



An tÚdarás Rialála
Seirbhíse Dlí
Legal Services
Regulatory Authority

Annual Report 2022



Independence
Innovation
Consumer Protection
*Transparency &
Accountability*



Our VISION is:

To develop the LSRA into an efficient, effective and accountable regulatory body with the capacity to protect and promote the public interest and the interests of consumers of legal services whilst encouraging an independent, strong, competitive legal profession with high standards of professionalism and integrity.

LSRA



Our MISSION is:

To regulate the provision of legal services by legal practitioners and ensure the maintenance and improvement of standards in the provision of legal services in the State.

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Our Values

The work of the LSRA as a public service body is guided by core values:



Annual Report for year ended 31 December 2022

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority was established by the Minister for Justice and Equality on 1 October 2016, under Part 2 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015.

This Annual Report on the performance of the Authority's functions in 2022 is made to the Minister for Justice and to the Oireachtas Joint Committee

on Justice in accordance with section 21(1) of the Act. This report covers the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

Under section 21(1) of the Act, this Annual Report must be made no later than 30 April each year. This is the LSRA's seventh Annual Report.

1. Introduction

Who We Are

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority (the Authority) was established by the Minister for Justice and Equality on 1 October 2016 under Part 2 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (the Act).

The Authority is comprised of 11 members appointed in accordance with section 9 of the Act. Authority members are appointed by the Government following nomination by the following ten organisations:

- Citizens Information Board
- Higher Education Authority (An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas)
- Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
- Institute of Legal Costs Accountants
- Consumers' Association of Ireland
- Bar Council (now the Bar of Ireland)
- Legal Aid Board
- Honorable Society of the King's Inns
- Law Society of Ireland

The nominating bodies nominate one person each to the Authority, apart from the Law Society which nominates two members. The nomination process is designed to ensure the independence of the Authority while also achieving a gender balance and a balance of interests between legal practitioners and consumers. The Authority has a lay majority and chair. The Authority is required under the Act to be independent in the performance of its functions.

When appointing a person to be a member of the Authority, the Government must be satisfied that he or she has knowledge of, and expertise in relation to, at least one of the following:

- the provision of legal services;
- legal education and legal training;
- competition law and policy;
- the maintenance of standards in professions regulated by a statutory body;
- dealing with complaints against members of professions regulated by a statutory body;
- business and commercial matters;
- the needs of consumers of legal services.

The executive function of the LSRA is provided by a Chief Executive Officer, the Secretary to the Authority and the staff of the LSRA. The Chief Executive Officer is Dr Brian Doherty and the Secretary is Ultan Ryan.

What We Do

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority is tasked with regulating the provision of legal services by legal practitioners and ensuring the maintenance and improvement of standards in the provision of those services in the State.

The Authority has eleven functions under section 13 of the Act. These are to:

1. Regulate the provision of legal services by legal practitioners and ensure the maintenance and improvement of standards in the provision of such services in the State.
2. Keep under review and make recommendations to the Minister in respect of:
 - i) admission requirements of the Law Society, Bar Council, and Honorable Society of King's Inns;
 - ii) availability and quality of education and training including ongoing training for the solicitors' and barristers' professions;
 - iii) policies in relation to admission and, or, entitlement to practise of the Law Society, Bar Council and the Honorable Society of the King's Inns;
 - iv) professional codes;
 - v) the organisation of the provision of legal services in the State.
3. Disseminate information in respect of the education and accreditation requirements and any other matters referred to above as the Authority thinks fit.
4. Specify the nature and minimum levels of professional indemnity insurance in accordance with the Act.
5. Establish and administer a system of inspection of legal practitioners for the purposes of the Act.
6. Receive and investigate complaints against legal practitioners.
7. Maintain the Roll of Practising Barristers.
8. Promote public awareness and disseminate information to the public in respect of legal services, including the cost of such services.
9. Keep the Minister informed of developments in respect of the provision of legal services and make recommendations to assist the Minister in coordinating and developing policy.
10. Undertake, commission or assist in research and other activities in respect of the provision of legal services which may promote an improvement in standards in services provision and promote public awareness of such services, and make recommendations to the Minister.
11. Perform any other functions conferred by the Act or by regulations made under it.

Our Objectives

The Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 sets out six statutory objectives of the Authority, which in effect are our operating principles. These are to:

1. Protect and promote the public interest.
2. Support the proper and effective administration of justice.
3. Protect and promote the interests of consumers relating to the provision of legal services.
4. Promote competition in the provision of legal services in the State.
5. Encourage an independent, strong and effective legal profession.
6. Promote and maintain adherence to the professional principles of legal practitioners specified in the Act.

This Report

This Annual Report documents how the LSRA performed in 2022 against the priorities in its **Strategic Plan 2019-2022**. This plan has now been replaced by the **Strategic Plan 2022-2025**.

Abbreviations and Terms used in this Report

Legal Practitioner

A practising solicitor or barrister (including a former solicitor or barrister and a firm of solicitors).

LPDT

Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal

LLPs

Limited Liability Partnerships

The Act

The Legal Services Regulation Act 2015

Probate

The process of applying to the court for a grant that entitles a person or persons to administer a deceased's estate.

Undertaking

A legally binding promise to do or not do something. In the context of complaints, these are specific agreements confirmed in writing by solicitors.

Failure to hand over

A failure to hand over files, title deeds etc. when required.

Failure to account

An omission by a legal practitioner to provide proper or complete accounts of monies held and received.

Foreword from the Chairperson



**Dr Don
Thornhill**

The year 2022 has been an important one for the LSRA. Not only has the Authority continued to make an impact on legal services through the performance of its regulatory functions, but it has also been looking forward and setting out new multi-year strategic priorities.

The Authority met on five occasions in 2022, and as in prior years I wish to thank my fellow Authority members for their hard work and engagement throughout the year. Over the period, the Authority approved the LSRA's Business Plan for 2022 and the Draft Financial Statements for 2021 for submission to the Department of Justice and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Levy Model Reform

The LSRA is largely funded through a levy on the legal professions. Since the establishment of the Authority in 2016, it has been apparent that the levy model contained in its founding legislation is unduly complex, challenging to administer and doesn't provide a sustainable funding stream for the organisation. During the year, the Authority engaged intensively with the Department of Justice and the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to Government in drafting significant legislative amendments to the existing levy model. These have successfully been included in the Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2022. Once introduced, these provisions will mean much more certainty and stability for the LSRA's future funding and planned expansion.

The Authority also received regular updates during the year from the executive team on the work of the Complaints and Resolutions Department and the ongoing establishment activities for the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal. While the Tribunal is an independent body to the LSRA with its own chairperson and separate premises, it is established under the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 and is also funded by the levy. The LSRA provides the new Tribunal with administrative and technical support.

New Strategic Priorities

In September 2022, the Authority approved and submitted to the Minister for Justice a new three year Strategic Plan, setting out the LSRA's priorities for the regulation of the legal services sector from 2022 up to 2025. The Authority used the occasion to redefine its vision for the years ahead and to reaffirm the core values that underpin our work as a public service body.

Within this refreshed strategic framework, we have set out clear targets and ambitions. I am confident that our management team will deliver against these. More details on the Strategic Plan are provided by Chief Executive Brian Doherty in his introduction to this report.

Looking Forward

Looking forward, 2023 will be another important year for progress towards the LSRA's vision to protect and promote the public interest and the interests of consumers of legal services, whilst encouraging an independent, strong, competitive legal profession with high standards of professionalism and integrity.

Work is progressing on legislative amendments that will enable the introduction of Legal Partnerships as a new business model for the delivery of legal services. Legal Partnerships are a model of practice for solicitors and barristers provided for in the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015.

Their introduction will enable barristers and solicitors to jointly provide legal services for the first time, thereby offering a greater range of services and expertise to their clients.

The Authority will engage closely with the professional bodies and other stakeholders around the introduction of Legal Partnerships, which are likely to make an impact on the market in which legal services are delivered. The Authority is committed to creating a regulatory framework that allows legal practitioners to work together and provide efficient and competitively priced legal services to consumers.

The Authority will also publish research with recommendations, as requested by the Minister for Justice, on two separate areas. The first is barriers facing trainee and early career legal professionals and, separately, on the potential creation of a new profession of conveyancer.

Thanks to Staff and Stakeholders

I would like to thank the LSRA's diligent and committed staff and all the LSRA's stakeholders including the Minister for Justice and officials and the professional bodies for your support of the work that we do in regulating legal services in the public interest.

On behalf of the Authority, I am pleased to submit this Annual Report of the Legal Services Regulatory Authority to the Minister for Justice and the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice in accordance with section 21(1) of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. This is the seventh Annual Report submitted since the LSRA was established in 2016.

Dr Don Thornhill
Chairperson

Introduction by the Chief Executive Officer



**Dr Brian
J. Doherty**

The year under review in this report was a significant year in the evolution of the LSRA. As the necessary Covid-19 restrictions began to be lifted and society began to return to pre-Covid activity, the LSRA moved from a focus on the establishment of the complaints and other regulatory infrastructure to focus instead on service delivery and our effectiveness as a regulator.

The LSRA undertook a significant workforce planning exercise during 2022, which recognised the need for more resources to deliver on our wide remit and challenging statutory objectives.

In 2022, the LSRA also turned the pages on a new chapter in its development, with the creation and publication of our new Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Our revised vision and refreshed strategic priorities will set us up to be more efficient and consumer focused in the future, building on the ground-work done to date.

We recognise that, building on the existing solid foundations, the LSRA must now set and attain high standards of efficiency and fairness in the delivery of the complaints handling system and across all the services we provide. Over the course of this new Strategic Plan, we will benchmark the delivery of the services we provide, set demanding targets and high standards and work hard to meet and surpass them.

Our Strategic Priorities

This annual report is the final one to track progress towards actions and goals in the LSRA's Strategic Plan 2019-2022. The new Strategic Plan sets out the following three strategic priorities, along with goals and actions to support their achievement:

- **Enhance Operational Efficiency and Service Delivery**

We will enhance operational efficiency to deliver our core regulatory operations and services effectively and independently and to identified and benchmarked standards.

- **Promote Professional Standards and Encourage Innovation**

We will promote professional standards and encourage innovation and advancement in education and training, legal practice business models, admission to the legal professions, access to justice and consumer protection.

- **Increase Awareness through Communication and Engagement**

We will improve awareness of the LSRA's regulatory activities and services as well as other issues relevant to the legal services sector through enhanced communications and engagement with the public, legal practitioners and other stakeholders.

Performance Framework

These strategic priorities map out the LSRA's ambition to evolve and innovate both internally and externally, with a strong focus on delivering for consumers of legal services and legal practitioners. This will drive further improvements in how we provide our services and deliver stronger relationships with key stakeholders, who were consulted as part of the plan's production.

To track our progress against our strategic priorities, the Strategic Plan is supported by a detailed framework of goals, actions and key deliverables. The plan will form the basis of our annual business planning process and our performance management and development activities over its lifetime.

The preparation of the new Strategic Plan provided a timely opportunity in 2022 for our stakeholders and ourselves to reflect on the direction that the LSRA should take over the next three years. I would like to sincerely thank all those stakeholders who provided their views as part of our public consultation around the preparation of the new strategy. My thanks also go to our dedicated staff for their direct input in shaping the new strategy and for their ongoing and abiding commitment to the LSRA's purpose, mission and values.

Complaints Handling

The year under review was the LSRA's third full year as the independent complaints handling body for complaints about solicitors and barristers. The number of complaints received was down on the previous year. In 2022, the LSRA opened 1,352 complaint files in comparison with 1,599 in 2021. Our analysis indicates that this is primarily due to a spike in 2021 of complaints received from financial institutions preparing to leave the Irish marketplace. It is hoped that complaint levels will now begin to stabilise.

While the level of complaints received has fallen, the breakdown in the type of complaints received shows a consistent trend. Complaints relating to alleged misconduct continue to account for approximately two thirds of the total (64%), while those relating to excessive costs continue to fall (4% of the total received in 2022 from 5% in 2021 and 7% in 2020). Complaints about inadequate legal services went up slightly from 27% of the total in 2021 to 32% in 2022.

I am pleased to report that for the first year since the LSRA began receiving and investigating complaints against legal practitioners, more complaints have been closed than were received. In 2022, the LSRA closed 1,483 complaints. Complaints are closed for a number of reasons including when they have been successfully resolved between the parties with the assistance of the LSRA or where they have been determined by the LSRA or by the Complaints or Review Committees. Complaints can also be closed early in the complaints handling process if they are found to be inadmissible.

Once again the high complaints closure rate reported for the year reflects the sustained efforts of LSRA staff to improve efficiencies and to refine complaints handling processes.

The year also saw an increase in activity for both the Review Committee and the Complaints Committee which were established under the Act in 2020. The Complaints Committee sat on 54 occasions in 2022 while the Review Committee sat on seven occasions. My sincere thanks to all those who sit on these committees which provide an integral part of the complaints infrastructure.

Communications and Research

As always, the LSRA had a challenging research and reporting agenda to deliver in 2022. Alongside the two reports into the operation of the complaints function, the LSRA also published the annual report into admissions to the legal profession. Work continued on our research into the potential introduction of a new profession of conveyancer. We also continued to engage with stakeholders in relation to the research the LSRA is undertaking at the request of the Minister for Justice on the economic and other barriers facing early career barristers and solicitors.

I am grateful to all of those who have assisted us in delivering our research agenda, particularly those who have made submissions to our public consultations, assisted with expert reference groups, completed a questionnaire or engaged with us in relation to possible recommendations. We look forward to publishing both reports in 2023.

On the communications front, we reviewed the LSRA website to ensure that it was accessible to all and also reviewed the information we provide to both consumers and to legal practitioners. Despite the restrictions in place due to Covid-19, the LSRA was able to reach stakeholders at online events and talks. I was delighted though, to attend in person to speak at the launch of the Evelyn Partners annual survey of legal firms in November.

Enforcement of LSRA Directions

The year in review saw the LSRA apply to the High Court for the first time for orders compelling legal practitioners to comply with directions made on foot of complaints that had been investigated and upheld. Where a direction has been made by the LSRA or one of its committees and the legal practitioner fails to comply within the required timeline, the LSRA will apply to the High Court for enforcement and will also seek an order for costs. Such action should not be necessary as every legal practitioner should comply with the directions of the regulator. Failure to do so creates unnecessary work, which slows down the system and also creates additional costs which are passed on to all legal practitioners through the annual levy collected by the LSRA to fund its operation.

Host of International Conference of Legal Regulators 2023

The LSRA was delighted to be selected during the year to host the annual International Conference of Legal Regulators in 2023. Following on from Singapore, The Hague, Scotland and Chicago, it is a credit to the LSRA that it has been selected to host the conference so soon after its establishment. The event is routinely attended by legal regulators from across the globe, and we look forward to welcoming delegates to the conference in Dublin in October 2023.

Acknowledgements to Stakeholders and Staff

As in every other year, I wish to express my gratitude to the staff and management of the Law Society, the Bar of Ireland and the Honorable Society of King's Inns for their assistance in our endeavours, particularly for the considered and detailed submissions made by the professional bodies to our frequent public consultations.

As I have stated, whilst the LSRA's independence is at the forefront of all that we do, successful and effective regulation cannot be achieved without ongoing engagement with the professional bodies and other key stakeholders.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the small but dedicated team at the LSRA. The work of the LSRA can often be complex and require sensitivity and often has to be completed to pressured deadlines. The LSRA staff continue to bring commitment, compassion, enthusiasm and hard work in all that they do. They have, as always, my heartfelt gratitude.

Dr Brian J. Doherty
Chief Executive Officer

2022 AT A GLANCE

ALL COMPLAINTS

2,925

PHONE CALLS AND EMAILS REQUESTING INFORMATION AND/OR COMPLAINT FORMS



1,352

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED



1,310

RELATING TO SOLICITORS

42

RELATING TO BARRISTERS

1,483

COMPLAINTS CLOSED



348

RESOLVED

212

WITHDRAWN

677

INADMISSIBLE

PRACTISING BARRISTERS ROLL

2,957

 BARRISTERS ON ROLL

UP 24 FROM 2021



2,173

 LAW LIBRARY BARRISTERS

784

 NON-LAW LIBRARY BARRISTERS

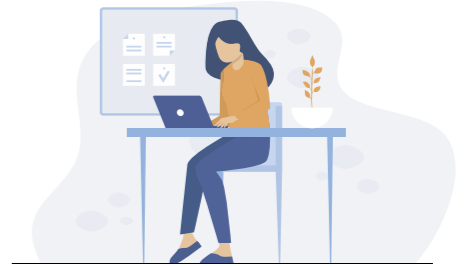
COMPLAINTS AND REVIEW COMMITTEES

61

 MEETINGS

OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

29,387

 WEBSITE USERS

625

 TWITTER FOLLOWERS

UP 35% ON 2021



523

 LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS

UP 370% ON 2021

LLPS

82

 LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIPS AUTHORISED

2. How We Regulate

Complaints, Investigations and Resolutions

This is the fourth year that the LSRA has reported in its Annual Report on its complaints handling activities. The LSRA began receiving and investigating complaints about solicitors and barristers on 7 October 2019, following the commencement of Part 6 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (the Act).

The number of complaints received in 2022 was 1,352, while the number of complaints closed in the year was 1,483. Multiple complaints can be made about an individual legal practitioner or firm.

Further recruitment took place in 2022 for mediator staff to assist with the informal resolution of complaints and for administrative support to the Complaints Committee which investigates misconduct complaints.

The total number of staff in the Complaints, Investigations and Resolutions Department stood at 31 at the end of 2022 (10 of whom are part-time). That is however a net increase of only 3 on 2021, due to staff departures over the year. For various operational reasons, a number of planned recruitment campaigns were deferred during the year and are taking place instead in 2023.

“

I would like to thank yourself and everyone else for your help in resolving this matter.

Types of Complaint the LSRA investigates

Under Part 6 of the Act, the LSRA can receive three types of complaint:

- that the legal services provided were of an inadequate standard;
- that an amount of costs sought by the legal practitioner for legal services was excessive;
- that an act or omission of a legal practitioner constitutes misconduct under the Act.

Misconduct is broadly defined in the Act and includes an act or omission which involves fraud or dishonesty, or which is likely to bring the profession into disrepute. It also includes the provision of legal services which were of an inadequate standard to a substantial degree, or the seeking of grossly excessive costs.

Only a client – or a person acting on behalf of a client – can bring a complaint to the LSRA where the client considers that the legal services provided were of an inadequate standard or that the amount of costs sought were excessive. When it comes to alleged misconduct by a legal practitioner, any person can make a complaint to the LSRA.

Complaints under the Act's three grounds are classified by the LSRA into a range of categories as part of an administrative process to aid our reporting. For example, complaints alleging inadequate standards of legal services and excessive costs are recorded by areas of work such as litigation, conveyancing, probate and family law. Complaints alleging misconduct are recorded under categories that relate to the nature of the act or omission that gives rise to the complaint.

Complaints Reporting

The LSRA is required under section 73 of the Act to report on the performance of its complaints function every six months. In 2022, two complaints reports were published:

- **Report 1-2022, published on 7th April, covering the period 4 September 2021 to 4 March 2022**
- **Report 2-2022, published on 18th November, covering the period 5 March to 2 September 2022**

As those reports deal exclusively with complaints, they provide a more detailed analysis of complaints statistics than are provided here. All complaints reports are available on the LSRA website.

Receiving and Investigating Complaints

The Act and associated Regulations set out detailed statutory processes for the handling of complaints about legal practitioners, including a series of statutory deadlines which must be observed. Complaints handling begins with files opened initially as queries. Complaints staff then scrutinise these files to decide whether a query meets the criteria for a complaint. This process is an important stage in the complaints handling process; in some cases it can generate a considerable amount of correspondence between complaints staff and complainants to clarify details of issues raised.

Preliminary Review for Admissibility of Complaints

Once a query is classified as a complaint, the LSRA is required under the Act to conduct a preliminary review to determine whether or not the complaint is admissible. As part of this process, the LSRA must notify the legal practitioner of the complaint in writing, provide the legal practitioner with a copy of the complaint, and request a written response with observations. Complaints staff may also at this preliminary review stage request additional information in writing from either the complainant or the legal practitioner. In complex complaints this process may require several rounds of communication between the parties.

“

As far as I am concerned the matter is settled and the complaint resolved. With great appreciation for the work undertaken by you/the LSRA in this matter.

Informally Resolving Complaints

The LSRA encourages early resolution of complaints where appropriate. The Act requires the LSRA to invite the parties to make efforts to resolve matters in relation to admissible complaints that relate to:

- **legal services of an inadequate standard;**
- **excessive costs; or**
- **misconduct which, if substantiated, would constitute legal services of an inadequate standard to a substantial degree.**

Staff who work to resolve complaints informally through the LSRA's Information Resolution Process are qualified mediators accredited by the Mediators' Institute of Ireland.

Depending on the type of complaint, where the parties decline an LSRA invitation for informal resolution, or where a complaint cannot be informally resolved, the complaint then comes back into the complaints process. It will then proceed to be determined by the LSRA or, in the case of a misconduct complaint, be referred to the Complaints Committee.

In total, the LSRA made 150 offers of informal resolution in 2022. In 89 complaints either the practitioner, the complainant, or both, chose not to engage in the process. In a total of 61 complaints, both parties engaged in the informal resolution process, compared to 38 in 2021.

Of these, 22 complaints were resolved by the parties with the assistance of the LSRA's trained mediators and closed. The 39 complaints which were not resolved went on to be determined by the LSRA.

Complaints Committee and Review Committee

Both the Complaints Committee and the Review Committee were established in 2020. Both committees have a majority of lay members. The Complaints Committee has 27 members appointed by the Authority. These are comprised of eight members nominated by the Law Society; four members nominated by the Bar of Ireland (formerly the Bar Council); and fifteen lay members appointed following a competitive selection process.

The Complaints Committee may sit in Divisional Committees of three or five members. Complaints of alleged misconduct that have been found to be admissible by LSRA staff are referred to the Complaints Committee for investigation. The Complaints Committee has the power to impose sanctions on legal practitioners itself or refer complaints to the separate Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (see more on page 24). However, the Complaints Committee cannot make findings of misconduct. Due to the volume of complaints relating to alleged misconduct, it has been necessary to increase the number of sittings of Divisional Committees of the Complaints Committee. In 2022, the Committee sat on 54 occasions compared to 34 in the previous year.

The Review Committee also has 27 members who are nominated and appointed in the same way as the Complaints Committee, and it sits in groups of three. The Review Committee reviews determinations made by LSRA staff on complaints that relate to inadequate legal services or charging excessive costs. There were seven sittings of the Review Committee in 2022.

Two induction and training days were held during the year for Complaints Committee members. Training was provided by an experienced external trainer, with the assistance of LSRA staff.

Complaints Received in 2022

Overview

In 2022, the Complaints, Investigations and Resolutions Department received a total of 2,925 phone calls and e-mails requesting information and/or complaint forms.

A total of 1,778 query files were opened by complaints staff in 2022. Following an assessment of these files, 1,352 were subsequently classified as complaints and were then subject to the statutory pre-admissibility assessment process. The remaining 426 query files were dealt with as queries with the complaints department providing whatever information or assistance it could. Even though they are not classified as complaints, addressing these queries can involve substantial work by LSRA staff.

As in previous years, far more complaints were received about solicitors than barristers in 2022, reflecting their higher numbers and greater level of contact with consumers. Of the 1,352 complaints received, 1,310 related to solicitors while 42 related to barristers.

Figure 1 on page 22 shows the breakdown of complaints received by county, based on the office locations of the legal practitioners. Taken together, legal practitioners in Dublin and Cork account for almost half (48%) of the total number of complaints received.

The largest category of complaints, at 861 (64%), related to alleged misconduct. A total of 433 (32%) were from clients relating to inadequate standards of legal services and a further 58 (4%) were from clients relating to excessive costs.

Complaints Trends

Certain trends that were identified early in the LSRA's complaints handling operations continued to be reflected in 2022. Although the number of complaints received fell in this period compared to the previous year, the breakdown in the types of complaint received shows a consistent trend.

Complaints relating to alleged misconduct continue to account for approximately two thirds of the total (64%), while those relating to excessive costs continue to fall (4% of the total received in 2022 from 5% in 2021 and 7% in 2020). Complaints about inadequate services went up slightly from 27% of the total in 2021 to 32% in 2022.

As the LSRA has stressed in previous Annual Reports, failures to reply to correspondence and poor communication remained very much at the heart of the majority of the complaints that were received in all categories.

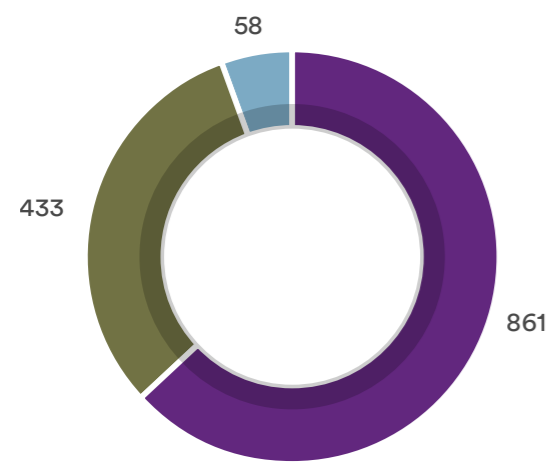
Misconduct complaints of alleged fraud or dishonesty have fallen by more than half, from 71 (7%) in 2021 to 32 (4%) in this report.



Complaints Received in 2022

All Complaints

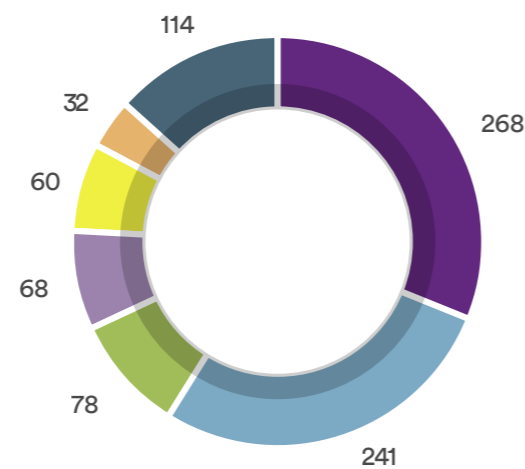
The largest category of the 1,352 complaints received were the 861 (64%) that related to alleged misconduct. A total of 433 complaints (32%) were from clients in relation to services of an inadequate standard and a further 58 (4%) were from clients who complained that they had been charged excessive costs.



● Misconduct	861	(64%)
● Inadequate Legal Services	433	(32%)
● Excessive Costs	58	(4%)
TOTAL	1,352	

Misconduct Complaints

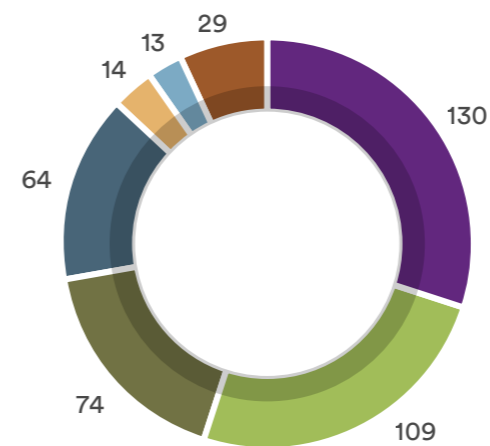
Of the 861 complaints of alleged misconduct, 268 (31%) related to conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute and 241 (28%) involved a failure to comply with an undertaking given to a colleague or financial institution. A further 78 (9%) related to a failure to communicate, 68 (8%) related to a failure to handover a file or other deeds and documents, 60 (7%) related to an alleged failure to account for clients' money and 32 (4%) involved alleged fraud or dishonesty.



● Bringing profession into disrepute	268	(31.1%)
● Undertaking	241	(28.0%)
● Failure to communicate	78	(9.1%)
● Failure to hand over	68	(7.9%)
● Failure to account	60	(7.0%)
● Fraud or dishonesty	32	(3.7%)
● Other	114	(13.2%)
TOTAL	861	

Inadequate Legal Services

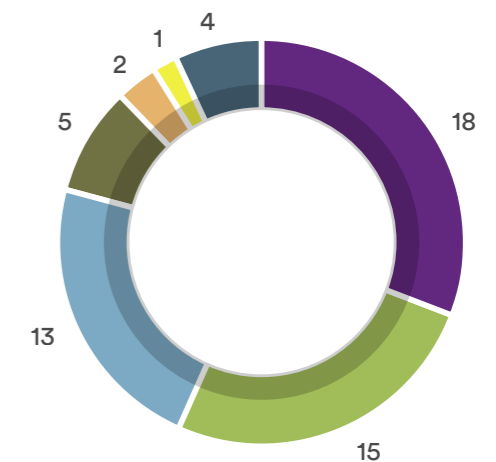
A total of 433 complaints received were about the provision of legal services of an inadequate standard. Of these, 130 complaints (30%) related to litigation, 109 (25%) related to conveyancing, with 74 (17%) related to probate and the administration of estates, and 64 (15%) related to family law.



● Litigation	130	(30.0%)
● Conveyancing	109	(25.2%)
● Probate	74	(17.1%)
● Family	64	(14.8%)
● Employment	14	(3.2%)
● Crime	13	(3.0%)
● Other	29	(6.7%)
TOTAL	433	

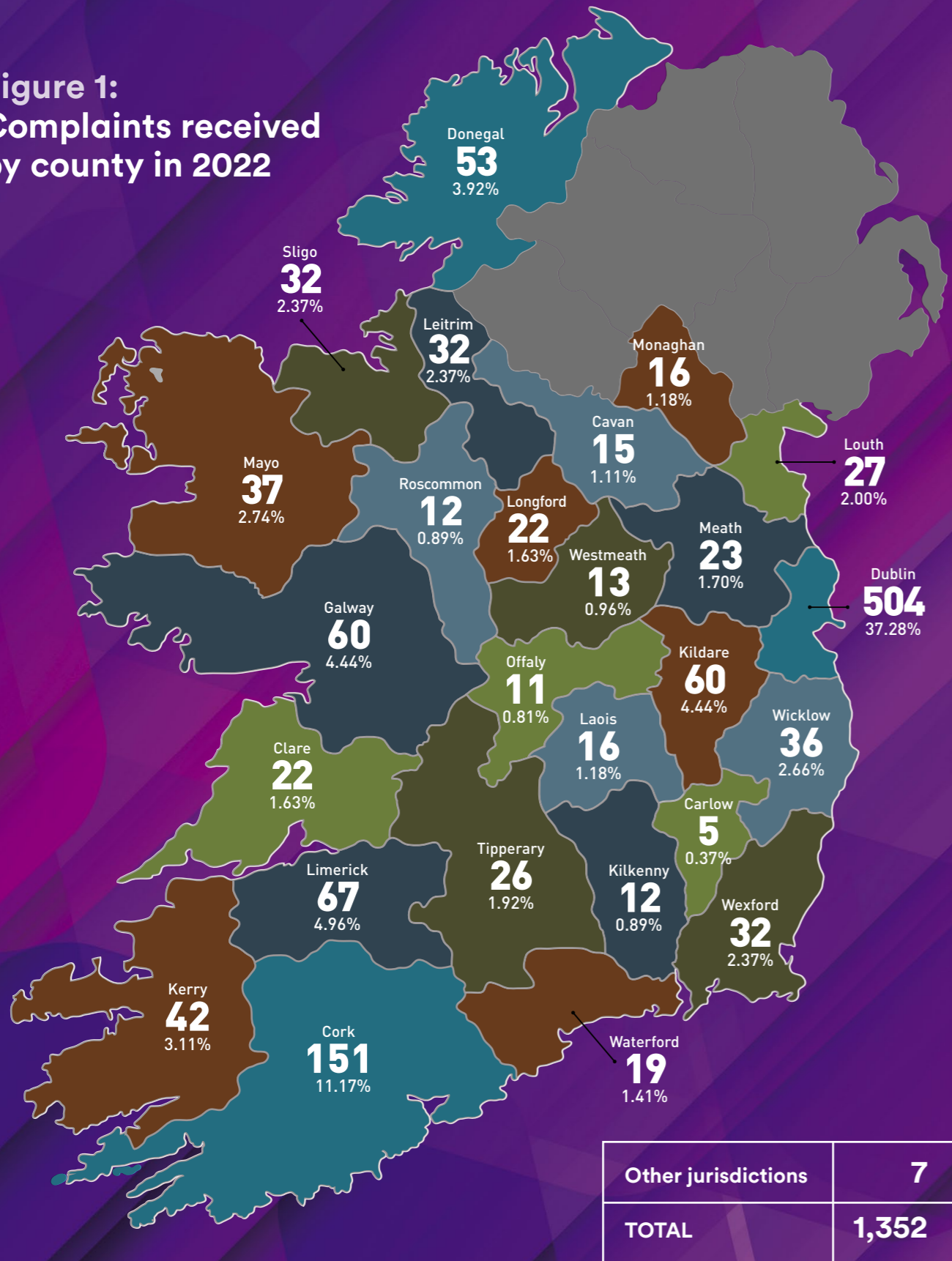
Excessive Costs

A total of 58 complaints of excessive costs (overcharging) were received. Of these, 18 (31%) related to conveyancing, with 15 (25%) relating to litigation, 13 (22%) relating to family law, and 5 (8%) to probate and the administration of estates.



● Conveyancing	18	(31.0%)
● Litigation	15	(25.9%)
● Family	13	(22.4%)
● Probate	5	(8.6%)
● Employment	2	(3.4%)
● Crime	1	(1.7%)
● Other	4	(6.9%)
TOTAL	58	

**Figure 1:
Complaints received
by county in 2022**



Complaints Closed in 2022

Overview

A total of 1,483 complaints were closed during the year. Under half of all closed complaints (677 complaints (46%)) were closed because they were deemed to be inadmissible following a statutory assessment.

A total of 348 (23%) complaints were resolved between the parties, including 22 complaints which were successfully informally resolved with the assistance of the LSRA's trained mediators.

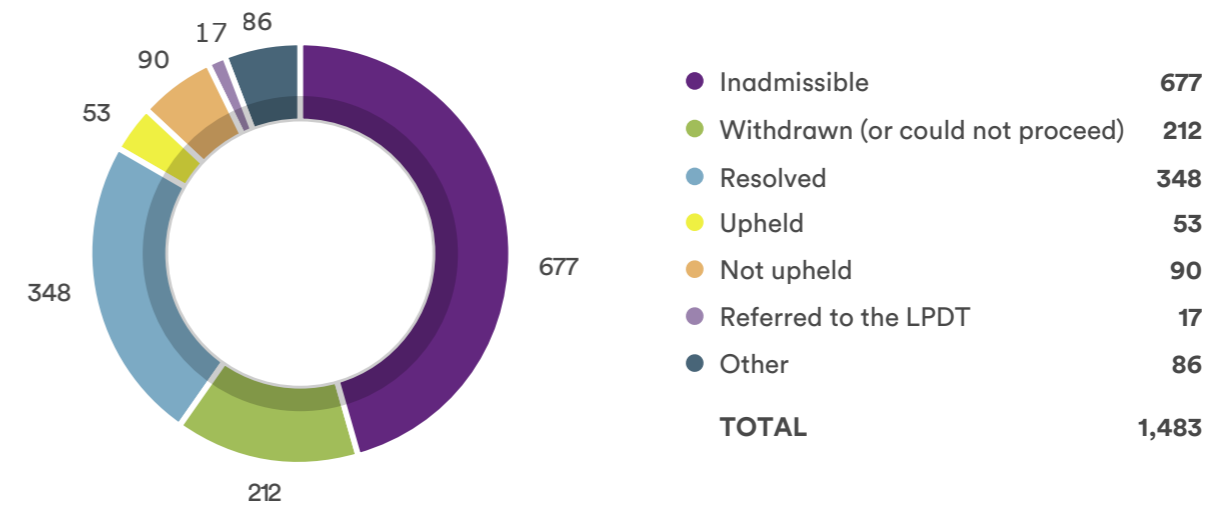
In addition, 212 complaints were withdrawn or could not proceed for other reasons. Complaints may be

unable to proceed because a legal practitioner has ceased to practice or has been suspended or struck off. An investigation might also be deferred because there are court proceedings ongoing.

It should also be noted that where complaints are either withdrawn or resolved between the parties, the LSRA may determine that it is in the public interest for an investigation to continue. The LSRA continued with one complaint on this basis in 2022.

A total of 53 complaints were upheld and 90 were not upheld, while 17 complaints were referred on to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal by the Complaints Committee which investigates misconduct complaints.

Complaints Closed



Enforcement in the High Court

During the course of 2022, the LSRA issued seven applications in the High Court for orders to enforce directions made by the LSRA. In all complaints where directions are not complied with, the LSRA brings enforcement proceedings under section 90 of the Act. In making such applications, the LSRA also seeks the payment by the legal practitioner of the costs it incurs in bringing High Court actions.

Complaints to the Ombudsman in 2022

Complainants who feel they were unfairly treated by the LSRA can bring a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman only requests a copy of the LSRA file in complaints which it considers require further investigation. In 2022, the LSRA received requests for a copy of a complaints file on 63 occasions.

“

Thank you for your intervention. I have received communication from the solicitor to advise she hopes to complete by Xmas. I will confirm when this have been completed. Things have really moved with your help.

Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal

Further work continued on the establishment of the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT) during 2022. The LPDT is an independent statutory body under the Act. Its role is to consider complaints of misconduct against solicitors and barristers referred to it from the LSRA's Complaints Committee or the Law Society.

The LPDT has a total of 33 members appointed by the President of the High Court on the nomination of the Minister.¹ It has 21 lay members nominated by the Minister for Justice. It also has six nominees of the Bar of Ireland (formerly the Bar Council) and six nominees of the Law Society. Its inaugural chairperson is Mr Tom Coughlan.

The Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal Regulations which govern the work of the Tribunal were drafted during 2021. Following a stakeholder consultation process, the regulations were completed and adopted at a plenary meeting of Tribunal members in December 2021. The approved Regulations were transposed into a Statutory Instrument in 2022.

The LPDT began receiving applications from both the Law Society and the LSRA towards the end of 2022 and it is expected that it will start hearings in mid-2023. The LPDT undertook a comprehensive training programme for Tribunal members during 2022. While the LPDT is a separate entity to the LSRA with its own premises, the LSRA provides it with administrative and technical support. The LPDT's seven support staff are LSRA employees and its Registrar is a member of the LSRA's Senior Management Team.

As an independent statutory body, the LPDT will in future report on its activities in its own Annual Reports.

¹ One member resigned during 2022.

ICLR Conference, Dublin 2023

The LSRA is part of an international community of legal services regulators who gather annually for a peer networking and learning event called the International Conference of Legal Regulators (ICLR).

LSRA staff were among participants at the 2022 event which was held in Chicago, Illinois in October 2022. Ireland is the venue for the ICLR 2023, which will be held in Dublin. It will take place from 25 to 27 October in the Royal Marine Hotel in Dún Laoghaire, Co Dublin.



ICLR staff were among participants at the International Conference of Legal Regulators in Chicago, Illinois in November 2022



CEO Brian Doherty speaking at International Conference of Legal Regulators in Chicago, Illinois in November 2022



Legal Services, Levy and Registration

Steady Growth of Limited Liability Partnerships

The number of partnerships of solicitors seeking authorisation from the LSRA to operate as Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) grew at a steady pace in 2022, with a total of 82 LLPs authorised during the year.

A total of nine LLPs notified the LSRA in 2022 that they intended to cease operating as an LLP. This brought the figure on the Register of LLPs to 424 at the end of the year.

The LSRA received 106 membership alteration forms from LLPs in 2022 with the alterations being processed in a timely fashion.

The LLP authorisation framework, the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (Limited Liability Partnerships) (Section 130) Regulations 2019 were issued on 23 October 2019.

An authorisation to operate with limited liability under the Act permits existing partnerships of solicitors to limit their personal liability. For example, their personal assets are protected from the negligence of other partners in the LLP. A partner may still be liable for a debt, obligation or liability arising from, for example, an act or omission of the partner which involves fraud or dishonesty and which was the subject of either a misconduct finding or a criminal conviction.

The limiting of personal liability by legal practitioners comes with responsibilities, including maintaining appropriate professional indemnity insurance and communicating effectively with clients and creditors as to the impact of the LLP operating model. The LSRA maintains and regularly updates the LLPs Register, which currently comprises a list of partnerships of solicitors authorised to operate as LLPs. The Register is available on the LSRA website.

Throughout 2022, the LSRA continued to engage constructively with applicants and others. Staff addressed queries from firms related to LLPs and various processes under the Regulations. These included applications to operate as an LLP, to cease operating and where there was a change in the partners of an LLP. LSRA staff responded to 54 queries relating to LLPs in 2022.

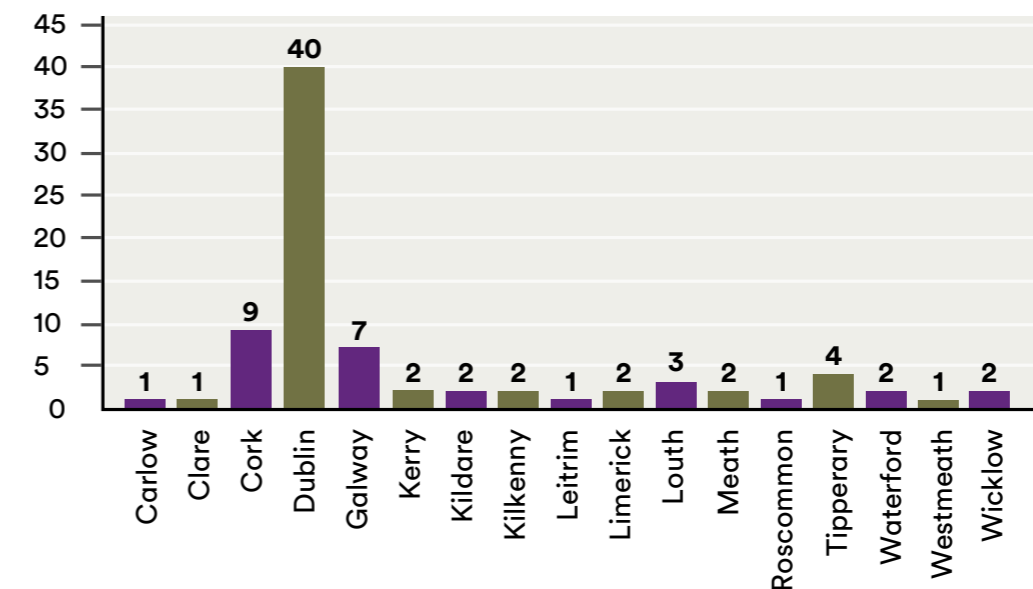
Section 125(9) of the Act requires the LSRA to make a decision on whether to authorise a relevant business to operate as an LLP no later than 60 days following receipt of a valid application form and fee. The average processing time for LLP applications during 2022 was 25 days.

Insights on New LLPs in 2022

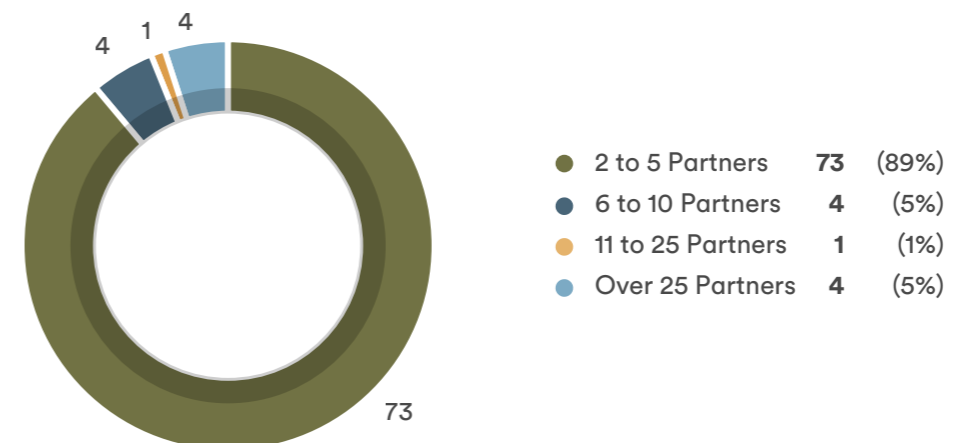
LSRA data on the 82 partnerships of solicitors that were authorised to operate as LLPs during 2022 provides useful insights. A total of 40 LLPs were authorised in county Dublin, with nine in Cork and seven in Galway. The majority of partnerships of

solicitors (73) authorised as LLPs had between two and five partners. At the other end of the scale, a total of four solicitors' partnerships who were authorised during the year had more than 25 partners.

LLPs Authorised in 2022 by County



LLPs Authorised in 2022 by Number of Partners



Levy on the Professions

The LSRA issued its fourth annual levy assessment notices in 2022. The Law Society of Ireland, the Bar Council (now the Bar of Ireland) and barristers who are not members of the Law Library are subject to the levy, under Part 7 of the Act. The levy is the LSRA's principal funding mechanism. The amount of the levy payable in 2022 is calculated to cover the operating costs and administrative expenses of the Authority incurred in the preceding financial year.

The LSRA, with the consent of the Minister, determined the operating costs and administrative expenses of the Authority for the 2021 financial year. The LSRA then calculated the proportion of the levy payable by the Law Society, the Bar of Ireland and barristers who were not members of the Law Library. Legal practitioners in the full-time service of the State are exempt from the levy under section 97 of the Act.

The number of complaints made against solicitors and barristers is a factor used in the calculation of the levy. The LSRA began accepting complaints in relation to legal practitioners on 7 October 2019, following commencement of Part 6 of the Act. The levy for 2021 financial year was €184.11 per barrister who was not a member of the Law Library, €190.97 per Law Library member and €255.67 per solicitor.

On 9 June 2022, the LSRA, as required under section 95 of the Act, issued Levy Assessment Notices to the two professional bodies as well as 534 individual barristers who are not members of the Law Library. A total of 121 Further Notices were subsequently issued to non-Law Library members as required by section 96(2) of the Act. The LSRA also received and responded to 87 queries regarding the levy in 2022.

A total of 99.81% of the levy for the 2021 financial year had been paid to the LSRA by 31 December 2022.

Maintaining the Roll of Practising Barristers

The LSRA maintains the Roll of Practising Barristers, a searchable online register of all barristers entitled to provide legal services in the State.

The Roll is available on the LSRA's website. It is an important tool by which members of the public can be assured that the barrister providing legal services on their behalf is lawfully entitled to do so. It is also necessary for the calculation and proper administration of the levy on barristers.

Qualified barristers are prohibited under section 136 of the Act from providing legal services if their names are not entered on the Roll.

The LSRA regularly updates the Roll, for example as new barristers are called to the Bar of Ireland and apply for entry to the Roll, where their details need to be amended, or where they cease practising and request to be removed from the Roll.

Over the course of the year, the details of 137 practising barristers were added to the Roll. The average turnaround time for applications was two working days. A total of 89 queries related to the Roll were dealt with in 2022.

The Roll numbers grew from 2,933 on 1 January 2021 to 2,957 on 31 December 2022. Of these, 2,173 were members of the Law Library and 784 were not members of the Law Library. Over the course the year, the LSRA received 337 requests for amendments to their details.

Barristers may request to be removed from the Roll when they no longer wish to provide legal services as a practising barrister. Barristers may also be removed from the Roll by the LSRA for other reasons including non-payment of the levy. A total of 113 barristers were removed from the Roll in 2022.

The LSRA and Senior Counsel Applications

In April 2020, the Authority established the Advisory Committee on the grant of Patents of Precedence, under section 172(1) of the Act. The role of the Advisory Committee is to make recommendations to the Government to grant Patents of Precedence to solicitor and barrister applicants. A solicitor or barrister who is granted a Patent of Precedence is entitled to use the title of Senior Counsel. In addition, a barrister who is granted a Patent of Precedence is entitled to be called to the Inner Bar. Prior to the applications system created in the Act, only barristers were entitled to seek the title Senior Counsel.

The seven-member Advisory Committee is chaired by the Chief Justice. The Chairperson of the Authority, Dr Don Thornhill, was nominated by the Minister for Justice to the Advisory Committee in 2020. The LSRA provided clerical and administrative assistance to the Committee during 2022.

The Advisory Committee issued its third call for applications for recommendations in December 2021. It received a total of 61 applications; 20 from solicitors and 41 from barristers. In June 2022, the Government approved the granting of the title of Senior Counsel to 28 barristers and 6 solicitors, based on the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

The Advisory Committee's calls for applications were made via the LSRA website, which posted detailed information for applicants, including guidance and application forms. The Committee's fourth round call for applications opened in December 2022 and closed in February 2023.

Advisory Committee Patents of Precedence Recommendations 2022

Barrister		Solicitor	
Female	Male	Female	Male
16	12	4	2
28		6	
TOTAL 34			

Engagement and Events



CEO Dr Brian Doherty (centre) spoke at the launch of the Evelyn Partners Ireland Law Firm Survey 2022 in November. With Paul Wyse (left) Head of Advisory Services and John O'Callaghan (right), Managing Partner, Professional Services, Evelyn Partners Ireland.



In May, CEO Dr Brian Doherty (left) and Chairman of the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (right) Tom Coughlan signed Service Level Agreement between the Authority and the Tribunal.



CEO Dr Brian Doherty speaking at one of two staff workshops in August 2022 to gather input for the LSRA's new Strategic Plan 2022-2025.



In June, the LSRA hosted a research visit by Professor Ron Paterson, Chair of an Independent Review of the statutory framework for legal services in Aotearoa New Zealand. Prof Patterson is pictured with CEO Dr Brian Doherty and members of the Senior Management Team.

3. How We Engage & Innovate

Research Reports and Recommendations

The year in review saw the publication of three statutory reports which reflect the range of the Authority's functions and its research and reporting responsibilities under the Act.



Complaints Reports 2022

Highlighting themes in complaints to raise awareness and improve standards

The LSRA is required under section 73 of the Act to publish a report on the operation of our independent complaints handling function every six months. The LSRA began receiving complaints about solicitors and barristers on 7 October 2019 under Part 6 of the Act.

The first complaints report of 2022 was published on 7 April. It reported receiving 822 complaints from 4 September 2021 to 4 March 2022 and closing 811 complaints in the same period. The second complaints report, published on 18 November, covered the reporting period from 5 March to 2 September 2022, and showed that the LSRA received 778 complaints and closed 754 complaints in the reporting period.

These bi-annual reports highlight emerging themes in complaints and identify areas where it may be possible to learn lessons and to raise standards. The reports include anonymised case studies which are aimed at helping both consumers and legal services providers learn from our examination of individual complaints.

Pathways to the Professions Annual Report 2021

Collecting data on the admission policies of the legal profession

The Authority's third annual report on the admission policies of the legal professions, as required under section 33 of the Act, was submitted to the Minister for Justice in April 2022.

The *Pathways to the Professions* report presented comprehensive data on the number of persons admitted to practise as solicitors and barristers during 2021. It followed a statutory consultation which attracted a total of nine written submissions. The report concluded that: *"The impact of the pandemic was not experienced uniformly across all sectors of the domestic economy nor within the legal services sector. Its effect was felt to differing degrees by solicitors and barristers depending on a range of factors including area of practice and, for solicitors, firm size. By the second quarter of 2021 there were signs of general recovery in employment rates and earnings across a range of economic sectors, including all professions. The year also saw the return of some optimism and confidence among law firms, with the re-emergence of reported staff recruitment and retention challenges among large Dublin law firms."*





Developing a New Strategic Plan

In 2022, the Authority approved the LSRA's new Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 in compliance with section 20 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. Section 20 requires that the Authority prepare and submit a three-year plan to the Minister for Justice within the six months before each third anniversary of the establishment day of 1 October 2016. This Strategic Plan therefore covers the period from 1 October 2022 until 30 September 2025.

In developing the plan, the LSRA executive considered the statutory and governance requirements of the LSRA in relation to strategic planning. A range of consultative activities took place and the LSRA executive also engaged with other regulatory bodies and comparator agencies and reviewed a range of strategic plans from a number of statutory and non-statutory bodies.

The staff of the LSRA were consulted and given an opportunity to contribute to the strategic planning of the organisation. Employees were first surveyed about how the organisation currently interacts with both the public and legal professionals and then a number of staff workshops took place where the priorities for the organisation over the next three years were discussed.

A survey was also sent to key stakeholders as well as members of the public to gather their views on what the organisation's third strategic plan should look like.

The Strategic Plan was considered and approved by the Authority members at the September 2022 meeting.

The plan identifies three strategic priorities within the context of the LSRA's work as a regulator in the legal services sector and as an organisation:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Enhance Operational Efficiency and Service Delivery

We will enhance operational efficiency to deliver our core regulatory operations and services effectively and independently and to identified and benchmarked standards.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Promote Professional Standards and Encourage Innovation

We will promote professional standards and encourage innovation and advancement in education and training, legal practice business models, admission to the legal professions, access to justice and consumer protection.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Increase Awareness through Communication and Engagement

We will improve awareness of the LSRA's regulatory activities and services as well as other issues relevant to the legal services sector through enhanced communications and engagement with the public, legal practitioners and other stakeholders.

To measure progress against these strategic priorities, the plan is supported by a detailed framework of goals, actions and key deliverables. The plan will form the basis of the LSRA's annual business planning process, performance management and development activities over its lifetime.

Ongoing Research in 2022

Exploring Economic and Other Barriers Facing Early Career Solicitors and Barristers

In March 2022, the LSRA submitted a report to the Minister for Justice on the barriers and challenges faced by early career legal professionals. The report was a summary of extensive research including comprehensive surveys of trainee and early career solicitors, student and early career barristers and law undergraduates.

This research and report was in response to a request from the Minister for Justice in November 2020 for the Authority to "consider the economic and other barriers faced by young barristers and young solicitors following their professional qualification from the King's Inns and Law Society respectively".

The LSRA intends to publish the report and recommendations in 2023.

Analysing the Creation of a New Profession of Conveyancer

In March 2021, in accordance with section 34(5) (a) of the Act, the Minister for Justice requested a report in relation to the creation of a new profession of conveyancer.

Following a request for tenders, in January 2022 the LSRA selected economic consultants INDECON to carry out an expert analysis on the creation of a new profession of conveyancer. This work continued throughout the year with the final report due in 2023. Simultaneously, the LSRA worked with an external agency to run a consumer survey on experiences of the conveyancing process in Ireland. The results will be incorporated into the final report for the Minister.

Preparing the Annual Admissions Report

In December 2022, the Authority launched a public consultation inviting written submissions in advance of the Authority's fourth annual report on the admission policies of the legal professions. Under section 33 of the Act, this report must be submitted to the Minister by the end of April 2023.

Communications and Engagement

The LSRA prioritises maintaining clear and regular direct engagement with legal professionals and the representative bodies to ensure lawyers are kept informed of their regulatory obligations. In 2022, the LSRA continued to expand its engagement with the consumers and the public, raising awareness of our work, particularly our complaints service.

Staff communications and engagement also continue to be a key priority for the LSRA. In November 2022 we relaunched our digital staff newsletter, Manorisms, as a fortnightly forum for sharing staff updates and news including charity and social events.

LSRA Outreach Events

Across the reporting year, the LSRA's Chief Executive Dr Brian Doherty engaged regularly with representatives of the Law Society, the Bar of Ireland and the Honorable Society of King's Inns.

Dr Doherty delivered talks on the work of the LSRA, careers in law, barristers' anti-money laundering obligations and the LSRA complaints process to professional bodies and groups across the country. The Head of Complaints also delivered CPD talks on aspects of the complaints process. Dr Doherty also spoke at the launch of the Evelyn Partners annual survey of law firms.

Dr Doherty, along with senior LSRA colleagues, attended the International Conference of Legal Regulators (ICLR) in Chicago in October as a panellist and participant. The ICLR provides a unique global opportunity for legal regulators, academics, non-governmental organisations and others to share best practice and emerging developments in the field. The LSRA will host the ICLR in Dublin in October 2023.

A full list of these and other activities are included in Appendix 1.

Expanding Engagement through Digital Platforms

Throughout 2022, the LSRA continued to grow awareness of our regulatory functions amongst the public, consumers of legal services and our wider stakeholder base.

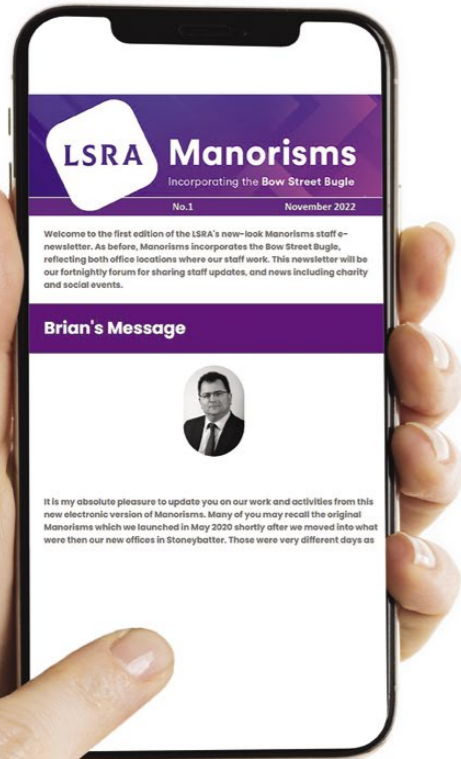
Accessibility was a key focus of our communications work in 2022, with staff attending digital accessibility training and the LSRA website receiving an accessibility review. Work continued on the new complaints section of the LSRA website and a plain English review of key complaints-related materials for consumers began.

The LSRA LinkedIn account continued to grow with 523 followers by the end of the year a 370% increase, on the previous year. The LSRA Twitter following also increased to 625 followers. There were a total of 29,387 website visitors in 2022.

Media Coverage of Our Work

The LSRA issued a total of 16 press releases and news and activities updates during the year. We received coverage of a number of reports and announcements in national media, regional media and legal publications. In addition, the Law Society of Ireland's Gazette and the Bar of Ireland's Bar Review carried regular updates for their respective members on the work of the LSRA.

Our press office responded to a total of eleven direct queries from journalists during the year.



Misconduct claims against lawyers fuel rise in overall complaints to watchdog

COMPLAINTS against lawyers increased by 12pc last year, the legal services watchdog has revealed. A total of 1,600 complaints – 1,500 related to solicitors and 99 related to barristers – were received by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) compared with 1,477 in 2021.

12% rise in complaints to lawyers

ALMOST 1,600 complaints were made against solicitors and barristers in Ireland last year, a rise of 12 per cent compared to the previous year.

Briefs

Legals services

Complaints about legal practitioners rose by 12%. The number of complaints made about solicitors and barristers rose by 12 per cent last year, according to the independent regulatory body for the sector. The Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) said alleged misconduct was the most common complaint type it received.

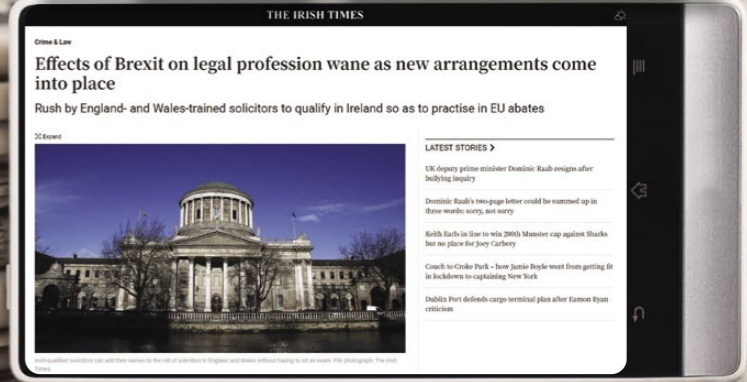
Solicitors who defy disciplinary decisions facing court

Regulator issues proceedings

THE legal services regulator has begun issuing High Court proceedings against solicitors who have failed to abide by the outcome of disciplinary proceedings. The LSRA chief executive Dr Brian Doherty said they had been a small number of cases where practitioners had failed to comply with court orders. In the worst case, he said, a solicitor would be faced with application to the High Court and would also be pursued for costs of the proceedings.

Barristers and solicitors to provide legal services jointly

MARY CARLAN, Minister for Justice, said a Bill introducing a new legal partnership to allow barristers and solicitors jointly provide legal services will be published shortly. Minister for Justice Helen McEntee has told a conference yesterday. The general scheme of the Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021 was first published by then minister for justice Heather Humphreys in June 2021. The provisions concerning the introduction of new legal partnerships are intended to address anomalies identified in the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 concerning the planned introduction of such partnerships.



4. Governance and Management

Authority Members and Nominating Bodies

The Authority members and their nominating bodies under the Act during 2022 were:



Dr Don Thornhill – Chair
Higher Education Authority

Dr Don Thornhill chairs the Legal Services Regulatory Authority. He also chairs the Standing Committee of Dublin Maternity Hospitals and is a consultant and adviser on strategy and policy. His previous board memberships have included the National Competitiveness Council, Hibernia College, the Chartered Accountants' Regulatory Board, the Irish Payments Services Organisation, the Irish Management Institute, Forfás, the Digital Hub, the Fulbright Commission and Science Foundation Ireland. Between 1993 and 2005 he was successively Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and Executive Chair of the Higher Education Authority.



Eileen Barrington SC
Honorable Society of King's Inns

Eileen Barrington is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, the King's Inns and the College of Europe, Bruges. Eileen commenced practice as a barrister in 1994 and became a Senior Counsel in 2011. She practises mainly in the areas of European, commercial, administrative and regulatory law.



Angela Black
Citizens Information Board

Angela Black is the retired Chief Executive of Citizens Information Board and has worked on consumer protection in financial services in Ireland and the European Commission. She is a member of the Legal Services Regulatory Authority and a Director of both the Social Finance Foundation and the Irish Banking Culture Board.



Geraldine Clarke SC
Law Society of Ireland

Geraldine Clarke is a consultant with Gleeson McGrath Baldwin Solicitors in Dublin, where she practises in the area of litigation. She is a past President of the Law Society of Ireland. She is a former Chair of the Professional Ethics Committee of the International Bar Association and has served as a Board member of the Irish Financial Services Appeal Tribunal.



Joan Crawford
Legal Aid Board

Joan Crawford is Chief Executive Officer of the Legal Aid Board, having worked as a solicitor and subsequently as a Managing Solicitor in various Law Centres in the Dublin region. In her current role Joan is also involved in developing policy, governance and strategy for the Board. She has experience in general practice and local government, as well as extensive experience in family law and mediation, child abduction and child care cases in all courts. Joan has a Masters in Public Management and Diplomas in European Law, Child Care Law and Mental Health and Capacity Law. She is a member of the Dublin Solicitors' Bar Association and Family Lawyers' Association.



Shane Galligan
Institute of Legal Costs Accountants

Shane is a Fellow of the Institute of Legal Costs Accountants, Chair of the Education Committee and, since 2012, a member of the six-person governing Council of the Institute. He is also a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, an Accredited Mediator (CI Arb) and co-founder of legal costs ADR Ireland.



Dermott Jewell

Consumers' Association of Ireland

Dermott Jewell is Policy and Council Advisor to the Consumers' Association of Ireland. He was elected President of ANEC – The European Consumer Voice in Standardisation in June 2019. Mr Jewell is a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitration (Irish Branch) CI Arb with accreditations in Employment Investigation and Mediation. He is a Member of the Irish Institute of Mediation and the Institute of Directors. He holds an IPA-UCD Professional Certificate in Governance.



Deirdre Malone

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Deirdre Malone is a former Global Director of Legal Policy at Twitter. She holds an honours degree in law from Trinity College Dublin (2003) and a diploma in Charity Law, Trusteeship and Governance from the Law Society of Ireland (2020). She was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 2006 and practiced as a barrister for several years from Garden Court Chambers, specialising in inquests and actions against the police. She was Executive Director of the Irish Penal Reform Trust 2014-2019 and was Legal Manager of the Public Interest Law Alliance, a public interest law network that seeks to engage the legal community and civil society in using the law to advance social change from 2019-2021. Previously Deirdre has also worked in the legal department of Liberty (National Council for Civil Liberties UK), in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Ireland), and as a researcher for the Attorney General of Ireland.



Sara Moorhead SC

Bar of Ireland

Sara Moorhead is a Senior Counsel and a Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) Accredited Mediator. She is primarily a trial lawyer/courtroom advocate. She has extensive expertise in the areas of Judicial Review, Personal Injuries, Administrative and Contract Law, Medical Negligence, Professional Negligence, Insurance Law, non-Jury, Asylum and Immigration law. She has represented the Government in proceedings before the European Court of Justice. She has also advised the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser and acted as Legal Counsel in a number of Tribunals of Inquiry.



Simon Murphy

Law Society of Ireland

Simon Murphy is a partner in JRAP O'Meara LLP Solicitors in Cork. He is a qualified Arbitrator and Mediator. He has previously chaired the main Law Society of Ireland Regulatory Committees and currently holds a number of regulatory roles across various professions. Simon served as an elected member of the Council of the Law Society of Ireland for many years and was President of the Law Society of Ireland in 2015-2016. He is also a former president of the Southern Law Association.



Síona Ryan (appointed in February 2022)

Competition and Consumer Protection Commission

Síona Ryan is the Director for Policy, Research and International at the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission charged with influencing policy development, promoting competition and advocating for the interests of consumers. She has over two decades of public policy experience operating across Irish, European and international institutions and holds both a MA in International Relations and a MA in Law.

Authority Appointments and Reappointments in 2022

Siona Ryan, nominee of the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) was appointed to the Authority by the Minister for Justice by letter dated 23 February 2022 until 30 September 2022 (the remainder of the term). Ms Ryan was reappointed for a three year term from 1 October 2022.

Both **Geraldine Clarke** (Law Society nominee) and **Dermott Jewell** (CAI) were reappointed for a two year term from 1 October 2022 (two year terms in light of aggregate term limit on Authority of eight years).

Sara Moorhead and **Shane Galligan** were reappointed for a further three year term from 1 October 2022.



LSRA offices in Stoneybatter, Dublin 7

Authority Members' Terms of Office

Authority Member	Organisation	1 st Term of Appointment ²	2 nd Term Appointment ³	3 rd Term Appointment ^{1,2}
Eileen Barrington	Honorable Society of the King's Inns	4 Years	4 Years	-
Angela Black	Citizens Information Board	4 Years	4 Years	-
Geraldine Clarke	Law Society of Ireland	3 Years	3 Years	2 Years
Joan Crawford	Legal Aid Board	4 Years	4 Years	-
Shane Galligan ⁴	Institute of Legal Costs Accountants	14 Months	3 Years	-
Dermott Jewell	Consumers' Association of Ireland	3 Years	3 Years	2 Years
Deirdre Malone ⁵	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	4 Years	-	-
Sara Moorhead ⁶	Bar Council (Bar of Ireland)	17 Months	3 Years	3 Years
Simon Murphy ⁷	Law Society of Ireland	4 Years	-	-
Siona Ryan ⁸	Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	7 Months	3 Years	-
Don Thornhill (Chair)	Higher Education Authority	4 Years	4 Years	-

² Under section 10 of the Act, five of the Authority members, selected by the drawing of lots, shall hold office for a period of three years, with the remaining members, including the Chair holding office for a period of four years. Members can be reappointed to the Authority, however the aggregate term of appointment shall not exceed eight years..

³ Members on three year term agreed to extend their terms by a further three years under section 10 of the 2015 Act.

⁴ Shane Galligan was appointed to the Authority with effect from 22 July 2021 to 30 September 2022 for the remaining term vacated by Stephen Fitzpatrick on his resignation and reappointed for a further three years from 1 October 2022.

⁵ Deirdre Malone was appointed to the Authority with effect from 1 October 2020 by letter dated 23 February 2021.

⁶ Sara Moorhead was appointed to the Authority in May 2018 following the appointment of David Barnville to the High Court. This appointment was for the remaining term of the original appointment and was renewed from 1 October 2019. Ms Moorhead was reappointed for a further 3 years from 1 October 2022.

⁷ Simon Murphy was appointed to the Authority from 1 October 2020 following his nomination by the Law Society to replace James MacGuill.

⁸ Siona Ryan was appointed to the Authority from 23 February 2022 to 30 September 2022 to replace Deirdre McHugh for the remainder of that term. Ms Ryan was reappointed from 1 October 2022 for a three year term.

Authority's Activities

The Authority met on five occasions during the year, bringing through a significant body of work to continue to build and execute the functions of the Legal Services Regulatory Authority. Due to Covid-19 impacts on business and associated restrictions, four of these meetings were held online. The minutes of all Authority meetings are published on the LSRA website.

Authority Meeting 1

At its first meeting of the year on 20 January 2022, the Authority reviewed and approved the LSRA's 2022 Business Plan. The Authority was provided with a presentation from Behaviour & Attitudes Ltd giving an overview of survey findings in respect of the section 34 Report on Barriers to entry to the Legal Profession and was updated on progress of the research and analysis work for the section 34 Report on the Profession of Conveyancer. The Authority was updated on the work of the Complaints and Resolutions Department and on the establishment activities for the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT). The Authority was also updated on the LSRA's finances, including engagement between the LSRA and the Department of Justice in respect of funding requirements for 2022.

Authority Meeting 2

At its second meeting on 24 March 2022, the Authority approved the Draft Financial Statements for 2021 for submission to the Department of Justice and the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General. The Authority was updated on the progress of the Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2022 which includes legislative amendments for the LSRA Levy Model and amendments to facilitate the introduction of Legal Partnerships. The Authority was updated on the work of the Complaints and Resolutions Department and on the establishment activities for the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT). The Authority reviewed progress on the section 34 Barriers Report and approved the submission of a report of its findings to the Minister for Justice. The Authority was updated on the progress of the section 34(c) Report on the Creation of a New Profession of Conveyancer and the section 6 Review of the Operation of the 2015 Act.

Authority Meeting 3

At its third meeting on 16 June 2022, the Authority was updated on the section 34 Barriers 'Findings' Report submitted to the Minister for Justice in March 2022. The LSRA Executive had liaised with the Department of Justice in respect of both the Barriers 'Findings' Report and the 'Setting Standards' Report which are interlinked on theme and actions, with the establishment of the Legal Practitioners Education and Training (LPET) Committee being a critical factor. The Authority approved the Executive to engage with relevant stakeholders on the draft recommendations flowing from the Barriers research. The Authority was updated on the section 34(c) Report on the Creation of a New Profession of Conveyancer. The Authority noted that Levy notices had issued on 9 June 2022 to the Law Society, the Bar of Ireland and individual non-Law Library barristers. The Authority was updated on the work of the Complaints & Resolutions Department and on the establishment activities for the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT). The Authority noted that the drafting of the LSRA's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 was underway.

Authority Meeting 4

At its fourth meeting on 8 September 2022, the Authority was updated on the ongoing engagement between the LSRA and both the Department of Justice and the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) on legislative amendments in respect of changes to the Levy Model and the introduction of the Legal Partnerships business model to be included in the Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2022. The Authority noted that the advances received pursuant to section 32 of the 2015 Act from the Minister for Justice from 2016-2018 inclusive had been designated as establishment costs and not subject to recoupment. This was confirmed by the Department of Justice following engagement between the LSRA, the Department of Justice and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Authority noted the ongoing challenge to funding in the absence of the revised levy provisions. The Authority reviewed and provided feedback to the Executive on the Draft LSRA Strategic Plan 2022-2025. The Strategic Plan was approved by the Authority subject to the final draft reflecting the feedback of the Authority.

Authority Meeting 5

At its fifth meeting on 1 December 2022, the Authority confirmed its Resolution of 17 October 2022, authorising the CEO to consent to the making of the Solicitors Professional Indemnity Insurance Regulations 2022. The Authority noted the LSRA’s financial position at end of year and that the executive would meet with the Department of Justice in December to discuss the LSRA’s funding. The Authority was informed that the Patents of Precedence process for 2023 would commence in the coming days. The Authority discussed the performance of the Complaints and Resolutions Department including statistical analyses. The Authority was informed that the Workforce Review (report and submission to DPER) undertaken by

Grant Thornton was complete and includes analysis of the needs of the Complaints and Resolutions Department. The Authority mandated the CEO on its behalf to provide the concurrence of the Authority to the Solicitors Accounts Regulations 2023, subject to the completion of an expert report and the flagging of any issues of significance in relation to consumer protection raised in that report with the Authority members. The Authority noted that the LSRA has received consent from the Ministers for Public Expenditure and Reform and Justice to enter into a lease for the Bow Street premises currently used by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal to be the new premises for the LPDT. Finally, the Authority reviewed its programme of activities for 2022 and the roadmap of planned activities for 2023.

Attendance at Authority Meetings January to December 2022

Members	20/01/22	24/03/22	16/06/22	08/09/22	01/12/22
Eileen Barrington	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Angela Black	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geraldine Clarke	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Joan Crawford	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shane Galligan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dermott Jewell	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deirdre Malone	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sara Moorhead	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Simon Murphy	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Siona Ryan	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✗
Don Thornhill (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Siona Ryan appointed as nominee of CCPC in February 2022

Financial Statements and Procurement

In 2022, the Authority submitted its fifth set of Financial Statements for the period from January 2021 to December 2021, to the Comptroller and Auditor General for Audit. On 20 December 2022, the Comptroller and Auditor General certified the accounts and reported that the LSRA Financial Statements gave a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the LSRA at 31 December 2021 and of its income and expenditure from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102.

The Authority undertook procurement exercises in 2022 with the advice and assistance of the Office of Government Procurement where relevant. The procurement exercises employed the existing All-of-Government Frameworks or for smaller procurements, were carried out in line with OGP Guidelines.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

The LSRA’s Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee is Chaired by Authority member, Angela Black. Authority member Geraldine Clarke also sits on the committee along with the independent external members of the committee who are Peter O’Brien and Claire Byrne. The Secretary to the Authority is also Secretary to the FAR Committee.

The FAR Committee met twice in 2022. The restricted number of meetings in the second half of the year arose due to impacts on resources and staffing at the LSRA which limited its operational capacity in that period. At each meeting, the FAR Committee receives a briefing from the Chief Executive Officer and formally reviews the LSRA Risk Register, examining all steps taken by the LSRA executive to mitigate those risks. The FAR Committee also reviews up-to-date management accounts and associated financial information at each meeting. The FAR Committee also reviews audit reports, both internal and external for the LSRA. The oversight remit of the FAR Committee has extended to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT) which is funded by the LSRA and included in its accounts. The LSRA Risk Register, audit reports, budget and financial statements are also considered and evaluated at Authority meetings.

Meetings of Finance Audit and Risk Committee 2022

Members	21/03/22	23/06/22
Angela Black	✓	✓
Claire Byrne	✓	✓
Geraldine Clarke	✗	✓
Peter O’Brien	✓	✓

Governance Arrangements

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority is a statutorily independent body. Under section 13(3) of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015, the Authority is required to be independent in the performance of its functions.

The LSRA's governance framework is guided by:

- the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (as amended);
- the DPER Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) which has been adopted by the Authority;
- the DPER Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies: Business and Financial Reporting Requirements (2016);
- Public Financial Procedures including the Public Spending Code.

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority has developed a suite of governance documents including:

- Code of Conduct for Authority members and staff;
- Terms of Reference for the Authority;
- Schedule of delegations and matters reserved to the Authority;
- Protected Disclosures Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Risk Register and Risk Management Strategy;
- Financial Policies and Procedures;
- Policy and Procedure for the Disclosure of Interests;
- Strategic Plan 2019-2022;

- Corporate Governance Assurance Document Agreement with the Department of Justice;
- Duly Authorised Register of staff authorised to perform section 13(7) functions under the Act;
- Quality Service Charter;
- Quality Service Action Plan.

Where appropriate, these documents have been made available on the LSRA's website.

The Role of the Authority and the Chief Executive

The Authority has approved a terms of reference for the LSRA which sets out the respective roles of the Authority and of the Chief Executive as follows:

The Authority:

The Authority is responsible for

- Reviewing and guiding the strategic direction and major plans of action of the LSRA;
- Ensuring compliance with all applicable statutory objectives;
- Holding the CEO and senior management to account for the effective performance of their responsibilities;
- Risk management policies and procedures;
- Annual budgets and business plans;
- Setting performance objectives;
- Monitoring implementation and performance;
- Overseeing major capital expenditure and investment decisions.

The Chief Executive:

The Authority delegates operational responsibility for the day-to-day running of the LSRA to the Chief Executive Officer and the LSRA's senior management team.

The Chief Executive Officer attends Authority meetings at the invitation of the Authority chairperson and provides regular reports on all aspects of the operation of the LSRA as required by Authority members. The Chief Executive Officer also attends the FAR Committee meetings for the purpose of providing an update on risk and financial management.

The Chief Executive Officer's role and responsibilities are set out in the Act. Section 24(3) of the Act states that the Chief Executive Officer shall:

- implement the policies and decisions of the Authority,
- manage and control generally the Authority's staff, administration and business,
- be responsible to the Authority for the performance of his or her functions, and
- perform such other functions (if any) as may be required by the Authority or as may be authorised under this Act.

Under section 13(7) of the Act, any function of the Authority may be performed through or by the Chief Executive or any member of its staff duly authorised by the Authority.

The Chief Executive Officer ensures that the Authority is kept up to date and fully informed about strategic issues and challenges affecting the LSRA and the environment in which it operates.

Conflicts of Interest

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority has developed a "Policy and Procedure for the Disclosure of Interests". Under the policy, and the Codes of Conduct for Authority members and staff, Authority members and the Chief Executive Officer register their interests in any other relevant undertakings with the Secretary of the Authority on appointment and on an annual basis. In addition, declaration of interests on specific agenda items is included as a standing item for each Authority Meeting and each Finance Audit and Risk Committee Meeting.

Performance Evaluation

The Authority will be undertaking an internal evaluation of its performance in 2023. This will be followed in 2024 by an external evaluation. The commencement of this process was delayed due to Covid-19 and other operational impacts on business.

Department of Justice Governance and Agencies Meetings

Over the course of 2022, the LSRA engaged extensively with officials from the Department of Justice. Two Governance Meetings were held in 2022 between the LSRA and the Civil Governance Unit of the Department of Justice, on 30 March and 20 October. A further meeting was held with the Department of Justice in relation to financial matters on 6 December 2022.

Financial Reporting

All appropriate procedures for financial reporting were adhered to in 2022 by the Authority. An annual budget for 2022 was agreed at the first Authority meeting of the year.

At each meeting of the Authority, up-to-date management accounts were presented by the Chief Executive. Monthly management accounts were produced throughout the year by the accounting service providers to the Authority and to the Executive ensuring that senior management have access to relevant and timely financial and non-financial information. The management accounts were also provided to and scrutinised by the Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee.

An Annual Financial Statement of the Accounts of the LSRA for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 was prepared and submitted to the Department of Justice and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) by the deadline of 31 March 2022. Audited accounts were approved by the OCAG on 20 December 2022 and subsequently submitted to the Minister for Justice along with the signed Letter of Representation, the Chairperson's Comprehensive Report to the Minister and a copy of the audit report to be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

Anti-Money Laundering

The LSRA is the competent authority under the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010 (the "2010 Act") as amended, for all barristers in the State. This means barristers who are members of the Law Library and barristers who are not members of the Law Library. The LSRA maintains the Roll of Practising Barristers, a searchable online register of all barristers entitled to provide legal services in the State. The LSRA is the competent authority for approximately 3,000 barristers registered on the Roll.

As the competent authority, the LSRA is tasked with monitoring such legal service providers as set out above and who are described as "designated persons", and taking measures that are reasonably necessary for the purpose of securing compliance by such legal service providers with the requirements of Part 4 of the 2010 Act.

It is the responsibility of such legal service providers to interpret and to act in accordance with all relevant anti-money laundering legislation that applies to them.

The AMLSC (Anti Money Laundering Steering Committee) was established and is chaired by the Department of Finance for the purpose of providing oversight and active review of Ireland's AML/ Combatting the Finance of Terrorism, (CFT) framework, of which the LSRA as a competent authority is a member.

In 2022, the Steering Committee published its terms of reference and the LSRA attended several meetings of the AMLSC's Risk Assessment Subgroup (established in order to examine how Ireland should meet its obligations in relation to national risk assessments). The LSRA also submitted AML and CFT related data and statistics to support a GAP analysis to support Ireland's AML & CFT assessments and as part of a presentation to the wider AMLSC on Statistics Gathering and Analysis at a Presentation at the Department of Finance on the 29 November 2022.

In 2022, the LSRA in its role as a competent authority continued to monitor and update information published on its website to assist practising barristers with their evolving obligations pursuant to EU sanctions against the Russian State and related Russian persons and entities. The LSRA is engaged on an ongoing basis as a member of the AMLSC with other members and wider stakeholders to determine, refine and cultivate data and policy to ensure that the Irish State fulfils its AML & CFT legal obligations including providing input to the international Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Horizontal Review of Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBP) Technical Compliance Related to Corruption.

Tax Law

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority complied with its obligations under tax law in 2022.

GDPR and Data Protection

The LSRA is registered as a Data Controller with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. The LSRA's Data Protection Policy is available on the website. In 2022, the LSRA received 13 Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection Acts.

The LSRA had 10 data breaches in 2022. Of these breaches, nine were determined as low level breaches. One breach was deemed medium risk but notifiable to the Data Protection Commission.

Transparency Actions

The Authority has adopted Transparency and Accountability as among its core values. The Authority is committed to transparency in relation to its work and decision-making. The minutes of all Authority meetings and the actions points arising are published on the LSRA website. The LSRA has also committed to publishing all of the statutory reports prepared by or on behalf of the Authority. Submissions made to the Authority as part of public consultations are also made available on the LSRA website.

The LSRA's website is updated regularly with information relating to the progress of the implementation of the Act. All key internal policy documentation can also be found on the site.

Freedom of Information Requests and General Queries

The LSRA is an FOI body under the Freedom of Information Act 2014. In 2022, the LSRA received a total of 18 FOI requests under the Act. The requests were dealt with in compliance with the Act.

Queries and requests for general information from the public, media, members of the legal professions and other stakeholders are acknowledged and responded to by the executive team. It is the objective of the LSRA to acknowledge all queries and requests within three days of receipt and to issue a substantive response, where possible, within 14 days.

Freedom of Information Requests 2022

Ref	Requestor Category	Granted	Part Granted	Refused	With-drawn	Awaiting Decision
01	Member of the Public		X			
02	Member of the Public		X			
03	Member of the Public		X			
04	Member of the Public			X		
05	Legal Practitioner		X			
06	Member of the Public			X		
07	Member of the Public		X			
08	Member of the Public	X				
09	Member of the Public		X			
10	Member of the Public	X				
11	Member of the Public	X				
12	Member of the Public	X				
13	Legal Practitioner	X				
14	Legal Practitioner		X			
15	Member of the Public				X	
16	Member of the Public	X				
17	Member of the Public		X			
18	Legal Practitioner	X				

Irish Language

The LSRA was included as a public body for the purposes of the Official Languages Act 2003 in 2020, under the *Official Languages Act 2003 (Public Bodies) Regulations 2019* (SI 230 of 2020). In 2022, Irish language versions of reports and guidance documents were made available. The LSRA also made recruitment materials available in both English and Irish.

Protected Disclosures

The LSRA has introduced a Protected Disclosure Policy and Procedure. There were no Protected Disclosures made to the LSRA in 2022. A report reflecting this position has been published on the LSRA website.

Compliance with DPER Code

The LSRA adopted the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The LSRA has fully complied with the DPER Code in 2022 with the following exceptions:

- Section 4.6 - Performance Review, the Authority did not undertake a self-assessment in 2021. Arrangements will be made for an Authority Self-Assessment in the first half of 2023.
- Section 4.6 - Performance Review, the self-assessment will be followed by an external assessment of effectiveness in 2024.
- Section 8.14, 8.15 - Periodic Critical Review, will be undertaken following the assessments under 4.6.
- Section 8.16 - Procurement Policy and review of Financial Policies & Procedures, review ongoing and revised documents to issue Q2 2023.
- Section 8.16 - Contracts Database, will be developed in first half of 2023.
- Section 8.20 - Corporate Procurement Plan, to be developed for Q2 2023

Organisational Developments

HR and Corporate

Under the terms of the 2015 Act, the Authority appoints its own staff with the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. There were five competitions held in 2022 for numerous roles within the LSRA.

The Authority seconded a small number of the above staff to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT) and has engaged five staff on part-time contracts for specific projects (e.g. mediation). In 2022 the LSRA engaged Grant Thornton to undertake a workforce planning review, which is now with DPER for their consideration.

LSRA Staff Resources as at 31 Dec 2022

Grade	2022*
Assistant Secretary	1
Principal Officer	2
Assistant Principal Officer	5
Registrar	1
Legal Advisor	2
State Solicitor	9.3
Higher Executive Officer	8
Legal Researcher	1
Officer Manager	1
Executive Officer	2
Clerical Officer	13.5
Contractors	5
TOTAL	45.8

* Staff numbers reflect job sharing arrangements.
A total of 50 staff members equates to 45.8 FTEs (Full Time Equivalents).

Attendance Management and Performance

All LSRA staff submit weekly timesheets to their managers. Monthly timesheets are then submitted to Human Resources. Timesheets record staff work in units of 15 minutes. The amount of staff time spent working on complaints is detailed, and this assists the LSRA in calculating the annual levy on the professions. Softworks Time Management System was introduced in June 2021 and will continue to assist calculations and apportionment for the levy. It was also further updated in 2022 to take into account the changes in working hours as per Circular 14/2022 Revision of Working Hours in the Civil Service and will be further updated in 2023 to reflect blended working. The LSRA has a Performance Management Development System for all staff and training was provided during the year to all new recruits. There is a Probation Management process in place for all new staff.

Continuous Development for Our Staff

Staff attended numerous training courses, conferences and seminars during 2022 in many different areas including Conducting Human Resource Investigations, Communications Skills, Building Resilience and Decision Making. Informal Lunch and Learn sessions took place in 2022 and will continue to take place in 2023 with both externally invited and internal speakers.

Health and Safety 2022

In 2022, there was a move to a more blended model of working which meant we had more staff attending the office; however, government guidelines in relation to Covid-19 were adhered to at all times. The Department of Justice ICT Unit assisted Corporate Services to arrange for new staff to have remote access to the LSRA business systems from commencement of employment. The LSRA complied with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (General Applications) Regulations 2007. We adhered to health and safety policies and procedures and we provided appropriate training, safety awareness programmes and personal protective equipment.

Public Sector Duty and Human Rights

The LSRA continued to meet its obligations to staff and customers under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

Information Technology

The LSRA has a Service Level Agreement, Governance Assurance and Data Processing Agreement in place with the Department of Justice. During 2022, the Department's IT section assisted Corporate Services to arrange for all new starters to have remote access to the LSRA internal systems to enable them to work securely from home. Sharepoint is our temporary Case Management System for complaints, but the LSRA is working closely with the Department to develop a long-term solution.

Energy Efficiencies

With limited numbers of staff attending the premises in 2022, energy usage was relatively low; however, more than in 2021. Further energy awareness campaigns, Green Team and actions for implementing reduction in carbon emissions in line with Government policy will proceed in 2023.

Procurement Activities

Procurement conducted in 2022 was in line with EU law and Government circulars and guidelines. The LSRA seeks to undertake all procurement through the Framework Agreements available through the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) where feasible.

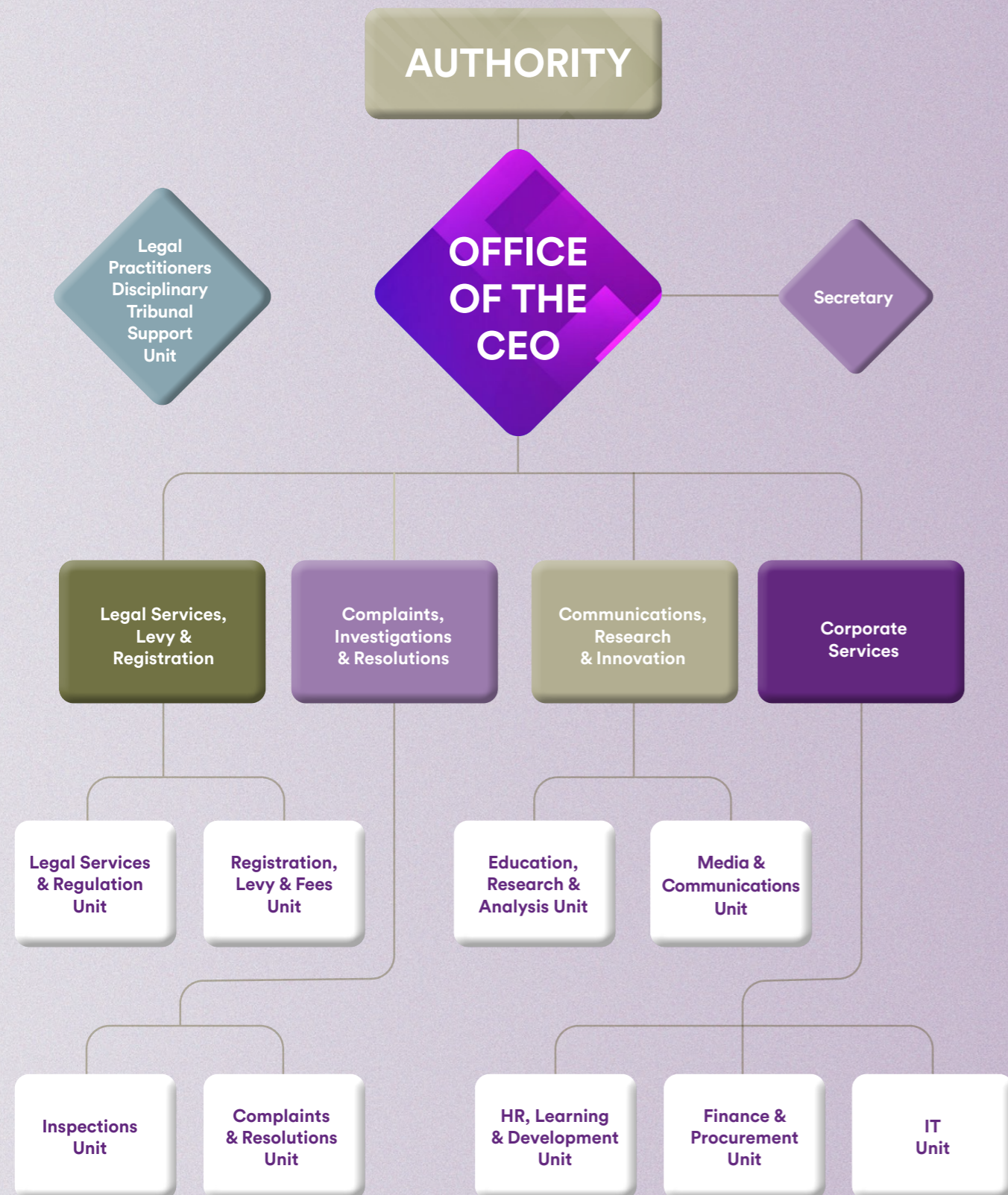
Prompt Payment of Accounts

It is the policy of the Legal Services Regulatory Authority to fully comply with the terms of the Prompt Payments of Accounts Act 1997. The LSRA has procedures in place to ensure that all invoices are paid within the statutory time limit. While the procedures have been designed to ensure compliance with the Act, they only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non-compliance with the Act. In 2022, no invoices incurred late payment penalties.

Senior Management Team

During 2022, the Senior Management met on a regular basis to review all major issues relevant to the efficient and effective operation of the Authority. One of the main responsibilities of the SMT is to monitor progress on achieving the targets set out in the Annual Business Plan for each Department.

Organisational Structure



Senior Management Team

Office of the CEO



Dr Brian Doherty
Chief Executive Officer

Brian Doherty is the Chief Executive Officer of the Legal Service Regulatory Authority. He was called to the Bar in 1996 and initially practised in Belfast. He joined the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland when it was set up in 2000 as one of the first civilian investigators, working on allegations of misconduct against the then RUC, later the Police Service of Northern Ireland. In 2007 he moved to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission as a senior investigating officer, later progressing to acting Deputy Director of Investigations. He returned to the Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman in 2014 to run the Current Investigations Directorate. Brian took up post as the CEO of the LSRA in September 2017.



Ultan Ryan
Secretary

Ultan Ryan joined the Civil Service in 1985 and worked for the Central Statistics Office before joining the Department of Social Welfare as a systems analyst in 1992. Ultan moved to the Department of Justice and Equality in 2000 where he worked on Cross-Border Justice projects including as Secretary to the Remembrance Commission. Ultan worked as project manager and operations manager with the Reception and Integration Agency before assignment to the LSRA in January 2017.

Communications, Research and Innovation Department



Nuala Haughey
Head of Communications, Research and Innovation Department

Nuala Haughey was appointed Head of Communications, Research and Innovation in November 2019. Nuala's background is in journalism and policy analysis. She is a former award winning Social Affairs Correspondent with The Irish Times and has extensive experience as a communications consultant with the European Commission. Nuala has also worked as a political communications director and a policy analyst and researcher.

Complaints, Investigations and Resolutions Department



Tony Watson

Head of Complaints, Investigations and Resolutions Department

Tony Watson joined the LSRA in September 2019 and is the Head of Complaints, Investigations and Resolutions. He qualified as a solicitor in England and worked as a litigator in London. He moved to Ireland in 2005 and joined the Complaints Section of the Law Society, where he was Deputy Head of Complaints prior to joining the LSRA. Tony has extensive experience in the regulation of lawyers, and the investigation and resolution of complaints in particular.



Eleanor Carmody

Head of Complaints and Resolutions Unit

Eleanor joined the LSRA in September 2019 as a Complaints Resolution Officer, and was appointed Head of the Complaints and Resolutions Unit in February 2020. Eleanor qualified as a solicitor in 1999 and worked mainly as a conveyancer in a general practice in Fermoy, Co. Cork. She joined the Law Society in 2008 and worked as a solicitor in the Complaints and Client Relations section investigating complaints against solicitors.

Corporate Services Department



Deirdre Fleming

Head of Corporate Services Department

Deirdre Fleming was appointed Head of Corporate Services in October 2019. Deirdre has significant experience in corporate services and finance within the public sector including in the Houses of Oireachtas, Law Reform Commission and recently the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.

Legal Services, Levy and Registration Department



Alison McIntyre

Head of Legal Services, Levy and Registration Department

Alison Emily McIntyre was appointed Head of Legal Services, Levy and Registration Department in October 2019 and took up her role in March 2020. Prior to this Alison was an Assistant Commissioner with the Irish Data Protection Commission where she worked as a legal adviser and as their Data Protection Officer. Alison has experience in private practice and in public sector organisations.



Padraig Langan

Head of Registration, Levy and Fees Unit

Padraig Langan was appointed the Head of the Registration, Levy and Fees Unit in July 2018. Previous to this, Padraig worked in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the Press Office and, prior to that, the Meat and Milk Policy Division where he gained experience working on policy issues. Padraig has more than 20 years of experience in the public sector.

Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal Support Unit



Kay Lynch

Registrar of the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal

Kay Lynch was appointed Registrar of the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal in September 2019. Prior to her appointment, Kay worked as an executive with the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal since 2014. She is a qualified solicitor and holds diplomas in Professional Regulation (University College Dublin) and Judicial Skills and Decision-Making (Law Society of Ireland).

Appendix 1: Key Activities in 2022

Date	Key Activity
18 January	LSRA meeting with Department of Justice and Financial Shared Services on the levy funding model for the LSRA
20 January	30th Meeting of the Authority
21 January	Law Society Update Meeting
21 February	LSRA meeting with Department of Justice on legal education reforms
24 February	CEO delivered a presentation on careers in Law and the LSRA to the King's Inns
25 February	Draft Financial Statements for 2021 submitted to the Department of Justice
8 March	Meeting with the European Commission on the 2022 EU Rule of Law Report
14 March	CEO delivered a presentation on Anti-money laundering and the work of the LSRA to the Bar of Ireland
24 March	31st Meeting of the Authority
30 March	Governance meeting with the Department of Justice
31 March	Law Society Update Meeting
1 April	CEO meeting with Law Society Director General
5 April	President of the High Court launches the LPDT
7 April	Publication of first LSRA Complaints Report of 2022 under section 73 of the Act
12 April	CEO meeting with CEO of the Bar of Ireland
29 April	First FAR Committee Meeting of 2022
13 May	Law Society Update Meeting
20 May	LSRA CEO and LPDT Chairperson sign Service Level Agreement between the Authority and the Tribunal

Date	Key Activity
20 May	Meeting with Law Society on the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal and the establishment of the LPDT
2 June	Meeting with Department of Justice on the section 34 "Barriers" Report
14 June	Bar of Ireland presentation to the LSRA at "Lunch and Learn" event
16 June	32nd Authority Meeting
17 June	LSRA workshop with Grant Thornton on workforce planning
23 June	Second Meeting of the FAR Committee
27 June	Fact finding visit to the LSRA by the Chair of the Independent Review of lawyers and legal services in New Zealand
28 June	Law Society Update Meeting
28 June	Anti-Money Laundering Steering Group Meeting
7 July	LSRA's section 33 Annual Report on the Admission Policies of the Legal Professions published
9 July	Levy notices issued to Law Society, Bar of Ireland and practising barristers who are not members of the Law Library
20 July	LSRA opened a public consultation on the Authority's Third Strategic Plan
9 August	LSRA Staff Workshop on new Strategic Plan
9 August	CEO meeting with CEO of the Bar of Ireland
22 August	LSRA SMT Workshop on new Strategic Plan
25 August	LSRA CEO Meeting with Grant Thornton on Workforce Planning
31 August	LSRA CEO Meeting with Under Treasurer of King's Inns

Date	Key Activity
7 September	CEO meeting with Law Society Director General
8 September	33rd Authority Meeting
21 September	LSRA CEO Meeting with Under Treasurer of King's Inns
22 September	Law Society Update Meeting
28 September	Project Update Meeting with Indecon on Conveyancer Research
29 September	Complaints Committee Plenary Meeting
13 October	Law Society Update Meeting
20 October	Governance Meeting with Department of Justice
27 October	CEO attended International Conference of Legal Regulators in Chicago
28 October	Dublin announced as Host of 2023 International Conference of Legal Regulators
9 November	Head of Complaints Department delivered a CPD presentation on the complaints process for the Law Society in Killarney
10 November	LSRA CEO Meeting with Under Treasurer of King's Inns
16 November	CEO delivered a presentation to the Bar of Ireland Professional, Regulatory and Disciplinary Bar Association
18 November	Publication of second LSRA Complaints Report of 2022 under section 73 of the Act
24 November	CEO delivered a speech at the launch of the Evelyn Partners Annual Survey of Irish Law Firms 2022
24 November	CEO delivered a CPD presentation on the complaints process for the Dublin Solicitors Bar Association
30 November	Head of Complaints Department delivered a CPD presentation on the complaints process for the Law Society in the Mansion House Dublin

Date	Key Activity
1 December	34th Authority Meeting
2 December	CEO delivered a CPD presentation at a La Touche Training CPD Conference
6 December	Governance Meeting with Department of Justice
9 December	LSRA opened a public consultation on the Admission Policies of the Legal Profession
16 December	CEO met with Law Society to discuss Law Society investigations where accounting issues arise
20 December	Applications opened for solicitors and barristers to apply to the Advisory Committee on the Grant of Patents of Precedence



An tÚdarás Rialála
Seirbhísi Dlí
Legal Services
Regulatory Authority

Our Workplace Culture





An tÚdarás Rialála
Seirbhísí Dlí
Legal Services
Regulatory Authority

Legal Services Regulatory Authority
Unit 1-3, Manor Street Business Park
Stoneybatter, Dublin 7

Postcode: D07 K290

Email: lsra-inbox@lsra.ie

Website: www.lsra.ie

Twitter: @LSRAIreland