An tÚdarás Rialála Seirbhísí Dlí

Legal Services Regulatory Authority

MINUTES FINAL

49th Meeting of Legal Services Regulatory Authority – Minutes (FINAL)

Date: 26 March 2026
Time: 16:30 to 18:30
Location: Ormond Meeting Rooms

Attendees:

Authority Members	Executive & Secretariat	Others
Tom Boland (Chair)	Niamh Muldoon (CEO)	David Coombes (Accountant – for Item 4.2 only)
Éilis Barry	Tony Watson (Interim CEO - outgoing)	
Shane Galligan*	Ultan Ryan (Secretary)	
Paul McGarry SC		
Simon Murphy		
Bríd O'Donovan		
Paul O'Donovan*		
Simon Barry		
William Abrahamson SC		
Michele O'Boyle SC *		
Emily Sherlock		

*Attended remotely

Apologies: N/A

Section 1 – Administration

1.0 General

1.1 Agenda adopted.

1.2 Declaration of Interests on agenda items. None raised.

1.3 Minutes of Authority meeting of 12 February 2026 and matters arising approved, subject to amendments regarding actions agreed at the meeting.

Section 2 – Governance

2.0 CEO Report (including update on Risk Register)

The CEO report was taken as read with the following items discussed at the meeting:

2.1.1 <u>Stakeholder Engagement – Anti-Money Laundering:</u>

The CEO report referred to the Interim CEO attending meetings in relation to the Anti-Money Laundering Authority with the Law Society and meeting chaired by the Central Bank. The Authority discussed the matter of funding for the operation of an AML function should the LSRA be in a position to take on a role in this area. The Authority was informed of the position taken by the LSRA in its engagement with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration (DJHAM) to date which was to set out the absence of expertise, resources and clarification on funding for this function. The question was discussed as to what other body would take on the role in respect of the legal sector if the LSRA did not. The executive to engage further on the matter with the Department and other stakeholders and report at the next meeting with any updates.

2.1.2 <u>Section 16 – Education & Training Committee:</u>

The Authority discussed the work of the Section 16 Education & Training Committee. The CEO (NM) informed the Authority of progress with the project for the development of the National Competency Framework (NCF) for legal education and training. This work is being undertaken through Forvis Mazars. The CEO informed the Authority that the project team will look at ‘day-one competencies’ for qualified legal professionals. The Authority clarified that any proposed NCF or other recommendations arising from the Section 16 Committee would ultimately require the consideration and approval of the Authority.

2.1.3 <u>Conveyancing and Probate:</u>

The Interim CEO (TW) updated the Authority on actions arising from the Housing for All Committee, stating that a draft solicitors advisory code on conveyancing was an action for the LSRA. The CEO (NM) informed the Authority that she would revisit the matter to clarify what was required for the code and to progress it accordingly. The Authority will be updated on this at the next meeting.

3.0 FAR Committee Chairperson's Report to the Authority

The Committee Chairperson provided an update in relation to the FAR Committee. The Authority was updated on the financial position of the LSRA, including that the end of year Financial Statements showed a deficit of €72.5k. The Authority was informed that the deficit arose primarily due to a significant spend required for legal services associated with the Complaints and Resolutions process. The Authority noted that the Risk Register had funding at Risk 1 and that this remained an ongoing risk for the LSRA. The Authority was informed through the report that the financial position at end 2025 alongside the budgetary projections for 2026 would give rise to an increase in the levy in 2026.

Section 3 – Finance

4.0 Financial Reports:

4.1 Management Accounts for period ended 31 December 2025

The Authority noted the Management Accounts to end December 2025, in particular in respect of the overspend on the legal services budget for the year

4.2 Draft Financial Statements 2025

The Draft Financial Statements were presented to the Authority by David Coombes (LSRA Accountant from Crowleys DFK). The Authority noted the significant overspend on legal services set out on page 12 of the Financial Statements. The Authority discussed the drivers behind this overspend and the options for the recruitment of more in-house legal employees to reduce the reliance on contractor expenditure over time.

The Authority instructed the Executive to ensure that 'promoting competition in the provision of legal services in the State' was included in the Financial Statements prior to submission.

The Authority noted accruals of €1.3m, primarily relating to staffing and also the outstanding €2.7m relating to advances received from the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration under section 32 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 in previous years.

The Authority discussed the recovery of costs on judgements and the restrictions in the legislation in respect of what the LSRA could recover on costs and on penalties.

In the light of the unanticipated overspends, particularly in respect of the LSRA's legal costs and in respect of the growing complexity of the LSRA's functions, the Authority proposed that the Executive look to recruiting a dedicated Finance Officer to better monitor and report on spend and projected spend.

The Authority noted that the procurement issues identified in the Financial Statements have now been resolved.

The Authority approved the submission of the Draft Financial Statements 2025 subject to amendments raised at the meeting.

4.3 Draft LSRA Budget 2026:

The Authority noted the draft budget. The Executive informed the Authority that this budget will need to be revised in light of the actual end year outturn for 2025 and the work programme for 2026. The CEO and the Authority discussed the financial position and the budgetary requirements for 2026. The Authority noted the impact that this would have on the levy for 2026 but noted that the Executive must determine its work programme, reflect the 2025 outturn and allow for anticipated expenditure needs in 2026 in calculating the budget and consequently, the levy amounts.

The CEO (NM) explained that the Executive would continue to engage collaboratively with the representative bodies and the Department in respect of the Levy for 2026 and the budget and finance positions facing the LSRA over the next few years. The Authority asked the Executive to look at how the LSRA works and how it could work as efficiently as possible to reduce costs.

The Executive committed to completing a line-by-line analysis of the budget for 2026 and to align this with the Strategic Plan 2025-2028 and the Business Plan for 2026 to produce a thorough and realistic budget for the year and to look towards 2027 budget estimates also. This analysis to include engagement with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration on elements of the programme of work which relate to public interest activities directed through the Department and how these should be funded.

Section 4 – LSRA Policy and Implementation

5.0 LSRA Policy and Implementation:

5.1 Update on the Performance of the Complaints and Resolutions Department

The Authority noted the report and statistics on the performance of the Complaints and Resolutions Department. The Authority noted in particular the fact that 32% of complaints have been in the process for over one year.

5.2 Update on the Operation of the LPDT

The Authority noted the volume of applications to the Tribunal increasing in 2025 and into 2026.

6.0 Update on Section 33 Report on the Admission Policies of the Legal Professions for 2025

The Authority discussed the update on the drafting of the Section 33 Pathways to the Professions 2025 report. The Authority discussed the importance of the third element of the reporting requirement under section 33, relating to assessment 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 Executive to look at a focus on this element in its work programme. This element was also discussed in the context of the next item.

7.0 Update on the Barriers Report and the Section 16 Education and Training Committee

The Authority noted that the S16 Committee is to report its findings and recommendations to the Authority for approval. The CEO (NM) updated the Authority on progress with the Barriers Implementation Plan and the work programme of the Section 16 Committee. The CEO explained that primary activity for the Section 16 Committee relates to the development of a National Competency Framework for legal education and training. The CEO also informed the Authority that there was cross over between a number of actions on the Barriers Implementation Plan and the scope of the Section 16 Committee's programme. The CEO also informed the Authority that where the LPET Committee would sit in respect of the LSRA and the Authority also requires consideration and this will be reviewed as part of the Section 16 programme. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

8.0 Closed Session of the Authority. The Secretary and others left the meeting at this point.

9.0 AOB. The CEO informed the Authority that the Duly Authorised Register for the LSRA was still in review and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Action Points – Meeting of 26 March 2026	
Agenda Item	**Action**
1.3	Minutes: • Minutes of 12 February 2025 to be updated and published in respect of attendance and inclusion of agreed actions.
2.0	CEO Report • CEO to update the Authority in respect of Anti-Money Laundering position at the next meeting; • Authority to be update on the Section 16 Committee work programme at next meeting, in particular in relation to the National Competency Framework (NCF) for legal education and training. • CEO to update the Authority in respect of an advisory code on conveyancing at the next meeting.
4.2	• Financial Statements Draft Financial Statements 2025 approved for submission to the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration (DJHAM) and the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General (OCAG) subject to minor amendments. • Staffing Executive to look at recruitment of a Finance Officer for the LSRA to monitor, control and report on expenditure and budgets.
4.3	• LSRA Budget 2026 The Executive to review and revise the Draft 2026 Budget and submit to FAR Committee and Authority at their next meetings for approval.
6.0	• Update on Section 33 Report Executive to look in future at focussing on element 3 Section 33 relating to assessment 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.
7.0	• Update on the Barriers Report and the Section 16 Education and Training Committee Executive to keep the Authority up to date on the work of the Section 16 Committee and the National Competency Framework for Legal education & Training.
9.0	• Duly Authorised Register Executive to update the Authority on this at the next meeting.

FINAL Minutes Signed

11 June 2026

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Ultan Ryan, Secretary   Date

11 June 2026

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Tom Boland, Chairperson   Date