



7,091 complaints received and 5,724 closed over five years of LSRA's independent complaints handling

Almost 1 in 4 of all closed complaints successfully resolved

Over quarter a million euro in compensation ordered to clients

€354,020 in unpaid barristers' fees recovered following complaints to LSRA

Press Release: Wednesday 30 October 2024

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) today marks five years of its independent handling of complaints about solicitors and barristers, during which time almost one in four of all closed complaints were successfully resolved by the parties.

The LSRA receives and investigates three types of complaints – about inadequate legal services, excessive costs (overcharging) and misconduct.

The five year complaints data published by the LSRA today shows it received a total of 7,091 complaints between October 2019 and October 2024, while closing 5,724 complaints. During this time, the LSRA directed legal practitioners to pay a total of €256,996 in compensation to their clients arising out of complaints. It also directed legal practitioners to refund or waive a total of €213,479 in professional fees. In addition, a total of €354,020 in unpaid barristers' fees were recovered following complaints made to the LSRA by barristers about solicitors.

The five year statistics are included as part of the LSRA's routine six monthly complaints report, its second of 2024. This is the LSRA's tenth complaints report to date, providing details of the number and nature of complaints about legal practitioners received and investigated during the reporting period of 2 March 2024 to 6 September 2024.

Total complaints received, closed and outcomes over five year period

Of the 7,091 complaints received in the five year period, 6,857 were made about solicitors and 234 about 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. Of these complaints:

- 4,317 complaints (61%) were about alleged misconduct.
- 2,019 complaints (28%) related to legal services of an inadequate standard.
- 318 complaints (5%) were of excessive costs (overcharging).
- 437 were mixed complaints (6%), with a combination of misconduct, inadequate services and excessive costs.



Of the 5,724 complaints closed in the five year period:

- 2,727 complaints (47%) were inadmissible.
- 1,335 complaints (23%) were resolved.
- 294 complaints (5%) were upheld.
- 385 complaints (7%) were not upheld.
- 98 complaints of alleged misconduct (2%) were referred by the LSRA to the separate Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal which, unlike the LSRA, can make findings of misconduct.
- 916 complaints (16%) were withdrawn, deferred or closed for other reasons.

On publishing today's report, the LSRA's Chief Executive Dr Brian Doherty said:

"The LSRA this month marks five years of our independent complaints handling. During this time we received 7,091 complaints and closed 5,724. A welcome trend that we document in today's report is the fact that almost one in four of all complaints closed in the past five years were resolved between the parties with the assistance of the LSRA.

"The successful early resolution of complaints is something we have repeatedly championed and it is heartening to see that such a significant number of complainants and legal practitioners have taken this message on board. For consumer complaints about poor services or overcharging, it is very often a much more satisfactory and speedy outcome that means both parties to the complaint do not have to go through the investigative process with their complaint being determined by the LSRA and either upheld with a sanction or not upheld. Legal practitioners and complainants alike who adopt a flexible and positive approach to complaints resolution both stand to benefit."

Dr Doherty added:

"Enforcement actions taken by the LSRA due to the failure of legal practitioners to comply with directions and determinations made following the investigation of complaints have increasingly been a feature of our work since we took our first High Court proceedings in 2022.

"It is of significant concern that the LSRA has to date been forced to apply to the High Court and been granted a total of 19 enforcement orders under section 90 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. Such actions should be unnecessary and the failure of legal practitioners to comply with the directions of their regulator only creates unnecessary work, serves to slow down the complaints process, and creates additional and unnecessary costs which are ultimately passed on to all legal practitioners through the LSRA's annual levy on the legal professions. The LSRA once again urges all legal practitioners to be mindful of their professional responsibility to engage with the complaints process and to comply with any determinations and directions made."

Today's report is available to download here: [Independent Complaints Handling: Complaints about solicitors and barristers Report 2 – 2024](#).

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Note to Editors:

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority is an independent statutory body set up under the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 with a range of functions. These include regulating the provision of legal services by legal practitioners (barristers and solicitors) and ensuring the maintenance and improvement of standards in the provision of legal services. The LSRA began receiving and investigating complaints about legal practitioners on 7 October 2019.