

Complaints about the Conduct of Judicial Office Holders - Code of Practice issued by the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland.

STATISTICAL RETURN FOR 2020

Statutory responsibility for complaints against members of the judiciary as well as Presidents and members of the tribunals rests with the Lord Chief Justice who in 2006 published a Code of Practice setting out arrangements for investigating complaints identified in the Code.

Court users and the public generally are entitled to expect holders of judicial office to maintain high standards of personal conduct. While the Lord Chief Justice is confident that courts and tribunal judiciary have demonstrated such standards in the past and will continue to do so, the Code provides for comprehensive procedures to address any serious or substantive complaints received and to do so within timescales set out in the Code.

It is important to emphasise that the Code applies only to judicial conduct and not to judicial decisions, the process of reasoning underpinning such decisions and the exercise of judicial functions generally. Such matters may only be challenged through the legal processes available.

1. Table A below provides information by judicial tier of judicial complaints received by the Lord Chief Justice for the 2020 reporting period together with 3 previous years for comparative purposes.

Table A

Judicial Tier	2020	2019	2018	2017
High Court	9	22	11	7
County Court	5	5	10	9
District Judge (Civil)	3	2	7	4
District Judge Magistrates' Courts	15	21	16	22
Statutory Officers and Others	2	8	12	10
Others	6	1	12	10
Total	40	59	57	54

Breakdown of complaints Received

2. Table B below summarises the final outcome of the 40 judicial complaints considered in 2020 (2 brought forward from 2019). Of the 40 complaints, 9 were investigated with 2 upheld, 2 not upheld and 6 complaints investigations were ongoing and carried over into 2021. 5 complaints were either withdrawn or did not proceed. The remaining 25 complaints were outside of the remit of the judicial Code of Practice.

Table B

Outcome	Total	(%)
Beyond remit	25	63%
Withdrawn/ did not proceed	5	12%
Not upheld	2	5%
Upheld in part	0	0%
Upheld	2	5%
C/Forward to 2021	6	15%

3. Table C below provides comparable information regarding complaints received during 2020 about the conduct of members of Tribunals and determined by Tribunal Presidents on behalf of the Lord Chief Justice.

Complaints about Tribunal Judiciary

Table C

Tribunal	Number received	Number beyond remit	Number informally resolved	Number not upheld	Number upheld in part	Number upheld in full	Withd rawn	C/F
Appeals Tribunal	21	18	-	2	-	-	-	1

Industrial Tribunal & Fair Employment Tribunal	8	1	1	-	-	-	-	6
Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Traffic Penalty Tribunal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Compensation Appeals Panel NI	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

OFFICE OF THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE

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