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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Contents

Key results for August 2014	2
Detailed results: Tables	4
Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons.....	4
Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons.....	5
Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000).....	5
Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended August 2013 and the three months ended August 2014.....	6
Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended August 2013 and the three months ended August 2014.....	6
Table 6 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year....	6
Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province.....	7
Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province.....	7
Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province.....	7
Explanatory notes	8
Glossary	9
General information	10

Key results for August 2014

Table A – Key figures for the month of August 2014

Actual estimates	August 2014	% change between August 2013 and August 2014	% change between Jun – Aug 2013 and Jun – Aug 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	69 544	-7,3	-3,9
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	25 865	-14,6	-10,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	323,0	-27,6	-18,6

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 3,9% in the three months ended August 2014 compared with the three months ended August 2013. A 7,3% decrease was recorded between August 2013 and August 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 3,9% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- promissory notes (contributing -2,7 percentage points);
- services (contributing -2,0 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing -1,4 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 10,1% in the three months ended August 2014 compared with the three months ended August 2013. A decrease of 14,6% was recorded year-on-year in August 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 10,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -4,7 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -3,0 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -2,3 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 18,6% in the three months ended August 2014 compared with the three months ended August 2013. A year-on-year decrease of 27,6% was recorded in August 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 18,6% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- services (contributing -4,7 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -4,6 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing -2,6 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In August 2014, 25 865 civil judgements for debt amounting to R323,0 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R90,1 million or 27,9%);
- 'other' debts (R89,8 million or 27,8%); and
- services (R53,8 million or 16,7%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

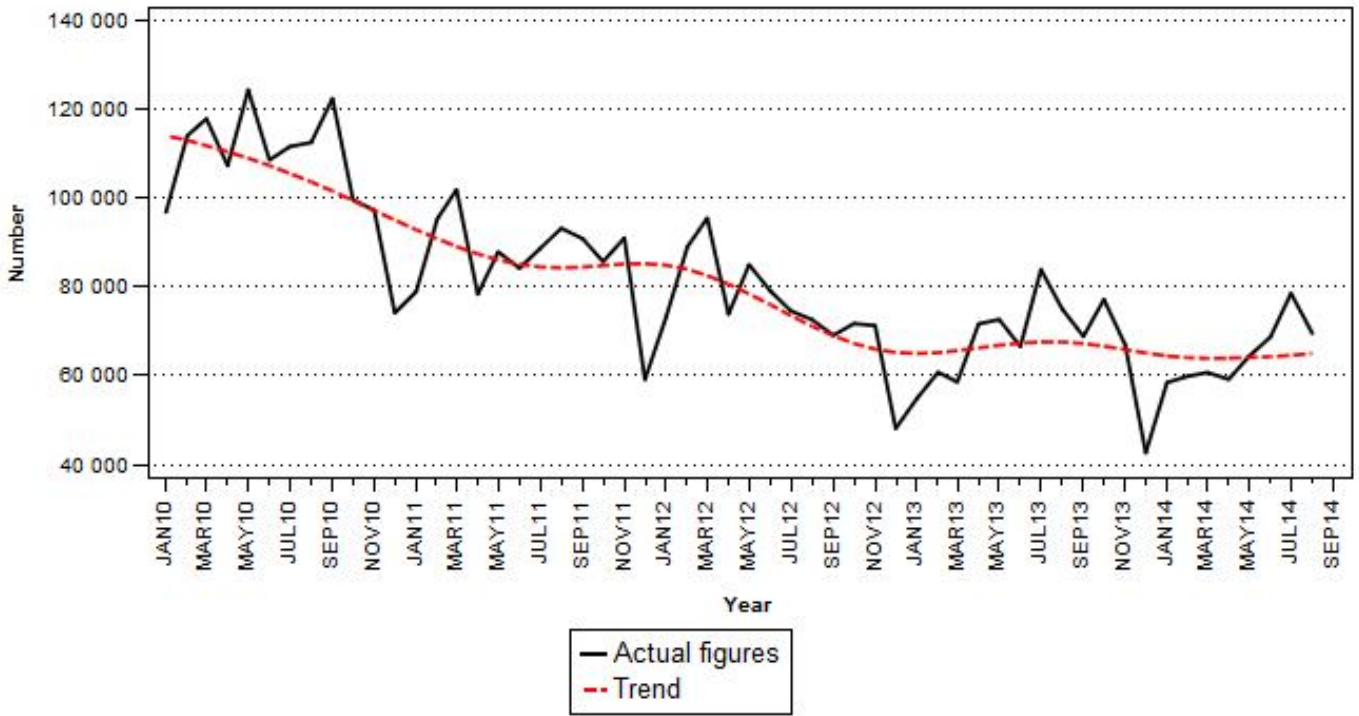
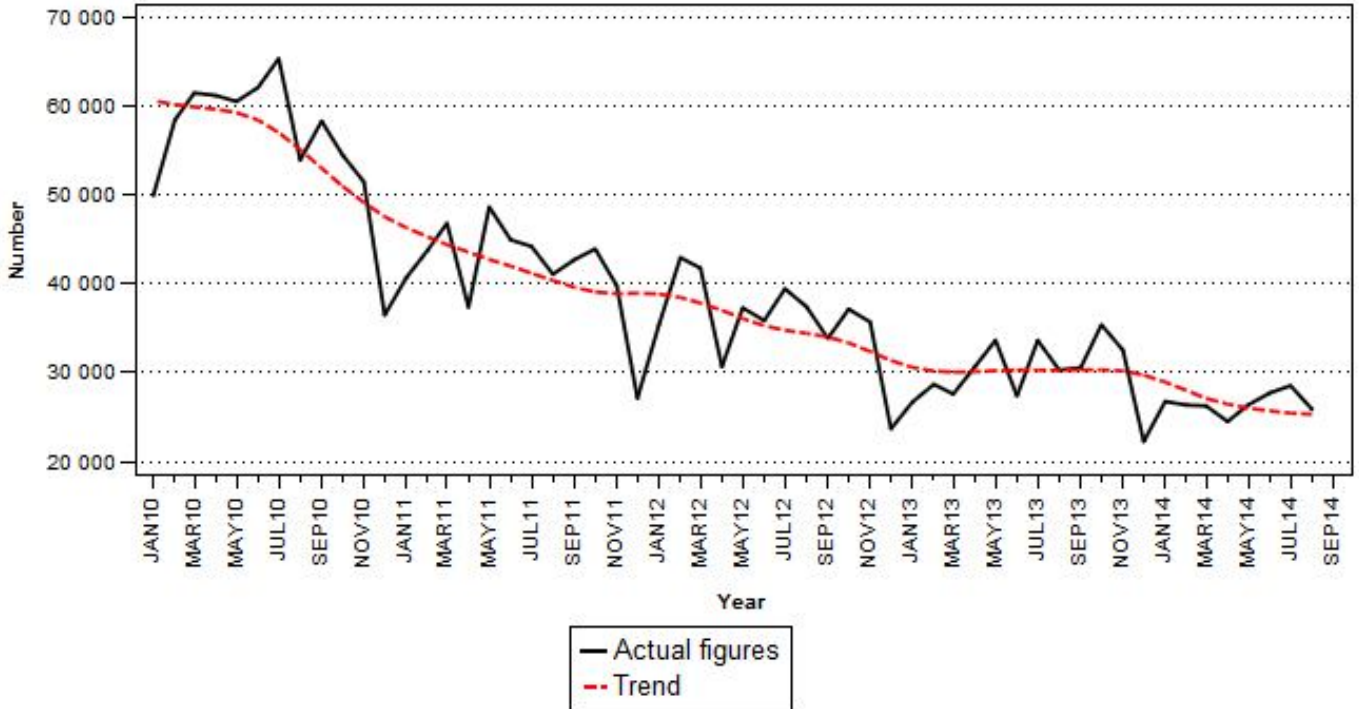


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Aug-13	1/ Jul-14	1/ Aug-14	2013	Aug-13	1/ Jul-14	1/ Aug-14
Cases recorded	Actual figures	885 940	82 072	83 573	74 527	771 916	71 386	75 367	65 663
	Seasonally adjusted		76 269	71 494	69 200		67 639	63 497	62 125
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	63 965	5 770	4 965	4 410	50 057	4 653	3 852	3 491
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	25 222	1 982	2 328	2 173	19 255	1 489	1 945	1 783
	Services - Professional	101 634	8 733	8 697	8 710	90 642	7 842	7 908	7 545
	Services - Other	136 153	12 519	12 122	10 191	119 189	11 077	10 531	8 607
	Rent	45 468	4 577	2 558	3 665	36 855	3 838	2 025	2 992
	Money lent	189 748	18 438	23 697	18 693	178 114	17 407	22 985	18 001
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	112 485	11 098	10 942	9 166	98 296	10 001	10 439	8 249
	Other debts	124 526	11 898	13 192	12 536	113 714	11 045	11 778	11 309
	Total - Actual figures	799 201	75 015	78 501	69 544	706 122	67 352	71 463	61 977
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		69 930	69 298	65 049		63 961	61 672	59 036

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Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Aug-13	1/ Jul-14	1/ Aug-14	2013	Aug-13	1/ Jul-14	1/ Aug-14
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	30 599	2 500	2 031	1 649	24 389	2 003	1 604	1 202
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 822	559	618	661	5 965	433	479	514
	Services - Professional	54 963	4 951	5 063	4 739	50 053	4 608	4 708	4 107
	Services - Other	54 737	4 698	4 244	3 738	47 396	4 078	3 794	3 220
	Rent	21 214	2 047	1 344	1 181	17 623	1 785	1 114	947
	Money lent	95 676	7 780	7 096	6 436	88 991	7 162	6 762	6 121
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	34 509	3 082	2 404	2 288	29 923	2 684	2 088	1 950
	Other debts	59 596	4 659	5 714	5 173	53 770	4 114	5 355	4 855
	Total - Actual figures	359 116	30 276	28 514	25 865	318 110	26 867	25 904	22 916
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		29 414	25 610	25 022		26 389	23 382	22 441

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Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Aug-13	1/ Jul-14	1/ Aug-14	2013	Aug-13	1/ Jul-14	1/ Aug-14
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	363 472	32 304	21 208	21 853	210 209	18 533	13 414	12 282
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	122 663	9 677	8 522	7 433	99 411	8 678	7 064	6 260
	Services - Professional	278 762	26 084	21 673	20 009	235 197	23 249	19 938	17 278
	Services - Other	591 013	61 519	37 953	33 815	472 533	41 140	29 314	26 785
	Rent	349 342	33 987	23 065	25 529	242 224	24 314	16 682	19 596
	Money lent	1 207 161	99 551	97 450	90 092	1 088 548	91 998	93 148	85 850
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 275	38 639	34 273	34 484	363 598	32 658	28 519	30 025
	Other debts	1 412 365	144 145	106 181	89 805	785 059	96 067	73 706	64 259
	Total - Actual figures	4 768 053	445 906	350 325	323 020	3 496 779	336 637	281 785	262 335
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		408 915	317 124	294 479		308 418	254 469	238 596

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Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended August 2013 and the three months ended August 2014

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jun – Aug 2013	Actual estimates Jun – Aug 2014	% change between Jun – Aug 2013 and Jun – Aug 2014	Difference between Jun – Aug 2013 and Jun – Aug 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	225 415	216 730	-3,9	-8 685
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	91 257	82 077	-10,1	-9 180
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 229,4	1 000,5	-18,6	-228,9

Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended August 2013 and the three months ended August 2014 1/

	Contribution (% points) to the % change in the total		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-1,2	-2,2	-1,9
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,1	-0,1	-0,5
Services - Professional	-0,5	0,0	-0,8
Services - Other	-1,5	-1,1	-3,9
Rent	-1,4	-1,7	-2,6
Money lent	2,0	-4,7	-2,3
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,7	-3,0	-2,0
Other debts	1,3	2,7	-4,6
Total	-3,9	-10,1	-18,6

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total during June to August 2013, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

Table 6 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates August 2013	Actual estimates August 2014	% change between August 2013 and August 2014	Difference between August 2013 and August 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	75 015	69 544	-7,3	-5 471
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	30 276	25 865	-14,6	-4 411
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	445,9	323,0	-27,6	-122,9

Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

Period	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa	
2013	August	11 334	6 537	1 295	4 240	11 335	3 020	29 758	5 026	2 470	75 015
	September	9 595	6 688	1 202	4 026	9 322	3 477	28 280	4 053	2 181	68 824
	October	12 020	8 394	1 316	4 504	9 834	5 022	29 364	4 314	2 367	77 135
	November	10 440	9 898	1 341	3 661	8 806	4 012	22 530	3 632	2 567	66 887
	December	5 591	3 662	769	2 781	7 129	3 127	14 984	2 037	2 510	42 590
2014	January	8 017	5 024	1 022	4 103	8 597	3 600	22 977	2 552	2 519	58 411
	February	8 624	5 869	1 019	3 730	8 980	3 493	22 792	2 679	2 669	59 855
	March	9 531	7 131	1 222	4 121	8 488	3 166	20 725	3 218	3 075	60 677
	April	9 252	5 239	1 507	4 729	8 611	2 978	21 763	2 966	2 103	59 148
	May	9 760	6 894	1 445	4 044	8 469	3 089	25 278	3 193	2 190	64 362
	June	13 090	5 587	1 276	4 254	9 564	3 357	25 994	3 107	2 456	68 685
	July 1/	12 853	6 730	1 505	4 887	10 610	3 691	32 249	3 514	2 462	78 501
	August 1/	8 735	6 091	1 282	4 284	10 645	3 754	28 346	3 988	2 419	69 544

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Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

Period	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa	
2013	August	5 295	3 685	714	3 140	4 026	1 805	6 548	2 847	2 216	30 276
	September	5 517	3 181	636	3 087	4 363	2 205	6 821	2 680	2 060	30 550
	October	6 934	4 688	787	3 761	4 852	2 049	8 480	1 668	2 162	35 381
	November	6 940	4 953	895	3 018	3 454	1 935	7 327	1 877	2 119	32 518
	December	3 103	3 049	454	1 976	2 834	1 708	6 076	1 096	1 928	22 224
2014	January	4 195	3 318	508	2 787	4 614	1 820	6 045	1 433	2 020	26 740
	February	4 753	3 348	737	2 911	3 924	1 662	5 903	1 145	1 946	26 329
	March	4 446	3 316	874	3 204	3 798	1 207	6 012	1 446	1 944	26 247
	April	4 062	2 877	697	2 410	3 858	1 357	5 682	1 526	2 018	24 487
	May	4 095	3 686	812	2 586	3 629	1 161	6 519	1 907	1 956	26 351
	June	5 315	4 102	766	3 401	3 595	1 518	5 413	1 628	1 960	27 698
	July 1/	5 529	3 913	631	3 570	3 685	1 515	5 884	1 743	2 044	28 514
	August 1/	4 521	3 119	721	3 084	3 699	1 281	6 266	1 228	1 946	25 865

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Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

Period	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa	
2013	August	122 733	40 579	8 300	28 319	38 692	23 111	119 218	56 016	8 938	445 906
	September	105 675	39 566	5 937	30 535	44 384	16 935	111 888	38 798	8 567	402 285
	October	111 222	53 381	8 146	35 366	49 516	20 792	125 777	34 525	11 810	450 535
	November	127 932	53 314	8 770	34 547	31 398	25 062	103 849	44 688	9 879	439 439
	December	56 313	33 514	4 047	19 776	39 281	17 039	98 680	25 380	12 177	306 207
2014	January	64 948	36 005	5 329	25 601	45 021	18 659	75 112	30 345	11 954	312 974
	February	117 751	38 391	6 810	36 414	34 787	17 569	81 162	49 647	19 968	402 499
	March	74 236	43 808	6 313	53 629	34 910	9 735	116 253	29 487	12 817	381 188
	April	75 403	37 097	6 648	22 227	30 140	13 181	70 563	27 186	10 045	292 490
	May	72 011	43 019	9 208	22 471	36 772	11 295	95 198	45 389	9 344	344 707
	June	91 053	43 723	5 073	32 985	34 968	12 856	72 497	21 943	12 050	327 148
	July 1/	84 131	52 402	4 934	33 841	34 975	14 670	79 929	33 696	11 747	350 325
	August 1/	61 376	41 190	5 043	35 044	38 151	14 280	97 007	19 280	11 649	323 020

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Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly sample survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued in South Africa. This information is obtained from selected magistrates' offices.
	2	Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejectment orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
Purpose of the survey	3	The survey of civil cases for debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa. This survey collects information regarding civil cases recorded, civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded in order to provide users with information on the extent of unpaid debt in South Africa. The results of the survey are used by the private and public sectors as an indicator of economic performance.
Scope of the survey	4	This survey covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of civil cases recorded; • number of civil summonses issued for debt; • number of civil judgements recorded for debt; and • value of civil judgements recorded for debt.
Statistical unit	5	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts. The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The monthly survey of 203 magistrates' courts represents approximately 98% of all cases in South Africa.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for August 2014 was 85,2%. The collection rate for July 2014 was 85,7%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Publications	9	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>South African Statistics</i> issued annually.
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts or electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa * Revised figures

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor in which he admits that he owes money to an individual or a company or a bank.
Bills	Bills are statements of charges for services rendered or for amounts owed.
Cases recorded	Includes civil debt and non-debt cases recorded.
Civil judgements	Civil judgements are decisions taken in a civil matter or a dispute between two people or parties.
Civil summonses	Civil summonses are notices to appear before the court of law where a dispute between two parties or people has to be heard, i.e. not for a criminal offence.
Consent judgements	Consent judgements refer to where a debtor agrees to subject himself/herself to obey or accept a judgement of a court against him for debt he owes without defending the action.
Default judgements	Default judgements refer to where the court gives a judgement or a ruling against the defendant who is not present in court and was previously given a notice that was ignored, i.e. a judgement was given against a party or an individual while not present in court.
Instalment sale transaction	Instalment sale transaction relates to where a person buys goods on credit and pays for them in instalments, e.g. every week or month, until he/she settles the debt.
Litigants	Litigants are people who take part in court proceedings, usually against each other, like a debtor and a creditor.
Litigants referred	Litigants referred relates to a case where the parties have been referred to another instance/court.
Open account transaction	Open account transactions are revolving credit, i.e. where an account does not have a final payment date and a person can always take more goods and keep paying as long as he has credit.
Other services	'Other services' refers to municipal services (except outstanding assessment rates), plumbers, builders, mechanics, panel-beaters, and electricians.
Other debts	'Other debts' refers to all other kinds of outstanding debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and salaries, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect of television maintenance contracts and outstanding money in respect of flat levies.
Plaintiff	Plaintiff is a person/party in a civil case who asks the court for judgement against another person.
Professional services	Professional services refer to medical doctors, dentists, advocates, attorneys, auditors, accountants, architects, engineers, hospital services etc.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written undertaking, signed by a person or party, to pay money to another person or to the bearer of such a note on a specific date or on demand.
Reference month	Reference month refers to one calendar month.
Refer to drawer (R/D) cheques	R/D cheques refer to dishonoured cheques. The drawer is the owner of the cheque. When a person issues a cheque and there is no money in the cheque account, the bank will refuse to pay the bearer. The cheque will be referred back to the drawer.

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