



Irish Institute of Legal Executives CLG.

By Registered Post & Email

Section 33 Consultation
Legal Services Regulatory Authority
PO Box 12906
Dublin 7

9th February 2021

Email: publicconsultation@lsra.ie

RE: SECTION 33 CONSULTATION

Dear Sirs,

I write to you on behalf of the Irish Institute of Legal Executives and I refer to our previous submissions; I thank the Authority for this opportunity/invite to make a submission under Section 33(2) to conduct a consultation with professional bodies and such persons as it prepares a report for the Year 2020.

The Institute previously submitted a submission under Section 33(1) on Admission Policies of the Legal Profession. As the Institute plays a crucial role in the Admissions and Policies of Legal Executives in this Country. Admission is based on Academic and Legal Experience. For convenience, I enclose a copy of our submission on Admission Policies of the Legal Professions under Section 33(1) dated 31st January 2020.

As to the submission under Section 33(2) for the purpose of preparing a report for the year 2020 containing the elements of i) *the number of persons admitted to practice as solicitors during 2020;* ii) *the number of persons admitted to practice as barristers during 2020;* iii) *as assessment as to whether or not, having regard for the demand for services of practising barristers and solicitors and the need to ensure an adequate standard of education and training for persons admitted to practice, the number of persons admitted to practices as barristers in 2019 is consistent with the public interest in ensuring the availability of such services at a reasonable cost.*

The Institute sets out its Members during the period of 2020.

NEW MEMBERS	STUDENT MEMBERS 2019/2020 Academic Year	REGISTERED MEMBERS
42	30	951

I wish to highlight to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority the importance of the essential role of Legal Executives in Ireland. Like Solicitors and Barristers, Legal Executives play a crucial role in the Legal Services industry. Legal Executives continued to work with their Solicitor colleagues right through the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and will continue to work closely with Solicitor colleagues throughout 2021 and beyond.



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The value placed on Legal Executives and their role within the provision of Legal Services in Ireland was never clearer than in 2019/2020 when the Law Society of Ireland themselves ran their inaugural course designed specifically for Legal Executives entitled “*Certificate in Property Law & Conveyancing for Legal Executives*”. Many Legal Executives through their Employers took up this course and were extremely successful in its completion. This recognition by the Law Society is perhaps the greatest acknowledgment of the value of the Legal Executive in Ireland.

Recognition is also achieved by virtue of the Institute being invited to participate in the Property Registration Authority Customer Focus Group together with Solicitors, Architects, Local Authority Legal Agents, The IFA and others.

Our value and importance are further underlined when you consider that annual talks for the Institute of Legal Executives have been carried out by The Property Registration Authority, Solicitors, Barristers and Recruitment Agencies.

As in previous submissions presented to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority, the Irish Institute of Legal Executives feel it is imperative that we take this opportunity to reiterate the following:-

- Regulation of Legal Executives would provide a *greater choice to the Consumer and more competitive legal costs*.
- Regulation offers protection for consumers of legal services and Legal Executives. Legal Executives are conducting high level of legal work on a daily basis that requires regulation/recognition to ensure that the very high standards of Legal Executives are maintained and to ensure that any person holding themselves out to be a Legal Executive is properly trained and carries the requisite skill and knowledge.
- The high and perceived high cost of legal services is preventing people on lower income levels from equal access to justice.
- 90% of our fully qualified Legal Executive members (MIILEX) are educated in legal disciplines to HETAC Level 7 and above, many holding third level Diplomas, Degrees, Masters and PhDs.
- Regulating/Recognition of the Legal Executives offers more choice to the Consumer. Access to cheaper legal advice is necessary as Free Legal Aid is not accessible to many due to means testing or lengthy waiting lists.
- The Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 addresses many issues in respect of cost. However, it offers no dramatic change to the way legal services are delivered. The regulation of Legal Executives would offer a fresh and modern approach to legal services.
- Our background is identical to that of Legal Executives in England and Wales coming from Legal Secretaries, Managing Clerks and Articled Clerks.
- Legal Executives in England and Wales can become Judges, Coroners, Conveyancers and Partners in Law Firms.
- Legal Executives are employed across a wide range of organisations in Ireland including but not limited to, Revenue Solicitors Office, Banks, Public Service, Local Authorities, Chief State Solicitors Office, Approved Housing Bodies together with Private Legal Practices.
- Legal Executives do very similar work as Solicitors and work alongside them on a daily basis (drafting documents, attending Court, Closing sale/purchases, they meet with the customer, they deal with customer files from beginning to conclusion). Legal Executives carry enormous experience and vast knowledge in their chosen field
- Legal Executives are consistently reminded by their Solicitor colleagues that they quite simply could not operate without them, given the importance of their role.



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Having considered the Irish Institute of Legal Executives Submissions and having Legal Executives recognised by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority as enacted by the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 would be another step forward not only for us, Legal Executives but the Legal Service in Ireland.

The Institute hopes that the Authority will not lose the excellent opportunity to recognise the role of Legal Executives and not just the Solicitor and Barrister profession in Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

Deborah Walsh (Legal Executive/Commissioner for Oaths)

Chairperson of IILEX

On behalf of the Board of the

Irish Institute of Legal Executives