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LENDERS ACCOUNT FOR MINORITY OF JUDGMENTS IN 2018

Analysis of judgment information from Northern Ireland in 2018 shows lenders accounted for 37 percent of judgments, ahead of the government sector on 27 percent and housing bodies on six percent.

Uncategorised claimants (which include insurance brokers, debt collectors and personal claimants) made up a further 27 per cent.

A total of 7,580 judgments were issued in Northern Ireland during 2018, according to Registry Trust which carried out the analysis.

Among lenders, which include banks and credit unions as well as other lenders), the most active claimants were Arrow Global (339) and Amigo Loans (275). The total number of lender claims was 1,589.

Government accounted for 1,129 judgments, led by Debt Management, part of the Department for Communities, whose 618 judgments gave it first place among all the top 50 claimants. The Registrar of Companies was second in the government sector with 412.

Housing organisations accounted for 273 judgments, with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive responsible for 196 judgments of them.

Utilities made up one percent (118), led by Power NI and NI Water.

Leading the other claimants were Abbey Insurance Brokers with 608 and debt collection agency, Asset Collection Investigations on 478.

Analysis by value offers a different if less significant perspective.

The total value of judgments in 2018 was £11.2m with banks and other lenders responsible for 75 percent. Top claimant Amigo Loans accounted for £1.9m worth and Bank of Ireland was the second largest claimant at £1.2m. PRA group, a firm which acquires and collects non-performing loans, was the third largest with judgments worth £737,764.

The government sector was responsible for £1.3m worth of judgments. Debt Management's total judgments was £599,269. The Registrar of Companies and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust were second and third biggest claimants with £346,798 and £152,626 respectively.

Among other claimants Abbey Insurance Brokers accounted for £420,740 worth of judgments and Asset Collection Investigations £370,414.

Housing organisations were responsible for three percent (£274,675) of the total value with Northern Ireland Housing Executive at £167,714. Utilities made up one percent with judgments total valued at £123,711.

The top 50 claimants are the 50 entities responsible for the largest value and volume of judgments during 2018. The top 50 accounted for 59 percent of the total value and 56 percent of the volume of judgments; personal claimants have been excluded.

Malcolm Hurlston CBE, chairman of Registry Trust said: "It will come as a surprise to many that lenders account for a minority of judgments, even in Northern Ireland where credit unions are strong and active, compared with the rest of the UK. "This is fresh information, vital for the public good, giving better insight into the significance of judgments. "We are deepening our study and encouraging England and Wales to follow the example set here."

Registry Trust received 30,541 requests to search the register for Northern Ireland online at www.trustonline.org.uk during 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.

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. Judgments affect the credit rating of both businesses and consumers.

-Ends-

Top 50 claimants categories by volume of judgments 2018

Lenders – 1,589 (37.4 percent of the volume of judgments) [2017: 1,372]
Other – 1,145 (26.9 percent) [2017: 845]
Government – 1,129 (26.5 percent) [2017: 1,120]
Housing – 273 (6.4 percent) [2017: 469]
Utility – 118 (2.8 percent) [2017: 177]

Top 50 claimants categories by value of judgments 2018

Lenders - £8.4m (75.2 percent of the total value of judgments) [2017: £7.6m]
Government - £1.3m (11.3 percent) [2017: £1.1m]
Other - £1.1m (9.9 percent) [2017: £644,575]
Housing - £274,675 (2.5 percent) [2017: £421,915]
Utility - £123,711 (1.1 percent) [2017: £208,586]

Top individual claimants by category (volume) 2018

Government Body

Debt Management: 618 judgments
The Registrar of Companies: 412
CTB NI: 50

Lenders

Banks

Santander Consumer UK: 81
Bank of Ireland: 40
Santander Consumer Finance: 23

Credit Unions

Newington Credit Union: 116
Lurgan Credit Union: 97
Cloughfern Community Credit Union: 20

Other lenders

Arrow Global: 339
Amigo Loans: 277
Skyline Direct: 162
PRA Group: 120

Housing

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: 196
Choice Housing Ireland: 53
Apex Housing Association: 40

Utility

Power Northern Ireland: 68
Northern Ireland Water: 49
Firmus Energy Ltd: 22

Other

Abbey Insurance Brokers: 608
Asset Collection and Investigations: 478
Flagship Media Group: 71

Top individual claimants by category (value) 2018

Lenders

Banks

Bank of Ireland: £1.2m worth of judgments
Ulster Bank: £582,594
Santander Consumer UK: £570,393

Credit Unions

Lurgan Credit Union: £318,274
Newington Credit Union: £260,697
Downpatrick Credit Union: £193,791

Other lenders

Amigo Loans: £1.9m
PRA Group: £737,764
Arrow Global: £638,530

Government Body

Debt Management: £599,269

Registrar of Companies: £346,798
The Southern Health and Social Care Trust: £212,184

Housing

Northern Ireland Housing Executive: £167,714
NICHHA: £60,413
Apex Housing Association: £46,548

Utility

Power Northern Ireland: £69,959
Northern Ireland Water: £46,196

Other

Abbey Insurance Brokers: £420,740
Asset Collection & Investigations: £370,414
BRS Limited: £121,390

Biggest increase in judgments by volume (2018 compared with 2017)

Asset Collection & Investigations LTD 478 (up 370)
Arrow Global Limited 339 (up 339)
The Registrar of Companies 412 (up 240)
Amigo Loans 275 (up 100)

Biggest increase in judgments by value (2018 compared with 2017)

Amigo Loans £1.9m (up 1.1m)
Bank of Ireland £1.2m (up 1.1m)
Arrow Global Limited £638,530 (up 638,530)
Santander Consumer (UK) PLC £570,393 (up 200,351)
Abbey Insurance Brokers £420,740 (up 142,368)

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Notes for editors

All figures are in reference to the top 50 claimants during 2018 (in terms of volume and value of judgments) and not to all debt judgments recorded in Northern Ireland during this period. The top individual claimants accounted for 59 percent of the value and 56 percent of the volume of all claims. Personal claimants have been excluded.

Debt Management is part of the Department for Communities. Its role is to recover overpaid benefits; make deductions from benefits for rent, rates and electric bill debts; recover Social Fund loans; recover Discretionary Support loans; and to recover benefits as a result of personal injury claims, together with any associated health services charges.

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 its 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 can be taken into account in future credit rating. Failure to pay within one month is a concerning signal.

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.