



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

Courts Service Annual Report 2024

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Cover image: Examples of our courtroom video enabled technology across the estate. This project expanded to 165 courtrooms in 2024. Our ICT team along with the Irish Prison Service were nominated and won an award for this work in the Digital First category at the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards.



Mission Statement

*To manage the courts,
support the judiciary and provide a
high quality and professional service
to all users of the courts.*



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

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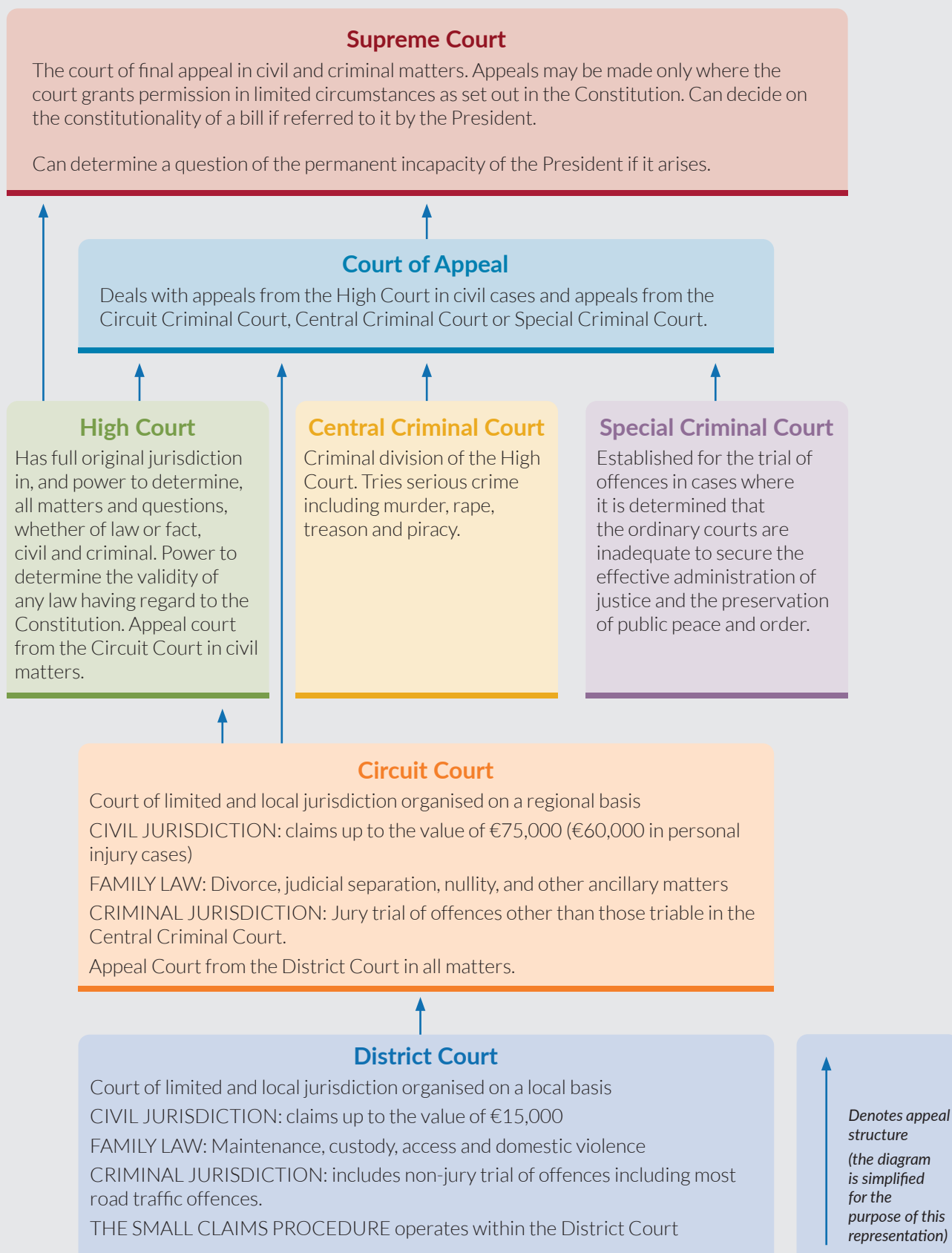
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Structure of the Courts





Foreword by the Chairperson of the Board, The Hon. Ms. Justice Elizabeth Dunne

I became Chair of the Courts Service in 2024, having been a member of the Board for a number of years and I was familiar with the diverse range of work across the Courts Service prior to taking on the role as a Chair. The pages of this Report certainly convey the breadth, depth and volume of work achieved by the Courts Service in 2024.

2024 was the first full calendar year of Judicial Planning Working Group (JPWG) recommendations. The potential for immediate and visible impact of the different recommendations depends on multiple factors such as the jurisdiction, the availability of Courts, Courts Service staff and resources, the practices of practitioners and court users. This Report provides evidence, in relation to the recommendations specifically for extra judges, and where those judges are supported by staff, resources and courtrooms, of increased cases and or reduced waiting/processing times. Further evidence of the efficiencies resulting from the appointment of additional judges includes the reduction of Courts being cancelled due to insufficient judicial resources. However, the Courts Service Board is aware, particularly in light of the feedback from the Healthy Place to Work survey, and from Executive and judicial members directly of the increased pressure placed on staff. The combination of new legislation, increased caseload, and extra judges as well as the ambitious Modernisation Programme of change is stretching the existing staff complement. The Courts Service Board commends the resilience of the staff to manage the extra workload in the absence of sufficient staffing resources.

In line with Chapter 4, recommendation 19 of the Judicial Planning Working Group Report, the five Court Presidents jointly developed the 'Irish Courts Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027' in 2024. This important plan, which outlines the strategic approach for each court jurisdiction, also contains an overarching framework for all jurisdictions. The Strategic Plan and the individual strategies which set out key objectives and priority actions, specific to each jurisdiction, are closely aligned with the Courts Service Modernisation Programme. There is particular alignment between both plans for improved data use.

In 2024, the Courts Service and the Judiciary made important progress in relation to data and the improved use of data. The work of the Courts Service data and data retention teams, over the past years, to improve and streamline the quality of the data provided the Judiciary and Executive with far more tangible, accessible and regular data-sets for the first full year in 2024. Although further improvements still need to be made, better quality of data and training on how to apply the data to the work of the Courts is aiding an improved collective understanding among the Judiciary and Courts Service Executive. Relevant data enables better decision making in terms of caseload and resource management for a more efficient courts system.

Other advancements towards achieving the goals of the Judicial Strategic Plan and the Courts Service Modernisation Programme welcomed this year included the completion of 165 video technology-enabled courtrooms. The availability of the video technology in courtrooms throughout the country provides

the Judiciary, practitioners and their clients, our justice sector partners, and vulnerable users with improved options to enable cases to get on and be heard. An important enabler for digital improvements is fast wireless internet access. In 2024 the Courts Service ICT team also improved the Wi-Fi availability in courthouses nationwide. The feedback from our justice sector partners on both the improved data and the video-technology enabled courtrooms demonstrates how the Courts approach to strategic modernisation is already having a positive impact on the wider sector.

The Rules of Court set out how court cases must be processed in a way that is consistent, efficient and fair to ensure justice is done properly and without undue delays. The Courts Service welcomes the adoption by the three jurisdictional Rules Committees of the Digital Rules by the end of 2024. The Digital Rules will underpin our future efforts to realise the benefits of modernisation as envisaged by the JPWG recommendations, and both the judicial and Courts Service Strategic Plans. The Digital Rules will support the provision of improved online and digital services to users in the coming months and years.

2024 was also the first full year of the new Courts Service Board and I would like to thank all members for their work and contribution. In particular, I would like to thank Mr. Justice George Birmingham, the President of the Court of Appeal who retired during the year, for his valuable contribution to the Board since 2018. I would like to welcome Ms. Justice Caroline Costello as the new President of the Court of Appeal. I would also like to mark the retirement of Her Honour Judge Alice Doyle and her valuable contribution to the Board since 2019. I welcome His Honour Judge Keenan Johnson, who replaced Judge Doyle, as the Circuit Court nominee to the Board. Indeed, I would like to thank all my judicial colleagues and the Courts Service staff for their work and continued dedication to serving the public both on the Board and on a number of sub-committees of the Board.



As Angela Denning remarks in her Introduction to Chapter 2, the size of change and modernisation being experienced across the courts system cannot be successfully achieved without direct engagement from all the justice sector partners. I would like to thank the legal profession, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Prison Service, the Probation Service, government and non-government agencies and civic society groups across the sector for their assistance, co-operation and support. The advancements we're making now and the attaching benefits into the future will not be possible without the continued support of the Minister and Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. On behalf of the Courts Service and the Board I would like to thank the Minister and the Department for their ongoing support and collaboration.

I commend this 2024 report to you as a comprehensive account of the work of the Courts Service and achievements towards realising an improved, modern court system for the benefit of all users.

Elizabeth Dunne
Judge of the Supreme Court
Chair of the Board of the Courts Service



1

About the Courts Service



About the Courts Service

The Courts Service is responsible for the administration and management of the courts in Ireland. Our primary functions are to manage the courts, provide support services to the Judiciary, provide information on the courts system to the public, and provide court buildings and facilities for court users. Our ancillary powers include acquiring, holding, and disposing of land, entering contracts, designating court venues, and making proposals to the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, for example, reform and development matters.

We are responsible for the management of all aspects of court activities (except for judicial functions which are a matter exclusively for the Judiciary). In fulfilling our functions our 1,300 people nationwide provide services in Civil, Criminal and Family Law to court users daily. These offices, supported by directorates, were established as part of our management structure, facilitate the work of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, Circuit Court and District Court.

The Courts Service Board

The Courts Service is governed by a Board consisting of a chairperson and 17 other members.

The Courts Service Act, 1998 provides that the Board should contain Judicial representatives from each court, a staff representative, a representative of the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration and representatives from the legal professions, trade unions and business world.

The Board considers and determines policy in relation to the Courts Service and oversees the implementation of that policy by the Chief Executive Officer. The Act provides that the Board consider the most beneficial, effective, and efficient use of organisation resources and how any policy or objective of the Government or Minister might affect or relate to the functions of the organisation.

The Act enables the Board to establish committees to advise on the performance of its functions. The Board also may appoint committee members who are not members

of the Board but have specialist knowledge and experience related to the purposes of the committee. Committees and their actions are subject to confirmation by the Board as deemed necessary. The committees of the Board as of 31 December 2024 were:

- Finance Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Family Law Court Development Committee
- Building Committee
- Modernisation Committee



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Membership of the Courts Service Board



The Hon. Ms Justice Elizabeth Dunne,
Judge of the Supreme Court
and Chairperson of the Board



The Hon. Ms Justice Caroline Costello,
President of the Court of
Appeal



The Hon. Mr Justice David Barniville,
President of the High Court



The Hon. Mr Justice Seamus Woulfe,
Elected by the ordinary
Judges of the Supreme Court



The Hon. Ms Justice Tara Burns,
Elected by the ordinary
Judges of the Court of Appeal



The Hon. Mr Justice Tony O Connor
Elected by the ordinary
Judges of the High Court



The Hon. Ms Justice Patricia Ryan
President of the Circuit Court



His Honour Judge Keenan Johnson
Elected by the ordinary
Judges of the Circuit Court



His Honour Judge Paul Kelly
President of the District
Court



Judge Alan Mitchell
Elected by the Judges of the District Court



Ms Angela Denning
Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service



Mr Sean Guerin
Nominee of the Bar Council



Mr Stuart Gilhooly
Nominee of the Law Society



Mr Derek Bunyan
Elected by the staff of the Courts Service



Ms Rachel Woods
Official of the Department of Justice nominated by the Minister



Ms Sarah Benson
Nominated by the Minister to represent consumers of the services provided by the Courts



Mr Owen Reidy,
General Secretary
Nominated by Irish Congress of Trade Unions



Mr Noel Beecher
Nominated by the Minister because of his relevant knowledge and experience in commerce, finance or administration



* The Hon. Ms. Justice Elizabeth Dunne replaced The Hon. Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell as Chair to the CSB on 8 April 2024..

* The Hon. Mr. Justice Seamus Woulfe replaced The Hon. Ms. Justice Elizabeth Dunne as Supreme Court nominee on 13 May 2024.

* His Honour Judge Keenan Johnson replaced Her Honour Judge Alice Doyle as Circuit Court nominee on 15 July 2024

* The Hon. Ms. Justice Caroline Costello replaced The Hon. Mr. Justice George Birmingham as President of the Court of Appeal on 3 October 2024.

* Mr. Sean Guerin, Chair, Bar Council replaced Ms. Sara Phelan 26 September 2024.

Committees of the Board (as of 31/12/2024)

Finance Committee

The Hon. Mr. Justice David Barnville, President of the High Court (Chair)

The Hon. Ms. Justice Caroline Costello, President of the Court of Appeal

The Hon. Ms. Justice Elizabeth Dunne, Judge of the Supreme Court

The Hon. Ms. Justice Patricia Ryan, President of the Circuit Court

His Honour Judge Paul Kelly, President of the District Court

Ms Angela Denning, Chief Executive of the Courts Service

Ms. Rachel Woods, Board member representing the Department of Justice

Mr. Noel Beecher, Board member representing commercial and financial interests

Ms Amelia Casey, External member

*The Hon. Ms. Justice Elizabeth Dunne replaced The Hon. Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell on the committee on 20 March 2024

*The Hon. Ms. Justice Caroline Costello replaced The Hon. Mr. Justice George Birmingham on the committee on 3 October 2024

* Mr. Justice David Barnville became Chairperson 21 October 2024



Audit and Risk Committee

Mr. Noel Beecher, Board member (representative of commercial and financial interests) – (Chair)

The Hon. Mr. Justice Senan Allen, Judge of the Court of Appeal

His Honour Judge Francis Comerford, Judge of the Circuit Court

Judge Alec Gabbett, Judge of the District Court

Ms. Rachel Woods, Board member representing the Department of Justice

Ms. Michelle Mc Greal, External Member with experience in Audit and Risk

Mr. Paul Spring, CIO, DPP.

*Mr. Paul Spring joined the committee 20th March 2024

Building Committee

The Hon. Ms. Justice Tara Burns, Judge of the Court of Appeal (Chair)

The Hon. Mr. Justice John Jordan, Judge of the High Court

His Honour Judge Brian O'Callaghan, Judge of the Circuit Court

Judge Brendan Toale, Judge of the District Court

Ms. Angela Denning, Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service

Mr Jack Nicholas, Nominee of the Chairman of the Bar Council

Mr. Ciaran O'Connor, representative of the Office of Public Works

Ms. Deirdre Browne BL who was nominated for the Bar Council

Ms. Helen Coughlan, The Law Society of Ireland

Ms. Maura Derivan, The Law Society of Ireland

Mr. Tom Ward, Assistant Secretary, Superior Courts Operations

Ms. Nina Brennan, Assistant Secretary, Circuit and District Operations

* Ms. Audrey Leonard retired from committee 21 March 2024

* Mr. Tom Ward joined the committee on 15 May 2024.

* Ms. Nina Brennan replaced Ms. Audrey Leonard on 16 October 2024

* Ms. Helen Coughlan and Ms. Maura Derivan joined the committee on 21 March 2024



Family Law Court Development Committee

Ms Sarah Benson, member of the Courts Service Board (Chair)
Her Honour Judge Elizabeth Maguire, Judge of the Circuit Court
Her Honour Judge Sinéad Ní Chúlacháin, Judge of the Circuit Court
Ms. Deirdre Browne BL, The Bar of Ireland
Mr. Peter Doyle, The Law Society of Ireland.
Ms. Jennifer Clancy, Courts Service, Head of Family Law Reform.
Mr. Tom Ward, Assistant Secretary, Superior Courts Operations
Ms. Rita Considine, County Registrar
Judge Carol Ann Coolican, Judge of the District Court
Judge Máire Conneely, Judge of the District Court
The Hon. Mr. Justice John Jordan, Judge of the High Court.
Ms. Emily Sherlock, Legal Aid Board.
Ms. Karen Kiernan, CEO, One Family.
Mr. Derek Bunyan, Courts Service representative on Courts Service Board

* Three new members of the Committee were formally approved by the Board on 9 December 2024:
 Ms. Nina Brennan, who replaced Audrey Leonard
 Her Honour Judge Elizabeth Maguire, who replaced Her Honour Judge Alice Doyle
 Ms. Jennifer Clancy, who replaced Mr Stephen Owens

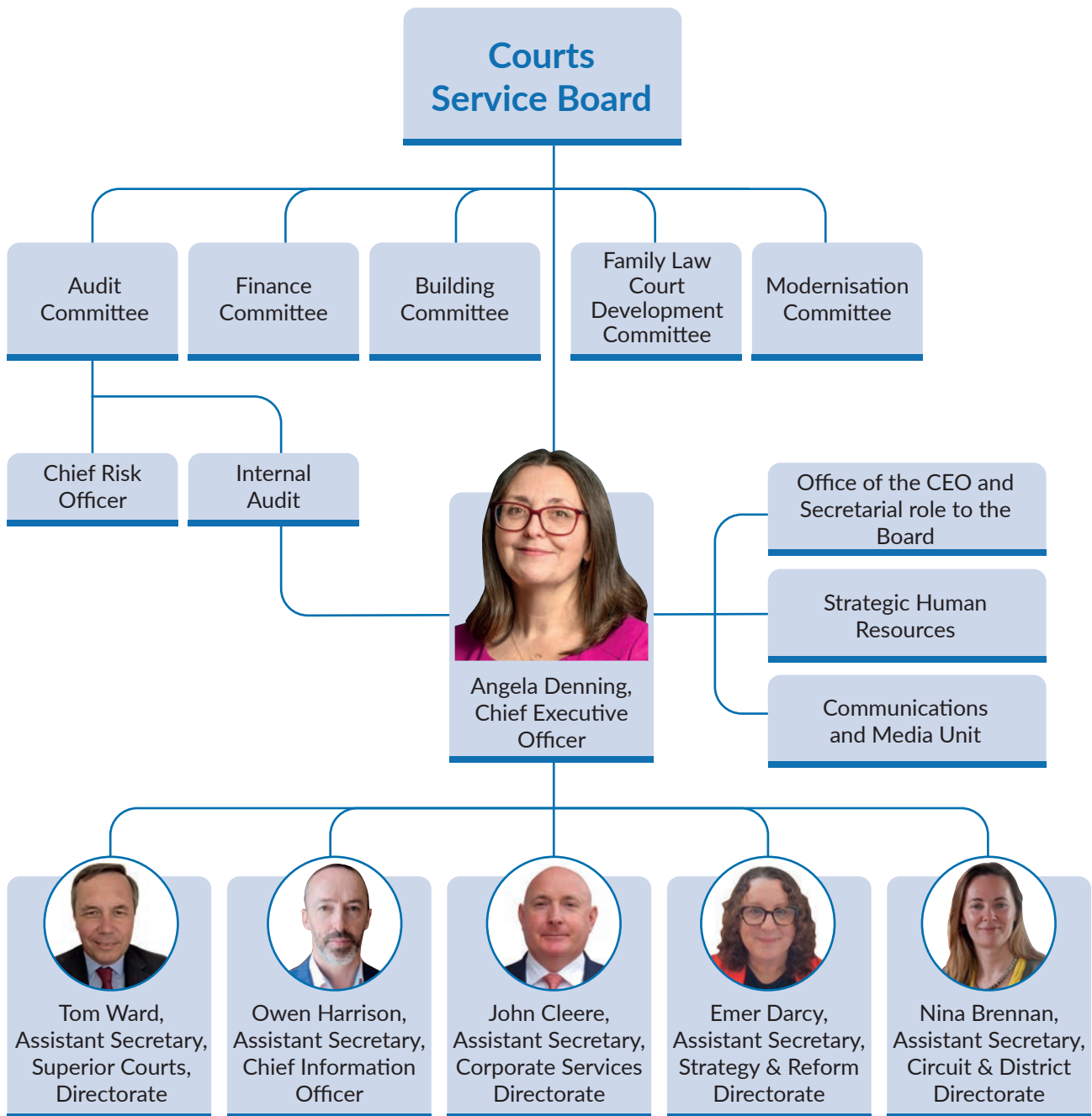
Modernisation Committee of the Courts Service Board

The Hon. Ms. Justice Elizabeth Dunne (Chair)
His Honour Judge Colin Daly, Judge of the Circuit Court
Mr. Michael Quinlan, Legal Practitioner Representative
Ms. Catherine Treacy, Former CEO of the Property Registration Authority
Ms. Louise Jevens, Chief Information Office, Department of Justice
The Hon. Mr. Justice Liam Kennedy, Judge of the High Court
Ms. Angela Denning, Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service.

* The Hon. Ms. Justice Elizabeth Dunne replaced The Hon. Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell on the committee on 1 May 2024.



Organisation Structure



Emer Darcy assumed the role of Assistant Secretary for Strategy and Reform in September 2024, following a period of acting up.

Nina Brennan became Assistant Secretary for the Circuit and District Directorate in September 2024, following the retirement of Audrey Leonard.



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 Courts Service and is also the Accounting Officer for the Courts Service.

The Chief Executive Officer is supported by the Senior Management Team comprising Assistant Secretaries with responsibility for Superior Courts, Circuit and District Courts, Strategy and Reform, Corporate Services, the Chief Information Officer. Together with the Head of Strategic Human Resources, a Representative of the Principal Officers and the Principal Officer in the Office of the CEO and Communications.

Organisation structure

The Courts Service is a largely decentralised organisation with administrative responsibility for courthouses and court venues throughout Ireland.

In Dublin, court offices support the work of the

Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, Dublin Circuit Court and Dublin Metropolitan District Court in the Four Courts, Criminal Courts of Justice, Dolphin House, Swords, Dun Laoghaire and Cloverhill.

Outside of Dublin, 25 court offices support the work of both the Circuit Court and the District Court, and 8 offices support the work of the District Court only.

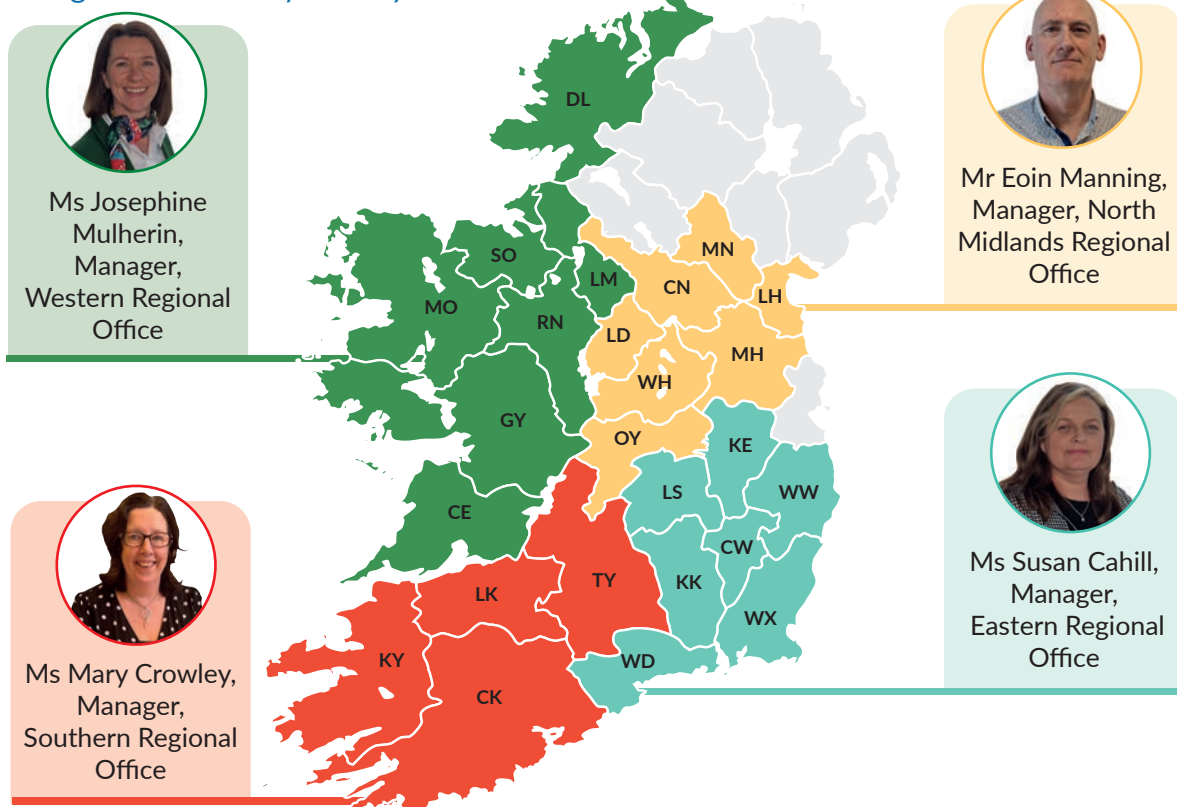
The Southern Regional Office includes the administrative area of counties: Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, and Kerry.

The Eastern Regional Office includes the administrative area of counties: Kildare, Wicklow, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Laois, and Waterford.

The Western Regional Office includes the administrative area of counties: Mayo, Galway, Clare, Sligo, Roscommon, Donegal, and Leitrim.

The North Midlands Regional Office includes the administrative area of counties: Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Westmeath, Offaly, Longford, and Cavan.

Regional Offices by County



2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030



2

The Year
in Review



Introduction by Angela Denning Chief Executive Officer



2024 was another very productive year. In addition to our Modernisation Programme of change, our staff met the challenges presented by new legislation. As well as working hard with additional judges to improve waiting or processing times across jurisdictions.

In this Report you will read how the work generating from the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (ADMC) Act 2015, which commenced in April the previous year, continued at pace in 2024. New legislation impacts Courts and court offices, providing challenges for staff as they, the Judiciary, legal practitioners and other court users get used to new practices and procedures. Such complex legislation is particularly challenging when the demand is strong from commencement, for example with the Civil Orders against Relevant Conduct (commonly known as Stalking or Restraining Orders), introduced in September 2024.

The dedication and resilience of our staff is a continual source of pride for me as Chief Executive Officer. In 2024, an example of how the organisation worked together was demonstrated when teams across many areas ensured that the year-long aircraft leasing case was accommodated and professionally supported throughout. The fact that the Commercial List and the work of the Court of Appeal was able to continue uninterrupted during a year-long case involving 33 interim appeals is testament to the extra judges recommended by the Judicial Planning Working Group and resilience of our staff. Achieving such stability is very important for Commercial litigation in this country.

At the end of 2024 we had achieved the first four years of our decade of modernisation and the potential of the transformation was becoming evident. Justice sector colleagues started to experience benefits in terms of improved data-sets, operational efficiencies afforded by 165

technology-enabled courtrooms, and improved information for users. Another source of pride, last year, was the Family Law Reform team winning a Civil Service Innovation and Excellence award for the comprehensive plain language family law information on courts.ie.

Developed with the user, for the user this information project won for "Citizen Impact and Customer Service." Using the same approach, the Family Law Reform team moved their focus to District Court Family Law forms. The forms which were trialled in 2024 received positive feedback from users. 60% of users reported that they were able to complete the forms themselves without having to retell, often traumatic stories, to Courts Service staff. This project is going live nationwide in 2025 for all users.

Improving resources is only one part of the transformation for users. In Chapter 2 we detail the modernisation advancements made in 2024. You can read how we further rolled out the unified case management system (UCMS) to include Circuit Court Family Law in 2024. This back-office UCMS, allowed the introduction of the Portal for legal practitioners to lodge applications and other filings online. Introduced as a 'pilot' or trial project in 2024, the Portal is being upgraded and improved in consultation with users. Further incremental rollout of the Portal to other Circuit Court Family Law areas across the country is happening in 2025. It is very much a partnership approach enabling us to build as we progress based on feedback from the Judiciary, legal practitioners and NGOs, representative organisations.

Just as we're putting the user at the centre of external facing transformation, we're placing the staff user at the centre of our internal



transformation. Modernisation in the Courts Service means 'Better Ways of Working'. We started by improving the tools staff need to do their jobs by providing modern laptops to everyone supported by the Microsoft suite of products. This enabled the introduction of the unified case management system which, by end of 2024, had been rolled out across all Circuit Court Family Law offices and had replaced 27 of the 150 legacy systems. Standardised and consistent tools, and systems enables staff to transfer more easily from one team to another within the organisation, minimising disruption.

Improved systems are only as good as the data inputted into them. In 2024, the data team continued the work to improve our data quality so as to better collate and coordinate data collection for analysis. The Data Retention team introduced a data retention portal and data management tools to enable staff to efficiently manage records and meet our obligations under the National Archives Act effectively. Our work is data-heavy, whether that's across the reducing 150 legacy systems or the physical hard copy files in every office. Teams made huge efforts, during a pressurised year, to better manage data as well as developing a healthier, safer, and more organised approach to data retention in the workplace.

To really embrace "Better ways of working", we introduced Healthy Place to Work a number of years ago. This is enabling us to better understand from colleagues how we can improve. In 2024 almost 80% of staff completed the Healthy Place to Work survey, I would like to thank staff for taking the time to complete the survey and for their honesty in providing feedback. We have been listening and in response to the feedback training initiatives were prioritised in 2024 and that will continue in 2025. The Senior Management Team are determined that staff are provided with the tools, skills and training to help grow confidence in their work. We are equally dedicated to making the Courts Service a place where people can come to work as themselves and can work together to make the organisation better for colleagues, for the Judiciary and for our users. We can't do everything at once, but we can try to improve year-on-year.



Improved systems are only as good as the data inputted into them. In 2024, the data team continued the work to improve our data quality so as to better collate and coordinate data collection for analysis.

The roles in the Courts Service, by their nature, from Clerical Officer to Principal Officer tend to have quite technical elements, many talk about the steep learning curve on joining and the value of years of service in role to offices and colleagues. In 2024, we marked 25 years of the Courts Service and celebrated the 300+ staff who have worked in the Courts Service and/or Government for 25 years or more. I am proud to say the idea to provide an award to everyone with 25 years of service or more was inspired by one of our Clerical Officers on reaching their significant work anniversary.

We thank all those who have provided great service to the organisation over the years. As well as welcoming our new joiners, we are working hard to empower those, who want to, to stay with us for many years to come.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the engagement of the Judiciary, our partners across the justice sector and Government as well as our users. Never before have we asked for support, feedback and engagement from so many. Without your engagement we cannot transform our information and services with users for users. And yet we have only just begun. In 2025, modernisation promises to bring more tangible benefits for the user and a courts system of which we can all be proud - and for that we will need your continued support.

Angela Denning
Chief Executive Officer
The Courts Service



About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of Courts Service operations across all jurisdictions, specifically highlighting trends and the evolving nature of our work as we progress on our Modernisation Programme journey.

At the end of the chapter, we report on our target activities for 2024. These activities are aligned to our strategic goals from our Corporate Strategic Plan, which supports overall delivery of our Strategic Vision 2030.

Judicial Planning Working Group

One of the recommendations of The Judicial Planning Working Group (JPWG) in 2023 was that consideration should be given to staggering the so-called long vacation of August and September. The JPWG recommended that some judges sit as normal from October to end-July, and that some sit from September to end-June. A pilot project was recommended as an initial step.

The pilot project in the High Court was undertaken in the long vacation in 2024. It covered three High Court lists – Family, Non-Jury/Judicial Review/Asylum and Immigration and Planning and Environment and included five High Court judges. Overall, the feedback from the judges, registrars and practitioners was broadly positive. While not necessarily leading to any increase in the volume of work dealt with in those lists, it did lead to a greater and more efficient and effective use of courtroom and other resources in September 2024, and led to some relief of the pressure on those resources in July 2024. It was also felt to contribute positively to work-life-family balance for some of the judges, registrars, court staff and practitioners.

Based on a review of the operation of the pilot, the President of the High Court has decided there should be a further pilot project for the long vacation in 2025.

Court Operations

Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, 2015

The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 (ADMC) came into effect on 26 April 2023, establishing a new legal framework for supported decision-making in Ireland. It allows people to make legal agreements on how they can be supported to make decisions about their personal welfare, property, and affairs. The Act introduced new arrangements to replace the Wards of Courts system for adults.

The Circuit Court is now the Court with responsibility to hear applications when there are serious questions of decision-making capacity in respect of individuals. When a Court decides a person lacks capacity, it can make orders to support them. These cases are not one-off hearings and must be reviewed in Court regularly.

Even after being in operation for over 18 months, this remains a relatively new area of law which is a challenge to court offices, the Judiciary, legal practitioners, and other court users, as complex legislation takes time to bed in and develop recognised practices and procedures.

Activity grew quarter-on-quarter from April 2023 and is expected to continue to do so for some years to come.



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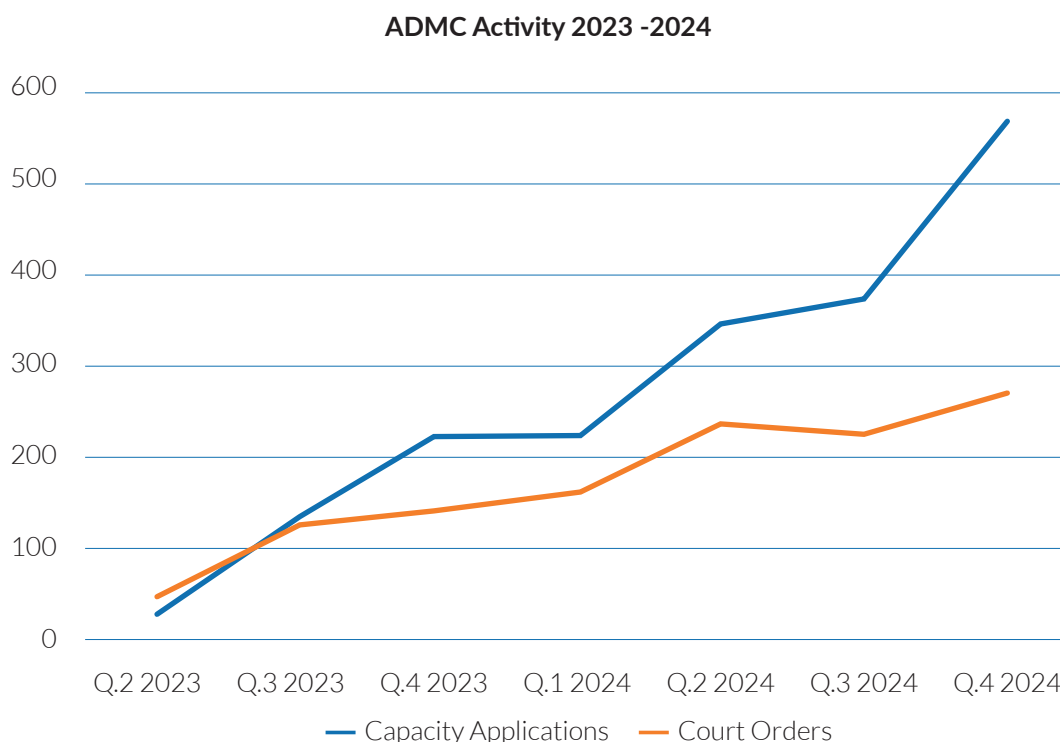


Figure 1: Assisted Decision-making Capacity activity profile 2023 - 2024

A dedicated area on our website courts.ie has been established to provide information to all court users about the Act. This includes general information, contact details for queries, and application forms to use when applying to Court. Court forms have been designed with a user-centric approach to make complex legal applications as straightforward as possible, while recognising all requirements of the legislation.

Discharge from Wardship

Efforts continued by the Offices of Wards of Court and the General Solicitor to promote the process of discharging Adults from Wardship in advance of the deadline set by the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 of 26 April 2026. During 2024, the offices sought to engage with the Committees of Wards and Wards themselves on the discharge process. There was an extensive communications campaign with committees throughout the year, as well as an information series for legal

practitioners in February 2024.

Despite this, only 386 applications for discharge from wardship were received by year-end (82 in 2023 and 304 in 2024), the majority of which have brought by the Office of the General Solicitor. As of year-end, the total number of adult wardship cases on hand was 1,877 declared Adult Wards of Court. 98 Wards of Court have been discharged from Wardship to date while 160 of the 386 discharge applications have been made by the Office of the General Solicitor. In addition, the office continues to manage 192 Minor cases and 569 deceased cases (cases of deceased persons for whom paperwork is being finalised and as a result, the cases are yet to be closed) which are pending dismissal.

New applications under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court, for people who previously would have been Wards of Court



The removal of the Wardship Regime brought new challenges, particularly for those who were supporting people who needed to be detained and provided with medical treatment for their own protection and welfare. These include new applications for people who require the Court's assistance, in addition to existing Wards of Court who have changing detention and treatment needs. As well as people who have been discharged from Wardship but still require detention as part of their care and treatment plan.

As a means of facilitating the lawful detention of a person, a new type of application was made to the High Court, under that Court's inherent jurisdiction, from May 2023 onwards coinciding with the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015.

The requirement for these applications increased during 2024 and following the making of a new Practice Direction (HC128), the Inherent Jurisdiction (Capacity) List was established as a separate list in its own right with effect from October 2024. There were 225 new cases commenced of this type in 2024 with 1088 orders made by year-end. During the initiating application, preliminary orders were made which included the appointment of a Guardian ad Litem.

Detention and care orders are reviewed at regular intervals as set by the Court and depending on the circumstances and requirements of the person involved. For many people involved, the detention was only required for a short period of time, until they recovered and were then discharged from their detention and the Court's care. For people requiring long term detention and care, regular reviews were established to align with those contained in the Mental Health Acts and depending on the issues affecting the person involved. A set review date, together with liberty to apply to the Court in the event of a change of circumstances, is always included in all orders made in this list.

Data on this new list will be presented as part of the full data-sets in 2025.

Civil Orders against Relevant Conduct (commonly known as Stalking or Restraining Orders)

Part 5 of the Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2023 commenced in September 2024. This legislation provides a remedy for applicants similar to those available in domestic violence cases. Section 27 defines relevant conduct that can lead to a Court imposing an order under Section 28, prohibiting a respondent from doing any or all of the following:

- a) using, or threatening to use, violence against, molesting or putting in fear the person;
- b) following or communicating by any means with or about the person;
- c) approaching, within such distance as the Court shall specify, the place of residence, education or employment of the person;
- d) engaging in such other forms of relevant conduct as the Court specifies.

There has been demand for this application since it became available. In the first four months of operations, District Courts saw the following activity:

- 314 applications have been received.
- 133 full restraining orders were granted.
- 107 interim orders were granted.
- 11 appeals have been lodged.
- 3 prosecutions for a breach of a restraining order were commenced.

Awareness of the availability of this civil remedy is growing and it is expected that this will lead to increased applications. New types of applications usually cause issues initially and are slow to be processed. This is because the court offices, judges, legal professionals and other stakeholders need time to understand the new law, practice and procedure. This is currently the case for Restraining/Stalking Orders.

Trends in the Criminal Courts

Positive progress was made across all criminal jurisdictions during 2024.

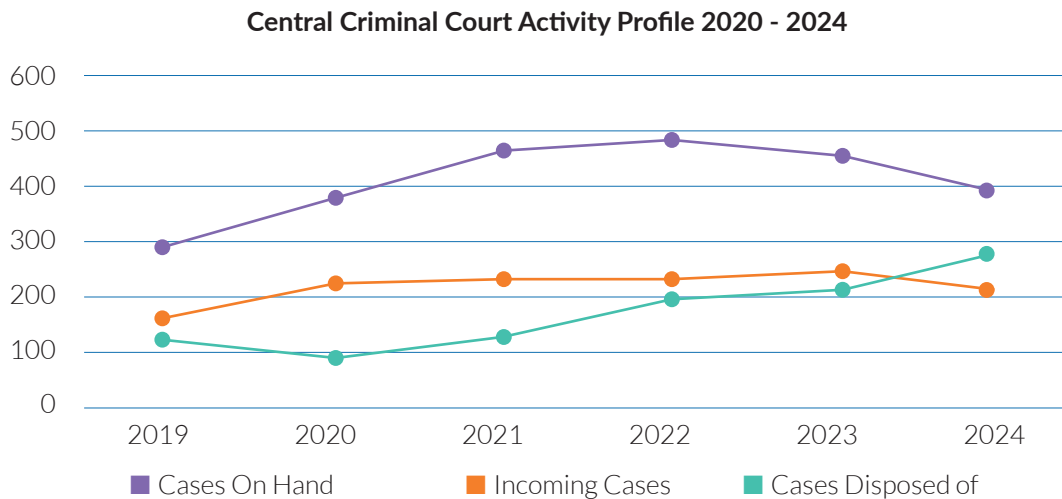


Figure 2: Central Criminal Court activity profile 2019 - 2024

The Central Criminal Courts saw a decrease of 16% in cases-on-hand. New cases also decreased (-10%) while matters disposed of increased by 24%. This trend continues a positive pattern of reducing numbers of cases waiting to be dealt with by Court. Cases-on-hand remains 35% higher than pre-pandemic levels and the volume of new cases is 40% higher even with last year's reduction. With additional judges from the implementation of Judicial Planning Working Group recommendations, the disposal rate jumped by 73% over 2019 figures.

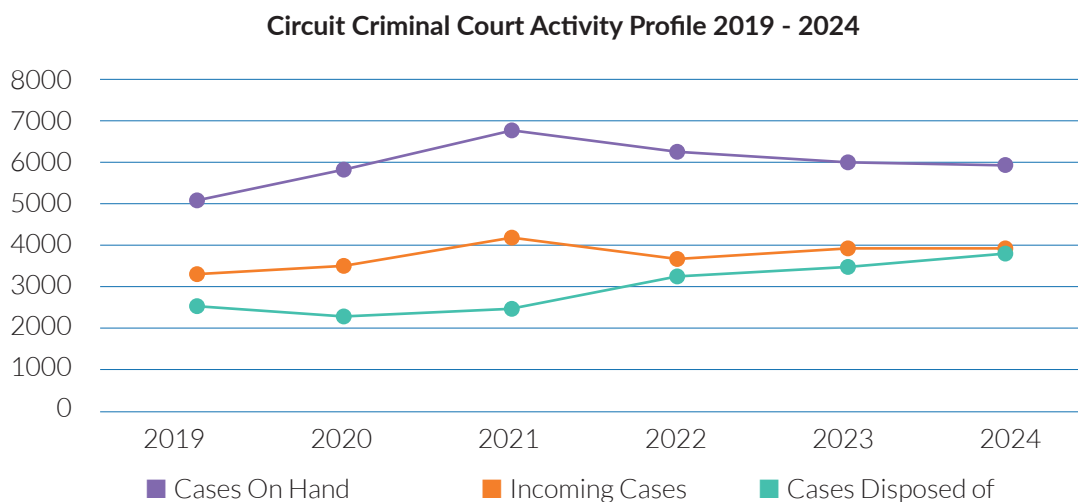


Figure 3: Circuit Criminal Court activity profile 2019 - 2024

The Circuit Criminal Court continued to make progress dealing with cases on hand, which decreased by 3% in 2024. New cases decreased marginally (-1%) while cases disposed of increased by 10%. As with the Central Criminal Court, positive progress is being made to reduce the number of cases on hand, but it is still 20% higher than 2019.

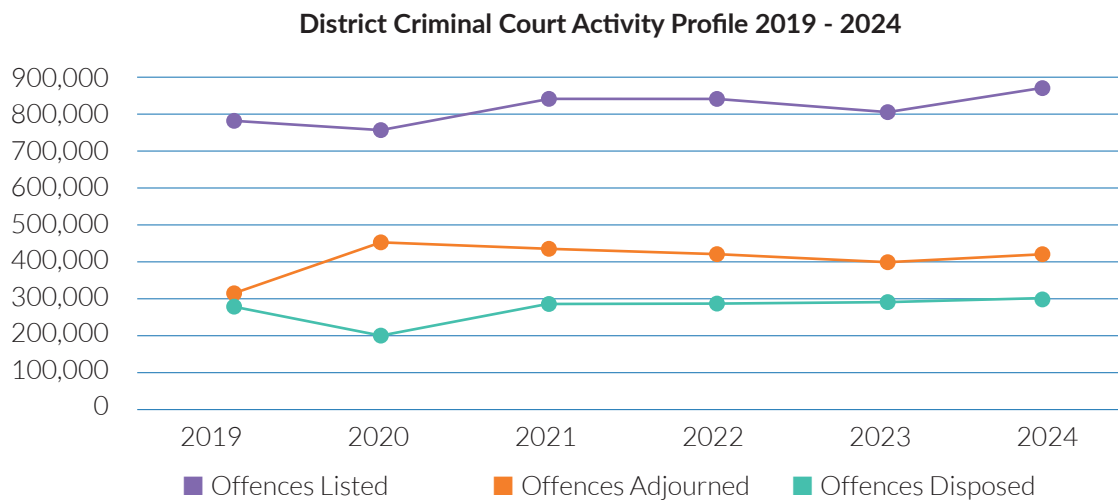


Figure 4: District Criminal Court activity profile 2019 - 2024

The District Court had increased activity in terms of the total number of offences listed in Court (+6%), the number of adjournment orders (+4%) and the number of offences disposed of (+4%). The higher level of offences being disposed of is a continuation of a positive trend experienced over the last few years.

Trends in Family Courts

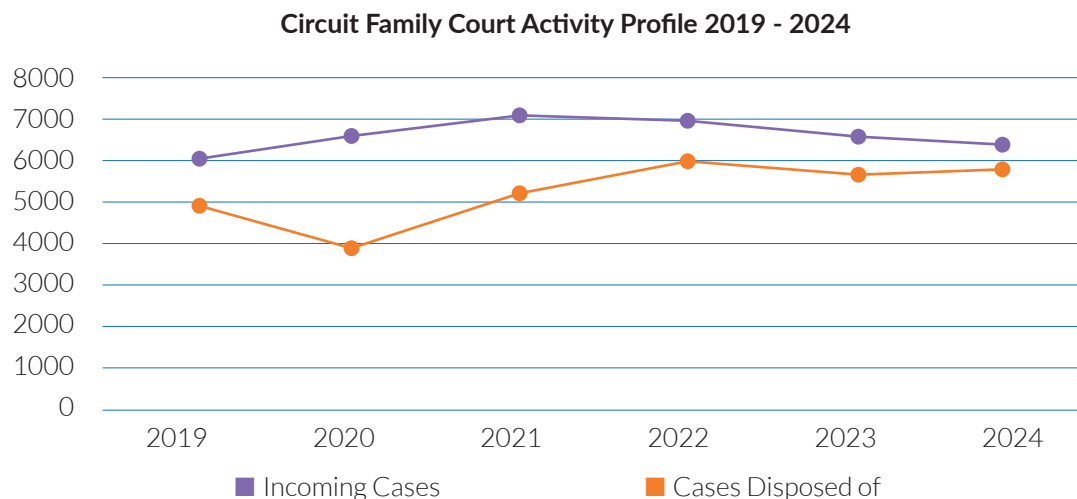


Figure 5: Circuit Family Courts activity profile 2019 - 2024

The Circuit Family Court saw a decrease of 4% in new cases while those disposed of remained at a similar volume to 2023 (marginal increase of 1%). This is an increase of 7% of incoming cases over 2019 and a disposal rate increase of 20%. Activity seems to have levelled out at a higher mark after the pandemic than before it.

Activity in the Family Courts remains high particularly in the District Court.

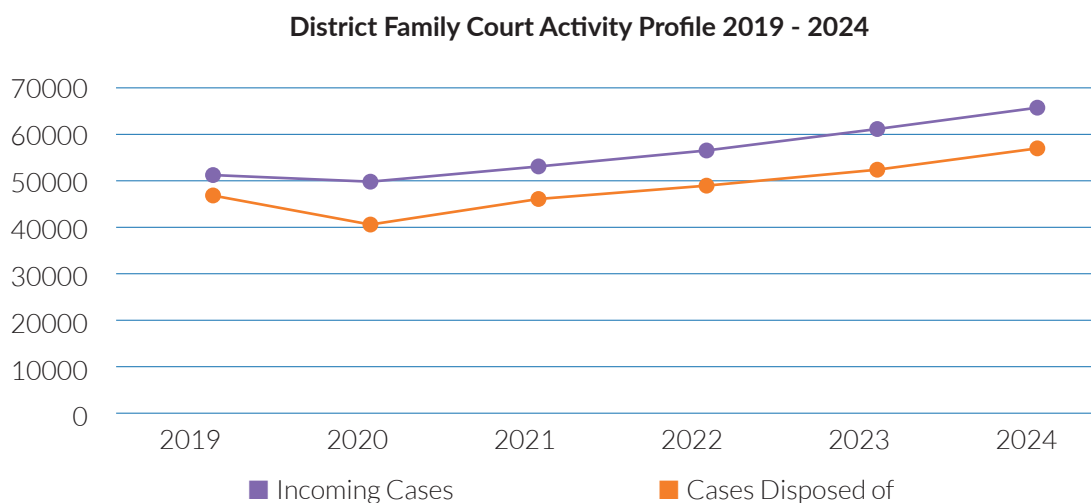


Figure 6: District Family Courts activity profile 2019 – 2024

Both incoming and disposed of applications increased again with growth of 6% and 8% respectively. Activity has increased for the last four years and shows no sign of slowing.

Trends in Civil Courts

Personal Injury applications

The Personal Injuries Guidelines adopted by the Judicial Council have not given rise to major increases in applications to the Circuit and District Courts, as can be seen in Figure 7. It was thought that lower awards in general may lead to a rebalancing of cases between jurisdictions.

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Incoming - Circuit	8,856	7,151	7,495	7,228
Incoming - District	1,070	1,542	1,401	1,149

Figure 7: Personal Injury applications to Circuit and District Courts 2021 - 2024

Circuit Court

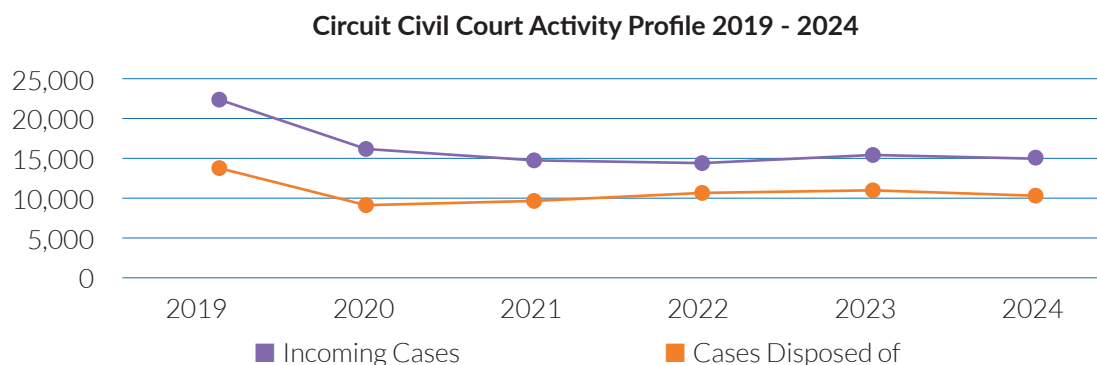


Figure 8: Circuit Civil Court activity profile 2019 – 2024



Incoming cases decreased by 3% over 2023. Activity has not returned to 2019 levels and remains significantly lower.

District Court

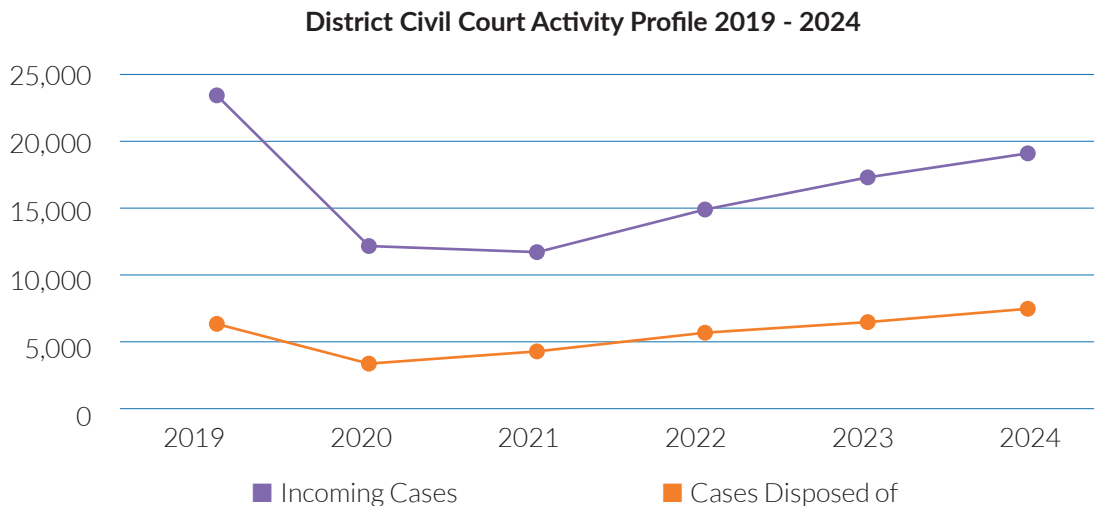


Figure 9: District Civil Court activity profile 2019 - 2024

While it remains below 2019 levels, the District Court received 12% more new applications in 2024 than 2023. There was also an increase of 16% in the number of applications resolved. There has now been five years of increases since the lows of the first year of the pandemic.

High Court

Personal Injury applications

The most noteworthy trend in personal injuries in the High Court was the reduced impact of the personal injuries guidelines issued in 2021. On the run up to the issuing of the guidelines on 6 March 2021, there was a spike in incoming cases issued right up to the that date, followed by, during the rest of 2021 and into 2022, a very noticeable drop in incoming cases.

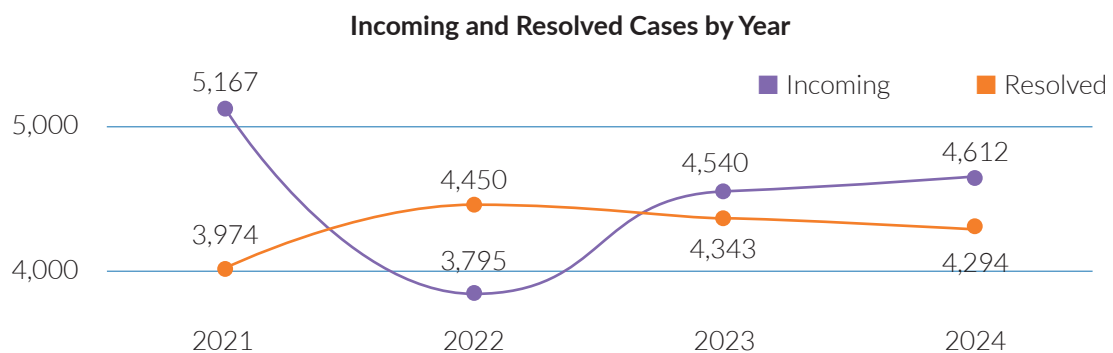


Figure 10: Personal Injury Applications

As Figure 10 shows, the numbers of incoming personal injury cases in the High Court in 2023 and 2024 are now back along anticipated lines.

Deed Poll

The numbers of applications for Deed Poll has evolved over recent years, as can be seen by the graph below:

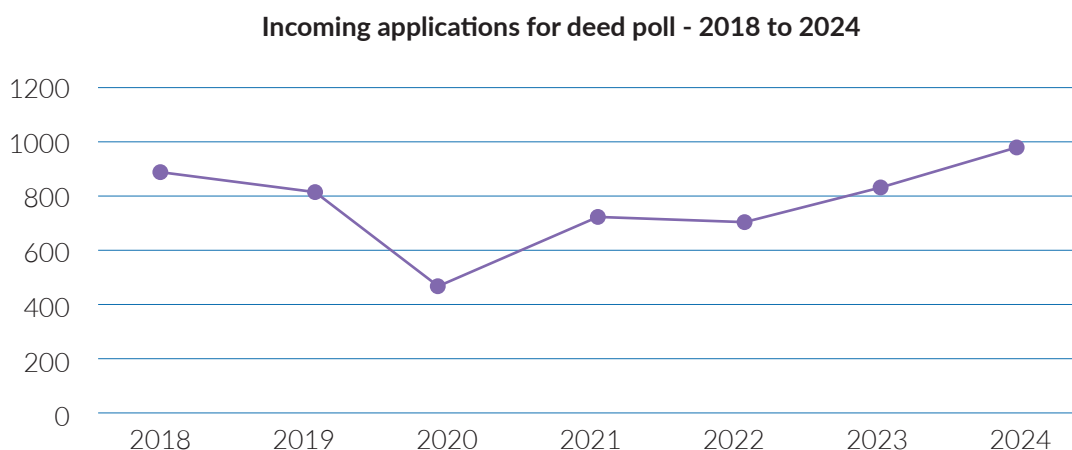


Figure 11: Deed Poll applications

The numbers of applications are significantly above pre-pandemic levels and to respond to this, the Courts Service embarked in 2024 on a process to simplify the Deed Poll process for court users.

Improvements in waiting times in the High Court

The appointment of additional judges to the High Court prior to and since the report of the Judicial Planning Working Group has enabled the High Court to reduce waiting times in several areas. Increasing the numbers of judges sitting has had a positive effect on waiting times in the Judicial Review lists for Asylum and Non-Asylum matters as well as for the Chancery lists. These assignment decisions were also important in the context of increases in incoming cases. In particular, the numbers of incoming Judicial Review Asylum cases stayed comparatively high in 2024 compared with 2023 (736 in 2024 compared with 779 in 2023), which are in stark contrast with incoming cases in the previous 4 years. (2022 – 336, 2021 – 360, 2020 – 355 and 2019 – 368).

The appointment of additional judges also

enabled cases that would take a long time to hear get on. The most notable of these was in the Commercial Court list where the hearing of a year-long case got underway with minimal disruption to the other cases on the list. This also allowed the High Court to meet the aim of the Commercial Court which is to facilitate the efficient trial of commercial cases, with the number of resolved cases increasing by 18% from 89 in 2023 to 108 in 2024.

Clearance of Dublin Probate Office arrears

At the start of 2024, the delays in processing applications for probate in the Dublin Probate Office caused much public scrutiny. It was acknowledged that the paper-based system needed to be overhauled and a modernised eProbate system was required. Work on this project continued during 2024 but nevertheless, the challenges associated with the arrears remained.

Thanks to the effort of the staff of the Probate Office, processing times for grants of probate were reduced from 20 weeks to 5 weeks by year-end. The accompanying table shows the progress made in processing times.

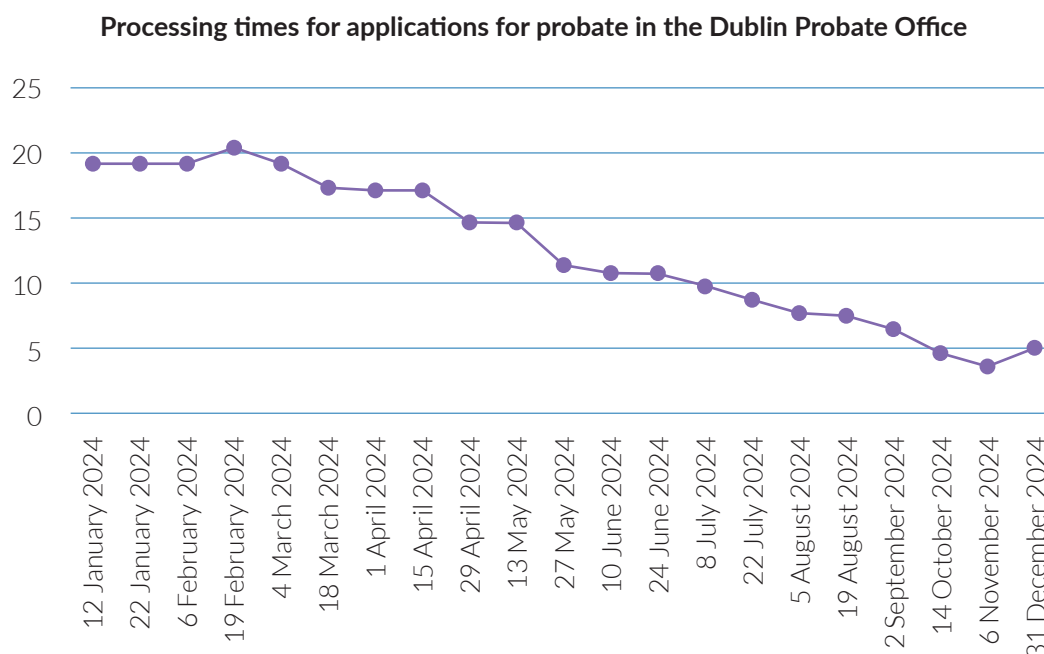


Figure 12: Probate applications in Dublin Probate Office

Work to maintain shorter processing times will continue in 2025 in advance of the launch of eProbate later in the year.

First full year of the Planning and Environment list

Following its launch in December 2023, 2024 saw the first full year of operation of the new Planning and Environment List. The list has a strong focus on case-management and provides for an expedited procedure for hearings for certain cases.

There were 143 active cases in the P&E List when it commenced, and 221 cases came in during 2024. Cases included residential developments, renewable energy matters, including wind farms and solar farms, and commercial developments. Approximately one third of the cases in 2024 involved a development located in Dublin. By year-end, there were 252 active cases in the list.

The Planning and Environment Court has also established a dedicated Users Group which

held its first meeting in December 2024. The purpose of the User Group is to serve as a forum for dialogue between the Court and stakeholders on practice and procedural issues relevant to the efficient functioning of the list.

Court of Appeal

During 2024, the Court continued to actively manage the balance of the appeals transferred from the Supreme Court which had been initiated before the establishment of the Court on 28 October 2014 and had not been fully or partly heard by the Supreme Court by that date (Article 64 appeals).

There were 341 appeals issued in respect of 3,194 offences lodged in the Court of Appeal (Criminal) in 2024. This represents an 11% increase year-on-year and is a continuation of the trend of the number of criminal appeals increasing in recent years. The Court disposed of 269 appeals in respect of 2,014 offences (304 appeals in respect of 1,847 offences in 2023).



Of the original 1,360 appeals transferred from the Supreme Court in 2014, the final 6 were disposed of, bringing an end to the Article 64 Appeals. The Court continued to operate a weekly directions list for new appeals which allows the Court to case manage every new appeal lodged and this was done using both physical attendance and Virtual/Hybrid attendance. There was a decrease (10.7%) in the number of Appeals issued when compared to 2023.

We wished Mr. Justice George Birmingham, President of the Court of Appeal well on his retirement and welcome Ms. Justice Caroline Costello as the new President of the Court of Appeal in 2024.

Supreme Court Work of the Court

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a year-on-year increase in new applications to the Supreme Court. In 2024, there was an increase of 15% in the number of applications for leave filed when compared to 2023, as well as a 14% increase in the number of applications determined.

Despite this, there is no backlog of appeals awaiting a hearing date, other than by the extent to which parties require time to fulfil necessary procedural steps prior to the hearing. Throughout 2024, litigants at final appellate level where leave to appeal was granted could expect a hearing within 23 weeks.

During 2024, following a review of the support arrangements for the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court, a new organisational structure was implemented. This will enhance the support services provided to the Court, allowing the Chief Justice and members of the Court to focus on their core responsibilities.

A new website for the Supreme Court was also launched (supremecourt.ie). This user-friendly site provides an enhanced range of information to users, including simplified explanations of the process of appealing to the Supreme Court.

Centenary of the Courts

2024 marked the centenary of the Courts of Justice Act 1924, which established Ireland's independent courts system, as provided for in the Constitution of the Irish Free State, 1922. This included the creation of a Supreme Court of Ireland for the first time, as well as a High Court, Circuit Court and a new District Court.

This historical event was marked by commemorative ceremonies in the Four Courts and a conference in Dublin Castle. Refurbishment works took place in the foyer outside the Supreme Court, including the addition of Irish and English language inscriptions from Article 40.1 the Constitution.



*Áirítear gurb ionann ina
bpearsain daonna na
saoránaigh uile i láthair an
dlí.*

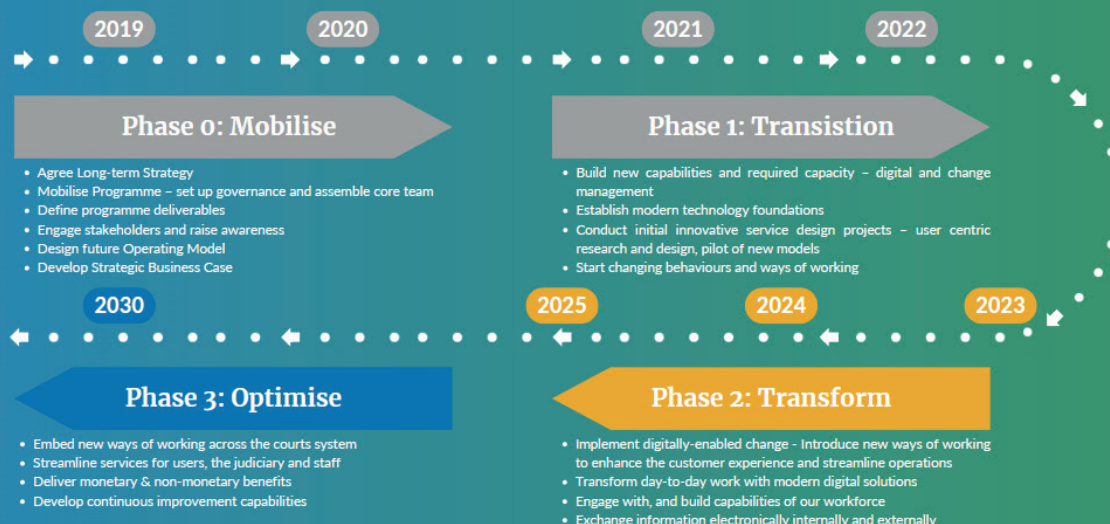
*All citizens shall, as human
persons, be held equal
before the law.*

*These words, quoted from Article
40.1 of the Constitution, were
inscribed above the foyer outside
the Supreme Court, marking 100
years of the modern Irish courts
system.*



Modernisation Programme

Courts Service Modernisation Programme – Phased Approach



The Modernisation Programme Board continued to monitor progress against all planned activity through the year. Good progress was made, with 44 of 66 key outputs completed, and the overall percentage of planned work completed across Programme deliverables was 83%. A procurement process for a Transformation Partner for the Optimise Phase of the Modernisation Programme was completed.

Our goal to design services ‘with users, for users’, worked across the whole transformation programme. Working with key user groups to improve how we design and offer online and in-person services and information is an essential part of our Modernisation Programme.

Our ‘digital first’ approach is transforming our Information and Communications (ICT) systems, enabling the development of digital filing and online transactions with Courts and court offices. ICT may be changing some of

our operations, but ours is not a “digital only” approach.

We held our first Round Table event with members of our Civic Society Forum as part of our continued engagement with civic groups. This event facilitated sharing of insights into our collaborative approach to transformation. The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), Victim Support at Court (V-SAC), National Disability Authority and Age Action Ireland all took part.

As part of our strategy to make the information we provide more accessible we have been continuously developing our plain English capabilities. Plain English also enables us to build trust with our users and can empower them when navigating the court system. We worked with the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) to develop an online learning module, ‘A Simple Guide to Plain English’ tailored for Courts Service staff.

2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030

Family Law Reform

Supporting the Family Justice Strategy

We continue to be a partner supporting the implementation of the Family Justice Strategy. Our reform activities are aligned with the Strategy, and we are contributing on to a several projects such as Hearing the Voice of the Child and reviewing the in-camera rule.

Modernisation of family law court forms

The goal of this work is to create modern application forms that are user-friendly, accessible, and simple to complete.

The Family Law Reform team have been focussing on application forms for Domestic violence orders (piloted in August), Maintenance orders, Divorce and Orders under the Guardianship of Infants Act 1964 for guardianship, custody and access. We've taken a collaborative and iterative approach in designing these forms. We have received input

and support for testing with a wide variety of groups including advocacy groups, court staff, judges, County Registrars, and end-users. The next step for the team is to progress the forms through the court Rules Committees and begin a national rollout.

9th Civil Service Innovation and Excellence Awards – Family Law information online continues to benefit court users

In 2023, the Family Law Reform Team launched comprehensive plain language family law information on the Courts Service website. In June 2024 we were delighted to receive a “Citizen Impact and Customer Service” award at the 9th Civil Service Innovation and Excellence Awards for the project. This award recognises initiatives where consideration of the customer has been central to the design and delivery of services, resulting in improved service provision, and in the quality of customer services.



Members of the Family Law Reform team received a “Citizen Impact and Customer Service” award at the 9th Civil Service Innovation and Excellence Awards.



Civil Reform

In 2024 we published a series of helpful, plain language information guides to the Assisted Decision-Making Capacity Act on our website. We also produced an online eligibility checker, allowing people to check whether they need consent from the Court before making an application.

The Civil Reform team also developed new plain language information for Repossession, covering the end-to-end steps involved in the court process and highlighting supports available. The information was developed in collaboration with a range of internal and external users.

The team completed a joint research project on Small Claims with members of the Family Law Reform team. We engaged with a range of court users and gathered information and insights about the current process, to identify key challenges and recommendations that will support future work in this space.

Innovation

New Innovation Strategy launched

Our Innovation Strategy for 2024 to 2026 outlines our vision for innovation, areas of focus for projects and initiatives, and our detailed action plan. The vision is to become a leader in user-focused innovation, enhance staff innovation skills, establish a clear process for submitting new ideas, and collaborate with partners to drive positive change within the Irish justice system. This strategy is closely aligned with the Courts Service Modernisation Programme's 2030 vision, the broader public service transformation strategy, Better Public Services and implementing actions to support Design Principles for Government in Ireland.

Jury Support Project

The Innovation Team's initial "Learn by Doing" project utilised service design (designing with users for users) principles to address juror needs. Originating from an employee idea, workshops revealed that jurors wanted more



Courts Service Innovation Strategy 2024-2026

information during the process and increased support post-trial. This led to the creation and piloting of an animated video to help explain the empanelment process and other aspects of jury service. Feedback was very positive, so we intend to roll-out use of the video nationwide in 2025. We also commenced a pilot of a thank-you card to provide post jury services information to jurors.

Service Design Training Workshop

This year, the first Service Design Workshop was held for Innovation Advocates and High Court operational staff. The goal was to enhance our ability to innovate and apply service design techniques and tools so that Courts Service staff have the skills to design new information, systems and processes with users for users.

Public Service Transformation Week

Transformation Week is a key event for promoting innovation within the public service.



This year, the Innovation team organised an ideas competition that utilised a Service Design framework to gather ideas from staff for improving the experiences of court users. Throughout the week, short videos explaining the design approach were shared with staff to guide them in submitting their ideas. The initiative generated some excellent ideas and highlighted the strong desire among staff to enhance services for our users.

ICT, Digital and Data

Tech in our Courts and Offices

2024 marks another year of key milestones towards improving the technology in the Courts Service. As a follow-up to the 2023 digital desktops provided to the Judiciary, in 2024, we improved the technology available on judicial benches. This rollout included enabling 190 judicial benches nationwide with the basics needed for ICT - power, network connectivity and docking stations. A simple yet crucial component in facilitating end-to-end digitally-enabled court processes.

This year we also enabled 29 courtrooms with video technology, bringing the number to 165 courtrooms countrywide. This technology facilitates parties to the case to 'dial into' proceedings from another location and provides a digital evidence display solution in

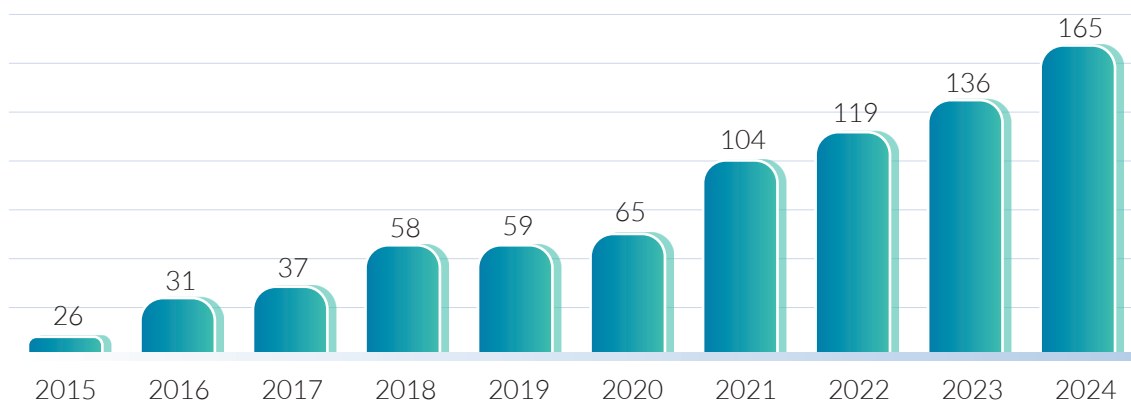
courtrooms. The Irish Prison Service continued to be a high-volume user of remote courtroom attendance, with 23,103 "dial-ins" from prisons throughout the year. This technology also supports the advancements made by others in the justice sector such as An Garda Síochána, enabling the presentation in Court of body-cam evidence and so on.

Our Wi-Fi service was expanded significantly in 2024. The service now covers all courthouses and court offices nationwide, except for the Criminal Courts of Justice, which is due to be completed in 2025. We are continuing to invest in the technology within our courtrooms with the approval in 2024 of a multi-year project to improve the digital audio recording and sound facilities across the Court Service nationwide estate.

Digital Update

The multi-year initiative, to re-imagine and migrate all case-related activity to a single unified case management system (UCMS) was one of the main focuses for our Digital team in 2024. UCMS is replacing many legacy systems with a single, modern, and user-friendly system that supports all staff, County Registrars, and members of the Judiciary. It will also support an online portal for court users that will enable digital journeys such as electronic filing and payments as well as improved data quality and

Technology-Enabled Courtrooms





We enabled 29 more courtrooms with video technology, bringing the total to 165 (pictured is courtroom in Sligo Courthouse)

security.

Following the successful rollout to back-office operations in the High Court in 2023, this year we have rolled out the UCMS to staff working on Circuit Family proceedings. This has resulted in the closure of 27 unconnected legacy technology systems. Similar work started in several other back-office operational areas. These include Probate, the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court and District Family matters. It is planned to advance these migrations over the coming year.

An important milestone for the Digital Crime team was reached in 2024 with the approval to replace the two main legacy crime systems with UCMS, to be implemented over the next

two years. Parallel strands of this project are underway to enable the creation of the crime component of UCMS including –

- the design of a new legal aid process involving the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, the Legal Aid Board and the National Shared Services Office
- the integration of the UCMS with the courts accounting system
- a new data exchange architecture for the UCMS and
- the adoption of common data registries across the criminal justice sector.



By having a single Unified Case Management System, we are paving the way for the introduction of online filing. The team has made significant progress on the development of a Courts Portal. The Portal will become the public-facing view of the UCMS for the legal profession, lay litigants and other parties. The Portal will allow new applications and other filings to be lodged, paid for if required, and tracked online. The Portal launched as a short trial in November supporting Circuit Court Family law cases in Cavan and Offaly, which we will expand on in 2025 after a period of testing with the various users.

Work began on migrating all content on courts.ie to a new accessible, mobile-friendly, plain language website. The project, due for completion in 2025, will focus on bringing courts.ie in line with the National Disability Authority (NDA) accessibility guidelines and in compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) Level AA and the upcoming European Accessibility Act. Website accessibility is part of an accessibility report, across all directorates, which goes to the Senior Management Team and the Board twice a year. In advance of the work on courts.ie we reviewed the Probate content on courts.ie last year. Working with users - citizens, personal applicants and practitioners - we developed a new public-facing Probate information hub, providing revised plain English and Irish language content. The clearer content allows both legal practitioners and personal applicants to better understand the steps involved, the information they need to provide and what they can expect from us. Furthermore, the Supreme Court website supremecourt.ie was similarly modernised with the involvement of the Superior Courts and Digital teams.

Our Data

Earlier this year, as part of a broad initiative to review and improve our record keeping practice, we launched a new staff-facing data retention portal and data retention tools, which are now available to all offices. The

data retention portal provides easy-to-follow information and guidance to enable staff to efficiently manage records. It also includes simple data management tools to support staff in meeting our obligations under the National Archives Act effectively. The rollout of this initiative is not just about managing records and clearing file rooms; it is an essential step in fostering a healthier, safer, and more organised workplace for all staff. The Data Unit is also rolling out staff training to improve data access and literacy. To date over 230 staff have received training.

Data-driven decisions continue to be a focus across all our business areas and drive a continued momentum for dashboards to support analysis from within a single reporting portal. During the year comprehensive data dashboards were delivered for the new UCMS covering various areas of court activity, and will continue to expand across 2025. Our commitment to Open Data was demonstrated by the launch of our data platform data.courts.ie, a central hub for the publication, access, and sharing of Courts Service data.

The achievements and progress made this year bring us to the end of our current ICT Strategy 2021 - 2024. Reflecting the Corporate Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027 and our Strategic Vision 2030, we have developed a new ICT, Digital & Data Strategy 2024 - 2027, which is available on courts.ie. Intensive and successful delivery of new technology initiatives over recent years were a contributing factor to a noted improvement since 2021 in staff and judicial satisfaction with ICT - moving from 40% in 2021 to 74% in 2024. We will continue to build on this momentum in the coming strategic period.

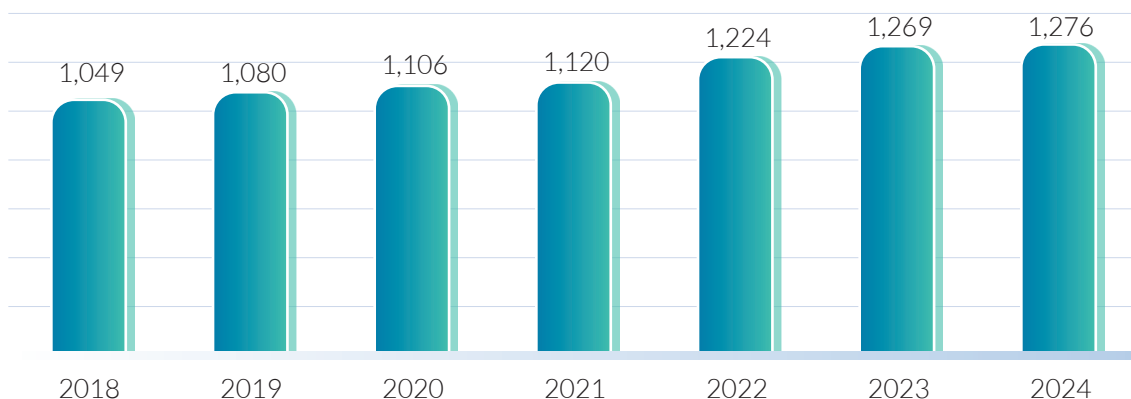
Human Resources

Staff: full time equivalent (FTE) 2018 - 2024

2024 marked the third and final year of our People and Organisation Strategy 2022 to 2024. The purpose of the strategy is to support Modernisation and better ways of working by



Staff Numbers (FTE)



developing staff to have the right skills at the right time, as well as developing leadership expertise and culture to facilitate a modern court system.

Training and development continued to be a priority, and good progress was made, especially in relation to Court Registrar training. Our goal is to have a structured training programme for all court-going staff. In 2024, curricula were designed for new entrants (a 2-year programme), civil and family law, and crime training started to be delivered. Over 700 staff took part in training programmes, delivered through a mix of in-person, online and self-directed learning.

We continued to roll out Team Effectiveness training to 12 offices. This programme offers tools and resources to support teams, and to integrate new staff quickly.

Developing leadership skills to embed better ways of working and enhance our employee experience remained a key activity. Our Leadership in Action programme, which began in 2022, saw six workshops held in 2024 with Principal Officers and the Senior Management Team.

Whilst 2024 was characterised by challenges,

including staffing shortages and a higher level of turnover than is desirable, creating a better employee experience remains our goal. 2024 saw us hold employee experience conferences for District Court clerks and Circuit Court Registrars to get their views on what they require for a better work experience. As a direct result, we committed more funds to training and developed an action plan. The Principal Officer Employee Experience group also engage and give regular updates to a representative group of attendees. These conferences will continue in future years.

Our staff engagement survey Healthy Place to Work, which is a measure of our staff's views on health under a number of headings, recorded a 2% score increase compared to 2023. We were pleased with this increase but recognise the challenge and effort required to meet our ambitious targets.

Health, safety and wellbeing

In 2024, we continued to support our staff in relation to physical and mental health wellbeing. We actively encouraged staff to participate in local health initiatives, supported by Spectrum.Life.

Spectrum.Life is a wellness partner, supporting people to take control of their health and

wellbeing. It provides physical and mental health support, 24/7 counselling services and bereavement support. 450 Staff signed up by the end of 2024.

Activities organised countrywide included group walks, in-office distance running competitions, healthy eating campaigns and much more.

Staff were encouraged to take care of their mental health through Spectrum.Life, internal publications, training supports and engagement with the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service.

Housekeeping Standard and Clean-Ups

We launched a Housekeeping Standard in 2024, aiming to provide well-organised office and storage spaces. Benefits of the initiative included easier records retrieval through more efficient management of storage space.

Our campaign supported 'Clean-Up Months' in May and August. The focus in May was on general and ICT waste; and in August, records

disposal in line with new Data Retention Policy Guidance.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

In 2024, our Inclusion Group focused on organising EDI activities to grow our inclusive work culture. We spread awareness on important topics by producing 35 news articles and an animated video on events, world culture, disabilities and neurodiversity, Pride month, gender equality, pregnancy and infant loss.

We launched our Public Sector Duty Plan 2024 – 2027. We held our first 'Celebration of Hope' event – an inspiring yet casual staff networking event. We supported 'lunch and learn' talks on 'Equality in law and 50 years since lifting the marriage bar' and 'the United Nations International decade for people of African descent'.

In November, we welcomed five Traveller Courts Support Workers to the Four Courts for an insightful discussion around court-going matters concerning travellers.



Members of the Inclusion Group at the Celebration of Hope event



A market launch for the Dublin Family Law Courts project took place in August.

Our Estate

Our estate includes 101 court venues, many of which are protected heritage buildings with an average age of over 160 years. As part of our commitment to the Courts Service Strategic Vision 2030, we continue to modernise the estate to enhance access to justice, improve service delivery, and uphold our core values of Service, Integrity, and Respect.

In response to evolving service delivery models and recommendations, the need for a more adaptable and future-focused estate has become clear.

To support this, we have developed a set of guiding principles to inform long-term estate planning and investment. These principles ensure that all decisions are not only responsive and sustainable, but also focused on delivering value for money aligning with the goals of the Courts Service Modernisation Programme.

In 2024, further progress was made by the Office of Public Works (OPW) on the Gandon Building at the Four Courts, where scaffolding was erected to support the dome. Restoration

work on the original, damaged capitals continued throughout the year.

Additional improvement works were undertaken at several Dublin court locations, including Blanchardstown Courthouse, the Children's Court, Áras Uí Dhálaigh, Green Street, Cloverhill and Dolphin House.

We continued to explore permanent accommodation options for Swords and Balbriggan, as well as Galway, including the identification and assessment of potential sites.

We also hold sites for planned courthouse developments in the county towns of Tralee, Wicklow, Portlaoise, Roscommon, and Naas. Progress on these projects is dependent on funding under the National Development Plan.

Dublin Family Courts Project

The Dublin Family Courts complex will provide a modern, purpose-built 19 courtroom facility designed with the specific needs of family law court users in mind. Court facilities will be provided in an integrated complex alongside meditation, family support and related services.

Throughout 2024 the Courts Service continued to work closely with the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) to advance this important project with a number of key milestones reached during the year:

- Planning permission under part 9 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 was granted by the Commissioners of Public Works in April 2024.
- Technical and legal advisors were appointed following a competitive procurement process undertaken by the NDFA.
- The procurement process got underway in July when the NDFA published a contract notice to initiate the first stage of the procurement process. The project is being procured as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) using the competitive dialogue procedure. A market launch was held in the Criminal Courts of Justice in August to stimulate interest in the project and to communicate key project details to the market participants. The first stage of the procurement process, the prequalification or shortlisting of candidates was completed in November.

Work to transfer the Hammond Lane site from OPW to Courts Service ownership continued throughout the year and is expected to be finalised in 2025.

While extensive archaeological investigations were undertaken at the Hammond Lane site between 2000 and 2010, enabling works to excavate a small number of previously unexcavated parts of the site and to resolve any archaeology remaining within these areas, commenced in November 2024 and will complete in 2025.

Sustainability and Climate Action

In 2024, we continued to focus our Sustainability resources on the public sector Climate Action Mandate and on key

2024 actions set out in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2024. Actions taken include:

- We published our third Climate Action Roadmap to align with Climate Action Plan 2024. This included an updated Gap-to-Target model, reflecting projects delivered or delayed in 2023 and identifying projects required to reach our public sector 2030 energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets. We socialised the Roadmap goals and projects across the organisation.
- We invested €2 Million in energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects across our varied estates. These included upgrading to energy-efficient lighting, transitioning to high-efficiency thermal plant and systems, enhancing building controls and automation, systems and fabric insulation and enhancing digital monitoring and oversight.
- We have developed a multiyear Energy Efficiency Action Plan for the Criminal Courts of Justice (our largest energy consumer) and are working with our PPP partners in progressive implementation. We continue ongoing energy efficiency actions with our regional bundle PPP partners, including full PV design in 2024 for installation in 2025.
- In 2024 we began in-depth analysis of the Four Courts systems, operation and control, in cooperation with the OPW, with a view to developing a similar multiyear Energy Efficiency Action plan for launch in 2025.
- We participated in the SEAI ISO50001 10-day accelerator course throughout 2024 and made significant progress towards ISO50001 certification. We gained the approval from our Chief Executive Officer for our energy policy, established a protocol with the OPW to meet the operational control requirements of the standard, increased oversight of



our utility consumption, and conducted a full review of statutory compliance with energy regulations. We plan to move progressively towards certification throughout 2025.

- We continued our participation in the Optimising Power at Work programme in 26 of our venues, with our advisors delivering staff workshops and engagement events nationwide.
- We rolled out the IPA Climate Action Leadership Training to all managers at Principal Officer level and above throughout 2024. We also commenced engagement on a customised leadership training event for managers for 2025.
- We completed a full review of our estate to inform the development of a greener travel policy and continue to monitor central Government guidance in this regard.
- We made our first application for a Smarter Travel Mark for our Phoenix House headquarters.
- We continued our staff engagement programs, displays and sustainability communication.

Monitoring and Reporting 2024

In 2024, the Courts Service was fully compliant with all reporting requirements via the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)'s Public Sector Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) System for our energy consumption across our estate and our provisional M&R results indicate:

- total carbon emissions of 4,749,283 kgCO₂, an improvement of 34.4% compared to the baseline of the 2016-2018 average
- fossil carbon emissions (from on-site heating) of 2,199,077 kgCO₂, an improvement of 19.2% compared to the

baseline of the 2016-2018 average

- energy efficiency improvement of 34.1% compared to 2009
- total final energy consumption of 19,435,829 kWh
- total energy expenditure of €4,145,449

Climate Action Mandate

In 2024, a new mechanism for reporting progress across all elements of the Climate Action Mandate was introduced by SEAI within the Monitoring and Reporting software. The Courts Service reported on progress on the elements of the 2023 Climate Action Mandate as follows: fully implemented 11, partially implemented 4, under review 9, and non-applicable 6. Our Climate and Sustainability Champion provided a comprehensive summary statement on our progress to date, challenges encountered and intentions for the years ahead. We will report in May 2025 on our progress on elements of the 2024 Climate Action Mandate.

Official Air travel

In 2024 the Courts Service was fully compliant with Circular 1/2020: Procedures for offsetting the emissions associated with official air travel. We calculated the carbon generated from air travel in 2024 as 33.03 tonne based on 166,346km flown and paid an on-time contribution of €1,849.85.

Communications and Outreach Events

2024 was another busy year for the Communications and Media Unit team (CMU). We attended the National Ploughing Championships in Laois for the third time, where we had a presence in both the Justice and Industries pavilions. Popular queries handled by our volunteers included Probate, Family Law, job opportunities for graduates, Assisted Decision-Making and Jury Service.

We were joined at the Championships



The Fingal Mummers performed in the Round Hall for Culture Night.

by civic society partners, including Age Action, Rainbows Ireland, One Family, and Accompaniment Support Services for Children. Our Civic Society Forum serves as an important source of feedback and engagement from NGOs and representative organisations on the Modernisation Programme.

We opened the Four Courts to the public once again for Culture Night. This year, attendees were treated to tours and a creative and traditionally Irish performance by the Fingal Mummers in the historic Round Hall.

Open House is a national annual festival of architecture. As part of this year's programme, we partnered with volunteer members of the Judiciary to conduct multiple tours of the Four Courts in October. The festival was marked across the country, including tours of Waterford Courthouse, one of the city's most architecturally stunning buildings.

For the first time, we collaborated with the Office of Public Works (OPW) to offer tours of the dome of the Four Courts, as part of Heritage Week 2024. The dome is an iconic



The OPW facilitated tours inside the dome of the Four Courts for the first time in 2024.

Dublin landmark and is not usually open to the public. These small-group tours were led by a conservation architect with the OPW.

Another first for us was hosting a recording of Newstalk's Talking History radio podcast in the Supreme Court. The event was run in conjunction with the Bram Stoker Festival, acknowledging Stoker's time as a petty sessions clerk.

In July we held a special programme of events



at Green Street Courthouse to commemorate Robert Emmet. Green Street was the location of Emmet's famous oration from the dock. The events included a tour of the courthouse, poetry, a historical lecture and a recital of Emmet's famous speech from the dock in Irish.

In May, we welcomed students from 19 secondary schools nationwide to compete in the National Mock Trials competition over two weekends. The competition took place in the CCJ, and was run in conjunction with Public Access to Law.

Centenary of the Court – Podcast series

As part of the commemorations of the 100-year anniversary of the Courts of Justice Act 1924 we developed the first Irish Courts podcast series with the judiciary. The series was launched on Friday 11 October 2024. It delved into landmark cases, influential figures, and the evolution of our legal system, featuring insightful discussions with prominent judges, legal scholars, and historians. Each episode illuminated our legal heritage and its impact on modern society.

Episodes published included:

- The David Norris Case
- The Julia Clarke Case; Jail for a Kiss
- two seminal District Courts cases: The State (Healy) V Donoghue, DPP v Gary Doyle

- Eileen Kennedy, Ireland's first woman Judge
- From Revolution to a New Court System

By the end of 2024 there were over 4,500 downloads of the series which is still available at theirishcourtspodcast.podbean.com/

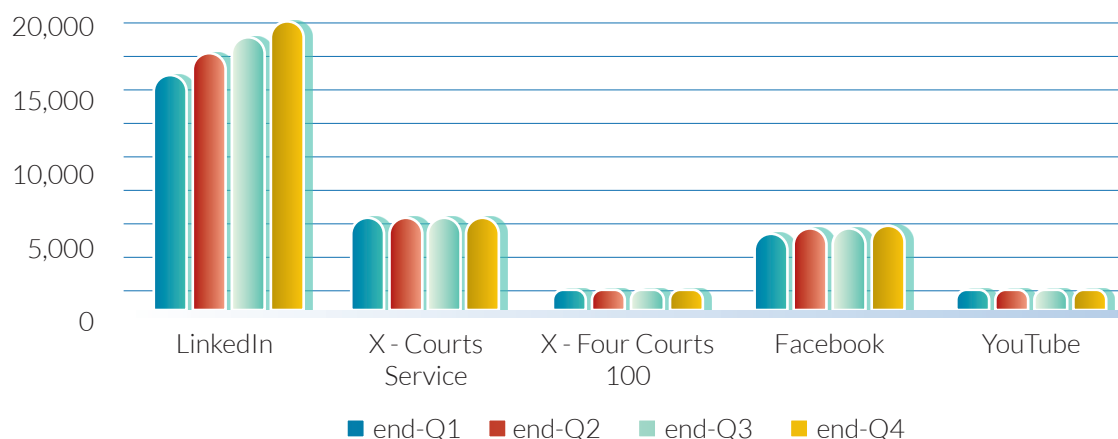
School Tours and Transition Year programme

Our school visits and work experience programmes were fully booked. We host at least six tours a week during school term in the Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ) alone. We also accept two Transition Year students each week for work experience in various court offices. These programmes are always booked up well into the following year.

Social media

Social media plays an important and strategic part in our communications and campaigns. We continue to build our employer profile across important channels such as LinkedIn, as part of our strategic approach to recruitment. Subscribers to our LinkedIn account grew by 28% during 2024 and we saw a 16.5% increase across all platforms (which also include X, Facebook and YouTube). Recruitment campaigns were particularly successful on LinkedIn and on Facebook – especially in regions outside Dublin and for specialist roles.

Social Media Following 2024





Corporate Strategic Plan: Target Activities 2024

Introduction

In 2024, we transitioned from our first Corporate Strategic Plan in support of our 10-year Modernisation Programme to our second Corporate Strategic Plan spanning 2024 -2027, the middle years of a decade of transformation. Having analysed the first Corporate Strategic Plan in terms of our progress under the Modernisation Programme, and the changing external environment, we remain committed to progressing the original 6 Goals from the first Strategic Plan. With the single exception of Goal 3 which has been expanded to incorporate 'a digital first, but not digital only' approach.

The activities for 2024 mapped to the original Corporate Strategic Plan, activities planned for 2024 that have been completed are highlighted in green. Activities that continue in 2025 are highlighted in orange. This approach ensures continuity and provides a singular focus on reaching our Modernisation Programme objectives and our Strategic Vision 2030.

Target Activities 2024

Completed activities

Activities yet to be completed



Goal
1

Take a user-centric approach

Strategic Goal

We will adopt new collaborative ways of working, taking a user-centric approach, to provide improved and enhanced service delivery.

Key Outcomes

A Service Delivery Model in place that supports a user-centric, evidence-based approach to provide equal service to all sectors of society.

- Better understanding of the needs of all service users.
- Culture of collaborative working.
- User-friendly and efficient experience for those who engage with the Courts



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Establish User Research and Service Design function to partner with the Judiciary and stakeholders to ensure best outcomes for all court users, with a specific focus on vulnerable users.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support the implementation of the Action Plan for Designing Better Public Services by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to use a design process and tools within family law and civil workstreams. Continuing our “Learning by Doing” programme to develop capability of innovation advocates to use a design process, learn about tools and embrace a design mindset to respond to user needs. Continuing to embed design approach within project governance processes. Define and scope opportunities for customer service improvements. 	<p>Teams continue to implement design process as part of better ways of working.</p> <p>Part of our Learning by Doing programme we completed the discovery phase of the Deed Poll project. Actions have been identified for delivery in 2025.</p> <p>A detailed plan of work for customer experience project in 2025 has been completed.</p>
Implement the Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and plan to effectively engage stakeholders.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2021 -2025. Continue engagement with Judicial, Legal Practitioners and Civic Society Forum. Complete report following review of stakeholder engagement groups. Increase the visibility of the Modernisation Programme internally and externally. Improve information on courts.ie website, having regard to plans for its eventual replacement. 	<p>All actions completed by end 2024. Review to take place in 2025 with aim to develop new strategy for 2026.</p> <p>Engagement continues with each group.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed a wide range of speaking opportunities nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Reform teams continued to improve the information on courts.ie section by section. The courts.ie upgrade project to meet accessibility standards, plain English guidelines and improve the reader age of pages on the site began by the end of 2024.</p>

Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
	8. Provide training to staff to enhance plain language standards.	In 2024 with the National Adult Literacy Association (NALA) we completed the first plain English training module for a legal/ justice-based organisation within Government. By the end of the year, we had started rolling out this training.
Standardise and simplify appropriate court procedures.	9. Launch marriage exemption form and standardised process.	Redesign process continues for presentation to the Circuit Court Rules Committee meeting in 2025.
	10. Develop simplified court forms: District Court forms – New suite of Family Law forms designed and brought to the District Court Rules Committee. Implementation of approved court forms and processes in court offices throughout the country. Circuit Court forms – New suite of Family Law forms designed and brought to the Circuit Court Rules Committee. Civil court forms - Standard Claim Notice for Debt for all Jurisdictions designed and brought to the relevant Rules Committees.	New District Court forms for Domestic Violence, Maintenance, Guardianship, Custody and Access have been approved by the Rules Committee. Go live for District Court Family Law forms and processes is expected early June 2025. Progress is advanced. Co-development of Divorce forms with judiciary, staff and practitioners continues. To support user experience, most commonly used civil forms, across all jurisdictions, are being relocated to the upgraded courts.ie.
	11. Provision of Information: Expansion of Civil information webpages to include additional topics, beginning with Small Claims. Assisted Decision Making Capacity (ADMC) guides updated.	Joint discovery work on small claims completed and shared with stakeholders. Plain language information on repossessions to be launched early-2025. Updated plain language ADMC guides published. Eligibility checker to support ADMC developed.



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
	12. Continue to track the implementation of the targets agreed as part of the Kelly Review Project Implementation plan and facilitate streamlined reporting to the Department of Justice.	<p>We continued to monitor progress against the Kelly recommendations throughout 2024. We provided updates and information to DOJ as required.</p> <p>The Digital Rules were adopted by both the Circuit Court and District Court Rules Committees. Rules on Interrogatories which were adopted by the Superior Courts Rules Committee in 2024 were discussed with the Circuit Court and District Court Rules Committees at the end of the year.</p> <p>Draft Rules on Appearances were considered by the Superior Courts Rules Committee (SCRC). A further draft will be presented in 2025. Once these rules are adopted by the SCRC, a draft will be presented to the Circuit Court Rules Committee.</p> <p>Rules on representation of children in litigation were adopted by the Superior Courts Rules Committee and will be presented to the Circuit Court Rules Committee in 2025.</p>
Support legislative initiatives as prioritised in the Programme for Government.	13. Continue to contribute to the preparation of legislation that will impact on the operations of the Courts.	<p>Observations offered on legislation including: the Children (Amendment) Bill 2024, Family Courts Act 2024, Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024, the Court Proceedings (Delays) Act 2024, Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Human Trafficking) Act 2024, Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024 and the Planning and Development Act 2024.</p>



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
	14. Promote the development of an enhanced Regulatory Impact Analysis process for new legislation so that sponsoring Government Departments and the Department of the Taoiseach take account of the impact of legislation on the Courts.	Concerns remain that Departments are not taking account of the impact on Courts (and the Courts Service) and resourcing needs to assist with the implementation of new legislation. Engagement took place with the Department of Justice during 2024 to develop an enhanced Regulatory Impact Analysis for all new legislation and policy across Departments, insofar as they related to Courts. In 2025 we will take a design approach to map out our engagement with the legislation process and to identify better ways of working in relation to this.



Support the Judiciary

Strategic Goal

We will work collaboratively with the Judiciary to define and provide the resources needed to effectively carry out their judicial functions.

Key Outcomes

- Efficient, effective, and suitable support services provided to the Judiciary to enable fulfilment of their judicial functions.
- Reform of court procedures and practices progressed through stronger collaboration.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Support delivery of the recommendations of the Judicial Planning Working Group to maximise impact within the funding envelope available.	1. Structured and regular engagement with Court Presidents, Judicial Implementation Group, Association of Judges of Ireland, Judicial Council, Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration and other parties responsible for delivery of recommendations regarding shared priorities.	Regular engagement with all parties continues.
	2. Participate in JPWG Steering Group and sub-groups, to advance priority recommendations particularly in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maximising and measuring impact of additional Judges already appointed b) Court Vacation Pilot c) 5-day week d) Data and other support for Court Presidents e) Expanding the role of officers holding quasi-judicial powers f) Enhancing the power of Court Presidents g) Stakeholder engagement. 	<p>The CEO attended all Steering Group and Stakeholder Engagement Sub-Group meetings during 2024, where updates on implementation plans were shared.</p> <p>The High Court ran a pilot during the long vacation in 2024.</p> <p>Staffing levels and training remains an issue with courtroom availability now presenting as a challenge in some counties.</p> <p>The Data Unit continues to lead the work to generate data for measuring impact of additional judges.</p>



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Support the establishment of the Judicial Appointments Commission.	3. Nominate Interim Director and appoint staff to interim secretariat.	Completed.
	4. Source accommodation or assign existing space, branding, ICT support and recruitment system.	Completed.
	5. Prepare draft documents pursuant to ss. 57, 58 and 59.	Draft documents being progressed.
	6. Prepare content for Induction programme for Commission members and content for information sessions for applicants. (<i>persons applying to be a Commissioner</i>)	Work is underway.
	7. Establish funding mechanism with the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP and Reform and Department of Justice in advance of Budget 2025.	Department of Justice have confirmed that the Courts Service will grant-aid Judicial Appointments Commission.
	8. Prepare for the dissolution of Judicial Appointments Advisory Board (JAAB).	JAAB was dissolved on 1 January 2025.



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Engage with the Judiciary to define requirements, to improve efficiencies and share information and best practice.	9. Planned and coordinated bi-monthly meetings with the Judicial Modernisation Engagement Working Group (JMEWG) to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify potential areas for reform within the wider judicial community b) provide judicial perspective and insight into potential impact of Modernisation Programme activities on the judiciary and environment c) ensure subject matter experts /members of the judiciary are involved in providing feedback to the Modernisation Programme and change projects i.e., piloting/ testing initiatives, and d) ensure judges are informed of the broader reform activities. 	Regular updates provided to the JMEWG at five scheduled meetings and between scheduled sessions also.
	10. Monitor Implementation of Judicial Communications Committee recommendations to improve communication with the Judiciary by increased and relevant communications from the Chief Justice and Presidents, increased engagement at the conferences, increased engagement through Committees/working groups.	This approach was updated from the end of 2024.
Develop and implement a framework for collaborative working with Judges, the Judicial Council, and the Courts Service.	11. Arrange quarterly meetings with the Judicial Council regarding shared areas of work and opportunities for synergies.	Meetings held. Day-to-day engagement when required.
	12. Review Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Judicial Council.	The Memorandum is in the process of being reviewed.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Review the business and structure of the Judicial and Library Research Services	13. Engage with judges to ascertain the value and effectiveness of the library and other services provided by the Legal Research and Library Services.	Not achieved by end of 2024 and will now be carried over into 2025.
	14. Review the current and assess the future requirements of the Research Tools including the Library and Knowledge Hub to increase their effectiveness.	Not achieved by end of 2024 and will now be carried over into 2025.
	15. Review the recruitment and appointment model for Judicial Assistants and Research Support Staff.	Completed.
Support strategy to promote Ireland as the leading venue for dispute resolution in the EU.	16. Participate in activities by stakeholders to develop materials for the promotion of Ireland including hosting visiting delegations for knowledge sharing	Completed. Arrangements for support of lengthy Aircraft Leasing Case in High Court demonstrated commitment to opportunities for Ireland to be recognised as a hub for international dispute resolution.
Deliver Programme of events to mark the Centenary of the Courts of Justice Act 1924	17. Work with the Commemorations Committee to develop and run events at local and national level to mark the centenary	Successful commemoration events took place in the Four Courts in May. An extension of these activities was the Irish Courts Podcast series marking seminal moments and characters across the Courts over the past 100 years.



Goal

3

Digital First

Strategic Goal

We will adopt a digital first approach.

Key Outcomes

- Digital channels in place reflecting user-centric approach and best practice in online service design.
- Reduced reliance on paper-based processes and outdated technology.
- Improved customer service that is inclusive and provides for digital first solutions, taking account of human and equality rights of all users and ensures that no user is disadvantaged when interacting with the Courts.
- A robust, secure, and transparent data ecosystem supporting the functioning of the Courts, effective decision making, and collaboration with justice agencies and government in line with GDPR.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Implement the ICT and data strategies which define the application, infrastructure, and data architecture to support a modern and digitally-enabled Courts Service.	1. Deliver phase 1 of a new public facing portal supporting eFiling for the following case types - Divorce, Judicial Separation, High Court Debt, ADMC.	The public portal to handle Divorce applications was launched in 2 offices and will be extended to other offices after a trial and learning phase in 2025.
	2. Replace the staff-facing Supreme Court case management system with our new Unified Case Management System (UCMS).	At an advanced stage and will be completed in 2025.
	3. Scope and build the replacement for our staff-facing case management system in the Court of Appeal based on the UCMS.	Build has been completed, for rollout in 2025.
	4. Complete the rollout of the staff facing modern case management system for Circuit Family Law cases based on the UCMS.	Completed.

2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
	5. Scope and build the replacement for our staff-facing District Court Family Law case management system based on the UCMS. Rollout the above new District Court Family Law case management system, starting in Q4 and continuing into 2025.	Rollout expected to commence early in 2025.
	6. Scope the replacement of our staff-facing Circuit Court Civil Law case management system based on the UCMS.	Scoping completed. Rollout expected to commence in 2025.
	7. Scope and build Judges portal based on the UCMS.	Scope and build are nearing completion with a pilot due to start in early 2025.
	8. Scope and build the replacement for our staff-facing Probate case management system based on the UCMS. Rollout the above new Probate case management system, starting in Q4 and continuing into 2025.	Completed. Due to go live early in 2025.
	9. Approval of a new Unified Crime case management system and commence build.	Business Case approved.
	10. Install a further 20 courtrooms with remote court and digital evidence display technology.	29 new technology-enabled courtrooms were installed over the year.
	11. Complete rollout of modernised digitally enabled Judicial Bench.	Completed.
	12. Delivery of Wi-Fi expansion to a further 25 sites under year 2 of 3 of the Wi-Fi expansion programme.	Wi-Fi project is on track for completion in 2025.



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
	13. Delivery of a 24/7 Cyber Security Operations Centre.	Procurement process began in 2024. Delivery due in the first half of 2025.
	14. Commence multi-year DAR and Sound modernisation programme.	Project commenced.
	15. Complete MS Teams proof of concept for remote courts platform.	Completed. Product will remain under review for future use.
	16. Implement a new infrastructural core for the organisation to improve ICT business continuity.	Completed.
	17. Launch new ICT, Digital & Data Strategy.	Completed.
Improve Data Management supporting a modern and efficient courts system.	18. Launch Open Data Portal.	Completed – data.courts.ie.
	19. Complete a Data Maturity Assessment.	Completed. Score of 2.53 out of 5, up from 1.7 in 2021.
	20. Develop a centralised Data Retention tracking system.	Completed.
	21. Introduce Data training for staff and Judges.	Training established for staff. Data training for Judiciary will commence early in 2025.
	22. Establish Data Retention Implementation Plan.	Completed.
Engage in collaborative digital initiatives with other agencies to drive efficiencies.	23. Sharing court lists with Oberstown.	Completed.
	24. Non AGS summons – scoping.	Paused pending a review by the local authorities on facilitating request.
	25. Sharing Committal Warrants with IPS – scoping.	Paused to allow for new legislation to enable digital committal warrants.



Goal

4

Better ways of working

Strategic Goal

We will continue to invest in and support our people to create a high-performing organisation, delivering on the modernisation agenda and broader government priorities.

Key Outcomes

- Learning and development supporting delivery of user-centric services to court users and staff learning for the new skills required to deliver the Modernisation Programme.
- A culture of continuous improvement with flexible working arrangements in place which maximise staff members' contribution to a high-performing organisation.
- Skilled staff with the capability to deliver on the Modernisation Programme, public service, and court reform.
- Innovation culture embedded where staff are inspired, empowered, and equipped to innovate.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Implement the People and Organisation Strategy to create a diverse organisation that supports digitally enabled operations and new ways of working.	1. Deliver Executive Development Programme to enhance the capability of the Executive and Senior Leaders to deliver change and transform the organisation, so we have a culture which supports delivery of our Strategic Vision 2030.	Completed.
	2. The results of the annual employee survey Healthy Place to Work (HPTW) for 2023 are communicated.	Completed.
	3. HPTW Action Plans based on findings and implementation progressed in advance of the 2024 survey in November.	Completed.
	4. 2024 Employee engagement survey issued.	Completed.
	5. Document the skills and behaviours required for successful performance as a Clerical Officer and an Executive Officer in a court office.	Completed.
	6. Workforce planning:	

2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
	a) Develop staffing model for Dublin Civil Office based on operational and HR trends.	Completed.
	b) Develop staffing model for the CCJ based on operational and HR trends.	Will be addressed in the next People and Organisation Strategy, to be completed in 2025.
	c) Determine the issues driving the turnover of court clerks at both EO and HEO grades and using these results to develop targeted interventions to improve retention of this critical cohort of staff.	Will be addressed in the next People and Organisation Strategy, to be completed in 2025.
	7. Liaise with criminal justice agencies (Director of Public Prosecutions and Legal Aid Board) to facilitate sectoral planned career moves.	Not feasible for the foreseeable future.
Build on existing Health and Safety Authority 'Work Positive' programmes.	8. Deliver the 2024 actions as per the Health & Wellbeing Plan.	Completed.
Implement Learning and Development workplan.	9. Deliver suite of individual and team development programmes.	Suite of individual and team development programmes delivered.
	10. Develop new entrant curriculum for Circuit and District HEO and Central Office.	Completed.
	11. Develop and commence delivery of programme for District Crime Registrars.	Scope of the programme has widened to include all grades working in District and Circuit crime.



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Implement our Innovation Strategy Goal 7.	12. Develop and launch Innovation Strategy 2024 – 2026.	Completed. Innovation Strategy launched in 2024.
	13. Innovation education programme roll-out commenced.	On hold due to team resourcing issues.
	14. Pilot post-trial support information for jurors and information to jurors in attendance.	Completed.
	15. Implement non-digital projects depending on capacity.	Information video to support juror empanelment successfully piloted in CCJ and Limerick. Rollout underway in other locations. Work progressed on Deed Poll project to review the current process. Delivery of plain language information and revised form scheduled for 2025.
Prevent discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of staff and of those to whom we provide services and meet our obligations under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014.	16. Implement Inclusion updated action plan to promote human rights and equality for 2024 building on progress of previous plan.	Inclusion plan 2024 was implemented, and actions have become part of the Courts Service calendar staples. This work for 2025 is business as usual.



Provide a modern and improved estate and facilities

Strategic Goal

Provide buildings that are modern, fit-for-purpose, safe and accessible and support the new ways in which we will conduct business.

Key Outcomes

- Enhanced facilities in our buildings for court users.
- Advanced progress on the development of user informed Family Law Court, supporting objectives of the Programme for Government.
- Biodiversity programme.
- Implementing and meeting our public service energy usage targets.
- An emphasis on sustainability is included in our fiscal, enterprise, innovation, and environmental approach and policies.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Conduct a National Review of Venues and implement the Estates Strategy to align with the future operating model.	1. Document outlining guiding principles of the Estate.	Completed.
	2. Commence the process of reconfiguring space within a Dublin venue to support a new operating environment.	This work has commenced and will continue in 2025.
Review condition assessment surveys and develop a strategy to move towards a Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) regime.	3. Report outlining current state of PPM and facilities management for the Estate and options for future regime.	Phase 1 completed in 2024. Phase 2, including stakeholder engagement, will take place in 2025.
	4. A roadmap outlining transition to the preferred maintenance regime.	This will be contingent on completion of work outlined in No.3 above.
Develop a user-centric approach to the development of new specialist Family Law Courts at Hammond Lane in Dublin.	5. Tender and appoint project advisors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Advisors. • Legal Advisors. 	Completed.
	6. Prepare output specifications.	This is ongoing and expected completed in 2025.
	7. Prepare Public Sector Benchmark (PSB).	PSB process has commenced.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
	8. Prepare Pre-qualification Questionnaire documentation.	Completed.
	9. Handover to National Development Finance Agency.	Expected Spring 2025.
	10. Commence Prequalification of tenderers.	Complete.
	11. Transfer Site into Courts Service ownership.	Pre-transfer work and enabling excavation works on the Hammond Lane site are underway.
Progress preparatory work on the priority capital projects in the National Development Plan 2018 – 2027.	12. Advance site acquisition or identification at Galway and Navan.	Engagement with Galway City Council continues.
Implement Environmental Sustainability vision for the Courts Service, including a strategy to achieve 2030 public sector energy and carbon targets.	13. Run a pathfinder 2030 courthouse project to identify the technical, financial, and operational challenges embedded in the 2030 targets. Technical site review and development of recommendations and outline costing completed in December 2023, for review and decision in 2024.	Completed.
	14. Complete individual sustainability strategy for Four Courts in cooperation with the OPW. Action individual sustainability strategies for 9 other significant energy users buildings: Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ), Phoenix House, 7 PPPs).	CCJ Energy Efficiency Action Plan being implemented on site on phased basis. Four Courts assessment ongoing. 7 BAM and Phoenix House plans being implemented. Regional PPP bundle approach agreed and projects underway.



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
	15. Develop a greener travel and electric vehicle charging policy. (guidance will be centrally led with each Public Sector Body to develop its own approach to meet the requirements).	Analysis completed. Awaiting central government clarification before finalising approach, confirming funding and resourcing requirement.
	16. Update of the Climate Action Roadmap.	Completed.
	17. Implement a structured water management programme to measure and compare water usage across the estate.	Assessment of bills and consolidation of information commenced.
	18. Achieve certification to ISO50001 (Energy Management Standard, required for Public Sector bodies with an energy spend of in excess of €2m per annum).	Intention is to progress all elements of ISO50001 to greatest extent throughout 2025 but certification is likely to be in 2026.



Accountability and Leadership

Strategic Goal

We will put in place robust governance structures to ensure effective accountability and leadership for our modernisation and reform agenda.

Key Outcomes

- A single organisational approach to managing change is embedded.
- Robust business continuity, analysis, and risk structures in place.
- Benefits of Modernisation Programme and reform agenda are realised.

Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Develop and implement a Single Change Governance Framework.	1. Continue to support with embedding the Single Approach to Change	The Single Approach to Change Governance Framework is well established. Part of business as usual is that new projects follow this framework and new project teams are given ongoing support to ensure continuing compliance.
	2. Provide an update on the Modernisation Programme including progress and outline of next phase of the programme to coincide with the estimates cycle.	Completed. Funding for 2025 has been secured.
Develop a new Strategic Plan covering 2024 to 2027.	3. Develop the new Strategic Plan for the Courts Service for the period 2024 to 2027.	Strategic Plan was completed and approved by the Courts Service Board in July 2024.
	4. Once developed, report quarterly on progress to implement the commitments in the new Strategic Plan, using the business planning framework.	Quarterly reporting happening as business as usual.
Monitor and report on the benefits accruing from the Modernisation Programme and reform agenda.	5. Define benefits reporting structure and implement schedule for reporting progress.	Completed.



Priorities	Target Activity for 2024	Update
Embed Business continuity processes.	6. Training programme to be undertaken by all staff.	We continue to promote and engage staff to do the training.
	7. Each office to formally review Business Continuity Plans, carrying out testing of plans under key operational functions including scenario testing.	37% of BC Office plans have been updated. Disaster Recovery testing scenarios have been signed off and available on the Courts Service Intranet.
	8. Manage engagement with National Shared Services Office (NSSO) and Justice Sector on the transition to a new Financial Accounting platform	Regular meetings underway and initial process mapping being compiled. Further meetings are scheduled early in 2025.



3

**The Year
in Numbers**



This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of data within the Courts Service, presenting breakdowns across all jurisdictions and areas of operation.

As part of the Courts Service Modernisation Programme, we are advancing our use of digital technologies and strengthening data management practices. The rollout of new case management systems in the High Court and Circuit Court—along with improved data collection processes—reflects our continued commitment to progress.

The data chapter in the Annual Report has also evolved, with a shift towards semi-automated data collection. This has reduced our reliance on manual and paper-based methods, delivering greater standardisation, consistency, and efficiency. Further enhancements are planned as we continue to modernise.

In 2023, we launched our Open Data portal, data.courts.ie, to provide easy and transparent access to Courts data. The portal is designed to be user-friendly, enabling users to explore trends and patterns through clear, accessible visuals. It features data from previous Annual Reports and will soon be updated to include data from 2024.

This marks just the beginning—more developments in open data are on the horizon as we work to make Courts data even more accessible and informative.

Overview

Civil Business By Jurisdiction	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
District Court	136,120	133,000	111,033	107,635
Circuit Court	25,772	28,954	19,047	21,120
High Court	21,371	17,346	17,360	14,374
Court of Appeal	293	325	362	368
Supreme Court	231	175	239	147
Total	183,787	179,800	148,120	143,644

Civil Business By Type	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Civil and commercial litigious cases	120,029	113,457	86,171	81,902
Civil and commercial non-litigious cases	55,648	61,047	52,732	56,545
Non-litigious enforcement cases	6,277	3,555	5,990	3,718
Appeals	1,811	1,701	3,218	1,450
Cases Stated	22	40	9	29
Total	183,787	179,800	148,120	143,644

Criminal Offences and Appeals By Jurisdiction	Incoming		Resolved*	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
District Court	350,852	329,714	309,787	294,100
Circuit Court	33,175	31,906	40,808	39,347
Special Criminal Court	68	35	47	55
Central Criminal Court	2,810	2,659	3338	2,998
Court of Appeal	3,194	2,701	2014	1,847
Supreme Court	59	41	51	45
Total	390,158	367,056	356,045	338,392

*by offence

Criminal offences and appeals total	Incoming		Resolved*	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Offences	373,733	349,283	337,659	320,586
Appeals	16,425	17,773	18,386	17,806
Total	390,158	367,056	356,045	338,392

*Resolved for Criminal matters is a count of orders made.

Civil Business

Civil Business Is Categorised By Case Type:

1. Civil And Commercial Litigious Cases

Comprise Cases Where One Party Is Suing Another; European Payment Order Applications; Corporate Insolvency Cases; Personal Insolvency Cases (Concerning Applications By Creditors); Appeals To The District Court And Litigious Enforcement Matters.

2. Civil And Commercial Non-Litigious Cases

Comprise Proceedings Issued In Ireland That Are Not Inter-Partes (Including Probate, Wards Of Court And Personal Insolvency Cases Concerning Applications By Debtors In Person); And Certain Foreign Proceedings.

3. Non-Litigious Enforcement Cases

Comprise Proceedings By Creditors Following Judgment To Procure Payment Of Debts Due.

4. Appeals

Comprise Civil And Family Law Appeals From The District Court To The Circuit Court; From The Circuit Court To The High Court; And From The High Court To The Court Of Appeal. They Also Include Applications For Leave To Appeal And Appeals To The Supreme Court.

5. Cases Stated

Are Instances Where A Court Asks For An Opinion On A Point Of Law From A Higher Court.



Civil statistics are presented by reference to cases/matters received and cases/matters resolved during the year. The majority of civil cases initiated in Ireland do not proceed to trial. Typically, they are either settled between the parties (with or without a court approving a settlement), are formally discontinued (involving notification to the defendant and the court), or are not pursued further by the plaintiff (without the plaintiff notifying the court). It is therefore not possible to provide figures for pending caseloads in most courts. Cases referred to as 'resolved' may include cases commenced in years other than 2023 or 2024.

1. Civil and Commercial Litigious Cases

A. Cases where one party is suing another: General

1. Personal injury (including medical negligence)

A person may pursue a claim for damages for personal injuries through the courts upon receipt of an authorisation from the Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB). This is a legal document issued in the absence of consent from the person responsible for the injury (the respondent) to the assessment of the claim by the PIAB or the rejection by either party of a PIAB assessment. PIAB does not deal with medical negligence claims.

Settlements in personal injury cases involving persons under 18 years (infant rulings) must be brought before the relevant court for approval prior to being accepted.

Amounts awarded include awards arising from contested cases and also settled matters where there is a requirement for Court Approval. Interim settlements are also included in the data but these do not reflect the total amount awarded. There can be many reasons why the total amounts awarded by the courts can go up and down but the most relevant impact on the total amount awarded in 2024 was that there were 8 less awards recorded in Medical Negligence cases last year compared to 2023.

High Court: Personal Injury			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
4,612	4,538	4,314	3,899

Personal Injury	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court*	Out of Court	By Court*	Out of Court
Circuit Court	7,228	7,495	6,070	293	6,539	337
District Court	1,149	1,401	695	N/A	718	N/A

* Cases dealt with by the court include all cases assigned to a judge. The majority of these cases are dealt with without a court hearing.

The District Court has power to award up to €15,000 in damages in personal injury cases and the Circuit Court has power to award up to €60,000, though both courts can make higher awards with the consent of the parties. The High Court has unlimited power to award damages.

Personal Injury Awards	District Court	
Amount	Cases	
	2024	2023
€0 to €7,500	222	278
€7,500 to €15,000	67	124
€15,000+	0	1
Total	289	403

Personal Injury Awards	Circuit Court	
Amount	Cases	
	2024	2023
€0 to €15,000	260	367
€15,000 to €60,000	383	499
€60,000+	3	5
Total	646	871

Personal Injury Awards	High Court	
Amount	Cases*	
	2024	2023
€0 to €60,000	143	136
€60,000 to €199,999	80	105
€200,000 to €499,999	24	29
€500,000+	53	66
Total	300	336

* includes medical negligence awards

	High Court		Circuit Court		District Court	
Amounts awarded*	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Lowest amount	€2,000	€1,279	€629	€1,000	€750	€500
Highest amount	€14,500,000	€20,500,000	€70,000	€76,841	€13,905	€15,000
Total amount	€135,598,424	€256,515,241	€12,811,201	€16,700,875	€1,542,134	€2,158,170

* includes medical negligence awards



Medical Negligence Awards:	High Court	
Amount	Cases	
	2024	2023
€0 to €60,000	33	38
€60,000 to €199,999	18	17
€200,000 to €499,999	14	13
€500,000+	34	38
Total	99	106

Medical Negligence Awards:	High Court	
Amount	Cases	
	2024	2023
Lowest amount awarded	€6,680	€14,000
Highest amount awarded	€14,500,000	€19,000,000
Total amount awarded	€93,376,275	€167,162,945

2. Negligence (excluding medical negligence causing personal injury)

Negligence claims are claims for damages against a person or persons against whom it is alleged breached a duty of care owed to the claimant resulting in pecuniary loss.

Negligence	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	161	132	95	123	70	119



3. Commercial

Commercial proceedings are defined in Rule 1 of Order 63A of the Rules of the Superior Courts. In short, they include claims in contract or tort arising out of business transactions where the value of the claim is not less than €1 million, intellectual property cases (including passing off), certain types of arbitration claims and appeals from, or judicial review applications in respect of, any statutory body where the judge in charge of the list considers that, having regard to the commercial or any other aspect of such an application it is one appropriate for entry into the commercial list.

Entry into the commercial list is not mandatory for any case types. Cases are only admitted to the list if one of the parties makes an application and the judge admits the case. They are not automatically admitted to the commercial list because of the relief sought and can be prosecuted in the chancery or in the non-jury lists if the parties so wish.

Previously, the Commercial Court heard a range of matters including significant planning and environment matters. With the establishment of the Planning and Environment list in December 2023, these matters are now commenced in that list which has reduced the number of incoming matters into the Commercial Court list.

Commercial	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court	76	106	108	89



4. Chancery

Chancery matters are dealt with in the High Court. They include injunction applications, company law motions, specific performance/rescission of contracts, administration of estates of deceased persons and trust actions.

Chancery	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	1,452	1,306	542	259	415	193

Analysis Of Incoming Cases	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Specific performance	140	100	93	99	125	145
Injunction	346	326	188	238	212	247
Declaration	499	348	425	487	663	633
European Communities Regulations*	22	12	5	6	2	3
Other	445	520	421	430	550	596
Total	1,452	1,306	1,132	1,260	1,552	1,624

* Cross Border Mergers S.I. No. 157 of 2008



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5. Property

Property (possession) cases are cases in which the plaintiff is seeking possession of lands and/or premises including family homes.

Other property cases include 'mortgage suits' (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), applications for ejectment, applications under Landlord & Tenant legislation, applications involving the Residential Tenancies Board and ground rent matters.

Property (Possession)	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	71	72	66	41	52	34
Circuit Court	1,064	1,019	299	0	381	0
Total	1,135	1,091	365	41	433	34

Property (Possession)	Orders Granted		Orders Not Granted	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Circuit Court	141	212	158	169

Property (Other)	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	32	10	9	6	18	2
Circuit Court	128	134	479	143	626	132
District Court	155	120	115	0	144	0
Total	315	264	603	149	788	134



6. Breach of contract

Where a party refuses or fails to fulfil an obligation imposed by a contract, the injured party can bring an action for damages. In this context, breach of contract cases do not include claims for liquidated damages.

The reason for the spike in new breach of contract cases was the commencement in 2024 of a large number of matters related to claims by householders in respect of defective building blocks due to the presence of Mica.

High Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2024	2023	2024		2023	
		By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
1,435	337	111	128	81	72

7. Recovery of debt (liquidated claims)

Actions to recover debt are generally taken by financial institutions seeking to recover specified amounts of money, often in respect of loans.

	Incoming		Resolved					
	2024	2023	2024			2023		
			By Court	Out of Court 1	Out of Court 2	By Court	Out of Court 1	Out of Court 2
High Court	909	857	204	642	210	188	276	202
Circuit Court	2,274	1,987	172	161	914	168	129	865
District Court	19,401	17,648	1,273	0	8,629	1,261	0	6,683
Total	22,584	20,492	1,649	803	9,753	1,617	405	7,750

1 Discontinuance

2 Judgments marked in the office – these figures are also on page 94 as part of the civil and commercial non-litigious statistics.



8. Defamation

Defamation is defined by the Defamation Act 2009 as the “publication, by any means, of a defamatory statement concerning a person to one or more than one person (other than the first-mentioned person)”.

	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	61	68	38	7	28	19
Circuit Court	228	292	0	14	7	35
Total	289	360	38	21	35	54

9. Assault

Assault claims are claims for damages against a person or persons against whom it is alleged intentionally attempted or threatened to inflict injury that placed the claimant in fear of imminent bodily harm or brought about an unconsented harmful or offensive contact with the claimant.

	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	144	148	81	28	66	35



10. Employment

Employment cases include those relating to the enforcement of and appeals relating to decisions of the Workplace Relations Commission brought under legislative provisions relating to matters such as unfair dismissal, payment of wages, adoption leave, parental leave and organisation of working time.

Employment (Dismissal)	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	1	2	0	0	0	0
Circuit Court	8	8	3	0	10	1
Total	9	10	3	0	10	1

Employment (Other)	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	10	5	3	0	3	0
Circuit Court	18	22	11	2	14	4
Total	28	27	14	2	17	4



11. Small claims

The Small Claims procedure provides an inexpensive way for consumers to resolve consumer complaints and business to make claims against other businesses, without the need to employ a solicitor. To make a claim under the Irish Small Claims procedure both the claimant and the respondent must be living or based within the State and the claim cannot exceed €2,000. Claims can be made online or lodged in person in the court office.

The European Small Claims Procedure, provided for in Regulation (EC) No. 861/2007 and the District Court Rules 1997-2014, is an alternative method of commencing and dealing with civil and commercial matters in respect of a small claim in cross-border cases. These are cases where at least one of the parties lives in a Member State of the European Union (excluding Denmark) other than the Member State of the court dealing with the claim. The claim cannot exceed €5,000. Claims cannot be made online.

Small Claims: Ireland* And EU: District Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2024	2023	2024		2023	
		By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
2,081	2,527	520	1,615	444	1,759

* claims include those made online.

Analysis Of Cases Dealt With	2024		2023	
	Ireland	EU	Ireland	EU
Not proceeded with	276	27	244	33
Decrees by default	336	25	336	15
Settled by registrar	818	37	936	105
Referred to court	478	42	439	5
Settled after notice to pay	96	0	90	0
Total	2,004	131	2,045	158

Adjudicated By The Court	2024		2023	
	Ireland	EU	Ireland	EU
Decrees granted	205	14	167	5
Cases dismissed	88	9	78	0
Withdrawn/struck out	185	19	194	0
Total	478	42	439	5



12. Proceeds of crime

The Proceeds of Crime Act 1996 provides for the civil forfeiture of property which is the proceeds of crime. Applications to the High Court under the Act are usually made by the Chief Bureau Officer of the Criminal Assets Bureau. If the court is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that a person is in possession or control of property which is or represents the proceeds of crime, it may order the freezing of the property and, after seven years, its disposal for the benefit of the Exchequer.

There was a 39% increase year on year reflected in the 2024 incoming case numbers. The “CAB” List takes place on the third Wednesday of every month.

High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
60	43	19	15



13. Judicial review

Judicial review applications are made when a person seeks an order in respect of the actions or decisions of certain courts, tribunal or regulatory bodies. Applications in asylum-related cases generally seek an order quashing the decision of a body such as the International Protection Appeals Tribunal, or an injunction restraining the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration from deporting them.

There was a 5.5% decrease in the number of Asylum judicial review cases in 2024 in comparison to 2023 figures. Waiting times for Asylum judicial reviews at pre-leave stage were significantly reduced in Q4 2024 in order to accommodate a potential increase in the number of asylum-related judicial review proceedings in 2025. In terms of judicial review more broadly, there was a 42.9% increase in the number of judicial review cases coming before the Courts in 2024 in comparison to 2023 figures. Judicial review is a broad mechanism encompassing a diverse and varied range of decisions made by State bodies by applicants who are represented as well as by Litigants in Person.

Judicial Review (Asylum Cases): High Court

Incoming		Resolved			
2024	2023	2024		2023	
		By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
736	779	366	5	406	0

Judicial Review (Non-Asylum cases): High Court

Incoming		Resolved			
2024	2023	2024		2023	
		By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
896	627	831	4	466	0

Judicial Review: High Court	(Asylum Cases)		(Non-Asylum Cases)	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Orders made:				
Granted	588	238	601	643
Refused	24	13	100	84
Strike Out	122	90	212	283
Miscellaneous - Interim	77	129	994	1,032
Miscellaneous - Final	272	358	144	142
Other	30	18	78	110
Total	1,113	846	2,129	2,294



14. Regulation of professions

The High Court deals with cases relating to the confirmation of, and appeals relating to, sanctions imposed by bodies regulated by statute affecting the ability of a registered professional to practice.

High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
232	189	183	163

15. Garda compensation

Members of An Garda Síochána who sustain injuries maliciously inflicted upon them in the performance of their duties or acting in their general capacity as a member of the force are entitled to apply to the High Court for compensation. Off duty members assaulted by virtue of them being a member of the force may also apply for compensation.

The commencement of the Garda Síochána (Compensation) Act 2022 means proceedings are no longer issued under this category. They are now issued by way of Garda Compensation Personal Injuries Summons and this category will cease to be reported on in the future.

High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
3	132	99	95

16. Habeas Corpus

Persons who believe they are being detained or held unlawfully, may apply to the High Court for an order of habeas corpus pursuant to Article 40.4 of the Constitution. This requires the person or institution detaining them to either produce the body of the person detained before the court or release that person from such detention.

In some instances, applications are issued and do not proceed. In others, the matter is resolved without recourse to the court following the making of an interim order.

Habeas Corpus applications rose by 22% in 2024 over 2023 figures. Given the urgent nature of these applications, they have to be heard in an expeditious manner.

Habeas Corpus: High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
83	68	56	43

17. Extradition

The Extradition List of the High Court is based in the Criminal Courts of Justice. The High Court is responsible for the execution of European Arrest Warrants (pursuant to the European Arrest Warrant Act 2003 [as amended]), warrants pertaining to the provisions of the Trade and Co-operation Agreement (2020) and from third countries outside of the European Union (pursuant to the Extradition Act 1965 [as amended]). Extradition may only be granted for offences carrying a sentence of at least one year under the statutes of the state seeking the extradition of an individual and Irish law. In the circumstances where a sentence has been imposed, it is required to be at least 4 months in duration.

The rollout of the Unified Court-Management System (UCMS) has enhanced the collation of statistics relating to the Extradition List of the High Court for 2024 over previous years. The table below outlines the warrant type which initiated extradition proceedings based on the refined data extracted from UCMS.

There was an 8% increase in the number of cases year-on-year between 2023 and 2024. Proceedings in the Extradition List operate in accordance with prescribed timelines as set forth in legislation. The effect of these timelines is reflected in the number of proceedings resolved by the courts in 2024 and 2023.

Extradition Proceedings by initiating Warrant Type: 2024	
Warrant Type	Total
European Arrest Warrant / Schengen Information System Alert	149
Trade Cooperation Arrest Warrant	112
1965 Arrest Warrant	4

Extradition: High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
265	245	226	236



18. Bail

Most bail applications in the High Court relate to appeals from the District Court where bail has been refused. However, there are some bail applications (i.e. in relation to murder and offences against the State etc.) which can only be dealt with in the High Court and such cases that specifically must go before the High Court Bail List are outlined in Section 29 of The Criminal Procedures Act.

Other examples of bail applications that are dealt with by the High Court are variations to High Court and District Court Bail, Revocations of Bail, Arrest and Committal Warrants, Consolidation Orders and Compassionate Bail Applications.

There was a marginal increase in the number of bail applications coming into the High Court bail list in 2024 (2.35%). The High Court Bail List runs 5 days per week and is based in Cloverhill Courthouse.

High Court: Bail			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
1,871	1,828	1,279	1,297

19. Planning and Environment

A new Planning and Environment Court division of the High Court was formally launched in December 2023. This Court deals with cases involving commercial planning and strategic infrastructure and will replace those that were previously sent to the Strategic Infrastructure list. For comparison purposes the numbers for 2023 below are the number of cases in the Strategic Infrastructure list which would have been part of the Commercial List.

High Court: List Planning & Environment List				
Planning and Environment List	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court	241	108	253	129



Cases where one party is suing another: 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.

1. Divorce

A decree of divorce dissolves a marriage and allows each party to remarry. Before a court can grant a divorce, the parties must have been married and living apart for at least 2 out of the previous 3 years (previously this was 4 out of the previous 5 years). There must be no reasonable prospect of reconciliation; and proper arrangements must have been made or will be made for the spouse and any dependent members of the family.

Divorce:	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	91	64	65	2	41	0
Circuit Court	4,913	5,154	4,617	0	4,809	0
Total	5,004	5,218	4,682	2	4,850	0

Divorce:	2024			2023		
	Granted	Refused	Other	Granted	Refused	Other
High Court	48	0	3	27	0	4
Circuit Court	4,614	3	0	4,804	5	5
Total	4,662	3	3	4,831	5	9



2. Judicial separation

A decree of judicial separation removes the obligation on spouses to co-habit. The most common ground on which a decree is granted is where the court considers that a normal marital relationship has not existed between the spouses for at least one year before the date of the application for the decree.

Judicial Separation:	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	22	27	17	0	16	1
Circuit Court	482	540	292	0	247	0
Total	504	567	309	0	263	1

Judicial Separation:	2024			2023		
	Granted	Refused	Other	Granted	Refused	Other
High Court	9	0	0	9	0	2
Circuit Court	292	0	N/A	246	1	N/A
Total	301	0	0	255	1	2

3. Dissolution of partnership

The Courts can dissolve civil partnerships in a similar way to the granting of divorce. A decree of dissolution allows both parties to a civil partnership to marry.

Dissolution Of Partnership	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Circuit Court	38	44	33	33

Dissolution Of Partnership	2024			2023		
	Granted	Refused	Other	Granted	Refused	Other
Circuit Court	32	1	0	32	1	0

4. Cohabitation

These are claims made under the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations Of Cohabitants Act 2010 in respect of claimants who are living together in an intimate and committed relationship, not married to each other, not in a registered civil partnership and not related to each other.

High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
9	9	8	2

5. Nullity

Nullity of marriage (civil nullity or civil annulment) is a legal declaration by the court which states that although two people went through a marriage ceremony, their marriage never actually existed in the eyes of the law or the State. There are two types of marriages that may be annulled or cancelled - void marriages and voidable marriages.

A void marriage is considered to have never taken place. A voidable marriage is considered to be a valid marriage until a decree of annulment is made.

Nullity of civil partnership is a declaration by a court that a supposed civil partnership is null and void and that no valid civil partnership exists between the partners. In nullity of civil partnership law, there are only void civil partnerships.

Nullity (Of Marriage)	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court	0	0	0	0
Circuit Court	15	9	5	2
Total	15	9	5	2

Nullity (Of Marriage)	2024			2023		
	Granted	Refused	Other	Granted	Refused	Other
High Court	3	0	0	0	0	0
Circuit Court	4	1	0	2	0	0
Total	7	1	0	2	0	0



6. Guardianship, custody, access

Guardianship means the rights and duties of parents in respect of the upbringing of their children. **Custody** is the right of a parent to exercise physical care and control in respect of the upbringing of his or her child on a day-to-day basis. **Access** is contact between a child and its parent or other relative with whom the child does not live. The majority of applications in all three areas are made to the District Court.

Guardianship, Custody, Access: District Court

Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
10,855	10,901	11,507	10,597

7. Maintenance

Maintenance is financial support (money) paid by a person for the benefit of a dependent spouse/civil partner and/or dependent children. Spouses/civil partners are required to maintain each other according to their means and needs. Parents, whether married or not, are responsible for the maintenance of their dependent children. If the parties cannot reach an agreement about maintenance an application can be made to the court for a maintenance order. The majority of applications for maintenance are made to the District Court.

Applications for maintenance in the Circuit Court are usually made as part of applications for judicial separation and/or divorce.

Maintenance	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court	1	1	0	0
District Court *	5,845	5,730	5,986	5,295

* excludes foreign maintenance – see page 102 (Section under 'Foreign Proceeding')

8. Domestic violence

Domestic violence legislation protects spouses/civil partners and children and offers legal remedies to dependent persons and persons in other domestic relationships where their safety or welfare is at risk because of the conduct of the other person in the relationship. It also gives An Garda Síochána powers to arrest without warrant where there is a breach of a court order.

Safety Order

A Safety Order is a full or long-term order that directs the respondent to stop engaging in violence or threats of violence, but does not order them to leave the home.

If the respondent is not living at the family home, it directs them to stay away from, being near, or watching the home. A Safety Order might also direct them to stop following or communicating in any way with the person applying for the Order (the applicant) and any dependent children. A judge will decide on these issues on a case-by-case basis.

Barring Order

A Barring Order is a full or long-term order that directs the respondent to leave - or stay away from - the applicant's home and any dependent children. In some cases, it can direct them to stop using violence or threats. It may also direct them to stop following, or communicating in any way with the applicant and dependent children. It can only be issued to current spouses or civil partners, or certain people who have an equal or greater ownership rights in the home than the respondent.

The applicant can apply for either an Interim Barring Order or Protection Order while waiting for the Court to hear the application for a full Barring Order. Both applications can be made at the same time.

Protection Order

A Protection Order is a short-term order. It is sometimes called a 'Temporary Safety Order' because it gives the same protection as a Safety Order but over a shorter time period. A Protection Order directs the respondent to stop committing further violence or threats of violence. A judge can make this order if they believe there is an immediate risk of significant harm to the applicant or any dependent children.

If the respondent is living with the applicant, it does not order them to leave the home. If the respondent is not living with the applicant, it directs them to stay away from, being near or watching the applicant's home. A Protection Order might also direct them to stop following or communicating in any way with the applicant and any dependent children.

The applicant can seek a Protection Order while waiting for the Court to hear the full application for a Safety Order or a Barring Order. Both applications can be made at the same time.

Interim barring order

An Interim Barring Order is a temporary and immediate order. It directs the respondent to leave - and stay away from - the applicants home and any dependent children. They must do this once they are aware that the order is in place. In some cases, it can direct them to stop using violence or threats. It may also direct them to stop following or communicating in any way with the applicant and dependent children.

A judge can make this order if they believe there is an immediate risk of significant harm to the applicant or dependent children and that a Protection Order would not be a sufficient safeguard. The applicant can ask for an Interim Barring Order while waiting for the court to hear an application for a full Barring Order. Both applications can be made at the same time.



Domestic Violence: District Court

Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
25,270	25,570	25,739	24,194

Domestic Violence: Circuit Court - Outcomes

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Orders Made	77	71	38	38	38	38

District Court: Domestic Violence - Trends*

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Barring Order applications	2,934	3,326	2,933	2,987	3,577	3,323
Barring Orders granted	813	849	732	810	1,159	1,137
Protection Order applications	9,745	9,641	8,719	8,269	7,649	7,049
Protection Orders granted*	8,009	7,971	5,815	6,917	6,592	5,864
Safety Order applications	9,956	9,913	9,317	8,918	8,887	8,061
Safety Orders granted	3,398	2,975	2,475	2,461	2,467	2,688
Interim Barring Order applications	2,129	2,064	1,951	1,917	1,918	1,643
Interim Barring Orders granted	1,190	1,105	951	1,141	1,251	1,209
Other applications	506	619	616	505	915	418
Orders granted	273	346	223	291	376	184

* Some interim Barring Orders were granted on foot of applications for Protection Orders. Likewise, some Protection Orders were granted on foot of Interim Orders.

9. Adoption

These are applications made under the Adoption Act 2010 for the making of adoption orders and challenges thereto.

Adoption: High Court

Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
53	31	45	34

10. Child abduction: Hague Luxembourg Convention

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (1980) is the main convention covering child abduction. The Convention seeks to protect children from the harmful effects of abduction and retention across international boundaries by providing a procedure to bring about their prompt return. It is based on the principle that the court of the child's habitual residence is best placed to decide any custody disputes.

Ireland is a signatory to *The Hague and Luxembourg Conventions*. These conventions have been incorporated into Irish domestic law by the Child Abduction and Enforcement of Custody Orders Act 1991.

Child Abduction: High Court - Analysis

Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
26	33	27	24

Child Abduction: High Court - Analysis

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Incoming	26	33	30	32	21	34
Orders made						
Assess child	12	22	7	17	7	11
Interim Order*	70	149	103	85	44	81
Child returned (on consent)	4	7	3	15	6	6
Child returned (court order)	1	5	2	8	4	7
Child remain (on consent)	3	10	7	9	5	7
Child remain (court order)	7	7	8	1	1	1
Other	18	14	0	10	5	20
Total	115	214	130	145	72	133

* there may be a number of Interim Orders made in individual cases



11. Childcare - 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 Tusla - the Child and Family Agency for their care. 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. The vast majority of applications are made to the District Court.

Emergency Care Orders

Tusla can apply for an Emergency Care Order for a child who is still at home or for one who has been removed by An Garda Síochána. In exceptional cases this type of order can be sought 'ex parte' without notice to the parent (e.g. a child may be found in a very vulnerable position unaccompanied with no adult carer). While exceptional applications may be made without notice being given to the parents or guardians of the child, generally, when An Garda Síochána remove a child, Tusla notify the parent and the parent is in Court when the matter is heard. The order will be made if the judge considers that there is an immediate and serious risk to the health or welfare of the child requiring him/her to be placed, or to remain in, the care of Tusla.

Care Orders and Interim Care Orders

Tusla must apply for a Care Order or a Supervision Order (see below) if a child needs care and protection which he/she is unlikely to receive without an order. The District Court judge may make an interim care order while the decision on a full care order is pending. This means that the child is placed in the care of Tusla for 29 days. It may be extended if Tusla and the parents agree or if the court finds that the threshold criteria for the making of the order continue to exist. Parents/guardians must be given notice of an Interim Care Order application or the extension of the order unless exceptional circumstances exist making this impossible.

Supervision Orders

A Supervision Order is an alternative to children being taken into the care of Tusla. It may be applied for by the Tusla instead of a Care Order. Tusla may consider that a care order is not necessary or appropriate in the circumstances, but that the child should be visited regularly by a social worker under a court Supervision Order.

The court can make a Supervision Order as an alternative, more proportionate remedy at the care order stage – but not at the Interim Care Order stage. During the application for a Care Order the court may decide that a Supervision Order will address the risk of harm identified by Tusla. A Supervision Order may also be made when the court has heard most of the evidence but needs more time to conclude the care proceedings.

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. There may also be applications for a variety of orders in the same case.

Supervision and Care Orders	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court*	67	79	51	1	25	0
District Court	21,797	17,504	12,973	0	11,457	0
Total	21,864	17,583	13,024	1	11,482	0

*This figure includes a small number of Guardianship of Infant Acts cases.

Child Care: High Court – Analysis

	2024	2023	2022	2021
Received	99	62	71	156
Orders made	289	202	279	259

Child Care: District Court - Analysis

	Incoming				Resolved			
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2024	2023	2022	2021
Supervision Order	361	417	439	376	343	319	343	299
Care Order	1,004	951	926	871	915	974	767	661
Extension of Care Order	502	784	708	697	519	793	693	748
Interim Care Order	1,448	1,529	1,388	1,369	840	736	832	860
Extension of Interim Care Order	6,926	6,002	6,087	6,052	6,991	5,942	5,252	5,782
Emergency Care Order	280	288	322	325	270	274	255	267
Review of Care Order	2,825	2,052	1,582	1,238	531	573	427	529
Re-entry of case	1,312	910	563	448	383	386	204	253
Other*	7,139	4,571	2,899	2,662	2,181	1,460	1,221	1,296
Total	21,797	17,504	14,914	14,038	12,973	11,457	9,994	10,695

*The “Other” section covers amongst others, After Care Assessment; After Care Review, Interjurisdictional Applications, Section 43a - Foster Parent Enhanced Rights, Section 25 - Mental Health Act, Section 37 - Access, Section 47 - Welfare of a child, Vary/ Discharge Care Order, Production Orders and F.M.’s



Child Care: Court - Analysis of applications resolved

	Application granted		Application not granted	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Supervision Order	269	262	74	57
Care Order	765	744	150	230
Extension of Care Order	495	748	24	45
Interim Care Order	704	640	136	96
Extension of Interim Care Order	6,865	5,799	126	143
Emergency Care Order	235	260	35	14
Review of Care Order	417	488	114	85
Re-entry of case	303	329	80	57
Other	1,922	1,261	259	199
Total	11,975	10,531	998	926

Family: Other

Included in this data are appeals of Family Law orders made in the Circuit Court, family law applications under the High Court's Inherent Jurisdiction and applications under Council Regulation (E) 4/2009 matters relating to maintenance

Family Law: Other	Incoming		Resolved			
	2024	2023	2024		2023	
			By Court	Out of Court	By Court	Out of Court
High Court	75	78	30	0	43	1
Circuit Court	263	319	18	0	27	0
District Court	1,928	1,492	1,776	0	1,726	0
Total	2,266	1,889	1,824	0	1,796	1

Assisted Decision-Making

The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 was signed into law on the 30 December 2015. The Act is about supporting decision-making and maximising a person's capacity to make decisions. The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) (Amendment) Act 2022 was signed into law in 2022. This amending legislation was necessary for the full commencement of the 2015 Act and to streamline processes and improve safeguards.

The 2015 Act brings about important changes for people who may require support to make decisions. These decisions can be about their personal welfare, health, social care, and their property and affairs. The Act introduced new arrangements to replace the Wards of Courts system for adults, and requires all adult wards to be discharged from wardship within three years of commencement of the Act. It introduces a tiered system of decision support arrangements for people who need help with making decisions.

Circuit Court: Assisted Decision Making

Incoming Applications	2024	2023
Capacity Application	871	299
Ex Parte Consent Application	398	114
Total	1,269	413
Cases	2024	2023
Incoming	950	348
Cases with a DMR assigned	622	118





Corporate insolvency

1. Examinership

Examinership is a process in Irish law whereby the protection of the court is obtained to assist the survival of a company. It allows a company to restructure with the approval of the court.

Examinership: High Court															
Incoming		Resolved													
		Out of Court		By Court											
		Petition Withdrawn		Appoint interim examiner*		Appoint examiner*		Extend time		Order reports		Wind up company		Misc.	
2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
3	7	1	5	5	15	1	8	1	9	2	2	0	3	0	1

* Figures for appointment of interim examiner and examiner may not be mutually exclusive as appointment of interim examiner often precedes appointment of examiner.

Examinership: Circuit Court							
Incoming				Resolved			
2024		2023		2024		2023	
4		0		0		1	

2. Liquidation

The Examiner's Office of the High Court continues to assist the Court in the supervision of pre-Companies Act 2014 liquidations, with particular regard towards bringing any outstanding liquidations to a timely conclusion.

The number of winding up petitions presented in 2024 is just over double the number presented in 2023. Approximately 37% of the total number of Winding Up petitions presented in 2024 were presented by the Revenue's Collector General compared to 14% of the total in 2023.

Wind Up Company Orders: High Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2024	2023	2024		2023	
		Settled/ struck out/ withdrawn	Order made	Settled/ struck out/ withdrawn	Order made
89	44	68	128	41	128

3. Restrict Directors

In certain circumstances an application can be made to the High Court to have a company director restricted from acting as a director or secretary of a company or be concerned or take part in the formation or promotion of a company. Restriction orders remain in force for a period of five years and confine a person to being a director in certain types of companies that have been adequately capitalised by their shareholders.

Restrict Directors: High Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2024	2023	2024		2023	
		Order made	Order refused	Order made	Order refused
5	4	5	0	5	0

4. Disqualify Directors

In certain circumstances the High Court may disqualify a person from being appointed or acting as a director or other officer, statutory auditor, receiver, liquidator or examiner or being in any way, whether directly or indirectly, concerned or taking part in the promotion, formation or management of certain corporate bodies. These circumstances include where the court is satisfied that the person is guilty of fraud or is in breach of his/her duty under Company Law or that the conduct of the person makes him/her unfit to be concerned in the management of a company.

Disqualified Directors: High Court					
Incoming		Resolved			
2024	2023	2024		2023	
		Order made	Order refused	Order made	Order refused
5	1	3	1	1	3



Personal insolvency

Personal insolvency (creditors' applications)

Applications to have a person adjudicated bankrupt are filed in the Office of the Examiner of the High Court. Following the making of an Adjudication Order ownership of the bankrupt's property is transferred to the Official Assignee in Bankruptcy (who manages the Bankruptcy Division within the Insolvency Service of Ireland). He/she is an independent statutory officer who administers the estate of the bankrupt person and is answerable to the High Court.

Bankruptcy applications may be made by creditors or by debtors in person. See below for details of pre-bankruptcy applications by creditors ('bankruptcy summonses') and applications by creditors to have debtors adjudicated bankrupt. Details of applications by debtors to be adjudicated bankrupt ('self-adjudications') and information about debt settlement procedures introduced under the Personal Insolvency Act, 2012 are on page 100.

Under the provisions of the Bankruptcy (Amendment) Act 2015 a person is automatically discharged from bankruptcy one year after the order of adjudication unless the period is extended by the High Court upon application by the Official Assignee in Bankruptcy.

Personal Insolvency: High Court	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
			Adjudicated / granted / approved	Adjudicated / granted / approved
Bankruptcy summonses	26	10	22	11
Bankruptcy petitions (creditors)	8	13	3	7

Appeals to District Court

There are a number of statutory entitlements to appeal decisions of regulatory bodies to the District Court. They include decisions regarding the award of taxi licences and gun licences.

Appeals To The District Court		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
104	86	126	66

Litigious enforcement

Following judgment, the creditor in a case can apply to the District Court for an Instalment Order against the debtor requiring him/her to pay the debt in instalments. The District Court can subsequently vary the amount ordered to be paid (variation order). If the debtor fails to make the instalments as ordered by the District Court, the creditor can apply for an Order committing the debtor to prison (Committal Order).

Summons For Attendance Of Debtor: District Court				
2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
958	949	1,094	1,243	1,240

Litigious Enforcement	Outcome	
	2024	2023
Instalment Orders issued	1,141	1,097
Variation Orders issued	60	67
Committal Orders issued	7	1



2. Civil and Commercial Non-Litigious Cases

Proceedings in Ireland

1. Judgments marked in the office

Where a defendant does not respond to a summary summons in the High Court, a civil bill in the Circuit Court, or a claim notice in the District Court; or where the Master of the High Court gives liberty to enter 'final' judgment, the plaintiff can apply to have judgment 'marked' (awarded) against the defendant in the court office.

Judgement Marked in the office	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court	222	220	222	220
Circuit Court	1,251	887	914	865
District Court	6,800	6,649	8,629	6,683
Total	8,273	7,756	9,765	7,768

2. Deed poll

Persons requiring documentary confirmation of a change of name, other than on marriage, may need to execute a document called a 'deed poll'. The deed poll can be lodged in the Central Office of the High Court.

The number of people applying to register a change of their name on foot of a deed poll continues to increase, with the number in 2024 representing an 18% increase on the number of applicants in 2023 and a 39% increase on the number in 2022.

Deed Poll: High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
989	835	989	835

3. Probate

A legal document called a *Grant of Representation* is required for authority to administer the estate of a deceased person. If there is a will, the executor needs to take out probate. If there is no will, or, if no executor has been appointed or the appointed person cannot act, an administrator may be appointed, and he/she takes out a Letter of Administration (or a Letter of Administration with Will Annexed if there is a will).

The Principal Probate Registry in the country is located in Dublin and the 14 District Probate Registries are in the Combined Court Offices in Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford, Cork, Tralee, Limerick, Clonmel, Castlebar, Galway, Letterkenny, Sligo, Dundalk, Cavan and Mullingar.

2024 saw a record number of grants of representation issued as the Dublin Probate Office strove to reduce waiting times for applications, in advance of the planned introduction of the eProbate project in 2025.

Probate: Incoming Applications

	2024	2023
Applications Lodged	10,606	11,331
Local registries	10,737	10,199
Total	21,343	21,530

Probate	Probate (And Administrations With Wills Annexed): Grants Issued		Intestacy - Grants Issued	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Principal Registry	10,614	8,418	2,523	1,988
Local registries	8,183	7,153	1,928	1,682
Total	18,797	15,571	4,451	3,670





4. Wards of Court

Historically when a person became unable to manage his or her assets because of mental incapacity, an application was made to have the person to become a Ward of Court. Since commencement of Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, as amended, no new applications have been received for adult wards of court. The Wards of Court Office is now processing discharge applications, the Court will make orders, where appropriate for a decision support person to be appointed and the person's assets and property will be returned to them.

A person under 18 years of age may still be taken into wardship as a minor and subsequently discharged from wardship on turning 18 years.

2024 was the second year after the commencement of the Act and saw a reduction in the numbers of Wardship cases on hand due to the discharge of people from Wardship, as well as their dismissal following the deaths of some Wards of Court.

Wards Of Court: High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
33	206	45	241

Wards Of Court: High Court		
	2024	2023
Wardship cases*	2,638	2,944
Applications awaiting hearing	15	85
Adults and minors taken into wardship (declaratory orders)	45	239
Dismissed/discharged	260	142
Orders signed	1,529	2,066
ADMCA Discharge Applications Received	304	82
ADMCA – Discharge	12	3
ADMCA – Discharge - Co-Decision Maker	4	0**
ADMCA – Discharge - Decision Making Representative	62	13

* This figure includes all Adult and Minor declared and deceased wardship cases, as they are active cases in the office.

** Two cases have been approved by the court for discharge with a Co-Decision Maker but are pending the registration of a co-decision making agreement by the Decision Support Service.

Wards Of Court: Active Cases:

	2024	2023
Reason admitted to wardship		
Brain injury	2	27
Dementia and age-related illness	10	116
Learning/intellectual disability	6	36
Minors (under 18 years of age)	23	28
Psychiatric illness	4	32
Total	45	239

5. General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court

The General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court is a solicitor in the service of the State appointed by the President of the High Court to act in certain wardship matters. He/she is accountable to the High Court for all monies and assets under his/her control relating to the affairs of a minor or ward. The General Solicitor can only act as solicitor in those matters assigned to them by the Registrar of the Wards of Court. He/she cannot take on private clients like a solicitor in private practice.

In 2024, the Office of the General Solicitor continued to bring applications to discharge Wards of Court from wardship, under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015.

General Solicitor For Minors And Wards Of Court

	2024	2023
Active (yearly average)	645	763
Pending	2	4
Dismissal	493	392

General Solicitor For Minors And Wards Of Court: Active Cases

	2024	2023
Reason admitted to wardship		
Brain injury	79	94
Dementia and age-related illness	131	187
Learning/intellectual disability	231	265
Minors (under 18 years of age)	11	12
Psychiatric illness	162	193
Other	31	14
Total	645	765



6. Enduring Powers of Attorney (registered)

An enduring power of attorney (EPA) allows another specially appointed person ('the attorney') to make 'personal care decisions' on the donor's behalf once he/she is no longer fully mentally capable of making decisions him/herself. Personal care decisions may include deciding where and with whom the donor will live, who he/she should see or not see and what training or rehabilitation he/she should get.

The Enduring Powers of Attorney registered in the Office of Wards of Court in 2024 represent those EPAs signed by people prior to the commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2025.

Enduring Powers Of Attorney (Registered): High Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
1,633	1,666	1,246	1,452

7. Care representatives

Where a person has reduced capacity to make certain decisions (that is, diminished mental capacity) and wishes to apply for a Nursing Home Loan, the Circuit Court can appoint a Care Representative to act on behalf of the person in respect of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme and especially in respect of the Nursing Home Loan. The Care Representative can also act on behalf of the person in relation to making an application for a Care Needs Assessment, State support, or any other matter relating to the scheme.

Care Representatives: Circuit Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
3	267	1	286

8. Mental Health Act applications

A person can appeal the making of an admission order or a renewal order by a mental health tribunal to the Circuit Court under the Mental Health Act 2001.

Mental Health Act Applications: Circuit Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
160	119	45	42

9. Personal insolvency (self)

The Insolvency Service of Ireland administers the debt settlement procedures introduced under the Personal Insolvency Act 2012. The Act introduced three debt resolution mechanisms for people who cannot afford to pay their personal debts. Applications may be made to the Circuit Court or to the High Court.

A **Debt Relief Notice** allows for the write-off of qualifying debt up to €35,000, subject to a 3-year supervision period. The Circuit Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear applications.

A **Protective Certificate** (PIA & DSA) offers a debtor and their assets protection from legal proceedings by creditors in respect of debts for a limited time while they are applying for a DSA or PIA. A Protective Certificate remains in force for a period of 70 days but may be extended in limited circumstances.

A **Debt Settlement Arrangement** applies to the agreed settlement of unsecured debts, usually over a period of 5 years. The Circuit Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear applications where the total value of unsecured debts does not exceed €2.5m. Where qualifying debts exceed €2.5m but do not exceed €3m, jurisdiction is vested in the High Court. For debts above €3m, the Act does not apply, and people are expected in the main to consider applying for bankruptcy.

An **Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Debt Settlement Arrangement** is an objection made by a Creditor to the proposal for a Debt Settlement Arrangement

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. The Circuit Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear applications where the total value of qualifying debts does not exceed €2.5m. Where qualifying debts exceed €2.5m but do not exceed €3m, jurisdiction is vested in the High Court.

An **Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Personal Insolvency Arrangement** is an objection made by a Creditor to the proposal for a Personal Insolvency Arrangement.

An Application Pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015 affords a debtor an opportunity to have Personal Insolvency Arrangements ("PIA"s), which has been rejected by creditors, reviewed by the Court under certain circumstances.

An **Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Application Pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015** is an objection made by a Creditor to the proposal for an Application pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015

Bankruptcy applications may be made to the High Court by creditors or by debtors in person ('self-adjudications'). See below for details of applications by debtors to be

adjudicated bankrupt. Details of pre-bankruptcy applications by creditors ('bankruptcy summonses') and details of applications by creditors to have debtors adjudicated bankrupt are on page 92.



Personal Insolvency: High Court

	Incoming		Resolved – by Court							
			Approve request		Refused		Struck out		Withdrawn	
	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Debt settlement arrangements	3	3	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Personal insolvency arrangements	7	5	7	10	0	1	0	0	2	0
Total	10	8	9	14	0	2	0	0	2	0

Personal Insolvency: Circuit Court

	Incoming		Resolved – by Court							
			Approve request		Refused		Struck out			
	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Debt relief notices	239	171	241	163	0	1	0	0		
Debt settlement arrangements	85	96	79	98	0	0	0	1		
Personal Insolvency Arrangements	618	548	655	535	3	0	10	0		
Protective Certificate (PIA & DSA)	1,264	1,369	1,304	1,296	2	0	7	1		
Application Pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015	363	337	181	109	209	36	25	1		
Application to Extend the Period of a Protective Certificate (PIA and DSA)	592	576	583	563	2	5	0	0		
Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Application Pursuant to Section 115A(9) of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012-2015	277	264	186	38	27	18	14	2		
Objection of Creditor to a Proposal for Personal Insolvency Arrangement	15	25	21	6	8	2	4	0		
Total	3,453	3,386	3,250	2,808	251	62	60	5		

Bankruptcy Petitions (Self): High Court

Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
		Adjudicated / granted / approved	Adjudicated / granted / approved
74	65	68	65

Personal Insolvency Appeals from the Circuit Court to the High Court

	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court	125	7	20	46

10. Licensing

The majority of applications for licences are made to the District Court. They include pub, restaurant, dance and lottery licences with applications for special exemption orders comprising over 80% of applications in any year. Special exemption orders exempt the holder of an on-licence from the provisions of the Intoxicating Liquor Act relating to prohibited hours in respect of licensed premises.

Licensing	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Circuit Court	201	250	200	209
District Court	40,276	41,884	39,686	41,844
Total	40,477	42,134	39,886	41,693

11. Marriage exemption

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.

Marriage Exemption: Short Notice: Circuit Court

Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
502	521	402	484



Foreign proceedings

1. Service of documents

Service Of Documents	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court*	105	102	49	58

* Hague Convention (proceedings initiated in non-EU countries)

Service of Documents: Circuit Court	Incoming		Outgoing Requests	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Circuit Court	3,045	3,720	95	94

2. Maintenance (foreign)

Maintenance (Foreign)	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court*	42	30	0	0
District Court	104	124	38	83

* applications under Regulation (EC) 4/2020

3. Other

Taking Of Evidence: Circuit Court			
Incoming		Resolved	
2024	2023	2024	2023
73	88	72	88

3. Non-Litigious Enforcement Cases

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 ('enforce the judgment'). In general, once the creditor has a Judgment Order, the judgment can be enforced. Enforcement orders can be issued by court offices – the creditor does not have to go back to court for the order. Creditors have 12 years from the date of the judgment to look for Enforcement Orders.

1. Execution Orders issued – following judgments marked in the office in debt cases

	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court*	357	213	357	213
Circuit Court	1,251	630	914	865
Total	1,608	843	1,271	1,078

* includes Execution Orders issued on foot of court orders

2. Execution Orders issued – on foot of court orders

	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Circuit Court	299	360	333	383

3. Execution Orders issued – possession cases

	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court	9	8	9	8
Circuit Court	183	216	199	234
Total	192	224	208	242

4. Judgments registered

Judgments Registered *	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court; Circuit Court; District Court	3,301	1,238	3,301	1,238

* judgments of High Court, Circuit Court and District Court are registered in High Court Central Office



5. Judgment mortgage certificates issued

Judgment Mortgage Certificates Issued	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court	171	261	171	261
Circuit Court	279	225	279	225
District Court	287	266	287	266
Total	737	752	737	752

6. Satisfaction piece issued

Satisfaction Piece Issued	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
High Court	31	51	31	51
Circuit Court	41	26	41	26
District Court	68	61	68	61
Total	140	138	140	138



4. Appeals

Appeals (Civil and Family Law)				
	Incoming		Resolved	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Circuit Court to High Court	416	318	299	225
District Court to Circuit Court	871	883	2,318	710

5. Cases Stated

Case stated is a procedure by which a court or tribunal can ask another court for its opinion on a point of law. There are two kinds: consultative case stated and appeal by way of case stated.

	2024		2023	
	Received	Orders made	Received	Orders made
District Court to High Court	12	6	13	9
Revenue to High Court	10	3	27	20

6. Miscellaneous

1. Written judgments

The High Court may decide following the hearing of a matter to 'reserve' its decision to another date. The decision may subsequently be delivered in the form of a written judgment. Many High Court judgments are available on the website of the Service: courts.ie.

High Court				
Written Judgments	2024	2023	2022	2021
Delivered	707	691	738	810



2. Notices of Motion

A Notice of Motion is a formal notice to participants in litigation of an intention on the part of another party to seek particular relief from the court. There may be numerous Notices of Motion issued in the course of an action and Notices of Motion may be adjourned a number of times before they are dealt with.

Notices Of Motion	Issued/dealt with	
	2024	2023
High Court	10,060	10,172
Circuit Court	24,848	25,947

* includes adjournments

3. Case Progression (Family Law)

Case Progression is the term given to the management of a case before it comes to trial. Its purpose is to ensure that proceedings are prepared in a manner which is fair, efficient and likely to keep the costs as low as possible. It also ensures that time and other resources of the court are put to best use.

Case Progression: Family Law	Number of Listings for Case Progression	
	2024	2023
Circuit Court	6,254	6,523

Criminal Business

Criminal Business: By Offence	Incoming		Resolved: Orders Made*	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Serious criminal offences: Central Criminal Court; Special Criminal Court; Circuit Criminal Court	22,822	19,569	27,821	26,486
Misdemeanour and/or minor criminal offences: District Court	350,852	329,714	309,787	294,100
Appeals: Supreme Court; Court of Appeal; Circuit Court	16,484	17,773	18,437	17,806
Total	390,158	367,056	356,045	338,392

* Orders made in respect of offences. Note that there may be more than one Order made in respect of an individual offence

Number of Trials			
	2024	2023	2022
Special Criminal Court	0	4	7
Central Criminal Court	161	125	118
Circuit Criminal Court	337	362	357

District Court

The District Court exercising its criminal jurisdiction deals with four particular types of offences: summary offences, indictable offences which are triable summarily (these include 'minor offences'), indictable offences that may be dealt with summarily and indictable offences which are not triable summarily. When the District Court hears a criminal case, the judge sits without a jury. The District Judge decides the issues of fact and whether to convict. He or she also determines the sentence. In the case of most indictable offences which have to be tried by a judge sitting with a jury, the District Court may impose sentence where the accused pleads guilty provided that the Director of Public Prosecutions consents and the judge accepts the guilty plea. Otherwise, the accused is sent forward to the Circuit Court on his signed plea of guilty for sentencing. The District Court has a limit on the sentence it may impose in respect of a single criminal charge of 12 months imprisonment.

It is important to note that there can be more than one Order made in respect of an offence.



Criminal Business: District Court		Incoming		Resolved: Orders Made*	
Categories	Offences	Defendants	Summary	Indictable dealt with summarily	Sent forward for trial**
Domestic Violence	5,009	2,883	4,425	0	17
Drugs	27,783	14,727	1,011	21,689	3,588
Larceny/Fraud/Robbery	39,038	14,541	14	26,643	6,170
Other	41,838	25,788	25,240	7,695	7,127
Public Order/Assault	47,956	25,141	34,862	2,967	2,650
Road Traffic	185,578	123,862	160,628	1,012	355
Sexual	3,650	668	111	191	3,392
Total	350,852	207,610	226,291	60,197	23,299

* Note: Resolved is a count of Orders made in respect of offences. Note that there may be more than one Order made in respect of an individual offence.

**Note: There is usually only one Order made when an offence is being sent forward for trial.

Summary Offences: Orders Made: District Court													
	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	3rd Pay	Total
Domestic Violence	520	1,546	489	165	41	0	6	282	236	318	822	0	4,425
Drugs	56	282	221	125	2	0	10	92	58	41	124	0	1,011
Larceny/ Fraud/ Robbery	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	14
Other	544	8,678	5,055	5,661	51	11	54	1,399	847	458	2,482	0	25,240
Public Order/ Assault	1,173	8,193	8,741	6,029	351	3	222	3,010	1,500	1,046	4,594	0	34,862
Road Traffic	5,624	52,906	21,156	37,743	61	9,105	266	861	939	1,286	16,126	14,555	160,628
Sexual	3	16	9	15	0	0	0	21	19	8	20	0	111
Total	7,925	71,623	35,672	49,739	506	9,119	558	5,665	3,599	3,158	24,172	14,555	226,291

Note: There is usually only one Order made when an offence is dismissed, struck out or taken into consideration. There may be more than one Order made when the penalty imposed in respect of an offence is a fine, bond, disqualification, community service, probation, imprisonment/detention, or sentence suspended.

Key: Dis = dismiss. S/O = strike out TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified C/S = community service Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention* Susp = suspended sentence Fixed = fixed penalty 3rd Pay = 3rd Pay Option

* refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre

Indictable Offences Dealt With Summarily: Orders Made: District Court

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/O	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	3rd Pay	Total
Drugs	533	6,810	3,046	2,877	62	4	209	2,138	595	745	4,670	0	21,689
Larceny/ Fraud/ Robbery	625	6,080	6,696	1,467	134	21	267	2,836	3,965	1,591	2,961	0	26,643
Other	310	2,321	1,320	502	68	3	88	669	753	408	1,253	0	7,695
Public Order/ Assault	237	1,071	126	107	32	1	46	291	215	291	550	0	2,967
Road Traffic	38	279	120	35	2	40	11	115	153	42	177	0	1,012
Sexual	12	32	5	6	0	0	4	30	5	37	60	0	191
Total	1,755	16,593	11,313	4,994	298	69	625	6,079	5,686	3,114	9,671	-	60,197

Note: There is usually only one Order made when an offence is dismissed, struck out or taken into consideration. There may be more than one Order made when the penalty imposed in respect of an offence is a fine, bond, disqualification, community service, probation, imprisonment/detention, or sentence suspended.

Key: Dis = dismiss. S/O = strike out TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified C/S = community service 3rd Pay = 3rd Pay Option Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention* Susp = suspended sentence

* refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre

Specific Road Traffic Offences: Orders Made: District Court

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	3rd Pay	Total
Dangerous Driving	155	1,266	624	508	0	833	31	45	145	116	1,394	0	5,117
Drink/ Drug Driving	714	1,355	122	2,661	1	3,182	39	20	72	202	510	0	8,878
Offences attracting Penalty Points	2,254	15,425	2,492	18,337	14	4,431	147	212	465	745	3,715	9,341	57,578
Total	3,123	18,046	3,238	21,506	15	8,446	217	277	682	1,063	5,619	9,341	71,573

Note: This is a selection of specific road traffic offences - not the full total. There is usually only one Order made when an offence is dismissed, struck out or taken into consideration. There may be more than one Order made when the penalty imposed in respect of an offence is a fine, bond, disqualification, community service, probation, imprisonment/detention, or sentence suspended.

Key: Dis = dismiss. S/O = strike out TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified C/S = community service

Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention* Susp = suspended sentence 3rd 3rd Pay = 3rd Pay Option

* refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre



Juvenile Crime

The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years (section 52 Children Act 2001, as amended by section 129 Criminal Justice Act 2006). Children who have not reached the age of 12 years cannot be charged with an offence. There is an exception for children aged 10 or 11 who can be charged with murder, manslaughter, rape, rape under section 4 of the Criminal Law (Rape)(Amendment) Act 1990 or aggravated sexual assault. In addition, where a child under 14 years of age is charged with an offence, no further proceedings can be taken without the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The majority of children who come before the courts are aged between 15 and 17 years.

District Court: Juvenile Crime. Orders made.

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	3rd Pay	Total
Domestic Violence	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Drugs	32	183	103	16	2	0	11	137	3	4	86	0	577
Larceny/ Fraud/ Robbery	53	294	217	12	3	1	12	349	53	4	110	0	1,108
Other	16	144	79	4	1	1	4	99	17	8	50	0	423
Public Order/ Assault	36	225	112	22	7	1	11	221	18	7	96	0	756
Road Traffic	43	323	247	51	0	85	9	131	58	4	89	8	1,048
Sexual	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	1	0	8
Total	181	1,169	758	105	13	88	47	942	150	27	432	8	3,922

Note: There is usually only one Order made when an offence is dismissed, struck out or taken into consideration. There may be more than one Order made when the penalty imposed in respect of an offence is a fine, bond, disqualification, community service, probation, imprisonment/detention, or sentence suspended.

Key: Dis = dismiss. S/O = strike out TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified C/S = community service Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention* Susp = suspended sentence 3rd Pay = 3rd Pay Option

* refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre

Circuit Court

The Circuit Court deals with all indictable offences except murder, rape, aggravated sexual assault, treason, piracy and related offences. This jurisdiction is exercisable in the area where the offence has been committed or where the accused person has been arrested or resides. In Circuit Courts outside Dublin, the trial judge may transfer a trial to the Dublin Circuit Criminal Court on application by the prosecution or the defence and if satisfied that it would be unjust not to do so. Criminal cases dealt with by the Circuit Criminal Court begin in the District Court and are sent forward to the Circuit Court for trial or sentencing. Where a person is sent forward to the Circuit Criminal Court for trial the case is heard by judge and jury although a person can change their plea to guilty and dispense with a trial. Certain indictable offences of a minor nature can be heard in the District Court where the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and or the accused consents.

Offences:	Incoming		Resolved: Orders made*							
	Offences	Defendants*	Guilty	Trials		N/P	TIC	Quash	Deceased	Total
				Convicted	Acquitted					
Assault	1,719	1,129	1,873	115	99	473	192	6	4	2,762
Child Abuse	56	23	28	2	1	1	3	0	0	35
Domestic Violence	17	17	40	3	2	21	15	0	0	81
Drugs	3,653	870	2,970	44	15	1,072	582	0	14	4,697
Firearms	931	700	567	41	40	326	188	6	5	1,173
Larceny/ Fraud/Robbery	6,502	1,350	3,296	243	91	1,109	1,348	2	7	6,096
Manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	4,442	1,997	3,300	264	103	1,046	1,027	7	118	5,865
Road Traffic	336	224	749	42	15	196	312	0	2	1,316
Sexual	2,288	300	778	399	175	496	560	0	3	2,411
Total	19,944	6,610	13,601	1,153	541	4,740	4,227	21	153	24,436

* Note: Resolved is a count of Orders made in respect of offences. Note that there may be more than one Order made in respect of an individual offence

** Note: There is usually only one order made when an offence is being sent forward for trial.

Key: TIC = taken into consideration N/P = nolle prosequi



Offences: Orders made: Circuit Court

	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp*	Susp	Other	Total
Assault	116	9	607	14	28	104	631	335	141	1,985
Child Abuse	1	-	8	-	-	-	6	12	3	30
Domestic Violence	8	1	6	-	2	1	20	3	4	45
Drugs	406	25	659	2	25	84	440	480	944	3,065
Firearms	98	1	150	-	9	35	137	92	96	618
Larceny/ Fraud/Robbery	451	9	994	3	34	171	1,230	406	245	3,543
Manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	446	95	922	20	49	101	920	562	494	3,609
Road Traffic	171	38	108	198	3	15	161	69	24	787
Sexual	164	1	322	-	4	51	438	114	80	1,174
Total	1,861	179	3,776	237	154	562	3,983	2,073	2,031	14,856

Key: TIC = taken into consideration Disq = disqualified C/S = community service Prob = probation Imp = imprisonment or detention* Susp = suspended sentence

* refers to detention of a person under 18 in a detention centre.

Appeals From District Court : Circuit Court

Categories	Incoming		Resolved: Orders made					
	Off	Def	Aff	Var	Rev	Withdrawn	S/O N/A	Total
Domestic Violence	303	160	44	112	80	52	39	327
Drugs	953	391	141	545	97	278	253	1,314
Larceny/Fraud/Robbery	1,796	620	227	471	109	579	876	2,262
Other	1,591	858	186	531	219	382	656	1,974
Public Order/Assault	1,687	848	274	744	188	482	561	2,249
Road Traffic	6,849	4,280	1,462	2,442	2,032	1,163	1,093	8,192
Sexual	52	23	1	11	2	35	5	54
Total	13,231	7,180	2,335	4,856	2,727	2,971	3,483	16,372

Key: Off = offences Def = defendants Aff = affirmed Var = varied Rev = reversed S/O = struck out S/O N/P = struck out no appearance

Special Criminal Court

The Offences Against the State Act 1939 provides for the establishment of Special Criminal Courts. The Special Criminal Court sits with three judges and no jury. The rules of evidence that apply in proceedings before the Court are the same as those applicable to trials in the Central Criminal Court. The Court is authorised by the 1939 Act to make rules governing its own practice and procedure.

Special Criminal Court		
Categories	Incoming	
	Offences	Defendants
Membership Of Illegal Organisation	0	0
Murder	4	4
Other	50	16
Possession of firearms/ammunition/explosive substance	13	5
Theft	0	0
Threaten To Kill	1	1
Total	68	26

* there may be more than one offence brought against a defendant

Categories	Offences : (All Outcomes)					
	Conviction (Guilty plea)	Conviction (trial)	Acquittal	TIC	Nolle Prosequi	Total
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	12	0	0	7	11	30
Possession of firearms/ ammunition/explosive substance	5	0	0	0	2	7
Theft	3	0	0	0	6	9
Threaten To Kill	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	20	0	0	7	20	47



Offences : (Convictions)			
Categories	Imprisonment	Suspended Sentence	Total Convictions
Murder	0	0	0
Other	9	3	12
Possession of firearms/ ammunition/explosive substance	5	0	5
Theft	3	0	3
Threaten To Kill	0	0	0
Total	17	3	20



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High Court: Central Criminal Court

The High Court exercising its criminal jurisdiction is known as the Central Criminal Court. It consists of a judge or judges of the High Court. The court sits at such time and in such places as the President of the High Court may direct and tries criminal cases which are outside the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court. The court mainly hears murder and rape trials and criminal trials under the Competition Act 2002. An appeal against conviction or sentence by the Central Criminal Court may be taken to the Court of Appeal.

Offences: Trials And Defendants: Central Criminal Court	Trials	Defendants
Assault	48	13
Domestic Violence	0	0
Murder (Including Attempted Murder)	31	26
Other	39	15
Rape (Including Attempted Rape)	656	129
Sexual Offences	738	82
Total	1,512	265

Offences: Outcome: Central Criminal Court									
Central Criminal Court	Incoming		Resolved						
Offence type	Off	Def	Guilty Pleas	Trials	Nolle Prosequi	TIC *	Quash	Dec	Total
Assault	73	37	25	40	8	12	0	4	89
Domestic Violence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murder (Including Attempted Murder)	47	45	11	24	7	0	0	0	42
Other ***	72	44	22	41	19	51	0	65	198
Rape (Including Attempted Rape)	1,075	190	163	538	361	188	0	40	1,290
Sexual Offences **	1,543	119	279	645	399	347	0	49	1,719
Total	2,810	435	500	1,288	794	598	0	158	3,338

* TIC – ‘taken into consideration’ – offences may be taken into consideration where an offender is sentenced on other multiple offences.

** includes serious offences such as sexual assault and sexual offences against children, previously reported under ‘other’.

*** includes impeding a prosecution, accessory to manslaughter, false imprisonment, criminal damage, possession of a knife, burglary.

Key: Off = offences Def = defendants G/P = guilty pleas N/P = nolle prosequi Dec = accused deceased



Offences: Resolved: Outcome Of Trials : Central Criminal Court

Offence type	Convicted	Acquitted	Disagreed	Committal: not guilty by reason of insanity	Prohibited	Total*
Assault	35	11	1	0	0	47
Domestic Violence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murder (Including Attempted Murder)	22	2	0	5	0	29
Other	24	8	10	2	0	44
Rape (Including Attempted Rape)	364	238	30	0	0	632
Sexual Offences	482	149	84	0	0	715
Total	927	408	125	7	0	1,467

*The number of offences for the Trial Outcomes is higher than the number of offences that are resolved by trials, because a single offence may have more than one result. For example, 'Imprisonment Part Suspended' and 'Probation'

Offences: Resolved: Penalties Imposed On Conviction : Central Criminal Court

	Fines	Det (minors)	Imp F/S	Imp P/S	Imp	Total
Assault	0	0	3	6	41	50
Domestic Violence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murder (Including Attempted Murder)	0	1	2	11	18	32
Other	0	0	2	11	30	43
Rape (Including Attempted Rape)	0	14	1	242	177	434
Sexual Offences	0	4	14	109	531	658
Total	0	19	22	379	797	1,217

Key: Det (minors) = detention of a person under 18 years in a detention centre Imp F/S = imprisonment fully suspended Imp P/S = imprisonment/detention* part suspended
* includes manslaughter

Offences: Resolved: Length Of Sentences Imposed On Conviction*: Central Criminal Court

	Up to 2 years	Over 2 years to 5 years	Over 5 years to 10 years	Over 10 years	Life	Total
Assault	4	42	4	0	0	50
Domestic Violence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murder (Including Attempted Murder)	0	2	9	4	17	32
Other	14	17	9	3	0	43
Rape	4	54	106	261	9	434
Sexual Offences	93	182	269	114	0	658
Total	115	297	397	382	26	1,217

Figures include suspended sentences

* Other includes manslaughter

Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2018

The Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2018 gives effect to provisions of Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25th October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA. The Courts Service commenced the collection of statistical information in compliance with section 30 of the Act during 2019.

Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2018

Evidence given by video link	Evidence given behind a screen	Intermediaries used
28	1	15

Court Of Appeal
Court of Appeal: Civil

The Court of Appeal is the final court of appeal in Civil and Criminal matters, save in respect of those cases where the Supreme Court grants leave to appeal either from the Court of Appeal or directly to it, pursuant to Article 34.5.4 of the Constitution. All orders of the High Court are appealable to the Court of Appeal. In Civil proceedings, the Court of Appeal hears appeals from the High Court and determines questions of law referenced to it by the Circuit Court, the High Court or the Military Judge, hear courts-martial (cases stated). The number of cases resolved significantly exceeded the number of incoming cases, continuing the positive trend in 2023.

The appeals are managed at a weekly Directions List to ensure that appeals are properly prepared and are given a timely date for hearing. The time between lodging an appeal and the hearing of an appeal continues to decrease, and most appeals can be heard within six months of the filing of a Notice of Appeal.

The number of appeals issued apparently decreased in 2024, but when account is taken of the fact that 33 appeals were filed in 2023 in what was, in essence, one commercial appeal, the number of incoming appeals is static. Also, the final 6 appeals transferred from the Supreme Court in 2014 were finally disposed of, bringing an end to the Article 64 appeals.



New appeals

New Appeals : Court Of Appeal			
Incoming 2024	Incoming 2023	Resolved 2024	Resolved 2023
293	325	362	368

New Appeals : Court Of Appeal								
Case type	Incoming 2024	Incoming 2023	Resolved 2024			Resolved 2023		
			In Court		Out of Court	In Court		Out of Court
			Determined	Withdrawn	Withdrawn	Determined	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
Article 40/ Habeas Corpus	4	1	4	0	0	5	0	1
Bail	11	1	9	1	0	2	0	0
Chancery	46	49	60	6	2	57	4	7
Commercial	21	58	51	0	0	17	5	6
Company	3	7	1	0	1	9	1	0
Constitution	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Contract	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0
Criminal	18	19	15	2	0	13	0	0
Extradition	2	1	2	1	0	3	0	0
Family	11	14	10	2	0	16	1	0
Insolvency (Corporate)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insolvency (Personal)	2	4	5	0	0	4	1	0
Judicial Review (asylum-related)	12	15	12	2	0	9	1	2
Judicial review (other)	44	43	40	3	1	37	11	6
Personal injury	14	23	15	0	2	22	1	1
Plenary	48	32	37	4	1	34	2	3
Proceeds of Crime Act	4	1	4	0	0	2	0	0
Security for costs	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Summary judgment	15	12	9	3	0	32	4	6
Other	38	45	49	5	2	30	2	4
Total	293	325	324	29	9	298	34	36



2. Article 64 appeals

At the end of 2023, there were six Article 64 appeals pending and remaining to be resolved. Over the course of 2024, all six of these appeals were resolved.

Article 64 Appeals (Appeals Transferred From Supreme Court)			
Resolved 2024	Resolved 2023	Resolved 2022	Resolved 2021
6	14	4	13

3. Cases stated

Cases Stated : Court Of Appeal		
	Received	Orders made
Circuit Court to Court of Appeal	1	1
High Court to Court of Appeal	0	0
Military Judge to Court of Appeal	0	0
Total	1	1

4. Additional matters

Additional Matters : Court Of Appeal		
	2024	2023
Motions listed before the Court	106	113
Appeals from appellants in person	86 (29%)	92 (28%)
Written judgments delivered	206	337
Length of appeal hearing:		
• One day or less	339	325
• Greater than one day but less than two days	4	3
• Two days or more	10	4



Court of Appeal: Criminal

The Court of Appeal deals with appeals from the Circuit Criminal Courts, Central Criminal Court and Special Criminal Court. Hearing dates are allocated during the subsequent legal term for the majority of cases included in the List to Fix Dates which is held once a term. Appeals are actively managed on a weekly basis by the judge assigned to the management of criminal lists to ensure that cases are dealt with as efficiently as possible and delays in cases progressing to the List to Fix Dates due to procedural issues arising are kept to a minimum. Applications for priority may be made at the weekly management list.

In addition, Civil appeals with a custody/criminal element (bail, Article 40/habeas corpus, judicial review and extradition) and Appeals from a Military Judge were accommodated as required without impacting on the waiting time for criminal appeals.

There were 341 appeals issued in respect of 3,194 offences lodged in the Court of Appeal (Criminal) in 2024. This compares to 308 appeals in respect of 2,701 offences lodged in 2023 marking an 11% increase year on year and is a continuation of the trend of the number of criminal appeals increasing for the past number of years. The Court disposed of 269 appeals in respect of 2,014 offences (304 appeals in respect of 1,847 offences in 2023).

Appeals: Criminal			
Incoming	Resolved		
	In Court		Out of Court
	Determined	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
341	176	57	36

Court of origin	Appeals		Percentage of appeals	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Central Criminal Court	84	78	25%	28%
Circuit Criminal Court	252	224	74%	67%
Court Martial	0	2	0%	0%
Special Criminal Court	5	4	1%	5%
Total	341	308	100%	100%

Appeals: Outcomes					
Court of origin	Conviction	Sentence (severity)	Sentence (leniency)	Other	Total
Central Criminal Court	4	3	0	0	7
Circuit Criminal Court	41	117	40	4	202
Court Martial	0	0	0	0	0
Special Criminal Court	39	9	9	3	60
Total	84	129	49	7	269

Appeals - Incoming (By Court Of Origin) : Court Of Appeal

Categories (by offence)	Incoming			Total
	Central Criminal Court	Circuit Criminal Court	Special Criminal Court	
Assault	53	203	0	256
Criminal Damage	0	1	0	1
Drugs/Misuse of Drugs	0	97	0	97
Firearms/weapon/possession of explosives/ ammunition	3	49	0	52
Manslaughter	0	0	0	0
Murder	14	0	0	14
Public Order	4	30	0	34
Rape	523	21	0	544
Road Traffic	0	179	0	179
Sexual Offences	604	463	0	1,067
Theft/Fraud/Robbery	3	445	1	449
Other	27	465	9	501
Total	1,231	1,953	10	3,194

Appeals : Outcomes : Court Of Appeal

Categories (by offence)	Resolved			Total
	Central Criminal Court	Circuit Criminal Court	Special Criminal Court	
Assault	13	117	1	131
Drugs/Misuse of Drugs	0	179	0	179
Firearms/weapon/possession of explosives/ammunition	3	44	0	47
Manslaughter	1	0	0	1
Murder	17	0	3	20
Public Order	0	14	0	14
Rape	284	31	0	315
Road Traffic	0	119	0	119
Sexual Offences	364	217	0	581
Theft/Fraud/Robbery	4	253	1	258
Other	44	300	5	349
Total	730	1,274	10	2,014



Appeals: Resolved (By Offence) Court of Appeal

Categories (by offence)	Resolved							Total
	Conviction	Sentence (severity)	Conviction and Sentence	Sentence (leniency)	DPP (dismissal)	MC*	Other	
Assault	6	72	13	38	0	0	2	131
Drugs/ Misuse of Drugs	0	110	10	53	0	0	6	179
Firearms/ weapon/ possession of explosives/ ammunition	2	27	4	11	0	0	3	47
Manslaughter	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Murder	15	3	0	1	0	0	1	20
Public Order	0	7	3	4	0	0	0	14
Rape	21	67	170	57	0	0	0	315
Road Traffic	5	71	18	25	0	0	0	119
Sexual Offences	65	166	257	80	0	0	13	581
Theft/Fraud/ Robbery	8	219	2	28	0	0	1	258
Other	7	136	55	147	0	0	4	349
Total	129	879	532	444	0	0	30	2,014

* miscarriage of justice

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the court of final appeal in civil and criminal matters. Appeals may be made only where the court grants permission in limited circumstances as set out in the Constitution. The court therefore concentrates on cases raising important constitutional and legal questions that have far reaching consequences for individuals and have systemic implications for the administration of justice as a whole.

The 2024 year-end position has seen an increase of 14% in the number of applications for leave filed when compared to 2023. In addition, there has been a 14% increase in the number of applications determined. There has also been significant increases in the total number of appeals determined and in the number of written judgments delivered by the Court. Thus, the trend shows significant year on year increase in business level post the COVID-19 downturn. Currently litigants at final appellate level where leave to appeal has been granted can ordinarily expect a hearing within 23 weeks. In this context the Court has no backlog of appeals awaiting a hearing date other than by the extent to which parties require time to fulfil necessary procedural steps prior to the hearing.

Incoming: Origin Of Applications For Leave To Appeal	2024	2023
High Court to Supreme Court	68	59
Court of Appeal to Supreme Court	114	101
Total	182	160

Overview : Supreme Court						
Overview Applications for Leave			Overview Appeals (current)		Overview Total Cases	
	Incoming	Resolved	Incoming	Resolved	Incoming	Resolved
Article 40/ Habeas Corpus	4	4	0	1	4	5
Civil	134	144	34	39	168	183
Criminal	44	35	15	16	59	51
Total	182	183	49	56	231	239

Other Matters : Supreme Court	2024	2023
Motions listed before the court	4	5
Reserved judgments delivered	93	61
Applications for leave to appeal from appellants in person	61	51
• One day or less	39	25
• Two days or more	8	17
Commissioners for Oaths appointed	19	22
Notaries Public appointed	3	11



Case analysis

Median number of days from issue to disposal. Note, this includes weekends, bank holidays and holiday periods.

With the introduction of new systems and better data collection in the High Court, improved data on the length of proceedings is now available. This data has been backdated to include both 2022 and 2023.

The median is considered a better measure of the length of proceedings in the High Court as it is not skewed by exceptionally high or low values.

Median length of proceedings - first instance courts

Civil : In Days - From Issue To Disposal		
	High Court	
	2024	2023
All	630	796
Asylum	224	203
Bail	20	15
Chancery	419	553
Extradition	46	71
Family	107	210
Judicial Review	151	217
Personal Injury	1,191	1,120

Criminal: District Criminal: Average Length In Days					
Summary		Indictable dealt with summarily		Return for trial	
2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
360	397	403	441	127	136

Summary: time from issue of summons to disposal of offence in the District Court

Indictable dealt with summarily: time from lodgement of charge sheet to disposal of offence in the District Court

Return for trial: time from lodgement of charge sheet to transfer of offence to higher court for trial.

Criminal: Circuit Court - Average Length In Days *		
	2024	2023
All	627	622

** time from receipt of return for trial in Circuit Court to final Order*

Criminal: Central Criminal Court - Average Length In Days *		
	2024	2023
All	691	888

** time from receipt of return for trial to final Order*

Criminal: Special Criminal Court - Average Length In Days *

	2024	2023
All	422	386

* time from receipt of charge sheet to final order

Average length of proceedings (in weeks) (from issue to disposal) (second instance courts)

Civil: Court Of Appeal – Appeals*

	2024	2023
All (new appeals only)**	53	59

* time from issue of notice of appeal to final Order (usually the Order is perfected several weeks after the Court has given the judgment to enable parties to resolve any outstanding issues)

** Figures stated do not include Article 64 appeals

Criminal: Court Of Appeal – Appeals*

	2024	2023
All	59	61

* time from issue of notice of appeal to final Order (usually the Order is perfected several weeks after the Court has given the judgment to enable parties to resolve any outstanding issues)

Average length of proceedings (in weeks) from issue to disposal (highest instance courts)

Supreme Court	2024	2023
Application for Leave Determined (issue to determination date)	16	17
Application for Leave Determined (from papers being ready to determination)	2.5	4
Appeals (from grant of leave to case disposal)	53	47



Waiting times

District Court – criminal, civil and family

Criminal: Waiting Time

Summons:

The time from receipt of summons application to scheduled date for hearing. There is an agreement with An Garda Síochána as part of Criminal Justice Interoperability Project that a period of 12-14 weeks will be allowed between the issuing of a summons and the first court date to allow time for service of the summons. The waiting times for criminal summonses generally reflect this agreement. Summonses may not be disposed on the first scheduled hearing date.

Charge sheets:

The time from receipt of a charge sheet to the first court date. Charge sheet cases are initially listed before the court usually within a day of the person being charged by An Garda Síochána. The first listing may not be the date of the hearing of the matter as the court may adjourn/ postpone the hearing for a variety of reasons. The time between the first appearance before the court and the final disposal of the case is outside the control of the Courts Service, but details are provided here.

Civil: Waiting Time

Applications:

The time from receipt of application to date when application is listed for hearing. This may not be the date that the matter is disposed of. A waiting time of up to 12 weeks is maintained in most offices with no waiting times of more than six months in recent years.

Family : Waiting Time

Applications:

The time from receipt of application to date when application is listed for hearing. This may not be the date that the matter is disposed of. Emergency domestic violence applications are dealt with on the date of first application to the court. In the majority of District Court Districts, waiting time for the hearing of these applications have not increased despite an ongoing increase in the volume and complexity of cases. Cases are listed for hearing in most instances within four to eight weeks of the date of the initial application.



District Court: Waiting Processing Times Shown In Weeks
(average of times across the year)

Office	Family Law				Civil	Criminal			
	Childcare	Domestic Violence	Guardianship	Maintenance	Civil Applications	Adult Charge Sheets	Adult Summonses	Juvenile Charge Sheets	Juvenile Summonses
Athlone					12				
Ballina		10	15	24	8	32	13	45	53
Blanchardstown					42	60	31		42
Bray	13	10	9	11	33	26	12	28	18
Carlow	48	12	6	10	8	13	6	16	46
Carrick-on-Shannon	110	7	23	22	14	21	17	28	36
Castlebar	121	15	11	23	12	21	12	59	23
Cavan	30	14	14	13	7	17	8		38
Clonakilty	10	3	11	9	6	13	8	42	32
Clonmel	25	6	9	7	8	9	1	28	19
Cloverhill House						15	77	61	35
Cork	5	10	10	11	10	16	5	18	20
Criminal Courts of Justice						27	13	491	88
Donegal	31	4	5	22	10	32	20		
Dublin	10	10	10	10	15	183	1		
Dun Laoghaire					9	34	4	23	85
Dundalk	47	9	6	7	6	15	1		15
Ennis	6	13	18	11	24	15	5	21	7
Galway	57	11	13	15	12	23	4	39	42
Kilkenny	20	9	9	11	5	16		38	18
Letterkenny	66	9	21	22	7	30	25	53	29
Limerick	26	7	9	9	8	17	3	27	34
Longford	33	9	9	15	13	25	19	38	21
Loughrea	29	8	8	15	13	20	11	29	55
Mallow	5	9	9	15	8	22	5	18	36
Metropolitan Children's Court Office						23	16	21	16
Monaghan	119	16	8	9	5	23	9	73	45
Mullingar	18	8	9	11	10	18	5	33	19
Naas	24	25	19	27	12	27	9	48	42
Nenagh	19	13	16	23	8	22	3	29	75
Portlaoise	3	8	12	12	7	20	2	54	24



District Court: Waiting Processing Times Shown In Weeks
(average of times across the year)

Office	Family Law				Civil	Criminal			
	Childcare	Domestic Violence	Guardianship	Maintenance	Civil Applications	Adult Charge Sheets	Adult Summonses	Juvenile Charge Sheets	Juvenile Summonses
Roscommon	86	5	5	29	5	11	12		213
Sligo	127	15	29	35	4	15	19	28	39
Swords		7	11	13	6	25	4		
Thurles					7				
Tralee	7	6	9	9	17	15	9	51	19
Trim	82	15	9	15	6	18	7	14	21
Tullamore	10	9	12	9	11	10	2	17	20
Waterford	2	5	6	6	9	17	3	20	34
Wexford	42	10	5	6	19	25	6	34	27
Youghal					9				

- (1) The data contains a mixture of average and median values. Median values are being used for District Family and District Criminal and average values for District Civil. Please note the long-term direction is to transition to median values.
- (2) Family Duration of Proceedings values are the median time (counted in weeks) from the Date the Application is lodged until the Court Date when the application was granted or refused (completed).
- (3) Civil Applications is defined as the time from receipt of application to date when application is listed for hearing.
- (4) Criminal Duration of Proceedings is defined as the date of the first hearing on an offence to the date of the Final Order (when the offence is resolved). The category "Adult" also includes "Company", but this is a very small number. The category "Summons" includes summons "Reissues".

Circuit Court – criminal, civil and family

Criminal

Waiting times for criminal cases vary, depending on whether the accused is on bail or in custody; on whether the plea is 'guilty' or 'not guilty'; on whether the trial is scheduled to last two days or two weeks. In most Circuit Courts outside Dublin, the majority of guilty pleas will be dealt with at the next criminal session – making the waiting time approximately three months. Defendants who are in custody take precedence so their trials are dealt with first, followed by trials of those who are on bail.

Waiting times in Dublin Circuit Court have been impacted in recent years by the number of so-called 'white collar' cases taken by the State in the wake of the financial collapse that followed the global recession in 2008. The complicated nature of the evidence in these cases together with the number of witnesses called and the additional legal argument required has lengthened the trials with a resulting impact on the number of trial courts available for other cases.

Measures introduced to address this situation include the allocation of the additional judges (subject to the availability of courtrooms) and the listing of only one long trial at any one time.

Nature Of Matter	Waiting Time
Trials	The time from receipt of return for trial to hearing date of trial
Sentences	The time from receipt of return for trial to sentence hearing (where plea of guilty entered)
Appeals	The time from receipt of District Court appeal to date of appeal hearing

Civil

Waiting times for civil cases vary with precedence given to criminal and family law cases where resources are limited. The nature of civil business has changed in recent years with fewer short cases and an increase in longer contested cases. Waiting times for longer cases tend to be longer than for so-called 'ordinary' cases and can distort waiting times. Some longer cases are dealt with by the allocation of additional sittings to the circuit.

Nature Of Matter	Waiting Time
Trials	The time from receipt of notice of trial to hearing date
Appeals	The time from receipt of District Court appeal to date of appeal hearing

Family

Waiting times are generally less than those for civil cases due to the priority afforded to family law cases. In most circuits, consent matters are heard in the 'next session' (a waiting time of three months or less). Additional sittings are arranged for long cases.

Nature Of Matter	Waiting Time
Cases	The time from receipt of notice of trial/notice of motion to hearing date
Appeals	The time from receipt of District Court appeal to date of appeal hearing



Circuit Court: Waiting Processing Times Shown In Weeks
(average of times across the year)

Office	Family Law		Civil		Criminal		
	District Court Appeals	Family Law Matters	Trials	Appeals	Trials	Sentences	Appeals
Carlow	48	40	26	26	36	12	26
Carrick-on-Shannon	14	16	52	52	117	78	130
Castlebar			18	18	63	27	37
Cavan			52	12	104	13	57
Clonmel	74		35	20	90	24	30
Cork	33	57	24	16	10	10	37
Dublin	53	35	7	7	91	7	38
Dundalk	32	27	26	13	130	24	22
Ennis	132	31	17	17	53	60	18
Galway	1	46	36	28	90	40	26
Kilkenny		42	16	16	24	16	12
Letterkenny	73	45	104	52	104	48	104
Limerick	21	47	96	15	89	44	8
Longford		44	39	10	126	13	19
Monaghan		8	13	13	104	52	52
Mullingar	40	75	19	19	52	18	18
Naas	26	33	101	14	52	35	24
Portlaoise		39	14	5	81	52	26
Roscommon	35	71	65	26	58	29	16
Sligo	5	30	18	14	80	23	12
Tralee	12	44	30	28	57	18	30
Trim	99	223	25	14	48	39	8
Tullamore	16	1	47	17	49	12	12
Waterford	36	45	12	10	47	33	11
Wexford	41	44	48	20	103	9	12
Wicklow	40	31	39	20	65	39	20

(1) The data contains a mixture of average and median values. Median values are being used for Circuit Family and average values for Circuit Civil and Circuit Criminal.

(2) Family Duration of Proceedings is a new metric for Circuit Family - it refers to the median time from date of issue to the final order on cases. Family Law matters relate to all Circuit Family matters including Divorce, Marriage Exemption, Judicial Separation, Co-habitation etc.

(3) Civil Appeals is defined as from Receipt of District Court Appeal to Date of the Appeal Hearing. Civil Trials is defined as from Receipt of Notice off Trial to Hearing Date of the Trial.

(4) Criminal Appeals is defined as from Receipt of District Court Appeal to Date of Appeal Hearing. Criminal Trials is defined as from Receipt of Return For Trial to Hearing Date of Trial. And Criminal Sentences is defined as from Receipt of Return For Trial to Sentence Hearing (where a Guilty Plea has been entered).

High Court – civil and family

High Court: 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 six weeks

Waiting time in other venues

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 for each venue

Venue	2024	2023
Dublin	4 weeks	6 weeks
Cork	4 weeks	4 weeks
Dundalk	4 weeks	9 weeks
Galway	4 weeks	9 weeks
Kilkenny/Waterford	4 weeks	9 weeks
Limerick	50 weeks	63 weeks
Sligo	4 weeks	4 weeks

High Court: Insolvency (Corporate)

Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
Applications to appoint examiner	The time from the issue of a petition to the allocation of the first return date before the High Court	Date immediately available	Date immediately available
Applications to wind up company	The time from the issue of a petition to the allocation of the first return date before the High Court	2 weeks	2 weeks

High Court: Other Corporate Applications

Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
Restrict directors	The time from the issue of a Notice of Motion to the first return date before the High Court	4 weeks	4 weeks



High Court: Insolvency (Personal)			
Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
Applications to issue summons	The time from the issue of a summons/ petition to the first return date before the High Court	2 weeks	2 weeks
Applications for adjudication	The time from the issue of a summons/ petition to the first return date before the High Court	2 weeks	2 weeks

High Court: Commercial List (Proceedings Defined In Order 63a Rule 1 Rules Of The Superior Courts)			
Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
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	Date immediately available

High Court: Competition List			
Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
Monday motion list	The time from the issue of a Notice of Motion to the first return date before the High Court	2 weeks	4 weeks

High Court: Chancery			
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	2024	2023
Monday motion list	The time from the issue of a Notice of Motion to the first return date before the High Court *	2 weeks	3 weeks
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	7 weeks	16 weeks
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	6 weeks	11 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	3 weeks

* Average waiting time for Chancery 1 and Chancery 2 Motions



High Court: Possession			
Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
Special summons for possession	The time from the issue of a summons to the first return date before the Master of the High Court	6 weeks	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	2 weeks	3 weeks

High Court: Mortgage Suits			
Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
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	6 weeks	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	2 weeks	3 weeks

High Court: Non-Jury (Breach Of Contract, Professional Negligence, Debt Collection)			
Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
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	4 weeks	8 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	14 weeks	21 weeks
Full hearing – cases more than one week in duration	As above	14 weeks	21 weeks

High Court: Appeals From The Circuit Court			
Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
Full hearing - cases less than 1 hour 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.	4 weeks	8 weeks



High Court: Judicial Review: Asylum Related

Nature of application	Waiting time	
	2024	2023
Pre-leave	6 weeks	9 weeks
Post-leave	Date immediately available	1 week

High Court: Judicial Review: Other

Nature of application	Waiting time	
	2024	2023
Pre-leave	4 weeks	6 weeks
Post-leave	7 weeks	9 weeks

High Court: Jury (Defamation; False Imprisonment; Assault)

Waiting time	2024	2023
The time from when a case is certified ready for hearing to the allocation of the first date for hearing before the High Court	17 weeks	64 weeks

High Court: Garda Compensation Act

Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
Full hearing	The time from the date of transfer from the Master's Court to the first return date before the High Court	12 weeks	5 weeks

High Court: Proceeds Of Crime Act

Waiting time	2024	2023
The time from receipt of application to hearing	Date immediately available	Date immediately available

High Court: Master's Court

Nature of application	Waiting time	2024	2023
Motions	The time from the issue of a Notice of Motion to the first return date before the Master	11 weeks	8 weeks



High Court: Common Law Motions

Waiting time	2024	2023
The time from the issue of a Notice of Motion to the first return date before the High Court	13 weeks	5 weeks

High Court: Family

Nature of application	Waiting time	
	2024	2023
Urgent applications	1 week	1 week
Non-contested cases	2 weeks	2 weeks
Contested cases	11 weeks	12 weeks
Applications under Hague Luxembourg Convention	Date immediately available	Date immediately available
Appeals from Circuit Court	10 weeks	11 weeks

High Court – Criminal

Change to this table from previous years to add clarity and better demonstrate the waiting times.

Central Criminal Court – Waiting Times (Weeks)

	2024	2023
Priority/Custody cases	44	55
Bail Cases	49	71
Juvenile/Priority	24	

Priority/Custody refers to cases that are considered urgent (e.g. where juveniles are involved) or where the accused is in custody thereby considered a priority as they are being denied liberty.

Bail refers to cases where the accused is on bail, and do not have their liberty denied while awaiting trial.

Juvenile/Priority was added as a new metric in 2024.



Court Of Appeal - Civil

Waiting time:		
The time from when an appeal is entered into the court list to the date of hearing		
	2024	2023
Appeals*	22 weeks	21 weeks
Fast tracked short appeals**	3 weeks	3 weeks

* appeals requiring more than two hours

**depends on time available

Court Of Appeal - Criminal

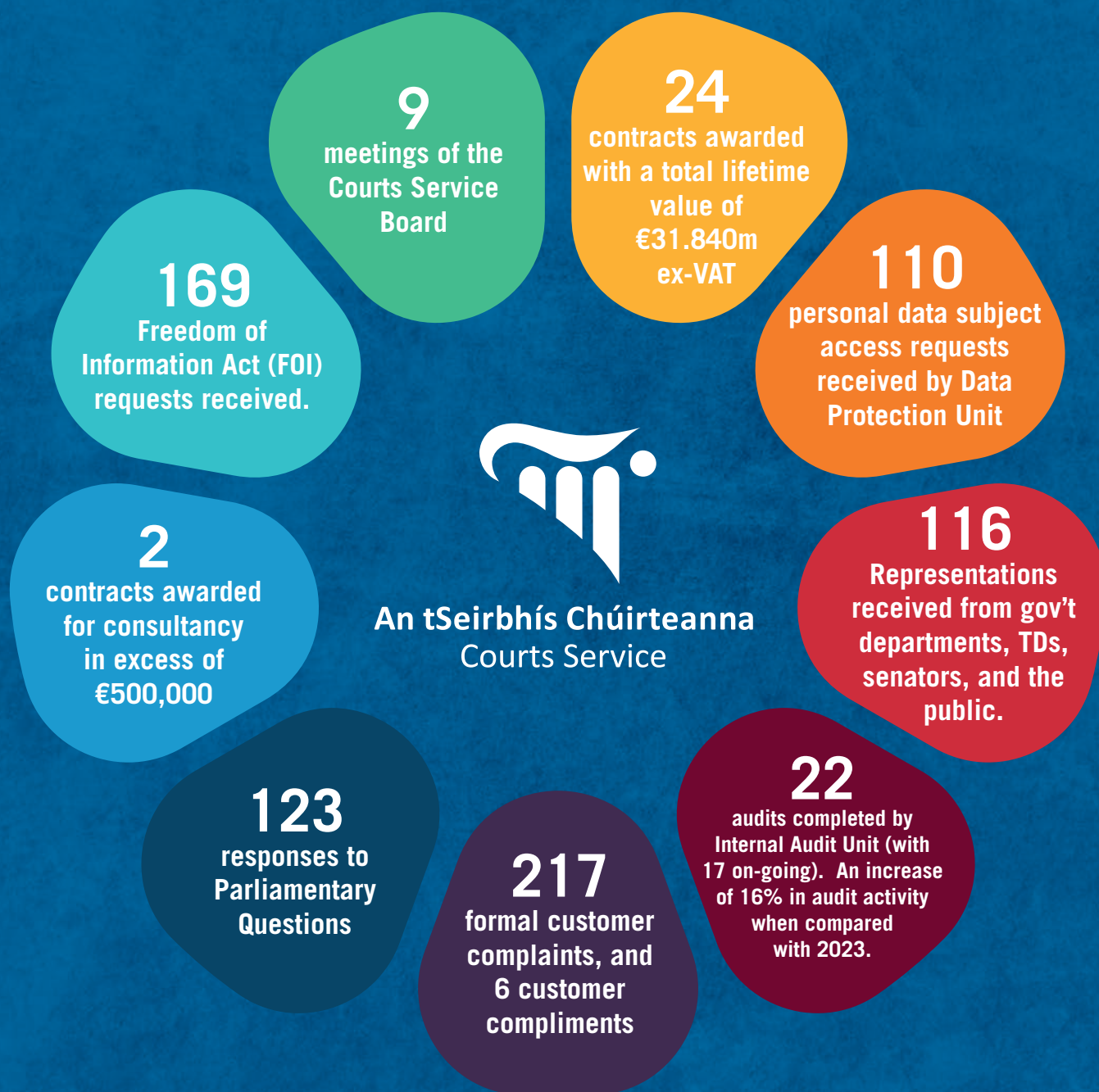
Waiting time:		
The time from when an appeal is entered into the court list to the date of hearing		
	2024	2023
Appeals	22 weeks	19.5 weeks
Article 40/habeas corpus appeals	1 weeks	0.5 weeks
European Arrest Warrant / Judicial Review appeals	5 weeks	1 week



Governance and Transparency

Governance

2024 Year at a Glance



About this chapter

In this Chapter we provide an organisational overview on our governance and reporting measures across the organisation, the Courts Service Board, and its various Committees. We also provide an update on our audit and assurance arrangements, requests for information, data protection, customer complaints and compliments, and our Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

Governance standards and practices

The Courts Service has strong governance arrangements in place at organisational and Board level providing a framework of rules and practices to ensure accountability, fairness, and transparency across organisational activities.

Under the Courts Service Act 1998, the Courts Service is a Civil Service body with its own Vote and Accounting Officer (the Chief Executive Officer). In addition to the Act, governance is based on the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (CPGSB) and the Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service.

The Courts Service has developed our Governance Framework in line with the principles and requirements set out in legislation and codes above, taking into account our particular requirements. The Framework sets out the statutory basis for the organisation, as described in legislation, as well as providing information on:

- our organisational structure
- the roles of the Board and its Committees
- the roles and responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Management Team
- the governance and accountability/assurance arrangements in place

The effective operation of this Framework is essential for proper management and control, as well as providing assurance to key stakeholders such as the Oireachtas, citizens, customers, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation (DPEIPSRD), the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General and others.

We benchmark our governance arrangements against the principles developed by DPEIPSRD, to ensure they are effective and robust.

Oversight Agreement between the Courts Service and the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

In accordance with best corporate governance practice and the requirements of the CPGSB, the Courts Service and the Department of Justice signed a three-year oversight agreement in 2023 to cover the period to 2023 - 2025.

This agreement is supported by Annual Performance Delivery Agreements. The agreements aim to enhance the working relationship between us and the Department and to support us in carrying out our functions. The Agreements recognise our status as an independent State agency governed by its Board. The agreements encompass all the legal and other obligations we face, as well as providing the necessary accountability and oversight for the Minister.

Organisation Overview Courts Service Board

The Courts Service is governed by a Board consisting of a Chairperson and 17 other members. The Board is responsible for the approval, oversight and implementation of the Courts Service Strategic Plan, and other organisational policies. It performs these functions directly and through its Committees. The term of office of the Board is three years and the current Board is in place since November 2023.

Standing items on the agenda for Board meetings include minutes of meetings and reports from the Committees of the Board, financial reports, reports from the Chief Executive Officer, reports from the Chief



Risk Officer and Head of Corporate Services. It approves proposals for contracts and arrangements, including the acquisition or disposal of any interest in land or property in addition to leases for periods more than four years and nine months irrespective of value. The Board approves contracts with a value more than €5m for Goods and Services and for consultancy contracts more than €0.500m.

The Board monitors the implementation of our Strategic Plan and provides strategic direction to the executive. It also approves an annual corporate business plan which it reviews quarterly with performance assessed by reference to our Corporate Strategic Plan. The Board approves our annual budget and regularly considers reports on budgets and expenditure. Annual corporate documents considered or approved by the Board in 2024 included:

Strategic Plan 2024- 2027

Corporate Business Plan 2024

Annual Budget 2024

Annual return to Minister for Justice under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies

In 2024, the Board considered and approved two contracts for consultancy in excess of €500,000.

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest & Declaration of Interest

Prior to the consideration of any procurement proposals by the Board or its Committees, the Chairperson as a matter of good governance, requests that any member who considers that they have an interest which might represent a conflict absent themselves from discussion on the matter. The minutes record any such declarations or abstentions. Following the requirements of the CPGSB, Board members also make periodic disclosure of interests which they, or a family member, may hold which could represent a conflict of interest for them in their role as members of the Board.

Board Meetings

The Board receives regular reports from the Chief Executive Officer on the operation of the Courts Service, the implementation of Board policy, the implementation of the annual Corporate Business Plan, expenditure and budgetary matters and other relevant issues and/or developments. The Board receives regular reports in relation to the implementation of risk management systems.



2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030



During 2024, the Board monitored progress of the implementation of the Courts Service Strategic Vision 2030; and progress being made towards the development of the Dublin Family Law Complex.

The Board held meetings on 22 January, 26 February, 8 April, 24 April, 13 May, 15 July, 26 September, 4 November, 9 December, with an overall attendance rate of 90%. Information on individual attendance at Board meetings is listed at the end of this chapter.

Five Committees supported the Board in its work in 2024:

- The Finance Committee
- The Audit and Risk Committee
- The Building Committee
- The Modernisation Committee
- The Family Law Court Development Committee

(See Chapter 1: About the Courts Service for membership details).

Meetings of Committees of the Board are held in advance of, and close to, the date of Board meetings where possible, to allow any issues to be brought to the attention of the Board without any undue delay.

Meetings of Committees of the Board 2024:

Audit and Risk Committee	12 February, 20 March, 8 May, 1 July, 27 September, 21 October, 25 November
Building Committee	15 February, 21 March, 15 May, 13 June, 16 October, 28 November
Family Law Court Development Committee	14 March, 29 April, 24 June, 16 September, 11 November
Finance Committee	12 February, 20 March, 8 April, 8 May, 1 July, 21 October, 25 November
Modernisation Committee	21 February, 1 May, 24 July, 23 October, 4 December

An annual fee is payable to non-judicial members of the Board (except for 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.

Minutes of meetings of the Board, are published on our website courts.ie.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for the implementation of policies approved by the Board, and the day-to-day management of the Courts Service. The CEO prepares an annual budget for approval by both the Finance Committee and the Board with support from the Senior Management Team. The CEO also provides regular updates to the Board and committees, detailing the management of the organisation, implementation of policies, progress on the strategic plan and the modernisation agenda.

The CEO provides an annual report on behalf of the Board to the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration providing assurance on compliance with the CPGSB. The report outlines the organisation's system of internal controls and confirms compliance across a range of headings. In particular, the report affirms compliance with:

- appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, travel
- procurement, and asset disposals
- inclusion of a Statement of Internal Control
- adherence to Codes of Business Conduct for Board members and employees
- compliance with Government guidelines on the payment of Board members' fees and provision of a draft strategic plan to the relevant Minister prior to the plan being finalised and adopted by the Board

Appropriation Account

As Accounting Officer, the CEO is responsible for the signing the annual Appropriation



Account of the Courts Service together with a Statement of Internal Financial Controls providing assurance on the internal financial controls in place across the organisation.

The Appropriation Account is the annual financial account of the Courts Service and is furnished to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) on or before 31 March each year. The outturn for the year, which is subject to audit by the C&AG, is outlined in Chapter 6.

Internal Financial Control

The Board has overall responsibility for the internal financial control of the Courts Service. It delegates responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of risk management and the internal controls in place to the Audit and Risk 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 Courts Service.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC), signed by the CEO for the purpose of the Appropriation Account, addresses the internal control environment within the Courts Service with 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 confirmation that the Courts Service has an Audit and Risk Committee and Internal Audit function.

The National Shared Services Office (NSSO) continues to perform a number of administrative functions of the Courts Service, including payroll, travel and subsistence and human resource services. Furthermore, the Courts Service is a client of the Financial Management Shared Service Centre (FMSSC), Killarney. The FMSSC provides the Courts Service with financial and accounting services and other ancillary activities. As part of the Appropriation Account process and for the signing of the SIFC by the CEO, the Accounting Officers for both the NSSO and the FMSSC provide letters of assurance as to the adequacy of controls systems in place within the NSSO and FMSSC for the provision of shared services to the Courts Service.

In the case of internal controls, systems can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss. 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 Courts Service has a policy statement on the prevention and detection of fraud with all cases, irrespective of value, being reported to the Head of Corporate

Services, the Senior Management Team, the Audit and Risk Committee and An Garda Síochána.

Financial Management

The Courts Service is represented on the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration Financial Management Committee as part of the governance arrangement for budget management within the justice sector. The Committee is comprised of representatives from, amongst others, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service and the Courts Service. It provides for a further level of assurance to the Department regarding vote management, adherence to Government financial guidelines and ensuring that value for money is achieved in the expenditure of public funds.

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 Finance Committee recommends the annual budget for approval by the Board. Day-to-day responsibility for managing expenditure within budgetary limits is assigned to the Assistant Secretaries responsible for each 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.

Performance budgeting

Performance budgeting forms part of the published Estimates and attempts to link funding provided to measurable results. The Courts Service complies with the performance budgeting format which identifies key outputs, context, and impact indicators. The expanded performance budgeting targets for 2024 were set out in the Revised Estimates Volume.

Risk Management

The Board has overall responsibility for overseeing the management of risk within the Courts Service. To support good governance, we have developed a risk management framework which clearly defines roles and responsibilities at the Board, Audit and Risk Committee, and at all levels of management.

The Board approves the Courts Service's Risk Management Policy, recognising that effective management of risk is the responsibility of all staff and seeks to promote a culture of risk management through the operation of a formal risk management framework. The Policy defines the risk appetite of the organisation. The Policy is supported by risk management guidelines aligned to the policy.

We have adopted key principles of the CPGSB and the Risk Management Guidance for Government Departments and Offices. The risk management framework and policy provide for a planned and systematic approach to identifying and managing a range of risk categories:

- Financial
- Service Delivery
- Buildings
- ICT
- People
- Governance and compliance
- Reform
- External Environment

The Chief Risk Officer is a member of the Senior Management Team and reports directly to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board. Risks are identified at corporate and business unit level and managed accordingly by assigning responsibility to the relevant Directorate and office manager.

The Courts Service maintains a Corporate Risk Register that is reviewed regularly by the Chief Executive Officer, Senior Management Team, Audit and Risk Committee, and the Board. The Corporate Risk Register is refreshed at the start of each year.

Strategic risks are rated based on their impact and likelihood of occurrence, with new and emerging risks being added as they arise. The Risk Register is linked to the annual business planning process and is a key document in enabling the organisation deal with the challenges it faces. It sets out the major risks facing the Courts 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 each Assistant Secretary prepares Risk Registers for their respective Directorates. In particular, we recognise the importance of cybersecurity and the impact an adverse ICT event could have on the operation of the Courts. We continuously review our ICT security systems and processes, taking action to further protect the organisation where appropriate.

Procurement

Procurement within the Courts Service complies with Office of Government Procurement public procurement guidelines for goods and services. We comply with the principle of competitive tendering in respect of expenditure on works, supplies and service contracts.

Responsibility for procurement is devolved to each Assistant Secretary for their Directorate, with the Corporate Services Directorate taking a lead coordination role in promoting awareness of obligations at both national and EU level. The Directorate monitors expenditure and maintains a contract register and an annual procurement plan, which is approved by the Senior Management Team.

We avail of centralised frameworks and contracts put in place by the Office of Government Procurement and continue to engage with the Office for advice on current and future procurement requirements.

Throughout 2024, the Courts Service awarded a total of 24 contracts and Framework Agreements (FWA) with a total value over the lifetime of each contract of €31.840m (excluding VAT).

Protected Disclosures

The Board maintains a role in relation to oversight of the operation of the policy of the Courts Service under the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022. Biannual updates are provided.

Audit and Assurance Arrangements Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is chaired by a member of the Board and includes a

judicial representative from the Court of Appeal, Circuit Court and District Court, and members with significant business expertise and experience within the public and private sectors. The Committee plays a fundamental role in ensuring that the Courts Service functions according to good governance, accounting and auditing standards and adopts appropriate management and risk arrangements. The Committee held seven meetings in 2024 at which it reviewed and considered a wide range of reports including the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee 2023 and the Annual Report of the Internal Audit Unit for 2023.

Internal Audit Function

Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function whose role is to provide assurance to the Board, Audit and Risk Committee, Chief Executive Officer and all levels of management as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems on governance, risk and internal controls operating within the Courts Service.

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 and Risk Committee. In carrying out audits, the Unit complies with the Institute of Internal Audit Standards, as adapted by the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation for use in Government Departments.

An independent external quality assessment of the Internal Audit Unit carried out in 2024 by the Institute of Internal Auditors found that the unit generally conformed with the then applicable Global Internal Audit Standards.

All audit reports are submitted directly to the Chief Executive Officer and to the Audit and Risk Committee who also receive periodic reports showing progress against the plan. By year end, our Internal Audit Unit had completed 22 audits and 17 audits were on-going. This represents an increase of 16% in audit activity when compared with 2023.

External audit

The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) performs the external audit of voted funds. The C&AG's authority extends to the audit of public funds and therefore does not include

court funds managed by the Courts Service on behalf of Minors and Wards of Court. The audit of court funds managed by the Accountant's Office to financial year end 30 September 2024 was carried out by external auditors, Forvis Mazars.

Requests for information

The Courts Service continued to respond to requests for information from the public, government departments and parliamentary representatives during the year. We provided material for responses to 123 parliamentary questions tabled by members of the Oireachtas. Our Office of the Chief Executive Officer dealt with 116 letters/representations from other government departments, TDs, senators, and members of the public.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

In 2024, we received 169 requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Many of these requests related to personal information contained in court records, which are not covered by Freedom of Information legislation and access therefore had to be refused.

We continue to meet our legal obligations in relation to responding to FOI requests and maintaining a well-informed network of decision-makers and internal reviewers. The Freedom of Information Officer continues to participate in the FOI Public Service User Network.

FOI Requests and Decisions are outlined below:

Freedom of Information Requests 2024	
On hand 01/01/2024	5
Received	169
Dealt with	171
On hand 31/12/2024	3
Outcomes	
Access granted/part granted	42
Refused*	109
Transferred/withdrawn	16
Handled outside of FOI	4

*Includes access requests for court records which are exempt under Freedom of Information legislation (section 42(a)(i) of the 2014 Act)

Data Protection

We process personal data in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The Data Protection Unit works with managers and staff to achieve full regulatory compliance by ensuring data protection is embedded into business practices from the outset. The Data Protection Officer participates in the Civil Service Data Protection Officer Network.

In 2024, the Data Protection Unit dealt with 110 data subject access requests for personal data held on CCTV, personnel files, and other Courts Service records under Data Protection legislation.

In the case of personal data processed by or on behalf of a Court when acting in a judicial capacity, the data protection rights of data subjects are restricted in law to the extent that the restrictions safeguard judicial independence and court proceedings. Access requests for personal information held on the court record must be addressed to the relevant court office under the existing rules of Court.

Customer complaints and compliments

The Customer Comments Co-ordination Office, supported by Directorate Liaison Officers, manages formal complaints as well as compliments received from members of the public. It is important for the Courts Service to understand services that are valued and appreciated by our customers as well as services or actions that need to be improved. Feedback, both positive and negative, can provide unique insights into the standards of service being provided to court users.

Conduct or decisions in relation to court business are matters for the judiciary and are therefore not dealt with under the formal complaint procedure. We received 217 formal customer complaints and six compliments during 2024.



Business Continuity Planning

In 2024, the organisation continued to strengthen its Business Continuity Planning (BCP) to ensure resilience in service delivery and operational stability during any disruptions.

A Central Business Continuity Steering Committee was established, operating under a clear Terms of Reference, and met four times during the year to oversee the implementation of the Business Continuity Framework. Its primary responsibility is to ensure the integration of business continuity practices across the organisation.

The Committee is responsible for the oversight, planning, approval, and review of all BCP activities, including regular testing and reporting. It coordinates BCP efforts across all business units and provides assurance on framework compliance to the Audit & Risk Committee and Senior Management Team, ensuring a robust and unified approach to continuity planning.

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 establishes a positive duty on public bodies to try to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect the human rights of staff and persons to whom services are provided.

The Courts Service published its Public Sector Duty Action plan 2024-2027 in April 2024.

The goals of our Public Sector Duty Action Plan 2024-2027 include:

- embedding the culture underpinning the plan as part of the People and Organisation pillar of our Modernisation Programme
- promoting awareness within the organisation of our core policies that relate to equality and human rights
- developing a culture of human rights, equality and diversity
- reviewing communications to the public and court users for accessibility
- reflecting our commitment to diversity and inclusion in recruitment campaigns
- ensuring that our new buildings are fully accessible to court users and reviewing physical access and signage of existing court buildings
- reviewing the accessibility of our website

The equality, diversity and inclusion agenda in the Courts Service is being driven by our Inclusion Group. The group aims to ensure the Courts Service is not just compliant with equality and human rights legislation but that we change our culture so that we proactively strive to achieve a diverse and inclusive work environment, protecting the human rights of staff and users.

Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021

2024 was a significant year for the Courts Service in relation to the Irish language and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 with the appointment of our first, full-time Irish Language Strategy Manager in January. The priority for the Irish Language Strategy Manager is to ensure the Courts Service is compliant with the provisions of the 2021 Act.

Specific achievements in 2024 included:

- exceeding the statutory compliance threshold for both advert placement and expenditure in the Irish language
- enhancing the provision of translated versions of forms, bilingual signage and digital content through courts.ie
- developing a suite of supports and resources for Courts Service staff on the Courts Service intranet
- arranging monthly conversation circles (Ciorcal Comhrá) in person and online for staff in Dublin and outside Dublin respectively

Consultation with stakeholders commenced in 2024 in advance of the development of the upcoming Irish Language Strategic Plan for the Courts Service 2025 – 2028. This plan will aim to chart the path for the development of the Irish language in the Courts Service in

a structured and systemic manner across six main areas of strategic priority. The main focus areas of the strategy will include the promotion of awareness and engagement with the language, support to the judiciary and planning to realise the 2030 requirement of 20% of new recruits with a proficiency in Irish.

Climate Action

The Government's Climate Action Plan sets out the mandatory requirement for all Public Sector Bodies within a section known as the Climate Action Mandate. The Mandate sets out requirements under four headings: Our Targets, Our People, Our Ways of Working, Our Buildings and Vehicles and aims to support public sector bodies to lead by example on climate action and thereby inspire action in

wider society. The Mandate requires every public body to publish a Climate Action Roadmap with details on actions planned under the four headings.

The Courts Service Climate Action Roadmap is a comprehensive document including narrative on our estate, our Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2024 and the decarbonisation and energy efficiency projects required to achieve our 2030 targets. 2024 saw the publication and approval by the Senior Management Team and Board of our third Climate Action Roadmaps, aligned with CAP24, which is publicly available on our website, courts.ie. In line with requirements, our Climate Action Roadmap will be updated with each iteration of the national Climate Action Plans.

Board Meeting Attendance

Board member attendance at meetings in 2024

Name	Attendances
Mr Justice Donal O' Donnell, Chief Justice	2/2
Mr Justice George Birmingham	4/7
The Hon Mrs Justice Caroline Costello	2/2
Mr Justice David Barniville	7/9
Ms Justice Elizabeth Dunne	9/9
Mr Justice Tony O'Connor	9/9
Ms Justice Patricia Ryan	9/9
Her Honour Judge Alice Doyle	2/5
His Honour Judge Keenan Johnson	4/4
His Honour Judge Paul Kelly	9/9
Judge Alan Mitchell	8/9
Ms Angela Denning	9/9
Ms Sara Phelan	5/6
Ms Rachel Woods	9/9
The Hon. Ms Justice Tara Burns	9/9
Mr Stuart Gilhooly	8/9
Mr Derek Bunyan	1/1
Ms Sarah Benson	9/9
Mr Owen Reidy	4/9
Mr Noel Beecher	9/9
Mr Sean Guerin	2/3



Legislative Provisions

The implementation of new legislation impacting on criminal proceedings and civil actions can place significant demands on the resources of the Courts Service. The Courts Service reviews the content of, and provides input into, proposed legislation to ascertain whether the provisions affect court operations or require new court procedures. Legislation in this context includes schemes of bills, bills, draft statutory instruments and draft EU legal instruments.

It is important that the Courts Service is afforded the opportunity to assess the impact of proposed legislative initiatives at an early stage. This is particularly relevant in the context of the development of strategies across a range of areas including ICT, buildings and Human Resources. The following are examples of legislation, or proposed legislation, which impacted the work of the Courts or the Service or into which input was provided in 2024:

Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2023

This Act was signed into law in July 2023 and Part 5 of the Act, which was commenced on 2 September 2024, provides for a new “civil order against relevant conduct” which is aimed at protecting victims of conduct such as stalking. The procedures for applying for these orders are broadly similar to domestic violence applications. Section 55 of the Act, which was commenced on 7 October 2024, provides for maintaining the anonymity of witnesses in criminal trials.

Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024

This Act which was signed into law in July 2024 but has not yet commenced, gives the Circuit Court jurisdiction to make Parental Orders for future surrogacy arrangements, both domestic and international. The High Court will have jurisdiction to make Parental Orders for past surrogacy arrangements, both domestic and international.

Planning and Development Act 2024

This Act updates and consolidates the planning and development regime and introduces procedural changes for judicial review proceedings to which the Act applies. This Act, which repeals and replaces the Planning and Development Act 2000, has yet to be commenced.

Court Proceedings (Delays) Act 2024

This Act provides for a system to compensate litigants where there are unreasonable delays in court proceedings. A party can bring a claim to a Court Delay Assessor for determination as to whether there was undue delay in court proceedings. In certain circumstances a party may bring an application to the Circuit Court to review an Assessor’s determination. The Courts Service continues to provide observations on the legislation which has not yet been commenced.

Family Courts Act 2024

This Act provides for family divisions of the first instance courts and for new rule-making provisions relating to family law proceedings. The Act also provides for the appointment of dedicated family court judges, including Principal Judges, for the District, Circuit and High Courts. This legislation has not yet been commenced.

Courts, Civil Law, Criminal Law and Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2024

This Act was commenced in July 2024 and provides for an increase in the number of ordinary judges in the Court of Appeal from 17 to 18.



Judicial Appointments Commission Act 2023

Although signed into law in 2023, this Act was commenced in 2024. The Act provides for the establishment of the new Judicial Appointments Commission and sets out a new legal framework for the appointment, or nomination for appointment, or election, to judicial office.

Digital Rules

Rules of Court to facilitate the digitalisation of civil proceedings were adopted by the three rules committee in 2024, as provided for in the Civil Law and Criminal Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020. These rules enable digital filing, issuing and service of documents and also provide for the making of a Statement of Truth in place of an affidavit in proceedings where digital filing is used. Providing for digitalisation of proceedings is a key part of the Courts Service Modernisation Programme, bringing more modern ways of working and transacting business to the administration of justice.

District Court Rules Committee Annual Report 2024

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, Home Affairs and Migration.

Members of the Committee at 31 December, 2024:

- The President of the District Court, His Honour Judge Paul Kelly (Chairperson)
- Judge Anne Watkin, Judge of the District Court
- Judge Alan Mitchell, Judge of the District Court
- Judge Marie Quirke, Judge of the District Court
- Judge Sandra Murphy, Judge of the District Court
- Ms Joyce Good Hammond, Solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
- Ms. Ann McGarry, Solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
- Mr. Eoin Martin, B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
- Ms. Ciara McMahon, Chief State Solicitor's Office, appointed to act in place of the Attorney General under section 71(9)(c) of the Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Mr. James Finn, Strategy and Reform Directorate, Courts Service, to whom membership has been delegated by the Chief Executive Officer under section 71(9)(b), Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended



- Eoin Manning, Deputy Chief Clerk, Dublin Metropolitan District Court, nominated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under section 71(3)(d) of the Courts of Justice act 1936, as amended

Secretary: Emma Quinn, (Acting Secretary), Strategy and Reform Directorate, Courts Service

Drafting Services: Mr Sean Barton of McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors

The Committee held 3 meetings during 2024. The following Rules of the District Court were signed by the Minister for Justice between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024.

S.I. NO.	Title	Date signed by Committee	Date effective from
13 of 2024	District Court (Data Protection) Rules 2024	8 November 2023	20 January 2024
231 of 2024	District Court (Garda Síochána (Compensation) Act 2022) Rules 2024	8 November 2023	31 May 2024
326 of 2024	District Court (Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015) Rules 2024	16 April 2024	8 July 2024
364 of 2024	District Court (Civil Restraining and Behaviour Orders) Rules 2024	16 April 2024	2 September 2024

At year end the District Court (Digital) Rules 2024 were adopted by the Committee and were awaiting the concurrence of the Minister.

The following matters were under consideration by the Committee at year end:

- Draft District Court (Domestic Violence) Rules 2024
- Draft District Court (Guardianship) Rules 2024

Elaine Ellard

Acting Secretary

15 May 2025



Annual Report

Circuit Court Rules Committee

31 December, 2024

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, Home Affairs and Migration, 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.

The members of the Committee at 31 December, 2024 were:

- The Hon. Ms. Justice Patricia Ryan, President of the Circuit Court (Chairperson)
- Her Honour Judge Sinéad Ní Chúlacháin, Judge of the Circuit Court
- His Honour Judge John Aylmer, Judge of the Circuit Court
- Mr. Tomás Keys B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
- Ms. Tracy Ennis Faherty B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
- Ms. Siún Hurley, Solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
- Mr. Martin Lawlor, Solicitor, nominated by the Law Society of Ireland
- Ms. Ann Spaine, Principal Solicitor, Office of the Chief State Solicitor – appointed to act in place of the Attorney General under section 69(9)(c), Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Mr James Finn, Principal Officer, Courts Service, to whom membership has been delegated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under section 69(9)(b), Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Ms. Patricia Hickey, County Registrar, Dublin
- Ms. Bridín Concannon, County Registrar, Meath and Westmeath, 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: Emma Quinn (Acting Secretary), Directorate of Reform and Development, Courts Service

Drafting Services: Mr Sean Barton of McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors



The Committee met on 5 occasions during 2024. The following Rules of the Circuit Court were signed by the Minister for Justice between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024

S.I. NO.	Title	Date signed by Committee	Date effective from
107 of 2024	Circuit Court Rules (Order 36) 2024	8 February 2024	29 March 2024
230 of 2024	Circuit Court Rules (Garda Síochána (Compensation) Act 2022) Rules 2023	12 December 2023	31 May 2024

At year end the following Rules were adopted by the committee -

- Circuit Court Rules (Digital) 2024

At year end the following Rules were under consideration by the Committee:-

- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Interrogatories) 2024
- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Evidence Regulation) 2024
- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024)
- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Data Protection Act 2018) 2024
- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Digital Services Act) 2024
- Draft Circuit Court Rules (Functions of Combined Court Office Manager) 2024

Elaine Ellard
Secretary

25 May 2025



Annual Report

Superior Courts Rules Committee

31 December 2024

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, Home Affairs and Migration.

Membership of the Committee at year ending 31 December 2024

- The Chief Justice, the Hon. Mr Justice Donal O'Donnell (Chairperson)
- The President of the Court of Appeal, the Hon. Ms Justice Caroline Costello (Vice Chairperson)
- The President of the High Court, the Hon. Mr Justice David Barniville
- The Hon. Ms Justice Elizabeth Dunne, Judge of the Supreme Court
- The Hon. Mr Justice Brian Murray, Judge of the Supreme Court
- The Hon. Ms Justice Mary Faherty, Judge of the Court of Appeal
- The Hon. Ms Justice Nuala Butler, Judge of the Court of Appeal
- The Hon. Mr Justice Richard Humphreys, Judge of the High Court
- The Hon. Ms Justice Siobhan Phelan, Judge of the High Court
- The Master of the High Court, VACANCY
- Ms Yvonne McNamara S.C., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
- Ms Grainne Larkin B.L., nominated by the Council of the Bar of Ireland
- Ms Michele O'Boyle, Solicitor, nominated by the Council of the Law Society of Ireland
- Ms Áine Hynes, Solicitor, nominated by the Council of the Law Society of Ireland
- Mr James Finn, Strategy and Reform Directorate, Courts Service, to whom membership has been delegated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Courts Service under section 67(9)(c) Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Ms Mary Cummins, Office of the Chief State Solicitor – appointed to act in place of the Attorney General under section 67(9)(d) Courts of Justice Act 1936, as amended
- Mr John Mahon, Registrar of the Supreme Court

Acting Secretary – Pauline Cusack, Strategy and Reform Directorate, Courts Service

Drafting Services - Mr Sean Barton of McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors.

The Committee met on 7 occasions during 2024. The following rules of the Superior Courts were concurred in by the Minister for Justice between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024:-

S.I. NO.	Title	Date signed by Committee	Date effective from
7 of 2024	RSC (Companies) 2024	23 November 2023	12 January 2024
161 of 2024	RSC (Order 61) 2024	1 February 2024	26 April 2024
163 of 2024	RSC (Order 84) 2024	1 February 2024	26 April 2024
228 of 2024	RSC (Garda Síochána (Compensation) Act 2022) 2024	20 July 2023	31 May 2024
229 of 2024	RSC (Particulars) 2024	1 February 2024	7 June 2024
362 of 2024	RSC (Order 11) 2024	13 May 2024	31 July 2024
363 of 2024	RSC (Interrogatories) 2024	13 May 2024	31 July 2024

At year end the following rules were adopted by the committee:

- Rules of the Superior Courts (Digital) 2024
- Rules of the Superior Courts (Digital Services Act) 2024
- Rules of the Superior Courts (Appendix I) 2024
- Rules of the Superior Courts (Guardian Ad Litem and Next Friend) 2024
- Rules of the Superior Courts (section 459, Companies Act 2014) 2024

At year end the following matters were under consideration by the Committee:

- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Planning & Environment List) 2024
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024) 2024
- Draft Rules of the Superior Courts (Brussels II ter) 2024

Pauline Cusack
Acting Secretary



6

Financial Highlights



Financial Statements 2024

About this Chapter

In this Chapter we present our financial statements for 2024 which details the funding provided to meet our statutory obligations and the financial position at year end. We also provide a financial overview for 2024, an analysis of our sources of funding, in addition to providing a detailed analysis of expenditure and income comparing 2024 with 2023. Finally, we outline information on our prompt payment interest and provide an extract from the financial statements relating to Court Funds.

Financial Highlights

Expenditure & Income	2024 €'000	2023** €'000
Current Expenditure		
Pay	70,974	70,338
Non-Pay	48,477	43,106
Total Current	123,451	113,444
Capital expenditure	65,322	70,056
Total Gross Expenditure	188,733	183,500
Total Income	38,313	38,148
Expenditure Net of Income	150,460	145,352

Staff	2024	2023
Full Time Equivalents	1,285	1,269

Court funds	2024	2023
Funds managed on behalf of court, minors and other beneficiaries at 30 September	2.499 billion	2.486 billion

Financial Operations	2024 €'000	2023 €'000
Fines collected	10,140	11,095
Family law receipts	12,591	13,172
Bail receipts	4,157	3,996
Court fees collected (and retained)*	14,255	14,366
Poor box receipts	1,566	1,518
Civil court and small claims receipts	472	300
Total	43,181	44,447

*Excludes miscellaneous income and the pension levy

**2023 was restated to reflect changes required following the audit by the C&AG

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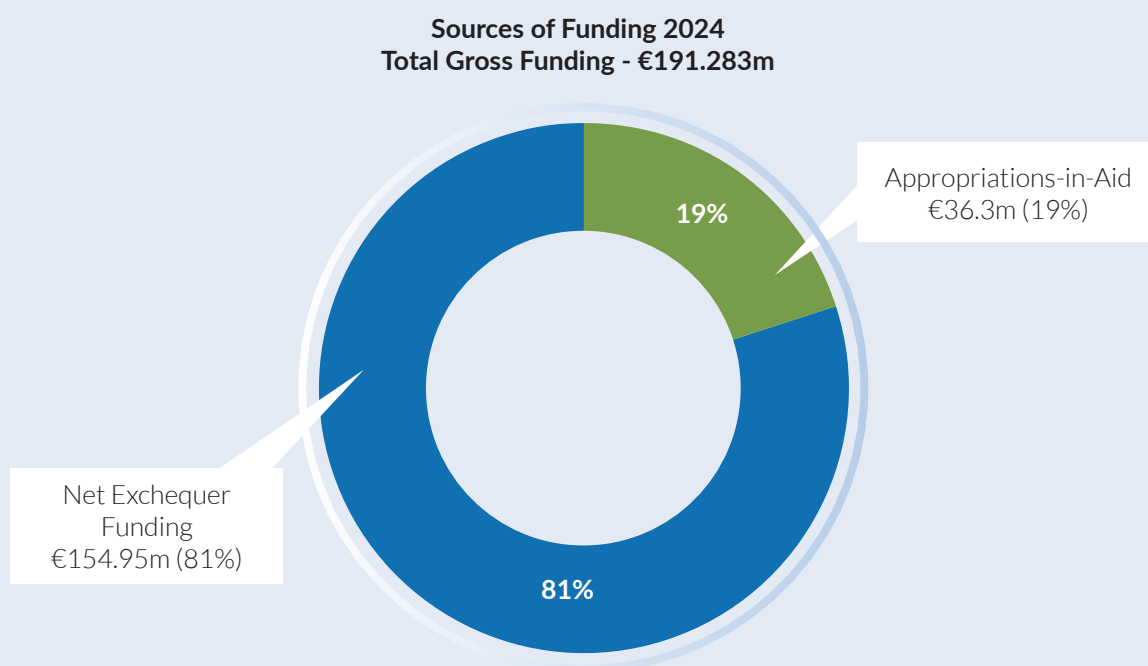
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Financial Overview

The funding of the Courts Service is from two main sources, direct Exchequer funding and Appropriation-in-Aid (income) primarily generated through court fees. For 2024 the total funding allocation net of receipts was €154.950m (2023 €146.811m). This reflects a gross allocation of €191.283m (2023 €183.524m) combined with total receipts of €36.333m (2023 €36.713m). Appropriations-in-Aid represents 19% (20% in 2023) of the total cost of running the Service in 2024. Operating within the funding parameters and the achievement of a balanced budget is a requirement under Government accounting guidelines.

Diagram 1: Sources of Funding



The actual outturn for 2024 saw the achievement of a balanced budget, with total gross expenditure for the running of the Service of €188.773m (€183.5m for 2023), €2.51m less than the funding received of €191.283m. Expenditure for 2024 compared with that of 2023 can be broken down between total current expenditure €123.451m (€113.444m for 2023), including pay of €74.974m (€70.338m for 2023), and total capital expenditure, including PPP of €65.322m (€70.056m for 2023).

The composition of funding reflects that 40% (2023 38%) is attributable to Pay, with 25% (2023 24%) relating to the day-to-day operation of the Service, 21% (2023 20%) to the Unitary Charges for the CCJ and Regional PPP's and the balance of 15% (2023 17%) for both ICT and Courthouse Capital.

The funding of the Service is supplemented by Appropriations-in-Aid which were €38.313m (€38.148m for 2023) this is €1.98m more than the funding target of €36.333m outlined above. Court Fee Income represents the main source of receipts. Court Fee Income relates to the administrative charge for the processing of civil cases. In 2024 this amounted to €35.677m (€34.164m in 2023), In addition to Court Fee income, Appropriations-in-Aid include Miscellaneous Income and a Pension Levy.



Court Fees

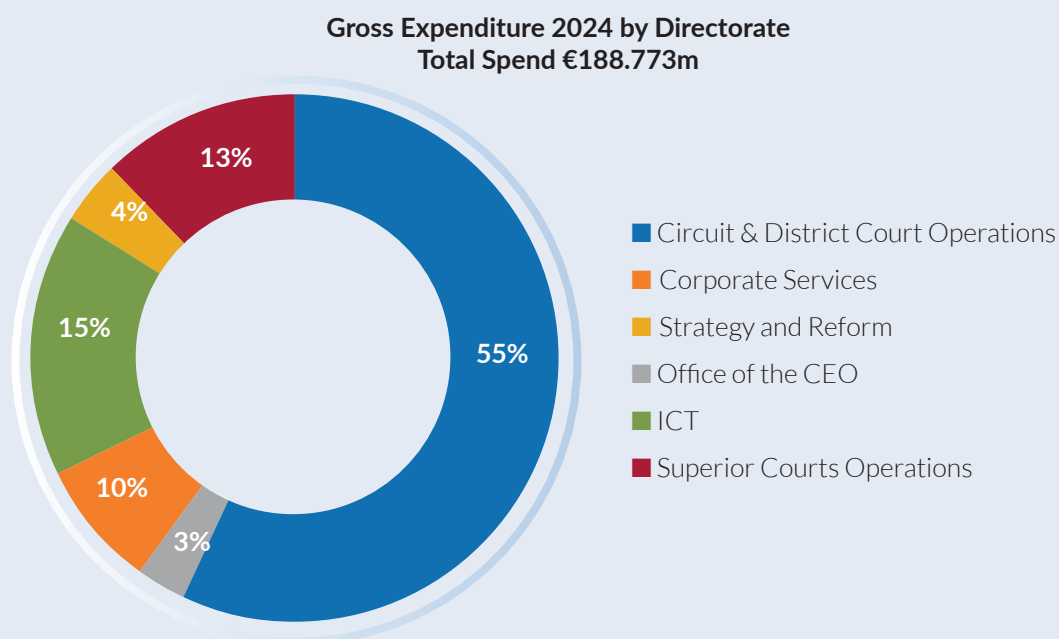
Court fees are charged in respect of legal documents lodged and services provided in court offices.

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.

Court Fees	2024 €'000	2023 €'000	2022 €'000
Retained by the Courts Service	35,677	34,164	33,476
Revenue Commissioners	2,500	2,375	2,380
Total	38,177	36,539	35,856

The Courts Service is divided into 6 Directorates, each with a distinct function. Diagram 2 below represents the spend across each Directorate in the Courts Service.

Diagram 2: Gross Expenditure by Directorate



Capital expenditure represents 35% of overall expenditure in the Courts Service. Diagram 3 below sets out how capital expenditure was spent in the Courts Service.

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Diagram 3: Capital Expenditure 2024

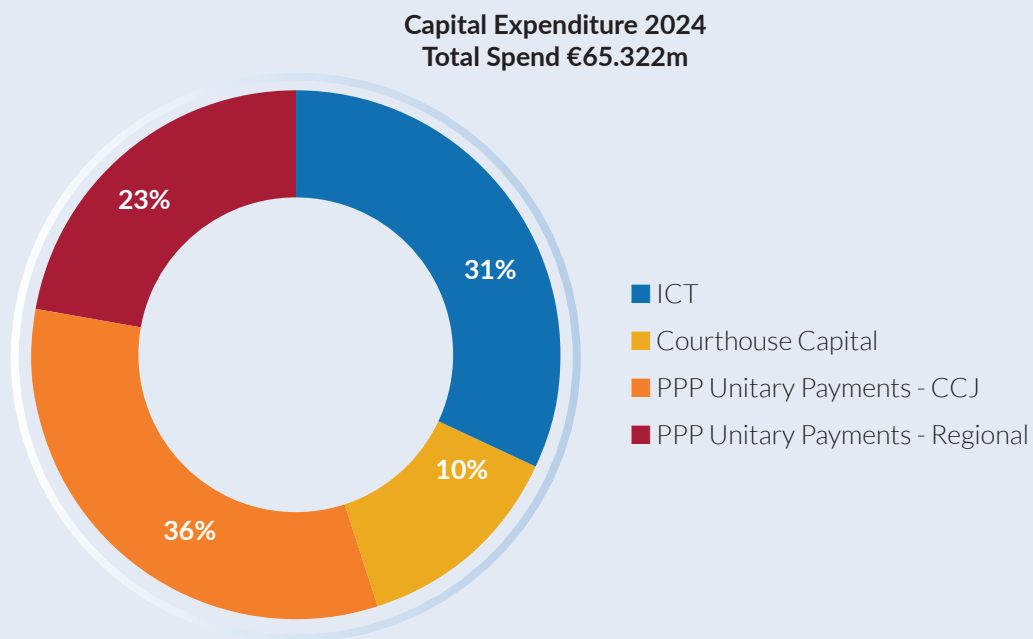
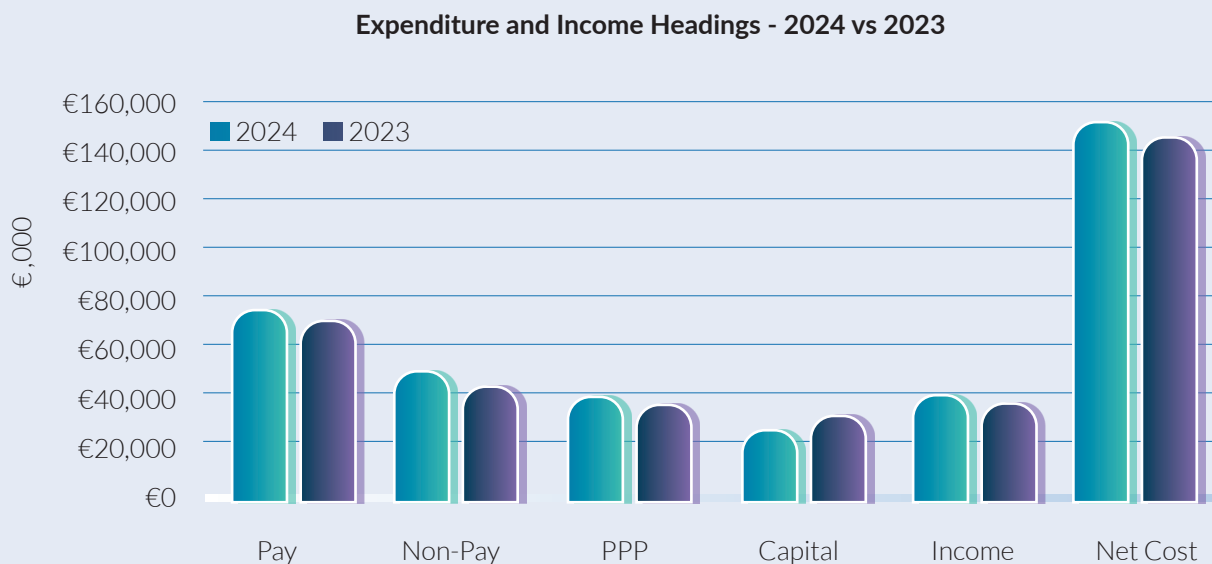


Diagram 4: Expenditure and Income 2024 v 2023



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. In 2024, the total amount paid out in respect of late payments was €12,766 (€19,934 in 2023).

Late payments			
Year	Interest amount	Compensation amount	Total
2024	€2,876	€9,890	€12,766
2023	€5,884	€14,050	€19,934
2022	€3,706	€13,080	€16,786

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 Agency: Courts Service				
Year	% 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
2024	65%	€60,628,746	59%	6,195
2023	66%	€62,453,655	57%	5,584
2022	72%	€61,898,915	62%	5,734



Expenditure & Income	2024 €'000	2023 €'000
Current Expenditure		
Salaries and wages	74,974	70,338
Travel and subsistence	4,111	3,541
Staff and judicial training	909	1,010
Incidental/miscellaneous costs	10,246	10,031
Digital audio recording and other fees	5,342	4,610
Legal services	1,243	721
Postal services	2,232	1,897
Telecommunications	1,082	1,344
Photocopying materials & Equipment	302	191
Office equipment and materials	1,418	474
Courthouse maintenance	10,164	7,542
Heat, light and fuel costs	4,199	4,421
Furniture and fittings	527	646
General Premises	2,090	1,958
Leases	4,470	4,515
Consultancy (non-I.T related)	142	204
Total Current Expenditure	123,451	113,444
Capital Expenditure		
Computer and telecommunications systems	20,142	21,407
Courthouses and other buildings	6,498	11,435
PPP - Unitary payment	23,809	22,470
PPP - Regional Unitary Payments	14,873	14,744
Total Capital Expenditure	65,322	70,056
Total Gross Expenditure	188,773	181,500
Income (Appropriations-in-Aid)		
Fees	35,677	34,164
Miscellaneous	686	2,210
Pension levy	1,950	1,777
Total Income	38,313	38,148
Total Net Expenditure	150,460	145,352

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

Court Funds Office

The Courts 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 Courts 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.

At the 30 September 2024, the Accountants Office was managing €2.499 billion in a fiduciary capacity (2023: €2.487 billion) on behalf of 19,958 beneficiaries. Of which 2,718 beneficiaries are persons who have been declared Wards of Court (2023: 2,943) with funds valued at €1.921 billion as at 30 September 2024 (2023: €1.893 billion). A further 17,240 are minors (2023: 17,581) with funds valued at €370 million (2023: €354 million). The remaining balance mostly consists of cases pending further Court Orders, residential redress board cases and lodgements with defence case types. The increase in the total value of funds by €12.3 million is attributable to a decrease from net capital transactions of €100.0 million (i.e., net excess disbursements over receipts) for the year and an increase in investment performance of €112.3 million.

The total funds managed of €2.499 billion is further analysed between the three Court jurisdictions in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Total Net Assets under Management, by Jurisdiction as at 30 September 2024

Jurisdiction	Net Assets € at 30/09/2023	%	Net Assets € at 30/09/2024	%	% Increase / (Decrease) in Net Assets
High Court	2,271,007,756	91.3%	2,275,571,196	91.0%	-0.3%
Circuit Court	181,567,967	7.3%	186,930,664	7.5%	+0.2%
District Court	34,333,879	1.4%	36,715,121	1.5%	+0.1%
Total	€2,486,909,602	100%	€2,499,216,981	100%	

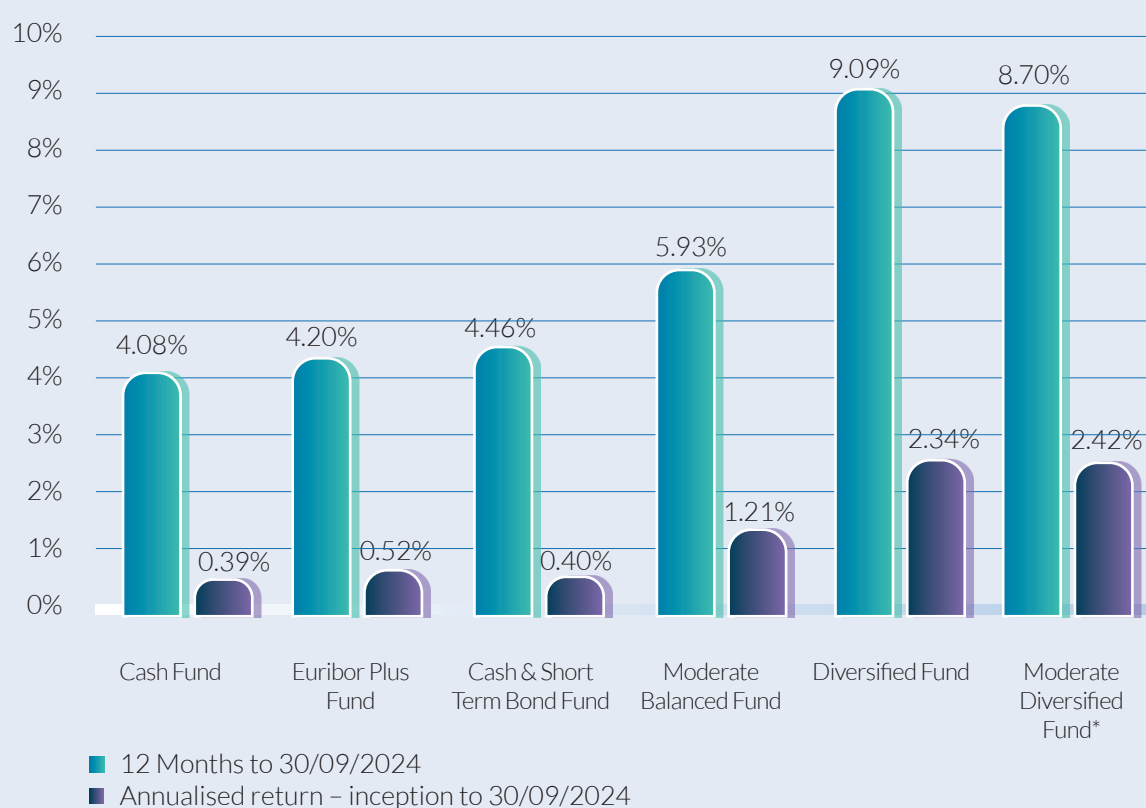




Table 2 below shows the investment performance gross of fees for all strategies for the financial year, covering the period from 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024 and the annualised return since inception. The gross returns, before management, custodian, and administration fees, for the year ending 30 September 2024 for each fund were as follows: Cash Fund 4.08%, Euribor Plus Fund 4.20%, Cash and Short Term Bond Fund 4.46%, Moderate Balanced Fund 5.93%, Diversified Fund 9.09%, and Moderate Diversified Fund 8.70%.

Note: Full details are contained in the Annual Report of the Financial Statements of the Accountant of the Courts of Justice for the year ending 30 September 2024 available on www.courts.ie

Table 2: SSGA Spectrum Funds Investment Performance (Gross of Fees) to 30th September 2024 and Annualised Return: Inception to 30 September 2024



The annualised returns for the year range from 4.08% (Cash Fund) to 9.09% (Diversified Fund). These positive rates are predominately because of the European Central Bank (ECB) maintaining higher base rates for the majority of the financial year ended 30 September 2024. This further builds on the positive performance of 2023 following a prolonged period of negative interest rates.

Statement of Financial Position At 30 September 2024

The Office of the Accountant of the Courts of Justice

	30/09/2024 €	30/09/2023 €
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	2,458,887,923	2,415,881,180
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	27,433,422	52,535,448
Cash and cash equivalents	19,173,787	23,018,067
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	46,607,209	75,553,515
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors	(6,278,151)	(4,525,093)
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	(6,278,151)	(4,525,093)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	40,329,058	71,028,422
TOTAL NET ASSETS	2,499,216,981	2,486,909,602
Represented by:		
Funds held for beneficiaries	2,499,216,981	2,486,909,602



Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 September 2024

	30/09/2024 €	30/09/2023 €
NET REALISED AND UNREALISED GAINS / LOSSES		
Net realised gains on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	24,844,184	17,852,730
Net change in unrealised Gains / Losses on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	89,309,804	41,343,732
Net gains / (losses) realised on transfers of assets	-	(83,356)
NET REALISED AND CHANGE IN UNREALISED GAINS / LOSSES	114,153,988	59,113,106
Investment income	96,244	160,940
	114,250,232	59,274,046
Expenses	(1,972,293)	(2,051,955)
(DECREASE) / INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS	112,277,939	57,222,091

Statement of Changes in Net Assets for the year ended 30 September 2024

	30/09/2024 €	30/09/2023 €
INCREASE / (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS		
Investment income less expenses	(1,876,049)	(1,891,015)
Net realised gains on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	24,844,184	17,852,730
Net change in unrealised gains / (losses) on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	89,309,804	41,343,732
Net gains / (losses) realised on transfers out during year	-	(83,356)
INCREASE / (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS	112,277,939	57,222,091
CAPITAL TRANSACTIONS		
Receipts	165,718,673	304,475,319
Disbursements	(265,689,233)	(211,784,606)
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM CAPITAL TRANSACTIONS	(99,970,560)	92,690,713
Total increase in net assets for the year	12,307,379	149,912,804
Net assets at beginning of year	2,486,909,602	2,336,996,798
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	2,499,216,981	2,486,909,602



Court Funds Office – Court Accounts Section

The Courts Accounts Section of the Courts Funds Office operates as a shared service centre for the processing of all financial transactions for the Combined Court Offices of the Courts Service. In 2024, the total volume of transactions (both receipts and payments) was €442,573 (2023, €413,488) with a monetary value of €85.8m (2023, €85.8m).

Fines

The Courts Service manages receipts and 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 for 2023 and 2024 are set out in table 3 below.

Table 3: Court Fines collected and transferred

	2024 €'000	2023 €'000
Exchequer (motor fines)	5,815	4,807
Exchequer (general)	1,438	2,824
The Office of the Revenue Commissioners	570	528
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	45	38
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	12	11
Total	7,880	8,208

Fines (Payments and Recovery) Act 2014

The Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014 allows for the payment of fines by instalment over a twelve-month period, subject to certain conditions. Where a person defaults in making payment the matter will be brought back to court. This may result in the making of an attachment of earnings order or a community service order. Where the unpaid fine is in excess of €500, the court may appoint a receiver.

Table 4: Number and value of fines imposed and recorded on CCTS* in 2024 and 2023

Fines imposed & Reported on CCTS*	2024	2023
Number of fines imposed	58,392	62,004
Value of fines imposed	€20,362,460	€21,016,144

*Criminal Case Tracking System



Family Law

The Courts Service processes Family Law payments for maintenance debtors and creditors.

Table 5: Family Law receipts and payments

Family Law Receipts & Payments	2024		2023	
	€'000	Volume	€'000	Volume
Receipts	€13,102	176,583	€13,474	151,427
Payments	€12,900	167,661	€13,102	176,583

The Courts Service continues to encourage users to avail of electronic funds transfer. EFT was the preferred method of payment for Family Law maintenance creditors at 92% of all payments made in 2024. Of the sums received from Family Law Debtors, 92% were standing orders and the use of standing orders is up by 7% on prior years.

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 Courts Service for onward payment to a charity as directed by the court.

The primary responsibility of the Courts Service in relation to the Poor Box is to ensure that:

- all monies paid into, and payments made from the Poor Box are carried out in accordance with the direction of the judge, and
- there are adequate and effective systems and procedures in place for recording court orders and accounting for Poor Box receipts and payments.

Table 6: Poor Box returns 2023

Poor Box	Balance At 01/01/2024	Receipts	Payments	Balance At 31/12/2024
District Court	€548,997.78	€1,578,370.02	€1,663,348.92	€463,982.88



Glossary of terms

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.

Barring Order – an Order preventing the person against whom the Order is made ('the respondent') from entering the family home or using or threatening violence against the person who applied for the Order ('the applicant') or other 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 civil case in the Circuit Court, it gives details of the parties to the case and details of the claim being made.

Claim Notice – a document used to commence a civil case in the District Court, it gives details of the parties to the case and details of the claim being made.

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 in the Circuit Court or a plenary summons in the High Court.

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 the person against whom the Order is made ('the respondent') 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).

National Development Finance Agency - The NDFA is an integrated finance, procurement and project delivery model established within the National Treasury Management Agency to bring a unified commercial approach to the procurement and project management of new public sector projects, including Public Private Partnerships.

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

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 Safety/Barring Order has been made, prohibiting the person against whom the Order is made ('the respondent') from committing further acts of violence or threatening violence

Safety Order – an Order prohibiting the person against whom the Order is made ('the respondent') from committing further acts of violence or threatening to do so. It does not prevent the respondent from entering the family home.

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).

Specific performance - an order of a Court which requires a party to perform a specific act, usually what is stated in a contract e.g., contracts for the sale, purchase, or lease of land. It is an alternative to awarding damages and is a discretionary equitable remedy.

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.



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