



Ms Éilis Fallon
Committee of Public Accounts
Houses of the Oireachtas
Kildare House
Dublin 2
D02 XR20

Your ref.: PAC32-I-1367
Our ref.: DJE-SG-00059-2019

Dear Ms Fallon,

I refer further to your letter of 15 March, 2019 with regard to the Committee meeting on Thursday 7 March, 2019 and my reply to the Committee dated 28 February, 2019.

The Courts Service provides statistics on the number of offences dealt with by the courts and this information is available in the Courts Service Annual report.

A specific defendant's case before the courts could involve a number of different offences.

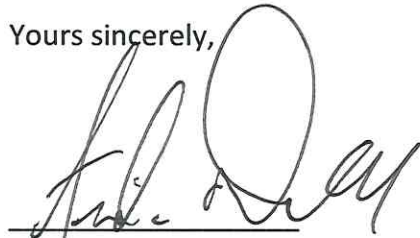
The Committee inquired as to whether it were possible to derive the figure for non-legally aided persons from comparing the difference between the number of persons appearing before the courts and the number of legal aid certs granted.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to derive a reliable estimate in this way. Legal Aid certs granted can refer to a single offence or a category of offences. A defendant appearing before the courts could be granted a number of Legal Aid Certs for offences in the one case or could have a number of Legal Aid Certs referring to different cases before the courts. It is not possible therefore to assess the number of cases legally aided or not legally aided by subtracting the number of Legal Aid Certs granted from the total number of offences dealt with by the courts.

As indicated previously, legal aid is granted by the courts for the majority of indictable offences dealt with in the Circuit, Central and Special Criminal Courts. The Courts Service advises that this would refer to at least 95% of these cases. In the District Court it advises that legal aid would be granted for the majority of defendants. It would be difficult to give an exact figure but the Courts Service estimate that more than 70% of defendants would be legally aided.

The types of offences which would not commonly attract Legal Aid would be those such as minor Road Traffic offences like speeding or tax cert or NCT cert displayed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aidan O'Driscoll', written over a horizontal line.

Aidan O'Driscoll
Secretary General

26 March, 2019