



April 24 2016

“CLOSER EXAMINATION NEEDED” AS BUSINESS JUDGMENTS LEAP

There was a sharp increase in the number of county court judgments (CCJs) against companies in England and Wales during the first quarter of the year, according to figures released today by Registry Trust.

Registry Trust is the Registrar of Judgments, Orders and Fines in England and Wales (on behalf of the Ministry of Justice). In addition, it collects, verifies and publishes judgment information from jurisdictions across the British Isles and Ireland. A judgment is incontrovertible proof of unmanaged debt.

In Q1 2017, 29,811 CCJs were registered against all businesses in England and Wales. The increase of 36 percent compared with the first quarter of 2016 bucks the downward trend which has lasted seven years.

The total value of business CCJs rose slightly by four percent to £81m, but the average value of a business judgment fell 24 percent to £2,712 – the lowest average for a single quarter on record.

The increase in the total number and value of business judgments was entirely owing to more CCJs against incorporated businesses. The number of judgments registered against companies rose 83 percent in Q1 2017. By contrast there was a 17 percent fall in the number of judgments issued against the generally smaller unincorporated businesses.

Meanwhile, the number judgments against businesses in the High Court fell to just 14 in Q1 2017, the lowest first quarter total on record. The total value surged 486 percent to £96.6m due to two unusually large judgments, one worth £66.6m against Malabu Oil & Gas Ltd and the other worth £14.8m against Anaconda Group LLC. Excluding these, the average value of a High Court business judgment was £1.2m.

“This sudden reversal of trend may well be a cause for alarm,” said Registry Trust chairman Malcolm Hurlston CBE. “Judgments against consumers have been rising for technical reasons. There is no equivalent reason for judgments against companies to have jumped to this extent. Closer examination is needed to unveil the truth behind the statistics.”

In Q1 2017 Registry Trust received 53,340 requests to search the register for England and Wales online at www.trustonline.org.uk. 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 judgment record of any business or indeed person. If you plan any kind of transaction, check first. Whereas there are many places to check your own record we are the sole source of second party checks," said Mr Hurlston. "If you find some negative information, think twice. As overall judgment numbers against businesses fall, those which mismanage present a clearer risk."

ENDS

Statistics

- CCJs against all businesses Q1 2017 (compared with Q1 2016)
 - Total: 29,811 (up 36 percent)
 - Value: £81m (up four percent)
 - Average: £2,712 (down 24 percent)
- CCJs against incorporated businesses Q1 2017
 - Total: 21,349 (up 83 percent)
 - Value: £59m (up 24 percent)
 - Average: £2,773 (down 32 percent)
- CCJs against unincorporated businesses Q1 2017
 - Total: 8,462 (down 17 percent)
 - Value: £21.6m (down 28 percent)
 - Average: £2,558 (down 13 percent)
- High Court judgments against businesses Q1 2017
 - Total: 14 (down 13 percent)
 - Value: £96.6m (up 486 percent)
 - Average: £6.9m (up 569 percent)

Notes for editors

Registry Trust is a non-profit company established in 1985 in order to become Registrar of County Court Judgments on behalf of the Department of Constitutional Affairs. 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.

Today Registry Trust is the Registrar for Judgments, Orders and Fines in England and Wales on behalf of the Ministry of Justice. The Register includes county court judgments, high court judgments, CSA liability orders, fine defaults and tribunal awards for England and Wales.

CCJs are removed from the register if paid in full within one calendar month of the judgment date, but will otherwise remain registered for six years. If fully paid outside the one calendar month, defendants can apply to have the judgment marked as 'satisfied' which will improve their credit rating. Failure to pay within one month is proof of failure to manage debt.

Anyone may search for entries against a named person or business at a stated address or a corporate body in Great Britain, Northern Ireland 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, please 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 information beyond the Register of Judgments please visit www.registry-trust.org.uk. The site includes RT View – free interactive mapping software which displays aggregated judgment data for England and Wales by region, local authority and ward back to 2001.

For more information, media may contact Daniel Helen at dhelen@hurlstons.com or call 020 7239 4971.