

Injuries Board 2015 Annual Overview

Friday, 1st April 2016: The Injuries Board has published its 2015 annual overview which shows that 33,561 new personal injury claims were submitted to the Board last year. The 6% increase in new claims – compared to 31,576 claims in 2014 – reflects increased economic and social activity and is not unexpected given there are more people at work, higher traffic volumes and higher footfall in public areas.

The Board made 11,734 awards for personal injury compensation and delivered a total of €268.4 million in compensation in 2015, compared to 12,420 awards and €281.2 million compensation in 2014. The reduction in awards does not reflect any change to underlying claim volumes but is due to the timing of awards with some volume from 2015 pushing into Q1 2016. Projecting to the end of this year, underlying award volumes annually will average 12,000 over the 3 year period 2014-2016 as compared to approximately 1,500 personal injury cases adjudicated in the courts annually.

Average compensation awards by the Board remained very consistent with 2014, increasing by a modest 1% to €22,878 (2014: €22,642) and the breakdown of awards remained steady with motor liability accounting for 3 in 4 awards (75%), employer liability at 8% and public liability at 17%.

The Board's strategic priorities in 2015 were:

1. To optimise use of the Injuries Board's model as the lowest cost and most efficient resolution mechanism for uncontested personal injury claims;
2. To commence a process of updating the Book of Quantum compensation guide to ensure continuing certainty and clarity around award values in 2016 and beyond;
3. To facilitate a wider understanding of the evolving claims landscape by seeking greater transparency and data sharing by key stakeholders so that the appropriate policy responses to the upward trajectory of insurance premiums can be considered;
4. To enhance the Board's operational capabilities through initiatives such as the new claims processing technology platform introduced in 2015.

Conor O'Brien, Chief Executive of the Injuries Board, stated:

"The Injuries Board continues to offer the lowest cost, most efficient and timely model for assessing significant volumes of personal injury cases. Last year alone the Board's non-adversarial model delivered direct savings of almost €80 million and claim processing costs are now at their lowest ever level of 6.5%. The comparable cost of processing cases in litigation can be up to 60% of the compensation awarded. The more cases that can be processed through the Board without the need for litigation, the greater the impact on claim costs.

In addition to processing efficiencies, we are seeking to ensure continued clarity around compensation values and an independent review of the Book of Quantum is underway for publication later this year.

A comprehensive understanding of the broader personal injury environment requires the publication of data relating to cases that are settled outside of the Board's model. Bridging this significant information gap should be in the best interest of all stakeholders and an important step in better understanding any claims-related factors impacting on insurance premium increases."

Key statistics for 2015:

- The Board made 11,734 personal injury awards and delivered €268.4 million in compensation.
- €78 million in savings were achieved by the Injuries Board model on the cost of delivering these awards.
- Awards for motor accidents continued to account for 3 out of 4 awards in 2015. The average motor award value in 2015 marginally increased by 1% to €21,470 (2014: €21,215). Motor awards continued to be the lowest average award value of all three claims categories.
- Employer liability awards accounted for 8% of total awards last year. While Employer Liability awards have typically attracted the highest average award value in recent years, in 2015 the average award for a workplace claim reduced by 3% to €31,267 (2014: €32,134).
- Public liability awards, for injuries resulting from accidents in public places, made up 17% of total awards in 2015, with a 2% increase in the average award to €25,213 (2014: €24,677).
- The average award processing timeline was steady at 7 months last year. The statutory processing timeline is 9 months.
- Counties Limerick, Longford and Louth recorded the highest volume of awards on a per-head-of-population basis.
- Counties Kilkenny, Wexford and Wicklow recorded the lowest volume of awards on a per-head-of-population basis.