribution of all costs associated with an entire case.

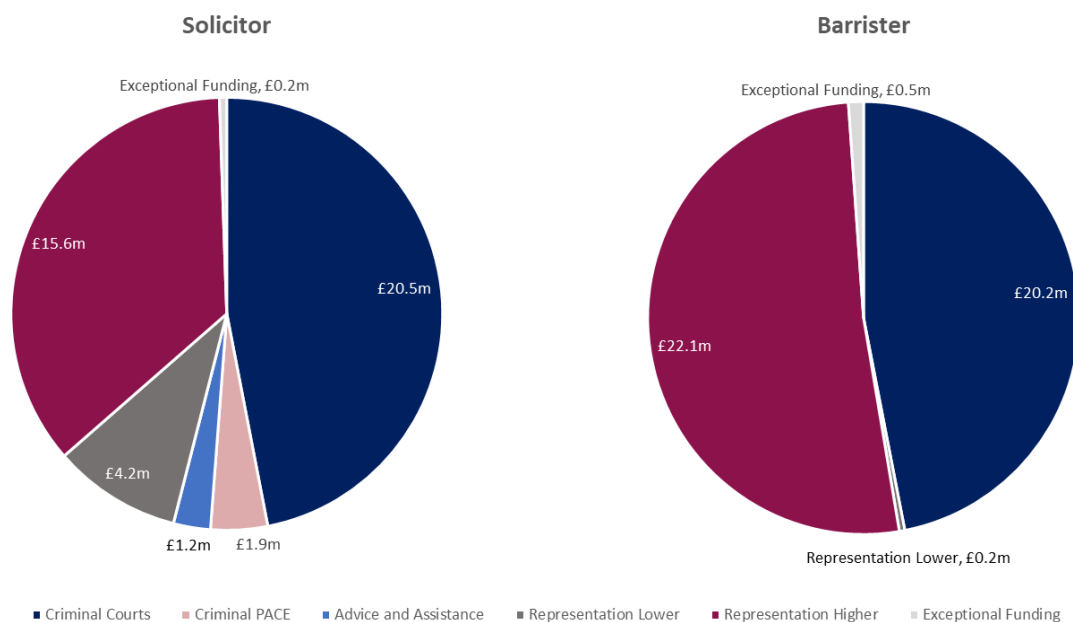
Figure 6.10 looks at solicitor and barrister profit costs (excluding VAT) expenditure by financial year. From this, it is evident that once disbursements are excluded, the expenditure split between solicitor firms and barristers narrows with figures for the most recent year (2023/24) showing profit cost expenditure as almost equal for barristers (£43.0m) and solicitor firms (£43.6m).

Figure 6.10 Solicitor Firm and Barrister Profit Costs, 2020/21 to 2023/24



Breaking down these overall 2023/24 solicitor and barrister profit costs by category of service, as depicted in Figure 6.11, shows that expenditure from Criminal Courts and Representation Higher cases contribute 83% of solicitor profit costs and over 98% of barrister profit costs. This breakdown of overall authorised expenditure in 2023/24, by payment type and category of service, is detailed further in Table A20.

Figure 6.11 Solicitor Firm and Barrister Profit Costs, 2023/24



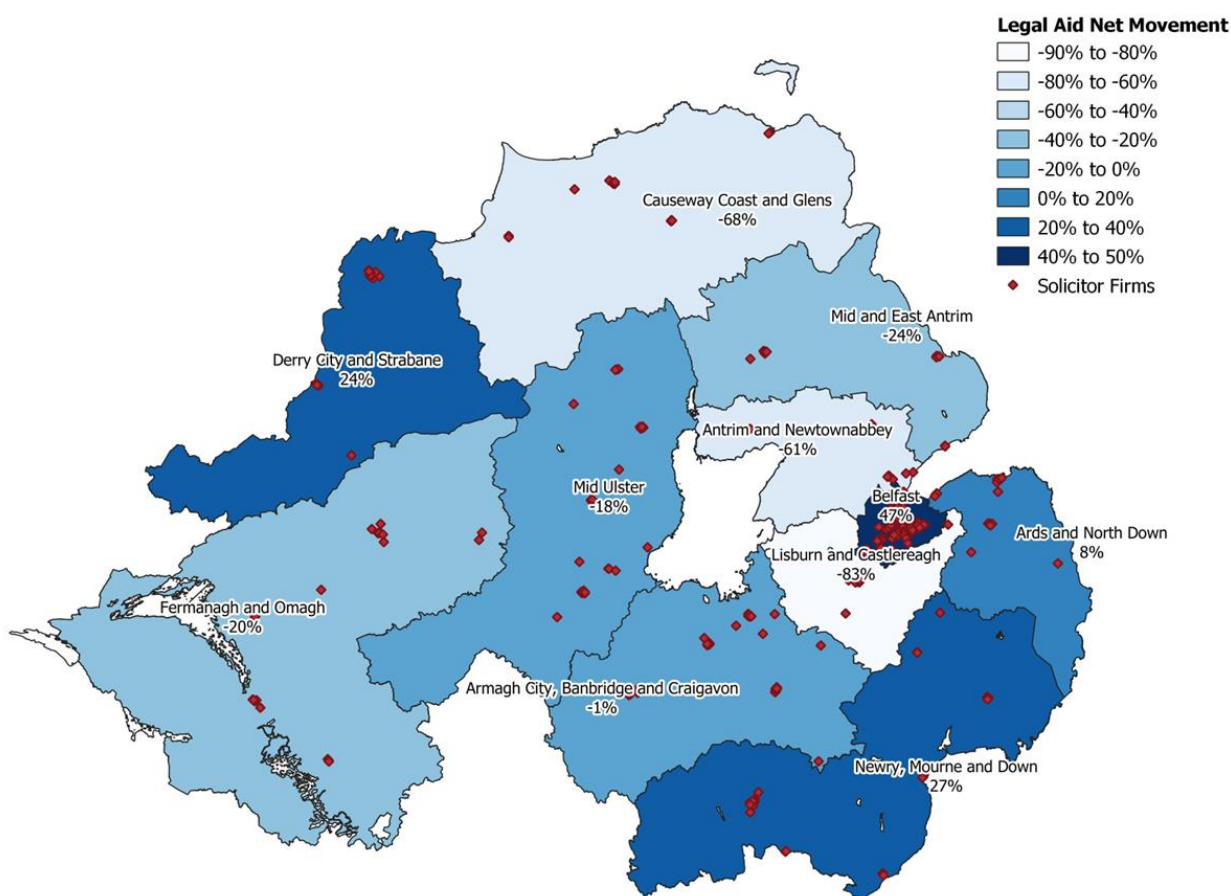
7. LEGAL AID MOVEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND, 2023/24

This section builds upon the previous two sections and provides a brief exploration into the observed geographical relationship between the council area in which the application is registered (Section 5) and that of the associated solicitor firm (Section 6) granted the legal aid certificate.

Access to legal aid services is transient by nature in that an assisted person is not restricted to use solicitor firms local to them. Table A21 details the number of applications granted to individuals registered within each district council area alongside any subsequent movement (inward and outward) of applications where an assisted person availed of a solicitor firm outside of their registered council area.

Figure 7.1 illustrates the net movement of applications granted in 2023/24 where the darker shading highlights those council areas that experienced a positive net movement of legal aid work. From the map it can be seen that the Belfast area had the largest net increase with solicitor firms gaining almost 11,000 legal aid cases granted to applicants in other council areas. In contrast, Lisburn and Castlereagh showed the highest net decrease (-83%; -4,923) which is consistent with the findings in Section 6 in that a majority of assisted persons in this council area seek legal aid services from Belfast based solicitor firms.

Figure 7.1: Legal aid net movement across Local Government Districts, 2023/24



8. TABULAR ANNEX

Please see the [LSANI website](#) for the following tables in fully accessible format.

Table A1: Applications granted, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Category of Service	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Criminal Total	48,112	37,517	42,043	43,790	44,260
Criminal Courts	27,580	20,567	24,649	24,925	25,235
Crown Court	2,207	1,810	2,495	2,129	2,308
Magistrate's Court	23,912	17,893	20,838	21,252	21,467
Extradition	72	58	76	74	66
Criminal Court of Appeal	44	56	52	36	51
County Court Appeal	1,345	750	1,188	1,434	1,343
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	20,532	16,950	17,394	18,865	19,025
Civil Total	26,186	27,258	26,919	20,186	19,621
Advice and Assistance Civil	13,552	12,954	12,088	5,885	5,055
Family	3,819	4,188	3,537	1,394	1,071
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	518	540	445	146	75
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	3,301	3,648	3,092	1,248	996
Non-Family	9,733	8,766	8,551	4,491	3,984
Representation Lower	6,100	7,610	7,588	7,119	7,455
Family	5,745	7,208	7,206	6,710	7,051
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	11	15	14	16	29
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	5,734	7,193	7,192	6,694	7,022
Non-Family	355	402	382	409	404
Representation Higher	6,508	6,663	7,213	7,151	7,083
Family	3,690	3,519	3,892	3,568	3,756
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	989	1,019	1,235	1,145	1,132
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	2,701	2,500	2,657	2,423	2,624
Non-Family	2,818	3,144	3,321	3,583	3,327
Exceptional Funding	26	31	30	31	28
Breach of Human Rights	3	5	14	6	5
Inquest	23	26	16	25	23
Grand Total	74,298	64,775	68,962	63,976	63,881

Table A2: Applications granted, by Quarter, April 2019 to March 2024

Category of Service	2019/20				2020/21				2021/22				2022/23				2023/24			
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
Criminal Total	12,118	12,966	11,808	11,220	5,768	9,944	11,274	10,531	10,780	10,823	9,964	10,476	10,346	11,499	10,559	11,386	11,260	11,558	10,320	11,122
Criminal Courts	7,950	6,756	6,887	5,987	2,430	5,305	6,633	6,199	6,283	6,328	5,958	6,080	5,901	6,535	5,989	6,500	6,362	6,536	6,026	6,311
Crown Court	596	517	600	494	100	391	615	704	691	585	666	553	471	529	522	607	515	555	614	624
Magistrate's Court	7,000	5,845	5,890	5,177	2,275	4,757	5,676	5,185	5,293	5,431	4,935	5,179	5,080	5,678	5,016	5,478	5,440	5,553	5,097	5,377
Extradition	13	19	22	18	10	15	21	12	8	14	34	20	21	17	18	18	14	22	11	19
Criminal Court of Appeal	14	7	9	14	16	12	9	19	16	10	15	11	7	10	10	9	12	16	14	9
County Court Appeal	327	368	366	284	29	130	312	279	275	288	308	317	322	301	423	388	381	390	290	282
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	4,168	6,210	4,921	5,233	3,338	4,639	4,641	4,332	4,497	4,495	4,006	4,396	4,445	4,964	4,570	4,886	4,898	5,022	4,294	4,811
Civil Total	5,331	6,211	7,197	7,447	4,694	7,421	7,572	7,571	6,559	6,373	7,258	6,729	4,733	5,260	5,082	5,111	5,025	4,544	4,718	5,334
Advice and Assistance Civil	2,465	3,538	3,662	3,887	2,138	3,683	3,598	3,535	2,869	2,767	3,654	2,798	1,505	1,567	1,549	1,264	1,307	1,030	1,450	1,268
Family	449	1,065	1,094	1,211	744	1,234	1,158	1,052	881	835	1,013	808	342	440	300	312	272	194	309	296
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	81	128	138	171	76	161	152	151	121	114	131	79	34	53	27	32	20	14	26	15
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	368	937	956	1,040	668	1,073	1,006	901	760	721	882	729	308	387	273	280	252	180	283	281
Non-Family	2,016	2,473	2,568	2,676	1,394	2,449	2,440	2,483	1,988	1,932	2,641	1,990	1,163	1,127	1,249	952	1,035	836	1,141	972
Representation Lower	1,235	1,311	1,842	1,712	1,223	2,040	2,230	2,117	2,112	1,815	1,856	1,805	1,626	1,743	1,766	1,984	1,897	1,943	1,865	1,750
Family	1,164	1,232	1,736	1,613	1,143	1,929	2,118	2,018	2,020	1,743	1,745	1,698	1,540	1,642	1,662	1,866	1,795	1,848	1,771	1,637
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	0	2	5	4	1	3	6	5	4	4	4	2	4	5	4	3	5	6	10	8
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	1,164	1,230	1,731	1,609	1,142	1,926	2,112	2,013	2,016	1,739	1,741	1,696	1,536	1,637	1,658	1,863	1,790	1,842	1,761	1,629
Non-Family	71	79	106	99	80	111	112	99	92	72	111	107	86	101	104	118	102	95	94	113
Representation Higher	1,625	1,347	1,691	1,845	1,333	1,691	1,733	1,906	1,572	1,782	1,741	2,118	1,591	1,945	1,759	1,856	1,818	1,566	1,394	2,305
Family	886	721	996	1,087	584	830	965	1,140	915	881	926	1,170	824	909	936	899	921	698	725	1,412
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	325	127	195	342	275	279	168	297	201	313	245	476	187	371	287	300	274	138	87	633
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	561	594	801	745	309	551	797	843	714	568	681	694	637	538	649	599	647	560	638	779
Non-Family	739	626	695	758	749	861	768	766	657	901	815	948	767	1,036	823	957	897	868	669	893
Exceptional Funding	6	15	2	3	0	7	11	13	6	9	7	8	11	5	8	7	3	5	9	11
Breach of Human Rights	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	5	5	1	2	2	2	0	1	0	3	1
Inquest	6	12	2	3	0	6	10	10	3	4	2	7	9	3	6	7	2	5	6	10
Grand Total	17,449	19,177	19,005	18,667	10,462	17,365	18,846	18,102	17,339	17,196	17,222	17,205	15,079	16,759	15,641	16,497	16,285	16,102	15,038	16,456

Table A3: Civil applications granted, by Primary Nature, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Category of Service	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Advice and Assistance	13,552	12,954	12,088	5,885	5,055
Child Proceedings	1,542	1,713	1,277	624	625
Criminal Matters	2,927	2,156	2,298	396	190
Family	2,277	2,475	2,260	770	446
Government	1,545	1,678	1,327	612	656
Housing & Debt	530	463	355	86	74
Neg / Personal Inj	1,727	1,419	1,141	341	269
Other	2,752	2,766	3,178	2,832	2,540
Parole Matters	252	284	252	224	255
Representation Lower	6,100	7,610	7,588	7,119	7,455
Children Order Articles 44 - 58	1,409	1,694	1,642	1,663	1,872
Children Order Articles 62 - 69	124	119	167	148	132
Children Order Articles 7 - 41	2,505	2,818	2,904	2,694	2,907
Children Order Generic	59	132	155	134	135
Debt / Ejectment	0	0	0	0	1
Family Homes Domestic Violence	1,637	2,430	2,324	2,055	1,976
Maintenance	11	15	14	16	29
Parole	175	219	208	212	241
Quasi criminal	39	44	23	29	15
Tribunal	141	139	151	168	147
Representation Higher	6,508	6,663	7,213	7,151	7,083
Appeals	123	131	208	198	181
Asylum & Immigration	135	101	112	112	186
Children Order Articles 44 - 58	1,471	1,359	1,335	1,310	1,425
Children Order Articles 62 - 69	8	10	12	10	11
Children Order Articles 7 - 41	775	729	827	612	720
Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	312	273	306	354	316
Debt / Ejectment	22	14	30	36	34
Family Homes Domestic Violence	126	121	158	114	136
High Court Bail	1,431	1,568	1,388	1,633	1,639
Judicial Review	150	128	160	195	159
Land / Property	13	22	41	48	41
Maintenance	4	5	1	5	3
Matrimonial / Civil Partnership	980	1,013	1,227	1,133	1,124
Other	417	535	584	549	432
Parole	0	0	2	2	3
Personal Injury	520	634	802	823	654
Quasi criminal	21	20	20	17	19
Exceptional Funding	26	31	30	31	28
Breach of the Human Rights Act or enforceable EU rights	3	5	14	6	5
Inquest	23	26	16	25	23
Grand Total	26,186	27,258	26,919	20,186	19,621

Note:

1. Criminal legal aid is administered by Court Tier and is presented, alongside PACE in Table A1. The information has not been duplicated in this Table.

Table A4: Authorised expenditure, 2020/21 to 2023/24

Category of Service	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Criminal Total	£35,916,726	£48,208,122	£50,679,427	£52,964,144
Criminal Courts	£34,006,808	£46,236,261	£48,963,663	£50,677,748
Crown Court	£17,614,895	£20,965,940	£25,463,825	£25,161,037
Magistrate's Court	£11,790,278	£19,931,555	£18,460,011	£19,465,984
Extradition	£59,827	£558,655	£534,174	£1,322,674
Criminal Court of Appeal	£4,184,415	£4,170,322	£3,747,541	£3,997,672
County Court Appeal	£357,394	£609,789	£758,112	£730,382
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	£1,909,918	£1,971,861	£1,715,763	£2,286,396
Civil Total	£39,547,639	£47,079,215	£51,087,843	£61,043,048
Advice and Assistance Civil	£1,776,357	£2,021,032	£1,726,941	£1,693,051
Family	£318,736	£286,372	£196,728	£224,388
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	£23,250	£27,728	£9,598	£3,659
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	£295,486	£258,643	£187,130	£220,729
Non-Family	£1,457,621	£1,734,660	£1,530,213	£1,468,663
Representation Lower	£4,311,065	£5,271,996	£6,903,764	£5,886,778
Family	£3,909,129	£4,920,343	£6,396,804	£5,499,279
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	£1,083	£1,788	£2,369	£1,842
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	£3,908,046	£4,918,554	£6,394,435	£5,497,437
Non-Family	£401,936	£351,654	£506,960	£387,498
Representation Higher	£32,006,423	£38,746,031	£42,369,792	£52,536,182
Family	£21,267,531	£27,185,598	£30,626,710	£33,818,947
<i>of which Matrimonial</i>	£3,670,338	£3,183,570	£2,989,970	£4,339,452
<i>of which Non-Matrimonial</i>	£17,597,193	£24,002,028	£27,636,740	£29,479,495
Non-Family	£10,738,892	£11,560,433	£11,743,083	£18,717,235
Exceptional Funding	£1,453,794	£1,040,157	£87,345	£927,037
Breach of Human Rights	£9,462	£27,465	£8,622	£39,928
Inquest	£1,444,332	£1,012,692	£78,723	£887,109
Grand Total	£75,464,365	£95,287,337	£101,767,269	£114,007,192

Table A5: Authorised expenditure, by Quarter, Q2 2019/20 to Q4 2023/24

Category of Service	2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23			2023/24						
	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar				
Criminal Total	£9,162,907	£11,159,531	£10,637,377	£9,126,074	£8,074,267	£6,335,354	£12,381,031	£12,434,032	£10,942,997	£10,477,735	£14,353,358	£9,796,368	£10,210,133	£15,368,813	£15,304,113	£11,208,045	£11,911,438	£13,468,841	£16,375,919
Criminal Courts	£8,466,690	£10,383,249	£9,915,062	£8,675,969	£7,583,189	£5,851,483	£11,896,167	£12,121,873	£10,471,445	£9,938,018	£13,704,925	£9,365,832	£9,826,794	£14,927,510	£14,843,528	£10,757,504	£11,363,195	£12,862,105	£15,694,944
Crown Court	£2,864,222	£4,868,333	£5,987,273	£4,820,578	£4,046,886	£3,338,509	£5,408,922	£5,252,318	£4,650,956	£4,015,270	£7,047,395	£3,553,402	£6,390,298	£7,025,783	£8,494,343	£6,315,475	£6,371,427	£4,904,026	£7,570,108
Magistrate's Court	£5,078,776	£4,800,936	£3,264,155	£3,135,769	£1,909,127	£1,929,625	£4,815,757	£4,862,175	£4,877,569	£4,813,827	£5,377,984	£4,348,081	£3,092,150	£6,017,875	£5,001,905	£3,679,634	£4,091,673	£5,050,457	£6,644,219
Extradition	£1,223	£53,226	£123,728	£8,153	£19,991	£15,726	£15,958	£64,370	£21,193	£21,700	£451,391	£245,215	£43,318	£62,783	£182,858	£212,202	£156,004	£747,185	£207,283
Criminal Court of Appeal	£344,130	£434,113	£415,467	£606,536	£1,542,187	£513,017	£1,522,674	£1,808,838	£768,824	£960,359	£632,301	£1,103,055	£132,316	£1,580,430	£931,740	£434,881	£515,519	£2,000,085	£1,047,188
County Court Appeal	£178,339	£226,640	£124,439	£104,933	£64,998	£54,607	£132,856	£134,171	£152,903	£126,861	£195,854	£116,078	£168,712	£240,640	£232,682	£115,312	£228,571	£160,352	£226,146
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	£696,217	£776,283	£722,315	£450,105	£491,078	£483,871	£484,863	£312,160	£471,552	£539,717	£648,432	£430,536	£383,339	£441,303	£460,586	£450,541	£484,244	£606,736	£680,875
Civil Total	£9,428,215	£9,159,411	£10,843,476	£11,892,175	£7,430,945	£9,106,338	£11,117,181	£9,264,883	£12,126,479	£11,553,992	£14,133,361	£9,752,019	£9,466,450	£15,547,445	£16,321,929	£12,845,232	£14,747,006	£12,987,524	£20,463,287
Advice and Assistance Civil	£223,880	£469,143	£368,789	£398,350	£416,028	£476,564	£485,415	£286,342	£461,699	£580,445	£692,546	£434,912	£305,063	£533,364	£453,602	£359,024	£356,129	£439,281	£538,617
Family	£47,556	£94,572	£75,498	£79,148	£88,627	£79,809	£71,151	£41,021	£72,096	£72,083	£101,172	£63,563	£34,647	£45,553	£52,964	£42,870	£56,331	£60,168	£65,018
of which Matrimonial	£3,478	£6,820	£6,559	£4,711	£6,385	£6,584	£5,569	£3,605	£6,670	£6,490	£10,962	£3,989	£2,679	£1,547	£1,383	£1,295	£474	£746	£1,144
of which Non-Matrimonial	£44,078	£87,752	£68,938	£74,437	£82,242	£73,225	£65,582	£37,416	£65,425	£65,593	£90,210	£59,574	£31,968	£44,006	£51,582	£41,576	£55,857	£59,423	£63,874
Non-Family	£176,324	£374,570	£293,292	£319,201	£327,401	£396,754	£414,264	£245,321	£389,603	£508,362	£591,374	£371,349	£270,415	£487,811	£400,638	£316,154	£299,798	£379,112	£473,598
Representation Lower	£1,281,512	£1,612,033	£1,612,469	£1,385,372	£696,572	£928,842	£1,300,279	£842,088	£1,360,324	£1,200,753	£1,868,832	£1,259,361	£1,516,778	£2,011,439	£2,116,186	£1,324,807	£1,361,547	£1,556,817	£1,643,607
Family	£1,186,691	£1,493,818	£1,570,271	£1,251,470	£647,796	£827,953	£1,181,909	£744,846	£1,267,175	£1,140,093	£1,768,229	£1,083,898	£1,450,054	£1,871,971	£1,990,881	£1,213,733	£1,307,963	£1,469,769	£1,507,814
of which Matrimonial	£1,112	£361	£877	£630	£75	£0	£378	£168	£261	£514	£845	£1,460	£671	£79	£159	£0	£196	£66	£1,580
of which Non-Matrimonial	£1,185,580	£1,493,457	£1,569,394	£1,250,840	£647,721	£827,953	£1,181,531	£744,678	£1,266,914	£1,139,579	£1,767,383	£1,082,438	£1,449,383	£1,871,892	£1,990,722	£1,213,733	£1,307,767	£1,469,703	£1,506,234
Non-Family	£94,820	£118,215	£42,197	£133,901	£48,776	£100,889	£118,370	£97,242	£93,149	£60,660	£100,603	£175,463	£66,724	£139,468	£125,305	£111,074	£53,584	£87,048	£135,792
Representation Higher	£7,721,923	£6,695,209	£8,273,855	£9,737,827	£6,184,851	£7,308,212	£8,775,532	£7,986,938	£10,160,625	£9,569,717	£11,028,751	£7,723,690	£8,575,045	£12,587,351	£13,483,706	£11,062,747	£12,694,705	£10,797,569	£17,981,161
Family	£5,249,009	£4,828,001	£6,160,783	£6,678,641	£4,436,539	£4,536,418	£5,615,933	£5,129,921	£6,224,809	£7,651,857	£8,179,010	£5,049,673	£6,580,358	£9,159,277	£9,837,401	£7,878,499	£8,732,425	£5,861,988	£11,346,035
of which Matrimonial	£628,787	£633,846	£970,373	£1,416,903	£783,809	£688,142	£781,483	£490,299	£943,768	£878,225	£971,278	£579,825	£542,331	£752,459	£1,115,354	£1,318,233	£965,311	£652,496	£1,403,413
of which Non-Matrimonial	£4,620,222	£4,194,155	£5,190,410	£5,261,738	£3,652,730	£3,848,276	£4,834,450	£4,639,622	£5,281,041	£6,873,632	£7,207,732	£4,469,848	£6,038,027	£8,406,818	£8,722,047	£6,560,266	£7,767,114	£5,209,493	£9,942,622
Non-Family	£2,472,914	£1,867,209	£2,113,073	£3,059,186	£1,748,312	£2,771,794	£3,159,599	£2,857,017	£3,935,816	£1,917,860	£2,849,741	£2,674,017	£1,994,686	£3,428,074	£3,646,306	£3,184,248	£3,962,280	£4,935,581	£6,635,126
Exceptional Funding	£200,900	£383,026	£588,363	£371,626	£133,494	£392,720	£555,955	£149,515	£143,832	£203,077	£543,733	£334,056	£-930,436	£415,291	£268,434	£98,654	£334,624	£193,857	£299,902
Breach of Human Rights	£0	£0	£562	£9,462	£0	£0	£13,597	£8,712	£0	£5,155	£0	£2,577	£0	£6,045	£1,398	£2,719	£2,530	£33,281	
Inquest	£200,900	£383,026	£587,801	£362,164	£133,494	£392,720	£555,955	£135,918	£135,120	£203,077	£538,577	£334,056	£-933,013	£415,291	£262,389	£97,255	£331,906	£191,328	£266,621
Grand Total	£18,591,122	£20,318,942	£21,480,853	£21,019,249	£15,505,213	£15,441,692	£23,498,212	£21,698,916	£23,069,476	£22,031,727	£28,487,219	£19,548,387	£19,676,583	£30,916,258	£31,626,042	£24,053,277	£26,658,444	£26,456,365	£36,839,106

Table A6: Civil authorised expenditure, by Primary Nature, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Category of Service	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Advice and Assistance	£1,776,357	£2,021,032	£1,726,941	£1,693,051
Child Proceedings	£208,247	£173,063	£144,691	£197,132
Criminal Matters	£179,682	£224,106	£138,623	£46,710
Family	£110,489	£113,308	£52,037	£27,256
Government	£326,748	£287,548	£208,260	£142,685
Housing & Debt	£32,849	£52,237	£30,895	£21,553
Neg / Personal Inj	£235,725	£225,938	£143,057	£107,192
Other	£571,860	£847,248	£946,404	£1,080,590
Parole Matters	£110,757	£97,583	£62,976	£69,934
Representation Lower	£4,311,065	£5,271,996	£6,903,764	£5,886,778
Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£1,324,043	£1,433,448	£1,825,986	£1,734,223
Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£60,181	£61,374	£84,523	£70,845
Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£1,508,059	£2,206,987	£3,173,429	£2,724,633
Children Order Generic	£46,064	£69,265	£113,211	£100,492
Family Homes Domestic Violence	£969,700	£1,147,480	£1,197,286	£867,243
Maintenance	£1,083	£1,788	£2,369	£1,842
Parole	£278,725	£260,755	£370,073	£270,228
Quasi criminal	£18,736	£12,649	£9,560	£9,037
Tribunal	£104,475	£78,250	£127,327	£108,234
Representation Higher	£32,006,423	£38,746,031	£42,369,792	£52,536,182
Appeals	£1,833,824	£2,680,487	£1,761,208	£5,225,101
Asylum & Immigration	£146,493	£182,646	£175,205	£234,462
Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£11,907,520	£15,111,190	£18,061,364	£19,060,986
Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£8,375	£34,587	£115,564	£38,678
Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£3,311,444	£5,308,724	£6,037,547	£6,312,332
Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£2,069,031	£3,084,677	£2,876,327	£3,478,885
Debt / Ejectment	£294,968	£68,835	£42,775	£54,280
Family Homes Domestic Violence	£224,994	£372,277	£321,462	£357,950
High Court Bail	£1,237,578	£1,189,620	£959,133	£1,229,905
Judicial Review	£3,519,619	£3,113,200	£3,019,392	£6,109,433
Land / Property	£26,600	£83,395	£155,007	£112,195
Maintenance	£6,364	£50,231	£5,241	£135,388
Matrimonial / Civil Partnership	£3,662,136	£3,129,291	£2,974,913	£4,178,206
Other	£1,912,222	£2,854,758	£3,662,144	£3,031,935
Parole	£0	£300	£1,015	£16,690
Personal Injury	£1,822,155	£1,340,870	£2,158,539	£2,769,385
Quasi criminal	£23,099	£140,942	£42,957	£190,370
Exceptional Funding	£1,453,794	£1,040,157	£87,345	£927,037
Breach of the Human Rights Act or enforceable EU rights	£9,462	£27,465	£8,622	£39,928
Inquest	£1,444,332	£1,012,692	£78,723	£887,109
Grand Total	£39,547,639	£47,079,216	£51,087,842	£61,043,048

Note:

1. Criminal legal aid is administered by Court Tier and is presented, alongside PACE in Table A4. The information has not been duplicated in this Table.

Table A7: Annual Children Order applications granted, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Category of Service/Primary Nature		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Public Children Order	Representation Higher	1,742	1,598	1,603	1,604	1,682
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	1,471	1,359	1,335	1,310	1,425
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	8	10	12	10	11
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	263	229	256	284	246
	Representation Lower	1,533	1,814	1,811	1,811	2,011
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	1,409	1,694	1,642	1,663	1,872
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	124	119	167	148	132
	Children Order Generic	0	1	2	0	7
Total	3,275	3,412	3,414	3,415	3,693	
Private Children Order	Representation Higher	824	773	877	682	790
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	775	729	827	612	720
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	49	44	50	70	70
	Representation Lower	2,564	2,949	3,057	2,828	3,035
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	2,505	2,818	2,904	2,694	2,907
	Children Order Generic	59	131	153	134	128
Total	3,388	3,722	3,934	3,510	3,825	
Grand Total		6,663	7,134	7,348	6,925	7,518

Table A8: Children Order applications granted, by Quarter, Q1 2019/20 to Q4 2023/24

Category of Service/Primary Nature		2019/20				2020/21				2021/22				2022/23				2023/24			
		Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
Public Children Order	Representation Higher	345	405	478	514	217	354	524	503	423	302	424	454	422	349	439	394	413	341	421	507
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	286	342	408	435	186	290	452	431	341	243	360	391	363	297	357	293	341	291	362	431
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	2	2	3	1	0	6	1	3	0	0	3	9	5	0	3	2	3	2	4	2
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	57	61	67	78	31	58	71	69	82	59	61	54	54	52	79	99	69	48	55	74
	Representation Lower	328	424	379	402	256	455	569	534	483	379	452	497	394	415	471	531	537	520	528	426
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	301	390	358	360	233	420	535	506	435	323	431	453	350	385	437	491	496	478	489	409
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	27	34	21	42	23	35	33	28	48	55	20	44	44	30	34	40	39	39	37	17
Children Order Generic	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2		
TOTAL	673	829	857	916	473	809	1,093	1,037	906	681	876	951	816	764	910	925	950	861	949	933	
Private Children Order	Representation Higher	180	173	278	193	78	163	233	299	242	206	225	204	183	148	172	179	200	178	183	229
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	172	160	261	182	72	159	218	280	228	193	210	196	172	131	155	154	191	156	168	205
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	8	13	17	11	6	4	15	19	14	13	15	8	11	17	17	25	9	22	15	24
	Representation Lower	518	483	800	763	431	774	890	854	822	785	737	713	664	668	683	813	764	766	765	740
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	506	470	786	743	410	753	845	810	785	735	700	684	640	630	647	777	725	732	732	718
	Children Order Generic	12	13	14	20	21	21	45	44	37	50	37	29	24	38	36	36	39	34	33	22
TOTAL	698	656	1,078	956	509	937	1,123	1,153	1,064	991	962	917	847	816	855	992	964	944	948	969	
Grand Total	1,371	1,485	1,935	1,872	982	1,746	2,216	2,190	1,970	1,672	1,838	1,868	1,663	1,580	1,765	1,917	1,914	1,805	1,897	1,902	

Table A9: Annual Children Order authorised expenditure, 2020/21 to 2023/24

Category of Service/Primary Nature		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Public Children Order	Representation Higher	£13,325,910	£17,490,149	£20,451,946	£21,452,040
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£11,907,520	£15,111,190	£18,061,364	£19,060,986
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£8,375	£34,587	£115,564	£38,678
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£1,410,015	£2,344,373	£2,275,018	£2,352,376
	Representation Lower	£1,385,551	£1,495,058	£1,911,481	£1,812,248
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£1,324,043	£1,433,448	£1,825,986	£1,734,223
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£60,181	£61,374	£84,523	£70,845
	Children Order Generic	£1,328	£236	£972	£7,179
Total	£14,711,461	£18,985,207	£22,363,427	£23,264,288	
Private Children Order	Representation Higher	£3,970,460	£6,049,029	£6,638,856	£7,438,841
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£3,311,444	£5,308,724	£6,037,547	£6,312,332
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£659,016	£740,305	£601,309	£1,126,509
	Representation Lower	£1,552,795	£2,276,017	£3,285,668	£2,817,946
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£1,508,059	£2,206,987	£3,173,429	£2,724,633
	Children Order Generic	£44,736	£69,030	£112,239	£93,313
Total	£5,523,255	£8,325,046	£9,924,524	£10,256,787	
Grand Total	£20,234,716	£27,310,253	£32,287,951	£33,521,074	

Table A10: Children Order authorised expenditure, by Quarter, Q2 2019/20 to Q4 2023/24

Category of Service/Primary Nature		2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23			2023/24						
		Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar				
Public Children Order	Representation Higher	£3,056,381	£2,862,682	£3,837,777	£4,163,444	£2,669,727	£2,956,834	£3,535,904	£3,497,058	£3,582,253	£5,126,422	£5,284,416	£3,319,077	£4,250,115	£6,320,807	£6,561,947	£4,780,377	£6,349,822	£3,671,501	£6,650,341
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£2,563,442	£2,419,867	£3,260,573	£3,719,642	£2,344,206	£2,754,594	£3,089,078	£3,151,124	£3,038,694	£4,295,565	£4,625,807	£2,868,934	£3,844,833	£5,702,525	£5,645,072	£4,104,625	£5,653,685	£3,349,252	£5,953,424
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£4,715	£4,413	£11,636	£254	£1,380	£0	£6,741	£19,061	£10,213	£4,171	£1,142	£2,418	£43,141	£19,895	£50,110	£203	£228	£2,870	£35,377
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£488,224	£438,402	£565,567	£443,548	£324,142	£202,240	£440,085	£326,874	£533,346	£826,686	£657,467	£447,725	£362,142	£598,387	£866,765	£675,549	£695,909	£319,379	£661,539
	Representation Lower	£369,081	£532,327	£523,790	£452,199	£279,009	£281,362	£372,983	£216,962	£457,593	£353,246	£467,257	£276,883	£426,014	£568,389	£640,195	£382,454	£456,259	£499,509	£474,026
	Children Order Articles 44 - 58	£343,875	£502,666	£495,665	£430,541	£260,267	£270,845	£362,390	£213,557	£438,781	£333,373	£447,737	£266,453	£406,433	£544,605	£608,496	£371,733	£432,058	£479,997	£450,435
	Children Order Articles 62 - 69	£17,297	£28,417	£25,815	£20,982	£18,506	£10,516	£10,177	£3,405	£18,577	£19,873	£19,520	£10,430	£19,110	£23,519	£31,463	£10,721	£20,743	£16,091	£23,291
	Children Order Generic	£7,908	£1,245	£2,309	£676	£236	£0	£416	£0	£236	£0	£0	£0	£471	£265	£236	£0	£3,458	£3,421	£300
TOTAL	£3,425,461	£3,395,010	£4,361,567	£4,615,643	£2,948,736	£3,238,195	£3,908,887	£3,714,020	£4,039,846	£5,479,668	£5,751,673	£3,595,960	£4,676,130	£6,889,196	£7,202,141	£5,162,831	£6,806,080	£4,171,010	£7,124,366	
Private Children Order	Representation Higher	£1,457,989	£1,209,580	£1,249,467	£1,009,056	£857,497	£870,929	£1,232,978	£1,046,500	£1,549,929	£1,662,449	£1,790,151	£1,072,706	£1,648,308	£1,946,491	£1,971,351	£1,666,356	£1,305,351	£1,388,628	£3,078,506
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£1,302,955	£1,170,176	£1,046,116	£798,831	£682,866	£757,820	£1,071,928	£1,025,081	£1,261,065	£1,414,685	£1,607,894	£991,194	£1,417,402	£1,814,137	£1,814,814	£1,376,309	£1,120,559	£1,335,892	£2,479,572
	Children Order Generic & Child Proceedings	£155,035	£39,404	£203,350	£210,225	£174,631	£113,109	£161,050	£21,420	£288,864	£247,764	£182,257	£81,512	£230,906	£132,354	£156,537	£290,048	£184,792	£52,736	£598,934
	Representation Lower	£521,313	£659,396	£881,608	£589,836	£235,417	£301,619	£425,923	£326,547	£575,377	£516,731	£857,362	£467,933	£763,426	£1,047,807	£1,006,503	£655,309	£718,006	£692,589	£752,041
	Children Order Articles 7 - 41	£500,164	£641,737	£860,590	£560,007	£232,226	£297,873	£417,953	£317,339	£561,375	£487,630	£840,643	£453,810	£736,322	£1,017,823	£965,474	£634,772	£690,351	£661,286	£738,223
	Children Order Generic	£21,149	£17,659	£21,018	£29,829	£3,191	£3,746	£7,970	£9,208	£14,002	£29,100	£16,719	£14,123	£27,104	£29,984	£41,029	£20,537	£27,655	£31,303	£13,818
TOTAL	£1,979,303	£1,868,976	£2,131,075	£1,598,892	£1,092,914	£1,172,548	£1,658,901	£1,373,047	£2,125,306	£2,179,180	£2,647,513	£1,540,638	£2,411,734	£2,994,298	£2,977,854	£2,321,665	£2,023,357	£2,081,217	£3,830,546	
Grand Total	£5,404,764	£5,263,986	£6,492,642	£6,214,535	£4,041,649	£4,410,744	£5,567,788	£5,087,068	£6,165,152	£7,658,848	£8,399,186	£5,136,598	£7,087,864	£9,883,494	£10,179,995	£7,484,497	£8,829,438	£6,252,227	£10,954,912	

Table A11: Applications granted and associated relative index values, by gender and age band³, 2023/24

Gender	Age Band	Number of applications granted			NI Population ¹	Grants per 1,000 population			Relative Utilisation Index Values ²		
		Criminal	Civil	Total		Criminal	Civil	Total	Criminal	Civil	Total
Female	Under 18	562	969	1,531	213,055	2.6	4.5	7.2	1.9	2.6	2.3
	18 to 24	1,091	842	1,933	71,959	15.2	11.7	26.9	10.9	6.9	8.7
	25 to 29	1,223	1,373	2,596	57,391	21.3	23.9	45.2	15.2	14.1	14.6
	30 to 39	2,719	3,376	6,095	130,741	20.8	25.8	46.6	14.9	15.2	15.0
	40 to 49	1,480	1,980	3,460	125,034	11.8	15.8	27.7	8.4	9.3	8.9
	50 to 59	801	713	1,514	132,216	6.1	5.4	11.5	4.4	3.2	3.7
	60+	327	418	745	240,200	1.4	1.7	3.1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	ALL	8,285	9,671	17,956	970,596	8.5	10.0	18.5	-	-	-
Male	Under 18	1,553	1,095	2,648	223,650	6.9	4.9	11.8	4.9	2.9	3.8
	18 to 24	5,698	892	6,590	77,783	73.3	11.5	84.7	52.4	6.8	27.3
	25 to 29	6,117	1,437	7,554	57,839	105.8	24.8	130.6	75.6	14.6	42.1
	30 to 39	12,314	3,347	15,661	122,874	100.2	27.2	127.5	71.6	16.0	41.1
	40 to 49	5,900	1,929	7,829	118,525	49.8	16.3	66.1	35.6	9.6	21.3
	50 to 59	2,731	794	3,525	127,371	21.4	6.2	27.7	15.3	3.6	8.9
	60+	1,454	433	1,887	211,905	6.9	2.0	8.9	4.9	1.2	2.9
	ALL	35,901	9,927	45,828	939,947	38.2	10.6	48.8	-	-	-

Notes:

1. NI Population figures in the above table are sourced from [NISRA 2022 mid-year population estimates for NI](#).
2. Index Values have been calculated using the volumes of applications granted to each age-gender group, standardised by the equivalent NI mid-year population estimates.
3. Analysis excludes 313 granted applications where the gender and/or age of the assisted person is unknown. In cases where the gender was known (but not the age) they have been added back into the 'ALL' category for Male or Female respectively.

Table A12: Applications granted, by Local Government District, 2023/24

Local Government District (LGD) ^{2,3}	Number of applications granted			NI Population ¹	Applications granted per 1,000 population		
	Criminal	Civil	Total		Criminal	Civil	Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	2,200	838	3,038	146,148	15.1	5.7	20.8
Ards and North Down	2,308	1,189	3,497	164,223	14.1	7.2	21.3
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	3,906	1,584	5,490	220,271	17.7	7.2	24.9
Belfast	11,461	5,275	16,736	348,005	32.9	15.2	48.1
Causeway Coast and Glens	2,114	1,208	3,322	141,316	15.0	8.5	23.5
Derry City and Strabane	4,144	1,573	5,717	150,836	27.5	10.4	37.9
Fermanagh and Omagh	1,663	535	2,198	116,994	14.2	4.6	18.8
Lisburn and Castlereagh	2,808	3,152	5,960	149,915	18.7	21.0	39.8
Mid and East Antrim	2,435	882	3,317	139,200	17.5	6.3	23.8
Mid Ulster	2,129	696	2,825	151,001	14.1	4.6	18.7
Newry, Mourne and Down	3,292	1,430	4,722	182,634	18.0	7.8	25.9
Northern Ireland (Total)	44,260	19,621	63,881	1,910,543	23.2	10.3	33.4

Notes:

1. NI Population figures in the above table are sourced from [NISRA 2022 mid-year population estimates for NI](#).
2. Analysis excludes 7,059 granted applications where the LGD of the assisted person is unknown, though these are included in the NI Total.
3. LGD is assigned on the registered postcode of each granted application.

Table A13: Applications granted, by area of deprivation (MDM), 2023/24

MDM Quintile ^{1,2,3}	Number of applications granted		
	Criminal	Civil	Total
Quintile 1 (most deprived)	15,617	6,423	22,040
Quintile 2	8,483	3,345	11,828
Quintile 3	5,868	2,743	8,611
Quintile 4	5,545	4,288	9,833
Quintile 5 (least deprived)	2,947	1,563	4,510
Northern Ireland (Total)	44,260	19,621	63,881

Notes:

1. Quintiles of deprivation in the above table are sourced from [NISRA's Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 \(NIMDM2017\)](#).
2. Analysis excludes 7,059 granted applications where the MDM Quintile associated with the application is unknown, though these are included in the NI Total.
3. MDM Quintile is assigned on the registered postcode of each granted application.

Table A14: Registered Legal Aid Service Providers by Type, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Provider	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Solicitor Firms	443	455	472	459	457
Solicitor Firms receiving payment	393	398	410	410	373
Barristers	585	632	667	621	603
Barristers receiving payment	453	488	495	492	483
Third Party Payees	4	4	4	7	6
Third Party Payees receiving payment	3	4	4	6	4

Table A15: Registered Solicitor Firms by Local Government District (LGD), Firms per 100,000 head of Population and Average Minimum Distance (miles) to Nearest Solicitor Firm, 2023/24

Local Government District	Solicitor Firms	NI Population ¹	Firms per 100k Population	Average Distance to nearest Firm ²
Antrim and Newtownabbey	14	146,148	9.6	1.6
Ards and North Down	24	164,223	14.6	1.8
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	52	220,271	23.6	2.1
Belfast	162	348,005	46.6	0.4
Causeway Coast and Glens	22	141,316	15.6	3.7
Derry City and Strabane	33	150,836	21.9	2.5
Fermanagh and Omagh	35	116,994	29.9	3.8
Lisburn and Castlereagh	14	149,915	9.3	1.8
Mid and East Antrim	22	139,200	15.8	2.4
Mid Ulster	36	151,001	23.8	2.7
Newry, Mourne and Down	43	182,634	23.5	2.9
Total	457	1,910,543	23.9	2.1

Notes:

1. NI Population figures in the above table are sourced from NISRA 2022 mid-year population estimates for NI.
2. Average distance is calculated on a straight line basis between the postcode centroids of both the registered applicant and solicitor firm addresses. Further information on this calculation is provided in the guidance notes.

Table A16: Authorised Expenditure by Provider Type, 2020/21 to 2023/24

Provider Type	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Solicitor Firm	£44,519,869	£55,801,329	£59,061,226	£62,884,201
Barrister	£30,747,086	£39,155,613	£42,303,440	£50,735,190
Third Party Payee	£197,410	£330,394	£402,603	£387,801
Total	£75,464,365	£95,287,337	£101,767,269	£114,007,192

Table A17: Authorised Expenditure by Provider Type and Category of Service, 2023/24

Category Of Service	Solicitor Firm	Barrister	Third Party Payee
Criminal Total	£29,007,004	£23,887,921	£69,219
Criminal Courts	£26,720,798	£23,887,921	£69,029
Criminal Advice and Assistance (PACE)	£2,286,205	£0	£190
Civil Total	£33,877,197	£26,847,269	£318,582
Advice and Assistance Civil	£1,488,560	£0	£204,490
Representation Lower	£5,653,824	£201,879	£31,074
Representation Higher	£26,387,795	£26,065,370	£83,017
Exceptional Funding	£347,017	£580,020	£0
Total	£62,884,201	£50,735,190	£387,801

Table A18: Solicitor Firm Authorised Expenditure by Provided Legal Aid Service and Local Government District, 2023/24

Local Government District	Civil	Criminal	Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	£987,768	£567,772	£1,555,540
Ards and North Down	£2,212,341	£1,627,116	£3,839,457
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	£3,089,489	£1,887,952	£4,977,440
Belfast	£14,864,966	£14,515,083	£29,380,049
Causeway Coast and Glens	£995,653	£387,145	£1,382,798
Derry City and Strabane	£3,108,749	£3,559,060	£6,667,808
Fermanagh and Omagh	£1,505,488	£870,080	£2,375,568
Lisburn and Castlereagh	£667,334	£360,312	£1,027,646
Mid and East Antrim	£1,153,571	£1,272,835	£2,426,406
Mid Ulster	£1,529,060	£1,081,343	£2,610,402
Newry, Mourne and Down	£3,762,779	£2,878,307	£6,641,086
Total	£33,877,197	£29,007,004	£62,884,201

Note:

1. LGD is assigned on the registered postcode of each Solicitor Firm.

Table A19: Authorised Expenditure by Provider and Payment Type, 2020/21 to 2023/24

Provider Type	Payment Type	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Solicitor	Profit Cost	£31,665,727	£39,802,298	£41,492,567	£43,553,024
	VAT	£6,242,952	£7,878,604	£8,258,583	£8,650,513
	Disbursement	£6,611,189	£8,120,428	£9,310,076	£10,680,664
	Total	£44,519,869	£55,801,329	£59,061,226	£62,884,201
Barrister	Profit Cost	£26,078,903	£33,248,512	£36,038,555	£42,963,207
	VAT	£4,643,031	£5,733,748	£6,241,134	£7,773,278
	Disbursement	£25,153	£173,353	£23,750	£-1,295
	Total	£30,747,086	£39,155,613	£42,303,440	£50,735,190
Third Party Payee	Profit Cost	£147,633	£268,698	£331,883	£323,168
	VAT	£29,527	£53,721	£66,230	£64,632
	Disbursement	£20,250	£7,976	£4,490	£0
	Total	£197,410	£330,394	£402,603	£387,801
All	Profit Cost	£57,892,263	£73,319,508	£77,863,006	£86,839,400
	VAT	£10,915,510	£13,666,073	£14,565,947	£16,488,423
	Disbursement	£6,656,592	£8,301,756	£9,338,317	£10,679,369
	Total	£75,464,365	£95,287,337	£101,767,269	£114,007,192

Table A20: Authorised Expenditure by Provider, Payment Type and Category of Service, 2023/24

Provider Type	Payment Type	Criminal			Civil					Grand Total
		Criminal Courts	PACE	Criminal Total	Advice and Assistance	Representation Lower	Representation Higher	Exceptional Funding	Civil Total	
Solicitor	Profit Cost	£20,450,619	£1,852,905	£22,303,524	£1,207,091	£4,184,542	£15,620,628	£237,239	£21,249,500	£43,553,024
	VAT	£4,080,921	£368,952	£4,449,873	£228,122	£839,146	£3,085,924	£47,448	£4,200,640	£8,650,513
	Disbursement	£2,189,258	£64,348	£2,253,606	£53,348	£630,136	£7,681,243	£62,331	£8,427,058	£10,680,664
	Total	£26,720,798	£2,286,205	£29,007,004	£1,488,560	£5,653,824	£26,387,795	£347,017	£33,877,197	£62,884,201
Barrister	Profit Cost	£20,166,157	£0	£20,166,157	£0	£173,471	£22,138,881	£484,698	£22,797,050	£42,963,207
	VAT	£3,721,706	£0	£3,721,706	£0	£28,407	£3,927,842	£95,322	£4,051,572	£7,773,278
	Disbursement	£58	£0	£58	£0	£0	£-1,353	£0	£-1,353	£-1,295
	Total	£23,887,921	£0	£23,887,921	£0	£201,879	£26,065,370	£580,020	£26,847,269	£50,735,190
Third Party Payee	Profit Cost	£57,525	£159	£57,684	£170,409	£25,895	£69,181	£0	£265,485	£323,168
	VAT	£11,504	£32	£11,535	£34,082	£5,179	£13,836	£0	£53,097	£64,632
	Disbursement	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Total	£69,029	£190	£69,219	£204,490	£31,074	£83,017	£0	£318,582	£387,801
All	Profit Cost	£40,674,301	£1,853,064	£42,527,365	£1,377,500	£4,383,909	£37,828,690	£721,937	£44,312,035	£86,839,400
	VAT	£7,814,130	£368,984	£8,183,115	£262,203	£872,733	£7,027,602	£142,769	£8,305,308	£16,488,423
	Disbursement	£2,189,316	£64,348	£2,253,664	£53,348	£630,136	£7,679,890	£62,331	£8,425,705	£10,679,369
	Total	£50,677,748	£2,286,396	£52,964,144	£1,693,051	£5,886,778	£52,536,182	£927,037	£61,043,048	£114,007,192

Table A21: Legal Aid Movement across Local Government Districts in Northern Ireland, 2023/24

Local Government District	Applications Granted to Assisted Persons	Applications Out	Applications In	Net Movement of Applications		Cases Granted to Solicitor Firms
				No.	%	
Antrim and Newtownabbey	3,038	2,565	697	-1,868	-61%	1,170
Ards and North Down	3,497	1,908	2,199	291	8%	3,788
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	5,490	1,794	1,762	-32	-1%	5,458
Belfast	16,736	3,108	10,957	7,849	47%	24,585
Causeway Coast and Glens	3,322	2,430	185	-2,245	-68%	1,077
Derry City and Strabane	5,717	676	2,063	1,387	24%	7,104
Fermanagh and Omagh	2,198	850	403	-447	-20%	1,751
Lisburn and Castlereagh	5,960	5,332	409	-4,923	-83%	1,037
Mid and East Antrim	3,317	1,859	1,054	-805	-24%	2,512
Mid Ulster	2,825	1,085	589	-496	-18%	2,329
Newry, Mourne and Down	4,722	1,217	2,506	1,289	27%	6,011

Notes:

1. Analysis excludes 7,059 granted applications where the LGD of the assisted person is unknown.
2. LGD is assigned on the registered postcode of each granted application and of the Solicitor Firm.

9. TECHNICAL NOTES

Numbers and Percentages

For presentational purposes, the majority of figures contained within this report (expenditure and percentages) have been rounded. As a result, totals may appear not to sum.

Percentages calculated on base numbers of under 100 should be treated with caution to avoid drawing unwarranted conclusions.

Population analyses

Where statistics have been standardised to enable direct comparison between groups, this has been based on the latest [NI mid-year population estimates](#). In Statistical Bulletin 2/2024, this was NISRA's 2022 update.

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM)

The [Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 \(NIMDM2017\)](#) replaced the NIMDM 2010 as the official measure of deprivation in Northern Ireland.

The MDM provides a mechanism for ranking Northern Ireland's 890 Super Output areas (SOAs) from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890).

Local Geographies

Analyses at local geography level is based on the postcode registered with each application. By nature, this will include addresses such as prisons, hospitals and those applications where, for example, the assisted person is a minor and the associated address is that of a third-party taking proceedings on behalf of the child in a public law case. It is expected that in the majority of cases the registered address will reflect the primary residence of the assisted person.

In instances where address information is unknown or not available, these cases have been excluded from the respective sub-analyses, though will be included in the equivalent Northern Ireland total. On average 11% of applications granted each year do not have a valid postcode recorded.

Typically, NI headline statistics are broken down into the eleven council areas known as [Local Government Districts \(LGDs\)](#).

Geographical Location Attribution

Solicitor Firm

The assignment of Local Government District (LGD) to solicitor firms are based upon the firm's address postcode provided at registration or during change of details updates. The postcode is linked to NISRA's most recently available [Central Postcode Directory](#) to geographically allocate the firm to an LGD.

Applicant

Applicants are attributed to a geographical location using the address postcode provided during the registration of an application onto the LAMS system.

It is likely that this will reflect the residing address for the applicant at that point in time. However, users should be aware that in some circumstances an alternative non-residential contact address may be provided e.g. prison, police station, solicitors office, child protection service.

As with solicitor firms, the applicant's postcode is linked to NISRA's most recently available [Central Postcode Directory](#) to allocate them to a geographical location.

Average Distance

The average distance (miles) to solicitor firm is calculated on the basis of straight line distance between the population weighted centroid of [Census Data Zones](#) (DZ2021) and nearest solicitor firm. Each area calculation is then weighted by the population size and aggregated up to LGD level to produce a population weighted average minimum distance to solicitor firm.