



An tÚdarás Rialála
Seirbhíse Dlí
Legal Services
Regulatory Authority

Consultation Notice

Invitation for Written Submissions on Admission Policies of the Legal Professions in 2023



15 December 2023

Invitation for Written Submissions on Admission Policies of the Legal Professions *2023 Annual Report*

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) invites written submissions as part of a consultation prior to its 2023 annual report to the Minister for Justice on the admission policies of the legal professions.

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority was established on 1 October 2016 to regulate the provision of legal services by legal practitioners and to ensure the maintenance and improvement of standards in the delivery of such services.

Under section 33(1) of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (the Act), the LSRA is required to prepare and submit to the Minister for Justice an annual report on the admission policies of the legal professions. For the purposes of preparing this report, the LSRA is required under section 33(2) of the Act to conduct a consultation with professional bodies and such persons as it considers appropriate. Section 33 of the Act was commenced in 11 October 2019 and this is the Authority's fifth annual report.

The LSRA's report will contain the following elements:

- (a) the number of persons admitted to practise as solicitors during 2023;
- (b) the number of persons admitted to practise as barristers during 2023;
- (c) an assessment as to whether or not, having regard to the demand for the services of practising barristers and solicitors and the need to ensure an adequate standard of education and training for persons admitted to practise, the number of persons admitted to practise as barristers and solicitors in 2023 is consistent with the public interest in ensuring the availability of such services at a reasonable cost.

The LSRA is interested to hear from those who are directly involved in the provision of legal services as well as from employers, state agencies, non-governmental bodies and other organisations and individuals who deliver and use legal services.

The LSRA is interested in views on whether there are any potential developments which are external to the legal sector (e.g. economic, social or technological) which might impact on admissions to the legal professions and the availability of the services of solicitors and barristers at a reasonable cost.

Following the consultation and other evidence gathering activities, the LSRA will draw up a report to the Minister of Justice. The final report will be submitted to the Minister by 30 April 2024.

Scope of Section 33 Consultation

The Authority invites written submissions in respect of the admission policies of the legal professions to include the following issues:

1. The **level of demand** for the services of practising barristers and solicitors in 2023.
2. The **costs of legal services** in 2023 and whether these were available at a reasonable cost to consumers.
3. The **standard of education** and training for persons admitted to practise.
4. The extent to which the admission policies of the legal professions are **consistent with the public interest** in ensuring the **availability of legal services at a reasonable cost**, taking into account the demand for services and the need to ensure adequate education and training standards for persons admitted to practise.

The above list of issues is not closed. Respondents may wish to comment on any other issues which have a bearing on the admissions policies of the legal professions and the assessment to be conducted under section 33(1)(c). Respondents may also wish to comment on any other issues in relation to the operation of the Act including the objectives of the Authority under section 13(4) of the Act, which are:

- a) protecting and promoting the public interest,
- b) supporting the proper and effective administration of justice,
- c) protecting and promoting the interests of consumers relating to the provision of legal services,
- d) promoting competition in the provision of legal services in the State,
- e) encouraging an independent, strong and effective legal profession, and
- f) promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles of independence and integrity, acting in the client's best interests, compliance with duties owed to the court and confidentiality.

It would be helpful for respondents to set out reasons for views expressed, and to provide any available evidence which may be deemed relevant.

Closing date and address for submissions

Interested parties wishing to contribute should send a written submission as soon as possible but in any event to be received no later than **Friday 9th February 2024**.

The Authority may contact respondents to explore any issues raised in responses in more depth and it will also be gathering evidence to use in its report from a variety of other sources.

Submissions may be sent to **Section 33 Consultation**:

- By e-mail to: publicconsultations@lsra.ie or
- By post to:
Section 33 Consultation
Legal Services Regulatory Authority
P.O. Box 12906
Dublin 7

Freedom of Information

Attention is drawn to the fact that information provided to the Authority may be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014. Therefore, should it be considered that any information provided is commercially sensitive, please identify same, and specify the reason for its sensitivity. The Authority will consult with interested parties making submissions regarding information identified by them as sensitive before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request. Any personal information, which you volunteer to the Authority, will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality and in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, 1998 and 2003 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) when commenced.

Publication of Submissions

The Authority intends where appropriate to publish any submissions received by it on its website and otherwise. Please note that a decision on any such publication may occur without prior consultation with respondents to this consultation notice. It is in the interest of respondents to highlight, in their submissions, any commercially sensitive or confidential information, which they would not wish to be disclosed.

Legal Services Regulatory Authority
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