

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Máinnystrie O tha Laa

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Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk to the Committee for Justice
Parliament Buildings
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09 September 2026

Dear Kathy,

COUNTY COURT JURISDICTION: STATUTORY RULES

Please find enclosed SL1s, together with the statutory rules and Explanatory Memoranda, for:

- The draft County Courts (Financial Limits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026; and
- The County Court (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2026.

The proposed Financial Limits Order, to be made by the Department, will increase the general civil jurisdiction of the county court from £30,000 to £60,000, the jurisdiction of district judges in the county courts from £10,000 to £20,000, and the jurisdiction of county courts to hear claims of libel and slander from £3,000 to £10,000.

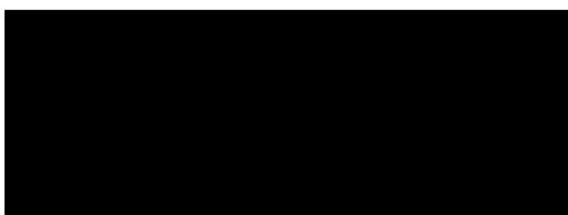
The other statutory rule makes consequential amendments to the County Court Rules (Northern Ireland) 1981, including amendments extending the scale costs (the costs payable to barristers and solicitors in privately funded cases) to cover proceedings falling within the increased financial limits. County Court Rules are a matter for the County Court Rules Committee, subject to being allowed by the Department. Please note that this statutory rule has already been made by the Rules Committee, but does not have effect until it is allowed by the Department.

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It is proposed that both statutory rules would come into operation on 30 November 2026.

The Department would, therefore, be grateful if the Committee could consider the two SL1s together, with final consideration at its meeting on 15 October 2026.

Yours sincerely,



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Annex A – Cover DALO Letter to JC - SL1 – THE (DRAFT) COUNTY COURTS (FINANCIAL LIMITS) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2026

Annex B – Draft The County Courts (Financial Limits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

Annex C - EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM - The County Courts (Financial Limits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

Annex D – Cover DALO Letter to JC - SL1 – THE COUNTY COURT (AMENDMENT) RULES (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2026

Annex E – Draft The County Court (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2026

Annex F - EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM - The County Court (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2026