



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service



Annual Report

Tuarascáil Bhliantúil

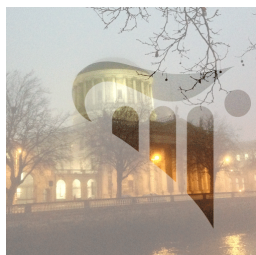
2014



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

MISSION STATEMENT

**TO MANAGE THE COURTS, SUPPORT THE JUDICIARY AND PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY AND
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE TO ALL USERS OF THE COURTS.**



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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affidavit – a written statement made on oath.

Appeal – a proceeding, taken by a party to a case who is dissatisfied with a decision made, to a court having authority to review or set aside that decision.

Appearance – a document which indicates that a defendant, after being served with a summons to a Circuit or High Court action, intends to defend the action.

Barring order – an order preventing a spouse from entering the family home or using or threatening violence against the other spouse or family members.

Care order – an order placing a child in the care of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) until he or she reaches the age of eighteen or a shorter period as determined by the court.

Certified list – a list of cases certified by counsel as being ready for hearing.

Civil bill – a document used to commence a case in the Circuit Court, it gives details of the parties to the case and details of the claim being made.

Commissioner for oaths – a person entitled to administer oaths and take affidavits.

Debt relief notice – one of three debt resolution mechanisms introduced by the Personal Insolvency Act 2012 to help mortgage-holders and others with unsustainable debt to reach agreements with their creditors. It allows for the write-off of qualifying debt up to €20,000, subject to a three-year supervision period.

Debt settlement arrangement – one of three debt resolution mechanisms introduced by the Personal Insolvency Act 2012 to help mortgage-holders and others with unsustainable debt to reach agreements with their creditors. It applies to the agreed settlement of unsecured debts, usually over a period of five years.

Defence – a document delivered by the defendant to the plaintiff in response to a civil bill or a plenary summons.

Defendant – a person against whom an action is brought; a person charged with a criminal offence.

Emergency care order – an order placing a child under the care of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) for a maximum period of eight days if the court considers that there is a serious risk to the health or welfare of a child.

Indictment – (a) a formal document setting out certain kinds of charges against an accused person or (b) the process by which those charges are presented against the accused.

Indictable offence – an offence which, if committed by an adult, is triable on indictment.

Injunction – an order of the court directing a party to an action to do, or to refrain from doing, something.

Interim barring order – an immediate order, requiring a violent person to leave the family home, pending the hearing of an application for a barring order.

Interim care order – an order, granted when an application for a care order has been or is about to be made, requiring that the child named in the order be placed in the care of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla).

Intestate – dying without making a valid will.

Judicial review – a legal remedy available in situations where a body or tribunal is alleged to have acted in excess of legal authority or contrary to its duty.

Judicial separation – a decree granted by the court relieving spouses to a marriage of the obligation to cohabit.

Jurisdiction – (a) the power of a court or judge to hear an action, petition or other proceeding, or (b) the geographical area within which such power may be exercised.

Liquidated debt – a claim for a specified amount of money.

Mortgage suit – a form of proceeding to recover a debt owed to the holder of security on property – by forcing the sale of the property (usually on foot of a judgment mortgage or an equitable mortgage).

Nolle prosequi – the entering by the prosecution of a stay on criminal proceedings (not to be confused with an acquittal).

Notary public – a legal practitioner, usually a solicitor, who witnesses the signing of documents or makes copies of them in order to verify their authenticity, especially for use abroad.

Oath – a form of words by which a person calls his/her god to witness that what he says is the truth, or that what he/she promises to do he will do.

Originating motion – document used to commence certain civil proceedings in the Circuit Court or the High Court (*e.g.* applications to prohibit unauthorised development or use of land, judicial review, bail).

Personal insolvency arrangement – one of three debt resolution mechanisms introduced by the Personal Insolvency Act 2012 to help mortgage-holders and others with unsustainable debt to reach agreements with their creditors. It applies to the agreed settlement and/or restructuring of secured debts up to a total of €3 million (as well as unsecured debts) over a period of six years.

Petition – document used to commence certain civil proceedings in the High Court (*e.g.* application to wind up a company, have a person adjudicated bankrupt).

Plaintiff – a person who brings a legal action against another.

Plenary summons – document used to commence certain civil proceedings (*e.g.* claims for non-specific damages, libel, nuisance) in the High Court where pleadings and oral evidence are required.

Protection order – an interim order, granted when an application for a safety/barring order has been made, prohibiting a person from committing further acts of violence or threatening violence.

Revenue summons – a form of summary summons heard on affidavit, used by the Revenue Commissioners to commence civil proceedings in the High Court to recover sums due (*e.g.* unpaid taxes).

Safety order – an order prohibiting a person from committing further acts of violence or threatening to do so. It does not prevent the person from entering the family home.

Setting down for trial – a request that an action be allocated a date for hearing.

Special exemption order – an order allowing a licensee to sell alcohol outside the normal licensing hours subject to certain conditions.

Special summons – document used to begin certain civil proceedings (*e.g.* equity claims, mortgage enforcement, administration of trusts) in the High Court to be heard on affidavit (*i.e.* not oral evidence).

Summary judgment – judgment for a claim in respect of a debt or specific monetary demand. The judgment is given to the plaintiff against the defendant in a court office without the need to bring the claim to court.

Summary summons – document used to commence certain civil proceedings (*e.g.* claims for a specific amount of money, recovery of possession by a landlord) in the High Court, to be heard on affidavit.

Supervision order – an order allowing the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) to monitor a child considered to be at risk. The child is not removed from his or her home environment. A supervision order is for a fixed period of time not longer than 12 months initially.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD



This year, the Courts Service has experienced a myriad of demands, challenges and opportunities. The changing needs of society inevitably leads to changes in the demands on court time, and the consequent quest to find how best to use and organise resources, energies and people within a defined pool.

This report highlights the administrative changes made, but I would like to reflect on the aspects of the report which demonstrates how the changes in society are reflected at the doors and counters of the courts.

The biggest change last year was the establishment of the Court of Appeal. The Irish People decided in 2013 to establish such a court – and throughout the year, the new President of the court, along with many from the judiciary and the Courts Service, worked to ensure that it became operational from October. Their work helped create a new infrastructure for dealing with appeals within our judicial system. It was a great opportunity to redraw rules of court for the 21st century, and in doing so not only set the new court up to succeed, but allowed us to create a reformed Supreme Court.

The great boom and bust of recent years has had a major impact on the courts. There were increases in certain areas as the economic sector flourished, activity expanded, and disagreements occurred. Similarly, as the economy shrunk in such a dramatic fashion, there have been increases in cases related to company matters, liquidation and the repercussions of the dissolution of companies and partnerships.

Nowhere has the downward effect been felt more than in the area of personal debt. Our previous reports have highlighted the numbing levels of cases brought to court for unpaid monies. Last year judgments for debt marked decreased on the previous year by 27% in the High Court, 43% in the Circuit Court, and 41% in the District Court. This may indicate that there are dramatically less instances of debt problems being allowed spiral to the point that people face court, and that those in such situations are engaging and coming to arrangements. This is particularly so where debt levels are for the lower amounts dealt with in the Circuit and District Courts. Summonses for non-payment of debts decreased by 34% in the District Court, while instalment orders decreased by 35%, and only 72 committal orders were made.

There were 941 applications under the debt resolution mechanisms introduced under the Personal Insolvency Act 2012, and 448 people were adjudicated bankrupt. It is worth noting that only 16 of these bankruptcies were on foot of applications by creditors: 432 were initiated by those in debt themselves – a 568% increase on 2013. This is a dramatic turn of events, which indicates that people see bankruptcy as providing some protection, rather than as a source of shame, as may have been the case in previous generations.

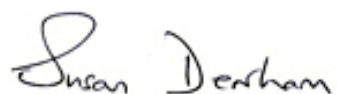
Possessions orders have changed in the various courts. There were 1,000 orders for possession made in the Circuit Court – a 175% increase on 2013, and 129 cases in the High Court – a 61% decrease. The Courts Service is working with other agencies to ensure that information, advice, and referral is available to those involved in this area of work, and other areas of debt.

Crime figures reveal a further decrease in the numbers of orders for public order and assault offences in the District Court, while 42% of offences in the Circuit Court related to fraud/theft/robbery, and there was a 9% decrease in defendants being brought to the Central Criminal Court for serious crimes.

This small insight into the work of the courts allows us repeat the observation that the courts are at the heart of what is happening in society, in homes, in places of business and on the streets of Ireland. Our courts reflect every aspect of Ireland. They reflect who we are as a people, an economy, a society, and as a nation.

I am grateful to the Chief Executive Officer, Brendan Ryan, and the staff and management of the Courts Service, for their magnificent and continuing efforts to respond to all the demands made. I and the Board of the Courts Service are indebted to the Minister for Justice and Equality, her Secretary General, and the staff of her Department, for their continued assistance and support. I also acknowledge the support provided to the Service by other Government departments and agencies, An Garda Síochána, the legal professions, and the wide number of other groups and agencies who operate in the legal system.

This Report is a testament to the changing nature of the work of the courts, and to the dedicated service of those who work in the Courts Service.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Susan Denham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Susan" is written in a smaller, more compact script, while the last name "Denham" is written in a larger, more prominent script with a long, sweeping tail on the final 'm'.

Susan Denham

CHAPTER 1 – ABOUT THE COURTS SERVICE

The Courts Service is responsible for the administration and management of the courts in Ireland. Its primary functions are to manage the courts, support the judges, provide information on the courts system to the public, and provide court buildings and facilities for court users.

The Service, through its offices in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, Circuit Court, and District Court, together with the support Directorates established as part of the management structure for the Service, has responsibility for the management of all aspects of court activities, with the exception of judicial functions which are a matter exclusively for the judiciary.

The Service is governed by a Board consisting of a chairperson and 17 other members. The Courts Service Act provides that the chairperson of the Board will be the Chief Justice and that the Board should contain judicial representatives from each court, a staff representative, a representative of the Minister for Justice and representatives from the legal professions, trade unions and business world. The Court of Appeal Act, 2014 amended the membership of the Board to include the President of the Court of Appeal (or his nominee) and an ordinary judge of the Court of Appeal elected by the ordinary judges of that court.

The Board considers and determines policy in relation to the Service and oversees the implementation of that policy by the Chief Executive Officer. The Courts Service Act, 1998 provides that the Board in the performance of its functions must have regard to

- the need to secure the most beneficial, effective and efficient use of the resources of the Service and
- any policy or objective of the Government or a Minister of the Government insofar as it may affect or relate to the functions of the Service.

The Courts Service Act provides that the Board may establish committees to advise it in relation to the performance of its functions and may appoint committee members who are not members of the Board but have a specialist knowledge and experience related to the purposes of the committee. The committees of the Board in 2014 were:

STANDING COMMITTEES

- Finance Committee
- Audit Committee
- Family Law Court Development Committee
- Building Committee

OTHER COMMITTEES

- The Irish Sentencing Committee (formerly the Steering Committee on Sentencing Information)

The newly appointed Board re-established the Committees of the Board and approved their respective terms of reference in December 2014.

THE BOARD OF THE COURTS SERVICE



The Hon. Mrs. Justice
Susan Denham,
Chairperson, Chief Justice



The Hon. Mr. Justice
Sean Ryan,
President of the Court of Appeal



The Hon. Mr. Justice
Nicholas Kearns,
President of the High Court



The Hon. Mr. Justice
Liam McKechnie, *elected by
the judges of the Supreme Court*



The Hon. Mr. Justice
Michael Peart, *elected by the
judges of the Court of Appeal*



The Hon. Mr. Justice
Patrick McCarthy, *elected by
the judges of the High Court*



The Hon. Mr. Justice
Raymond Groarke, *President
of the Circuit Court*



Her Hon. Judge **Dóirbhile
Flanagan**, *elected by the judges
of the Circuit Court*



Her Hon. Judge **Rosemary
Horgan**, *President of the District
Court*



Judge **Gerard Haughton**,
*elected by the judges of the
District Court*



Mr. **Brendan Ryan**, *Chief
Executive Officer, Courts
Service*



Mr. **Colm Ó hOisín**, S.C.,
*nominated by the Bar Council
of Ireland*



Mr. **James McCourt**,
solicitor,
*nominated by the President of
the Law Society of Ireland*



Ms. **Elaine Jones**
elected by the staff of the Service



Mr. **Conan McKenna**,
*an officer of the Minister,
nominated by the Minister*



Mr. **Pat Doyle**, *nominated
by the Minister*



Mr. **Liam Berney**, *nominated
by the Irish Congress of Trade
Unions*



Mr. **Shane Browne**, *nominated
by the Minister*

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Finance Committee

The Hon. Mrs. Justice Susan Denham – *Chairperson*
The Hon. Mr. Justice Sean Ryan
The Hon. Mr. Justice Nicholas Kearns
The Hon. Mr. Justice Liam McKechnie
The Hon. Mr. Justice Raymond Groarke
Her Hon. Judge Rosemary Horgan
Mr. Brendan Ryan
Mr. Conan McKenna

Audit Committee

Mr. Jim Farrell, external member – *Chairperson*
The Hon. Mr. Justice Michael Peart
Her Hon. Judge Elma Sheahan, nominee of the President of the Circuit Court
Her Hon. Judge Dóirbhle Flanagan
Judge Michael Coghlan, nominee of the President of the District Court
Mr. Conan McKenna
Mr. Pat Doyle
Mr. Shane Browne

Building Committee

The Hon. Mr. Justice Patrick McCarthy – *Chairperson*
His Hon. Judge Martin Nolan, nominee of the President of the Circuit Court
Judge Hugh O'Donnell, nominee of the President of the District Court
Mr. Brendan Ryan
Mr. Liam Berney
Ms. Elaine Jones
Mr. John Coyle, Head of Circuit and District Courts Operations, Courts Service
Mr. Paul Burns, Head of Infrastructure Services, Courts Service
Mr. Ciaran O'Connor, Office of Public Works
Ms. Yvonne Mullen, the Bar Council of Ireland
Mr. James McCourt

Family Law Court Development Committee

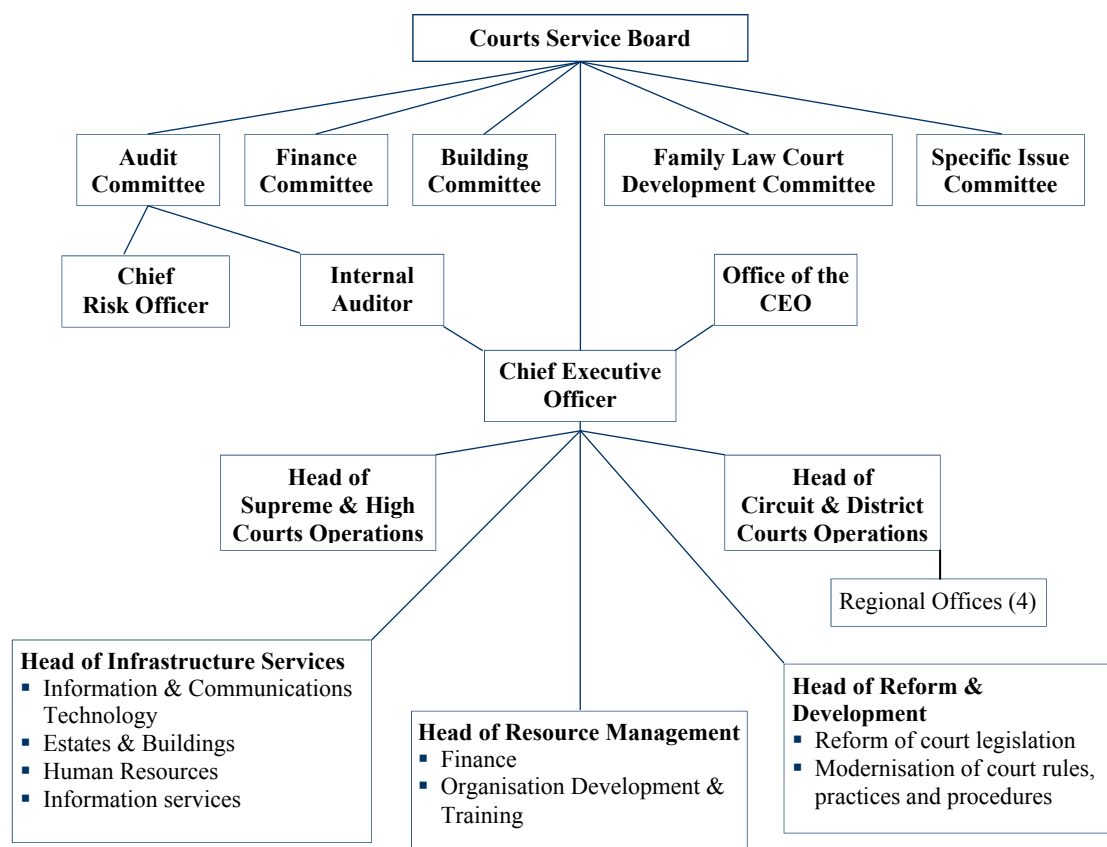
The Hon. Mr. Justice Michael White, judge of the High Court – *Chairperson*
The Hon. Mr. Justice Henry Abbott, judge of the High Court
Her Hon. Judge Petria McDonnell, judge of the Circuit Court
Her Hon. Judge Dóirbhle Flanagan
Judge Gerard Furlong, judge of the District Court
Mr. Shane Browne
Ms. Nuala McLoughlin, Director of Supreme and High Courts Operations, Courts Service
Mr. John Coyle
Mr. Tom Ward, Chief Clerk, Dublin Circuit and District Civil Courts, Courts Service
Ms. Eithne Coughlan, nominee of the County Registrar's Association
Ms. Catherine Forde, the Bar Council of Ireland
Mr. Donagh McGowan, the Law Society of Ireland

OTHER COMMITTEES:

Irish Sentencing Committee

The Hon. Mrs. Justice Susan Denham, Chief Justice – *Chairperson*
The Hon. Mr. Justice Michael Peart
The Hon. Mr. Justice Patrick McCarthy
Her Hon. Judge Mary Ellen Ring, judge of the Circuit Court
Her Hon. Judge Rosemary Horgan
Professor Thomas O'Malley, Faculty of Law NUI, Galway

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of policies approved by the Board, the day-to-day management of the staff, administration and business of the Service and is also the Accounting Officer for the Service. (see Chapter 4)

The Chief Executive Officer is supported by the Senior Management Team comprising a Head of Supreme and High Courts Operations, a Head of Circuit and District Courts Operations and three support Heads: Reform and Development, Resource Management and Infrastructure Services.



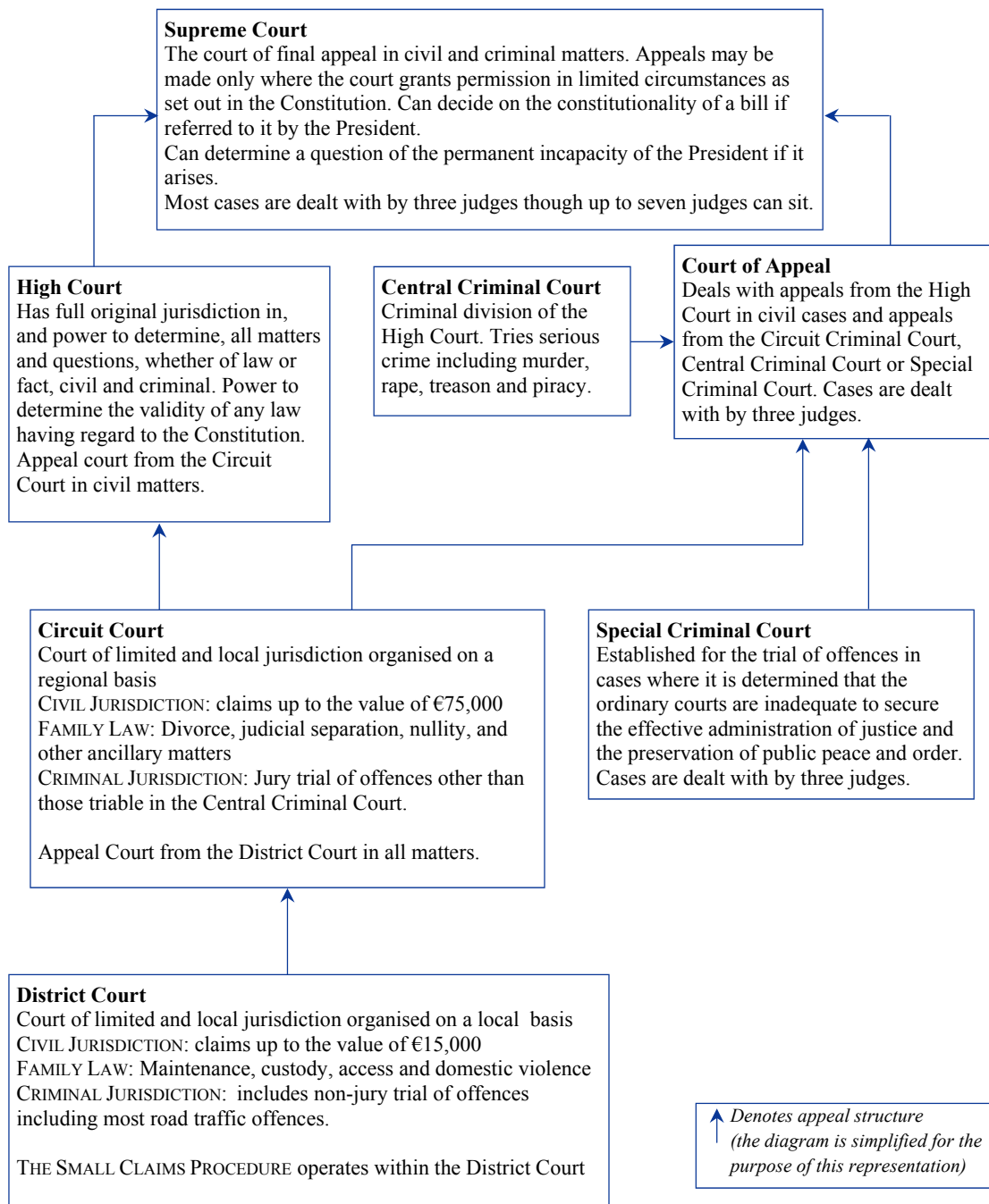
Senior Management Team

Following a review, the Service changed its regional office structure with effect from 1st January 2014. There are now regional support offices in Naas, Dundalk, Cork and Castlebar.



Regional managers

STRUCTURE OF THE COURTS





CHAPTER 2 – THE YEAR IN REVIEW

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Brendan Ryan

While the year provided us with many challenges it also provided opportunities to improve the service we deliver around the country and to demonstrate, once again, the commitment and dedication of our staff.

It was another year of reduced funding but there were hopeful signs from Government that the next few years will bring some relief from the challenges that have faced the Courts Service and the public service generally over the past number of years.

Between 2009 and 2014 funding for the Service decreased significantly with a 44% reduction in non pay current expenditure, an 18% reduction in pay and a 73% reduction in capital. In the same period the fee income target increased by 19% resulting in a 41% decrease in the cost to the Exchequer of operating the courts and the Service during this period. The 2015 Estimates provided, for the first time since 2008, for an increase in funding for the Service with a 4% increase over the 2014 allocation. So while our budgetary situation remains challenging – with a reduction in net funding of 40% since 2008 – the increase, though small, is a welcome development as we plan for the future.

We continued to monitor the allocation of funding and expenditure closely to ensure that core court operations and front line services were protected; that all possible savings and efficiencies were made to optimise the funds available and that value for money was achieved.

We were proud to play our part in the introduction of the Court of Appeal. The historic establishment of this new court, following the outcome of the Referendum on the proposed Thirty-Third Amendment of the Constitution (Court of Appeal) Bill in October 2013, placed considerable demands on available space within the Four Courts complex and in the Criminal Courts of Justice. However, the €2m provided for the new infrastructure required enabled us provide offices for judges and staff, and two courtrooms for the operation of the court. We also sought and received approval to arrange appropriate staffing in time for the first sitting of the Court in November.

With central Government initiatives to reform and improve the public service as a backdrop, the main driver for our modernisation programme continued to be the need to provide a modern, efficient infrastructure suited to the needs of court users in 21st century Ireland. Austerity and the need for cut backs played its part but we had embarked on a modernisation programme from the time of our establishment that enabled us face what would otherwise have been insurmountable challenges.

One such challenge continues to be the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Employment Control Framework (ECF) which sets a ceiling on staff numbers for the Service with a moratorium on the filling of vacancies. Having coped with the ECF since 2008, there were some welcome signs in 2014 with the sanctioning of posts for the Court of Appeal, the holding of interviews for staff promotions and a promise of some relief from the application of the ECF in 2015 with the proposed granting of delegated sanction for staffing within a fixed payroll budget.

I appeared before the Public Accounts Committee in November and outlined the extent of our major modernisation programme and the contribution of our staff to its continued success. Their support for projects such as our Combined Office Project, the LEAN Project, and various ICT projects including digital audio recording and civil case management systems, and their willingness to support judicial initiatives including additional sittings, remains vital to the success of everything we do and all we have achieved.

The ongoing development of information and communications systems continues to be one of our major priorities. We will not keep pace with the increased demands on our service without streamlined, integrated systems. We continued to work within our budget to deliver on our ICT programme including critical development to facilitate implementation of the Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act, 2014 the implementation of which poses a particular challenge for our staff supporting the District Court. As the continued success of our Courts Accounting System (which automates financial transactions such as maintenance and fines payments) and the steady implementation of our civil case management system (CSOL) demonstrate, investment in ICT systems is vital in the drive to deliver efficiencies by making the best use of our resources.

As with ICT development our ability to progress building projects had been severely curtailed during the downturn years. It was therefore heartening to oversee plans for the construction and/or refurbishment of seven courthouses in major population centres around the country which will be delivered on a Public Private Partnership basis. The provision of modern buildings and improved facilities for court users is a critical function of the Service. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Office of Public Works and the National Development Finance Agency in advancing these projects. Together with this regional development we continued to pursue our plan to develop a dedicated family law and children courthouse in Dublin. It was hugely encouraging to procure support from Government Ministers and the Office of Public Works for the development of part of a site near the Four Courts for this purpose.

We remain committed to reaching out to the community to better inform them as to how the courts system operates and are availing of modern platforms such as YouTube and Facebook for this purpose. Our visit programmes remain extremely popular while our website received over 2.6 millions visits during the year.

We have a long history of providing professional and impartial service to legal practitioners and members of the public. This is due to a huge level of commitment by many people across a number of organisations and agencies. I extend my gratitude to the staff of the Service the length and breadth of the country for their unstinting dedication to their work. I am grateful to the Chief Justice for her support, and for that of the other members of the judiciary and other members of the Courts Service Board. I acknowledge the support of the Minister for Justice and Equality and the staff of her Department and others including An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service, Probation and Welfare Service, the legal professions, and those who support victims and a wide variety of organisations and agencies. To all who have provided input to our consultation exercises and have supported our initiatives in whatever way I say thank you. We are all working together to deliver the best possible service to those who use our courts.

This Report details our efforts to deliver on the objectives we set ourselves at the start of the year. It is a timely reminder of the work that is involved in administering the courts and the scale of the workload dealt with in 2014.

DEVELOPMENTS DURING 2014

Public Service agreements and initiatives

Public Sector Reform Plan

The Public Sector Reform Plan 2014-2016, published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in January 2014, promotes the need to reduce costs and increase efficiencies and places increased emphasis on the need to deliver the best possible outcomes across Government departments and agencies.

<i>The Public Sector Reform Plan has four key themes: delivery of improved outcomes for service users, achieving a reform dividend, greater digitalisation and use of open data, and more openness and accountability.</i>
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Reforms in the Justice and Equality sector are aligned with the overall Public Service Reform Programme. The various justice agencies contribute to annual integrated reform delivery plans compiled by the Department of Justice and Equality. During 2014, the Service contributed to the Department's Integrated Reform Delivery Plan which outlines reforms under three headings: (i) sector and department specific reforms; (ii) cross-departmental actions; and (iii) implementation of measures under the Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2016 ('the Haddington Road Agreement'). The contribution contains delivery timelines up to end 2016 and is informed by principles in the Strategic Plan of the Service reflective of those in the Public Sector Reform Plan.

Civil Service renewal

The Service encouraged staff participation in a project, part of Public Service Reform, to renew and make real the vision for the Civil Service in Ireland. Staff were encouraged to share their views with a 'Taskforce' of civil servants from across Government Departments and offices in relation to issues including their experience of the Civil Service and to make suggestions for improvement. They were also encouraged to attend 'town hall' meetings to share views with colleagues across the Civil Service.

The project culminated in the launch of the 'Civil Service Renewal Plan' by the Taoiseach and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in October 2014. The Plan brought together the work of the Independent Panel on Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance and the work of the Civil Service Renewal Taskforce.

Courts Service strategic documents

A number of strategic documents continued to highlight areas targeted for development and underpinned the work of the Service in 2014. These documents take account of the Programme for Government, and the mandates of the Service, and mirror the commitments given to comply with the various public service agreements, including the Public Service Reform Plan and the Public Service Stability Agreement ('the Haddington Road Agreement').

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan of the Service 2011-2014, provides for the implementation of the modernisation initiatives set out in the Public Service Reform Plan and the Programme for Government. It contains six goals each supported by a strategy designed to deliver on the mandates set out in the Courts Service Act, 1998.

Corporate Business Plan

The Board of the Service approves an annual Corporate Business Plan which identifies the specific actions to be taken to deliver on the goals set out in the Strategic Plan. The Corporate Business Plan, approved by the Board in December 2013, set out the priorities for the Service during 2014 and the outputs required and actions necessary to achieve them.

Performance budgeting targets

Performance budgeting output targets set out in the Revised Estimates Volume for 2014 complemented the actions set out in the Corporate Business Plan and other strategic documents providing further measure of achievements during the year. (see further page 32)

Public Service Activity	Output targets	Outputs achieved
Deliver high quality services by transforming administrative structures and processes	Complete Combined Court Office Project	Remaining three offices combined. Project completed.
Support the judiciary	Support scheduled Circuit & District Court sittings and scheduled High Court civil sittings (subject to judicial vacancies being filled)	All scheduled court sittings supported.
	Establish Court of Appeal	Court of Appeal established.
Support our people	Provide training for staff	18 training programmes organised; 684 staff attended.
Maximise the use of all accommodation and ICT	Rationalise the number of court venues and offices;	Closure of certain venues and offices in Dublin postponed following review
	Advance seven court building projects under the Government Infrastructure Stimulus Package;	Procurement process for projects, to be procured as a Public Private Partnership, commenced by National Development Finance Agency.
	Provide accommodation and ICT facilities for the Court of Appeal	Accommodation and ICT facilities provided in advance of first sitting of Court of Appeal in November.
	Debt Claims Online system available subject to legislation	System developed subject to legislation.
Delivery of excellence in governance, accountability and value for money	Achieve reduced expenditure targets; achieve fee income budget; develop improved performance reporting.	Achieved balanced budget for 2014; achieved fee income targets; progressing performance budgeting

GOAL 1: DELIVER HIGH QUALITY SERVICES BY TRANSFORMING ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Court of Appeal

A committee established by the Service planned for the implementation of the new Court of Appeal during the year. The committee was tasked with examining and making recommendations in relation to all aspects of the administrative support for the new court including organisational structure, staffing, accommodation, information and communications technology (ICT) systems, facilities, and rules of court to regulate court procedures. The Service provided input to the Department of Justice and Equality and the Superior Court Rules Committee in the preparation, respectively, of the required legislation and court rules.

The Court of Appeal Act 2014, which implemented the new jurisdictional arrangements, also contains important innovations to support the introduction of a comprehensive case management regime for the Court, with the express intention of ensuring that appeals are determined “in a manner which is just, expeditious and likely to minimise the cost of those proceedings”. The rules of court for the Court of Appeal are designed to ensure the expeditious preparation of an appeal for hearing and the conduct of the hearing, providing in particular for more precisely formulated appeal documentation; speedier preparation of appeals for hearing and more focussed written and oral submissions.

The Court of Appeal was established on 28th October 2014 and sat for the first time to deal with civil appeals on 5th November 2014. Other matters progressed in advance of the first sitting included sanction and associated payroll funding for staffing posts for the new court, development of a case management system, and provision of modern accommodation for judges and staff, and comfortable facilities for all who will use the new Court.

Under the Court of Appeal Act, the Court of Appeal was given the appellate jurisdiction previously exercised by the Court of Criminal Appeal. The Court of Appeal sat to deal with criminal appeals in the Criminal Courts of Justice for the first time on 10th November 2014. The court sat on a daily basis frequently in two chambers and, to the end of the year, heard over 100 sentence appeals part of the inherited caseload from the Court of Criminal Appeal. The facilities in the Criminal Court of Justice contributed greatly to the large throughput of criminal appeals in a safe and secure environment for all persons having business with the court.

“It is a great honour for us and all of our colleagues to be appointed as judges of the Court of Appeal. This is an historic moment in the administration of justice in Ireland. It is the first structural change in the judicial arm of government since the foundation of the State”. Mr. Justice Sean Ryan, President of the Court of Appeal at the first sitting of the Court on 5th November 2014.

Improving efficiencies in court offices

The Combined Office Project, a restructuring of court offices to provide a multi-jurisdictional court office in each county town, replacing individual Circuit Court and District Court offices, was completed in 2014 with the provision of combined offices in Wicklow, Tralee and Cork. The project brought staff of Circuit Court and District Court offices together, with a manager and deputy manager appointed by the Service and county registrars retaining responsibility for specific statutory functions, including those relating to sheriffs and probate.

The project reduced the number of Circuit Court and District Court offices around the country from 62 to 33 between 2010 and 2014. The Service estimates that the project will deliver €2 million in savings across a number of areas including travel and subsistence, maintenance, leases and payroll.

“Managers and staff of Circuit Court and District Court offices engaged in significant collaborative work as part of the training and knowledge transfer required to achieve the change necessary to deliver combined court offices throughout the country.” Brendan Ryan, Chief Executive.

The Chief Justice, chairperson of the Board, completed a programme of visits to all Combined Court Offices with a visit to Dundalk in November.

The Service continued to increase efficiencies and streamline operations across offices by using the opportunities presented by the Combined Office Project to promote LEAN, a methodology designed to improve business processes to ensure consistency in service delivery. In June, students of the College of Business Administration in the University of Northern Iowa, worked with Dublin Circuit Court and District Court Civil Office to identify business process improvements according to LEAN Six Sigma principles.

LEAN is a streamlining of court procedures and processes through a business process improvement exercise which identifies procedural enhancement to rationalise and standardise processes in use in court offices.

Revised regional management structure

Regional offices in Tullamore and Monaghan were closed following the implementation of a revised management structure in January 2014. An office was established in Dundalk, to be called 'North Midlands Regional Office', with the other offices in Castlebar, Cork, and Naas. (*see page 10*)

User and support groups

User groups comprising representatives of organisations and others who regularly use the courts or court offices continued to ensure that the views and suggestions of those particularly involved in the courts system are taken into consideration in the development and operation of policy and initiatives. They also provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and an opportunity for users to share needs and concerns. Group participants include members of An Garda Síochána, the Probation Service, the Prison Service, the Bar Council, the Law Society, and a variety of support and interest groups.

Specific user groups continued to deal with different areas of court business. They include the Criminal Courts of Justice, family law in the Circuit Court and District Court, Probate, civil law in the High Court, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court, family law in the High Court, and insolvency.

A group comprising representatives of stakeholders in the Criminal Courts of Justice met three times in 2014.

Regional managers, combined office managers and other office managers chaired meetings of representative groups in a variety of regional locations including Ballinasloe, Cavan, Cork, Ennis, Letterkenny, Naas, Tralee, and Trim.

The Committee supporting the Drug Treatment Court (DTC) programme met six times and a further meeting was held attended also by the DTC Judge and the DTC Team. (*see page 19*)

The Steering Committee for the Circuit Court and District Court Civil Mediation Initiative met quarterly. (*see page 25*)

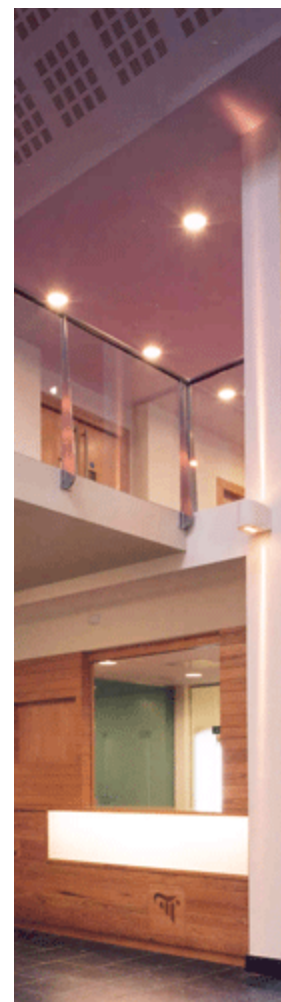
Customer complaints

There were 21 formal complaints received during 2014. Eighteen concerned administrative matters which were dealt with through the customer complaints procedure. Two complaints related to matters which could not be dealt with by administrative means and one was appropriate to another organisation.

Interpretation services

The cost of the provision of interpretation services has fallen significantly in recent years reflecting the decreased need for interpretation services and the value for money achieved by revised arrangements entered into with service providers. Costs have decreased by 72% from €3.75m to €1.03m in the years between 2008 and 2014.

Interpretation costs	2008	2012	2013	2014
	€3.75m	€1.56m	€1.26m	€1.03m



The Service made 7,475 requests for translation services during the year.

Language	Requests	Percentage of total requests
Polish	2,151	28.8%
Romanian	1,367	18.3%
Lithuanian	1,109	14.8%
Russian	743	9.9%
Mandarin	336	4.5%
Latvian	255	3.4%
Vietnamese	194	2.6%
Portuguese	150	2%
Arabic	126	1.7%
Czech	111	1.5%
Others	933	12.5%
Total	7,475	100%

GOAL 2: SUPPORT THE JUDICIARY

The support of the judiciary is a key function of the Service. The application of the ECF and increases in court sittings continued to have an impact on the maintenance of adequate support levels. There were ten additional judicial appointments with the establishment of the Court of Appeal – the President of the Court and nine ordinary judges. The overall number of judges requiring support during 2014 was 164 compared to 147 in 2010 and 112 when the Service was established.

Judiciary: 2010 – 2014 serving at 31st December (with maximum numbers allowed)					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Supreme Court	8 (8)	8 (8)	8 (8)	10 (10)	10 (10)
Court of Appeal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10 (10)
High Court	37 (37)	36 (36)	36 (36)	33 (36)	34 (36)
Circuit Court	38 (38)	34 (38)	38 (38)	44 (46)*	44 (46)
District Court	64 (64)	61 (64)	62 (64)	61 (64)	63 (64)
Total	147 (147)	139 (146)	144 (146)	148 (156)	161 (166)
* Section 191 of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012 provides for eight specialist judges. Six were appointed in July 2013.					

Support for court sittings

The scheduling of court cases and the allocation of court business is a matter for the Presidents of the courts and the presiding judge who are, under the Constitution, independent in the exercise of their judicial functions.

The Presidents of the various courts continued to work with the Service to target judicial resources so as to ensure that cases were dealt with as efficiently and effectively as possible. They continued to arrange additional sittings where possible within the resources available to them to deal with any delays in the hearing of cases.

The Service supported all scheduled sittings and additional sittings of the courts across all jurisdictions during the year to facilitate the effective disposal of cases. Waiting times were, in general, maintained or reduced across all court jurisdictions.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court made significant progress in dealing with its backlog by undertaking the review and management of its total caseload under the direction of the Chief Justice. The Court sat during the Summer Recess to hear call-over lists of uncertified appeals to identify appeals which are not proceeding and striking them out of the list. At year end, the Court remained in a transitional phase and continued to actively manage its legacy caseload together with applications under its new Constitutional jurisdiction.

New statutory powers to complement the Supreme Court's new jurisdiction facilitate the case management of appeals and a new procedural regime comprised of revised rules of court and a practice direction issued by the Chief Justice will assist the Court to determine proceedings in a manner which is just, expeditious and likely to minimise costs.

Court of Appeal

The Court of Appeal will hear the majority of appeals from decisions of the High Court made after establishment day (28th October 2014). The Office of the Court of Appeal was established to support the Court with a senior registrar and three assistant registrars appointed to manage the administration of the civil and criminal caseload supported by a number of additional clerical staff.

The judges of the Court, supported by the Service, developed new procedures for dealing with the caseload of the court which are designed to ensure that cases are managed from the date of the appeal. These procedures are set out in the Practice Directions of the President of the Court of Appeal and in the Rules of the Superior Courts.

High Court

Registrars and other office staff continued to support the work of the High Court with over 27,000 court orders perfected following 4,642 sitting days including weekends. Initiatives including sitting as Deputy Master of the High Court to manage personal injury and non jury judicial review lists were continued, freeing up judicial time for the hearing of cases.

A number of High Court judges were appointed to the Court of Appeal, but despite some judicial vacancies and significant changes in judicial personnel, the President of the High Court maintained the reductions made in earlier years in waiting times for trials. The President also assigned an additional judge to assist with the hearing of asylum cases in November. This additional resource combined with initiatives by judges and the registrar managing the list resulted in significant reductions in delays for hearing asylum cases. The waiting time for pre-leave asylum cases was reduced from 30 months to nine months during 2014.

Delays in the hearing of cases can occur for reasons outside the control of the courts and the Courts Service, for example the unavailability of a witness or vital evidence or because parties or their legal practitioners are not ready to proceed. This gives rise to adjournments which can have a major impact on the time taken to complete the hearing of a case and on the number of cases which can be disposed of in a court sitting.

Additional High Court sittings were held during August and September with a view to maintaining the improvements made in waiting times in recent years. The High Court dealt with bail lists every week during the court vacation and sat each day and during several weekends to hear matters arising of an urgent nature.

A number of actions which could not be dealt with earlier, due to the volume of business requiring attention in July, were listed for hearing during August and September. These were cases from the non jury, judicial review, chancery, commercial and extradition lists. In addition, hearings of pre-trial High Court matters were dealt with during September where four judges dealt with common law lists with 331 motions listed and three commercial lists with 48 matters listed. In addition, there were two bankruptcy, examiner's and child abduction lists dealt with.

Other courts

The President of the Circuit Court and the President of the District Court continued to target judicial resources at prioritised areas and those experiencing lengthy waiting times.

There were over 600 additional sitting days and over 1,000 out of hours court sittings held in the District Court during 2014 with scheduled sittings continuing during the months of August and September.

Adjustments were made to the listing of business in the Circuit Court to afford the maximum time to urgent areas of business. Criminal business is given priority (other than in emergencies) to ensure the earliest trial date for those in custody with separate sittings for crime in the majority of circuits.

"Available resources and operational and organisational structures continue to be reviewed to ensure that resources are targeted and focussed on keeping waiting times in the provision of services to a minimum."
Brendan Ryan, Chief Executive.

The Service continued to support the work of the Drug Treatment Court. The court provides a restorative justice alternative to a custodial sentence for persons with drug addiction, who have pleaded guilty before, or have been convicted by, the District Court for minor, non-violent, criminal charges connected to their addiction. There were 54 new participants referred to the DTC programme in 2014 and one participant graduated at the gold level. Three induction meetings were held for new participants while two meetings were held between the participants, the DTC Judge and the DTC Team.

Changes in jurisdictional levels

Processes and resources were in place to support the increase in the jurisdictional levels of the Circuit Court and District Court on 3rd February 2014 effected by S.I. No. 566 of 2013.

Maximising the efficiency of administrative and research assistance

The Service continued to provide administrative and research assistance to all the judiciary to ensure that the best use is made of judicial time.

Judicial assistants in the Judicial Researchers' Office

The Judicial Research Office (JRO) was established to provide research assistance to the judiciary in all courts. There are six judicial assistant posts in the JRO and all judicial assistants are law graduates. Their tasks include the following:

- 'On the spot' research for judges of all jurisdictions
- Preparation of material for publication on 'the Judges' Intranet'
- Preparation and updating of handbooks for all court jurisdictions
- Preparation and issuing of the District Court newsletter summarising recently published judgments
- Preparation of confidential memoranda on points of law
- Proof-reading of judgments and other documents.

Judicial assistants in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court and Circuit Court

Judicial assistants, who are all law graduates, are assigned to all judges appointed on or after 1st January 2012 in place of the traditional tipstaff. The judicial assistant combines the role of the tipstaff and the role of the research assistant. Their duties include assisting the judge in preparing for court, conducting the judge to the court, and assisting the judge as required. The judicial assistant may also assist the judge by researching points of law, preparing drafts of judgments, proof-reading completed judgments prior to delivery and publication.

Judges appointed before 2012 who have a tipstaff may also have need of the support of a judicial assistant for assistance with research, drafting judgments or conference papers and proof-reading. A small team of judicial assistants is assigned to support the work of these judges of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and High Court.

The new judges appointed to the High Court and the Circuit Court during 2014 increased to 50 the number of judicial assistants providing support to the judges. The Service provided induction training and support for 27 new judicial assistants assigned to judges of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court during the year.

The Executive Legal Officer continued to provide legal and administrative support for the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice also has a judicial assistant in place of a tipstaff to provide her with assistance in court and in her office and to assist the Executive Legal Officer with research.

Library and research facilities

The Judges' Library continued to provide a service to judges, judicial researchers and to the staff of the Service. Subscriptions were maintained to the core journals, law reports, legislation, and text books, though a reduced budget required some revisions which were made following consultation with the Judges' Library Committee. The Committee is a user-group which represents the interests of the judiciary in the service provided by the library and is comprised of representatives of all court jurisdictions together with the librarian or other representative of library management.

Staff of the library provided training and assistance in the use of various information resources for readers, including a number of library induction tours, meetings with newly appointed judges, and detailed training on online databases. They also availed of opportunities for continuing professional development and training to keep abreast of trends and best practices, and contributed to the profession by involvement in professional bodies.

Additional support

The Judicial Support Unit continued to provide a one stop shop for issues of concern to all judges. Areas managed by the Unit include judicial travel (both domestic and foreign), validation of travel claims, procurement of judicial attire, protocol arrangements and liaison as appropriate between the judiciary and other sections of the Service, and the judiciary and other Government departments.

Visitors, both judicial and administrative, were accommodated during the year with many availing of tailored visit programmes which included opportunities to meet members of the judiciary and staff of the Service. During 2014, the Service facilitated visitors from Ireland and other countries including Australia, Bulgaria, China, South Korea, Scotland, Tanzania, Turkey, and the United States of America.

The Unit completed a handbook providing information for judges on a variety of issues during the year.

The Unit also provided administrative assistance to the Committee established by the Service to plan for the Court of Appeal. It also continued to provide secretarial and administrative support to the Committee for Judicial Studies, and the Judicial Appointments Advisory Board, which are independent of the Service.

Support for the use of computer technology

The Judicial Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Cross Jurisdictional Committee continued to oversee the provision of computer training for judges, encourage the use of (and propose enhancements to) existing ICT services, and propose new developments in the use of computer technology.

The committee, comprising senior staff of the Service and judges from each jurisdiction, held three meetings in 2014 and reported to the Committee for Judicial Studies. Staff of the ICT Unit of the Service attended at judicial conferences during the year to provide additional information and support to the judiciary regarding the provision and use of equipment and respond to particular technical issues.

The Service continued to support the ongoing development of 'The Judges' Intranet', an information database to provide judges with access to an electronic resource for research and other information purposes. Judicial researchers assisted with the maintenance and development of the database during the year.

Newly appointed judges availed of training on the use of ICT equipment with additional training made available to all judges on request.

Provision of courtroom technology

Video viewing facilities

Video viewing facilities continue to allow for viewing of evidence including recordings of interviews in garda stations, CCTV security footage and other forms of evidence held electronically including scanned documentary evidence. Available in 53 courtrooms they can be used to display video and data evidence from sources including computers, VHS, DVD, digital cameras and camcorders. A mobile viewing facility continued to enable video viewing in courtrooms without built-in viewing facilities in the Criminal Courts of Justice and around the country.

Video conferencing facilities

The Service continued to facilitate the taking of evidence by witnesses in locations other than the court *via* the use of video conferencing. These facilities eliminate the necessity for witnesses to attend in person, and are of particular benefit when witnesses are abroad. It leads to considerable cost savings especially in relation to expert witnesses in civil cases.

Video conferencing facilities continued to be used for mutual assistance cases, where evidence is taken before a judge in a court in Ireland in respect of criminal trials in another jurisdiction, particularly another EU Member State. The court in that other jurisdiction can view and hear the witness giving evidence by video conferencing.

By year end there were facilities available in 28 courtrooms across 17 venues – in Dublin, Cork, Tullamore, Limerick, Castlebar, Dundalk, Cavan, Nenagh, Limerick, Galway, Letterkenny, Monaghan, Kilkenny and Sligo.

Courtrooms in the Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ) in Dublin can be upgraded to provide additional video conferencing facilities and additional facilities for viewing CCTV footage. The CCJ also has a mobile evidence unit, jury empanelling via video conferencing, and separate video conferencing facilities for solicitors to consult clients. Thirteen courtrooms in the CCJ have technology capability; eight have video conferencing facilities and an additional seven have CCTV viewing facilities.

Video conferencing continues to be used successfully in commercial, non-jury, chancery, and personal injury cases in the High Court. In criminal cases, children or vulnerable witnesses can avail of video link to give evidence to the court from a witness room and it is used frequently in cases with underage/vulnerable witnesses who are also victims in a case.

Video conferencing facilities between the Service and the Prison Service

Courts with video conferencing facilities continue to connect courts and prisons to process pre-trial hearings in accordance with section 33 of the Prisons Act 2007. This allows for certain pre-trial matters and remands to be dealt with where the defendant in custody appears in court *via* video link from a location within a prison.

At the end of 2014, video conferencing was being used in Dublin Circuit Court, Dublin District Court, Limerick District Court, and Cork District Court. Links were also operating from the Special Criminal Court to Portlaoise Prison and occasionally in Letterkenny District Court. The Service remains committed to expanding this initiative, as resources permit, given the significant savings that have been created across the criminal justice sector with the reduction in the need to transport prisoners from prisons to courts for short pre-trial appearances. Discussions in the matter continued during the year as part of the work of the Working Group on Efficiency Measures in the Criminal Justice System on which the Service is represented. (see page 25)

Digital Audio Recording

Digital audio recording (DAR) is the standard method of recording criminal cases and producing transcripts of court proceedings and is available in all courtrooms (including those not on the network of the Service). To assist in the production of transcripts in the Circuit Court and the Central Criminal Court, persons known as loggers were engaged to 'log' (note) certain information in court in addition to the recording available from DAR.

A project to reduce reliance on these external loggers with court registrars logging the information required continued during 2014. Following the successful piloting of the project in Dublin Circuit Criminal Court, the Central Criminal Court and Cork Circuit Criminal Court in 2013, and with the cooperation of staff, the initiative was extended to the criminal sittings of the Circuit Court in Limerick, Galway, Waterford and Tullamore. This project, which has provided savings of €340,000 over the two years to end 2014, will be extended to additional Circuit Courts in 2015. The Service is confident that further savings will be achieved upon completion of the project.

GOAL 3: SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE

The Service continues to recognise that its staff are its greatest resource and remains committed to improving their skills, developing their potential, and providing other support to assist them in the performance of their work. The ability to deliver on this commitment continued to be tested by the ongoing application of the Employment Control Framework (ECF) by the Department of the Public Expenditure and Reform. As stated on page 13 the ECF sets the ceiling on staff numbers for the Service for the years 2010 to 2015.

The approved staff number for the Service for 2014 under the ECF as published in the Revised Estimates was 900. This figure was revised to 927 to include the staff approved for the Court of Appeal.

The overall impact for the Service of the application of the ECF has been a reduction of 16.74% in staff numbers between 2009 and 2014 (apart from the posts sanctioned for the Court of Appeal) with ongoing consequences for the remaining workforce including increased workloads, lack of promotion opportunities, and gaps in the corporate knowledge base.

Employee Control Framework: Analysis 2009 - 2014						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Approved staff number	1,081	1,002	972	930	924	900*
Reduction		-79	-109	-151	-157	-154
% Reduction		-7%	-10%	-14%	-14.5%	-16.74%
* excludes posts sanctioned for Court of Appeal						

There were, however, some positive developments in relation to staff during the year. Additional posts were sanctioned for the Court of Appeal together with the necessary payroll funding provision in the budget allocation for 2015. Internal promotion interviews were held for the first time since 2007 with successful candidates identified for assignment to vacant positions with effect from early 2015.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform indicated that a delegated sanction approach would replace the ECF in 2015 by way of a new process for managing staff numbers. This approach will bring increased flexibility providing the Service with power to fill posts at all levels (within the allocated payroll).

An application for additional staff was made to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform following the decision of the Board not to proceed with a reorganisation of offices in the Greater Dublin area upon completion of a consultation exercise following a comprehensive review (*see page 27*). The application was necessary in light of the impact of the original issues which gave rise to the review and the significant reduction in staffing resources in the Circuit Court and District Courts in Dublin. These impacted on the ability to provide staff to support all of the sittings intended by the President of the Circuit Court and President of the District Court.

Employee assistance

The Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) is a regionalised service which provides services and support to civil servants by promoting well-being, resilience and organisational effectiveness. It also supplements the work of human resource units and managers. During the year, 14% of staff of the Service availed of the Services of the CSEAS for advice, support and information on personal and work related matters.

Centralisation of human resources services

Planning for the transfer of certain human resource services to the Civil Service Human Resources and Pensions Shared Services Centre ('PeoplePoint') continued during the year. The transfer was deferred in June following a decision of the Programme Board until 2015.

PeoplePoint forms part of the Government's overall Public Service Reform agenda to restructure how the Public Service does business by establishing shared service models for a number of areas.

Training and development

The continued budgetary reductions resulted in another challenging year in the area of staff training. Notwithstanding the reductions, the Service continued to develop initiatives to assist staff and encouraged and supported personal development by refunding course fees *via* the 'Refund of Fees' scheme. A total of 18 training programmes were provided throughout the year with 684 staff attending.

Technical training continued to be delivered on a continuous basis in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and High Court offices, especially in relation to the implications of new national and EU legislation. The programme to provide technical training in procedures associated with the work of the Circuit Court and District Court also continued.

Additional programmes provided training on ICT systems and health and safety in the workplace. Work also continued on a pilot project to establish an e-learning platform to provide training for staff *via* desktop.

The programme to provide training for staff uploading material to the website of the Service continued with 33 people attending training courses during the year.

Improving performance management

The Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) continued to provide staff with a planned structure for clarifying their role and reviewing their performance. PMDS includes the completion of a role profile form and two performance reviews (an interim review in June and an annual review in December).

Protected Disclosures

A policy to meet the obligations under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 which commenced in July 2014 (*see Chapter 7*) was developed by the Service during the year.

Partnership

The Partnership Committee was reconstituted during the year. It received updates on financial and staffing positions and worked on updating the Customer Service Charter.

GOAL 4: SUPPORT CASE MANAGEMENT AND LISTING

The Service continued its programme to modernise and improve court rules procedures, practices and legislation where appropriate. During the year the Service played a critical role in the development of procedural and legislative reforms to the processing and hearing of court cases including the legislation for the establishment of the Court of Appeal, case management initiatives and other reforms.

The Service continued to support and participate in the three court rules committees (*see Chapter 6*) and prepared 17 pieces of secondary legislation reforming, updating or otherwise amending the court rules for the various jurisdictions (Superior Court, Circuit Court, and District Court).

In addition, the programme to modernise and simplify court rules and forms, practice and terminology continued with the Service preparing amendments to reform litigation procedure, facilitate the operation of new primary legislation, respond to developments in jurisprudence and implement EU judicial cooperation and mutual assistance instruments. Details of amendments prepared by the Service and adopted by the various rules committees are in Chapter 6.

The review of the content and provision of input to proposed legislation (Schemes of Bills, Bills, draft Statutory Instruments, and draft EU legal instruments) to ascertain whether provisions affect court operations or impact or require new court procedures remained a priority for the Service during the year. Notable examples of legislation, or proposed legislation, in which the Service was involved or into which it provided input in 2014 are the Court of Appeal Act, 2014, the Criminal Justice (Mutual Assistance) (Amendment) Bill, 2014, the Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014 and a draft General Scheme for a Criminal Procedure Bill.

Supporting the judiciary to minimise waiting times

The Service continued to support initiatives by the judiciary to improve efficiencies in the management of court hearings. (*see also page 18*)

Pre-trial preparation of criminal proceedings

The Service provided input to the draft General Scheme for a Criminal Procedure Bill, which envisages the establishment of a preliminary trial hearing in cases triable on indictment.

New approaches to the management and lists of cases

The Service continued to co-operate with the judiciary to develop and agree new approaches to the management and listing of cases designed to address waiting times across jurisdictions.

District Court Civil Procedure Rules

Revised civil procedure rules, consolidating the various rules governing statutory applications into one rule with a standard procedure set out therein, came into effect in February 2014.

Cross agency initiatives

The Integrated Reform Delivery Plan of the Department of Justice & Equality, to which the Service contributes, identifies cross-departmental co-operation as an area with potential to reduce cost and improve efficiencies. Organisations in the Justice and Equality sector continue to work to share services where possible and to utilise common approaches wherever and whenever advantageous. The Service was represented at the Justice and Equality Ministerial roundtable meeting in Farmleigh in the Phoenix Park in Dublin in November where there was a common focus on delivering better services and outcomes for citizens.

Criminal Justice Interoperability Project (CJIP)

This project continues to illustrate the cost and efficiency benefits of cross-departmental cooperation. It provides for the electronic transfer of summons applications between the Garda Síochána PULSE system and the Criminal Case Management System of the District Court. It also provides for the transfer of the result of court cases, bail and warrant information to PULSE from the District Court system. It supports business between An Garda Síochána and the District Courts nationally and handles over 90% of all summons applications, all court outcomes and bails and all warrants for execution by An Garda Síochána. During 2014, planning continued for the electronic exchange of charge sheets with An Garda Síochána

"CJIP has transformed the exchange of information between An Garda Síochána and the Service and has eliminated duplicate data entry by both agencies. It is an excellent example of the potential of cross agency initiatives to reduce costs and promote efficiencies. We estimate that 75% of the administrative process steps have been eliminated by replacing a paper based information exchange with an integrated electronic one." Brendan Ryan, Chief Executive.

Working Group on Efficiency Measures in the Criminal Justice System

This Group was established by the Chief Justice and the Minister for Justice and Equality to identify and implement efficiency measures with a specific focus on the Circuit Court and District Court. The Service joins with representation from the judiciary, the Department of Justice and Equality, the Legal Aid Board, An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service, the Probation Service, and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions on the Group.

Following submission of a report to the Chief Justice and the Minister the Group continued to consider efficiencies in relation to criminal justice in the District Court, in particular, measures to reduce delays, repeat court appearances and the length of time members of An Garda Síochána spend in court. Practical cooperation and identifying changes in procedures or legislation that will improve efficiency, including through ICT were considered. This includes the potential to expand the use of video conferencing between the courts and prisons. (see page 21)

Unified Patent Court

The Service has committed to providing facilities for a local division of the United Patent Court (UPC), which the Government in November 2014 announced would be established in Ireland, in the event that the international agreement for the UPC is ratified by a Referendum. The Service continues to contribute to the preparatory work required to establish the division.

Working Group on Medical Negligence and Periodic Payments

Arising from the recommendations of this Working Group, established by the President of the High Court, the Government legislative programme, published in September 2014, includes a Civil Liability (Amendment) Bill to provide for periodic payments in cases of personal injury awards. Publication is expected in 2015.

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)

This committee of the Council of Europe is charged with promoting improvements in the administration of justice in member States of the Council. The Service was represented at two meetings of the Commission during the year and continued to liaise with the Department of Justice and Equality on the provision of annual caseload statistics to CEPEJ.

GRECO (Council of Europe Group of States Against Corruption)

The Courts Service facilitated the visit in March 2014 by the GRECO expert evaluation team to the courts in connection with the fourth round of GRECO evaluations focused on corruption prevention laws and systems for parliamentarians, judges and prosecutors, the report on foot of which was adopted by the GRECO plenary at its meeting in October 2014.

Mediation and Support Services

The Service continued to work with other agencies in the development of non-judicial alternatives for resolving disputes and settling issues during the year.

- *Civil cases*

Callers to Dublin Circuit and District Court Civil Office continued to use the mediation process when seeking certain court remedies. The project, supported by the Service and the Mediators' Institute of

Ireland, is provided by three service agencies, South Dublin Mediation Service, Mediation Ballymun, and Community Law and Mediation. Disputes considered appropriate for mediation include boundary disputes, private prosecutions for breach of the peace, complaints about noise or nuisance pets, and disputes between adult family members on questions of property. During 2014, a staff member was available to the District Court to meet litigants and explain the service every week. Parties in 28 cases met representatives of one of the agencies, following their appearance in court or at the court office. There were 13 final agreements reached.

- *Family cases - mediation*

The mediation initiative involving the Service, the Legal Aid Board and the Family Mediation Service of the Legal Aid Board in the District Court continued in Cork, Dublin, Naas, and Tipperary during the year. It was extended to Limerick in July.

The objective is to offer an alternative to a court determined outcome and a more appropriate means of resolving certain family disputes. Parties contemplating proceedings in relation to access, custody or guardianship matters are initially invited to attend mediation information sessions. A formal mediation process is then offered to parties willing to engage with legal advice available on site *via* the Legal Aid Board. By accelerating the resolution of disputes, the initiative has considerable individual, system, societal and cost benefits for all involved, including the parties, the Service and other State services.

Family mediation initiative		
Venue	Parties attending information sessions	Agreements finalised
Cork	163	31
Dublin	1,743	351
Naas	203	45
Tipperary	177	7
Limerick	60	3

- *Family cases - support*

A support and referral service for women provided by three organisations – Women’s Aid, Dublin 12 Domestic Violence Service, and Inchicore Outreach Centre – continued in Dublin District Family Court during the year. The service is available to all women using the court for applications under the Domestic Violence Act in particular but also for important ancillary matters including protection of infants. It is also available to women who present in the office indicating that domestic violence is an issue for them. The service provides information relating to the action the woman is taking, explains the possible outcomes of court proceedings, provides safety planning information and gives information about ongoing support and advocacy services. It also provides a level of emotional support to women more appropriately delivered by non court staff. In 2014, there were 313 visits to the Support & Referral Service in Dolphin House by 293 women with a further 64 women receiving support *via* telephone.

AMEN, a State-supported non-governmental organisation working with male victims of domestic violence, continue to provide an outreach service in Dolphin House. Male applicants who report instances of domestic violence are provided with contact details for AMEN. If they need further support, an appointment can be made with a support worker from AMEN to meet in a consultation room in Dolphin House.

A DVD, entitled *Separating the Options*, to assist separating couples and their children involved in the court process was launched by the Ombudsman for Children and the President of the District Court in March. Prepared by the Office of the Ombudsman for Children and the Service the DVD contains two films – *Finding Your Way* for parents and *You Are Not Alone*, for young people aged 13-15 years (which encourages them to discuss their feelings and seek support if it is required). The films provide introductory information on the court process and information on family mediation and advice/support centres. The films are available on the websites of both organisations with links to YouTube.

“Children have a right to be heard in decisions which affect them. This film ‘You Are Not Alone’ reinforces that message in the mind of the child whose parents are separating and is to be very much welcomed.” Judge Rosemary Horgan, President of the District Court.

Over 100 women in Louth availed of a service, based on the Dolphin House service, which was positively reviewed during the year following a twelve month operation. The service, developed and steered by the Service, the Probation Service and Women’s Aid Dundalk was supported by the Commission for the

Support for Victims of Crime. The aim was to improve the outcomes for women and children affected by domestic violence by providing on-site expert advice and support services within Dundalk courthouse.

“In accommodating these groups with facilities, we are ensuring that a wide spectrum of advice and options is made available – in one place – before people of either gender decide to go into a courtroom. These are services of support, sources of information, or alternative routes to finding a solution. This partnership provides clients with the support they require, thereby helping our staff to get on with the important business of supporting the courts.”
Brendan Ryan, Chief Executive.

GOAL 5: MAXIMISE THE USE OF ACCOMMODATION AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

	As of 31st December 2014
Courthouses meeting modern standards	53
Court venues with videoconferencing facilities	16 (28 courtrooms)
Courtrooms with digital audio recording facilities	220

Reviewing court venues

The Strategic Plan commits to rationalising court venues to ensure compliance with disability and health and safety requirements and to achieve value for money from the significant capital investment in court venues in county towns. By rationalising venues, the Service can ensure that more courts are being held in venues which have a higher standard of facilities. By year end the number of venues outside Dublin had been reduced to 85 from over 250 when the Service was established in 1999.

“The closure of court venues generates savings in day to day running costs and ensures that more long-term expenditure on general upkeep, maintenance and refurbishment is concentrated on venues with justifiable caseloads. More importantly, it frees up judicial and staff time to deal with more cases, over full days, in busier locations.” Brendan Ryan, Chief Executive

Review of court services in the Greater Dublin area

The Service completed a review of District Court services in the Greater Dublin area during the year. The review was carried out in the context of the ongoing reductions in staff numbers and the need to ensure that the Service can continue to support the court sittings required by the Presidents of the Circuit Court and District Court. It aimed to ensure the maximum utilisation of court resources and court accommodations, and provide perceived opportunities for efficiencies across the justice system.

The review proposed the closure of outlying court venues and offices (with the exception of Blanchardstown) and the centralisation of all road traffic business in Blanchardstown with a resulting freeing up of ten full time staff. Following a comprehensive consultation process, the Service decided not to proceed with the proposals. This followed the views expressed in relation to the perceived impact on court users, the organisational challenges and projected increased costs outlined by other agencies, in particular An Garda Síochána and the Law Society of Ireland.

The postponement of the review proposals eliminated the potential staff benefit and led to an application by the Service to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for additional posts.

The issues that gave rise to the review remain unresolved and the Service will continue its efforts to look for the resources needed to meet current and impending demands in 2015.

Implementation of the Capital Building Project

Preparatory work continued during the year on seven courthouse construction and/or refurbishment projects as part of the Government's Infrastructure Stimulus Package. The projects, in Cork, Drogheda, Letterkenny, Limerick, Mullingar, Wexford, and Waterford, are to be delivered as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) project with design and planning work being undertaken by the Office of Public Works.



The National Development Finance Agency commenced the procurement process for the project on behalf of the Service during the year. Following the completion of planning and design requirements, a series of presentations were made to those who had expressed an interest in bidding for the projects at a ‘market day’ held in Kilkenny courthouse in May.

A pre-qualification exercise was subsequently undertaken with four consortia pre-qualified to tender for the bundle of projects. Tenders were sought in October with a preferred bidder expected to be selected by mid 2015.

In preparation for the commencement of the building works, the Service continued to explore options for temporary accommodation during the construction period in Cork, Waterford, and Mullingar.

“Courthouses are the mirror of society. Any successful bidder will have the opportunity to work on seven landmark, national buildings and add to our courts and justice infrastructure”. Chief Justice, Mrs. Justice Susan Denham

Court of Appeal

Work continued during the year to provide accommodation for the new Court of Appeal in the Four Courts complex in Dublin.

Existing staff and facilities relocated from the former Public Records Office (PRO) building following refurbishment work in Áras Uí Dhálaigh. This work provided facilities for the new Office of the Court of Appeal, and courtrooms for the District Court and Circuit Court. Progress was made on the provision of courtrooms for the Court of Appeal and office accommodation for judges of the Court of Appeal in the PRO building. This work will be completed in early 2015.

Criminal Courts of Justice

The Service continued to closely manage the public private partnership contract for the Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ) - a twenty five year contract between the Service and a public private partnership company that will last until 2034. The ICT element of the contract concluded in November 2014 with arrangements being made for ICT support for the CCJ courts to be provided as part of the wider ICT contractual arrangements of the Service.

Development of Dublin Family Law Courthouse

The Service continued to explore the feasibility of providing customised family law facilities in Dublin to enable users avail of appropriate modern facilities and accommodation. There is also a need to replace and transform the facilities available for the Children Court in Smithfield which lack space for the necessary support services. The Service proposes that these services be integrated into a new Family Law Courthouse with appropriate separation between facilities.

The Service put forward proposals for a Family Law Courthouse to be built on a State-owned site at Hammond Lane and Church Street, beside the Four Courts. Such a courthouse would centralise family law and children court business in a single complex with all necessary custom built facilities. The Office of Public Works agreed to the use of part of the site by the Service to accommodate a family law and children court complex on this site. The project will consolidate family law and children court business in Dublin in new and suitable accommodation. It will potentially allow the replacement of facilities currently in Dolphin House, Phoenix House, and Áras Uí Dhálaigh, and eliminate lease payments in both Phoenix House and Áras Uí Dhálaigh. Discussions continued during the year with OPW to scope out the overall requirements for the site and funding of the project.

The proposed new complex would also allow the integrated services approach which has been developed in Dolphin House with the Legal Aid Board and the Family Mediation Service of the Legal Aid Board, to encourage greater use of mediation in family law cases, to continue.

Work on the Four Courts complex

The Office of Public Works project to address major structural deficiencies in the dome of the Four Courts continued during the year with the major structural work to be undertaken in 2015.

Accessibility

The Service continued to undertake accessibility audits in court buildings in conjunction with the Office of Public Works. Audits were completed of buildings in Portlaoise and on the Four Courts Campus.

Managing energy usage

There was 9.35% reduction in overall energy consumption in 2014 when compared to 2013 with the reduction in consumption in the Criminal Courts of Justice representing a 24.06% saving on 2010. Expenditure on energy showed a slight reduction, from €2,663,894 to €2,559,274.

Energy consumption				
	2014	2013	Difference	% difference
Overall consumption	21,337,103 kwh	23,538,710 kwh	2,201,607 kwh	-9.35%
Criminal Courts of Justice	4,836,843 kwh	5,212,316 kwh	375,473 kwh	-7.20%

	2014	2010	Difference	% difference
Criminal Courts of Justice	4,836,843 kwh	6,368,956 kwh	1,532,113 kwh	-24.06%

Expenditure on energy			
2014	2013	Difference	% difference
€2,559,274	€2,663,894	€104,620	-3.93%

The Service occupies over 117 buildings throughout the country. Some are used infrequently (once or twice per month), others are shared with other organisations (e.g. local authorities) while others are rented on court days. The Service cannot provide precise figures in relation to energy usage in respect of buildings where it is not the sole user.

The Service continued to support 'energy teams' in offices around the country while the continued rationalisation of the courthouse network concentrates activities in more energy efficient buildings. This work will continue in 2015.

Planning for the future of information and communications technology (ICT)

Supporting the operation of the Fines Act

The Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act, 2014 (*see page 87*) introduces the payment of fines by instalment and significantly alters the enforcement environment in the event of a person defaulting on payment of a fine. The Act contains a new range of alternative sanctions to prisons for failure to pay including appointment of a receiver, attachment of earnings and community service orders.

The Service is required to implement a number of changes to facilitate the operation of the Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act, 2014. The changes include the design of new work processes, the outsourcing of printing and payments collection and the enforcement of District Court order.

Implementation of the Act requires the Service to further develop the Criminal Case Management System in the District Court (CCMS) and the Courts Accounting System, in particular, to facilitate enforcement and payment of fines by instalments. The work required will be delivered in several phases. Development work on CCMS comprising part of the first phase of the project was completed during the year with arrangements being put in place for the outsourcing of printing and payments collection. At year end, plans were in place for phase two of the project, including a user acceptance testing exercise, and work had commenced on the design for phase three (the tracking of appeal and enforcement proceedings for District Court appeals).

Courts Accounting System

The Courts Accounting System centralises all District Court financial transactions including payment of fines and payment of family law maintenance.

Maintenance payments can be made directly into recipients' bank accounts by electronic funds transfer (EFT). Of the 219,801 payments made to family law creditors during 2014, over 90% were made by EFT. In addition, family law debtors can transfer payment electronically to the Service by standing order. Over 70% of all monies receipted for family law payments in 2014 were made electronically, an increase of 1.5% on 2013 and 7% on 2011.

Civil case management system

The Service continued work on the development of a single civil case management system to provide a common platform for the civil processes of all jurisdictions. The system – CSOL (Courts Service On-Line) – will replace existing disparate systems covering all jurisdictions and will incorporate the facility to file documents electronically (eFiling). It will, on completion, process all civil cases across all jurisdictions replacing a number of legacy stand alone case management systems using a number of diverse applications. CSOL can manage a case from end to end regardless of type and has many other benefits including:

- all users in civil and family offices, customers and members of the public will benefit from a single view of a case as it moves through the different jurisdictions
- staff mobility will be supported and training requirements reduced
- processes across jurisdictions will be standardised and supported
- data processing will be improved
- litigants will benefit from electronic services such as eFiling and ePayment
- integrated court scheduling supporting efficient production of civil and family law court lists will be provided
- management information and statistical reporting will be provided
- standardised offices will mean a service that is easier to understand and will benefit litigants and staff
- court users will be able to electronically submit cases reducing traffic in court offices and resources needed to process cases
- the introduction of a fully electronic case management system opens the way for fully electronic cases with paper documentation no longer required.

CSOL is being implemented on a modular basis with several areas of the work of the courts benefiting from the new system by the end of 2014:

- *Insolvency arrangements*

The first manifestation of CSOL allowed a new type of case – ‘personal insolvency’ – to be processed requiring a minimum level of resource. The second release of the system in January 2014 provided for the first category of 100% electronic cases to be processed with no paper documents required. The Insolvency Service of Ireland submits live cases and motions using an online account on the system. A total of 941 cases were processed in 2014.

- *Small Claims*

The Small Claims Online system commenced operating from the CSOL platform in 2014 reducing support costs and facilitating access by the most up to date browser technology. Over 56% of small claims transactions were received electronically during the year.

The Small Claims Online system enables applicants lodge claims and pay fees online. They can follow the progress of their application through the various stages using a unique personal identifier (PIN).

- *Debt Claims Online*

CSOL will also provide an online system for the processing of liquidated debt claims across all court jurisdictions. At year end Debt Claims Online, built on the CSOL platform, was at an advanced stage of development awaiting legislative change prior to commencement, expected as part of the Legal Services Regulation Bill during 2015.

Draft Heads of Bill submitted by the Service to the Department of Justice and Equality to facilitate the operation of Debt Claims Online included provisions for the establishment of a centralised office for the performance of designated business or part of the business of a court office, the initiation of proceedings by electronic means, and the filing electronically of a statement of truth instead of an affidavit subject to authorisation for such by rules of court.

- *Licensing*

Plans were being made at the end of the year to develop the CSOL platform to accommodate licensing applications and renewals which account for approximately 50,000 cases a year in the Circuit Court and District Court.

- *Court of Appeal and Supreme Court*

The CSOL platform was further developed to manage cases in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court with work continuing to enhance the statistical generating capacities.

Plans to deploy CSOL to other litigation areas were being finalised at the end of the year. The incremental deployment approach suits the resources currently available to the Service in terms of staff availability, specific skills, business requirements, and user testing.

Communications infrastructure

Improved telephony system

The Service completed the roll out of a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone system. The project involved the complete replacement of the existing infrastructure with a more cost effective and modern solution.

The telephone upgrade followed the completion of an upgrade of the Wide Area Network (WAN) of the Service which provides data links from locations around the country to a data centre in Dublin. That upgrade led to faster response times on desktops and systems and provides for new services (e.g. desk to desk video conferencing) and enabled the implementation of the new VoIP telephone system.

The upgrade to the WAN and the implementation of the VoIP system reduced overall telecommunications charges from some €2m per annum in 2009 to €1.25m in 2014.

Improving hardware and software in offices

The Service continued a desktop replacement programme in 2014. Over 100 ‘thin client’ devices were deployed in court offices including the High Court in Dublin and Cork Circuit Court and support offices in Phoenix House in Dublin as the first phase of a project to replace older PCs. Rollout will continue in 2015.

Availability of Wi-Fi

The Service availed of a Department of Justice and Equality contract to pilot a project to provide Wi-Fi access in the Four Courts and Phoenix House in Dublin during the year. Following the success of the pilot, new endpoints were installed in a number of locations throughout the Service including the Children Court (Dublin), Dundalk, Sligo, Waterford, Ennis, Kilkenny, Anglesea Street (Cork), Longford, Wexford, Monaghan, Portlaoise, Carlow, Naas, Galway, Tullamore, Cavan, and Bray. In addition, work commenced on the provision of a service in Carrick-on-Shannon, Trim, Letterkenny, Clonmel, Castlebar, Washington Street (Cork), and Limerick.

Managed print service

The Service introduced a managed print service in 2014 to provide all standard laser printers, photocopiers and their servicing and consumables centrally. Expected to deliver annual savings in the region of €50,000 to €60,000, by year end the new service had delivered savings of €36,000.

Managed service contract

The outsourcing of the management of ICT services has proved to be an efficient way to provide the many services required to support the ICT function of the Service. With the current contract due to expire in early 2015, the Service engaged in a procurement exercise during 2014 for the provision of these services for the three year period following the expiration of the current contract.

Support for other projects

The Service continued to support the Irish Sentencing Committee during the year, in particular, by providing assistance in the redesign and redevelopment of the Committee’s website (www.irishsentencing.ie). Work was ongoing at the end of the year with the new site to be launched in mid 2015.

GOAL 6: DELIVER EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND VALUE FOR MONEY**Risk management**

The risks facing the Service are identified in a Corporate Risk Register which in turn provides the context through which Heads of Directorates prepare individual directorate risk registers. The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed on a regular basis by the Chief Executive Officer, the Senior Management Team, the Audit Committee and the Board. (*see Chapter 4*)

Performance budgeting

Performance budgeting requires the identification of key outputs, context and impact indicators for the business units of the Service as part of the Estimates process. The output targets for the Service were set out in the Revised Estimates Volume for 2014. They complement the actions set out in the Corporate Business Plan 2014 to deliver on the goals in the Strategic Plan. The targets together with the outputs achieved are on page 15.

Containing expenditure within funding limits

The Service continued to reduce spending across a number of headings during the year with overall expenditure contained within approved budget limits.

Additional fee income generation

Fees orders for the Supreme Court and High Court, Circuit Court, and District Court came into force on 3rd February 2014 to coincide with the commencement of the increased jurisdiction of the Circuit Court and District Court. A further fees order for the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and High Court came into force on 30th October 2014 providing for the fees payable on documents lodged in the Office of the Court of Appeal. (*see also page 74*)

Communicating with the public*Website*

There were over 2.6 million visits to the website during the year. The most visited sections were *Legal Diary*, *Judgments*, *Rules and Fees*, *Offices and Maps*, and *High Court Search*.

Website: Visits	
2014	2,619,641
2013	2,569,418
2012	2,434,487

Website: Visits by mobile device	
2014	630,321
2013	457,894
2012	229,627

There was a 38% increase in visits to the website *via* mobile devices on 2013 and a 175% increase on 2012.

The Service continued to make the *Legal Diary* available on a mobile version of the site (m.courts.ie) facilitating access for those using hand held devices. The layout of the *Legal Diary* was further improved with Circuit Court lists provided in a dedicated section ensuring more streamlined access to hearing dates, including future dates.

Information on the website for unrepresented litigants appearing in family law cases continued to improve supported by the Family Law Court Development Committee. In addition, the Service continued to use the website to support family law initiatives of the European Union by promoting leaflets and videos. One such initiative during the year was designed to inform couples of new rules introduced to improve judicial cooperation in cases involving cross-border separations.

The first judgments of the new Court of Appeal were published on the website in November with development work completed to facilitate publication of determinations of the Supreme Court.

Social media

The Service continued to post news of initiatives, events and court sittings on Facebook and used its channel on YouTube to present information in video format.

Outreach

The Service continued to encourage the public to learn about the courts system. Over 4,000 second level and third level students, and community and other groups availed of the Outreach Programme with visits to court buildings around the country tailored to suit their various interests.

Court buildings, including the Four Courts, the Criminal Courts of Justice and courthouses in Castlebar, Cavan, Dundalk, Galway, Loughrea, and Naas were made available for mock trial and other events. The Criminal Courts of Justice, in particular, hosted over 50 events including competitions, seminars, conferences, lectures, and visits from judiciary from other jurisdictions. The popularity of this imposing building was emphasised by an attendance of over 800 as part of the Irish Architecture Foundation's 'Open House' weekend in October.

The Service participated in other initiatives to encourage the public to visit court buildings and facilitated the use of the buildings for a variety of community and other uses. They included lectures organised by the Courts Centenary Commemoration Committee in the Four Courts in March and November, a guided public walk in and around Dublin's Legal Quarter in May, and events in Galway and Sligo. Media requests to film inside court buildings were facilitated in several locations in Dublin and in Castlebar.

An internship programme for final year and postgraduate law students, initiated by the Chief Justice and organised by the Service and the Office of the Chief Justice, enabled 18 students from law schools in NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth, Dublin City University, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University of Limerick, and Fordham University New York, to gain practical experience of the Irish courts and the legal system in July.

A programme to provide work experience for second level students continued during the year in offices including Cavan, Carrick-on-Shannon, Castlebar, Donegal, Dublin, Ennis, Galway, Kilkenny, Naas, Roscommon, Sligo, and Trim.

Media

One of the main sources of information for the public about the courts and court cases is through media reports. The Service engages with journalists from all media types on a daily basis – and helps create the accurate reporting of court cases and the compiling of fact based features and documentaries on the courts system.

The provider of the Media Relations Service (MRS) liaises between the Service centrally and the media, and acts as a support, resource, and source of information for court offices, the judiciary and a wide range of journalists across all platforms.

Media workshops and contacts with the various media bodies including the National Union of Journalists, the Press Council and the Press Ombudsman continued and were built upon throughout 2014. The MRS worked with the Presidents of all court jurisdictions to allow for accurate reporting by *bona fide* representatives of the press of child care proceedings following reforms to the in-camera rule which came into force in January 2014. A draft set of reporting guidelines was presented and discussed with the media at a seminar of the National Union of Journalists attended by the President of the District Court and the coordinator of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs Childcare Reporting Project in April. In addition, the President, with the assistance of the (Courts) Service, prepared and issued guidelines to the judges of the District Court in the matter.

The MRS receives approximately 10,000 queries throughout the year dealing with a broad range of issues from court proceedings, details of charges, court process and procedure, court statistics and some archival/historical research from documentary makers. Over 95% of all media queries continue to be dealt with on the day of receipt with only a small number referred to the Freedom of Information Officer.

Students of journalism in third level institutions and other centres of education at undergraduate and postgraduate level, made regular visits to the courts throughout the year, where lectures, and workshops were organised for them. Information on other areas of the legal and justice system continued to be provided from the MRS as the need arose.

Other information

The Service continued to provide information to the public, government departments and parliamentary representatives following specific requests made during the year.

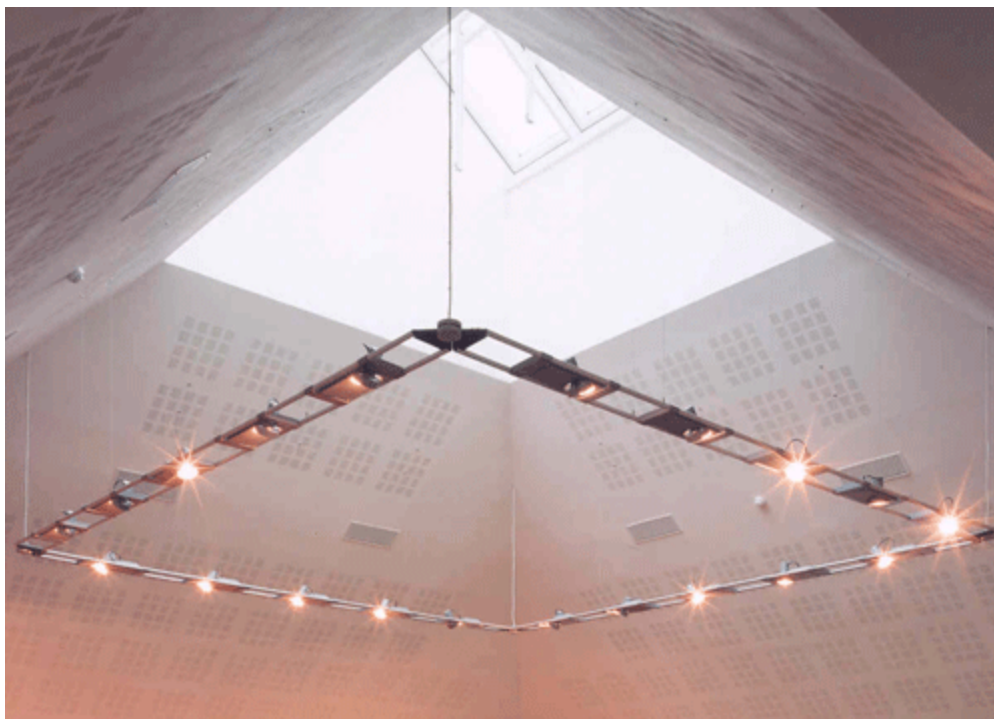
Material for responses to 178 parliamentary questions tabled by members of the Oireachtas was provided and the Service dealt with 241 letters/representations from other government departments, TDs, senators and members of the public.

There were 29 formal requests under the Freedom of Information Acts and a further 85 written requests dealt with outside of the Acts. Additional queries were dealt with by telephone or email, many relating to information contained in court records not covered by the Freedom of Information legislation. The Freedom of Information Officer continued to participate in the Public Service Users Network, a group of Freedom of Information officers in public service bodies.

A new Freedom of Information Act was introduced in October 2014 which abolished the €15 application fee and amended other fees payable. This resulted in an increase in the number of requests received by the Courts Service.

Requests: Freedom of Information Acts	
On hand 01/01/14	2
Received	29
Dealt with	30
On hand 31/12/14	1
Outcome of requests dealt with	
Access granted/part granted	19
Refused	4
Transferred/withdrawn	7

The Service dealt with 40 requests under the Data Protection legislation during the year.



CHAPTER 3 – STATISTICS

The statistics in this chapter are for the period from 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2014. They refer to the major areas of work of the courts and are presented by reference to criminal and civil law. In some instances statistics for 2013 and previous years are provided for comparison purposes.

The classification and categorisation used by the Service to produce the statistics in this chapter may differ from those of other agencies such as An Garda Síochána, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Injuries Board Ireland, the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement and the Health Service Executive.

Additional statistics are available on the website of the Service www.courts.ie.

Note: Statistics for incoming cases do not (with some exceptions) include pending caseloads. Many civil litigious cases are not proceeded with, for reasons including settlement between the parties, and are not brought back before the court after issue.

COURT STATISTICS: OVERVIEW

CIVIL

Civil business by jurisdiction	Incoming	Resolved
District Court	145,138	115,987
Circuit Court	60,283	34,138
High Court	47,197	34,008
Court of Appeal	118	30
Supreme Court	464	710
Total	253,200	184,873

Civil business by type	Incoming	Resolved
Civil and commercial litigious cases	143,993	80,827
Civil and commercial non-litigious cases	87,201	83,508
Non-litigious enforcement cases	18,014	17,680
Appeals	2,774	2,451
Cases stated	24	13
Other	1,194	1,194
Total	253,200	184,873

CRIME

Offences and appeals by jurisdiction	Incoming	Resolved
District Criminal Court	425,150	312,861
Circuit Criminal Court	28,086	29,137
Special Criminal Court	32	26
Central Criminal Court	1,128	1,408
Court of Criminal Appeal	206	166
Court of Appeal (Criminal)	57	118
Total	454,659	343,716

Offences and appeals: total	Incoming	Resolved
Offences	439,994	330,509
Appeals	14,665	13,207
Total	454,659	343,716

COURT STATISTICS: HIGHLIGHTS

CIVIL

- 7,047 personal injury suits in the High Court and 9,852 in the Circuit Court – a 26% decrease in the High Court and a 16% increase in the Circuit Court on 2013
- 111 cases disposed of in the Commercial List of the High Court – a 34% decrease on 2013
- 1,063 orders for possession made in the Circuit Court – a 193% increase on 2013
- 78 companies wound up by the High Court – a 20% increase on 2013
- 448 people adjudicated bankrupt – 16 on foot of applications by creditors and 432 by debtors (self adjudications) – a 568% increase on 2013
- 941 applications received under the debt resolution mechanisms introduced by the Personal Insolvency Act 2012
- 187 asylum-related judicial review applications – a 51% decrease on 2013
- 1,271 applications for judicial separation – a 3% decrease on 2013 – the majority (over 70%) in both Circuit Court and High Court by wives
- 3,831 applications for divorce – little change from 2013 – the majority in the Circuit Court (56%) by wives; the majority in the High Court (56%) by husbands
- 13,528 applications to the District Court under the domestic violence legislation – a 2% increase on 2013
- 1,355 civil matters transferred from Supreme Court to Court of Appeal upon establishment of new court in October
- Over 800 appeals retained to be dealt with by Supreme Court following transfer of appeals to Court of Appeal

CRIME

- 8,477 orders in respect of drink driving offences in the District Court - a 25% decrease on 2013, and a 33% decrease on 2012
- 62% of orders in the District Court relate to road traffic offences – little change from 2013
- 11,877 orders in respect of drugs offences in the District Court – a 15% decrease on 2013
- 30,194 orders in respect of public order offences in the District Court – a 26% decrease on 2013
- 42% of offences in Circuit Court relate to fraud/theft/robbery
- 114 defendants before Central Criminal Court – a 9% decrease on 2013
- Murder convictions in respect of 21 offences
- Rape convictions in respect of 125 offences
- 206 appeals lodged in Court of Criminal Appeal – a 26% decrease on 2013 and a 40% decrease on 2012
- 660 appeals transferred from Court of Criminal Appeal to Court of Appeal in October

COURT STATISTICS: SUMMARY

CIVIL BUSINESS

District Court, Circuit Court, High Court

Personal injury

There were 17,763 personal injury suits filed – 7,047 (including 931 medical negligence) in the High Court, a 26% decrease on the 9,561 in 2013, and 9,852 in the Circuit Court, a 16% increase on the 8,505 in 2013. There were 864 suits filed in the District Court.

Commercial list

There were 171 new cases admitted to the High Court Commercial List, a slight increase on the 169 admitted in 2013. There were 111 cases disposed of, a 34% decrease on the 167 disposed of in 2013.

Property cases

Property cases include cases in which the plaintiff is seeking possession of lands and/or premises including family homes. Applications for possession may also form part of ‘mortgage suits’. These are cases where the creditor has a mortgage on the property in which the defendant has an interest but does not have power to sell that property unless the court declares the mortgage well-charged on the debtor’s interest.

There were 129 cases for the recovery of possession of lands and/or premises in the High Court – a decrease of 61% on the 332 cases in 2013. The Circuit Court received 8,164 possession cases and made 1,063 orders for possession. There were 475 other property cases across the jurisdictions. They included mortgage suits and proceedings for ejectment.

Recovery of debt

The courts received over 30,000 claims for the recovery of liquidated debt. There were 3,666 cases in the High Court, 6,223 in the Circuit Court, and 20,524 in the District Court. Many of these are issued by financial institutions seeking to recover specified amounts of money, often in respect of loans.

Where a defendant does not respond to a summary summons in the High Court, a civil bill in the Circuit Court, or a debt claim notice in the District Court, or where the Master of the High Court gives liberty to enter judgment, the plaintiff can apply to have ‘judgment marked’ against the defendant in the court office. In 2014, judgments were marked in the High Court in 1,958 cases, a 27% decrease on the 2,675 marked in 2013. There was a 43% decrease in judgments marked in the Circuit Court (to 5,146 from 9,103 in 2013) and a 41% decrease in the District Court (to 7,771 from 13,142 in 2013).

Enforcement of judgments

Following judgment, a creditor can choose a number of routes to obtain payment of money adjudged to be owed by a debtor, or the return of property the subject of possession proceedings.

Execution orders

The courts issued 8,502 execution orders in 2014. There were 2,364 execution orders for the recovery of money, and 139 for possession of property in the High Court, and 5,705 execution orders to recover money and 294 for possession in the Circuit Court.

Committal and instalment orders

Summonses for the attendance of debtors before the District Court for non-payment of debts decreased by 33% from 10,349 in 2013 to 6,883. Orders made following the issue of these summonses can include instalment orders, variation orders, and committal orders. There were 5,110 instalment orders made in 2014, a decrease of 35% on the 7,882 made in 2013. Proceedings for committal resulted in the issue of 72 committal orders. There were 399 orders made varying previous orders.

Registration of judgments

Judgments obtained in the District Court, Circuit Court and High Court can be registered in the High Court. There were 4,146 judgments registered in 2014, a 30% decrease on the 5,879 in 2013. Judgments registers are open for public inspection in the Central Office of the High Court.

Judgment mortgage certificates

There were 2,314 judgment mortgage certificates signed in the High Court, a 23% decrease on the 2,991 certificates signed in 2013. There were 2,157 certificates signed in the Circuit Court, a 34% decrease on the 3,282 certificates signed in 2013, and 401 certificates signed in the District Court.

Corporate insolvency (companies)

Applications to the High Court to wind up a company decreased by 9% - from 170 in 2013 to 155. Winding up orders were made in respect of 78 companies, a 20% increase on the 65 orders made in 2013. Applications were made to restrict the directors of 95 companies, a 6% increase on the 90 such applications made in 2013. There were 86 restriction orders made, an increase of 9% on the 79 such orders made in 2013. Disqualification orders were made in respect of the directors of four companies, a 75% decrease on the 16 orders made in 2013.

Personal insolvency (bankruptcy)

Applications to have a person adjudicated bankrupt are filed in the Office of the Examiner of the High Court. The Official Assignee in Bankruptcy is the officer of the Court to whom the ownership of the property of the bankrupt person is transferred on the day the person is made bankrupt. He is an independent statutory officer who administers the estate of the bankrupt person and is answerable to the High Court. He manages the Bankruptcy Division within the Insolvency Service of Ireland. There were 448 people adjudicated bankrupt in 2014 – 16 on foot of applications by creditors and 432 by debtors (self adjudications).

The Insolvency Service of Ireland administers the debt settlement procedures introduced by the Personal Insolvency Act 2012. The Act introduced three debt resolution mechanisms for people who cannot afford to pay their personal debts. A Debt Relief Notice allows for the write-off of qualifying debt up to €20,000, subject to a 3-year supervision period. A Debt Settlement Arrangement applies to the agreed settlement of unsecured debts, usually over a period of 5 years. A Personal Insolvency Arrangement applies to the agreed settlement and/or restructuring of secured debts up to a total of €3 million (as well as unsecured debts) over a period of 6 years. There were 263 debt relief notices, 160 debt settlement arrangements, and 518 personal insolvency arrangements received during the year.

Small claims

Applications under the small claims procedure (excluding those lodged online) decreased by 15% from 1,927 to 1,631 in 2014. Small claims registrars settled 521 claims, there were 150 decrees by default (granted where the person against whom the claim is made does not respond or take any part in the case), 138 applications not proceeded with and 327 referred to the District Court. In court, decrees were granted in 146 cases, 44 cases were dismissed and the remaining 137 were struck out or withdrawn.

Judicial review

There were 835 applications for judicial review to the High Court in 2014, a 14% decrease on the 973 in 2013. There was a 51% decrease in asylum-related applications – 187 compared with 385 in 2013. Asylum-related applications represented 22% of all judicial review applications. Applications in asylum related cases generally seek an order quashing the decision of a body such as the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, or an injunction restraining the Minister for Justice and Equality from deporting them.

Family law

The High Court and the Circuit Court have concurrent jurisdiction in family law matters. However, the majority of judicial separation, divorce and nullity applications are made to the Circuit Court. There is a right of appeal from the Circuit Court to the High Court.

Judicial separation

There were 1,271 applications for judicial separation in 2014 – 25 in the High Court and 1,246 in the Circuit Court - a 3% decrease on 2013. The majority of applications in both jurisdictions (76% in High Court, 74% in Circuit Court) were by wives. There were 649 orders granted – 26 in the High Court and 623 in the Circuit Court.

Divorce

There was little change in the number of applications for divorce – 3,831 as compared to 3,609 in 2013. There were 23 applications in the High Court and 3,808 in the Circuit Court - the majority in the High Court

(56%) were by husbands and the majority in the Circuit Court (56%) were by wives. There were 2,638 orders granted – 26 in the High Court and 2,612 in the Circuit Court.

Supervision and care orders

The courts deal with applications for orders in respect of the care or supervision of minors, or on behalf of minors concerning the arrangements made by the Child and Family Agency, (called Tusla), for their care. Tusla, a statutory organisation established in January 2014 under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, assumed responsibility for a range of services including the child welfare and protection services previously operated by the Health Service Executive (including family support services). Tusla can apply to the courts for a number of different orders when dealing with children who are at risk or who are in need of care. These orders give the courts a range of powers about the type of care necessary and about access to the children for parents and other relatives. There were over 9,000 child care applications to the courts. The District Court made 566 supervision orders, 366 emergency care orders and 773 final care orders.

It is important to note that the number of applications does not necessarily reflect the number of children in respect of whom orders are made, as several orders may be made in respect of an individual child.

Child abduction

There was a 48% decrease in new applications to the High Court under the Hague Convention on Child Abduction – 26 compared to 50 in 2013, with 83 orders made.

Notice/age of marriage

The Circuit Court can exempt persons wishing to marry from the requirement to give three months notice to the Registrar of Marriages. It can also exempt persons from the age requirements for marriage. There was a 6% decrease in applications received – 532 compared to 563 in 2013 – with 427 applications granted compared to 428 in 2013.

Guardianship, custody, access

The District Court received over 15,000 guardianship applications. Of these, 2,693 were by unmarried applicants, a 10% decrease on the 2,986 such applications in 2013. There were over 6,000 applications for custody and access in District Court.

Domestic violence

Applications to the District Court under the domestic violence legislation increased by 2% to 13,528 from 13,275 in 2013. There was a 3% increase in applications for safety orders (5,499 as compared to 5,334 in 2013) and a 3% decrease in applications for protection orders (4,406 as compared to 4,529 in 2013). Applications for interim barring orders showed a slight increase (699 as compared to 674 in 2013) while applications for barring orders showed a slight decrease from 2,738 to 2,671.

Licensing

There was an 8% decrease in licensing applications dealt with in the District Court – 48,799 compared with 52,843 in 2013.

Court of Appeal

Appeals in civil proceedings from the High Court which prior to the Thirty-third Amendment of the Constitution would have been heard by the Supreme Court now lie to the Court of Appeal, except for those cases in which the Supreme Court has permitted an appeal to it on being satisfied that the appeal meets the threshold set out in Article 34.5.4° of the Constitution. In addition, questions of law which could previously be referred by the Circuit Court to the Supreme Court for determination (a 'case stated') are now determinable by the Court of Appeal.

Under the transitional arrangements comprised in the Thirty-third Amendment to the Constitution, the Chief Justice was given liberty with the agreement of the other judges of the Supreme Court, to direct that specified appeals pending in the Supreme Court which had been initiated before the establishment day and had not been fully or partly heard by that court be heard and determined by the Court of Appeal.

The Chief Justice, gave a direction on 29th October 2014 specifying the class of appeals pending in the Supreme Court which would transfer to the Court of Appeal. The Supreme Court subsequently transferred a caseload of 1,355 civil matters to the Court of Appeal, including 258 cases that were certified as ready for hearing. By year end, an additional 118 new cases had been lodged. The Court operates two lists – one for

ordinary appeals and one for appeals requiring expeditious hearing ('expedited appeals'). Between 28th October and 31st December there were 84 ordinary appeals and 34 expedited appeals lodged.

The Supreme Court

Consequent to the amendment of the Constitution, a reformed appellate jurisdiction exercisable by the Supreme Court came into operation on 28th October 2014. A general right of appeal from the High Court to the Supreme Court was replaced by a general right of appeal to the Court of Appeal. An appeal to the Supreme Court now lies from decisions of the Court of Appeal and the High Court where the Supreme Court is satisfied that the relevant jurisdictional thresholds set out in Article 34 5 3° and Article 34 5 4°, respectively, are met.

Pursuant to the direction of the Chief Justice given on 29th October 2014, the Supreme Court, in addition to transferring certain appeals to the Court of Appeal, retained a legacy caseload of more than 800 appeals. There were 459 new appeals from the High Court lodged in the Supreme Court between 1st January 2014 and 28th October 2014 and two appeals from the High Court between 28th October 2014 and 31st December 2014. In the period to 28th October, there were three cases stated from the Circuit Court.

There were no applications for leave to appeal from the Court of Appeal to the Supreme Court between 28th October 2014 and 31st December 2014.

CRIMINAL BUSINESS

The courts received over 450,000 criminal matters and dealt with over 340,000 in 2014. There were 166 appeals disposed of in the Court of Criminal Appeal; 118 appeals disposed of in the Court of Appeal; 1,408 offences dealt with in the Central Criminal Court; 26 offences dealt with in the Special Criminal Court; 16,214 offences and 12,923 appeals from the District Court dealt with in the Circuit Court; and 312,861 orders made in respect of offences in the District Court.

In addition, there were 109 orders made in *habeas corpus* and 120 orders made in European Arrest Warrant cases in the High Court, 1,437 orders in bail cases and 14,812 offences sent forward for trial to higher courts from the District Court – 13,684 offences to the Circuit Court and 1,128 to the Central Criminal Court.

District Court

The District Court received 425,150 offences and made orders in respect of 312,861 – a 10% decrease on the 347,998 orders made in 2013. A further 14,812 were sent forward for trial to higher courts, a 13% increase on the 13,107 in 2013. Indictable offences dealt with summarily decreased by 29% to 45,033 from 63,049 in 2013.

Orders made in respect of offences under the road traffic legislation continued to be the highest category accounting for 62% of orders made in respect of summary and indictable offences. There were 3,873 orders made in respect of dangerous driving offences, little change on the 3,886 orders made in 2013 and a 15% decrease on the 4,557 orders made in 2012. There were 8,477 orders made in respect of drink driving offences, a 25% decrease on the 11,329 orders made in 2013, and a 33% decrease on the 12,636 orders in 2012.

Orders made in respect of drugs offences decreased by 15% to 11,877 from 14,008 in 2013. There were 30,194 orders made in respect of public order and assault offences - a decrease of 26% on the 40,823 orders in 2013.

Juvenile crime

Orders made in respect of offences before the Children Court decreased by 9% to 4,877 from 5,365 in 2013 with 50% of all offences struck out or taken into consideration with other offences.

Circuit Court

There were 13,684 offences received in the Circuit Court involving 4,199 defendants. Theft and robbery remained the largest category of offence with 5,823 offences. There were 1,878 drug offences and 1,137 assault offences. Appeals from the District Court related to 14,402 offences and 7,887 defendants.

Central Criminal Court / High Court

The Central Criminal Court dealt with 1,408 offences involving 114 defendants and held 63 trials. There were 35 murder offences with pleas of guilty entered in respect of seven offences - 27 went to trial. There were findings of not guilty by reason of insanity in respect of four offences, acquittals in respect of two offences, and convictions in respect of the remainder. There were convictions for murder in respect of 21 offences and a conviction for manslaughter in respect of one. There were 468 rape offences and 824 indecent/sexual assault offences before the court. Guilty pleas were entered in respect of 178 of these offences with 670 going to trial. There were convictions in respect of 125 rape offences and 229 indecent/sexual assault offences, and acquittals in respect of 37 rape offences and 137 indecent/sexual assault offences.

European Arrest Warrant applications

There was a decrease in applications in European Arrest Warrants cases in the High Court with 254 applications made, a 15% decrease on the 298 applications made in 2013.

Bail

Only the High Court has jurisdiction to deal with bail applications where a person is charged with murder. Applications may also be made to the High Court to vary the terms of a bail order made by a District Court judge. The High Court made 1,437 orders in bail applications, a 16% decrease on the 1,708 such orders made in 2013.

Court of Criminal Appeal / Court of Appeal

Appeals pending in the Court of Criminal Appeal which had not been fully or partly heard as of 28th October 2014 transferred to the Court of Appeal. Of the total of 660 such cases there were 142 sentence appeals and 75 conviction appeals ready for hearing. Appeals which had been fully or partly heard in the Court of Criminal Appeal and remained to be determined will be determined by the Court of Criminal Appeal, which will continue in existence until those appeals are disposed of. There were 26 such appeals as of 28th October 2014. There were 206 appeals lodged in the Court of Criminal Appeal between 1st January 2014 and 28th October 2014 and 57 appeals lodged in the Court of Appeal to the end of December.



CIVIL BUSINESS**DISTRICT COURT, CIRCUIT COURT, HIGH COURT****1. CIVIL AND COMMERCIAL LITIGIOUS CASES****(a) Cases where one party is suing another**

1. Personal injury	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	7,047	881	3,140
Circuit Court	9,852	2,773	283
District Court	864	433	0
Total	17,763	4,087	3,423

Personal injury awards: Circuit Court	
Amount	Cases
€0 to €15,000	654
€15,000 to €60,000	356
€60,000+	8
Total	1,018

Personal injury awards: High Court	
Amount	Cases
€0 to €60,000	237
€60,000 to €199,999	171
€200,000 to €499,999	45
€500,000+	56
Total	509

Personal injury awards	High Court	Circuit Court
Lowest amount awarded	€2,000	€250
Highest amount awarded	€9million	€525,000
Total amount awarded	€154,915,926	€13,794,354

2. Commercial	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	171	73	38

Analysis of caseload	2014	2013
On hands 01/01	106	104
Incoming	171	169
Resolved	111	167
On hands 31/12	166	106

Analysis of cases resolved	2014	2013
Motion to dismiss	1	1
Settled after entry	8	8
Settled after directions hearing	13	24
Settled after hearing date set	15	21
Settled at hearing	11	31
Full hearing	61	81
Other	2	1
Total	111	167

3. Chancery	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	2,149	493	282

Analysis of proceedings initiated	2014	2013
Specific performance	212	232
Injunction	375	353
Declaration	873	701
European Communities (Cross Border mergers) Regulations, 2008*	6	8
* S.I. No. 157 of 2008		

4. Property (possession)	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	129	190	5
Circuit Court	8,164	1,170 *	200
Total	8,293	1,360	205
* includes 1,063 orders for possession			

5. Property (other)	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	37	27	0
Circuit Court	396	474	0
District Court	42	13	0
Total	475	514	0

6. Breach of contract	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	952	55	95
Circuit Court	544	372	48
Total	1,496	427	143

7. Liquidated debt	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	3,666	764	30
Circuit Court	6,223	594	833*
District Court	20,254	1,493	0
Total	30,143	2,851	863

* see page 49 for judgments marked

8. Negligence	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	824	48	75

9. Defamation	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	182	9	22
Circuit Court	25	8	1
Total	207	17	23

10. Assault	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	135	13	18

11. Employment (dismissal)	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
Circuit Court	69	87	2

12. Employment (other)	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	26	9	11
Circuit Court	271	50	3
Total	297	59	14

13. Small claims procedure	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
District Court	1,631 (in office)	327	905

Analysis of cases issued	2014	2013
Not proceeded with	138	228
Decrees by default	150	180
Settled by registrar	521	616
Settled after notice to pay	96	-
Referred to court	327	698
Total	1,232	1,722

Adjudicated by the court	2014	2013
Decrees granted	146	306
Cases dismissed	44	82
Withdrawn/struck out	137	310
Total	327	698

14. Proceeds of crime	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	17	3	0

15. Judicial review (asylum related)	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	187	330	329

Judicial review (other)	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	648	240	174

Analysis of caseload	Judicial review (asylum related)		Judicial review (other)	
	2014	2013	2014	2013
Incoming	187	385	648	588
Orders made:				
Liberty to apply for judicial review granted	98	213	481	510
Liberty to apply for judicial review refused	24	29	27	28
Interim orders	89	107	232	199
Final orders – relief granted	72	77	145	224
Final orders – relief refused	58		144	75
Final orders – miscellaneous	168	221	-	-
Final orders – struck out (no order)	334	350	78	178

16. Regulation of professions	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	213	154	1

17. Garda compensation	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	125	121	0

18. Habeas corpus	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	179	109	6

19. European Arrest Warrants	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	254	120	0

20. Bail	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	1,961	1,437	0

21	Other	Incoming	Resolved	
			By court	Out of court
	High Court	1,146	315	143

22. Divorce	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	23	26	0
Circuit Court	3,808	2,612	0
Total	3,831	2,638	0

Trends: Divorce: applicants				
Year	Wife		Husband	
	High Court	Circuit Court	High Court	Circuit Court
2014	10	2,130	13	1,678
2013	6	1,979	5	1,619
2012	8	1,840	12	1,622
2011	13	1,796	15	1,534

23. Judicial separation	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	25	26	2
Circuit Court	1,246	623	0
Total	1,271	649	2

Trends: Judicial separation: applicants				
Year	Wife		Husband	
	High Court	Circuit Court	High Court	Circuit Court
2014	19	920	6	326
2013	20	918	5	374
2012	16	926	5	343
2011	20	1,013	7	339

24. Dissolution of partnership	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
Circuit Court	41	9	0

Dissolution of partnership: applicants	
Female	Male
33	8

25. Cohabitation	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	7	0	1

26. Nullity	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	2	0	0
Circuit Court	33	17	0
Total	35	17	0

Trends: Nullity: applicants				
Year	Wife		Husband	
	High Court	Circuit Court	High Court	Circuit Court
2014	1	17	1	16
2013	1	19	1	27
2012	0	17	0	11
2011	0	16	0	23

27. Guardianship	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
District Court	15,420	13,802	0

District Court: Guardianship: Unmarried applicants		
	2014	2013
Granted	2,121	2,261
Refused	46	71
Withdrawn/struck out	526	654
Total	2,693	2,986

28. Custody and access	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
District Court	6,463	5,700	0

District Court Custody and access: Outcomes		
	2014	2013
Granted	3,684	5,822
Refused	163	235
Withdrawn/struck out	1,853	1,981
Total	5,700	8,038

Circuit Court Custody and access: Outcomes								
	Judicial separation		Dissolution		Divorce		Nullity	
	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013
Orders made	378	467	2	n/a	660	727	n/a	2

29. Maintenance	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	1	1	0
District Court	10,459*	8,718	0
* includes applications subsequent to initial application (e.g. applications to vary and applications to recover arrears)			

District Court: Maintenance: Outcome of applications made (by applicant)				
	Married		Unmarried	
	2014	2013	2014	2013
Granted	964	1,354	2,325	2,744
Refused	15	41	26	26
Withdrawn/struck out	332	410	632	690
Total	1,311	1,805	2,983	3,460

30. Domestic violence	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
District Court	13,528	13,367	0

Circuit Court: Domestic violence: Outcomes	2014	2013
Orders made	47	103

District Court: Domestic violence: Trends	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Barring order applications	2,671	2,738	2,789	2,763	2,726
Barring orders made	877	1,167	1,165	1,043	1,064
Protection order applications	4,406	4,529	4,192	3,403	2,926
Protection orders made*	4,024	4,142	3,849	3,085	2,672
Safety order applications	5,499	5,334	5,026	3,755	3,561
Safety orders made	2,029	2,381	2,255	1,513	1,457
Interim barring order applications	699	674	648	731	530
Interim barring orders made	569	522	520	569	431
* Some interim barring orders were granted on foot of applications for protection orders. Likewise some protection orders were granted on foot of applications for interim orders.					

31. Adoption	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	35	36	0

32. Child abduction: Hague Luxembourg Convention	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	26	25	0

High Court: Child abduction: analysis	2014	2013
Incoming	26	50
Orders made		
Assess child	7	12
Interim order	59	133
Child returned (on consent)	10	19
Child returned (court order)	4	3
Child remain (on consent)	2	7
Child remain (court order)	1	2
Total	83	176

33. Child care	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	63	76	0
District Court	9,210	7,332	0
Total	9,273	7,408	0

High Court: Child care: analysis		
	2014	2013
Received	63	52
Orders made	400	517

District Court: Child care: analysis 2014	Incoming	Resolved
Supervision order	628	667
Care order	1,206	933
Extension of care order	515	587
Interim care order	2,141	2,125
Extension of interim care order	2,059	1,947
Emergency care order	398	388
Review of care order	829	235
Re-entry of case	116	76
Other *	1,318	347
Total	9,210	7,332

* includes applications under s. 37 and s. 47 Child Care Act 1991.

34. Family: Other	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
High Court	305	86	0

(b) European Payment Order applications

Court	Incoming	Resolved
High Court	122	125

Resolved: outcome	
Declared enforceable	53
Terminated by claimant	62
Remitted for hearing	10

(c) Corporate insolvency

1. Examinership	Incoming	Resolved		
		Out of court	By court	
		Petition settled etc.	Appointment made	Appointment refused
High Court				
Interim examiner	n/a	0	20*	0
Examiner	29	1	25	0

* Note that figures for appointment of interim examiner and examiner may not be mutually exclusive as appointment of interim examiner often precedes appointment of examiner

2. Liquidation	Incoming	Resolved	
		Out of court	By court
High Court		Settled/struck out/withdrawn	Orders made
Wind up company	155	31	78

3. Restrict directors (s. 150 Companies Act 1990)	Incoming	Resolved	
		Order made	Order refused
High Court	95	86	7

4. Disqualify directors (s. 160 Companies Act 1990)	Incoming	Resolved	
		Order made	Order refused
High Court	12	4	1

Trends: Compulsory liquidations in High Court Examiner's Office					
Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Incoming	78	72	101	106	121
Resolved	102	100	72	75	n/a

(d) Personal insolvency

(see also page 50)

High Court	Incoming	Resolved		
		By court		
		Issued	Adjudicated / granted/ approved	Discharged / annulled
Bankruptcy summonses	86	86	not applicable	not applicable
Bankruptcy petitions (creditors)	45	45	16	0

(e) Appeals to District Court *

Incoming	Resolved	
	By court	Out of court
63	82	0

* includes taxi appeals and gun licence appeals

(f) Litigious enforcement

1. Summons for attendance of debtor	Incoming
District Court	6,883

Outcome	
Instalment orders issued	5,110
Variation orders issued	399
Committal orders issued	72*
* figures published in previous Annual Reports relate to proceedings issued	

(g) Other

Other	Incoming	Resolved	
		By court	Out of court
Circuit Court	1,952	195	172
District Court	5,473	1,203	0

2. CIVIL AND COMMERCIAL NON-LITIGIOUS CASES**(a) Proceedings in Ireland**

1. Judgments marked in the office	Incoming	Resolved
High Court	4,260	1,958
Circuit Court	5,310	5,146
District Court	5,556	7,771
Total	15,126	14,875

2. Deed Poll	Incoming	Resolved
High Court	605	562

3. Probate	Incoming	Resolved
High Court: Principal Registry	8,603	8,852
Circuit Court: Local registries	7,173	6,895
Total	15,776	15,747

Probate (and administrations with wills annexed): resolved	2014	2013
High Court: Principal Registry	7,044	6,207
Circuit Court: Local registries	5,405	5,541
Total	12,449	11,748

Intestacies: no valid wills	2014	2013
High Court: Principal Registry	1,808	1,630
Circuit Court: Local registries	1,490	1,514
Total	3,298	3,144

4. Wards of court	Incoming	Resolved
High Court	429	322

	2014	2013
Wardship cases	2,014	2,404
Applications awaiting hearing*	78	68
Declaratory orders**	322	321
Dismissed/discharged	160	211
Orders signed	1,458	1,525
* cases pending with inquiry order signed at 31st December		
** adults and minors taken into wardship		

General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court	2014	2013
Active (yearly average)	420	416
Pending	10	7
Dismissal	141	131
Sub cases	296	242

Active cases: reason admitted to wardship	2014
Acquired brain injury	54
Elderly mental infirm	159
Learning or intellectual disability	122
Minor	6
Psychiatric illness	95
Residential abuse	2
Total	438

5. Enduring Powers of Attorney registered	Incoming	Resolved
High Court	650	620

6. Care representatives appointed	Incoming	Resolved
Circuit Court	413	282

7. Mental Health Act applications	Incoming	Resolved
Circuit Court	111	86

8. Personal insolvency (self)	Incoming	Resolved		
High Court		By court		
		Issued	Adjudicated / granted/ approved	Discharged / annulled
Bankruptcy petitions (self)	445	445	432	0

	Incoming	Resolved			
Circuit Court		By court			
		Approve request	Refused	Struck out	Withdrawn
Debt Relief Notices	263	249	0	0	1
Debt Settlement Arrangements	160	77	1	1	1
Personal Insolvency Arrangements	518	120	1	0	1
Total	941	446	2	1	3

9. Licensing	Incoming		Resolved	
	2014	2013	2014	2013
Circuit Court	241	284	241	284
District Court	48,799	52,843	48,799	52,843
Total	49,040	53,127	49,040	53,127

10. Marriage exemption: short notice	Incoming	Resolved
Circuit Court	532	427

Marriage exemption: under age	Incoming	Resolved
Circuit Court	41	33

(b) Foreign proceedings

1. Service of documents	Incoming	Outgoing
High Court *	85	83
Circuit Court	2,755	456
* Hague Convention (proceedings initiated in non-EU countries)		

2. Maintenance (foreign)	Incoming	Resolved
High Court*	187	58
District Court	65	33
* Applications under Regulation (EC) 4/2009		

3. Other	Incoming	Resolved
District Court – taking of evidence	107	not applicable

3. NON- LITIGIOUS ENFORCEMENT

1. Execution orders (judgments) issued	Incoming	Resolved
High Court*	2,364	2,364
Circuit Court	5,146	5,146
Total	7,510	7,510
* includes execution orders (court orders) issued		

2. Execution orders (possession) issued	Incoming	Resolved
High Court	139	139
Circuit Court	467	294
Total	606	433

3. Execution orders (court orders) issued	Incoming	Resolved
Circuit Court	720	559

4. Judgments registered *	Incoming	Resolved
High Court; Circuit Court; District Court	4,146	4,146
* Judgments of High Court, Circuit Court and District Court are registered in High Court Central Office		

5. Judgment mortgage certificates issued	Incoming	Resolved
High Court	2,314	2,314
Circuit Court	2,157	2,157
District Court	401	401
Total	4,872	4,872

6. Satisfaction piece issued	Incoming	Resolved
High Court	39	39
Circuit Court	94	94
District Court	27	27
Total	160	160

4. APPEALS

Court	Incoming	Resolved
Circuit Court to High Court	637	416
District Court to Circuit Court	1,558	1,297

5. OTHER

1	Cases stated	2014		2013	
		Received	Orders made	Received	Orders made
	District Court to High Court	17	11	22	16
	Revenue (District Court) to High Court	4	0	7	2
	Circuit Court to Supreme Court	3	2	1	1
	Circuit Court to Court of Appeal	0	0	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Total	24	13	30	19

6. MISCELLANEOUS

	High Court
Written judgments delivered	668
Taxation of costs: summonses issued	1,194

High Court: Written judgments delivered	2014	2013
Reserved at 01/01	105	49
Delivered	668	627
Reserved at 31/12	115	105

COURT OF APPEAL:

Category	Pending*	Incoming	Resolved	Outstanding
Appeals	1,355	118	30	1,443
Cases stated	0	0	0	0
* cases transferred from Supreme Court				

Nature of appeal	
Expedited	34
Ordinary	84
Total	118

SUPREME COURT:

1. Supreme Court civil and commercial litigious cases	Incoming	Resolved
(a) Appeals: High Court to Supreme Court (to 28 October)	456	708
(b) Appeals: Court of Appeal to Supreme Court (from 28 October)	0	0
(c) Appeals: High Court to Supreme Court (from 28 October)	2	0
(d) Cases stated: Circuit Court to Supreme Court (to 28 October)	3	2
Total	461	710

Appeals:	Case type	Incoming	Resolved		
(a) from High Court			In court		Out of court
			Determined	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
	Article 40/ <i>Habeas Corpus</i>	17	24	1	1
	Bail	27	23	4	4
	Chancery	70	65	4	8
	Commercial	42	49	0	6
	Company	7	11	0	1
	Contract	0	1	0	0
	Criminal	2	8	0	0
	Extradition	9	9	0	0
	Family	7	11	1	0
	Insolvency (corporate)	3	6	0	2
	Insolvency (personal)	10	4	0	0
	Judicial Review (asylum related)	11	21	2	8
	Judicial review (other)	58	99	3	8
	Personal injury	34	47	6	15
	Plenary	46	41	4	4
	Proceeds of Crime Act	4	0	0	0
	Security for costs	0	4	0	0
	Summary judgment	31	16	0	2
	Other	78	143	13	29
Total		456	582	38	88

Appeals:	Case type	Incoming	Resolved				
(c) from High Court			In court			Out of court	
			Allow	Dismiss	Other	Withdrawn	Other
	Matter of general public importance	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Matter in interests of justice	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	0	0	0	0	0

Cases stated:		Incoming	Resolved
(d) Cases stated	Circuit Court to Supreme Court	3	2

2. Supreme Court	
Transferred to Court of Appeal by direction of the Chief Justice	1,355

3. Supreme Court - other	2014	2013
Motions listed before the court	373	447
Appeals from appellants in person	141	130
Length of appeal hearing: one day or less	142	112
Length of appeal hearing: two days or more	27	16
Commissioners appointed	23	24
Notaries Public appointed	26	28



CRIMINAL BUSINESS

By jurisdiction	Incoming	Resolved
District Criminal Court	425,150	312,861
Circuit Criminal Court	28,086	29,137
Special Criminal Court	32	26
Central Criminal Court	1,128	1,408
Court of Criminal Appeal	206	166
Court of Appeal (Criminal)	57	118
Total	454,659	343,716

By offence/appeal	Incoming	Resolved
Serious criminal offences: Central Criminal Court; Special Criminal Court; Circuit Criminal Court	14,844	17,648
Misdemeanour and/or minor criminal offences: District Court	425,150	312,861
Appeals: Court of Criminal Appeal; Court of Appeal; Circuit Court	14,665	13,207
Total	454,659	343,716

DISTRICT COURT:

Categories	Incoming		Resolved: offences		
	Offences	Defendants	(a) Summary	(b) Indictable dealt with summarily	Sent forward for trial
Road traffic	265,756	164,783	188,687	2,565	222
Drugs	17,796	10,842	487	11,390	1,878
Sexual	1,748	331	80	176	1,264
Larceny/fraud/robbery	31,676	12,969	10	22,050	5,823
Public order/assault	38,828	20,969	29,868	326	1,480
Other	69,346	49,328	48,696	8,526	4,145
Total	425,150	259,222	267,828	45,033	14,812

Summary offences: outcomes												
	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob.	Imp/Det	Susp	Other	Total
Road traffic	5,774	90,670	22,642	44,763	64	8,966	519	1,765	1,044	931	11,549	188,687
Drugs	41	144	84	56	6	1	9	40	20	29	57	487
Sexual	3	37	3	10	-	-	-	4	3	9	11	80
Larceny / fraud / robbery	0	6	1	2	1	-	-	0	0	0	0	10
Public order / assault	1,071	7,701	5,930	5,519	533	5	644	3,516	1,208	969	2,772	29,868
Other	958	18,535	4,417	18,287	139	13	128	1,895	724	480	3,120	48,696
Total	7,847	117,093	33,077	68,637	743	8,985	1,300	7,220	2,999	2,418	17,509	267,828

Key: Dis = Dismiss. S/O = strike out. TIC = taken into consideration. Disq. = disqualified. C/S. = community service.
 Prob. = probation. Imp/Det = imprisonment or detention. Susp. = suspended sentence

Indictable offences dealt with summarily: outcomes

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp/Det	Susp	Other	Total
Road traffic	66	554	372	198	7	481	85	107	347	191	157	2,565
Drugs	305	2,713	1,488	2,253	61	4	297	1,571	358	510	1,830	11,390
Sexual	11	65	6	14	5	-	-	13	4	19	39	176
Larceny / fraud / robbery	643	4,914	4,184	2,072	330	33	606	2,730	2,887	1,802	1,849	22,050
Public order / assault	17	92	29	24	4	-	10	35	24	43	48	326
Other	349	2,668	1,100	805	111	10	264	901	843	546	929	8,526
Total	1,391	11,006	7,179	5,366	518	528	1,262	5,357	4,463	3,111	4,852	45,033

Key: Dis = Dismiss. S/O = strike out. TIC = taken into consideration. Disq. = disqualified. C/S. = community service.
 Prob. = probation. Imp/Det = imprisonment or detention. Susp. = suspended sentence

Specific road traffic offences

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp/Det	Susp	Other	Total
Dangerous driving	104	1,085	355	411	6	713	43	21	187	73	875	3,873
Drink driving	635	834	64	2,976	13	3,321	75	27	135	159	238	8,477
Penalty points	3,194	26,444	2,542	22,883	30	4,544	305	633	533	567	3,954	65,629
Total	3,933	28,363	2,961	26,270	49	8,578	423	681	855	799	5,067	77,979

Key: Dis = Dismiss. S/O = strike out. TIC = taken into consideration. Disq. = disqualified. C/S. = community service.
 Prob. = probation. Imp/Det = imprisonment or detention. Susp. = suspended sentence

Juvenile crime

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp/Det	Susp	Other	Total
Road traffic	61	299	370	85	10	85	19	85	43	11	73	1,141
Drugs	13	57	74	12	8	-	-	46	4	2	12	228
Sexual	9	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	12
Larceny / fraud / robbery	97	271	327	28	21	1	27	274	100	55	140	1,341
Public order / assault	96	276	386	107	17	-	8	244	57	25	128	1,344
Other	60	174	216	15	14	-	11	190	52	18	61	811
Total	336	1,077	1,374	247	71	86	65	839	256	111	415	4,877

Key: Dis = Dismiss. S/O = strike out. TIC = taken into consideration. Disq. = disqualified. C/S. = community service.
 Prob. = probation. Imp/Det = imprisonment or detention. Susp. = suspended sentence

CIRCUIT COURT:

Offences	Incoming		Resolved: offences						
	Offences	Defendants	Guilty	Trials		NP	TIC	Quash	Dec
				Convicted	Acquitted				
Road traffic	222	190	478	64	16	125	38	0	4
Drugs	1,878	533	1,610	68	41	890	71	4	10
Sexual	717	131	396	172	103	263	59	19	5
Firearms	659	486	499	28	30	224	44	0	1
Larceny / fraud / robbery	5,823	1,115	3,867	62	78	1,186	945	0	8
Assault	1,137	866	1,258	73	150	270	36	2	2
Child abuse	-	-	181	31	12	78	0	0	0
Manslaughter	4	4	4	2	1	0	0	0	0
Other	3,244	874	1,470	145	179	739	152	1	20
Total	13,684	4,199	9,763	645	610	3,775	1,345	26	50

Key: Guilty = guilty pleas. NP = nolle prosequi. TIC = taken into consideration non conviction.
Quash = quash return for trial. Dec. = accused deceased.

Offences: outcomes												
	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp	Susp	Other	Total
Road traffic	0	0	74	16	86	116	8	16	156	52	79	603
Drugs	0	0	53	16	404	3	24	49	311	335	537	1,732
Sexual	0	0	41	1	106	2	4	25	285	95	50	609
Firearms	3	0	23	0	153	0	10	16	135	98	106	544
Larceny / fraud / robbery	10	0	78	5	1,123	5	143	95	1,112	986	279	3,836
Assault	10	0	25	2	429	7	55	52	367	286	133	1,366
Child abuse	0	0	0	0	53	0	0	11	101	31	14	210
Man-slaughter	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	0	6
Other	15	0	109	55	475	11	81	45	445	309	175	1,720
Total	38	0	403	95	2,830	144	326	309	2,915	2,193	1,373	10,626

Key: Dis = Dismiss. S/O = strike out. TIC = taken into consideration. Disq. = disqualified. C/S. = community service.
Prob. = probation. Imp = imprisonment. Susp. = suspended sentence

Appeals (from District Court)							
Categories	Incoming		Resolved: offences				
	Offences	Defendants	Affirmed	Varied	Reversed	Strike out Withdrawn	Strike out - no appearance
Road traffic	9,132	5,181	1,422	3,115	2,797	668	455
Drugs	498	258	82	239	39	2	18
Sexual	6	6	2	11	0	0	2
Larceny / fraud / robbery	1,689	611	424	592	63	0	198
Public order / assault	1,185	673	282	551	117	153	93
Other	1,892	1,158	296	634	435	78	155
Total	14,402	7,887	2,508	5,142	3,451	901	921

SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT:

Categories	Incoming		Resolved: offences			
	Offences	Defendants	Guilty pleas	Trials		Nolle prosequi
				Convicted	Acquitted	
Membership of illegal organisation	13	13	3	0	1	5
Possession of firearms /ammunition / explosive substance	15	2	3	9	1	0
Murder	0	0	0	2	0	2
Theft	1	0	0	0	0	0
Threaten to kill	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other	3	0	0	0	0	0
Total	33	15	6	11	2	7

Offences: outcomes					
	Imprisonment	Nolle prosequi	Acquittal	Taken into consideration non conviction	Total
Membership of illegal organisation	3	4	1	0	8
Firearms / ammunition / explosive substance	13	0	0	1	14
Murder	2	2	0	0	4
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	18	6	1	1	26

HIGH COURT: CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT:

	Incoming	Resolved	Defendants	Trials
Offences	1,128	1,408	114	63

Offences: resolved: method of disposal							
	Guilty	Trials	NP	TIC*	Dec.	Quash	Total
Murder #	7	27	1	0	0	0	35
Manslaughter	6 [§]	1	0	0	0	0	7
Rape	62	249	112	15	29	1	468
Indecent/sexual assault	116	421	203	24	60	0	824
Assault	3	10	1	0	0	0	14
Other †	12	16	27	4	1	0	60
Total	206	724	344	43	90	1	1,408

Key: Guilty = guilty pleas. NP = nolle prosequi. TIC = taken into consideration non conviction. Dec. = accused deceased.

Quash = quash - remit to District Court.

* TIC – ‘taken into consideration’ offences may be taken into consideration where an offender is sentenced on other multiple offences. Taken into consideration – non conviction specifically refers to circumstances where no plea was entered

includes five attempted murder

§ in respect of six offences of murder, five pleas of ‘not guilty to murder but guilty of manslaughter’ and one plea of ‘not guilty to murder but guilty of manslaughter on the ground of diminished responsibility’ were entered in respect of which pleas were accepted by the Director of Public Prosecutions

† ‘other’ offences include impeding a prosecution, accessory to manslaughter, false imprisonment, criminal damaged, possession of a knife, burglary

Offences: resolved: outcome of trials						
	Convicted	Acquitted	Disagreed	Committal: not guilty by reason of insanity	Taken into consideration	Total
Murder	21	2	0	4	0	27
Manslaughter	1	0	0	0	0	1
Rape	125	37	87	0	0	249
Indecent / sexual assault	229	137	55	0	0	421
Assault	7	2	0	0	1	10
Other	11	2	0	0	3	16
Total	394	180	142	4	4	724

Offences: resolved: penalties imposed on conviction							
	Fine	Prob	Det P/S	Sent F/S	Imp P/S	Imp	Total
Murder	0	0	1	1 (attempted murder)	3 (attempted murder)	23 (life 22)	28
Manslaughter	0	0	0	1	6	0	7
Rape	0	0	0	2	89	96 (life 9)	187
Indecent /sexual assault	0	0	0	0	41	304	345
Assault	0	1	0	1	3	5	10
Other	1	0	0	1	7	14	23
Total	1	1	1	6	149	442	600

Key: Prob. = probation. Det P/S. – detention part suspended. Sent F/S = sentence fully suspended.
Imp P/S = imprisonment part suspended. Imp = imprisonment.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL:

Trends: Appeals		
Year	Received	Disposed of
2014	206	166
2013	279	244
2012	346	173
2011	314	290
2010	326	267
2009	324	229

	Pending	Incoming	Resolved	Outstanding	Transferred to Court of Appeal	Retained
Appeals	646	206	166	686	660	26

COURT OF APPEAL:

	Pending (as at 29 October)	Incoming	Resolved	Outstanding
Appeals	660 (from Court of Criminal Appeal)	57	118	599

Categories	Incoming					
	Conviction	Sentence (severity)	Conviction & sentence	Sentence (leniency)	DPP (dismissal)	Mis-carriage
Drugs	0	8	0	1	0	0
Larceny / fraud /robbery	0	11	0	1	0	0
Assault	0	4	1	5	0	0
Murder	4		0	0	0	0
Rape / sexual assault	2	4	2	0	0	0
Other	1	8	3	2	0	0
Total	7	35	6	9	0	0

Categories	Resolved					
	Conviction	Sentence	Conviction & sentence	Sentence (leniency)	DPP (dismissal)	Mis-carriage
Drugs	0	23	0	5	1	1
Larceny / fraud /robbery	0	23	0	1	0	0
Assault	0	8	0	9	0	0
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rape / sexual assault	0	17	0	7	0	0
Other	0	13	1	9		
Total	0	84	1	31	1	1

Appeals: outcomes																						
Categories	Outcomes																					
	Conviction					Sentence -severity				Conviction & sentence						Sentence -leniency			DPP dis-missal		Mis-carriage	
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	A	B	A	B
Drugs	0	0	0	0	0		18	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	10	0	0	1	1	0
Larceny/ fraud/robbery	0	0	0	0	0	4	9		6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Assault	0	0	0	0	0		5	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Murder	0	0	0	0	0		2			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rape/ sexual assault	0	0	0	0	0		8	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0		5	1	7	0	0	0	0	1		2	4	1	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	4	47	5	28	0	0	0	0	1	0	11	19	1	0	1	1	0

Key:	A	B	C	D	E	F
Conviction	Refused	Conviction quashed - retrial	Conviction quashed - no retrial	Struck out / withdrawn	Dismiss	-
Sentence (severity)	Refused	Original sentence quashed - sentence in lieu	Struck out / withdrawn	Dismiss	-	-
C&S	Refused	Conviction affirmed - sentence varied	Conviction quashed - retrial	Conviction quashed - sentence in lieu	Struck out/withdrawn	Dismiss
Sentence (leniency)	Refused	Original sentence quashed - sentence in lieu	Struck out / withdrawn	Dismiss	-	-
DPP dismissal	Refused	Original order quashed	Dismiss	-	-	-
Miscarriage	Refused	Original order quashed	Dismiss	-	-	-

WAITING TIMES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2014

SUPREME COURT:

Waiting time	
<p>This is the time between the lodgment of the certificate of readiness and the hearing date. During 2014 waiting times were governed by the availability of court time, the number of priority cases and the degree of urgency necessitated by the circumstances of particular appeals. The waiting time was also affected by the fact that in addition to sittings in the Supreme Court judges of the Supreme Court were required to sit in the Court of Criminal Appeal. With the establishment of the Court of Appeal on 28th October 2014 appeals pending in the Court of Criminal Appeal which had not been fully or partly heard transferred to the Court of Appeal. There were 26 appeals which had been fully or partly heard in the Court of Criminal Appeal and remained to be determined by the Court of Criminal Appeal.</p> <p>During 2014 the Supreme Court continued to prioritise those appeals which necessitate an expedited hearing. The Chief Justice maintained a management list each Thursday at which she gave directions for the management of the hearing of appeals. Priority continued to be given to Child Abduction and Enforcement of Custody Orders Act, 1991 (Hague Convention) matters and European Arrest Warrant Act 2003 matters, with appeals case managed until their hearing.</p> <p>Application could also be made for priority in other matters where the particular circumstances dictated, including appeals in criminal matters, that might hold up a trial, and appeals from the High Court Commercial, Family Law or Asylum lists. Hearing dates were allocated, depending on the degree of urgency and the availability of dates.</p> <p>These arrangements will continue for the disposal of the legacy caseload of over 800 appeals retained by the Supreme Court following the transfer of certain appeals to the Court of Appeal pursuant to the direction of the Chief Justice given on 29th October 2014.</p>	
Priority list	12 months
General list	These appeals comprise the general waiting list. The average waiting time for appeals in this list during 2014 was 54 months.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL:

Waiting time	
The time from when an appeal is entered into the court list to the date of hearing	
Appeals	15 months

HIGH COURT: CRIME:

Waiting time		
Murder and rape trials (Central Criminal Court)	The time from the first listing of a case before the Central Criminal Court on return for trial from the District Court, to the trial date	18 months
Bail applications	The date from the issue of a notice of motion to the date the matter is first listed before the High Court	Date immediately available

HIGH COURT: CIVIL:

Personal injury

Waiting time: Dublin					
The High Court tries personal injury cases in Dublin every week during court sittings. Cases that are ready for hearing can obtain a date within four weeks					
Waiting time: Other venues					
Note: The High Court tries personal injury cases for a limited number of weeks in each of the venues below. The time from when a case is set down for trial to the date on which it is listed in the selected venue is shown below in months for each venue					
Cork	Dundalk	Galway	Kilkenny/Waterford	Limerick	Sligo
21 months	5 months	4 months	9 months	7 months	5 months

Insolvency (corporate)

Waiting time	
The time from the issue of a petition to the allocation of the first return date before the High Court	
Nature of application:	
Applications to appoint examiner	Date immediately available
Applications to wind up company	3 weeks

Other corporate applications

Waiting time	
The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the High Court	
Restrict directors (s. 150 Companies Act 1990)	4 weeks

Insolvency (personal)

Waiting time	
The time from the issue of a summons/petition to the first return date before the High Court	
Application to issue summons	Date immediately available
Application for adjudication	Date immediately available

Commercial list (proceedings defined in Order 63A Rule 1 Rules of the Superior Courts)

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Liberty to enter list (motion)	The time from the issue of a summons to the first return date before the High Court	Date immediately available
Full hearing	The time from the first return date to the date of the full hearing	1 week to 4 months depending on time required for hearing

Competition list

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Monday motion list	The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the High Court	Date immediately available

Chancery matters commenced by plenary summons or special summons (including injunction applications, company law matters, specific performance/rescission of contracts, administration of estates of deceased persons, trust actions)

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Monday motion list	The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the High Court	1 week
Hearing of certified cases	The time from when a case is certified ready for hearing to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court	3 months
Special summonses (Master's Court)	The time from the issue of a summons to the first return date before the Master of the High Court	3 weeks
Special summonses (High Court)	The time from the date of transfer from the Master's Court to the first return date before the High Court	3 weeks

Possession

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Special summons for possession	The time from the issue of a summons to the first return date before the Master of the High Court	3 weeks
Full hearing	The time from the date of transfer from the Master's Court to the first return date before the High Court	3 weeks

Mortgage suits

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Special summons for well charging order	The time from the issue of a summons to the first return date before the Master of the High Court	3 weeks
Full hearing	The time from the date of transfer from the Master's Court to the first return date before the High Court	3 weeks

European Order for Payment

Waiting time		
The time from receipt of application to making of order	Within 30 days (as required by Regulation 1896/2006)	

Non-jury (breach of contract, professional negligence, debt collection)

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Miscellaneous (motions that require more time than they can be given in the Monday list)	The time between listing in the common law list and hearing in the non jury list	15 weeks
Full hearing – cases less than one week in duration	The time from when a case is certified ready for hearing to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court	5 months
Full hearing – cases more than one week in duration	As above	9 months (3 months for parties willing to travel to Cork)

Appeals from the Circuit Court

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Full hearing – cases less than one week in duration	The time from the lodgement of the books of appeal to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court	5 months
Full hearing – cases more than one week in duration	As above	9 months (3 months for hearing in Cork)

Judicial review: asylum related

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Pre-leave	9 months	
Post-leave	4 months	

Judicial review: other

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Pre-leave	Application made <i>ex parte</i> on any Monday	
Post-leave	4 months	

Jury (defamation; false imprisonment; assault)

Waiting time		
The time from when a case is certified ready for hearing to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court	4 months	

Garda Compensation Act

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Special summons	The time from the issue of a summons to the first return date before the Master of the High Court	4 weeks
Full hearing	The time from the date of transfer from the Master's Court to the first return date before the High Court	4 weeks

Proceeds of Crime Act

Waiting time		
The time from receipt of application to hearing	Date immediately available	

Master's court

Nature of application	Waiting time	
Motions	The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the Master	3 weeks

Common law motions

Waiting time	
The time from the issue of a notice of motion to the first return date before the High Court	3 weeks

Family

Nature of application	Waiting time
Urgent applications	Within 3 weeks
Non-contested cases	Within 3 months
Contested cases	Within 3 months
Applications under Hague Luxembourg Convention	Case must be dealt with within 6 weeks
Appeals from Circuit Court	Within 3 months

CIRCUIT COURT: CRIME

Nature of matter	Waiting time
Trials	The time from receipt of return for trial to hearing date
Sentences	The time from receipt of return for trial to sentence hearing
Appeals	The time from receipt of District Court appeal to date of appeal hearing

CIRCUIT COURT: CIVIL

Nature of matter	Waiting time
Trials	The time from receipt of notice of trial to the listing for hearing
Appeals	The time from receipt of District Court appeal to date of appeal hearing

CIRCUIT COURT: FAMILY

Nature of matter	Waiting time
Cases	The time from receipt of notice of trial/notice of motion to the listing for hearing
Appeals	The time from receipt of District Court appeal to date of appeal hearing

CIRCUIT COURT

Waiting times are shown in months (unless otherwise stated).

	Criminal			Civil		Family law		
	Trials	Sentences	Appeals	Trials	Appeals	Contested	Non-contested	Appeals
Carlow	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	6	N.S.	N.S.
Carrick on Shannon	6	6	3	3-6	3-6	6	N.S.	N.S.
Castlebar	3-6	N.S.	9	6	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Cavan	9	N.S.	6	12	6	6	N.S.	N.S.
Clonmel	6-9	3-6	3-6	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Cork	N.S.	N.S.	3	3-6	3	3-6	N.S.	N.S.
Dublin	10	3	1	2	2	0.5-3 *	2 weeks	0.75
Dundalk	18-24	3-6	N.S.	18	N.S.	3-6	N.S.	3-6
Ennis	6	3	3	3-6	3	6	N.S.	6
Galway	7-9	3	2	3-6	3-6	3	2	2
Kilkenny	10	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Letterkenny	6-9	3-6	N.S.	12-18	12	6-9	N.S.	6-9
Limerick	3-6	3-6	N.S.	3-6	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Longford	6	3-6	N.S.	6-9	N.S.	3-6	N.S.	N.S.
Monaghan	18-24	6-12	3-6	6-9	3-6	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Mullingar	9-12	N.S.	N.S.	12-18	12-18	6-9	N.S.	3-6
Naas	12	N.S.	N.S.	6-9	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Portlaoise	6	6	3-6	9-12	3-6	3-6	N.S.	3-6
Roscommon	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Sligo	6	3	3	3-6	3	3	3	3
Tralee	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Trim	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Tullamore	6-18	3-6	N.S.	9-12	N.S.	6-12	N.S.	N.S.
Waterford	3-6	3-6	3	3-6	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Wexford	12	N.S.	6-12	6-12	N.S.	6-12	N.S.	3-6
Wicklow	12	N.S.	12	6-9	N.S.	6	6	6
* 3 months for a guaranteed priority hearing; 2 weeks for a possible hearing (if priority case settles or does not proceed) N.S. = Next Sitting of the Court Details of the sittings of the Circuit Court are available on the website of the Service (www.courts.ie)								

DISTRICT COURT: CRIME

Waiting time	
Summons:	The time from receipt of summons application to scheduled date for hearing
Charge sheets:	The time from receipt of charge sheet to first court date

DISTRICT COURT: CIVIL

Waiting time	
Applications:	The time from receipt of application to date of first court date

DISTRICT COURT: FAMILY

Waiting time	
Applications:	The time from receipt of application to date of first court date

DISTRICT COURT

Waiting times are show in weeks (unless otherwise stated).

Office	Criminal		Civil	Family Law	
	Summonses	Charge sheets	Applications	Domestic violence applications **	Maintenance / guardianship applications
Athlone	12-14	N.S. #	4-8	2	4
Ballina	15-20	N.S.	6-8	N.S.	N.S.
Bray	16	N.S.	8	1-3	3-6
Carlow	12	N.S.	8-12	12	12
Carrick-on-Shannon	12-15	N.S.	4-8	N.S.	N.S.
Castlebar	12	N.S.	12	N.S.	6
Cavan	16	N.S.	8	N.S.	14-18
Clonakilty	16	N.S.	2-4	2-4	2-4
Clonmel	14	N.S.	4-6	2-5	4-12
Cork	14	N.S.	6	6	16
Donegal	12	N.S.	4-6	N.S.	4
Dublin	s. 49 *: 16 other: 24	N.S.	4	12	12
Dundalk	14-18	N.S.	8-10	4-8	4-8
Ennis	12-15	N.S.	8-12	5	10
Galway	12	N.S.	16	1	4-8
Kilkenny	20-26	N.S.	4	2-4	4-8
Letterkenny	20-24	N.S.	16-20	5	20
Limerick	16-20	N.S.	8-10	8	8
Longford	12	N.S.	4	1	4
Loughrea	12	N.S.	4	N.S.	4
Mallow	12-15	N.S.	4-8	N.S.	N.S.
Monaghan	16	N.S.	8-10	N.S.	N.S.
Mullingar	15-16	N.S.	4-8	N.S.	4
Naas	12-16	N.S.	8-10	2-4	10-12
Nenagh	16	N.S.	6-8	N.S.	4
Portlaoise	14-18	N.S.	12-16	N.S.	8-10
Roscommon	12-15	N.S.	4	N.S.	N.S.
Sligo	12-15	N.S.	8-24	N.S.	N.S.
Tralee	8-12	N.S.	8	4	4
Trim	10-14	N.S.	6-8	4-8	6-8
Tullamore	12	N.S.	4	N.S.	4
Waterford	14	N.S.	4	8	8
Wexford	16	N.S.	6-8	N.S.	6-8
Youghal	12-14	N.S.	8-12	N.S.	N.S.
* Drink driving prosecutions ** urgent interim applications are dealt with immediately (that is on next sitting day in every District) # N.S. = next sitting Details of the sittings of the District Court are available on the website of the Service (www.courts.ie)					



CHAPTER 4 – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Service operates in accordance with best practice corporate governance principles in line with the Courts Service Act 1998 and where applicable the guidelines as set out in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (CPGSB).

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies published by the Department of Finance provides a framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non-commercial bodies.

Courts Service Board

The Service is governed by a Board consisting of a Chairperson and 17 other members. In accordance with the Courts Service Act, 1998 the term of office of the Board is three years. A new Board was established on 9th November 2014. The Board is responsible for determining the policies for the Service and for overseeing their implementation. It performs these functions directly and through the committees of the Board.

One of the functions of the Board is to prepare a Strategic Plan which is submitted to the Minister for Justice and Equality for approval. The Minister must lay the Plan, with or without amendments, before each House of the Oireachtas. The Board approved the Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2014 in October 2011 (which was subsequently approved by the Minister). In October 2014 the Board approved the Strategic Plan for the period 2014-2017 which has also been approved by the Minister.

The Strategic Plan 2014-2017 sets out the strategic direction for the Service and places continuing emphasis on the implementation of the transformation programme and ensuring value for money. It will be translated into detailed business work programmes through annual corporate business plans and unit business plans.

The Board reviews and monitors the implementation of Strategic Plan and approves an annual Corporate Business Plan to ensure a focussed approach to achieving the goals and objectives set out therein. The Corporate Business Plan 2014 was approved by the Board in December 2013, and the 2015 plan was approved in December 2014.

The Board receives regular reports from the Chief Executive Officer on the operation of the Service, the implementation of Board policy, and expenditure and budgetary matters. The Board also receives progress reports on the Action Plan of the Service under the Public Service Agreement and the implementation of the Haddington Road Agreement (which replaced the Public Service Agreement). In 2014 the Board received reports at its meetings in January, July, October and December. The Senior Management Team of the Service attended meetings where appropriate to brief the Board on relevant issues and deal with matters arising.

Other reports approved by the Board during 2014 included the Annual Report of the Service for 2013, the Annual Budget for the Service 2014 and 2015, the Corporate Risk Register 2014, the Annual Report of the Audit Committee and the Annual Return to the Minister for Justice and Equality under the CPGBS. The Board also received regular reports in relation to the implementation of risk management in the organisation and expenditure by the Service during the year.

The Board is responsible for the engagement of legal advisors, investment advisors, and fund managers. It approves proposals for contracts and arrangements including the acquisition or disposal of any interest in land or property with a value in excess of €5m, proposals for leases for periods in excess of four years and nine months irrespective of value, and proposals for contracts for consultancy in excess of €500,000. During 2014 the Board approved contracts, on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, relating to digital audio recording and the provision of managed services for information and communications technology. It also recommended proposals for revisions to court fees to the Minister for Justice and Equality. Standing Orders set out the operating procedures of the Board.

Standing items on the agenda for meetings of the Board include minutes of meetings and reports considered by committees of the Board, reports on expenditure and budgets, estimates and budgetary allocations, reports from the Chief Executive, reports from Chief Risk Officer and Head of Resource Management, and details of the contract register.

The Board held five meetings during 2014 with an overall attendance rate of 77%. The rate was affected by the fact that two nominations for the new Board had not been made as of December 2014.

Meetings of Committees of the Board	
Name of Committee	Number of meetings in 2014
Finance Committee	5
Audit Committee	3
Building Committee	5
Family Law Court Development Committee	5
Irish Sentencing Committee	1

An annual fee is payable to non judicial members of the Board (with the exception of the Chief Executive Officer) in the sum of €11,970 together with travel and subsistence expenses at rates sanctioned by the Department of Finance. In accordance with Department of Finance regulations, fees are not paid to Board members who are public servants.

Governance Framework

The Courts Service Act, 1998 (as amended) is the legislative basis for the establishment of the Service. A framework document approved by the Board defines the governance framework for the Service and sets out the functions of the Board, the Chief Executive, and the Committees of the Board. It also outlines the appropriate levels of authority and delegation arrangements. It defines the communication strategy between the Chief Executive and the Chief Justice and Presidents of the Courts, between the Service and the Minister for Justice and Equality and between the Service, the Public and the media.

Accountability

The Courts Service Act, 1998 provides that the Chief Executive Officer is the Accounting Officer for the Service and clearly defines the accountability framework in which the Service operates. This is supported by the governance framework and corporate governance arrangements within the Service.

The Service is accountable to the Minister for Justice and Equality, and through the Minister, to the Government. It is also accountable through the Chief Executive Officer as Accounting Officer to the Oireachtas under the Committee of Public Accounts of Dáil Éireann, and other committees of the Oireachtas. The Service must submit an annual Report and such other information as the Minister may require.

Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of policies approved by the Board, and the day-to-day management of the staff, administration and business of the Service. He prepares an annual budget for approval by both the Finance Committee and the Board with support from the Senior Management Team. He provides regular updates to the Board, the Finance Committee and other Committees of the Board in regard to the management of the Service, implementation of policy, progress on the strategic plan and the modernisation agenda of the Service.

In his capacity as a Board member and Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive provides an Annual Report in relation to the organisation's system of internal financial controls to the Minister for Justice and Equality confirming compliance across a range of headings. The Service thereby complies with the CPGSB and in particular affirms compliance with:

- appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, travel, procurement and asset disposals
- inclusion of a statement on the system of internal financial control
- adherence to Codes of Business Conduct for Directors and Employees
- compliance with Government guidelines on the payment of Directors' fees
- provision of a draft strategic plan to the relevant Minister prior to the plan being finalised and adopted by the Board.

As Accounting Officer the Chief Executive Officer is also responsible for the signing of the Annual Appropriation Account together with a Statement of Internal Financial Controls providing assurance on the internal financial control environment operating within the Service.

Appropriation Account

The Appropriation Account is the annual financial account of the Service and is furnished to the Comptroller and Auditor General on or before 31st March each year. It is compiled on foot of approved estimates by the Oireachtas and is prepared by the Chief Executive. An extract from the Appropriation Account 2014 submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General is on page 75.

For the purposes of the Appropriation Account the Chief Executive Officer is the Accounting Officer to whom the Minister for Finance has assigned responsibility, in accordance with section 22 of the Exchequer and Audit Department Act 1866, to prepare the annual account for the vote under his charge.

Internal Financial Control

The Board has overall responsibility for the internal financial control of the Service. It delegates responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of risk management and the internal control environment to the Audit Committee. The Committee receives regular reports from management, the Chief Risk Officer, internal audit, and external auditors. Such arrangements are designed to manage rather than eliminate the risks facing the Service. In the case of internal controls, systems can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control signed by the Chief Executive Officer for the purpose of the Appropriation Account addresses the internal control environment within the Service with particular regard to the financial control environment, the framework of administration, management reporting and internal control. It includes a statement of compliance with procurement guidelines and with circulars relating to the mandatory use of framework agreements and contracts.

Breaches of controls, in particular instances of fraud or irregularity, must be brought to the attention of the Comptroller and Auditor General in accordance with public financial procedures. The Service made a nil return in respect of such incidences in 2014. The Service has a policy statement on prevention and detection of fraud with all cases irrespective of value being reported to the Resource Management Directorate, the Senior Management Team, and the Audit Committee.

Budget Management

The Chief Executive Officer and the Senior Management Team prepare an annual budget based on the funding allocation contained in the annual estimates approved by the Oireachtas. The annual budget is recommended for approval by the Finance Committee to the Board. Day-to-day responsibility for managing expenditure within budget limits is assigned to Heads of Directorate. Budgets are monitored closely with monthly reports furnished to the Senior Management Team. Quarterly financial reports are submitted to the Finance Committee and the Board.

Audit Committee

The role of the Audit Committee is fundamental to ensuring that the Service operates according to good governance, accounting and auditing standards, and adopts appropriate risk management arrangements. The Committee's terms of reference are kept under review to ensure that they continue to reflect best practice and Audit Committee guidance.

The Committee focuses primarily on assisting the Board and the Chief Executive Officer fulfil their duties by providing an independent and objective review of the financial reporting and budgeting process, financial and operational risks (including overall risk management), effectiveness of internal controls and risk management, effectiveness of internal and external audit functions, adequacy of governance procedures, and value for money issues.

The Committee, which includes persons with significant business expertise and experience within the public, semi-state and private sectors, met three times during the year. The Audit Committee is supported by the Internal Audit function and reports annually to the Board.

Internal Audit Function

Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function charged with reviewing operations across all areas of the Service, as a service to the Board, the Audit Committee and to all levels of management. The Internal Audit Unit operates in accordance with an audit charter approved by the Board and an annual audit plan approved by the Chief Executive Officer and the Audit Committee. All audit reports are submitted directly to the Chief Executive Officer and to the Audit Committee who also receive periodic reports showing progress against the plan. The Unit completed 20 audits during the year.

Risk Management

Risk management continues to be promoted as a key tool for the management of risks facing the Service at both senior management and office level. The embedding of risk management across the organisation is an ongoing process. Risks are identified at corporate and business unit level and managed accordingly by assigning responsibility to the relevant directorate and office manager.

The risk management framework and policy of the Service is approved by the Board. It provides for a planned and systematic approach to identifying and managing a range of risk categories: financial, service delivery, infrastructure (buildings and ICT), people, compliance and governance, health and safety, and projects. The Chief Risk Officer is a member of the Senior Management Team and reports directly to the Audit Committee and the Board.

The Service maintains a Corporate Risk Register which is reviewed regularly by the Chief Executive Officer, Senior Management Team, Audit Committee and the Board. The Register is linked to the annual business planning process and is a key document in enabling the Service deal with challenges and risks. It sets out the major risks facing the Service together with existing controls and actions to mitigate them, and identifies owners and target dates for completion. It also provides the context through which Heads of Directorates prepare risk registers for their respective Directorates.

The Service undertook a staff risk management survey in October 2014 as part of an ongoing exercise to promote awareness of risk management and ensure that it is effectively applied. The survey assessed the major risks impacting on offices and the operation and effectiveness of risk management. The results were used to update the Corporate Risk Register for 2015.

Procurement

The Service operates under the Public Procurement Guidelines – Competitive Process which provides the direction for all procurement policy activity and ensures that the objectives and key principles of competition, and the equality of treatment and transparency which underpins national and EU rules are complied with.

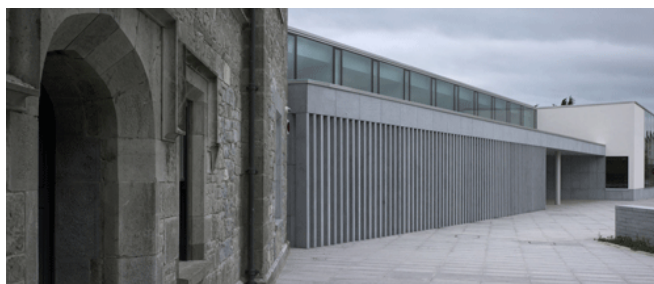
Responsibility for procurement is devolved to each Head of Directorate with the Resource Management Directorate taking a lead role in promoting awareness of obligations at both national and EU level. The Directorate provides training for staff, maintains a contract register and monitors the expenditure which is subject to the procurement process. The devolved nature of procurement in the Service requires that directorates and regional offices play a significant role in the procurement process. Roles and responsibilities have been compiled for budget holders as required.

Goods and services procured by the Service include ICT managed services and interpreting services. The Service avails of centralised managed contracts that have been put in place by the Office of Government Procurement including the provision of stationery and office supplies, managed print service and foreign travel. The Service continues to engage with the Office of Government Procurement for advice on current and future procurement requirements.

Non-compliance with procurement regulations is reported to the Comptroller and Auditor General in accordance with Circular 40/02: Public Procurement Guidelines. The matter is also referred to in the Annual Appropriation Account in the Statement of Internal Financial Control. There were seven such instances in 2014 compared with 10 in 2013.

Performance budgeting

The Service complies with the performance budgeting format which identifies key outputs, context and impact indicators for the Service. The performance budgeting targets for the Service for 2014 are set out in the Revised Estimates Volume for 2014.



CHAPTER 5 – ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Voted Funds	2014 €'000	2013 €'000
Current expenditure:		
Pay	47,139	49,012
Non-Pay	25,271	27,298
PPP	22,862	20,240
Total Current	95,272	96,550
Capital expenditure	10,127	8,097
Total gross expenditure	105,399	104,647
Income	48,797	46,838
Expenditure net of income	56,602	57,809

Court Funds	2014	2013
Funds managed on behalf of court, minors and other beneficiaries at 30th September	€1.473 billion	€1.293 billion

Financial Operations	2014 €'000	2013 €'000
Fines Collected	13,2431	13,754
Family law receipts	18,366	18,786
Bail Receipted	2,814	3,375
Court fees collected (and retained)*	44,302	42,165
Poor box receipted	1,696	1,995
Civil court and small claims receipts	230	659
Total	80,651	80,734
* excludes miscellaneous income and the pension levy		

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

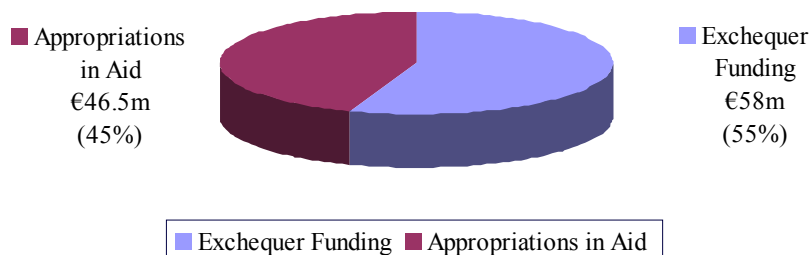
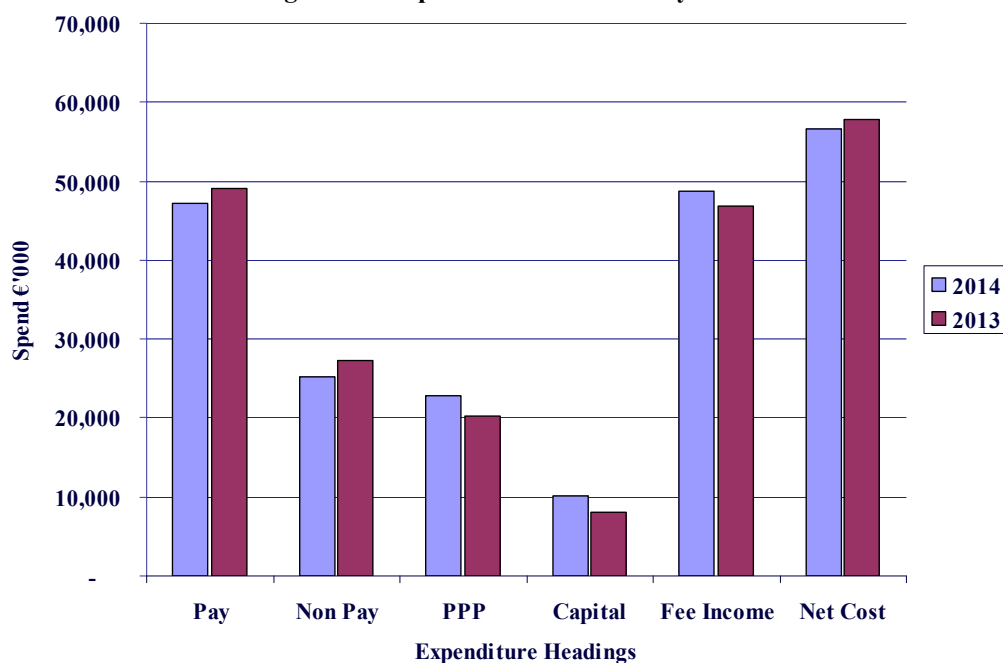
The achievement of a balanced budget in 2014 was particularly challenging following six consecutive years of budgetary cuts during which time there were significant reductions across all expenditure headings. Compared with 2008, non pay current expenditure reduced by €19.2m; payroll reduced by €10.7m and capital by €28.8m. At the same time fee income increased by €5m. The combined net effect of the funding reductions and increased income is a reduced net expenditure cost of €44.2m. to the Exchequer of operating the Service since 2008. The budgetary position for 2014 was further compounded by contractual commitments under the PPP contract for the Criminal Courts of Justice building and the need to provide additional funding to meet the annual indexation adjustment.

The net cost of running the Service in 2014 was €56.602m compared with €57.809m in 2013. Total current expenditure including payroll and non-pay (which includes PPP unitary payment for the Criminal Courts of Justice) was €95.27m compared with €96.55m in 2013, capital expenditure was €10.1m compared with €8.1m in 2013 and total income (including court fees receipts, miscellaneous income and pension levy) was €48.8m compared with €46.8m in 2013.

Funding for the Service is supplemented by courts fees receipts, miscellaneous income and a pension levy. Court fee income represented 42% of the cost of running the Service in 2014.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The Service is funded from two primary sources – direct Exchequer funding and *via* Appropriation in Aid (income) generated by the Service, primarily through court fees.

Diagram 1 : Sources of funding 2014 - total funding €104.5m**Diagram 2 : Expenditure/Income analysis: 2014 v 2013**

COURT FEES

Court fees are charged in respect of legal documents lodged and services provided in court offices.

The Service also collects fees on behalf of the Revenue Commissioners and the Property Registration Authority. The fees collected on behalf of the Revenue Commissioners include excise duties on certain licensing applications. The Property Registration Authority fees relate to access to documents held locally in court offices.

The additional fee income receipted in 2014 followed the coming into operation of new fees orders - District Court Fees Order 2015 (S.I. No. 22 of 2014), Circuit Court Fees Order (S.I. No. 23 of 2014) and Supreme Court and High Court Fees Order 2015 (S.I. No. 24 of 2014) - on 3rd February 2014, and changes in the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court and District Court.

Court fees	2014 (000's)	2013 (000's)
Retained by the Courts Service *	44,302	42,165
Revenue Commissioners	5,150	5,456
Property Registration Authority	2	2
Total	53,949	47,623
* Relates to court fees only.		

EXTRACT FROM APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT 2014**EXPENDITURE AND INCOME**

	2014 €'000	2013 €'000
Current Expenditure		
Salaries and wages	47,139	49,012
Travel and subsistence	2,912	2,881
Staff and judicial training	253	332
Stenography and other fees	2,861	3,120
Legal services	677	513
Postal services	1,150	1,199
Telecommunications	1,111	1,277
Office equipment and materials	579	460
Courthouse maintenance	6,288	7,359
Heat, light and fuel costs	2,852	3,041
Furniture and fittings	105	118
Leases	4,437	5,082
Consultancy (non I.T related)	76	67
Incidental/ miscellaneous costs	1,970	1,849
PPP – unitary payment	22,862	20,240
Total Current Expenditure	95,272	96,550
Capital Expenditure		
Computer and telecommunications systems	5,671	5,592
Courthouses and other buildings	4,456	2,505
Total Capital Expenditure	10,127	8,097
Total Gross Expenditure	105,399	104,647
Income (Appropriations - in - Aid)		
Fees	44,302	42,165
Miscellaneous	1,869	1,809
Pension levy	2,626	2,864
Total Income	48,797	46,838
Total Net Expenditure	56,602	57,809

Note: The figures are provisional and subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

PROMPT PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS ACT, 1997**Payment practices**

Prompt payment interest provides for the payment of interest to suppliers for invoices not paid within 30 days. The Service has procedures in place to ensure that all invoices are paid within the time limits identified on the invoices or, if no time limit is specified, within the statutory time limit. While the procedures have been designed to ensure compliance with the Act, they only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non compliance with the Act.

Prompt payment interest

Prompt payment interest and compensation is paid to suppliers in respect of invoices not paid within 30 days of receipt.

Late payments			
Year	Interest amount €	Compensation amount €	Total €
2014	695.98	3,920.00	4,615.98
2013	466.79	1,620.00	2,086.79

Prompt Payment Quarterly Returns by Government Departments 2014 Agency: Courts Service				
Quarter ended	% of overall total value paid within 30 days	Value of payments within 30 days	% no. of payments within 30 days	No. of payments within 30 days
March	98%	€9,203,888	98%	2,378
June	99%	€11,373,577	98%	2,265
September	98%	€10,714,040	98%	2,002
December	100%	€15,204,154	99%	2,443

15 day payment requirement

The Service makes every effort, consistent with proper financial procedures, to ensure that all suppliers are paid within 15 days.

Prompt Payment Quarterly Returns by Government Departments 2014 Agency: Courts Service				
Quarter ended	% of overall total value paid within 15 days	Value of payments within 15 days	% no. of payments within 15 days	No. of payments within 15 days
March	91%	€8,558,759	77%	1,875
June	78%	€9,007,534	81%	1,875
September	88%	€9,598,009	79%	1,612
December	91%	€13,885,707	78%	1,933

COURT FUNDS

The Service, in accordance with the Courts Service Act 1998, is responsible for the management and administration of the courts and the provision of support services for judges. It is in this capacity that the Service has a role in the management and investment of court funds, which are held in trust by the courts. These funds are invested in line with the provisions of the Trustee (Authorised Investments) Act, 1958 and subsequent orders.

As at the 30th September 2014, the total value of funds managed by the Accountant's Office was €1.473 billion (€1.293 billion, at 30th September 2013). The increase in the total value of funds by €180 million (14%) is attributable to a net increase from investment performance of €63 million for the year (€20 million in 2013) and a net increase in net capital transactions of €117 million (€84 million in 2013) (*i.e.* net excess receipts over disbursements).

Net assets under management by jurisdiction					
	at 30/09/2014	%	at 30/09/2013	%	% increase
High Court	€1,340,569,155	91.02%	€1,178,207,988	91.08%	13.78%
Circuit Court	€127,734,346	8.67%	€111,411,670	8.62%	14.65%
District Court	€4,604,242	0.31%	3,907,588	0.30%	17.83%
Total	€1,472,907,743	100%	€1,293,527,246	100%	13.87%

The Investment Committee, chaired by the President of the High Court, continued to monitor the investment performance of court funds and related matters and the Service continued to retain the services of independent investment advisors, fund managers and custodians.

At the beginning of the financial year, following advice from the investment advisors and approval by the Investment Committee, new investment strategies for the management and investment of court funds were established. The revised investment arrangements, take account of the ongoing modifications to investment strategies aimed at meeting requirements for the management of court funds.

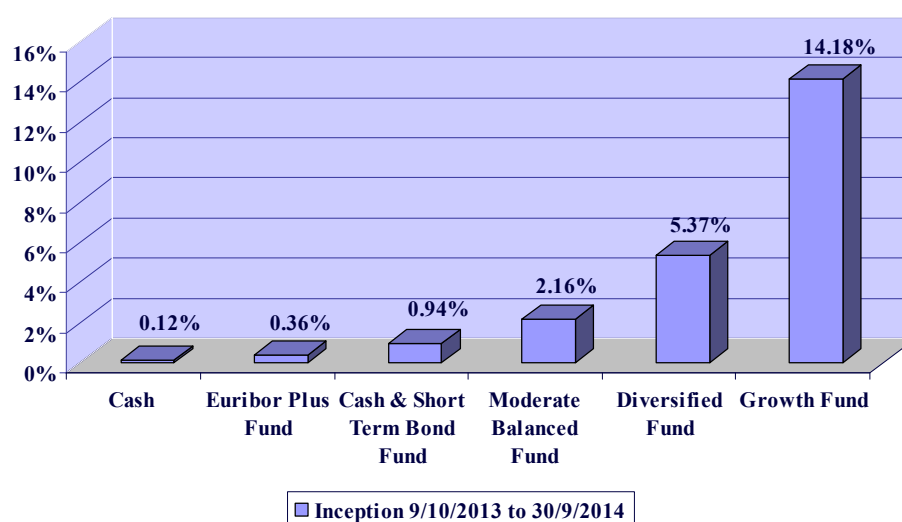
At the 30th September 2014 the Accountants Office was managing €1.473 billion in a fiduciary capacity on behalf of more than 18,500 beneficiaries. Of these beneficiaries 2,600 are persons who have been declared wards of court with funds valued at €950 million. A further 14,300 are minors with funds valued at €277 million. The remainder mostly consist of cases pending further court orders, residential redress board cases and 'lodgments with defence' case types.

During the year ended 30th September 2014, for many cases, the overriding investment objective, particularly for minors was 'capital preservation', in so far as that can be achieved in the current unprecedented extremely low interest rate environment. In other cases, in particular wards of court cases, the objective was to seek a higher return on behalf of beneficiaries where income generation was deemed appropriate. Actions taken by the European Central Bank, in the wake of the credit crisis and the Eurozone crisis has resulted in a situation where capital preservation, even in the lowest risk strategies, cannot be guaranteed. This is due to a flight to safety and recent ECB actions which have resulted in the safest of investments yielding practically zero and in some cases marginally negative returns. This is a global, industry-wide trend and not something unique to the investment of court funds.

Investment Performance

The table below shows the investment performance, net of fees, for all six strategies for the current financial year covering the period from inception 9th October 2013 to 30th September 2014. The net returns were as follows; Cash Fund (+0.12%), Euribor Plus Fund (+0.36%), Cash and Short Term Bond Fund (+0.94%), Moderate Balanced Fund (+2.16%), Diversified Fund (+5.37%), Growth Fund (+14.18%).

Spectrum Funds Annual Investment Performance (Net of Fees) to 30th Sept 2014



The Cash Fund generated a return of 0.12%, after management fees. When account is taken of the primary investment objective of capital preservation for this fund and the unprecedented low ECB interest rates, this return was in line with expectations. However, in seeking to enhance returns for minors' cases with medium to long term investment periods a number of new investment strategies were established to accommodate principally minors' funds with investment horizons of greater than one year. These funds performed in line with expectations. Returns for the Growth Fund for the year have been very robust at 14.18%, after deducting management fees.

Over the past ten years various modifications have been made to the investment strategies. In October 2013 a new set of investment strategies were established. As these do not align directly with the funds that existed prior to that, cumulative investment performance achieved between December 2003 and September

2013 is not shown in the table on page 77. In the case of the funds that are most comparable, the cumulative investment performance net of management fees, to September 2014 was as follows:

- Cash Plus Fund and the new Cash Fund (19.79%)
- Balanced Fund and the new Growth Fund (67.27%)

THE OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT OF THE COURTS OF JUSTICE

EXTRACT FROM THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2014

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2014

	30/09/2014	30/09/2013
	€	€
INVESTMENT ASSETS	1,440,915,855	1,271,780,807
Investments		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	20,007,981	12,410,315
Bank	13,153,958	10,026,894
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	33,161,939	22,437,209
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors	(1,170,051)	(690,770)
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	(1,170,051)	(690,770)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	31,991,888	21,746,439
TOTAL NET ASSETS	1,472,907,743	1,293,527,246
Represented by:		
Funds held for beneficiaries	1,472,907,743	1,293,527,246

The financial statements were approved by the Accountant on 23rd March 2015.

THE OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT OF THE COURTS OF JUSTICE**EXTRACT FROM THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2014****STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2014**

	30/09/2014	30/09/2013
	€	€
NET REALISED AND UNREALISED GAINS		
Net realised gains on investments disposed of during the year	7,091,927	6,706,512
Net change in unrealised gains on investments	58,996,549	15,475,183
Net losses realised on transfers of assets	(1,642,374)	(107,193)
NET REALISED AND CHANGE IN UNREALISED GAINS	64,446,102	22,074,502
Investment income	364,179	327,022
	64,810,281	22,401,524
Expenses	(2,093,030)	(2,023,576)
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS	62,717,251	20,377,948

The financial statements were approved by the Accountant on 23rd March 2015.

THE OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT OF THE COURTS OF JUSTICE

EXTRACT FROM THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2014

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2014

	30/09/2014	30/09/2013
	€	€
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS RESULTING FROM OPERATIONS		
Investment income less expenses	(1,728,851)	(1,696,554)
Net realised gains on investments	7,091,927	6,706,512
Net change in unrealised gains on investments	58,996,549	15,475,183
Net losses realised on transfers of assets	(1,642,374)	(107,193)
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS	62,717,251	20,377,948
CAPITAL TRANSACTIONS	462,345,001	566,174,586
Receipts		
Disbursements	(345,681,755)	(481,804,728)
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM CAPITAL TRANSACTIONS	116,663,246	84,369,858
Increase in net assets	179,380,497	104,747,806
Net assets at beginning of year	1,293,527,246	1,188,779,440
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	1,472,907,743	1,293,527,246

The Report and Financial Statements are available on the website of the Service at www.courts.ie.

COURTS ACCOUNTS OFFICE

The Courts Accounts Office operates as a shared services centre for the processing of all District Court financial transactions. In 2014 there were 566,753 receipts and payments transactions with a value of €173.4m, compared with 572,222 transactions valued at €172.5m in 2013.

Fines

The Service manages and receipts fines imposed by the courts. Court fines received are transferred to the Exchequer and a number of other government departments and agencies.

Court fines collected and transferred	2014 (€'000's)	2013 (€'000's)
Exchequer (motor fines)	6,889	6,807
Exchequer (general) *	4,234	4,879
Revenue Commissioners	1,885	1,761
Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	19	97
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	216	210
Total	13,243	13,754
* Includes monies transferred to the Exchequer in relation to unclaimed bail monies over 3 years old of €0.424k for 2014 and €0.452k for 2013		

Court fines collection rate	2014	2013
% fines collection rate	90%*	76%
% fines paid on-line (% volume)	35%	32%
* The fines collection rate for 2014 exceeded that for 2013 due to a once off adjustment.		

Family law

The Service processes family law payment for both maintenance debtors and creditors.

Family law: Receipts and Payments				
	2014		2013	
	€'000	Volume	€'000	Volume
Receipts	€18,305	224,088	€18,786	224,298
Payments	€18,359	219,801	€18,795	218,083

The Service continues to encourage users to avail of electronic funds transfer (EFT) as the preferred method of payment with 92% of family law maintenance creditors paid by EFT in 2014, and 72% of family law maintenance debtors making payment by standing order.

Family Law: Electronic Funds Transfer	2014	2013
% family law paid <i>via</i> electronic funds transfer (% volume)	92%	93%
% family law received <i>via</i> electronic funds transfer	72%	71%

Poor Box

The court may direct that money be paid into the court poor box in lieu of, or in conjunction with, another penalty. Payments can be made *via* the Service for onward payment to a charity as directed by the court.

	Balance at 01/01 €	Receipts €	Payments €	Balance at 31/12 €
District Court and combined court offices	880,284.75	1,696,692.68	2,182,060.50	394,916.93



CHAPTER 6 – REPORTS OF THE COURT RULES COMMITTEES

SUPERIOR COURTS RULES COMMITTEE

The Superior Courts Rules Committee was established by section 67 of the Courts of Justice Act 1936. Under section 68 of the 1936 Act the power to make, annul or alter rules of court is exercisable by the Committee with the concurrence of the Minister for Justice and Equality.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE AT YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2014

The Chief Justice, the Hon. Mrs Justice Susan Denham (Chairperson)
 The President of the Court of Appeal, the Hon. Mr Justice Sean Ryan (Vice Chairperson)
 The President of the High Court, the Hon. Mr Justice Nicholas Kearns
 The Hon. Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell, judge of the Supreme Court
 The Hon. Mr. Justice William McKechnie, judge of the Supreme Court
 The Hon. Mr. Justice Peter Kelly, judge of the Court of Appeal
 The Hon. Mr Justice Michael Peart, judge of the Court of Appeal
 The Hon. Mr. Justice Anthony Barr, judge of the High Court
 The Hon. Ms Justice Iseult O'Malley, judge of the High Court
 The Master of the High Court, Mr. Edmund W. Honohan S.C.
 Mr. Paul McGarry S.C., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
 Mr. Gerard Meehan B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
 Mr. Stuart Gilhooly, solicitor, nominated by the Council of the Law Society of Ireland
 Mr. Michael Kavanagh, solicitor, nominated by the Council of the Law Society of Ireland
 Mr. Noel Rubotham, Director of Reform and Development, Courts Service, to whom membership has been delegated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under Section 30(2) of the Courts Service Act 1998
 Ms. Mary Cummins, Office of the Chief State Solicitor – appointed to act in place of the Attorney General under Section 36(4) of the Courts and Court Officers Act 2002
 Mr. John Mahon, Registrar of the Supreme Court

Secretary: Ms. Liz Hughes, Directorate of Reform and Development, Courts Service

Drafting Services: Mr. Sean Barton of McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors

The Chief Justice welcomed three new members to the Committee following the establishment of the Court of Appeal on 28th October 2014, the Hon. Mr Justice Sean Ryan, President of the Court of Appeal and the Hon. Mr Justice Peter Kelly and the Hon. Mr Justice Michael Peart. Tribute was also paid to the Hon. Mr Justice John Edwards who stood down from the Committee on his elevation to the Court of Appeal.

The Committee met on 5 occasions during 2014. The following rules of the Superior Courts were signed by the Minister for Justice and Equality between the 1st January 2014 and the 31st December 2014:-

S.I. No.	Title	Date signed by Committee	Operative date
16 of 2014	RSC (Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013) 2014	24 October 2013	3 February 2014
277 of 2014	RSC (Services or Delivery by Post) 2014	24 October 2013	7 July 2014
278 of 2014	RSC (Provision of Transcripts of Sentencing Hearings) 2014	24 October 2013	7 July 2014
293 of 2014	RSC (Case Stated) 2014	24 October 2013	21 July 2014
485 of 2014	RSC (Court of Appeal Act 2014) 2014	9 October 2014	28 October 2014
539 of 2014	RSC (Supreme Court Forms) 2014	13 November 2014	24 November 2014
600 of 2014	RSC (Order 76) 2012	13 November 2014	31 December 2014

At year end the following rules signed by the Committee are awaiting the concurrence of the Minister:-

Title	Date signed by Committee
RSC (Bail Hearings) 2014	18 December 2014
RSC (Order 70A) 2014	18 December 2014
RSC (Judicial Review) 2014	18 December 2014
RSC (Personal Insolvency) 2014	18 December 2014

Rules relating to the following were under consideration by the Committee at year end:

- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Chancery and Non-Jury Actions: Pre-trial procedures)
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Conduct of Trials)
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Child Care)
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts in respect of Regulation (EU) No. 1215/2012 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (Brussels 1 recast)
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts in respect of Regulations (EC) No 883/2004 and (EC) No 987/2009 on the coordination of social security systems
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Recovery of Benefits and Assistance Scheme)

Liz Hughes
Secretary

CIRCUIT COURT RULES COMMITTEE

The rule-making authority for the Circuit Court is the Circuit Court Rules Committee established under section 69 of the Courts of Justice Act 1936. The remit of the Committee is fixed partly by section 66 of The Courts of Justice Act 1924 which empowers it to annul or alter rules and make new rules with the concurrence of the Minister for Justice and Equality, including rules for regulating the sessions, vacations and circuits of the Circuit Judges and the practice, pleading and procedure generally (including liability of parties as to costs and also the entering-up of judgement and granting of summary judgement in appropriate cases) of the Circuit Court and the use of the national language therein amongst other things.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE AT YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2014

The Hon. Mr. Justice Raymond Groarke President of the Circuit Court (Chairman)
 Her Honour Judge Alison Lindsay, judge of the Circuit Court
 Her Honour Judge Sarah Berkeley, judge of the Circuit Court
 Ms. Dervla Browne S.C., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
 Mr. David Dodd B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
 Mr. Gerard J. Doherty, solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
 Ms. Fiona Duffy Coady, solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
 Mr. Ronan Boylan, Office of the Chief State Solicitor – appointed to act in place of the Attorney General under Section 36(4) of the Courts and Court Officers Act 2002
 Mr. Noel Rubotham, Director of Reform and Development, Courts Service, to whom membership has been delegated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under Section 30(2) of the Courts Service Act 1998
 (Vacancy), County Registrar, Dublin
 Ms. Mairead Ahern, County Registrar, Louth, nominated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under Section 69(4)(d) of the Courts of Justice Act 1936 as amended.

Secretary: Ms. Liz Hughes, Directorate of Reform and Development, Courts Service

Drafting Services: Mr. Sean Barton of McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors

During the year the President welcomed to the Committee Her Honour Judge Sarah Berkeley to replace His Honour Judge Tony Hunt who ceased to be a member on his elevation to the High Court, and Ms. Mairead Ahern, County Registrar.

The Committee met on 4 occasions in 2014. The following rules of the Circuit Court were signed by the Minister for Justice and Equality between the 1st January 2014 and the 31st December 2014:

S.I. No.	Title	Date signed by Committee	Operative date
276 of 2014	Circuit Court Rules (Registered Post) 2014	25 November 2013	7 July 2014
284 of 2014	Circuit Court Rules (Examinership) 2014	28 April 2014	14 July 2014
408 of 2014	Circuit Court Rules (Family Law Reporting) 2014	24 February 2014	6 October 2014
410 of 2014	Circuit Court Rules (Provision of Transcripts of Sentencing Hearings) 2014	25 November 2013	6 October 2014
597 of 2014	Circuit Court Rules (Lugano Convention and Maintenance Regulation) 2014	25 November 2013	19 December 2014

At year end the following rules signed by the Committee were awaiting the concurrence of the Minister:-

- Circuit Court Rules (Sex Offenders Act 2001) 2014
- Circuit Court Rules (Criminal Law (Insanity) Act 2006) 2014
- Circuit Court Rules (Personal Insolvency) 2014

Rules relating to the following were under consideration by the Committee at year end:

- Circuit Court Rules (Possession) 2014
- Regulation (EU) No. 1215/2012 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (recast of 44/2001)

Liz Hughes
Secretary

DISTRICT COURT RULES COMMITTEE

The rule making authority for the District Court is the District Court Rules Committee established under section 71 of the Courts of Justice Act, 1936. The Committee may annul or alter rules and make new rules with the concurrence of the Minister for Justice and Equality.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE AT YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2014

The President of the District Court, Her Honour Judge Rosemary Horgan (Chairperson)

Judge Mary Devins, judge of the District Court

Judge Brian Sheridan, judge of the District Court

Judge Conal Gibbons, judge of the District Court

Judge Anne Watkin, judge of the District Court

Ms. Fiona Twomey, solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland

Mr. Shane McCarthy, solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland

Ms. Grainne Larkin, B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland

Mr. Roy Pearson, Chief State Solicitor's Office, appointed to act in place of the Attorney General under section 36(4) of the Courts and Court Officers Act, 2002

Mr. Noel A. Doherty, Directorate of Reform and Development, Courts Service, to whom membership has been delegated by the Chief Executive Officer under Section 30(2) of the Courts Service Act, 1998

Ms. Michelle Johnston, Deputy Chief Clerk, Dublin Metropolitan District Court

Secretary: Ms. Liz Hughes, Directorate of Reform and Development, Courts Service

Drafting Services: Mr. Sean Barton of McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors

The Committee met on 5 occasions during 2014. The following rules of the District Court were signed by the Minister for Justice and Equality between the 1st January 2014 and the 31st December 2014:

S.I. No.	Title	Date signed by Committee	Operative date
17 of 2014	District Court (Civil Procedure) Rules 2014	20 January 2014	3 February 2014
409 of 2014	District Court (Criminal Justice Act 2013) Rules 2014	24 February 2014	6 October 2014
596 of 2014	District Court (Forms) Rules 2014	24 February 2014	31 December 2014
598 of 2014	District Court (General) Rules 2014	26 May 2014	31 December 2014
599 of 2014	District Court (Personal Injuries) Rules 2014	26 May 2014	31 December 2014

At year end the following Rules signed by the Committee were awaiting the concurrence of the Minister:-

- District Court (Children) Rules 2014
- District Court (Child Care) Rules 2014
- District Court (Family Law Reporting) Rules 2014

Rules relating to the following were under consideration by the Committee at year end:

- District Court (Order 25) Rules 2014
- District Court (Jurisdiction and the Recognition and Enforcement of Judgments in Civil or Commercial Matters) Rules 2014
- Form of Probation Bond

Liz Hughes
Secretary



CHAPTER 7 – LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

The implementation of new legislative initiatives impacting on the range and type of criminal proceedings and civil actions which come before the courts can place significant demands on the resources of the Service. The Service is also impacted by procedural changes, such as alterations in jurisdiction or the manner in which remedies may be sought. These matters require the Service to constantly monitor the legislative landscape and plan for the potential impact on its work, particularly the work of court offices.

Legislative provisions with particular significance for the operation of the courts in 2014 included:

COURTS AND CIVIL LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT, 2013

Part 2 (sections 3 to 12) of this Act came into operation on 11th January 2014. These sections make provision for the reporting of family law matters and child care matters subject to certain restrictions.

Part 3 of the Act commenced on 3rd February 2014. This Part increased the monetary jurisdiction limit of the District Court to €15,000 and the monetary jurisdiction limit of the Circuit Court to €75,000 except in respect of personal injuries claims where the new limit is €60,000.

COURT OF APPEAL ACT, 2014

This Act was signed into law on 20th July 2014 following the outcome of the Referendum on the proposed Thirty-Third Amendment of the Constitution (Court of Appeal) Bill.

The Act provides, in pursuance of Article 34 of the Constitution, for the establishment of the Court of Appeal referred to in Article 34.2.ii of the Constitution. It specifies the jurisdiction of the court and provides, in relation to the court, for supplementary matters and judges and officers of the court.

It provides that the Supreme Court may, in certain circumstances, hear certain applications made to it in respect of decisions of the Court of Appeal or the High Court otherwise than with an oral hearing. It also provides that the Chief Justice or the President of the Court of Appeal may issue directions in relation to the conduct of appeals or applications made to the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeal, and makes provision in relation to the conduct of proceedings before those courts.

The Act came into operation on 28th October 2014.

FINES (PAYMENT AND RECOVERY) ACT, 2014

This Act, signed into law on 16th April 2014, provides for the payment and recovery of fines imposed on persons convicted of offences. The Act allows the payment of a fine by instalment where the fine exceeds €100 and it provides for a range of possible sanctions where a fine is unpaid, including attachment of earnings, the appointment of a receiver where the amount of a fine imposed on an individual exceeds €500, the making of a community service order, or, where none of the other sanctions are considered appropriate, the commitment to prison of the fined person.

The Act had not come into operation as of 31st December 2014.

PROTECTED DISCLOSURES ACT 2014

This Act, signed into law on 8th July 2014, makes provision for and in connection with the protection of persons from the taking of action against them in respect of the making of certain disclosures in the public interest and for connected purposes.

It came into operation on 15th July 2014.

COMPANIES ACT 2014

This Act, signed into law on 23rd December 2014, consolidates the Companies Acts 1963 to 2013.

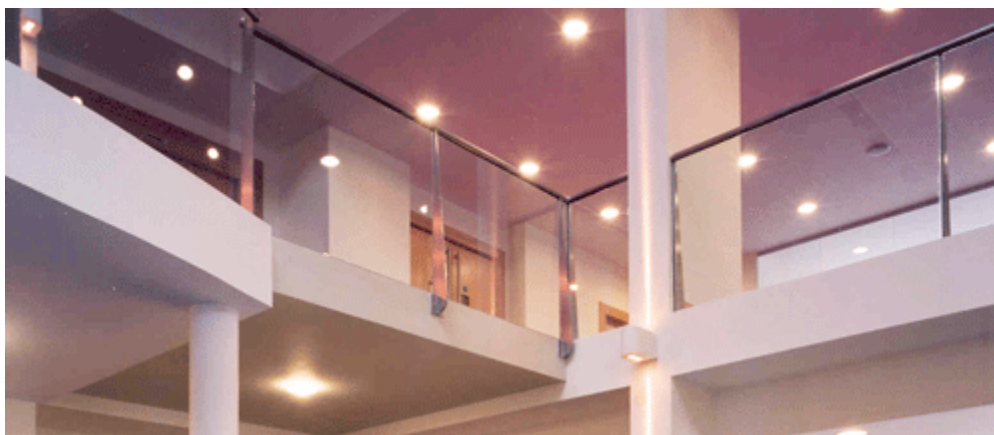
The Act had not come into operation as of 31st December 2014.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE (MUTUAL ASSISTANCE) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2014

This Bill is entitled an Act to give effect to:

- (i) Council Decision 2006/783/JHA of 6 October 2006 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to confiscation orders
- (ii) Council Framework Decision 2005/214/JHA of 24 February 2005 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to financial penalties
- (iii) Council Decision 2008/617/JHA of 23 June 2008 on the improvement of cooperation between special intervention units of the Member States of the European Union in crisis situations
- (iv) Council Decision 2009/426/JHA of 16 December 2008 on the strengthening of Eurojust and amending Decision 2002/187/JHA setting up Eurojust with a view to reinforcing the fight against serious crime
- (v) Council Decision 2010/616/EU of 7 October 2010 on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and Japan on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters
- (vi) to give further effect to Council Framework Decision 2009/299/JHA of 26 February 2009 amending Framework Decisions 2002/584/JHA, 2006/783/JHA, 2008/909/JHA and 2008/947/JHA, thereby enhancing the procedural rights of persons and fostering the application of the principle of mutual recognition to decisions rendered in the absence of the person concerned at the trial
- (vii) for those purposes, to amend the Criminal Justice (Mutual Assistance) Act 2008, the Criminal Justice Act 1994, the Criminal Justice (Joint Investigation Teams) Act 2004 and the Garda Síochána Act 2005.

Details of Statutory Instruments enacting Court Rules are in Chapter 6.



CHAPTER 8 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CONTACTING OFFICES OF THE SERVICE

Contact details for the main offices of the Service are on the website www.courts.ie.

Details may also be obtained from the Information Office, Courts Service, Phoenix House, 15/24 Phoenix Street North, Smithfield, Dublin 7. Telephone: 00 353 1 8886459.

EIRCOM TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

Telephone numbers for the main offices of the Service are in the green pages section of the Eircom telephone directories and online in eircom PhonebookOnline (www.eircomphonebook.ie) and www.goldenpages.ie.

OTHER INFORMATION

The Legal Diary with details of cases listed in the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the High Court (including the Central Criminal Court) and the Circuit Court is on the website. Annual reports of the Service together with strategic plans, customer service action plan, customer charter and other publications are on the website.

A Guide to the Courts Service published in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act is on the website. The Guide contains a general description of the structures of the Service, its functions, the services it provides to the public and how to access them together with a general description of the classes of records held. It also sets out the rules, procedures, guidelines and interpretations used by the Service.

WEBSITE

The website can be accessed at www.courts.ie. Users of mobile devices can access the provincial Legal Diary *via* m.courts.ie.

SOLICITORS

Matheson, solicitors,
70 Sir John Rogerson's Quay,
Dublin 2.

McCann FitzGerald, solicitors,
Riverside One,
Sir John Rogerson's Quay,
Dublin 2.

AUDITORS

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General,
Treasury Block,
Lower Yard,
Dublin Castle,
Dublin 2.
(*Appropriation Accounts*)

Grant Thornton,
Chartered Accountants,
24-26 City Quay,
Dublin 2
(*Financial Statements of the Office of the Accountant of the Courts of Justice*).



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service



The Courts Service
Phoenix House
15/24 Phoenix Street North
Smithfield
Dublin 7
Tel. +353 1 888 6000
Web. www.courts.ie