



LSRA report shows 595 complaints received and 596 complaints closed in six month period

Regulator encourages parties to resolve services and costs complaints informally

Press Release: Thursday 6 April 2023

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) today [Thursday 6 April] publishes its first complaints report for 2023 which shows it received 595 complaints about legal practitioners in a six month period, with 596 complaints closed.

The report provides details of the number and nature of complaints about legal practitioners (solicitors and barristers) received and investigated during the reporting period of 3 September 2022 to 3 March 2023.

Total complaints received

- The LSRA's Complaints and Resolutions Unit received a total of 595 complaints in the reporting period. A total of 576 complaints related to solicitors and 19 to barristers, reflecting the higher number of solicitors and their greater level of contact with consumers. Multiple complaints may be brought against an individual legal practitioner.
- A total of 374 complaints (63%) alleged misconduct, with 195 complaints (33%) related to legal services of an inadequate standard. A further 26 (4%) came under the category of excessive costs (overcharging).
- The LSRA's Complaints and Resolutions staff received a total of 1,509 phone calls and e-mails requesting information and/or complaints forms. A total of 809 files were opened initially as queries.

Total complaints closed and outcomes

- A total of 596 complaints were closed during the reporting period.
- Of these, 291 complaints (49%) were found to be inadmissible, 226 (38%) were either resolved or determined by the LSRA and 80 (13%) were withdrawn or deferred. (The total number of complaint outcomes was 597 as one complaint was dealt with under two separate categories).
- The 226 resolved or determined complaints comprised:
 - 130 complaints where LSRA determinations were made, comprising 35 services and costs complaints and 95 complaints of alleged misconduct. This includes a total of 13 complaints of alleged misconduct which were referred to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT) for further investigation. The LPDT is a separate body to the LSRA.



- 83 complaints resolved with the assistance of the LSRA before a decision was made as to whether the complaint was admissible.
- 13 services and costs complaints resolved with the help of the LSRA's trained mediators after they had been made admissible.

Overall, legal practitioners were directed to pay a total of €43,700 in compensation to complainants.

On publishing today's report, the LSRA's Chief Executive Dr Brian Doherty said:

"It is always encouraging to see complainants and legal practitioners making efforts to resolve issues early on in the complaints process. I am pleased to report that in this reporting period a total of 96 complaints were resolved in this way, including 13 complaints which were resolved with the help of the LSRA's trained mediators.

"It makes sense that complaints about consumer matters such as service delays, poor communications or overcharging are addressed quickly and informally where possible. This can lead to practical common sense outcomes for both parties, who can then move on with their affairs.

"The additional clear benefit of taking a positive and proactive approach to resolving complaints is that it avoids protracted and costly investigations, which in turn reduces the costs of the LSRA which are passed on to all legal practitioners through an annual levy."

Dr Doherty also emphasised the small but growing number of instances where the LSRA has made determinations in complaints and issued statutory directions to legal practitioners, and the practitioners have chosen not to comply with the directions. He added:

"Legal practitioners should be aware that the LSRA will use its statutory powers and apply to the High Court for an order to enforce directions made against legal practitioners. The LSRA will also apply for an order covering any costs it has incurred in taking court actions, as otherwise these costs too fall to be included in the annual levy through which the LSRA is funded. In effect, where legal practitioners fail to engage with the LSRA or to comply with statutory directions, the cost is borne to a large extent by their colleagues."

Note to Editors:

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority is an independent statutory body set up under the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 with a range of functions. These include regulating the provision of legal services by legal practitioners (barristers and solicitors) and ensuring the maintenance and improvement of standards in the provision of legal services. The LSRA began receiving and investigating complaints about legal practitioners on 7 October 2019.

Today's report is available to download here: [Independent Complaints Handling: Complaints about solicitors and barristers, Report 1-2023](#)

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