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Case Processing Time for Criminal Cases dealt with at Courts in Northern Ireland 2022/23

Date published: 30 August 2023

The Department of Justice (DoJ) today published a Research and Statistical Bulletin on 'Case Processing Time for Criminal Cases dealt with at Courts in Northern Ireland 2022/23'. It is an Official Statistics Publication.

This bulletin presents data on the average Case Processing Time for Criminal Cases dealt with in the Crown and magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland for the year 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 and refers to the time from which the offence was reported to, or detected by, the police.

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Summary

Prior to the pandemic, the time taken for cases to be completed had been showing a general improvement. The pandemic however, impacted on the levels of court business which could be conducted, during 2020/21 in particular. This meant that, for a large part of that year, cases were not able to proceed through the system at a rate they might otherwise have done, resulting in a backlog of cases to be cleared in 2021/22 and going forward.

All Courts

- In 2022/23, average time taken for a case to be dealt with at all courts, was 206 days, a decrease of 8.8% from the previous year (226 days) and the second highest figure recorded in the last five years.

Crown Court cases

- In 2022-23, the average time taken for a charge case to be dealt with at Crown Court was 561 days, an increase of 4.9% from 2021-22 (535 days).
- The average time taken for a summons case was 1,150 days, an increase of 11.8% from 2021-22 (1,029 days).

Adult Magistrates' Courts

- In 2022-23, the average time taken for a charge case to be dealt with at adult magistrates' courts, was 103 days, a decrease of 4.6% from the previous year (108 days).
- The average time taken for a summons case to be dealt with at adult magistrates' courts, was 254 days, a decrease of 11.8% from 288 days in 2021-22.

Youth Magistrates' Courts

- In 2022-23, the average time taken for a charge case to be dealt with at youth magistrates' courts, was 142 days, a decrease of 2.1% from 2021-22 (145 days).

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days at which 50% of those cases included under counting rules has been completed.)

Notes to editors:

1. This bulletin presents data on the average Case Processing Time for Criminal Cases dealt with in the Crown and magistrates' courts in Northern Ireland for the year 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023. The intention of the publication is to show the impact on performance over time of key 'speeding up justice' initiatives put in place through law reform and through administrative and practice improvements. It aims to provide an overview of the time taken for a case to be disposed at court from the date that case began its journey through the criminal justice system, based on a start point of the date the offence was reported to, or detected by, the PSNI. Analysis is also provided in relation to case type, i.e., whether it was a charge or summons case, and in relation to the type of court in which the case was disposed, i.e., Crown Court, adult magistrates' courts or youth magistrates' courts. Findings for the 2022/23 year have been compared with those for cases disposed in the previous four years.

2. The data used in this bulletin were taken from the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism (DSM1). Causeway is an interconnected information system, launched as a joint undertaking by the Criminal Justice Organisations (CJOs) in Northern Ireland.

3. The figures reported in this bulletin, relate to cases disposed at court in the year specified, where the case was prosecuted by the Public Prosecution Service on behalf of PSNI, Harbour Police, Airport Constabulary or the National Crime Agency. Cases disposed of through an out of court disposal, or which do not reach the end of the full court process, do not go through the standard stages of the court system and, as such, are not directly comparable with cases that have gone through the judicial system. Similarly, cases relating to breaches of court orders previously imposed are not included in the dataset, as they relate to a previous offence and have not proceeded through the various stages in the criminal justice process in the same way that cases relating to other offences may have. They have therefore not been included in the figures reported.

4. Official Statistics are produced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference. They are also subject to restrictions in terms of pre-release access.

5. This bulletin is available from the publication section (/publications/case-processing-time-criminal-cases-dealt-courts-ni-2223) of this website or Analytical Services Group, Financial Services Division, Block B, Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3SG.

Email: statistics.research@justice-ni.gov.uk (mailto:statistics.research@justice-ni.gov.uk).

6. For media enquiries contact the Department of Justice Press Office via EMAIL (mailto:press.office@justice-ni.gov.uk).

The Executive Information Service operates an out of hours service for media enquiries only between 1800hrs and 0800hrs Monday to Friday and at

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