



MINUTES FINAL

31st Meeting of Legal Services Regulatory Authority – Minutes (FINAL)

Date: 24 March 2022

Time: 16:30 to 18:00

Attendees by video conference:

Authority Members	Executive & Secretariat	Others
Angela Black	Brian Doherty (CEO)	
Joan Crawford	Ultan Ryan (Secretary)	
Shane Galligan		
Dermott Jewell		
Deirdre Malone		
Sara Moorhead		
Simon Murphy		
Síona Ryan		
Don Thornhill (Chairperson)		

Apologies: Eileen Barrington, Geraldine Clarke

Section 1 – Administration

1.0 General

1.1 Chairperson welcomed the new member of the Authority, Síona Ryan, nominee of the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission. Ms Ryan is Director of Policy and International Division at CCPC.

Agenda adopted.

1.2 Declaration of Interests on agenda items. None raised.

1.3 Minutes of Authority meeting of 20 January 2022 approved.
Matters arising dealt with in CEO Report.

Section 2 – Governance

2.0 CEO Report

- 2.0.1 CEO provided updates on highlighted activity and Risk Register dashboard since the last Authority meeting:
- 2.0.2 COVID Update:
LSRA ramping up roster of staff on-site at premises. Priority site access is for the Complaints & Resolutions function but other functions will see increased on-site presence.
- 2.0.3 Recruitment and Staffing:
Recruitment campaigns to fill current vacancies ongoing. Grant Thornton have been engaged following procurement to undertake Workforce Review for the LSRA (including LPDT staffing).
- 2.0.4 Anti-Money Laundering:
The LSRA Executive has created an Anti-Money Laundering section on its website. Following correspondence from the Department of Finance, updates have issued in relation to further AML obligations arising from the conflict in Ukraine.
- 2.0.5 Risk Management:
Risk Management update provided in report.
- 2.0.6 Other matters dealt with under separate agenda items.

3.0 Duly Authorised Register.

Minor adjustments to staff list approved by Authority.

4.0 FAR Committee Chairperson's Report

Angela Black, FAR Committee Chairperson provided an update to the Authority following the Committee's meeting of 21 March 2022. At that meeting, the FAR Committee reviewed and approved the Draft 2021 Financial Statements for the LSRA subject to minor amendments. The FAR Committee approved the Draft Budget 2022.

Section 3 – Finance

5.0 Financial Reports

5.1 **Draft 2021 Financial Statements:** The Authority approved the Draft 2021 Financial Statements of the LSRA, noting that the Statements had also been reviewed by the FAR Committee.

5.2 **Management Accounts for period ending 31 January 2022**
Authority noted the accounts and the Draft Budget 2022.

5.3 Update on Amendments to the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 and other matters:

The CEO informed the Authority that the draft legislative amendments were at a significantly advanced stage and that some further engagement with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel on re-ordering of text and minor amendments. Further update will be provided at next meeting.

Section 4 – LSRA Policy and Implementation (Item 5.0 taken early)

6.0 Update on the Performance of the Complaints and Resolutions Department

6.0.1 Staffing:

Recruitment ongoing to fill existing vacancies. Following the DAC Beachcroft review further staff have been allocated to provide support for the Review and Complaints Committees Secretariat. The Workforce Review being undertaken by Grant Thornton will include analysis of the needs of the Complaints and Resolutions function.

6.0.2 Admissibility Determinations:

In 2022 to date, admissibility determinations have been made in 224 cases. Of those, 67 cases were determined to be admissible and 157 were determined to be inadmissible. A further 17 cases were withdrawn by the complainant in the pre-admissibility stage.

6.0.3 Section 73 Report:

The next Section 73 Report on the operation of the Complaints function is due to be published on 4 April 2022.

6.0.4 Informal Resolution and Mediation:
Whilst the numbers of successfully resolved complaints post-admissibility are increasing steadily, they are still relatively low. The LSRA has revised its procedures to make them more streamlined and less administratively burdensome on the parties.

6.0.5 Determinations by Complaints and Resolutions Officers:
To date in 2022, determinations have been made in 19 cases.

6.0.6 Complaints and Review Committee:
General update on activities of Committee provided.

7.0 Section 34 “Barriers” Findings Report

The Authority considered the draft Section 34 Findings Report in Legal Education and Training – Barriers to Entry to the Professions. The Authority welcomed the structure and focus of the report and approved its submission to the Minister. It is intended to publish the detailed research findings to the LSRA in due course.

8.0 Update on Section 34(c) Report on Profession of Conveyancer

7.0.1 The Authority was provided with a progress update on the report work. Following procurement for external research expertise, Indecon were selected as the provider. The Authority formally approved the engagement of Indecon under contract for the work on this report.

7.0.2 A further progress update will be provided to the Authority at the next meeting.

9.0 Update on establishment of Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT)

9.0.1 The Authority was provided with an information note and update on the progress of establishment of the LPDT. The Tribunal will have its official launch on 5 April 2022.

10.0 Update on Section 6 Review of the Operation of the 2015 Act

Drafting is ongoing on this report. The LSRA received 12 submissions as part of the consultation process. Focus includes amendments to Levy model, streamlining of complaints process and minor technical amendments to the Act.

11.0 Closed Session

This was conducted at the beginning of the meeting.

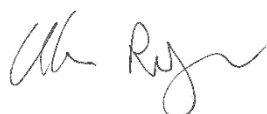
12.0 AOB

Matters arising were taken at the beginning of the meeting.

Action Points – Meeting of 24 March 2022	
Agenda Item	Action
1.3	<p><u>Minutes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of 20 January 2022 approved. • Secretary to arrange upload to website.
3.0	<p><u>Duly Authorised Register:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Duly Authorised Register under 2015 Act approved by Authority. • Update will be required for next Authority Meeting to reflect any staff changes arising in the interim.
5.0	<p><u>Financial Reports:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft 2021 Financial Statements approved by Authority for submission to Department of Justice and Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General by end March 2022. • Authority to be updated at next meeting on progress in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legislative amendments in respect of Levy Model and Legal Partnerships (Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021; ○ Levy process for 2021 and 2022. ○ Any update in respect of treatment of advances from 2016-2018 inclusive.
6.0	<p><u>Update on performance of Complaints and Resolutions Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Authority on Complaints statistics and processing; • Update Authority on Recommendations and actions arising from DAC Beachcroft Report
7.0	<p><u>Section 34 'Barriers' Report:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 34 Findings Report to be submitted to Minister for Justice.
8.0	<p><u>Section 34(c) Report on Profession of Conveyancer:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on progress to be provided at next Authority Meeting.

9.0	<p><u>Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on establishment and operation of LPDT to be provided at next Authority meeting.
10.0	<p><u>Section 6 Review of the Operation of the 2015 Act:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress Report on Section 6 Review Report and recommendations.

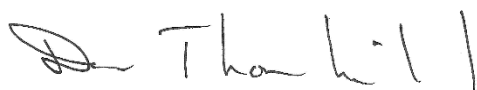
FINAL Minutes Signed



16 June 2022

Ultan Ryan, Secretary

Date



16 June 2022

Don Thornhill, Chairperson

Date