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DEBT FALLS FOR SMALLER BUSINESSES

The number of debt decrees registered against Scottish businesses reached a record low during the first six months of the year, 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 British Isles and Ireland. In Scotland it collects information on small claims, summary, ordinary cause and simple procedure sheriff's court decrees. A decree is incontrovertible proof of failure to manage debt.

There were 1,198 debt decrees registered against Scottish businesses in the first half of 2017, down a third on the previous year and the lowest on record. The total value of business decrees fell 55 percent to £7.6m and the average business decree was worth £6,342.

There was no change in the number of decrees against companies between the first half of 2017 and the first half of 2016. There was a 56 percent fall, however, in the number of decrees against the generally much smaller unincorporated businesses.

The average corporate judgment decreased 52 percent to £8,140; the average non-corporate judgment fell 15 percent to £3,518.

"Scottish business can take heart from these figures," said Registry Trust chairman Malcolm Hurlston CBE. "If they need to expand they may well have the borrowing capacity."

In the first half of 2017 Registry Trust received 15,679 requests to search the register for Scotland online at www.trustonline.org.uk. Through TrustOnline anyone in Scotland can 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 firms 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

Decrees against all businesses Q1 and Q2 2017 (compared with Q1 and Q2 2016)

- Total: 1,198 (down 33 percent)
- Value: £7.6m (down 55 percent)
- Average: £6,342 (down 33 percent)

Decrees against incorporated businesses Q1 and Q2 2017

- Total: 732 (no change)
- Value: £6m (down 52 percent)
- Average: £8,140 (down 52 percent)

Decrees against unincorporated businesses Q1 and Q2 2017

- Total: 466 (down 56 percent)
- Value: £1.6m (down 62 percent)
- Average: £3,518 (down 15 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, the defendant can apply to

have the record marked as 'satisfied', which will have a positive effect on most credit scores. 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.

For more information about Registry Trust's aims, structure and accountability as well as information about its services beyond the registers of decrees and judgments please visit www.registry-trust.org.uk. The site includes RT View—free interactive mapping software which displays aggregated decrees 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.