

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

STATISTICAL RETURN FOR 2016

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/determined by the Lord Chief Justice for the 2016 reporting period together with 3 previous years for comparative purposes.

Table A

Judicial Tier	2016	2015	2014	2013
High Court	5	9	8	11
County Court	7	5	8	7
District Judge (Magistrates' Court)	10	11	14	15
Statutory officers and Coroners	10	16	6	11
Others	16	6	14	2
Total	48	47	50	46

2. Table B below summarises the final outcome of the 42 judicial complaints determined in 2016. Two were investigated with one being upheld. The remaining 40, (83.3%), were beyond the remit of the complaints Code of Practice issued by the Lord Chief Justice as these concerned judicial decisions.

Table B

Outcome	Total	(%)
Beyond remit	40	(83.3)
Withdrawn	0	(0)
Not upheld	1	(2.1)
Upheld in part	0	(0)
Upheld	1	(2.1)
CF to 2016	6	(12.5)

3. Table C below provides comparable information regarding complaints received during 2016 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	C/F
Appeals Tribunal	31	24	-	2	-	3	2
Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal	2	-	1	-	-	-	1
Industrial Tribunal & Fair Employment Tribunal	7	5	-	1	-	-	1
Pensions Appeals Tribunal	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Traffic Penalty Tribunal	2	2	-	-	-	-	-