



July 31 2017

CONSUMERS HOLD STEADY – DECREE FIGURES SHOW

There was a small increase in the numbers of decrees for debt against Scottish consumers during the first half of 2017, according to figures released today by Registry Trust.

Registry Trust is the non-profit organisation which collects decree and judgment information from jurisdictions across the UK, including small claims, summary, ordinary cause and simple procedure sheriff's court decrees in Scotland.

In the first six months of 2017, 10,967 debt decrees were registered against consumers in Scotland, a four percent increase on the same period last year. The average value of a consumer decree fell 10 percent to £3,000, bringing the combined value of all consumer decrees down by six percent to £32.9m.

There were marked differences in the trends for small claims and summary causes and ordinary cause decrees. While the number and value of small claims and summary causes increased, these numbers fell for ordinary cause decrees.

The average small claims and summary causes decree was worth £1,724, the highest on record; the average ordinary cause decree was worth £16,014.

Only four percent of decrees were marked as satisfied in the first two quarters of 2017, far lower than the 12 percent of satisfied debt judgments in England and Wales, where satisfaction rates are generally higher owing to legal differences.

Under a new initiative from Registry Trust, lenders are being encouraged to notify the Trust directly when a decree has been settled to their satisfaction. At the moment, the onus lies with the consumer to take the action, which is logical but does not work well enough in practice. Lender notification would make an immediate difference in Scotland, helping transform access to credit for thousands of consumers.

"It is time consumers were helped to register payments and improve their histories," said Registry Trust chairman Malcolm Hurlston CBE. "It cannot be fair that such a low

proportion of satisfactions are marked in Scotland. We are taking the initiative to work fast with responsible lenders, including the Credit Services Association which launched a new code of conduct at the start of the month."

In the first half of 2017 Registry Trust received 15,679 requests to search the register for Scotland online at www.trustonline.org.uk. TrustOnline allows anyone to search for decrees and similar information registered against businesses and consumers 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. "Negative information would certainly make me think twice."

ENDS

Statistics

All consumer decrees Q1 and Q2 2017 (compared with Q1 and Q2 2016)

- Total: 10,967 (up four percent)
- Value: £32.9m (down six percent)
- Average: £3,000 (down 10 percent)

Small claims and summary cause decrees Q1 and Q2 2017

- Total: 9,988 (up four percent)
- Value: £17.2m (up 18 percent)
- Average: £1,724 (up 13 percent)

Ordinary cause decrees Q1 and Q2 2017

- Total: 979 (down five percent)
- Value: £15.6m (down 24 percent)
- Average: £16,014 (down 19 percent)

Notes for editors

Registry Trust is a non-profit company established in 1985 to become the Registrar of County Court Judgments. It maintains public records of decree and judgment information for 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 Scottish decrees. By agreement with the Scottish Courts Administration Service it collects details of undefended money decrees entered in the small claims, summary and ordinary causes sheriffs' courts in Scotland.

From November 28 2016, a change to Scottish law was evoked whereby 'simple procedure' replaced the previous small claims procedure and part of the summary cause procedure. Simple procedure is a court process designed to provide a speedy, inexpensive and informal way to resolve disputes where the monetary value does not exceed £5,000.

Decrees are 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, defendants can apply to have the record marked as 'satisfied' to improve their credit rating. Failure to pay within one month is proof of unmanaged 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 statistics, please visit www.trustonline.org.uk/press.

There is currently no register of liability orders which leads to relative underpayment of council tax and business rates.

For more information about Registry Trust's aims, structure and accountability as well as information about its range of products beyond the register of decrees and judgments please visit www.registry-trust.org.uk. The site includes RT View—free interactive mapping software which displays aggregated decree and judgment data for Scotland, England and Wales by region, local authority and ward back to 2001.

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