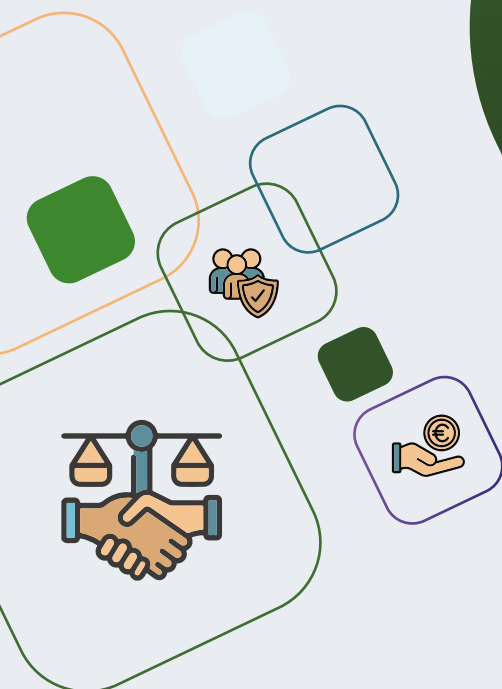
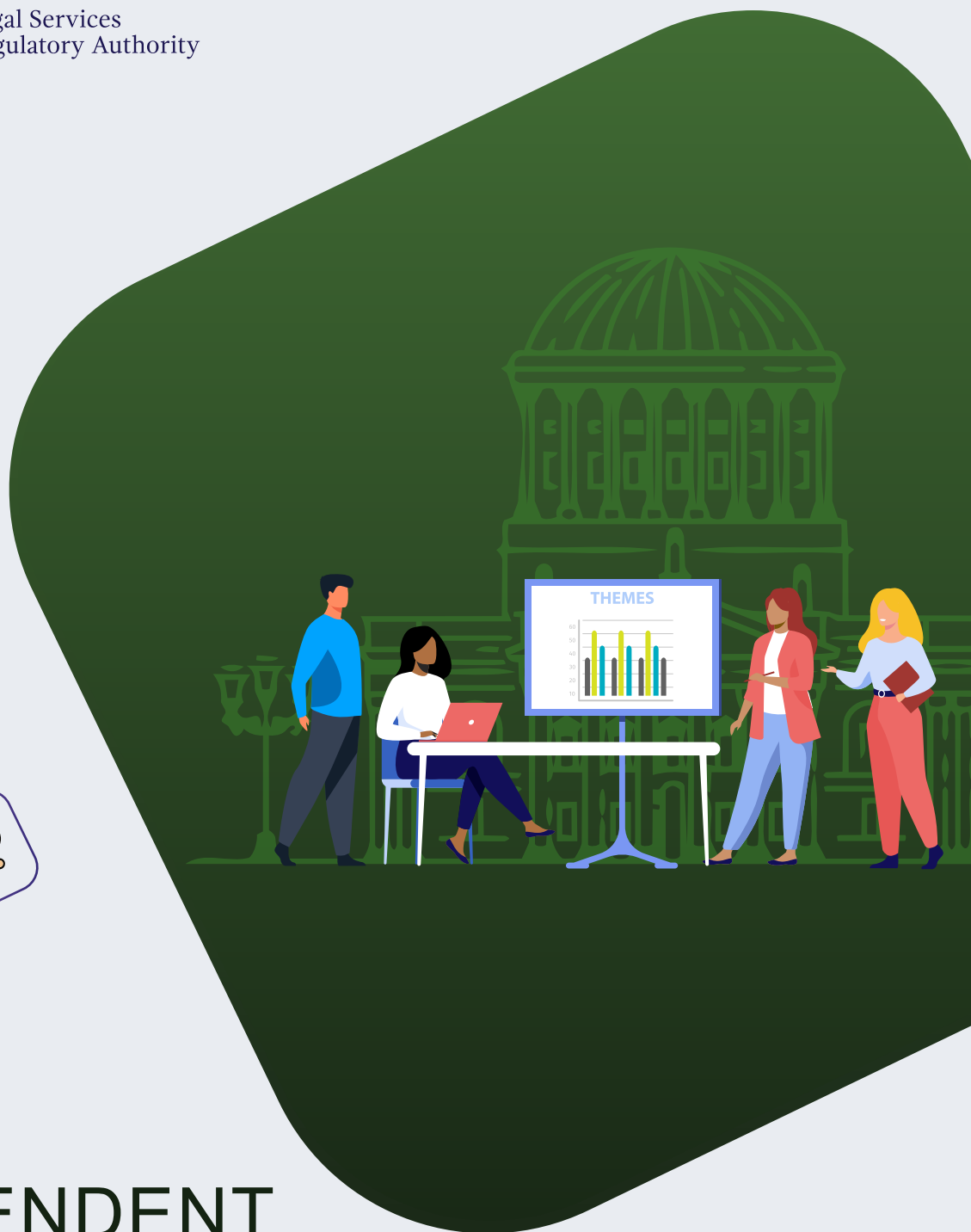




An tÚdarás Rialála
Seirbhísí Dlí

Legal Services
Regulatory Authority



INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS HANDLING 2026

Complaints about solicitors and barristers
Focus on Litigation Costs, Fees and Settlements

Report 2 – 2026 | From 7 March 2026 to 4 September 2026



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Glossary

Grounds of complaint under the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015

Inadequate legal services

A complaint that the legal services provided did not meet the standard reasonably expected of a legal practitioner.

Excessive costs

A complaint that the costs sought for legal services are excessive, having regard to the nature and complexity of the work involved.

Misconduct

A complaint that an act or omission by a legal practitioner amounts to misconduct under the Act. Misconduct includes matters such as fraud or dishonesty, conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, or serious failures in professional standards as defined in legislation.

Complaints process

Mixed complaint

A complaint that includes more than one of the three statutory grounds above.

Admissible complaint

A complaint that, when assessed against statutory criteria, is something we can progress (i.e. we can investigate and/or determine).

Inadmissible complaint

A complaint that, when assessed against statutory criteria, is something we cannot progress (i.e. we cannot investigate and/or determine).

Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT)

An independent statutory body that hears certain misconduct complaints referred to it and has the power to impose sanctions.

Litigation costs, fees and settlements explained

Litigation

A formal process for resolving a legal dispute through the courts.

See page 23 for additional explanations of terms on this theme.

Foreword by the Chief Executive Officer



Welcome to the fourteenth bi-annual report on the Legal Services Regulatory Authority's (LSRA) operation of our independent complaints handling function, covering the period 7 March 2026 to 4 September 2026.

The services of the Complaints, Investigations and Resolutions Department have once again been in demand during this reporting period, closing 1,021 complaints, with 260 of these complaints being resolved informally between the parties with the

assistance of the LSRA. Although not recorded in this report, it is significant to highlight that during this reporting period, the LSRA categorised its 10,000th complaint since we began receiving and investigating complaints in 2019. This means that 10,000 complaints have been received in writing and, accordingly, our team has investigated and categorised this number of complaints. This milestone showcases the substantial amount of work carried out by the LSRA and underlines the importance of a complaints system that is both efficient and accessible.

An added focus in this report is the thematic analysis on complaints relating to litigation costs, fees and settlements. While taking an in-depth look at the complaints received in this specific area of legal services, we can highlight common issues arising in complaints and provide guidance to both legal practitioners and consumers on best practice.

FOREWORD

Most people will engage a legal practitioner at some significant point in their life, maybe while buying their home, following the loss of a loved one, through their employment or during a challenging period. Fees and costs need to be transparent and expectations realistic.

Consumers needing to engage the services of a legal practitioner should expect that their solicitor will be upfront regarding legal costs from the very outset. Additionally, their solicitor should clearly explain the expected fees and any reason why the fees might change throughout their time working with them. The bill at the end may be costly, but there should be no hidden surprises. In this report we aim to provide a better understanding to consumers about what they should reasonably expect when engaging legal services through practical case studies based on real life situations.

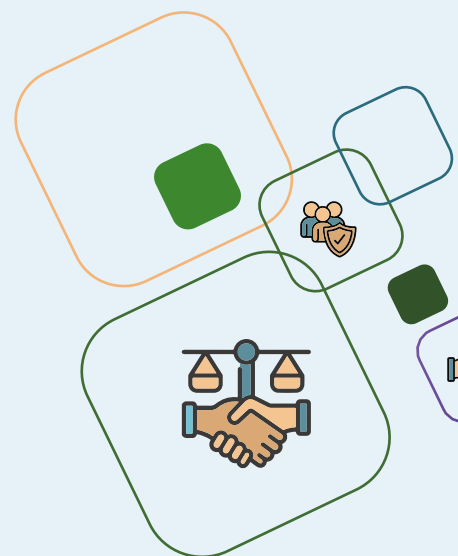
For legal practitioners, it is essential to continually ensure that as professionals you are delivering legal services to high standards. These reports provide real case studies, with a focused look at various cases in order to outline practical lessons which aim to support the delivery of services in line with best practice.

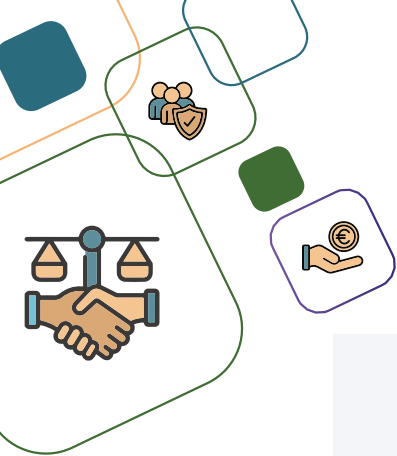
This report helps to provide transparency and clarity as to how, and why, misunderstandings give rise to complaints, in addition to supporting legal practitioners in reflecting on their practice and helping consumers to better understand what they can reasonably expect when engaging legal services in this area.

We hope that this report will offer both insights and analysis from our complaints files, supporting high standards and informed expectations by consumers and practitioners alike, in the public interest.

Niamh Muldoon

Chief Executive Officer





INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The LSRA began receiving and investigating complaints about solicitors and barristers on 7 October 2019. Since this time, the bi-annual complaints report provides a valuable overview of the number and nature of complaints received, the issues that commonly arise, and how these complaints are resolved.

Under section 73(1) of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015, the LSRA has a statutory obligation to report on the performance of its complaints handling at intervals of no greater than six months. This is the fourteenth such report and it includes the reporting period from 7 March 2026 to 4 September 2026.

This report focuses on complaints relating to litigation costs, fees and settlements. Over the reporting period of this report, 29.7% of inadequate services complaints and 31.5% of excessive costs complaints were related to litigation proceedings, and parties to complaints have noted the levels of stress experienced in cases relating to litigation, in particular. We acknowledge that litigation arises following a dispute or the breakdown of relations between parties, contractual or otherwise, and

will, by its very nature, be adversarial and stressful for the parties involved. It is not uncommon that long running and contentious litigation matters will result in high legal fees, due to the more complex and time sensitive nature of the area of legal work. The nature of this work can carry additional financial concern for clients and their families, particularly where the costs are not explained to or wholly understood or expected by the client.

While looking at the complaints received relating to litigation costs, fees and settlements, a number of recurring issues have been identified. In this report, we look at issues arising from failure by practitioners to provide clear explanations of legal costs and the issues related to the strict time limits for initiating legal cases.

Lessons learned and thematic analysis are provided to assist and inform, both legal practitioners and clients of legal services, with intended practical insights by explaining the courts system in Ireland and what should be considered if a settlement agreement is to be agreed.

INTRODUCTION

The report includes an overview of the LSRA's independent complaints handling process, statistical information on the number and nature of complaints received, determined and closed during the reporting period, and the outcomes of those complaints. It also includes anonymised case studies which illustrate how complaints are considered and resolved in practical terms.

Through this work, the LSRA strives to underpin high standards in legal services by ensuring that complaints are considered, investigated and resolved in a fair, impartial and objective way.

The LSRA's statutory objectives are to:

- » protect and promote the public interest
- » support the proper and effective administration of justice
- » protect and promote the interests of consumers in relation 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
- » promote and maintain adherence to the professional principles of legal practitioners



Independent Complaints Handling

The LSRA is responsible for handling complaints about solicitors and barristers in Ireland. This function is set out in Part 6 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (the Act).

Before the LSRA was established, complaints about solicitors and barristers were handled by their respective professional bodies.

What types of complaint can the LSRA deal with?

The LSRA can receive and investigate three types or grounds of complaint:

- » that the legal services provided were of an inadequate standard
- » that the amount of costs sought by a 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. It 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.

Who can make a complaint?

Who can make a complaint depends on the specific grounds of complaint.

- » Complaints about legal services of an inadequate standard or excessive costs can be made by either a client of a legal practitioner or someone acting on behalf of a client.
- » Complaints about alleged misconduct can be made by any person.

Complaints relating to legal services or costs must generally be made within three years of the legal services being provided or the bill of costs being issued, or within three years of the client becoming aware (or ought reasonably to have become aware) of the issue.

There is no statutory time limit for complaints relating to alleged misconduct.

How we record and classify complaints

Complaints received by the LSRA often involve more than one issue. For example, a complaint about inadequate services may also include concerns about costs.

Since 2023, the LSRA records complaints across all relevant grounds, rather than under a single primary ground. This means that a single complaint may be recorded as relating to one, two or all three statutory grounds, where appropriate. These are referred to as mixed complaints.

Complaints are also classified into a range of categories to support LSRA reporting and analysis. There are a total of 35 available categories. Services and costs complaints are recorded by area of law, such as litigation, conveyancing, probate and family law. Complaints alleging misconduct are recorded under categories that relate to the nature of the issue involved, such as, fraud or dishonesty or failure to hand over a file.

A complaint may be recorded under more than one category. This reflects the reality that complaints often involve multiple issues or areas of law.

These approaches provide a more accurate picture of the nature and complexity of complaints received, and support more detailed reporting on trends and themes.

How to make a complaint

Complaints must be made to the LSRA in writing and can be submitted by post or email. A complaint form is available for download from the LSRA website, along with information guides for both complainants and legal practitioners. Complainants are encouraged to use the complaint form, where possible.

How we can assist

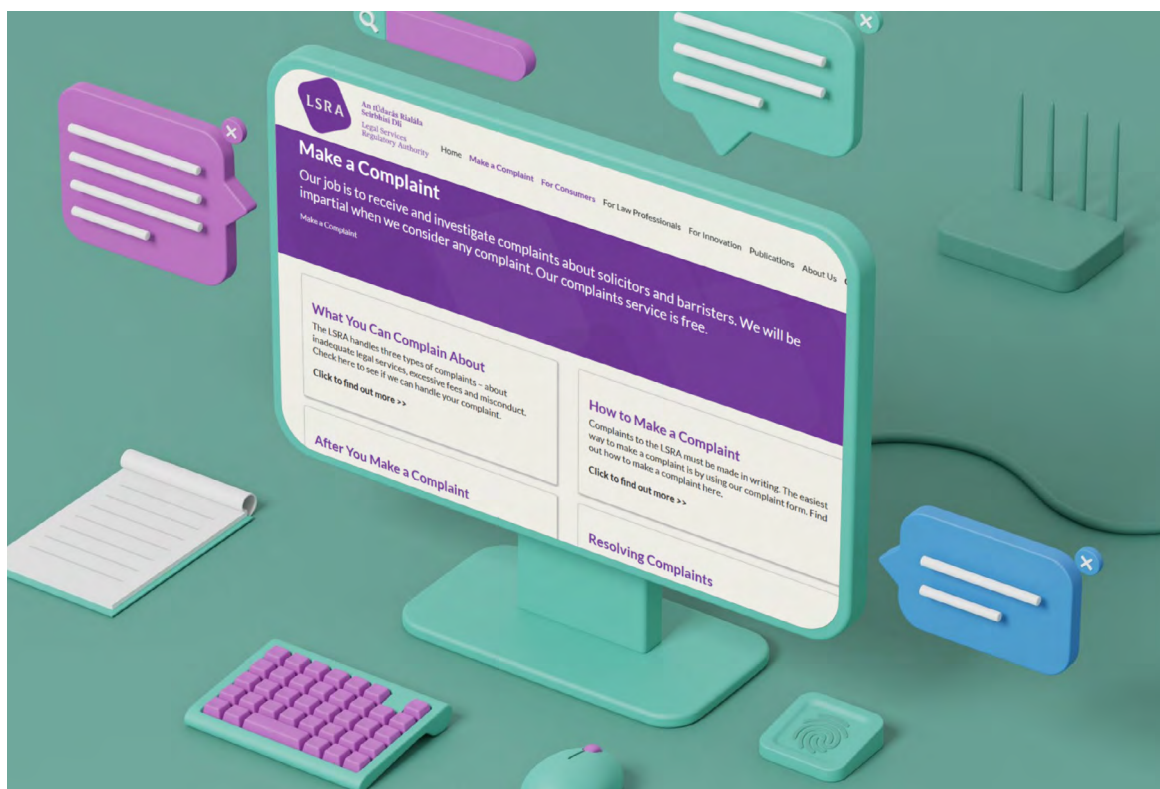
LSRA staff are available to answer questions about the complaints process and can be contacted by telephone during the hours listed on our website.

As an independent regulator, the LSRA cannot advise complainants about the nature and content of their complaint or whether a complaint should be made.

A consumer guide to the LSRA's complaints service is available in Citizens Information offices and libraries. Information leaflets and videos are also available on the LSRA's website and YouTube channel.

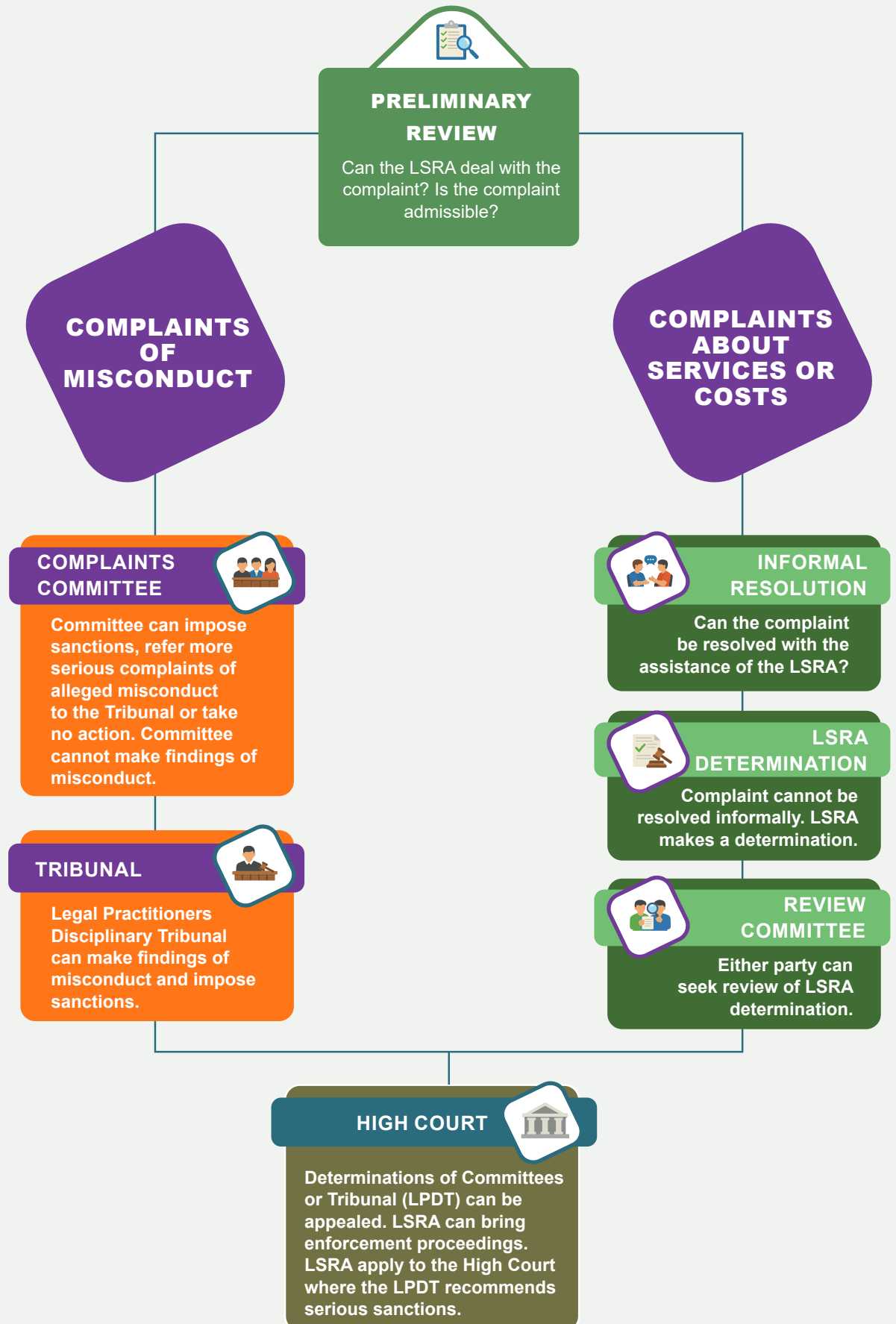
Anyone who needs assistance in making a complaint may wish to contact the Citizens Information Service, the Free Legal Advice Centres or the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities.

If you require particular assistance accessing our services, you can contact our Access Officer whose details are on our website.



Complaint Journey

COMPLAINT JOURNEY



The Complaints Process

The Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (the Act), together with supporting regulations, set out how complaints about legal practitioners must be handled. This includes specific steps and statutory deadlines that the LSRA must follow.

When a complaint or query is received, it is assigned a reference number and reviewed by our complaints team. At this early stage, staff assess whether the matter should be treated as a formal complaint or dealt with as a query. This helps to clarify the issues raised and ensure they are handled properly.

Preliminary review for admissible and inadmissible complaints

Once a query is classified as a complaint, the LSRA must conduct a preliminary review to determine whether it is admissible under the Act.

The legal practitioner is notified of the complaint in writing, provided with a copy of the complaint and invited to submit a written response.

Legal practitioners are encouraged to provide a full response to allegations made and to provide any relevant evidence that they may have at this stage. It is often necessary to seek further information from the complainant and/or from the legal practitioner in order to ensure that the LSRA has sufficient material upon which to base its decision on the admissibility of a complaint.

Informally resolving complaints

The LSRA encourages early resolution of complaints, where appropriate. Complaints may be informally resolved between parties at any stage, including before a decision has been made on admissibility.

Where a complaint is found to be admissible and relates to services or costs, the LSRA is required under the Act to invite the parties to consider resolving the matter. In some cases, these complaints may also involve issues which, if substantiated, could amount to misconduct.

Informal resolution is usually facilitated by one of the LSRA's trained mediators who speaks separately with each party to explore whether a mutually acceptable outcome can be reached. Depending on the circumstances, this may involve phone calls, joint discussions, face-to-face meetings or, in some cases, an external mediator.

The mediation process is separate to the investigation and determination of the complaint, which is paused to allow this process to take place.

In line with the Mediation Act 2017, LSRA staff involved in the informal resolution process are appropriately trained and affiliated with the Mediators' Institute of Ireland.

Determination of complaints about services and costs

If a complaint about inadequate legal services or excessive costs is not resolved informally, it is determined by the LSRA's Complaints, Investigations and Resolutions Department.

Where the LSRA determines that the legal services provided by a legal practitioner have been of an inadequate standard, the LSRA may direct the legal practitioner to:

- » rectify the issue at their own expense or at the expense of their firm
- » take specified action (up to a cost of €3,000)
- » transfer any documents relating to the issue to another legal practitioner nominated by the client
- » pay compensation to the client (up to €3,000) for any financial or other loss suffered by the client

Where the LSRA determines that the amount of costs sought by a legal practitioner was excessive, the LSRA may direct the legal practitioner to:

- » refund all or part of the amount already paid by the client to the legal practitioner
- » waive all or part of the amount billed

The LSRA may also determine that no action is required where the complaint is not upheld.

Review of determinations about services and costs

Both the complainant and the legal practitioner can request a review of an LSRA determination by the independent Review Committee.

The Review Committee is made up of three members: two lay persons and one legal practitioner. It considers all requests for review made to it and provides both the complainant and the legal practitioner with an opportunity to make a statement in writing as to why the determination of the LSRA was incorrect or unjust.

Following this consideration, the Review Committee may:

- » confirm the LSRA determination
- » refer the complaint back to the LSRA with directions for it to be dealt with again
- » issue its own directions to the legal practitioner as it considers appropriate, for example, to waive or refund fees, to rectify an error or to pay compensation

Determination of misconduct complaints

Complaints alleging misconduct are considered by the Complaints Committee (established by the LSRA in 2020) which is independent in its decision-making.

The Committee is made up of 27 members, including legal practitioners nominated by the Law Society of Ireland and The Bar of Ireland, together with lay members appointed following a competitive selection process.

The Complaints Committee sits to investigate complaints, as either a five- or three-person committee. Each Divisional Committee has a lay majority and a lay chairperson.

Divisional Committees sit on a rolling basis throughout the year, typically at intervals of six weeks. They may also sit on an ad hoc basis to consider individual complaints, where necessary.

As part of its investigation, the Complaints Committee may request the complainant or legal practitioner to provide information or documentation relating to the complaint. It may also require information to be verified by way of an affidavit, and may require either party to attend before it.

The Complaints Committee cannot itself make findings of misconduct. It can refer more serious matters on to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT) for a formal inquiry.

Where the Complaints Committee considers that the complaint does not warrant referral to the LPDT, but nonetheless warrants action, it may impose sanctions including the following directions to the legal practitioner to:

- » complete the legal service or arrange for the service to be completed by a legal practitioner nominated by the complainant at the expense of the legal practitioner
- » participate in a professional competence scheme
- » waive or refund fees
- » take other action in the interests of the client
- » comply with undertaking(s)
- » withdraw or amend an advertisement
- » pay compensation to the complainant (up to €5,000)
- » with the consent of the legal practitioner (failing which the matter will proceed to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal), impose a specified restriction or condition on the practising certificate or the practice of the legal practitioner

Where the Complaints Committee considers it to be reasonable and appropriate, it may also direct a legal practitioner to pay up to €5,000 towards the costs incurred by the LSRA in investigating the complaint.

Where the Complaints Committee determines that the legal practitioner has, in the course of its investigation,

“refused, neglected or otherwise failed, without reasonable cause, to respond appropriately”, the legal practitioner can be directed to make a further contribution to the LSRA’s costs of up to €2,500.

Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal

The Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT) is an independent statutory tribunal established under section 74 of the Act. It considers complaints of alleged misconduct referred to it by the LSRA or the Law Society of Ireland. It does not accept complaints directly from members of the public or any other party.

The LPDT has 33 members, including its chairperson. Its membership consists of 21 lay members, six solicitors and six barristers. It sits in divisions of at least three members, with a lay majority including a lay chair. Members are appointed by the President of the High Court.

LPDT inquiries are generally held in public, by way of an oral hearing. The LPDT has the same rights and powers as the High Court in respect of the production and discovery of documents and can subpoena witnesses to attend to give evidence, including under cross-examination.

The LPDT is the successor body to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal and the Barristers’ Professional Conduct Tribunal.

Where the LPDT makes a finding of misconduct, it can impose a wide range of sanctions. These include:

- » advising, admonishing or censuring the legal practitioner
- » directing the legal practitioner to participate in one or more professional competence schemes
- » directing the legal practitioner to waive or refund costs
- » directing the legal practitioner to complete certain legal services
- » imposing conditions on the legal practitioner’s practising certificate
- » imposing a range of monetary sanctions (which cannot exceed €15,000)
- » making a recommendation to the High Court that the legal practitioner be restricted in the type of work they can do
- » making a recommendation to the High Court that the legal practitioner be prohibited from practising without supervision
- » making a recommendation to the High Court that the practitioner be suspended from practice or struck off permanently from the Roll of Solicitors

Where the LPDT makes a finding of misconduct against a legal practitioner, the LSRA is required (subject to any appeal of the decision) to publish details of the determination. This includes the name of the legal practitioner, the nature of the misconduct and any sanction imposed. Since 2024, the LSRA has been responsible for the publication of LPDT determinations. For complaints about solicitors, the LSRA publishes LPDT findings in the Law Society Gazette.

Where, following a recommendation of the LPDT, the High Court makes an order striking the name of a solicitor off the Roll of Solicitors, or the name of a barrister off the Roll of Practising Barristers, or suspending either a solicitor or barrister from practice, the LSRA is required to publish a notice of the operative part of the order in *Iris Oifigiúil* and will also publish the details on the LSRA website.

Enforcement in the High Court

Where a legal practitioner fails to comply with a determination of the LSRA or the LPDT, the LSRA can apply to the High Court for an order directing compliance.

These enforcement applications under section 90 of the Act are made where any appeal period has expired and no evidence of compliance by a legal practitioner has been provided. In circumstances where the LSRA considers it necessary to apply to the President of the High Court for a section 90 order, the LSRA will also seek an order for the payment of the costs incurred in doing so.



Number and Nature of Complaints Received

During the reporting period from 7 March 2026 to 4 September 2026, the LSRA received a total of 1,358 phone calls and emails requesting information and/or complaint forms. In addition, 1,228 files were opened initially as queries. Following assessment, 914 of these were categorised as complaints.

This represents a decrease of 9% in the number of complaints received compared with the previous reporting period, when 1,000 complaints were received. A further two files were classified as relating to an alleged breach of the Advertising Regulations 2020.

Of the 914 complaints received, 875 related to solicitors and 39 to barristers, reflecting the higher number of solicitors and their greater level of contact with consumers. Multiple complaints may be brought against an individual legal practitioner.

As outlined earlier in this report, the LSRA records complaints as relating to one, two

or all three of the Act's statutory grounds, as appropriate. A total of 674 complaints (74%) involved a single ground, while 240 (26%) were mixed complaints involving more than one ground.

The largest category of complaints received related to alleged misconduct. In this reporting period, 447 complaints (49%) concerned misconduct only. Misconduct was also raised as a ground in a further 181 complaints.

A total of 214 complaints (23%) related solely to inadequate legal services, with this ground also present in a further 225 complaints. Complaints relating only to excessive costs were less common (13 complaints, or 1%), although excessive costs also featured in a further 115 complaints.

A further breakdown of these figures is provided in the *Statistical Breakdown of Complaints* section (see page 43) of this report.

Complaints Closed

Summary of complaints closed and outcomes

A total of 1,021 complaints were closed in this reporting period. Of these, 481 complaints (47%) were closed because they were deemed to be inadmissible following a statutory assessment.

A total of 260 complaints (25%) were resolved informally between the parties with the assistance of the LSRA. These included 13 complaints which were resolved and closed in the LSRA's informal resolution process with the help of its trained mediators.

Of the remainder:

- » 89 complaints were upheld.
- » 104 complaints were not upheld.
- » 34 complaints were withdrawn.
- » Nine complaints of alleged misconduct were referred to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal by the Complaints Committee.
- » 58 complaints were closed for other reasons including that the complaint was deferred.

In 48 of the 89 upheld complaints, the legal practitioner was directed to pay compensation to the complainant of up to €5,000. The total amount of compensation that legal practitioners were directed to pay to their clients was €68,700.

In addition, legal practitioners were directed to refund or waive a total of €34,713 in fees and pay €7,750 by way of contribution towards costs incurred by the LSRA in investigating complaints.

While 1,021 complaints were closed in the reporting period, the total number of outcomes recorded is 1,035. This is because a single complaint may involve more than one statutory ground and, therefore, more than one outcome.

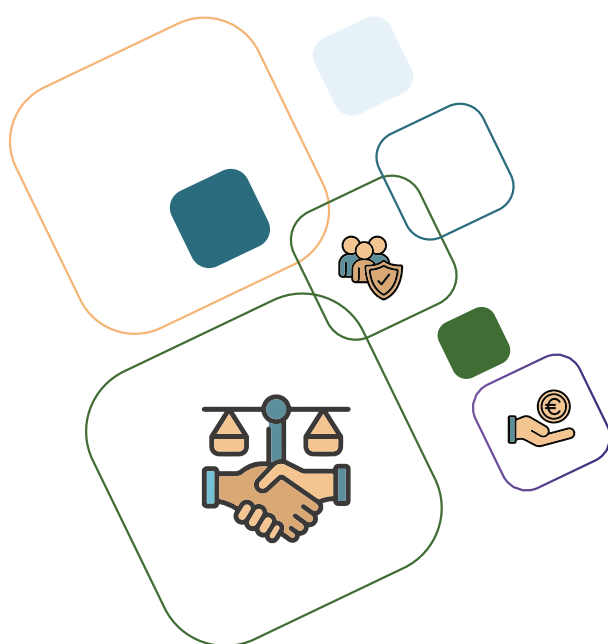
Full details of the outcomes of complaints closed in the reporting period are set out in the *Complaints Completion Statistics* section (see page 47) of this report.

Overview of Complaints Handling

This section provides an overview of progress at different stages of the complaints process during the reporting period. It summarises the outcomes of complaints at five stages in the process:

- » Informal resolution
- » LSRA determinations
- » Review Committee
- » Complaints Committee
- » Enforcement in the High Court

Some complaints remain ongoing, while others are closed and included in the statistics in the previous section regarding complaints closed.



Informal resolution

In a total of 114 complaints of inadequate legal services and excessive costs that were determined to be admissible, the parties were invited to make efforts to resolve matters through the LSRA's statutory informal resolution process. The outcomes were as follows:

- » In 26 complaints, there was no response to the invitation from either the complainant or the legal practitioner.
- » In 28 complaints, the legal practitioner did not take up the invitation to participate in the informal resolution process.
- » In 14 complaints, the complainant did not take up the invitation.
- » 13 complaints were resolved with the assistance of the LSRA's trained mediators.
- » In 33 complaints, both parties engaged in the informal resolution process, but it was not possible to resolve the complaint.

Complaints of inadequate legal services and excessive costs that are not resolved through informal resolution proceed to investigation and determination by the LSRA.

LSRA determinations

The LSRA's Complaints Resolution Officers (CROs) made determinations in 96 complaints in this reporting period. Of these, 51 complaints were upheld and 29 were not upheld. A further 16 complaints were resolved, withdrawn, or could not proceed at that stage.

Either party may seek a review of a CRO determination within 30 days of notification. Reviews are carried out by the Review Committee. Where no review is requested within this period, the LSRA's determination becomes binding on the parties.

For this reason, the *Complaints Completion Statistics* section of this report (see page 48) sets out the details of 83 LSRA determinations that can be reported on as the review period has expired. The remaining determinations will be included in the next report.

Review Committee

The Review Committee met five times in the reporting period and reviewed determinations made by LSRA CROs in 35 complaints. The Review Committee's determinations were as follows:

- » It confirmed the initial determinations in a total of 33 complaints. In three of these, the Review Committee increased the amount of compensation or refund to complainants.
- » It confirmed the determination in relation to inadequate services but did not confirm the determination in relation to excessive costs in one complaint.
- » It overturned the decision not to uphold one complaint.

The Review Committee outcomes are set out in the *Complaints Completion Statistics* section (see page 56) of this report.



Complaints Committee

The Complaints Committee met on 21 occasions in the reporting period. A total of 193 complaints were closed at Complaints Committee stage. The outcomes were as follows:

- » Nine complaints were referred to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal for further investigation.
- » 31 complaints were upheld.
- » 76 complaints were not upheld.
- » 23 complaints were resolved by the parties and nine were withdrawn or discontinued for a range of reasons whilst before the Committee.
- » A total of 45 complaints were closed prior to consideration by the Complaints Committee. Of these, 40 were resolved by the parties and five were withdrawn by the complainant or discontinued for a range of other reasons.

The Complaints Committee outcomes are set out in the *Complaints Completion Statistics* section (see page 61) of this report.

Enforcement in the High Court

During the reporting period, the LSRA issued instructions to external legal representatives to begin enforcement proceedings against legal practitioners under section 90 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. These High Court actions are for an order to direct a legal practitioner to comply with the LSRA's determinations and directions.

A total of 26 pre-action letters were issued to legal practitioners seeking their compliance with LSRA directions or determinations within a set period of time. A pre-action letter can result in compliance by the legal practitioner, in which case court proceedings are not necessary.

Also in this reporting period, the LSRA issued three section 90 enforcement proceedings. In total, the LSRA obtained five orders from the President of the High Court, some of which related to applications that had been issued in the previous reporting period. All orders provided for the payment of the LSRA's costs by the legal practitioner.

Themes Emerging from Complaints: Litigation Costs, Fees and Settlements

As part of our ongoing analysis of complaints, the LSRA examines trends in particular areas of law where consumers frequently engage legal practitioners to provide legal services. The purpose of this thematic focus is to help consumers understand the issues that can arise and to support legal practitioners in reviewing their practices in order to reduce the likelihood of complaints.

In this report, we have focused on complaints relating to legal fees and costs in the context of litigation and settlement agreements. This area of law can be complex and can give rise to disputes between legal practitioners and clients, especially where communication regarding the costs has not been clear from the outset.

This section explains the court structure in Ireland and what may be involved in litigation, along with some commonly used terms.

Litigation explained

Litigation is a formal process for resolving a legal dispute through the courts. The types of cases that may be litigated are civil matters and are wide-ranging. Common examples are family law proceedings, court applications in company and commercial disputes, defamation actions, landlord and tenant proceedings and personal injury claims.

Our court system

Our Constitution outlines the structure of the court system in Ireland. Within the Irish court system, the court in which a case is heard will depend on the remedy being sought and, where relevant, the amount of money in dispute.

The District Court

In civil matters the District Court can deal with claims up to €15,000, while in family law proceedings it can hear matters relating to maintenance, domestic violence and custody of and access to children.

The Circuit Court

In family law matters, a grant of divorce or judicial separation can be made in the Circuit Court, and in other civil law matters, cases involving amounts between €15,000 and €75,000 can be dealt with by the Circuit Court.

The High Court

In civil matters, claims above €75,000 are heard in the High Court and it has jurisdiction to hear all matters including appeals from the Circuit Court and judicial review cases.

The Court of Appeal

In civil matters and for matters of constitutional law, the Court of Appeal hears and determines appeals from the High Court.

The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the court of final appeal in civil and criminal matters. It hears appeals from decisions of the Court of Appeal or the High Court in exceptional circumstances relating to matters of general public importance or in the interests of justice.

Legal practitioner fees

Depending on the complexity and the jurisdiction of the case (whether the case is heard in the District Court, Circuit Court, High Court, Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court) legal practitioner fees will vary. Cases heard in the higher courts tend to be more complex and will require more legal work resulting in higher legal practitioner fees. In many cases, a barrister may also be engaged to provide specialist legal advice and representation.

A barrister may provide specialist legal services at different stages of a case. This can include a consultation to provide legal advice or an opinion on the strength and weaknesses of a case. A barrister may also draft court documents, such as pleadings and motions, and advise on the steps to be taken as a case progresses.

If a case proceeds to court, a barrister may also be engaged to represent the client. The cost of these additional services can further increase the overall legal costs of a case. For both solicitor and barrister professional fees, VAT will be charged on fees at the standard rate of 23%.

When a legal practitioner is engaged by a client and receives instructions, they must provide their client with a section 150 costs notice. This refers to section 150 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 which requires legal practitioners to provide their client, in writing, with detailed information regarding the basis on which fees are calculated. It should also detail the amount of legal costs that have been incurred up to the date of the notice, if applicable, and any fixed costs.

Other litigation costs

There are other costs associated with litigation, which are often referred to as “fixed costs” and “outlay”. They can include the professional fees for an expert witness, Court Services Stamp Duty or other additional expenses that may be paid to third parties as part of the case. The LSRA does not have jurisdiction to determine any other costs apart from legal practitioner’s professional fees.

How legal costs are paid

In litigation, unless the judge makes a direction otherwise, the general rule is that the losing side will pay the legal costs of the winning side. The rule is often cited as “costs follow the event”.

If a party is successful in a case, there is, therefore, often an order requiring the other party to pay some or all of their legal costs. These are known as “party and party costs”. These will include the work carried out by the solicitor to progress a case through the court process, and may include barrister’s fees, expert witness fees and other expenses incurred as part of the case.

“Solicitor and own client costs” are the full legal costs that arise between a solicitor and their own client. These may include advice, meetings and addressing matters raised by the client that go beyond the court process itself. These costs are paid directly by the client. Sometimes costs awarded or agreed in settlement do not cover all of the solicitor’s professional fees or the total costs of expert reports or other expenses. These costs may have to come out of the award or settlement amount.

Legal costs accountants

Often in complex cases, a solicitor may retain the services of a legal costs accountant sometimes referred to as a “costs drawer” to prepare the final bill of costs. A legal costs accountant or costs drawer is a specialist who prepares and reviews detailed bills of legal costs, including the fees and expenses arising from legal proceedings.

Generally, where costs are prepared by a legal costs accountant or cost drawer, the LSRA will not consider those costs to be excessive.

Common terms

Professional fees: The fees for all legal work carried out by a legal practitioner.

Brief fee: A fixed fee charged by a barrister which would include all advice prior to hearing, together with the cost of the first day of the court hearing. It will generally be calculated on the complexity of the case, the amount of preparation required and the experience and seniority of the barrister briefed. Where a case requires more than one day at hearing, a "refresher fee" may be charged by the barrister for each additional day in court.

Put in funds/Payment on account: A client pays a certain amount of money upfront to enable the case to proceed.

Outlay/Disbursements: These costs are other expenses that may arise in the course of a case, separate to the legal practitioners' fees. They can include costs that a legal practitioner pays to a third party on behalf of a client as part of the legal matter.

Costs follow the event: The losing side will pay the other side's reasonable legal costs.

Solicitor and own client costs: The costs that the client is liable to pay their solicitor under their own arrangement.

Party and party costs: Where an award of costs is made or where a settlement includes costs, the amount of costs that one party will be required to pay towards the costs of the other party. Party and party costs are limited to the reasonable costs incurred in the steps required in the litigation and may not cover all legal services provided by a solicitor to a client.

Settle on an "all-in basis": An "all-in" settlement is an agreed total amount of money that covers both the damages recovered, and also the party and party costs.

"No foal, no fee" arrangements: This means that the client does not have to pay money upfront and if they are not successful, the client does not pay the solicitor for the work that they have undertaken on the case. It does not mean that there will be no costs as clients may still be responsible for other expenses and may have to pay the legal costs and expenses for the other side, if they are not successful.

Issues identified from complaints

The importance of section 150 notices

If a complaint of excessive fees is made to the LSRA, the LSRA will take into account the section 150 notice as well as supporting documentation provided by the legal practitioner to the client outlining the work that they have undertaken. If a legal practitioner does not provide a client with a section 150 notice this can be deemed to be services of an inadequate standard and potentially misconduct.

The purpose of a section 150 notice is to make legal fees and costs more transparent for clients, so they have advance notice of what to expect, allowing them to plan and budget.

Example

The LSRA upheld a complaint made against a solicitor who represented a client in Circuit Court proceedings taken against a car dealership. The client made a complaint of inadequate services and excessive costs against the solicitor on the grounds that she was informed that the other side would discharge the fees.

The LSRA found that there was no evidence to support the client's allegation that she would not have to discharge fees, and so the allegation of excessive fees was not upheld. But the LSRA upheld the complaint of inadequate services on the grounds that the solicitor did not provide a section 150 notice. If the solicitor had provided this to the client at the start of the case, the client would have been aware how fees were to be calculated.

The section 150 notice should also include the costs of engaging a barrister, expert witnesses and the cost of any other service that is likely to be provided. The legal practitioner must have the approval of the client before engaging the services of a barrister or other experts.

If the legal practitioner becomes aware at any point throughout the case that the fees may be higher than originally indicated, the legal practitioner must send the client a new section 150 notice with a breakdown of the legal costs due up to that point and the new calculations for fees.

Example

The LSRA upheld a complaint against a solicitor who did not provide his client with a costs notice when he was engaged at first, nor did he provide her with an updated section 150 notice when the legal costs increased. The only indication that she had that her legal costs were increasing was when she received timesheets from her solicitor.

The LSRA deemed this to be an inadequate service as she should have received updated section 150 notices that kept her informed on how much she would be expected to pay.

In legal proceedings, legal practitioners are required to provide further information in the section 150 notice, outlining the work to be done at each stage of the process and the cost of this. They must also set out the legal and financial implications if the client is to withdraw from the litigation process.

Example

The LSRA upheld a complaint of excessive fees against a barrister who had represented a client in litigation proceedings. The legal costs set out in the initial section 150 notice were indicated to range between €2,000 and €3,000, exclusive of VAT. The legal practitioner issued an updated notice a month later that indicated that the legal costs would be higher than what was originally estimated.

The complaint was upheld because, at the time that the barrister issued the second section 150 notice, she had already undertaken the work, this meant that the client did not have the opportunity to decide if they wanted to proceed.

The section 150 notice must also explain to clients the circumstances in which they may have to pay the legal costs for the other side, and also the circumstances where they might not recover all of their own legal costs from the other side.

Consider your options and make an informed decision

After receiving a section 150 notice, a client has 10 working days “cooling off period”, during which they can consider the proposed fees. Different legal practitioners may charge different fees for the same services. There is nothing to prevent a client from engaging with another legal practitioner to consider their options, prior to either confirming instructions with the legal practitioner, or the lapse of the 10 working days.

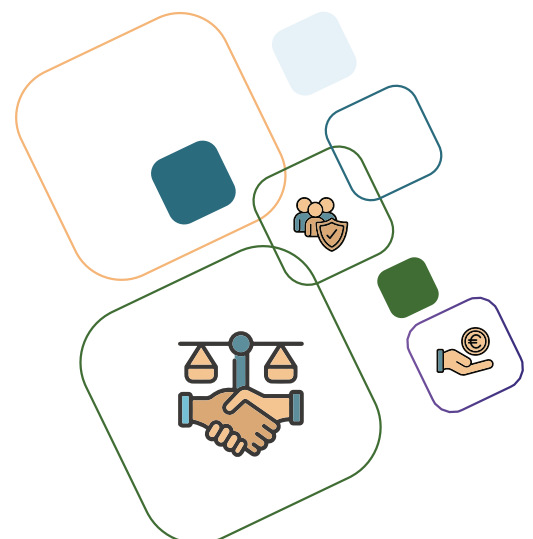
Comparing fees and services may provide an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how different legal practitioners operate. A legal practitioner’s approach to providing cost details in the section 150 notice and how they communicate around this, can indicate their approach to the services that they provide.

The LSRA would always recommend that clients, when deciding to engage a legal practitioner, make an informed decision and if there are any doubts or queries, to seek further information from the legal practitioner, and be satisfied with the answer provided.

Example

The LSRA upheld the complaint of excessive costs against a solicitor who charged his client €50 each for 26 emails, which amounted to €1,300. The solicitor had charged the client a fee for the preparation of the final account on top of fees for professional services. The final bill did not explain how the “preparation of the final account” was separate from the overall “fees for professional services.”

As the solicitor had not issued the client with a section 150 notice, the client did not have the information needed to fully understand how the costs would be calculated and the rates that she would be charged, to make an informed decision about proceeding.



“No foal, no fee” arrangements

Legal practitioners sometimes provide services on a “no foal, no fee” basis, otherwise known as “no win, no fee”. This means that the client does not have to pay money upfront and if they are not successful, the client does not pay the solicitor for the work that they have undertaken on the case.

However, importantly, “no fee” does not mean “no cost”. Clients may still be responsible for other expenses, such as expert fees, outlays, or the legal costs of the winning opponent if their case is lost, which may be a considerable amount.

It is important to note also that if a client decides to change solicitor mid-claim under a “no foal, no fee” arrangement, the original “no foal, no fee” agreement terminates and the client may be liable to pay the solicitor’s fees for work done to date. This is because a “no foal, no fee” arrangement is generally entered into on the basis that the legal practitioner will handle the case to conclusion.

If a legal practitioner is engaged on a “no foal, no fee” basis, a section 150 notice should still be issued to the client. At the conclusion of a case, there should be a written agreement between the legal practitioner and the client detailing the amount that will be deducted from any award that is made in their favour to cover legal costs and other expenses.

Example

The LSRA upheld a complaint of inadequate legal services against a solicitor who deducted €10,000 from a settlement award from his client. The solicitor advised the LSRA that he had taken the case on a “no foal, no fee” basis, however he had not provided his client with a costs notice and did not provide any documentation to support the claim that he had an agreement with the client that €10,000 would be deducted from the award to cover legal costs. The LSRA directed the solicitor to compensate the client €1,000 for any financial or other loss suffered.

Another important feature of a “no foal, no fee” arrangement is that legal practitioners are prohibited from calculating their fees as a percentage of the compensation or damages awarded to their clients, except in proceedings involving the recovery of a debt or a specific amount of money owed.

Where both senior and junior counsel are engaged in a case, junior counsel’s fees cannot be calculated as a percentage of senior counsel’s fees.

Settlement agreements

Often where litigation is involved, the parties in the case may reach a settlement agreement before the case is finalised. As part of the settlement, parties may agree how legal costs will be dealt with. For example, one party may agree to pay all or part of the other side's legal costs. Where the amount agreed does not cover the full legal cost, the client may be responsible for paying the difference.

Before signing a settlement agreement, clients should be provided with a bill of costs from their legal team, so they are aware of any difference between the amount being paid towards their legal costs and the amount they still have to pay. They should also be told how much of the settlement they will receive after any outstanding legal costs have been deducted. The client should be informed and should provide their written consent to the deduction. Legal practitioners cannot deduct money from a settlement without the client's written authority.

Example

The LSRA did not uphold a complaint of excessive fees against a solicitor involved in complex High Court proceedings that spanned eight years. The complainant agreed to a settlement on an "all-in basis", at a time when the case had been fully prepared and ready to proceed.

The solicitor's file indicated that they had provided the complainant with up-to-date costs notices, and that when the settlement was agreed the complainant was made aware of the amount that would be deducted and the remainder of the award that would be left to the complainant.

The LSRA found that the amount deducted was not excessive based on the work undertaken by the solicitor and senior counsel over the eight-year period.

Litigation can be an expensive and complex process

Due to the nature and complexity of litigation, quite often legal costs that appear to be high, are determined not to be excessive, on review, as the legal costs reflect the work undertaken by the legal practitioner. Sometimes, if there is a gap in correspondence with the client, it may be because the legal practitioner is awaiting an answer from a third party or is trying to minimise costs.

Example

The LSRA did not uphold a complaint of inadequate services against a solicitor who represented a client in divorce proceedings in a regional Circuit Court.

The complaint was based on the length of time to finalise the case, and the client also alleged that the solicitor was not responding to her phone calls. Upon review, the LSRA found that the legal practitioner had informed the client that divorce proceedings would take a number of months as the Circuit Court, where the case was being heard, only sat a few times a year. There was also delay caused by the other side not returning documentation in a timely manner, but this was not the fault of the legal practitioner. The LSRA found that, based on the documentation provided the legal practitioner was actively working to finalise the divorce. While the legal practitioner could have provided more updates to the client, overall the services were not of an inadequate standard.



Mediation

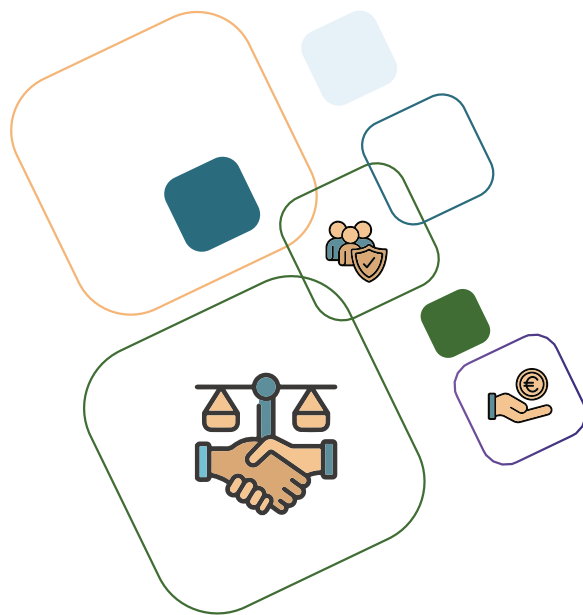
Solicitors have a mandatory obligation to advise clients, prior to starting any litigation proceeding, to consider mediation as a means to attempt to resolve the dispute. Solicitors are required to provide the client with information about mediation services, including the advantages and benefit of it, while recognising that mediation is voluntary and that it may not be a safe option if there is a risk to the client and/or their children.

Solicitors must provide a statutory declaration to show that they have fulfilled the mandatory obligations regarding mediation. The LSRA would consider the failure to advise clients of mediation as services of an inadequate standard.

Example

The LSRA upheld a complaint of inadequate services against a solicitor on the grounds that he had not fulfilled his mandatory obligations to advise his client on the merits of mediation.

The complaint arose from a complex litigation matter. In this case, mediation was not offered until a later stage, and only after substantial costs had been incurred by the complainant.



Good practice**Key messages for legal practitioners**

- » At the earliest opportunity, furnish your client with a section 150 costs notice.
- » Explain to your client that “no foal, no fee” does not mean they will have no liability for costs. They may be liable for some or all of their own costs if it is an all-in settlement or for the other side’s costs if an order in that regard was made against them.
- » Keep the client advised regarding costs. If it is likely the costs may increase for some reason, furnish your client with an updated costs notice.
- » The section 150 notice and any updates should include details of any fixed costs, outlays and disbursements.
- » Provide a full narrative of work done to the client which supports the fees you are seeking and will assist in addressing any complaint that may subsequently be made.
- » Before your client agrees a settlement, provide them with a bill of costs and advise them on the amount they will receive after costs have been paid.
- » Obtain your client's written authority to make any deductions from an award.
- » It may be helpful to obtain a cost drawer's opinion on fees, if there is a dispute.

Client expectations

- » After engaging a legal practitioner, at the earliest opportunity, ensure your solicitor has provided you with a section 150 costs notice.
- » The section 150 notice should include details of any third party or other expenses.
- » In “no foal, no fee” arrangements you should be made aware that you may be responsible for your own legal team’s costs if there is an “all-in” settlement or you may be responsible for the other side’s costs if the court makes that order.
- » You should receive regular notices from your legal practitioner regarding costs if they are subject to change.
- » If you agree a settlement with the other party to the case, your legal practitioner should provide you with a bill of costs so that you are aware of any amount that might be deducted from the settlement towards costs.
- » Once the case has concluded, you should receive a final bill of costs from your legal practitioner as soon as reasonably possible. The bill should detail the work done by the legal practitioner which supports the fee being sought. The solicitor should fully account for all amounts received and disbursed in the course of the file.

Litigation Costs, Fees and Settlements Case Studies

Case Study 1

Solicitor directed to refund €11,000 in fees to client and pay compensation

Type of complaint: Inadequate legal services and excessive costs

The complainant engaged a solicitor on his behalf to prevent the termination of his employment contract following an illness diagnosis. The solicitor estimated that the total fees for the case would be €37,000. The complainant paid the solicitor €11,000 upfront, on agreement that the fees would be repaid to the complainant if he was successful in his case. The case involved complex High Court proceedings and resulted in a mediated severance agreement, with a successful outcome for the complainant. The agreement reached between the complainant and his former employers included a significant contribution towards the complainant's legal costs.

The complainant received a bill of costs a year after the case had concluded. The bill contained two invoices which amounted to €49,000 and the complainant was informed that the €11,000, which he had paid upfront, would not be refunded.

The complainant made a complaint to the LSRA alleging inadequate legal services and excessive costs on the basis that he had not been provided with a section 150 notice setting out the basis for the legal fees, that throughout the process he had requested information regarding fees and costing structures, but this was not provided by his solicitor. He also alleged that the bill of costs contained inaccuracies and did not properly explain how the final fees had amounted to €49,000.

Outcome: Complaint upheld

The LSRA upheld the complaint of excessive costs because the bill of costs did not fully account for a difference between the estimated fees (€37,000) and the final bill of costs (€49,000). The LSRA also determined that the amount charged (€7,500 plus VAT) for a legal practitioner to attend a mediation hearing lasting one day was excessive. The LSRA directed the solicitor to refund the complainant €11,000 in respect of the money he had paid upfront.

The LSRA also upheld the complaint of inadequate services because the solicitor had not responded to phone calls and correspondence from the complainant and had not provided the complainant with a section 150 notice. Furthermore, the solicitor had not provided the complainant with updates regarding changing costs structures, and had not issued the bill of costs within a reasonable timeframe. The LSRA directed that the legal practitioner compensate the complainant an additional €1,500 for the inadequate legal services.

Lessons for the public:

Legal practitioners must provide clear and transparent notices outlining how you will be charged before they start to work for you. If it becomes clear that fees may differ from those initially advised, your legal practitioner must notify you of changes to those costs.

Lessons for practitioners:

Clients must always be fully aware of the costs they are to be charged. You should ensure that you obtain a signed section 150 notice which is fully compliant with the requirements of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 prior to commencing instructions.

Case Study 2

LSRA finding against Managing Partner leads to negotiated settlement with client

Type of complaint: Inadequate legal services

The complainant had brought a personal injuries case to the Injuries Resolution Board and had engaged legal representation from a solicitors' firm to assist with the claim.

The solicitors' firm lodged the claim with the Injuries Resolution Board but then did not respond to communications from the Injuries Resolution Board over an extended period. This resulted in the case falling outside of the two-year time limit for bringing personal injuries claim to the Injuries Resolution Board and the case was ultimately statute-barred.

The complaint of inadequate legal services was made against the Managing Partner of the firm, based on the inaction of the firm.

Outcome: Complaint upheld; later resolved between the parties and withdrawn

After attempts by the LSRA to resolve the complaint informally did not result in a resolution, the LSRA determined that the service provided to the complainant was of an inadequate standard. The LSRA directed the solicitors' firm to compensate the complainant the maximum amount of €3,000 under the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015.

Following the determination and direction by the LSRA, the complainant and the solicitors' firm engaged in further negotiations, outside the LSRA structures, and agreed a settlement figure. The complaint was closed by the LSRA on the basis that the complainant indicated she was satisfied to withdraw the complaint as it had been resolved.

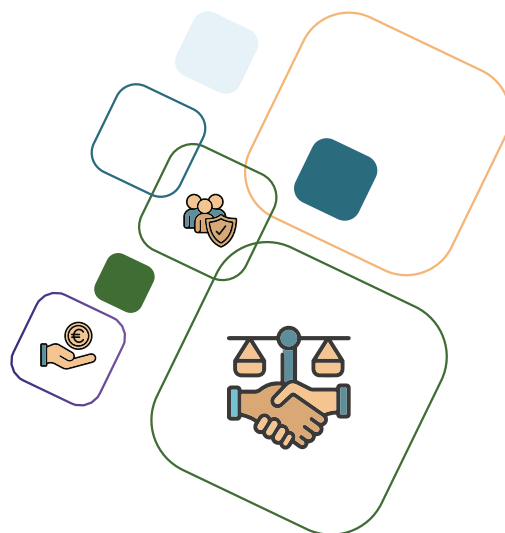
Lessons for the public:

When bringing a complaint to the LSRA, please be mindful of the maximum amounts that can be awarded under the law, which are set out in the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015, as this may guide you on what course of action is best for you. The maximum compensation which can be directed for a complaint of service of inadequate standard is €3,000, while the Complaints Committee can direct a maximum of €5,000 compensation. In addition, it must be noted that receiving compensation, which the LSRA has directed a legal practitioner to pay, does not affect other statutory rights available to the client. It may be advisable to take independent legal advice in specific cases.

Lessons for practitioners:

The legal practitioner's error in failing to respond to the email from the Injuries Resolution Board, was made worse by their insistence to their client that there had been no further contact from the Injuries Resolution Board, and that there was no further action they could take. This time delay, which ultimately led to the matter becoming time-barred, could have been avoided through proper due diligence.

The LSRA recommends and expects that legal practitioners do such due diligence in all cases to avoid the consequences which occurred in this case. Solicitors should always act in the best interests of the client.



Case Study 3

Complaint that a friend achieved a more favourable outcome in a similar case not sufficient grounds for complaint of inadequate service

Type of complaint: Excessive costs and inadequate legal services

The complainant alleged that he was misled about the solicitor's fees and that the solicitor failed to achieve the best possible outcome, noting that a friend who pursued a similar claim with a different solicitor received a higher settlement.

The evidence showed that the complainant had been provided with, and had signed, a section 150 notice outlining the basis of legal costs. It also confirmed that the complainant accepted the settlement offered by the opposing party.

Outcome: Complaint not upheld

The complaint was not upheld as there was no evidence to support the allegations of excessive costs or inadequate legal services. The legal practitioner provided a signed section 150 notice, demonstrating that the complainant had been informed of the basis on which fees would be charged.

In addition, the evidence confirmed that the complainant accepted the settlement offer. The fact that another claimant obtained a higher settlement in a separate case was not sufficient to establish that the service provided was inadequate, as each claim must be assessed on its own facts and merits.

Lessons for the public:

When you receive the section 150 notice, which explains how legal fees are calculated, you can ask your solicitor to explain anything that is unclear to you before you agree to engage their services.

It is also important to recognise that outcomes can vary significantly between cases, even where the circumstances appear similar. A higher settlement obtained by another person does not, in itself, indicate that a solicitor has provided an inadequate service. Each claim depends on its specific facts and available evidence. Once a settlement offer is accepted, the matter is generally concluded. You should ensure that you understand and are satisfied with the terms of any offer before agreeing to it.

Lessons for practitioners:

This complaint underlines the importance of clear and transparent communication with clients, particularly regarding fees and settlement decisions. You should ensure that section 150 notices are not only issued and signed, but also understood.

In cases where comparisons arise with other claims, you should manage your client's expectations by clearly explaining the outcomes.

Maintaining clear records of advice given, including settlement discussions and client instructions, is essential and may be critical in responding to complaints.

Case Study 4

Excessive costs complaint against solicitor retained on short notice not upheld

Type of complaint: Excessive costs

The complainant had a probate case before the High Court and 10 days before the case was due to be heard, the complainant approached a solicitor and asked for legal representation. The solicitor agreed to represent the complainant and asked to be paid upfront (often referred to as being “put in funds”), which the complainant did.

On the first day of the High Court case, the complainant was not satisfied with the service he received from the solicitor and dismissed the solicitor. The solicitor sent a bill of costs to the complainant for the legal services provided.

The complainant made a complaint to the LSRA, alleging that the solicitor had not sent him a section 150 notice setting out the legal costs. He also alleged that the costs were excessive for one day’s work.

In response, the solicitor explained that they had come on record at short notice, prepared court documents, instructed counsel and attended upon the complainant. They stated that they had been dismissed before they could issue a section 150 notice to the complainant.

Outcome: Complaint not upheld

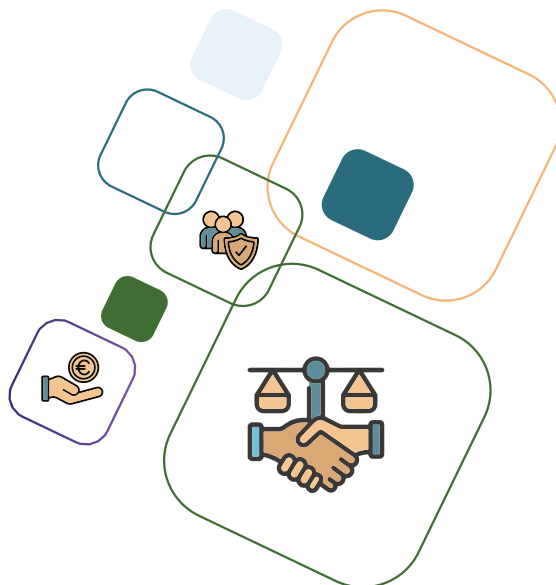
This complaint was not upheld because the solicitor was engaged by the complainant at very short notice and, so, it was reasonable to expect that they may not issue a section 150 notice prior to the High Court date as they had to focus on preparing for the case. The fees set out in the bill of costs for the solicitor were less than what the complainant had already paid in advance, although there were other outstanding costs which included counsel’s fees.

Lessons for the public:

If you instruct a solicitor at short notice, particularly for a case before the High Court, it is not unreasonable for a solicitor to request to be put in funds. A solicitor should provide a section 150 notice setting out how they charge their fees, at the earliest possible opportunity. You cannot dismiss your legal representative and expect not to have to pay a fair bill of costs for the work that they have done.

Lessons for practitioners:

If you are engaged at short notice for a hearing date, it is imperative to provide details of fees at the earliest opportunity. A request to be put in funds should be provided to your client in writing and clearly communicated. A bill of costs must be provided as soon as possible with all necessary details, including how to deal with disputed costs.



Case Study 5

Solicitor refunds money taken without authority and without providing a section 150 notice

Type of complaint: Misconduct

The complainant had instructed the solicitor in a personal injury case which was ultimately settled. The settlement agreement included payment of the complainant's legal costs. At no stage during the legal engagement did the solicitor provide the complainant with a notice of legal costs.

After receiving a cheque from the solicitor for the settlement, the complainant made a complaint to the LSRA that the solicitor had deducted an excessive amount of money from the settlement amount.

In response to the complaint, the solicitor explained that the money deducted from the settlement amount was to cover the shortfall for the legal costs he received from the other party. The solicitor refunded the money deducted to the complainant as he had not obtained consent to make the deduction, which he is obliged to do.

Outcome: Complaint upheld

Even though the money was refunded to the complainant, who was satisfied with the outcome, the complaint was referred to the Complaints Committee for consideration of misconduct as a matter of public interest.

The Complaints Committee upheld the complaint. However, as the money had been refunded and the complainant was satisfied that the matter was resolved, the committee did not sanction the solicitor.

Lessons for the public:

Once you have given instructions to your legal practitioner, they are obliged to provide you with a section 150 notice, providing you with information regarding the legal costs that will be incurred or the basis upon which the costs will be calculated.

If you agree to settle your case on the basis that your costs will be paid by the other side, but that the other side will not pay the full amount of legal costs sought by your solicitor, you should be informed of this by your solicitor at the time of settlement. You should be asked if you consent to any deduction from the settlement for the shortfall. If you agree, you should sign an authority allowing the solicitor to deduct money. If you do not agree, the solicitor should inform you of the option to have a Legal Costs Adjudicator assess the costs.

Lessons for practitioners:

You are obliged to provide your client with a section 150 notice on receipt of instructions. Where full information cannot be provided as to the costs which will be incurred at the outset, this information should be provided as soon as practicable. If there is a settlement you must indicate the amount of your legal costs that the other side is willing to pay. Where there is a shortfall in costs, you must seek the consent of your client as to whether they are agreeable to pay the shortfall that will be deducted from a settlement amount or an award.

If the client is agreeable, you should obtain a signed authority from your client to deduct money. If the client does not consent to paying the shortfall in costs, inform them of the option of a Legal Costs Adjudicator assessing the costs.

Case Study 6

Solicitor directed to reduce fees after failing to establish client received section 150 notice

Type of complaint: Inadequate legal services

The complainant engaged the solicitor to represent her in family law proceedings. She made a complaint to the LSRA alleging that the solicitor had not provided her with a costs notice which all legal practitioners are obliged to provide under section 150 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015.

The solicitor provided the LSRA with documentation to support her claim that she had provided the complainant with a section 150 notice, however, she did not have a copy which had been signed by the complainant. The complainant alleged that the relevant documents were only produced after the LSRA complaint had been made. She also said that she would not have proceeded with the solicitor, if she had received the section 150 notice because the anticipated fees outlined were beyond her means.

Outcome: Complaint upheld

The LSRA found that the evidence given by the solicitor did not sufficiently establish that she had provided the complainant with a section 150 notice when she was engaged by the complainant. The solicitor was directed to reduce the final bill of costs and issue a revised bill to the complainant.

Lessons for the public:

At the start of any legal engagement, you should always receive a costs notice (a section 150 notice), providing a clear breakdown of how legal costs will be calculated and any factors that may affect those costs. If this information is not provided, you should request it promptly.

Lessons for practitioners:

At the outset of every legal engagement, you should always provide your clients with clear written information explaining how legal costs will be calculated and identifying any factors that may affect those costs. Compliance with statutory costs transparency requirements should be documented and retained on file. It is advisable to have signed copies of these documents on file to avoid any subsequent dispute about whether they were provided to your client or not.

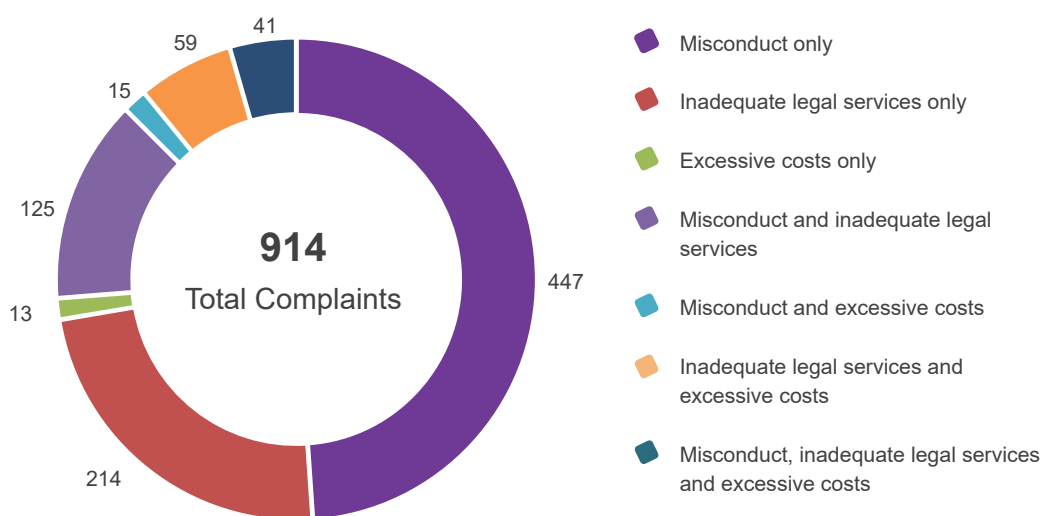
Statistical Breakdown of Complaints

This section deals with complaints received from 7 March 2026 to 4 September 2026.

All grounds for complaints

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. The recording of complaints reflects the reality that a single complaint may include several different allegations across a total of 35 available categories.

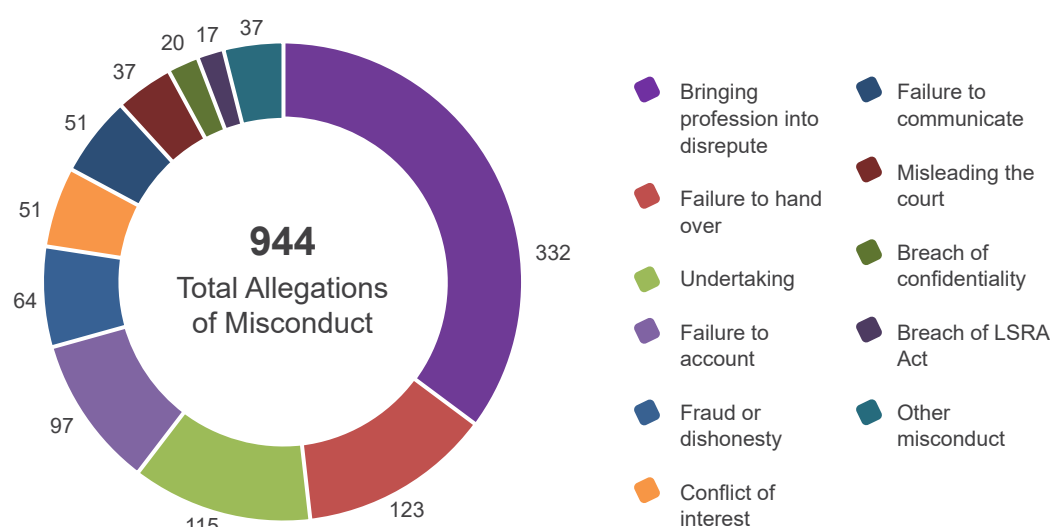
The 914 individual complaints received in the period contained a total of 1,574 allegations across the available 35 categories.



Misconduct only	447	48.9%
Inadequate legal services only	214	23.4%
Excessive costs only	13	1.4%
Misconduct and inadequate legal services	125	13.7%
Misconduct and excessive costs	15	1.6%
Inadequate legal services and excessive costs	59	6.5%
Misconduct, inadequate legal services and excessive costs	41	4.5%
Total	914	

Misconduct

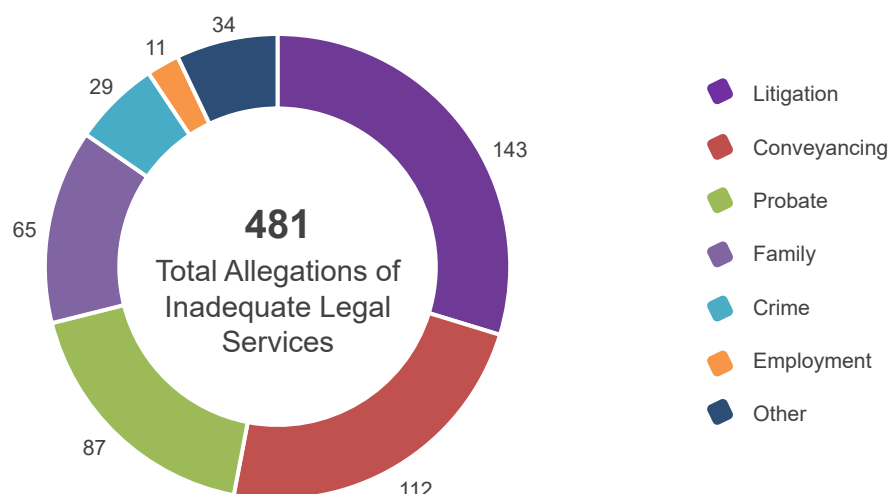
A total of 944 allegations of misconduct were recorded across all complaints received in the period. These were classified under a range of available categories based on the alleged acts or omissions of the legal practitioners. Of these, the largest were 332 (35%), which related to conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, and 123 (13%) which related to an alleged failure to handover a file, title deeds or other documents. A further 115 (12%) involved alleged failure to comply with an undertaking, 97 (10%) related to an alleged failure to account for clients' money, 64 (7%) related to alleged fraud or dishonesty, 51 (5%) related to an alleged conflict of interest, 51 (5%) involved alleged failure to communicate, and 37 (4%) related to misleading the court.



Bringing profession into disrepute	332	35.2%
Failure to hand over	123	13.0%
Undertaking	115	12.2%
Failure to account	97	10.3%
Fraud or dishonesty	64	6.8%
Conflict of interest	51	5.4%
Failure to communicate	51	5.4%
Misleading the court	37	3.9%
Breach of confidentiality	20	2.1%
Breach of LSRA Act	17	1.8%
Other misconduct	37	3.9%
Total	944	

Inadequate legal services

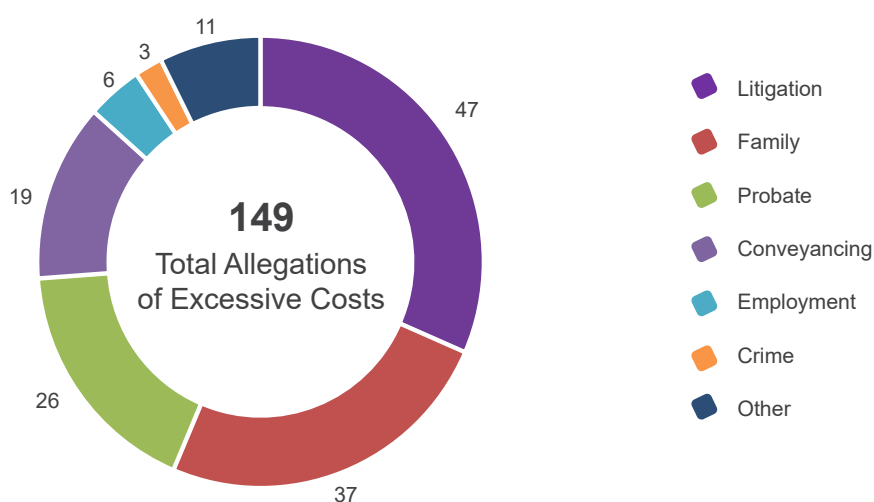
A total of 481 allegations of inadequate legal services were recorded across all complaints received in the period. These were classified under a range of categories based on the relevant area of law. Of the 481 total, 143 (30%) related to litigation, 112 (23%) related to conveyancing, while 87 (18%) related to probate and the administration of estates, and 65 (14%) related to family law.



Litigation	143	29.7%
Conveyancing	112	23.3%
Probate	87	18.1%
Family	65	13.5%
Crime	29	6.0%
Employment	11	2.3%
Other	34	7.1%
Total	481	

Excessive costs

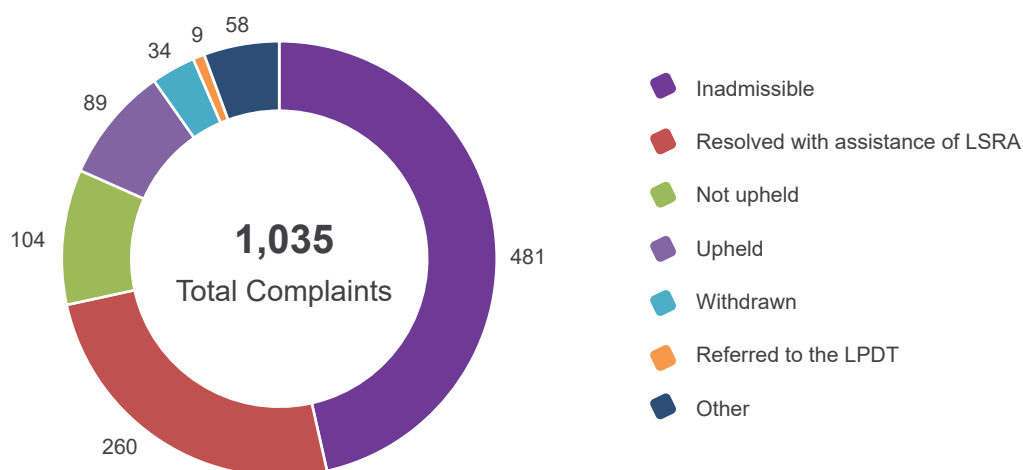
A total of 149 allegations of excessive costs were recorded across all complaints received in the period. These were classified under a range of categories based on the relevant area of law. Of the 149 total, 47 (32%) related to litigation, 37 (25%) related to family law, while 26 (17%) related to probate and the administration of estates, and 19 (13%) related to conveyancing.



Litigation	47	31.5%
Family	37	24.8%
Probate	26	17.4%
Conveyancing	19	12.8%
Employment	6	4.0%
Crime	3	2.0%
Other	11	7.4%
Total	149	

Complaints Completion Statistics

This section deals with complaints closed from 7 March 2026 to 4 September 2026.



Inadmissible	481	46.5%
Resolved with assistance of LSRA	260	25.1%
Not upheld	104	10.0%
Upheld	89	8.6%
Withdrawn	34	3.3%
Referred to the LPDT	9	0.9%
Other	58	5.6%
Total outcomes	1,035*	

**The 1,035 outcomes relate to a total of 1,021 closed complaints. 14 complaints were on mixed grounds and therefore had multiple outcomes.*

Complaints determined by LSRA Complaints staff

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
1	01/09/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a property purchase.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file.
2	23/09/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.
3	30/09/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.
4	02/10/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €300 as compensation.
5	03/10/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to finalise the work at own expense and pay €2,000 as compensation.
6	06/10/2025	Excessive costs in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.
7	08/10/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a road traffic claim.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €200 as compensation.
8	22/10/2025	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.
9	23/10/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to property and mortgage matters.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to follow through on a commitment regarding the re-imbursement of fees to the client.
10	29/10/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a house purchase.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to forward the outstanding duty fees, transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.
11	25/11/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to secure the registration at own expense of the property and to transfer the file.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
12	01/12/2025	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.
13	01/12/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to rectify the matter at own expense and pay €1,500 as compensation.
14	02/12/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €250 as compensation.
15	02/12/2025	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a litigation matter.	Inadequate services complaint upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €150 as compensation. Excessive costs complaint not upheld.
16	10/12/2025	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to property law matters.	Not upheld.
17	17/12/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €2,000 as compensation.
18	07/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to the administration of an estate.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide a full update to the clients, an outline of future actions and pay €1,000 in compensation.
19	14/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €2,500 as compensation.
20	15/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation.
21	15/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to an international protection matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €750 as compensation.
22	16/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to the administration of an estate.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
23	19/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file.
24	19/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a road traffic accident matter.	Not upheld.
25	19/01/2026	Excessive costs in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.
26	20/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to secure the pension adjustment order at own expense.
27	20/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injury matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation.
28	21/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Not upheld.
29	27/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,250 as compensation.
30	28/01/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund €3,000 in fees. No direction in respect of the inadequate services complaint.
31	28/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.
32	28/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a criminal law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to issue a bill of costs, hand over the file and pay €1,000 as compensation.
33	03/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.
34	09/02/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
35	09/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €2,000 as compensation.
36	09/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide a detailed report outlining the status of the entire probate file, transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.
37	10/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation.
38	10/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Not upheld.
39	11/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide assistance to the new firm of solicitors in the registration of the property, in contacting such other parties as were engaged in the conveyancing matters, and with procuring copies of the relevant and necessary documentation.
40	13/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.
41	13/02/2026	Excessive costs in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund €205.
42	16/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to finalise the registration at own expense and pay €1,000 as compensation.
43	16/02/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.
44	16/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
45	16/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.
46	17/02/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.
47	17/02/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter.	Excessive costs complaint upheld. Practitioner directed to reduce the final bill of costs by €2,000. Inadequate services complaint not upheld.
48	17/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation.
49	18/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to complete the application for the pension adjustment order, provide regular updates and pay €500 as compensation.
50	26/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer all documents relating to the probate application on behalf of the client to another legal practitioner, together with any and all funds retained that form part of the estate.
51	02/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.
52	12/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law and conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner to issue a bill of costs and pay €150 as compensation.
53	12/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.
54	12/03/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law and conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
55	12/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file.
56	24/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file.
57	24/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to reimburse €3,000 to cover costs associated with the reconstitution of the title deeds and pay €3,000 as compensation.
58	31/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to an employment law matter.	Not upheld.
59	01/04/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injury matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.
60	07/04/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a probate matter.	Not upheld.
61	15/04/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the file and pay €2,000 as compensation.
62	22/04/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.
63	27/04/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.
64	28/04/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. No direction.
65	29/04/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter.	Inadequate legal services complaint upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation. Excessive costs complaint not upheld.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
66	29/04/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to complete the transfer of the €600 registration fee, inform Land Registry that they are no longer acting for the complainant, transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation.
67	06/05/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. No direction.
68	07/05/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file, discharge the sums owing in respect of Local Property Tax to the relevant authority including payment of any fines / fees owed in respect of non-payment of the first year's property tax and pay €2,000 in compensation.
69	12/05/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injury matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the settlement money, provide copies of all relevant settlement documentation and pay €3,000 as compensation.
70	12/05/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.
71	20/05/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.
72	20/05/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.
73	20/05/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide copies of all documents to which the complainant is entitled and to pay €500 as compensation.
74	22/05/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
75	02/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to reduce the final bill of costs by €250 and issue a new bill of costs with the relevant VAT adjustment.
76	03/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.
77	04/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injury matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation.
78	09/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to furnish the complainant with the title deeds and pay €250 as compensation.
79	09/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation.
80	12/06/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a litigation and family law matter.	Inadequate legal services complaint upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation. Excessive costs complaint not upheld.
81	12/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive fees to the value of €3,000, transfer the file and pay €500 as compensation.
82	23/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the file and pay €1,000 as compensation.
83	16/07/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.

From the above list, a total of 32 determinations are from the current period, while 51 are from a previous period.

Review Committee outcomes

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	LSRA Outcome	Date of Review	Outcome
1	01/09/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a property purchase.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file.	25/03/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination. Added directions to pay compensation of €2,000 and to refund the registration fee of €750.
2	23/09/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.	25/03/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
3	30/09/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.	25/03/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
4	02/10/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €300 as compensation.	22/04/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
5	06/10/2025	Excessive costs in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.	25/03/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
6	08/10/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a road traffic accident.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €200 as compensation.	25/03/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
7	22/10/2025	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.	25/03/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	LSRA Outcome	Date of Review	Outcome
8	23/10/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to property and mortgage matters.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to follow through on a commitment regarding the re-imbursement of fees to the client.	22/04/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
9	29/10/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a house purchase matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to forward the outstanding duty fees, transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.	25/03/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination. Added directions to refund the registration fees of €1,265 and to include the title deeds with the file.
10	01/12/2025	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.	22/04/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
11	02/12/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €250 as compensation.	20/05/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
12	02/12/2025	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a litigation matter.	Inadequate services complaint upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €150 as compensation. Excessive costs complaint not upheld.	20/05/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	LSRA Outcome	Date of Review	Outcome
13	10/12/2025	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to property law matters.	Not upheld.	22/04/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
14	14/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €2,500 as compensation.	22/04/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
15	15/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to an international protection matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €750 as compensation.	22/04/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
16	19/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file.	25/08/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
17	19/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a road traffic accident matter.	Not upheld.	20/05/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
18	19/01/2026	Excessive costs in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.	22/04/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
19	28/01/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a criminal law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to issue a bill of costs, hand over the file and pay €1,000 as compensation.	20/05/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
20	03/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Not upheld.	17/06/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	LSRA Outcome	Date of Review	Outcome
21	09/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide a detailed report outlining the status of the entire probate file, transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.	17/06/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination and compensation. Did not confirm the direction to provide a detailed report.
22	13/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.	20/05/2026	Did not confirm LSRA determination. Practitioner directed to issue a written section 150 notice to the complainant.
23	13/02/2026	Excessive costs in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund €205.	25/08/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
24	16/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to finalise the registration at own expense and pay €1,000 as compensation.	17/06/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination and compensation. Varied the direction such that the practitioner is directed to stamp the deed and lodge all documents necessary to complete registration with Tailte Éireann.
25	16/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.	17/06/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	LSRA Outcome	Date of Review	Outcome
26	16/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Not upheld.	17/06/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
27	17/02/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter.	Excessive costs complaint upheld. Practitioner directed to reduce the final bill of costs by €2,000. Inadequate services complaint not upheld.	17/06/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination in relation to inadequate service. Did not confirm determination in relation to excessive costs.
28	18/02/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to complete the application for the pension adjustment order, provide regular updates and pay €500 as compensation.	20/05/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
29	02/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.	17/06/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
30	12/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law and conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner to issue a bill of costs and pay €150 as compensation.	17/06/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination. Increased compensation to €500.
31	12/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.	25/08/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.

No.	Date of LSRA Determination	Nature of Complaint	LSRA Outcome	Date of Review	Outcome
32	12/03/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law and conveyancing matter.	Not upheld.	25/08/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
33	24/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to reimburse €3,000 to cover costs associated with the reconstitution of the title deeds and pay €3,000 as compensation.	25/08/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
34	31/03/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to an employment law matter.	Not upheld.	25/08/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.
35	07/04/2026	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a probate matter.	Not upheld.	25/08/2026	Confirmed LSRA determination.

Complaints Committee outcomes

Referred to LPDT	9
Upheld	31
Not upheld	76
Resolved	23
Withdrawn	5
Other outcome	4
Closed prior to Complaints Committee consideration	45
Total	193

Complaints Committee directions and referrals

No.	Date of Committee Meeting	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
1	16/12/2024	Failure to communicate regarding outstanding registrations.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the file and pay the reasonable costs of the new practitioner.
2	02/09/2025	Failure to fulfil an undertaking to discharge itemised property management fees.	Referred to the LPDT.
3	03/09/2025	Grossly excessive fees, misconduct and inadequate legal services to a substantial degree.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to complete a module of professional competence regarding client care and professional standards.
4	03/09/2025	Delays in the administration of an estate and poor communication including failure to respond to correspondence.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay to the LSRA a sum of €2,500 by way of contribution towards its costs and complete a module of professional competence regarding client care and professional ethics.
5	10/12/2025	Failure to account for money paid for the purposes of discharging property registration fees.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund the sum of €915.
6	29/01/2026	Conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to complete a course of professional development concentrating on professional ethics and conduct, to last a minimum of ten hours.
7	10/02/2026	The practitioner had furnished the complainant with an invoice for dealing with a previous LSRA complaint and would not release a will until the invoice was discharged.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay to the LSRA €500 as a contribution towards its costs.
8	10/02/2026	Failure to handover the title deeds of a property.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to handover the file and deeds and pay for any costs incurred in respect of the matter.
9	04/03/2026	Delays in furnishing a bill of costs and releasing a file in relation to family law proceedings.	Upheld. No direction.

No.	Date of Committee Meeting	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
10	04/03/2026	Lack of integrity regarding misrepresenting the finding of the LSRA and raising of this as a bill is injurious of the public trust.	Upheld. No direction.
11	04/03/2026	Lack of progress and delays in an application for wardship.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €2,000 as compensation, and to complete a suitable professional development course in professional ethics and client care.
12	12/03/2026	Failure to lodge the deed of assent and failure to deal fully with the administration of an estate, despite having taken fees.	Referred to the LPDT.
13	24/03/2026	Delays in handing over a file.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to handover the file and pay to the LSRA €500 as contribution towards its costs.
14	09/04/2026	Inadequate legal services to a substantial degree in a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to make an application to reconstitute the proceedings, at own expense.
15	09/04/2026	Inadequate legal services to a substantial degree in a family law matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund the legal fees paid, pay €1,000 as compensation and pay to the LSRA €1,500 as contribution towards its costs.
16	15/04/2026	Employing a struck off solicitor without authorisation.	Upheld. No direction.
17	29/04/2026	Unexplained delay in progressing the file in a land boundary issue.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive any claim to future fees.

No.	Date of Committee Meeting	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
18	07/05/2026	Failure to discharge funds due.	Referred to the LPDT.
19	07/05/2026	Delay in handing over a file and failure to engage with the new solicitor in a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €750 as compensation.
20	07/05/2026	Failure to hand over a file in a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the file.
21	07/05/2026	Failure to properly complete a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund all fees paid and waive any fees outstanding, discharge costs incurred in recovering the file and pay €500 as compensation.
22	27/05/2026	Failure to respond to correspondence in an asylum / international protection application matter.	Upheld. No direction.
23	03/06/2026	Failure to discharge the costs of the previous solicitor.	Referred to the LPDT.
24	10/06/2026	Breach of SI No. 375 of 2012, Solicitors (Professional Practice, Conduct and Discipline – Conveyancing Conflict of Interest) Regulations 2012.	Upheld. No direction.
25	10/06/2026	Failure to hold monies in trust as ordered by the client, failure to return funds on order and unilateral completion of a conveyance.	Upheld. No direction.
26	10/06/2026	Issues in handling of a property purchase and the registration of a charge.	Referred to the LPDT.

No.	Date of Committee Meeting	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
27	16/06/2026	Inappropriate behaviour towards the complainant while consulting with a client regarding a will.	Upheld. No direction.
28	16/06/2026	Delays in the payment of expert's fees in a litigation matter.	Upheld. No direction.
29	16/06/2026	Excessive costs in a conveyancing matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund €2,838.33 charged on the timesheet in relation to responding to an LSRA complaint.
30	16/06/2026	Delay in a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay to the LSRA €750 as a contribution towards its costs.
31	08/07/2026	Failure to deal with letters of authority in respect of estates and failure to engage with the complainant throughout.	Upheld. No direction.
32	08/07/2026	Failure to appropriately progress an administration / probate matter.	Upheld. No direction.
33	08/07/2026	Failure, despite requests, to account and failure to provide a statement of account, in relation to a sale of land matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide a statement of account and pay €1,000 to the LSRA by way of contribution towards its costs.
34	08/07/2026	Delays in the administration of an estate.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay to the LSRA €1,000 as a contribution towards its costs.
35	16/07/2026	Improperly swearing an affidavit.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to complete a suitable course in client care and professional ethics.

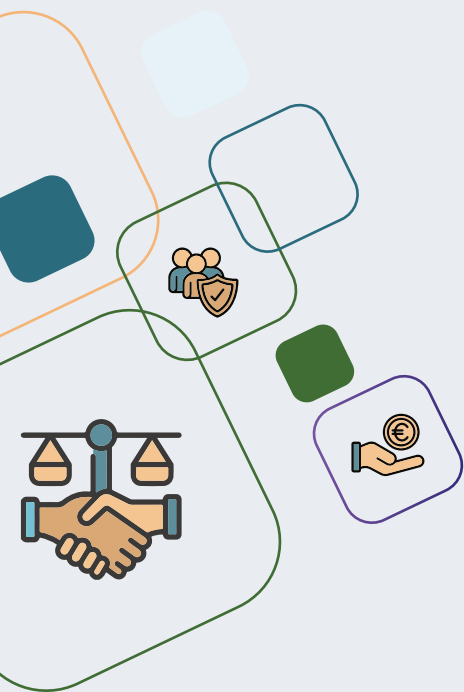
No.	Date of Committee Meeting	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
36	16/07/2026	Improperly swearing a declaration.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to complete a suitable course in client care and professional ethics.
37	22/07/2026	Provision of legal services which were, to a substantial degree, of an inadequate standard in relation to a conveyancing matter.	Referred to the LPDT.
38	22/07/2026	Failure to comply with an undertaking.	Referred to the LPDT.
39	28/07/2026	Failure to hand over title deeds.	Referred to the LPDT.
40	28/07/2026	Failure to use reasonable endeavours to recover counsel's fees.	Referred to the LPDT.

Enforcement Orders obtained in the High Court

No.	Date of Order	Nature of Complaint	LSRA/Committee Direction
1	08/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injuries matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €600 as compensation.
2	08/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file.
3	08/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation.
4	08/06/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injury matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide an update as to the current status, transfer the file and pay €2,000 as compensation.
5	27/07/2026	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter.	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €1,500 as compensation.

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An tÚdarás Rialála
Seirbhísí Dlí
Legal Services
Regulatory Authority

Legal Services Regulatory Authority



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