



May 30 2018

JUDGMENTS RISE IN Q1

The total number of defaults and small claims judgments issued in Northern Ireland during the first quarter of the year rose to the highest levels since Q1 2012, according to figures released today by Registry Trust.

Registry Trust is the non-profit organisation which collects judgment information throughout the British Isles and Ireland. In Northern Ireland it collects information on defaults and small claims judgments, and High Court judgments. A judgment is a warning that debt may be out of control.

There were 2,242 small claims judgments in Q1 2018, 16 percent more than during the same quarter last year and the highest total for any first quarter since 2012.

The average small claims judgment decreased four percent to £1,960; combined these changes led to an 11 percent rise in the total value of small claims judgments.

Registry Trust is analysing public information about claimants which will be published this summer and form part of future news releases.

In the High Court 24 judgments were registered, 21 fewer than during the first quarter of 2017. The average High Court judgment plummeted, dropping 48 percent in value, leading to a 72 percent fall in the total value of judgments.

During Q1 2018, 2.74 percent of judgments were marked as satisfied. This contrasts with 13.14 percent in England and Wales, where satisfaction rates are generally higher owing to differences between legal systems.

Trust chairman Malcolm Hurlston CBE advised people who had paid back: "If you have satisfied a judgment, tell Registry Trust and we shall let credit reference agencies know. Then you are likely to find borrowing easier and cheaper. You need to tell us, it doesn't happen automatically. Fewer than a quarter of the people in Northern Ireland who pay back are getting the recognition they deserve."

Registry Trust received 8,646 requests to search the register for Northern Ireland online at www.trustonline.org.uk during the first quarter of 2018. TrustOnline allows anyone to search for judgments and similar information registered against consumers and businesses in any jurisdiction across the British Isles and Ireland. "It is a unique benefit for consumers to be able to check the debt record of any person or business with which

they may be transacting,” said Mr Hurlston. “I would hesitate before transacting with any business which had a judgment on its record.”

Ends

Statistics

- Defaults and small claims Q1 2018 (compared with Q1 2017)
 - Total number: 2,242 (up 16 percent)
 - Total value: £4.4m (up 11 percent)
 - Average: £1,960 (down four percent)
 - Median: £837 (down three percent)

- High Court judgments Q1 2018
 - Total number: 24 (down 21)
 - Total value: £2.3m (down 72 percent)
 - Average: £97,844 (down 48 percent)
 - Median: £89,531 (up 58 percent)

For more information please contact

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Notes for editors

Registry Trust is a non-profit company established in 1985. In England and Wales, it is the Registrar for Judgments, Orders and Fines, appointed by the Lord Chancellor. It maintains public records of judgment and decree information for most jurisdictions in the British Isles and Ireland. These records are an important factor in avoiding debt and in supporting responsible lending decisions, which in turn underpin a modern and stable economy.

Registry Trust holds a public register of Northern Ireland judgments. It collects details of undefended default, small claims and High Court judgments directly from the Northern Ireland Courts Service with their agreement.

Registry Trust provides its licensed credit reference agencies with regular updates on outstanding judgment debts. This information affects the ability of all enterprises to borrow.

Judgments can be removed from the register if paid in full within one calendar month of the issue date and Registry Trust is informed, but will otherwise remain registered for six years. If fully paid outside the one calendar month, the defendant can apply to have the judgment marked as ‘satisfied’, which will be taken into account in their credit rating. Failure to pay within one month is proof of unmanaged debt.

To have a paid judgment marked as satisfied, defendants need to send evidence of payment to Registry Trust. The written evidence, which will be available from the claimant or the claimant’s solicitor, should include: the case number, the judgment’s

date, amount, and the date when the debt was repaid in full. Defendants should add confirmation of their name and address at the date of the judgment and send it to: Registry Trust, 153–157 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 6QW. An administration fee of £6.00 is payable for each named person or business at a specified address or limited company name. Cheques should be made out to: Registry Trust.

Anyone may search for entries against a named person or business at a stated address or a corporate body in the British Isles and the Republic of Ireland by visiting Registry Trust's website www.trustonline.org.uk or by writing to Registry Trust, 153–157 Cleveland Street, London W1T 6QW.

To view the full set of annual statistics, visit www.trustonline.org.uk/press.

For more information about Registry Trust's aims, structure and accountability as well as information about its range of products beyond the register of judgments visit www.registry-trust.org.uk.