



# County Court

Annual Report 2004 - 2005

**Eastbourne**

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**Annual Report by the Designated Civil Judge and Regional Director**

**Information (please enter)**

Designated Civil Judge:

Regional Director:

Area Director: Dave Weston

Trial Centre(s):

**Courts covered in report** (please enter manager name)

<b>Court Name</b>	<b>Court Manager</b>
Eastbourne County Court	Hazel Hollands

**Eastbourne**  
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**Comments Section:**

The workload in general has remained stable with a slight increase in possession summons. The main growth area of work is with debtors bankruptcy which continues for the third year to rise - 22% this year. This not reflected in these statistics.

There has been a slight shift towards Fast Track trials due to the sum claimed and fewer of these are settling prior to hearing.

The lists are almost evenly split between civil and family work. This year has seen some problems with CAFCASS being unable to meet deadlines for filing welfare reports that impacted on listing family work for final hearings. The District Judge, Court Manager and Listing Officer met with Cafcass to agree a forward plan and the situation was resolved.

The permanent judicial sitting plans remain static year on year. Last year the Court was able to book part time District Judges when the need arose sometimes exceeding in month profile. Being able to do this meant being able to respond more efficiently to unexpected peaks and troughs in work and provide annual leave cover when advised at short notice.

A new system for turnaround of boxwork was put into place this year. This area of work was targeted by the Court Manager in liaison with the DJs and ushers. Boxwork now is usually completed within 10 working days at the outside. However, as an un-statted area work, when the lists are busy, this is the first area of work to get neglected. CMs are fairly toothless without the back up of a DCJ when this problem occurs. This has in the past year sometimes impacted on achievement of A/E targets.

The court maintained an active programme of work experience students all of last Summer. In addition a local school was invited and attended the Court on an awareness visit. The Court staff were also involved in a new training programme for Citizens Advice Bureau advisors. This was well received and served to enhance the local relationship with the CAB that has been quite tenuous in the past. The judiciary are not involved in ADR to my knowledge but an ADR practitioner asked to attend the court to appraise the staff on the purpose etc. of ADR and has done so.

Accommodation has been an issue on occasions this year as it has been historically. The building is limited with regards to consultation rooms. It does not have separate witness areas. It is very hot in the Summer and does not have any secure place to hold prisoners. This year under DDA various improvements were made to door openers etc. However, a lift was not provided on financial grounds despite the fact that all of the chambers, courtroom and consultations rooms are on the first floor of the building.

**PERFORMANCE**

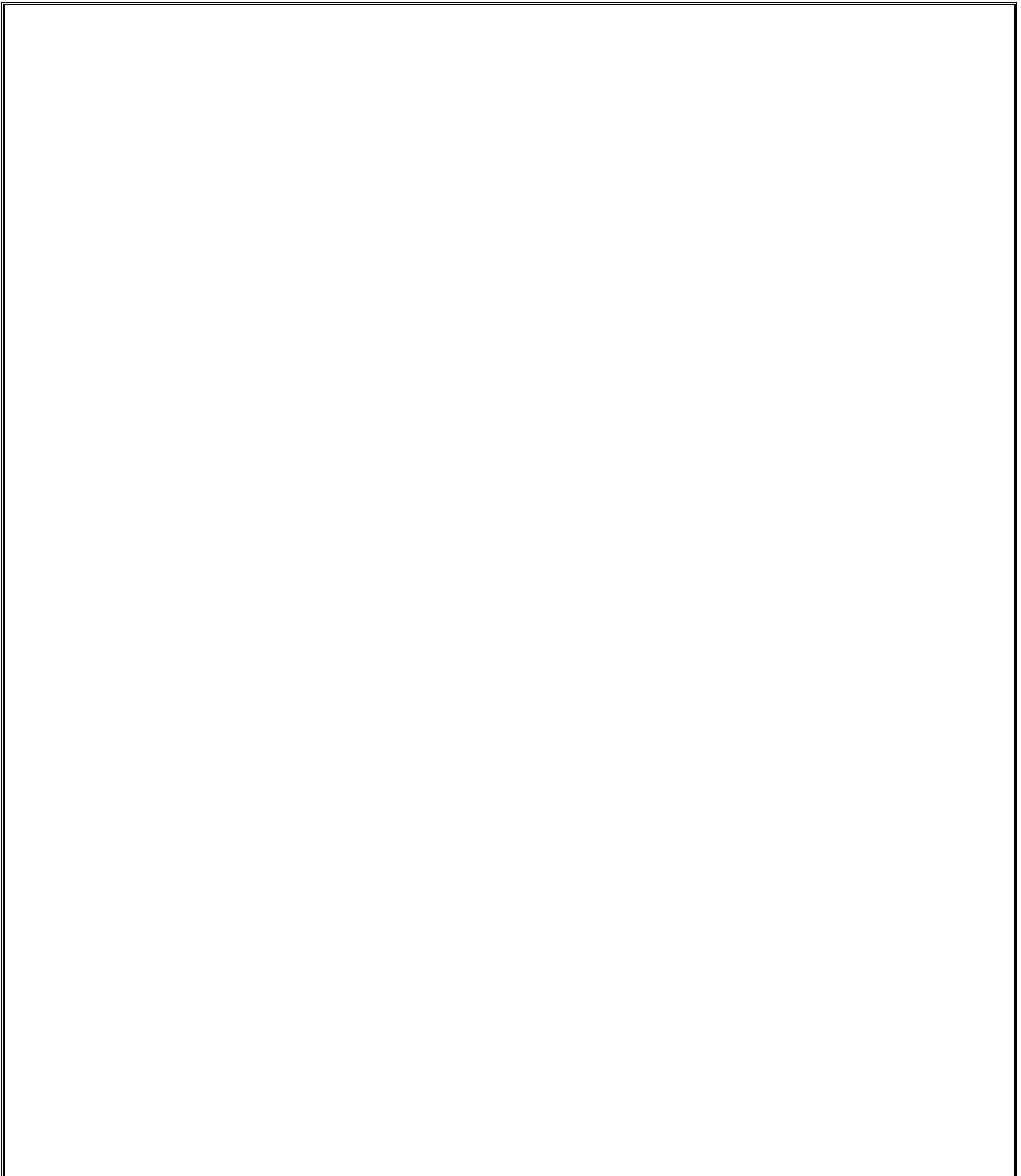
Most areas of work were in target for the majority of the year. The biggest area of failing was with Fast Track trials with only 5 of 11 cases meeting the 30 week target. All of the offending cases have been investigated and I am unable to identify any specific trends. One case missed target by 3 weeks only and should have better managed. The other 5 cases each had several interlocutory hearings, one many changes of solicitors on both sides. Another had medical reports updated several times. Another interlocutory judgement given and set aside more than once before final hearing. None of these cases missed target due to office administration error.

Both the Court Manager and the Office Manager have invested a considerable amount of time this year monitoring cases via Image. This will continue along with a closer scrutiny of the DMS system and adherence to the system introduced by the Court Manager to raise awareness of the window for trial when listing cases for final hearing.

Last year saw many staffing difficulties with both long term sick absence and the need to address lack of skills within the team. An extensive training plan was put into place to provide better cover for all members of staff and this continues. However this, and employment of casual staff to cover sick absence did impact slightly on the delivery of Customer Service as people were taken out of their area of expertise whilst learning/helping on new areas of work.

Curiously, appeals from the DJ have risen threefold in the last year. Most of the cases have been looked at to identify a trend. There was none. Most of the orders appealed were DJ Robinson but on variety of different cases. It is to be expected that the majority of cases would be his as he sits here the most. Only one of those looked at was upheld.

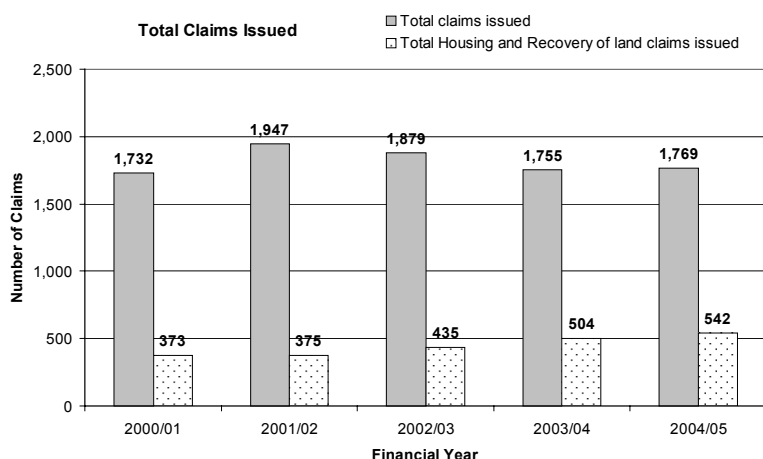
**Eastbourne**  
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**Eastbourne**  
Annual Report by the Designated Civil Judge and Regional Director

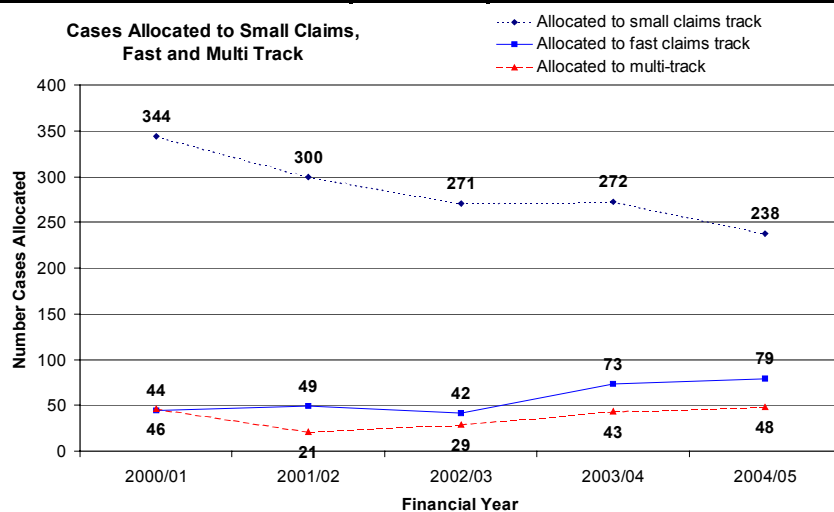
## County Court Claims Issued<sup>1</sup>

Financial Year	EW 04/05	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	% Diff
Total claims issued	881,328	1,732	1,947	1,879	1,755	1,769	0.8%
Total Housing and Recovery of land claims issued	233,969	373	375	435	504	542	7.5%



## Number Allocated to Small Claims, Fast Track and Multi Track

Financial Year	EW 04/05	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	% Diff
Allocated to small claims track	73,248	344	300	271	272	238	-12.5%
Allocated to fast claims track	50,385	44	49	42	73	79	8.2%
Allocated to multi-track	28,494	46	21	29	43	48	11.6%

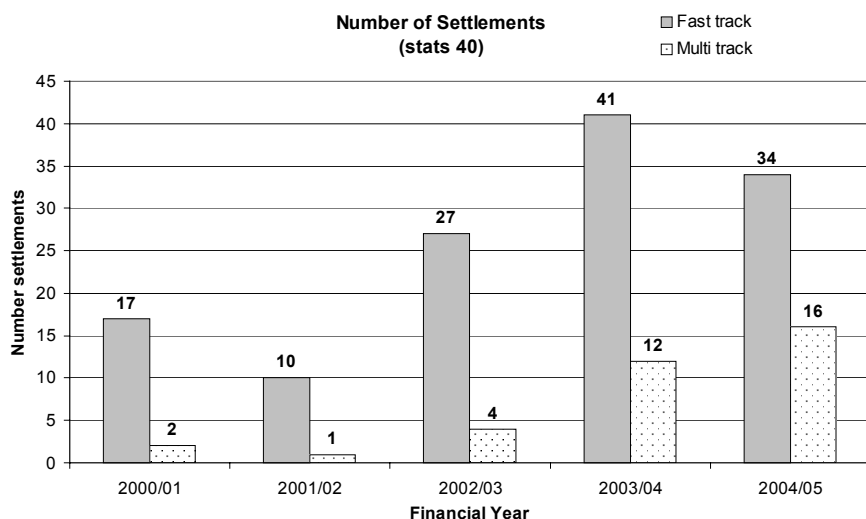


<sup>1</sup> The England and Wales column is for comparison purposes. The % Diff column shows the increase from 2003/04 to 2004/05.

**Eastbourne**  
Annual Report by the Designated Civil Judge and Regional Director

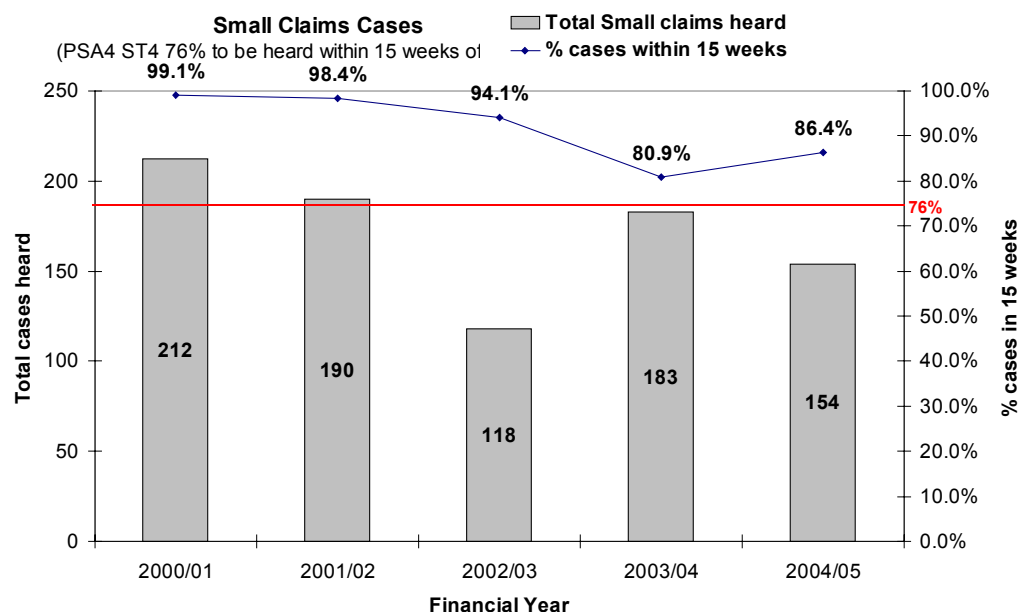
### Number of Settlements After Allocation<sup>2</sup>

Financial Year	EW 04/05	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	% Diff
Fast track settlements	24,858	17	10	27	41	34	-17.1%
Multi track settlements	15,747	2	1	4	12	16	33.3%



### Number of Small Claims Heard and Timeliness

Financial Year	EW 04/05	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	% Diff
Small claims cases heard	43,622	212	190	118	183	154	-15.8%
Small claims cases heard in 15 weeks	80.8%	99.1%	98.4%	94.1%	80.9%	86.4%	6.8%



<sup>2</sup> The number of settlements after allocation is only available for 11 months of data.

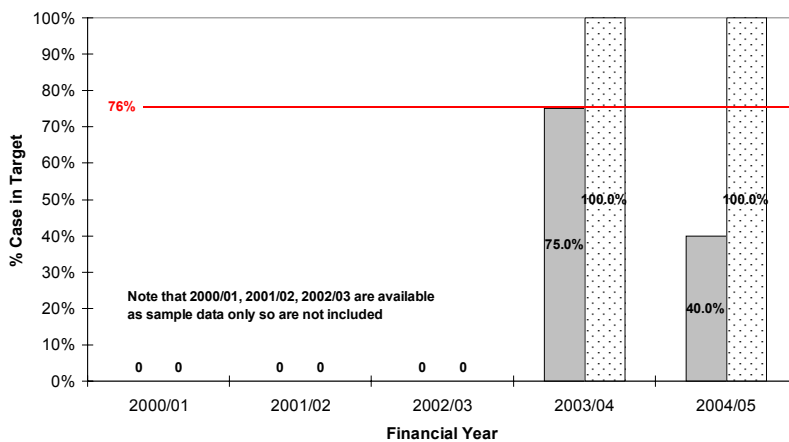
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Annual Report by the Designated Civil Judge and Regional Director

### Numbers of Fast and Multi Track Trials and Timeliness<sup>3</sup>

Financial Year	EW 04/05	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	% Diff
Fast track cases heard	9,536	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	10	-16.7%
Fast track cases heard in 30 weeks	79.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	75.0%	40.0%	-46.7%
Multi track cases heard	4,191	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	1	-50.0%
Multi track cases heard in 50 weeks	75.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%

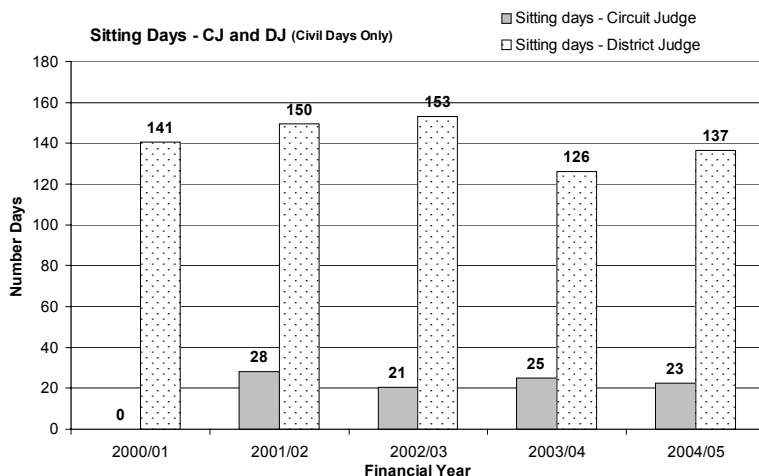
**Fast and Multi Track Cases**  
(PSA4 ST5/6 76% to be heard within 30/50 weeks of allocation)

% Fast Track within 30 weeks  
 % Multi Track cases within 50 weeks



### County Court Sitting Days<sup>4</sup>

Financial Year	EW 04/05	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	% Diff
Sitting days - Circuit Judge	14,666	0	28	21	25	23	-10.0%
Sitting days - District Judge	69,840	141	150	153	126	137	8.3%



<sup>3</sup> Figures for Fast Track and Multi Track before December 2002 were recorded on a sample basis only.

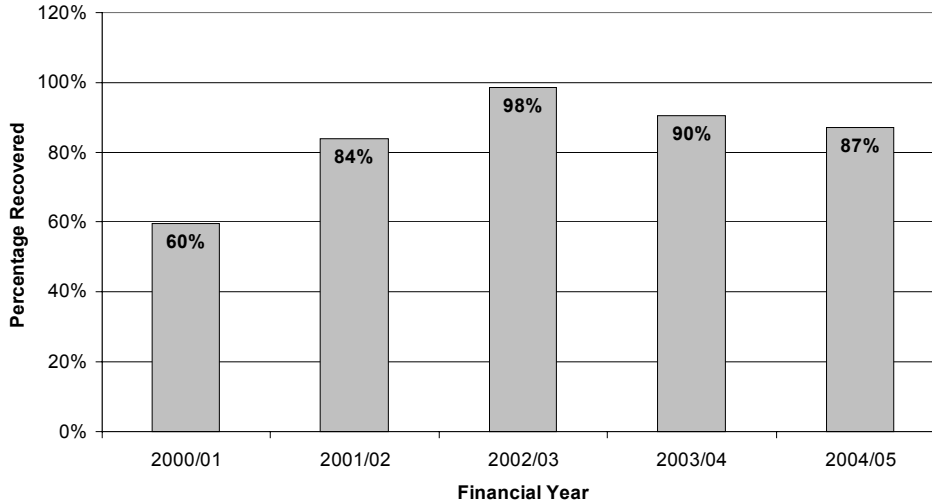
<sup>4</sup> Approximate numbers for civil cases as many judges have mixed lists including family cases.

**Eastbourne**  
Annual Report by the Designated Civil Judge and Regional Director

## Recovery of Debt

Financial Year	EW 04/05	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	% Diff
% money recovered on warrants for recovery of debt	91%	60%	84%	98%	90%	87%	-3.8%

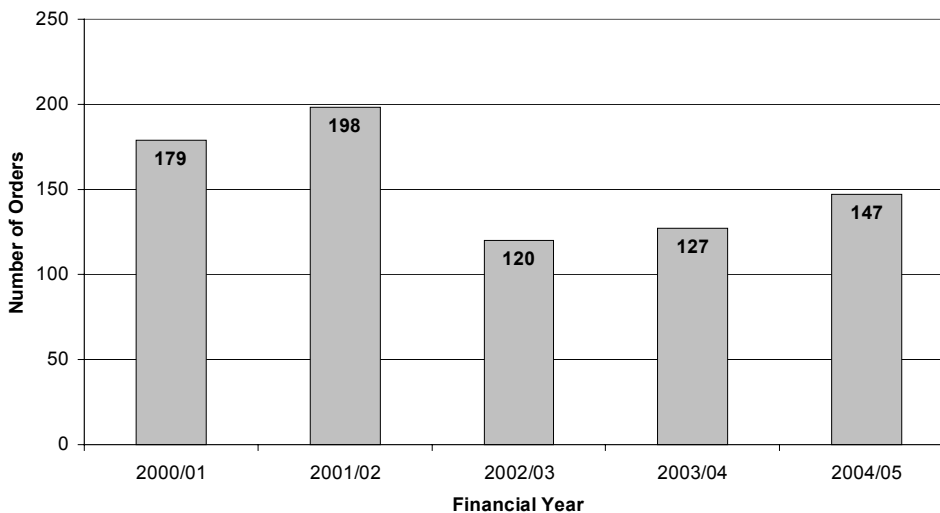
% of Money Recovered on Warrants for Recovery of Debt



## Attachment of Earnings

Financial Year	EW 04/05	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	% Diff
Attachment of Earnings orders made	79,687	179	198	120	127	147	15.7%

Number of Attachment of Earnings Orders

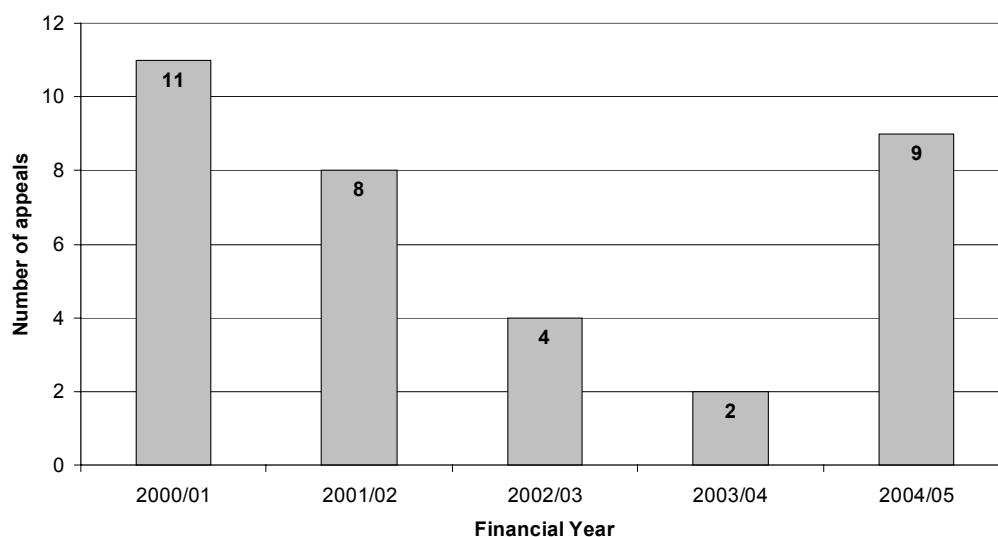


**Eastbourne**  
Annual Report by the Designated Civil Judge and Regional Director

## Appeals<sup>5</sup>

Financial Year	EW 04/05	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	% Diff
Appeals from District Judges	3,292	11	8	4	2	9	350.0%

Number of Appeals from DJ's



## Source Data

Measure	Source
County Court Claims Issued	BMS task Nos. IS1, IS2 & IS7 extracted from CaseMan
Number Allocated to Small Claims, Fast Track and Multi Track	BMS task Nos. JH60, JH61 & JH62 extracted from CaseMan
Number of Settlements After Allocation <sup>6</sup>	Stats40
Number of Small Claims Heard and Timeliness	PSA4_s4
Numbers of Fast and Multi Track Trials and Timeliness <sup>7</sup>	PSA4_s5, PSA4_s6
County Court Sitting Days	Stats10
Recovery of Debt	PSA4_s11
Attachment of Earnings	BMS task No. EN30 extracted from CaseMan
Appeals <sup>8</sup>	BMS task No. JH9 extracted from CaseMan

## Missing Data

At the time of producing these reports, there was outstanding Stats10 and Stats40 data for North and West Yorkshire Group for the month of March and February 2005 respectively.

There was also some Stats40 data outstanding from South Wales group for the month of February 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Appeals from District Judge – JH9 – Issue appellants/respondents notice (N161/N162)

<sup>6</sup> The number of settlements after allocation is only available for 9 months of data.

<sup>7</sup> Figures for Fast Track and Multi Track before December 2002 were recorded on a sample basis only.

<sup>8</sup> Appeals from District Judge – JH9 – Issue appellants/respondents notice (N161/N162)