



LSRA Notice – Claims Harvesting Websites

In accordance with section 218 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (“Act”), the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (Advertising) Regulations 2020 (S.I. no. 644/2020) (“Advertising Regulations”) were implemented to regulate the manner in which legal practitioners can lawfully advertise their professional services.

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority (“LSRA”) is tasked with ensuring compliance by legal practitioners with the Act and with the Advertising Regulations in order to ensure the protection of the independence, dignity and integrity of the legal profession, and in the public interest.

The LSRA continues to have concerns about websites which may be described as “claims harvesting” websites. Potential or prospective consumers of legal services should be very wary of such websites which deliberately seek to target people, often vulnerable people, who look online for information about personal injuries claims.

Such websites are commonly set up by persons who are not legal practitioners with little or no expertise in the practice of law and are very difficult to regulate as they often operate from outside of the State. The LSRA continues to actively monitor the activities of these websites and, where appropriate, is determined to take firm action, including court action, to safeguard and protect the interests of the public.

The key protections for persons seeking legal services are that the legal practitioners engaged by them are qualified to perform the services they offer, hold professional indemnity insurance and are subject to professional codes of practice, including disciplinary action, if they fail to act professionally. None of these protections exist in respect of persons who are not legal practitioners.

The LSRA monitors and regulates websites maintained by legal practitioners to ensure that those websites which advertise legal services are fully compliant with section 218 of the Act and with the Advertising Regulations. These legislative provisions are specifically designed to outline and control the content of lawful advertising of legal services by legal practitioners with a view to protecting the best interests of the public. Legal practitioners operating websites which are considered not to be compliant with the law may face regulatory, disciplinary and court action where appropriate.

12 October 2022