

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

STATISTICAL RETURN FOR 2021

Statutory responsibility for complaints against members of the judiciary as well as Presidents and members of the tribunals rests with the **Lady Chief Justice**. **In 2006, a Code of Practice was published 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 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 Chief Justice for the 2021 reporting period together with 3 previous years for comparative purposes.

Table A

Judicial Tier	2021	2020	2019	2018
C/O from previous year	6			
High Court	7	9	22	11
County Court	3	5	5	10
District Judge Magistrates' Courts	15	15	21	16
Statutory Officers and Others	11	5	10	8
Others	1 (From ITFET)	6	1	12
Total	43	40	59	57

Breakdown of Complaints Received

2. Table B below summarises the final outcome of the 43 judicial complaints considered in 2021 (1 brought forward from 2019 and 5 brought forward from 2020). Of the 43 complaints, 7 were investigated with 1 upheld, 6 not upheld and 4 complaints investigations were ongoing and carried over into 2022. 4 complaints were either withdrawn or did not proceed. The remaining 28 complaints were outside of the remit of the judicial Code of Practice.

Table B

Outcome	Total	(%)
Beyond remit	28	65
Withdrawn/did not proceed	4	9.5
Not upheld	6	14
Upheld in part	0	0
Upheld	1	2.5
C/Forward to 2022	4	9

3. Table C below provides comparable information regarding complaints received during 2021 about the conduct of members of Tribunals and determined by Tribunal Presidents on behalf of the Lady Chief Justice.

Complaints about Tribunal Judiciary

Tribunal	Carried Over from previous years	Number received	Number beyond remit	Number informally resolved	Number not upheld	Number upheld in part	Number upheld in full	Withdrawn	C/F
Appeals Tribunal	-	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	4
Industrial Tribunal & Fair Employment Tribunal	2019 - 4 2020 - 7	4	2 (1 transferred to LCJ)	-	5	-	-	-	8
Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Traffic Penalty Tribunal		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Compensation Appeals Panel NI				-	-	-	-	-	-
Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

LADY CHIEF JUSTICE'S OFFICE

July 2022