



An tÚdarás Rialála
Seirbhísí Dlí
Legal Services
Regulatory Authority

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 = 2028



Independence

Innovation

Consumer Protection

Transparency &
Accountability



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FOREWORD BY AUTHORITY CHAIR

I am delighted to present the Legal Services Regulatory Authority's fourth Strategic Plan, which runs from September 2025 to September 2028.

In October 2026, we will mark ten years since the establishment of the Authority. In that time, we have gone from a start-up organisation to a fully-fledged regulatory body. The Authority is now on a firmer financial footing, and our statutory functions, including our independent complaints handling system and the Roll of Practising Barristers, have been fully established for a number of years.

We have considered and introduced innovations into the field of legal services, including limited liability partnerships and legal partnerships as new business models. We have advanced our work on education and training, with our Section 16 Education and Training Committee in place and paving the way for the establishment of the statutory Legal Practitioners Education and Training Committee. We are working diligently, together with key stakeholders, to implement the recommendations of our *Breaking Down Barriers* report, which aims to address economic and other barriers facing many aspiring and early career solicitors and barristers.

Our vision is to ensure that legal services are trusted and accessible to all, and our three strategic priorities set out how we intend to work towards that vision. If we have excellent standards in legal services on the one hand, delivered by legal practitioners who operate to the highest standards, and empowered consumers on the other, who understand what to expect from those legal services, and have recourse to an effective and independent complaints system if needed, then we will succeed in protecting and promoting the public interest and the effective administration of justice. This must, of course, be underpinned by effective operations within our organisation, ensuring that we have a right touch regulatory model.

Throughout the strategic planning process, we have consulted extensively with our staff and external stakeholders, through surveys, interviews and workshops. We would like to thank all those who engaged, helping us to reflect on our operations, giving us new perspectives and helping us to consider our next steps. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff, who work incredibly hard – the LSRA is lucky to have such dedicated staff and engaged and supportive stakeholders.

Our outgoing Chief Executive, Dr Brian Doherty, has also been key in helping us develop this Strategic Plan. Since September 2017, he has worked tirelessly to create a strong and independent Authority, and his commitment and drive have been greatly appreciated. The Authority wish him every success in his new role. I look forward to working with his successor, my colleagues on the Authority, and all the staff as we deliver the goals set out in this Strategic Plan.

Tom Boland,
Chair of the Authority

Our vision is to ensure that legal services are trusted and accessible to all, and our three strategic priorities set out how we intend to work towards that vision.



INTRODUCTION

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority is the independent regulator for legal services provided by barristers and solicitors (legal practitioners). It was established by the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015, and has the following statutory objectives to:

- protect and promote the public interest
- support the proper and effective administration of justice
- protect and promote the interests of consumers relating to the provision of legal services
- promote competition in the provision of legal services in the State
- encourage an independent, strong and effective legal profession and
- promote and maintain adherence to the professional principles of legal practitioners as specified in the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015.

In this Strategic Plan, we outline our **vision, mission and values**. We identify **three strategic priorities**:

- Excellent standards in legal services;
- Empowered consumers; and
- Effective operations.

We also outline the actions we will take under each priority and how we will measure success.

Finally, we discuss **our commitment to human rights and equality**, and to enhancing **our workplace culture**.

In this Strategic Plan, we outline our vision, mission and values.

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES



Our Vision

Legal services that are trusted and accessible and delivered by legal practitioners who meet the highest standards of professionalism and integrity.



Our Mission

To regulate the provision of legal services by legal practitioners, and to maintain and improve standards in the provision of legal services in Ireland.

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES



Our Values

These are the values that guide how we work and engage with all our stakeholders:

INDEPENDENCE

Our independence is key to maintaining the trust of the public and the legal professions alike. The Authority will maintain its independence and impartiality in its complaints investigation and resolution, its research and reporting and its recommendations for reform

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumer protection is at the heart of everything that we do. We will inform and empower consumers to understand what to expect from legal services, and to have recourse to an impartial, efficient, accessible, timely and transparent complaints process if needed. We will promote competition in legal services which enhances consumer choice.

INNOVATION

Innovation has the potential to both drive forward how the LSRA regulates and to improve standards and encourage competition in the legal services market. We will embrace and encourage new ways of working, both in our internal practices and our proposed reforms. We will be guided by the public interest in pursuing innovation in both how we work and how legal services are provided, on the basis of evidence, research and consultation with key stakeholders.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We are committed to transparency and clarity in all our operations and decision-making. We will report promptly and communicate clearly and in a manner that is accessible to all. We will explain our processes and our decisions, reflect on our performance and impact as a regulator, and be accountable for our actions.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Excellent standards in legal services delivery, effective or right-touch regulation, and empowered consumers of legal services, go hand-in-hand to support the effective administration of justice and promote the public interest.

We will underpin these priorities by ensuring that our own operations in the exercise of our regulatory functions are effective and efficient.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE

EXCELLENT STANDARDS IN LEGAL SERVICES

We will ensure that the legal professions meet the needs of the population and are held to the highest professional standards in the delivery of legal services.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO

EMPOWERED CONSUMERS

We will increase awareness among consumers about legal services and what they should expect, and ensure that they have recourse to an impartial, timely and effective complaints system if needed.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE

EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS

We will strive for excellence in our core operation and services, and continue to develop a right-size regulatory model.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE:

EXCELLENT STANDARDS IN LEGAL SERVICES



We will ensure that the legal professions meet the needs of the population and are held to the highest professional standards in the delivery of legal services.

What we will do:

1. Continue our work on education and training reform, including the development of competency frameworks for solicitors and barristers, and the establishment of a statutory Legal Practitioners Education and Training Committee (LPET).
2. Take measures to address economic and other barriers facing many aspiring and early career solicitors and barristers, with a view to promoting a strong and diverse profession, including through our *Breaking Down Barriers* Implementation Working Group.
3. Apply our insights on emerging themes and issues in complaints handling data to identify areas where professional standards need to be improved and issues where consumers need to be better informed, using this analysis to inform the appropriate method of regulatory intervention.
4. Continue to engage with legal practitioners, professional bodies and other stakeholders through consultations and outreach events.
5. Ensure that legal practitioners engage fully and promptly with our regulatory functions through the provision of detailed and timely information on the regulatory processes and through proper exercise of our statutory powers. We will have regard for the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer¹ in our engagement with legal practitioners across all our functions.
6. Continue to monitor and enhance competition in the legal professions, including the continued provision of information relating to new models of legal services delivery, monitoring and assessing the uptake of legal partnerships and other models, and revisiting the introduction of Multi-Disciplinary Practices.

Indicators of success:

- Complete the work of the LSRA's Section 16 Education and Training Committee and deliver the framework for the establishment of the statutory Legal Practitioners Education and Training Committee.
- Successful implementation of the 32 *Breaking Down Barriers* recommendations, including through the multi-stakeholder Implementation Working Group.
- Improved engagement and response times from legal practitioners in engaging with our regulatory functions.

¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/porta/-/council-of-europe-adopts-international-convention-on-protecting-lawyers>

STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO: EMPOWERED CONSUMERS

We will increase consumer awareness about legal services and what they should expect, and ensure that they have recourse to an impartial, timely and effective complaints system if needed.



What we will do:

7. Work with the professional bodies and other stakeholders to improve the information available to consumers on the provision of legal services (including the costs of such services) and the standards of legal services they should expect.
8. Seek to enhance understanding of the role of the LSRA by consumers, practitioners and the general public. We will also seek to ensure that the public have access to comprehensive and timely information about how we make decisions and how we are accountable for those decisions and the options open to them should they disagree with decisions being made.
9. Share information that may impact on consumers through structured engagement with the professional bodies and other stakeholders, including data and analysis from our complaints system, to address recurring issues and continually improve standards in the provision of legal services.
10. Streamline and continue to improve accessibility, fairness and timeliness in our complaints system, including through seeking statutory changes where required following a reflective and thorough review of the Act.
11. Seek structured feedback on a periodic basis from both complainants and legal practitioners, to continually improve the functioning of our complaints handling system.

Indicators of success:

- Greater public awareness and understanding of the LSRA and its role.
- Improved understanding of and satisfaction with the complaints system by complainants and legal practitioners.
- Quality complaint investigations conducted in a timely manner leading to effective and transparent outcomes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE:**EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS**

We will strive for excellence in our core operations and services, and continue to develop a right touch regulatory model.

**What we will do:**

12. Ensure that we are pursuing a regulatory model that is fit for purpose and proportionate to risk, including through exchange of best practice with other regulators.
13. Enhance the effectiveness of our complaints process at every stage including admissibility, determination of complaints and making directions where required, consideration and investigation by the Complaints and Review Committees and referrals to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal.
14. Deliver on our governance and sustainability obligations, in line with best practice for a state regulatory body.
15. Ensure that we have sufficient staffing, at the appropriate levels, including through continued workforce review, and embracing technological innovations for greater efficiency.
16. Improve staffing mobility, development and resilience, including through promoting training available and a business continuity review.
17. Continue to build a workplace culture where staff are valued, empowered and enabled to innovate, including through regular staff consultation and working groups.

Indicators of success:

- Reduced timelines and improved processes for complaints processing.
- Policies and procedures in place which integrate our governance and sustainability obligations.
- Maintenance of a positive, supportive and collegiate workplace culture.

IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

The implementation and delivery of the LSRA's three year strategic plan will be driven by the LSRA's CEO and the Senior Management Team and will be monitored by the Authority. The delivery of the plan will involve the entire LSRA.

STRATEGY

The LSRA Three Year Strategic Plan sets out our strategic priorities and how the organisation plans to deliver its strategic mission.

DELIVERY

The LSRA executive creates a business plan each year for the approval of the Authority which sets out in detail the priorities and actions for each year linked to the LSRA's strategic priorities.

MONITORING

The LSRA's CEO provides regular structured updates to the Authority on the progress towards the delivery of the annual business plan in line with the strategic priorities.

REPORTING

The LSRA publicly reports in its Annual Reports on its performance in delivering on the strategic priorities and on its delivery of its section 42 public sector duty commitments.

OUR COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

Public bodies such as the Authority must have regard for the need to:

- eliminate discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- and protect the human rights of staff and people to whom services are provided.

This is set out in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 and is known as the Public Sector Duty.

To put this into practice, public bodies must **assess** relevant human rights and equality issues; **address** these issues appropriately, and **report** on their progress.

Our last Strategic Plan set out a number of issues that we needed to improve on, and we have reported on progress on these in our Annual Reports. This was based on an assessment of our policies and procedures in the context of relevant domestic and human rights law.

In order to update our assessment, we:

- Surveyed our staff and external stakeholders on our public sector duty performance, and asked their views on what more we could do;
- Invited an IHREC representative to address an all-staff strategy day to enhance staff understanding of the *public sector duty* and what they can do;
- Further discussed with staff what more we could do to ensure inclusivity;
- Consulted with other public-facing public bodies, including the Ombudsman and the Citizens Information Board, on their implementation of the Public Sector Duty, and how it might inform our actions.

Drawing on the various stakeholder consultations, we have identified the following areas to address in the lifetime of the next Strategic Plan:

- We have already put in place a plain English guide for consumers on our complaints service and carried out an internal plain English review of our correspondence with complainants. Further improvements could include, for example, providing plain English explanations of common legal services and what to expect on our website.

- We will continue to progress our Breaking Down Barriers report recommendations, which aim to address economic and other barriers facing aspiring and early career solicitors and barristers. These measures aim to widen access to the legal profession, and increase its diversity.
- We will invite people from some of the nine protected groups² to speak to us about their experience of dealing with legal services providers in order to gain a better understanding of some of the barriers that might exist.
- We will provide continued training to our staff on how best to ensure equality and non-discrimination when handling complaints.
- We will signpost assistance for complainants with literacy or language difficulties, or with impairments which may affect their ability to access the complaints system.
- We will continue to expand our programme of events and stakeholder consultation, to ensure that consumers of legal services, legal practitioners and their representative bodies, and other stakeholders can share their views and inform our regulatory functions and statutory objective.
- We will report on progress in our Annual Report.

² The nine protected grounds for discrimination in Ireland are: Gender; Civil status; Family status; Sexual orientation; Religion; Age; Disability; Race; Membership of the Traveller community.



HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

Our plan was developed over a six-month period with the assistance of Hannah Grene and Eva Early of Barncat Consulting. We conducted an internal survey of all staff, followed by an all staff strategy workshop. An external survey garnered responses from 201 stakeholders, including barristers, solicitors, and respondents from public and statutory bodies.

This was supplemented by in-depth interviews with six key stakeholders, including the heads of the three professional bodies. We also considered the views of members of the public, using results from a representative sample survey conducted for us by Coyne Research in September 2023 to inform our plan.

Feedback from our complaints systems from both legal practitioners and complainants was also examined. We are very grateful to all those who took part in the process.



OUR STATUTORY OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

As the independent regulator responsible for the oversight of both branches of the legal profession, we operate to meet six key statutory objectives to:

- protect and promote the public interest
- support the proper and effective administration of justice
- protect and promote the interests of consumers relating to the provision of legal services
- promote competition in the provision of legal services in the State
- encourage an independent, strong and effective legal profession and
- promote and maintain adherence to the professional principles of legal practitioners as specified in the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015.

The Authority has eleven general functions under the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. These are to:

- 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.
- Keep under review and make recommendations to the Minister in respect of:
 - admission requirements of the Law Society, Bar Council, and Honorable Society of King's Inns;
 - availability and quality of education and training including ongoing training for the solicitors' and barristers' professions;
 - 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;
 - professional codes;
 - the organisation of the provision of legal services in the State.

- Disseminate information in respect of the education and accreditation requirements and any other matters referred to above as the LSRA thinks fit.
- Specify the nature and minimum levels of professional indemnity insurance in accordance with the Act.
- Establish and administer a system of inspection of legal practitioners for the purposes of the Act.
- Receive and investigate complaints against legal practitioners.
- Maintain the roll of practising barristers.
- Promote public awareness and disseminate information to the public in respect of legal services, including the cost of such services.
- 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.
- 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.
- Perform any other functions conferred by the Act or by regulations made under it.



An tÚdarás Rialála
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