



An tÚdarás Rialála
Seirbhísí Dlí
Legal Services
Regulatory Authority

INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS HANDLING

Complaints
about solicitors
and barristers

Focus on Family Law



Report 1 - 2025

From 7 September 2024
to 7 March 2025




 The logo for LSRA (Law Society of South Africa) is displayed in a large, bold, serif font. It is centered within a light purple, rounded rectangular shape that overlaps a dark purple background. The background of the entire page is a geometric composition of dark purple, blue, and maroon shapes, with two white plus signs.

LSRA

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FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I am pleased to introduce this report into the operation of the LSRA's independent complaints handling function for the period 7 September 2024 to 7 March 2025. This is our first bi-annual report of 2025 and the eleventh report that the LSRA has published on complaints handling since the LSRA took over the receipt and investigation of complaints about solicitors and barristers on 7 October 2019.

Dr Brian J. Doherty



Our last report published in October 2024 looked back on five years of independent complaints handling and provided an overview of the complaints received and their outcomes. Having reached that important milestone, and following that reflection, we have decided to change the format slightly for this and future reports. We intend over the next few reports to focus in each report on a single area of law and share some of the themes and case studies that have emerged from complaints in that area. In doing so we hope to provide information that may be of assistance to both legal practitioners and consumers of legal services about the issues that can lead to complaints, what to expect when a complaint is made, and how we can help to put things right.

In this report we focus on the area of Family Law. That is not to say that family law attracts a disproportionate number of complaints when compared to other areas of law; in fact, family law complaints make up only around 7% of the total complaints received by the LSRA. Naturally, this report only focuses on the matters that are reported to the LSRA as part of our complaints process. I am well aware that the vast majority of solicitor-client interactions in family law matters do not result in a complaint to the regulator.

Family law proceedings inevitably deal with the breakdown of a relationship, a disagreement within a family or sometimes the need for a party to seek the protection of the law. This means that sometimes they can be challenging, emotional, sensitive and stressful for the parties concerned. For both complainants and solicitors alike, complaints to the LSRA in the area of family law can also be charged with strong emotions.

In focusing on this one area of law and the complaints that we have received, we hope to provide information that will assist legal practitioners to reflect on your own practices and maybe be conscious of behaviours that can lead to complaints. We also hope that consumers will find this report useful as it provides details on what standard of legal services you can expect to receive in the area of family law.

To that end, we highlight the need for solicitors to provide clear and ongoing information in relation to their costs to the client in family law proceedings. Based on the complaints received, this is a clear area where legal practitioners could improve their communications. Due to the nature of family law, it may be difficult to provide an accurate costs estimate at the outset, as it may not be clear at that point how matters will progress between the parties and, for example, whether expert reports will be required or counsel will need to be briefed.

However, legal practitioners are also required to update their clients where the costs likely to be incurred are significantly greater than those indicated in the initial Costs Notice. Complaints could clearly be avoided by legal practitioners if they kept their clients advised when there was an increase in costs beyond the initial estimate and if they updated their Costs Notices to take account of unforeseen cost increases.

This report also considers the need for legal practitioners to set clear parameters as to how they will communicate with clients in family law matters including the need to keep clients updated as to the progress of proceedings.

For clients, we stress the need to provide clear instructions, preferably in a single document, and to avoid multiple or repetitious emails to your solicitor which may in fact increase the costs incurred.

We also emphasise the pressure and impact that family law proceedings can have on the parties to the proceedings as well as their legal practitioners, and advise legal practitioners to be mindful of their own well-being to avoid burn out.

One other area we also highlight relates to circumstances where a party to family law proceedings, for example divorce or separation proceedings, makes a complaint about their estranged partner's solicitor or barrister. Whilst some complaints of this nature may have been well founded, we have also seen a small number of instances where it would appear that the motivation behind the complaint may be to frustrate ongoing family law proceedings.

Where the LSRA reaches the view that the complaints process is being improperly used, for example to pursue what is in effect a family related grievance, the LSRA will determine that complaint to be inadmissible and no further action will be taken.

In upcoming complaints reports, we intend to focus on the legal services areas of Conveyancing, Probate and Wills and Litigation. We hope that both clients and legal practitioners find the new format to be informative and useful.

The rest of the report reflects another busy period for the LSRA. Between the 7 September 2024 and the 7 March 2025, we received 829 complaints, 801 related to solicitors and 28 relating to barristers. This represents a 12% increase in complaints on the previous reporting period. In the same period, we closed a total 839 complaints. This represents a significant amount of work being undertaken by the small team at the LSRA.

Of the 839 complaints closed, 244 (29%) were either resolved between the parties or were resolved with the assistance of the LSRA's trained mediators. It is a consistent message of these reports that where legal practitioners take the necessary steps to attempt to resolve a matter that may have arisen with a client, the outcome of the complaint is usually reached quicker and to the satisfaction of both parties. The LSRA again encourages both parties in any complaint made to the LSRA to engage in any attempts to resolve the matter and bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Finally, as in all of the reports that the LSRA has published to date, I would like to express my sincere and continued gratitude to the dedicated complaints team of the LSRA whose hard work and resilience is reflected in this report. I would also like to thank the members of the LSRA's independent Review Committee and Complaints Committee whose commitment and dedication plays such a vital role in the successful delivery of an independent, impartial and balanced evidence-led complaints process.

Dr Brian J. Doherty
April 2025

INTRODUCTION

The LSRA began receiving and investigating complaints about solicitors and barristers (collectively referred to as legal practitioners) on 7 October 2019. The LSRA is required under section 73(1) of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 (the Act) to report on the performance of its complaints function at intervals of no greater than six months. This is the eleventh such report, and it reports on the period from 7 September 2024 to 7 March 2025.

The LSRA is responsible for the regulation of legal services by legal practitioners and also for ensuring the maintenance and improvement of standards in the provision of such services.

Under the Act, the objectives of the LSRA are:

- **protecting and promoting the public interest;**
- **supporting the proper and effective administration of justice;**
- **protecting and promoting the interests of consumers relating to the provision of legal services;**
- **promoting competition in the provision of legal services in the State;**
- **encouraging an independent, strong and effective legal profession; and**
- **promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles of legal practitioners.**

The professional principles referred to require legal practitioners to: act with independence and integrity; act in the best interests of their clients; maintain proper standards of work; comply with such duties that are rightfully owed to the court; and comply with their duties of confidentiality to their clients.

The purpose of these reports is to inform consumers, legal professionals and the wider public about the matters that we investigate, the issues and behaviour that commonly give rise to complaints and the outcomes of the complaints that are made to us. In doing so, it is hoped that there will be increased consumer awareness about these issues. It is also hoped that legal practitioners find the reports useful in identifying the types of acts or omissions that can lead to complaints and in ensuring that their delivery of legal services is of the highest standard possible.

To that end, this report contains an overview of our independent complaints handling process, a summary of the nature and types of the complaints that we have received in the reporting period. It documents the outcomes of complaints considered by the Complaints Committee and the Review Committee and also contains case studies based on anonymised complaints. We hope that these case studies will be of particular use to both legal practitioners and consumers of legal services in understanding the nature of the LSRA's complaints handling and the lessons that can be learned from the complaints we receive and investigate.

INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS HANDLING

Under the independent complaints handling regime, as set out in Part 6 of the Act, the LSRA became responsible for complaints which previously were made to the professional bodies for solicitors and barristers – the Law Society of Ireland and the Bar of Ireland, respectively.

Prior to the introduction of the LSRA's complaints handling function, the Law Society investigated complaints in relation to solicitors based on the statutory framework set out in the Solicitors Acts 1954 to 2011.

Prior to the introduction of the LSRA's complaints handling function, complaints in respect of barristers were not governed by statute. The Bar of Ireland, through the Barristers Professional Conduct Tribunal, was responsible for these complaints that related to its members.

What types of complaint can the LSRA deal with?

Under Part 6 of the Act, 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 and 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.

Only a client – or a person acting on behalf of a client – can bring a complaint to the LSRA where the client considers that the legal services provided were of an inadequate standard or that the amount of costs sought were excessive (overcharging). When it comes to alleged misconduct by a legal practitioner, any person can make a complaint to the LSRA.

How we record and classify complaints

In 2023, the LSRA introduced changes in the way that individual complaints are recorded and classified. The LSRA now records each individual complaint as relating to either one, two or all three of the statutory complaints grounds where appropriate. This replaces the previous system whereby an individual complaint was recorded under only the primary ground presented in the complaint.

The aim of the new more sophisticated recording method is to better reflect the complexity of complaints that the LSRA receives, which often do not fit neatly into a single statutory ground. In reality, a single complaint may contain a number of different grounds. For example, in a complaint that is primarily about inadequate legal services, the complainant may also consider that they have been overcharged. Similarly, in a complaint of alleged misconduct, the complainant may also consider that the legal services they received were inadequate. These are called mixed complaints.

A second change introduced in 2023 relates to how 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.

There are a total of 35 available categories. Services and costs complaints are recorded by areas of law, such as litigation, conveyancing, probate and family law. Complaints alleging misconduct are recorded under categories that relate to the nature of the act or omission that gives rise to the complaint, such as, for example, fraud or dishonesty or failure to communicate.

Previously, an individual complaint was recorded as relating to one category only. For example, a complaint of inadequate legal services was classified only under family law, even if it also involved a component of probate. Likewise a complaint alleging misconduct was classified only under dishonesty even if it also included a failure to communicate component. In all complaints, only the primary component was categorised and recorded.

Since the start of 2023, a complaint is classified into one or more categories as appropriate. This reflects the reality that a single complaint frequently contains one or more issues or areas of law.

This change also better shows the complexity of the complaints received by the LSRA.

The number of complaints we report on remains the same, but we are able to report on the different components contained within those complaints and provide better data and analysis of the issues contained within complaints and the areas of law to which they relate.

Combined, these two changes give an accurate sense of the work involved in considering and investigating complaints by both the LSRA's Complaints and Resolutions Officers and its two regulatory committees. The LSRA will continue to improve and refine the data that it collects and reports in fulfilment of its statutory objectives.

Who can make a complaint to the LSRA?

The complaints system – including who can make a complaint – differs depending on the specific grounds of complaint.

Complaints of inadequate services and excessive costs

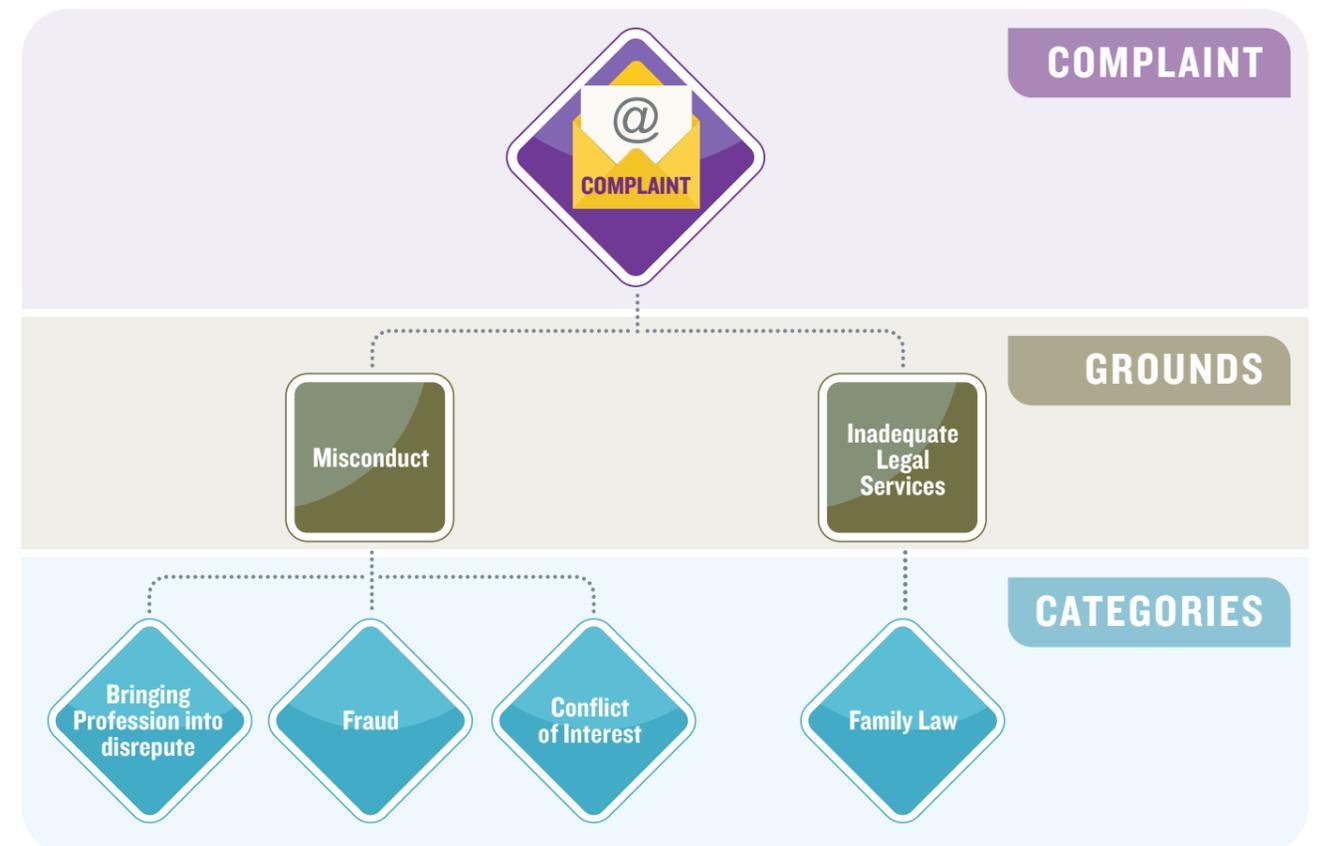
Complaints about inadequate legal services or excessive costs can be made to the LSRA by either the client of a legal practitioner or a person acting on behalf of a client.

Complaints in connection with legal services or costs must be received by the LSRA within three years of the date on which the legal services were provided or the bill of costs issued or within three years of the client becoming aware of the inadequate legal services or excessive costs (or from when they ought reasonably to have become aware of the same).

Complaints of misconduct

Any person, not just a client, can make a complaint to the LSRA where he or she believes there is evidence of misconduct on the part of a legal practitioner. There is no statutory time limit for complaints relating to alleged misconduct.

HOW A MIXED COMPLAINT CAN BE RECORDED AND CLASSIFIED



How to make a complaint

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

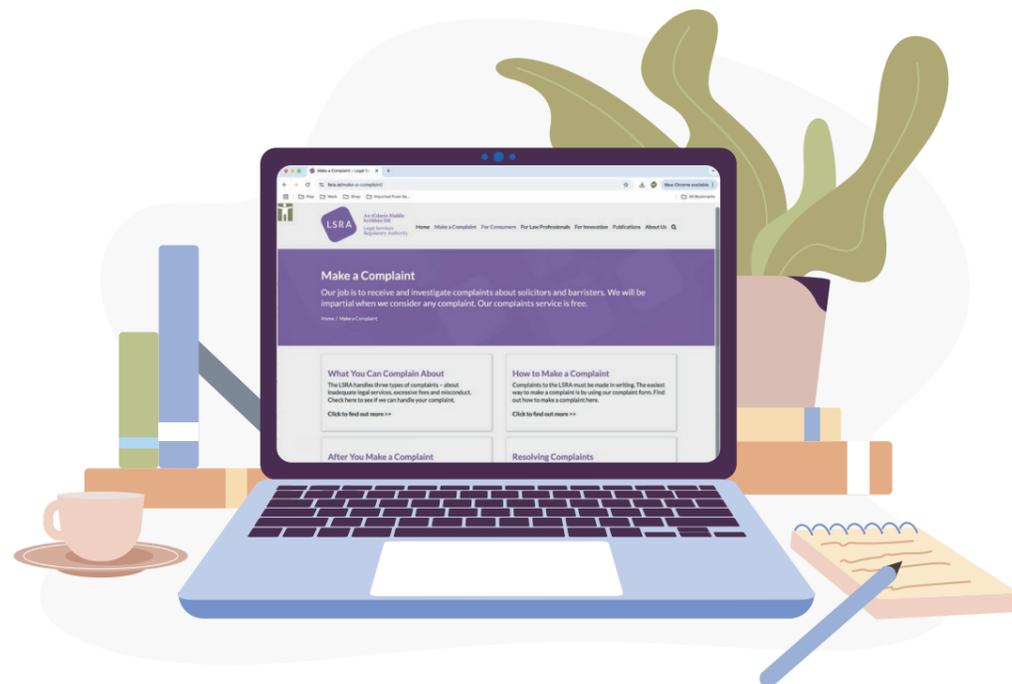
How we can assist

As the LSRA is independent in the operation of its functions, our complaints staff cannot advise complainants about the nature and content of their complaint or indeed whether or not to make a complaint. However, LSRA staff are available to assist

in answering any questions about the complaints process and are available by telephone during the hours listed on our website. In addition, a consumer guide to the LSRA's complaints service is available in Citizens Information Offices and libraries. Consumer leaflets and videos are also available on the LSRA's website and YouTube channel.

Should anyone need assistance in making their complaint, they should consider contacting 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 (www.lsr.ie).



COMPLAINT JOURNEY



THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

The Legal Services Regulation Act 2015, together with the Regulations enacted pursuant to the Act, set out detailed processes for the handling of complaints about legal practitioners, including a series of statutory deadlines which must be observed.

All complaints received are designated a file reference and opened initially as a query. Complaints staff then scrutinise each file to decide whether a query should be classified as a complaint or is more appropriately dealt with as a query. This is an important stage in the complaints handling process as complaints staff clarify the issues that have been raised.

Preliminary review for admissible and inadmissible complaints

Once a query is classified as a complaint, the LSRA is required under the Act to conduct a preliminary review to determine whether or not the complaint is admissible. In essence, this means that complaints staff gather evidence from both the complainant and the legal practitioner.

As part of this process, the LSRA must notify the legal practitioner of the complaint in writing, provide the legal practitioner with a copy of the complaint and request a written response with observations within 21 days. Complaints staff may also, at this preliminary review stage, request additional information in writing from either the complainant or the legal practitioner.

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. The informal resolution of complaints between parties can take place before the complaint has been determined to be admissible.

In addition, once a complaint has been determined to be admissible, the Act requires the LSRA to invite the parties to make efforts to resolve matters where those complaints relate to:

- **Legal services of an inadequate standard;**
- **Excessive costs; or**
- **The provision of legal services of an inadequate standard to a substantial degree that, if substantiated, would constitute misconduct.**

Informal Resolution in most cases is by way of individual phone calls with the LSRA mediator. The mediator generally calls the parties to see if there is a way for the parties to resolve the complaint to their satisfaction. The approach to Informal Resolution may vary in each complaint depending on the nature of the complaint and what the parties agree. Group calls, face-to-face meetings or the appointment of an external mediator can all be considered if the participants agree that it could help to resolve the issues.

In compliance with the terms of the Mediation Act 2017, the LSRA's qualified staff are affiliated to the Mediators' Institute of Ireland and are fully trained to deal with this aspect of the legislation. The mediation is quite separate to the investigation and determination of the complaint, which is effectively placed on hold to allow the Informal Resolution process to take place.

Determination of complaints about services and costs

If not resolved, complaints relating to inadequate legal services or excessive costs are determined by the LSRA Complaints and Resolutions Unit.

Should the LSRA determine that the legal services provided by a legal practitioner have been of an inadequate standard (and that it is appropriate to do so) the LSRA can direct the legal practitioner to:

- **Rectify the issue at their own expense or at the expense of their firm;**
- **Take such other action as the LSRA may specify, the cost of which should not exceed €3,000;**
- **Transfer any documents relating to the issue to another legal practitioner nominated by the client;**
- **Pay to the client a sum not exceeding €3,000 in compensation for any financial or other loss suffered by the client.**

Should the LSRA determine that the amount of costs sought by a legal practitioner was or is excessive (and that it is appropriate to do so) the LSRA can direct the legal practitioner to:

- **Refund, without delay, all or some of any amount already paid by the client to the legal practitioner; or**
- **Waive all or some of the amount billed.**

The LSRA can also make a determination that the costs sought were not excessive or that the legal services delivered were not inadequate.

Review of LSRA determinations about services and costs

Once the LSRA has made a determination of a complaint, the legal practitioner or complainant can request that the determination be reviewed by the Review Committee.

The independent Review Committee sits as a three person committee, composed of two lay persons and one legal practitioner. The Review Committee 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 its consideration of the determination made by the LSRA, as well as any statements made by the complainant and the legal practitioner, the Review Committee can:

- **Confirm the LSRA determination;**
- **Send the complaint back to the LSRA with directions for it to be dealt with again;**
- **Issue one or more directions to the legal practitioner, for example to waive or refund fees, to rectify an error or to pay compensation, as it considers appropriate.**

Determination of misconduct complaints

The Complaints Committee considers and investigates complaints of alleged misconduct about legal practitioners. The LSRA established the Complaints Committee in 2020. It is independent in its decision-making.

The Committee is made up of 27 members. These are comprised of not fewer than eight members nominated by the Law Society; not fewer than four members nominated by the Bar of Ireland (formerly the Bar Council); and the balance made up of lay members appointed following a competitive selection process.

The Complaints Committee is split into three groups, each with nine members. Divisional Committees drawn from these groups sit to investigate complaints, as either a five or three person committee. Divisional Committees always have a lay majority and a lay chairperson. The Divisional Committees sit on a rolling basis throughout the year at approximately six week intervals. They also meet on an ad hoc basis to consider individual complaints when it is necessary to do so.

The Complaints Committee can ask the complainant or legal practitioner to supply information or documentation relating to the complaint and can also require either party to verify information by way of an affidavit. The Complaints Committee can also require the complainant and the legal practitioner to appear before it for the purposes of the investigation of the complaint.

The Complaints Committee can refer more serious matters on to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT) for an inquiry, where appropriate.

If the Complaints Committee considers that the complaint does not warrant referral to the LPDT, but is one that warrants the imposition of a sanction, it can 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 interest of the complainant;**
- **Comply with undertaking(s);**
- **Withdraw or amend an advertisement made by the legal practitioner;**
- **Pay compensation to the complainant not exceeding €5,000;**
- **Pay costs to the LSRA;**
- **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 can 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 Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. It considers complaints of alleged misconduct referred to it by the LSRA or the Law Society of Ireland. It does not accept direct applications from complainants or from other parties.

The LPDT’s 33 members, including its Chairperson, were appointed by the President of the High Court in November 2020. Its membership consists of 21 lay members, six solicitors and six barristers. It sits in divisions of a minimum of three members, with a lay majority including a lay chair.

LPDT inquiries are generally held in public, with oral evidence. The LPDT has the same rights and powers as the High Court regarding the enforcement of the attendance of witnesses, as well as the production and the discovery of documents. It can subpoena witnesses to attend and 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:

- **Imposing an advice, admonishment or censure on 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, the total amount of 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.

The LPDT started holding inquiries in June 2023. Where the LPDT makes a finding of misconduct against a legal practitioner the LSRA has an obligation, subject to any appeal of the decision, to arrange for the publication of: the determination of the LPDT; the name of the legal practitioner concerned; the nature of the misconduct; and the sanction imposed. Starting in 2024, the LSRA will arrange for the publication of LPDT determinations. For complaints about solicitors, the LSRA will also arrange for the LPDT findings to be published 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 September 2024 to 7 March 2025, the LSRA received a total of 1,393 phone calls and e-mails requesting information and/or complaint forms. In addition, a total of 1,039 files were opened initially as queries. Following assessment, a total of 829 were then categorised as complaints. This is an increase of 12% in the total number of complaints received in this reporting period compared with the previous one, when 740 complaints were received. Of the 829 complaints, a total of 801 related to solicitors and 28 related 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 has enhanced the recording of individual complaints as relating to one, two or all three of the Act's grounds where appropriate. These reports now include a full breakdown of grounds across all 829 complaints received. This breakdown shows that a total of 645 complaints contained only one statutory ground, while a further 184 were mixed complaints combining more than one of the three grounds.

The largest category of complaints received were of alleged misconduct. In this period, 453 complaints received were about alleged misconduct only. However misconduct was also a ground for complaint in a further 145 complaints, bringing the total to 72% of all complaints received.

A total of 179 complaints were about inadequate standards of legal services only. However inadequate services were also a ground for complaint in a further 173 complaints. Likewise, 13 complaints were about excessive costs only, with excessive costs grounds also raised in 70 other complaints.

A further breakdown of these figures is provided in the Statistical Breakdown of Complaints section of this report.



COMPLAINTS CLOSED

Summary of complaints closed and outcomes

A total of 839 complaints were closed in this reporting period. Of these, 290 complaints (34%) were closed because they were deemed to be inadmissible following a statutory assessment.

A total of 244 complaints (29%) were resolved informally between the parties with the assistance of the LSRA. These included 27 complaints which were resolved and closed in the LSRA's Informal Resolution process with the help of its trained mediators.

Of the remainder:

- 96 complaints were upheld.
- 108 complaints were not upheld.
- 17 complaints were withdrawn.
- 41 complaints of alleged misconduct were referred to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal by the Complaints Committee.
- 60 complaints were closed for other reasons including that the complaint was deferred.

While there were 839 complaints closed in the reporting period, the complaints outcomes total above comes to 856. This is because there can be more than one outcome in a mixed complaint which contains more than one of the three statutory grounds. Full details of the outcomes of complaints closed in the reporting period are set out in Table 1 in the Complaints Completion Statistics section of this report.



OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS HANDLING

This section provides an overview of progress in complaints handling during the reporting period. It summarises the outcomes of complaints at five different stages in the complaints process. Some of these complaints are still making their way through the complaints system, while others are closed and form part of the statistics above.

- Informal Resolution
- LSRA Determinations
- Review Committee
- Complaints Committee
- High Court Enforcement

Informal Resolution

In a total of 138 complaints of inadequate legal services and excessive costs which were determined to be admissible, the parties were invited to make efforts to resolve matters in the LSRA's statutory Informal Resolution process. The outcomes of these complaints are as follows:

- In 18 complaints there was no response to the invitation by either the complainant or the legal practitioner.
- In 26 complaints the legal practitioner did not take up the invitation to take part in the Informal Resolution process.
- In 24 complaints the complainant did not take up the invitation to take part in the Informal Resolution process.
- A total of 29 complaints were resolved with the assistance of the LSRA's trained mediators. Two of these complaints were not closed at this stage. As they were complaints that related to inadequate legal services to a substantial degree (which is a ground for misconduct), following resolution they were sent to the Complaints Committee for its consideration.
- In 41 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 by the Informal Resolution process proceed to be investigated and determined by the LSRA.

LSRA Determinations

The LSRA's Complaints Resolution Officers (CROs) made determinations in 108 complaints in this reporting period. Of these, 70 complaints were upheld and 18 were not upheld. A further 20 complaints were resolved, withdrawn, or could not proceed at that stage.

In 56 of the 70 upheld complaints, the legal practitioner was directed to pay compensation to the complainant of up to €3,000. The total amount of compensation that legal practitioners were directed to pay to their clients in the reporting period was €88,300. In addition, legal practitioners were directed to refund or waive a total of €12,982 in fees.

Either party to a complaint can seek a review of the LSRA's CRO determinations within 30 days of notification (the review period). Reviews are carried out by the Review Committee. Where the 30 day period expires without a review request, the LSRA's determination is binding upon the parties. For this reason, these reports only report on determinations made by the LSRA where the 30 day review has expired.

Table 2 in the Complaints Completion Statistics section of this report sets out the details of LSRA determinations. This table comprises both the 49 determinations made during this reporting period and 53 determinations made in a previous reporting period that can now be reported on as the review period has expired.

Likewise, the next complaints report will include details of those determinations made in the current reporting period that were still within the 30 day review period at the cut-off date for this report.

Review Committee

The Review Committee met nine times in the reporting period and reviewed determinations made by LSRA CROs in 54 complaints. The Review Committee's determinations were as follows:

- **It confirmed the initial determinations in a total of 41 complaints. In two of these, the Review Committee increased the amount of compensation to complainants. In a further two, the Review Committee decreased the amount of compensation to complainants.**
- **It set aside determinations upholding seven complaints.**
- **It sent back two complaints to be dealt with again.**
- **It overturned the decision not to uphold four complaints.**

The Review Committee outcomes are set out in Table 3 in the Complaints Completion Statistics section of this report.

Complaints Committee

The Complaints Committee met on 20 occasions in the reporting period. It considered a total of 230 complaints of alleged misconduct and closed a total of 213. The outcomes were as follows:

- **41 complaints were referred to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal for further investigation.**
- **38 complaints were upheld.**
- **70 complaints were not upheld.**
- **18 complaints were resolved by the parties and six were withdrawn or discontinued for a range of reasons whilst before the Committee.**
- **A total of 40 complaints were closed prior to consideration by the Complaints Committee. Of these, 29 were resolved by the parties and 11 were withdrawn by the complainant or discontinued for a range of other reasons.**

The Complaints Committee outcomes are set out in Tables 4 and 5 in the Complaints Completion Statistics section of this report.

High Court Enforcement

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 18 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 nine section 90 enforcement proceedings. In total the LSRA obtained 13 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: FOCUS ON FAMILY LAW

As part of our ongoing work examining the issues and themes behind complaints, the LSRA intends in this and over subsequent reports to focus on complaints received in particular areas of law where consumers often have legal needs. The aim of this is to both assist consumers of legal services to better understand issues that may arise and to inform legal practitioners as to how they might review their own practices in order to reduce the likelihood of complaints being made.

The theme of this report is the area of Family Law. The LSRA is very aware that family law proceedings can often be extremely complex and sensitive, as well as being emotionally and financially challenging for the parties involved.

The LSRA is also aware that family law practitioners frequently have an incredibly difficult but essential role to play in assisting their clients to rebuild their lives following the breakdown of a relationship. The following are some of themes that have emerged in complaints relating to Family Law made to the LSRA:



Keeping clients informed on solicitors' costs will ensure no surprises

Almost half of all upheld complaints in family law matters relate to deficiencies in how solicitors communicated with their clients about the costs of their services and how they set and managed their clients' expectations around costs.

Examples of upheld complaints include instances where:

- The solicitor failed to supply the client with a written Costs Notice as required under section 150 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015.
- The solicitor provided the client with a Costs Notice setting out how the client was to be billed. However, the final Bill of Costs bore no practical resemblance to what had been set out in the Costs Notice as the basis upon which fees would be charged.
- The solicitor did not keep the client informed about significant increases in the costs of the legal services being provided, resulting in a shock for the client when the final bill was issued.

Naturally, the costs of legal services is an important and potentially sensitive issue for clients. Solicitors are required to provide clear information about their charges and costs on both an upfront and ongoing basis in order to manage their clients' expectations throughout the course of their cases.

Family law proceedings can sometimes continue for years and may involve experts' fees, the cross-examination of multiple witnesses and numerous court hearings. Court hearings may require the services of counsel (barristers), which come at additional costs to the client.

Getting it right

In relation to costs, clients should be able to expect that:

- A solicitor's Bill of Costs will be drawn up in compliance with the Costs Notice (also called a Section 150 letter or notice) they have received.
- A solicitor's Bill of Costs will remain within any estimate previously provided, and where it is clear that further costs are being incurred, that they would be advised in advance.
- Where the solicitor's costs are calculated with reference to an hourly fee rate (as is often the case in family law) that a detailed breakdown of the time spent would be provided to them in the Bill of Costs.

Legal practitioners must ensure that their final bill to their clients does not come as a surprise. In particular, clients may not understand how "time posting" systems work and how costs can accrue quite dramatically.

Family law clients have often been through quite a traumatic experience, and an unexpected bill is very often the catalyst for a complaint to the LSRA. An unexpected final bill can also end the client-lawyer relationship. Such outcomes can be avoided with better communication about costs.

Solicitors must actively manage client expectations around communications

An LSRA analysis of a sample of family law complaints that have been upheld found a common theme of solicitors failing to respond to phone calls and emails.

Examples of upheld complaints include instances where:

- **The client was only informed of a court hearing on the evening before it was due to take place, despite having emailed the solicitor on multiple occasions requesting confirmation of the hearing date.**
- **The solicitor took some four months to respond to emails from their client. When they did finally respond, they requested information from the client that had already been provided by email.**

The LSRA has also seen instances where clients have sent multiple emails and messages and made a large number of telephone calls to their solicitor. Where this happens, it can be challenging for the solicitor to manage. The answer, however, is not to just ignore this communication as that just frustrates and distresses clients even further. Instead, solicitors should actively engage with their clients and set out how they may most efficiently communicate with the solicitor or the firm.

Solicitors should inform the client that multiple emails on the same subject matter close to hearing dates is not an efficient way of providing instructions. Solicitors should also consider setting clear boundaries with clients about the use or not of text messages, WhatsApp or other messaging services to seek updates or to provide instructions.

Getting it right

Solicitors, particularly in a busy practice, often work within considerable time restraints, and finding the time to reply to emails and return calls may be quite a challenge. Client updates can be particularly challenging if the client is repeatedly seeking information in circumstances where there is nothing substantial to report. Clients should be able to expect that their communications are at least acknowledged. That might be a short email simply saying that there is no significant progress to report.

Solicitors should actively manage such issues to appropriately set their clients' expectations. Clear ground rules can be established from the outset. Those ground rules might have to be reiterated throughout the duration of any proceedings. Clients should also be informed if additional costs are being incurred due to the solicitor having to respond to multiple emails and requests for updates.

Complaints should not be made to “get back” at estranged partners

Around four in ten complaints to the LSRA relating to family law matters are found to be inadmissible.

Solicitors are always encouraged to bring a collaborative approach to the practice of family law and to encourage a conciliatory approach to family law proceedings. Such proceedings, however, can in some cases be extremely acrimonious, especially where they relate to divorce or separation.

In some of the family law complaints which are ultimately found to be inadmissible, the complainant is not complaining about the legal services provided by their own solicitor. Instead the complaint relates to the solicitor or barrister representing their estranged or former partner.

A party to family law proceedings might be annoyed at what is said in court by their estranged partner's solicitor or barrister or the case that is being put forward. However, legal practitioners are acting on their client's instructions and are presenting their client's case whilst also being required to maintain proper standards of professional conduct.

Whilst some complaints of this nature may have been well founded, the LSRA has also seen a small number of instances where it would appear that the motivation behind the complaint may be to frustrate ongoing family law proceedings as opposed to there being a genuine cause for complaint.

Where the LSRA reaches the view the complaints process is being improperly used, for example to pursue what is in effect a family related grievance, the LSRA will determine that complaint to be vexatious and therefore inadmissible and no further action will be taken.

Getting it right

A complaint against a solicitor by someone who is not their client should only be made in circumstances where the complainant believes that misconduct has taken place.

Complaints should not be made for the purpose of “getting back” at an estranged partner or their representative or as an attempt to frustrate ongoing proceedings.

Where legal practitioners receive notification of a complaint which they believe has only been made in an attempt to frustrate ongoing proceedings or to interfere with their ability to represent their client, they should inform the LSRA of this in their response to the complaint.

Legal practitioners should note that the LSRA is obliged to send all complaints it receives to the practitioner complained of – this is a mandatory part of the preliminary review process.

The LSRA recognises that the receipt of a complaint, even one later determined to be inadmissible, can have an impact on the wellbeing of a legal practitioner. If necessary, legal practitioners should talk to their colleagues or seek further support.

Partners in firms should monitor wellbeing of their family law solicitors

Family law can be a challenging area of law in which to practice. It requires the use of a wide range of legal and advocacy skills and can frequently involve sensitive and emotional issues. Following the breakdown of a close relationship, clients can have very real concerns about access to children, their financial stability and even their personal safety and that of their children.

Often the solicitor is seen as the only person who can help them through this difficult time.

Family law practitioners therefore need to have excellent communication and people skills. They also need to be extremely resilient. Family law practitioners often complain that the financial rewards of working in this area are not commensurate with the challenges such cases can bring.

Many of the complaints that the LSRA receives about services in this area, relating particularly to delay and poor communication, are as a result of legal practitioners struggling to manage a heavy workload and the associated stress on them as professionals.

Getting it right

Partners in firms should have continuous oversight of the cases that are being progressed by the solicitors at their firm. They should always be cognisant of the substantial workload involved in family law cases. Equally, they should be mindful of the stressful and emotional impact which such cases can place on all staff.

Monitoring a colleague's wellbeing should be as much a priority for the partners in a firm as monitoring their workload and fee income. Too often family law is dealt with by one particular individual in a firm who may have legal expertise but insufficient workplace support.

When issues or problems are identified, rectification of the matter for the client should also be a priority for the whole firm, not just the solicitor taking instructions.

Legal practitioners who feel they are struggling to cope should talk to their colleagues. If necessary they should not hesitate in seeking help from their professional representative body or their local Bar Association. There are helplines and supports available including the Law Society's LegalMind therapeutic service.

FAMILY LAW CASE STUDIES

This section contains a selection of anonymised case studies based on complaints dealt with by the LSRA. Details of the complaints may have been altered to ensure anonymity, but the case studies should serve to illustrate the nature of the complaints the LSRA receives as well as the outcomes. It is hoped that these case studies are useful for both the public and legal practitioners.



CASE STUDY 1

Poor communication at heart of complaint resolved with help of LSRA mediator

TYPE OF COMPLAINT: Inadequate legal services and excessive costs

This complaint concerned a family law matter in which the complainant said there was a complete lack of communication. As the solicitor had failed to record the client's notified change of address, the client had not received correspondence regarding an upcoming court case. Given the mistakes that had occurred, the complainant also considered the solicitor's costs were excessive.

OUTCOME: Complaint resolved informally

The solicitor acknowledged that he had failed to update his records with the complainant's change of address. He said the file had been dealt with by another solicitor in the firm who had left the practice suddenly and the re-distribution of that solicitor's case files had impacted the professional services to the complainant. The complaint was resolved to the satisfaction of the parties with the assistance of one of the LSRA's team of trained mediators.

LESSONS FOR THE PUBLIC:

The LSRA encourages both parties to try and resolve complaints about inadequate legal services or excessive costs. If you indicate to the LSRA when making a complaint that you are open to the complaint being resolved, it may inform how the legal practitioner responds to the complaint and could expedite the complaints process.

LESSONS FOR PRACTITIONERS:

If you acknowledge that your services to a client were inadequate you can make efforts to resolve the matter with your client. The LSRA can also assist you to resolve the complaint informally through the services of our trained mediators. In the Informal Resolution process you are more likely to reach an outcome that is satisfactory and will avoid a complaint being upheld against you.

CASE STUDY 2

Solicitor ordered to compensate client for error in settlement agreement

TYPE OF COMPLAINT: Inadequate legal services

The complaint arose in a contentious family law case which was concluded on the basis of a separation agreement. The complainant co-signed the separation agreement on the advice of her solicitor. Subsequently, the complainant discovered that a term of the settlement agreement was not as she had expected. The solicitor accepted that an error had been made.

OUTCOME: Complaint upheld

The LSRA's Review Committee upheld the complaint, setting aside the original decision made by the LSRA and directing the solicitor to pay the complainant €3,000 as compensation. The Review Committee concluded that the solicitor did not appear to have taken adequate care when representing the complainant through the execution stage of the settlement agreement, as is reasonably expected of a member of the legal profession. It did not appear that the complainant would have signed the settlement agreement had the legal terminology used in it been interrogated and adequately explained to her by her solicitor.

LESSONS FOR THE PUBLIC:

You should not sign any document that you do not fully understand, and that applies particularly to legally binding documents such as contracts and separation agreements. It might be very difficult, if not impossible, for such documents to be amended later. You are entitled to expect that your solicitor would protect your interests, explain relevant legal terminology to you, and ask you if anything is not included.

LESSONS FOR PRACTITIONERS:

Your clients rely upon you to identify and clarify all significant issues to ensure that they are fully clear about matters they are agreeing to in legally binding documents. In the area of family law, your clients may have had no prior experience of dealing with the legal profession and the courts system. You must therefore at all times communicate with your clients in plain language, making sure that any technical terms are explained and understood before advising them to sign legally binding documents.

CASE STUDY 3

Failure by solicitor to give client clear information on costs constituted inadequate legal services

TYPE OF COMPLAINT: Excessive costs and inadequate legal services

The solicitor acted for the complainant in family law proceedings over a period of six months. At the outset, the solicitor advised the client in writing that her fees would be calculated at a rate of €150 per hour and €75 per letter sent by the firm on the client's behalf. When the solicitor sent the client the final Bill of Costs, it made no reference to the time expended by the solicitor or the number of letters issued. The solicitor confirmed to the LSRA she did not have a record of the exact hours spent on the case.

OUTCOME: Complaint upheld in part

The LSRA invited the parties to try to resolve the complaint informally. While both parties accepted the offer, a resolution could not be reached and the complaint was sent forward for investigation. The LSRA determined that while the costs charged by the solicitor for the work undertaken were not excessive, the fact that the solicitor had not been clear with her client about how she would charge for her work amounted to inadequate legal services. The solicitor was directed to reduce her professional fee by €1,250 plus VAT and send a new Bill of Costs to the complainant.

LESSONS FOR THE PUBLIC:

If you are told by your solicitor that their legal fees will be calculated on an hourly basis, then you are entitled to have the time posting records provided to you as part of the final Bill of Costs. It is reasonable for a client to expect that their solicitor's bill would be drawn up on the basis of information given at the outset in the Costs Notice.

LESSONS FOR PRACTITIONERS:

If your section 150 Costs Notice informs your client that they will be charged on an hourly basis, then all billable time must be recorded correctly. Issues often arise when clients are sent bills with solicitors' time posted in large blocks which do not cross refer to work actually undertaken on the file, attendance notes, or court hearings. Under section 150 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015, where time is a factor in the calculation of legal costs, a Bill of Costs must contain the time spent dealing with a matter.

CASE STUDY 4

Delay of several years in finalising a court order for client amounted to inadequate legal services

TYPE OF COMPLAINT: Inadequate legal services

The complainant's family law proceedings had been concluded a number of years ago and they included a court-ordered pension adjustment order. The complainant contacted his former solicitor to get confirmation that the legal work relating to the pension adjustment order had been completed. In his response to the complaint the solicitor confirmed that he had overlooked this work but intended to now resolve it.

OUTCOME: Complaint upheld

The LSRA invited both parties to try to resolve the complaint informally. While the complainant accepted the offer, the solicitor did not respond. The complaint was sent forward for the LSRA to make a determination. The LSRA found that the legal services provided by the solicitor were inadequate. Although the issues regarding the pension adjustment order were ultimately rectified by the solicitor, he was nevertheless directed to pay to the client compensation of €1,000.

LESSONS FOR THE PUBLIC:

It is prudent to always follow up with your solicitor, seeking written confirmation that particular work has been carried out. While this complaint related to a pension adjustment order, similar issues can sometimes arise where property has to be transferred following family law proceedings.

LESSONS FOR PRACTITIONERS:

Your obligations to your client do not cease upon the successful conclusion of court proceedings. You must ensure that you complete all of your client's instructions and provide written confirmation of work undertaken. In this instance the solicitor was able to rectify the matter notwithstanding the significant time lapse, but that may not always be the case. If there is a financial loss due to your oversight, there could be a professional negligence action.

CASE STUDY 5

Services complaint not upheld against solicitor found to have acted in accordance with client's instructions

TYPE OF COMPLAINT: Inadequate legal services

The solicitor acted for the complainant in connection with an application for an emergency access order. The complainant complained that the solicitor had failed to carry out her written instructions and, in particular, to ask a series of specific questions at the court hearing. The client had sent the instructions in a considerable number of emails to the solicitor; the solicitor received a total of 36 emails from the client in a period of 18 hours immediately before the court hearing.

OUTCOME: Complaint not upheld

The LSRA invited both parties to try to resolve the complaint informally. While the solicitor accepted the offer, the complainant declined. The complaint was sent forward for the LSRA to make a determination. The LSRA found that the legal services provided by the solicitor were not inadequate as they had acted in accordance with the client's instructions and they were entitled to exercise their professional judgement as to how the proceedings would be conducted and what questions should be put to the other side in court.

LESSONS FOR THE PUBLIC:

Client instructions to legal practitioners should be as clear and concise as possible to avoid any misunderstanding. Clients should look to clearly set out their instructions, preferably in a single document, and not spread out over multiple emails or messages. Instructions should be discussed and agreed in advance. Legal practitioners are entitled to exercise their professional judgment in the conduct of court proceedings. The LSRA investigates whether or not the legal services provided were of an inadequate standard. Clients should also be aware that legal practitioners have professional obligations to both the courts and their colleagues.

LESSONS FOR PRACTITIONERS:

In cases of this sort it is important for solicitors to explain to the client how communication will be managed to ensure clear instructions are received and to manage the client's expectations. Clients may not have had any previous experience of instructing a legal practitioner or being in a court, and given the issues involved, are likely to find the whole experience very stressful. They should, however, be clearly informed as to how their case will be dealt with both at the initial meeting and as the case progresses. Clients need to know what the legal practitioner can and cannot do in order to avoid any misunderstandings later.

CASE STUDY 6

Failure of solicitor to communicate with client over protracted period led to services complaint being upheld

TYPE OF COMPLAINT: Inadequate legal services

The complainant could not make contact with her solicitor over a protracted period. She was concerned that her family law case was not being progressed, that money due to her from the sale of the family home had not been accounted for, and that issues relating to her child's education and maintenance were outstanding.

OUTCOME: Complaint upheld

The LSRA put the complaint to the solicitor involved but no response was received. The managing partner in the firm became involved and explained that the solicitor was on extended leave. The LSRA invited both parties to try to resolve the complaint informally. Both parties accepted the offer but could not reach a resolution. The complaint was sent forward for the LSRA to make a determination. The complaint was upheld and the solicitors were directed to transfer the complainant's file to another solicitor to be nominated by the complainant. The solicitors had already agreed to waive any entitlement to charge fees. Additionally, they were directed to pay compensation of €2,500 to the client.

LESSONS FOR THE PUBLIC:

If it becomes apparent that your solicitor is not responding to your communication within a reasonable timeframe, you could consider escalating the matter to the managing partner in the firm. Do not hesitate to subsequently raise the matter with the LSRA if it is not being dealt with to your satisfaction. If it is necessary to instruct a new solicitor, it will inevitably take the new firm time to review the file and become familiar with your case, so the sooner that is addressed the better.

LESSONS FOR PRACTITIONERS:

Contested family law proceedings can be particularly stressful to the parties involved. Dealing with a high volume of such cases can impact upon the wellbeing of legal practitioners. This type of situation is a feature in many family law complaints. It is important that solicitors receive the support of their colleagues at their firm and seek assistance and support when needed.

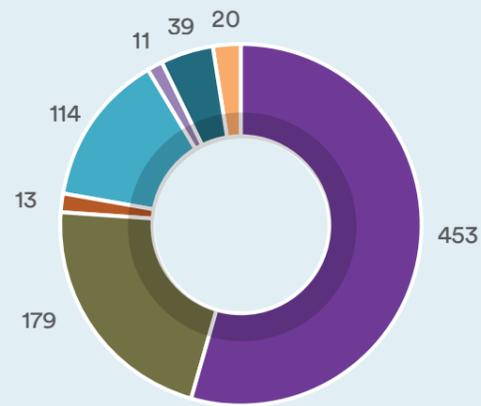
STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS

Complaints Received

From 7 September 2024 to 7 March 2025

ALL GROUNDS FOR COMPLAINTS

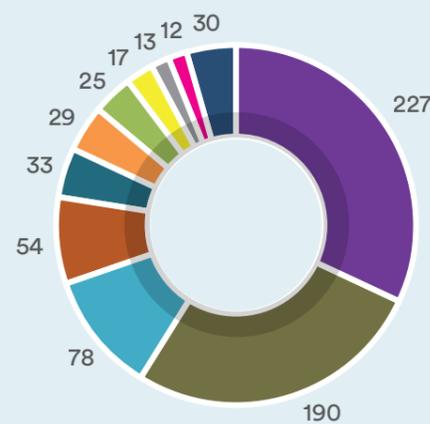
Complaints under the Act’s three grounds are classified by the LSRA into a range of categories as part of an administrative process to aid our reporting. The recording of complaints reflects the reality that a single complaint may include several different components across a total of 35 available categories. The 829 individual complaints received in the period contained a total of 1,167 components across the available 35 categories.



● Misconduct only	453	(54.6%)
● Inadequate legal services only	179	(21.6%)
● Excessive costs only	13	(1.6%)
● Misconduct and inadequate legal services	114	(13.8%)
● Misconduct and excessive costs	11	(1.3%)
● Inadequate legal services and excessive costs	39	(4.7%)
● Misconduct, inadequate legal services and excessive costs	20	(2.4%)
TOTAL	829	

MISCONDUCT

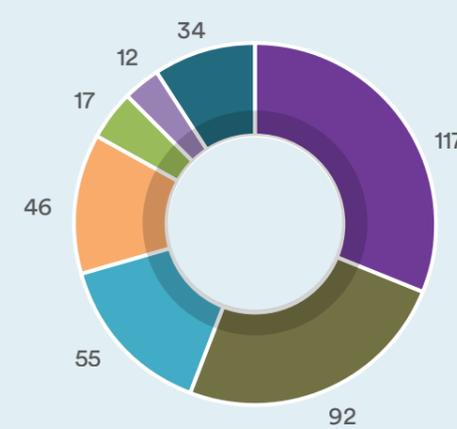
A total of 708 components of misconduct were recorded across all complaints received in the period. These were classified under a range of available categories based on the alleged acts or omissions of the legal practitioners. Of these, the largest were 227 (32%) which related to conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, and 190 (27%) a failure to comply with an undertaking. A further 78 (11%) involved alleged failure to handover a file or other deeds and documents, 54 (8%) related to an alleged conflict of interest, 33 (5%) related to alleged fraud or dishonesty, 29 (4%) to failure to communicate and 25 (4%) related to an alleged failure to account for clients’ money.



● Bringing profession into disrepute	227	(32.1%)
● Undertaking	190	(26.8%)
● Failure to hand over	78	(11.0%)
● Conflict of interest	54	(7.6%)
● Fraud or dishonesty	33	(4.7%)
● Failure to communicate	29	(4.1%)
● Failure to account	25	(3.5%)
● Substantial inadequate services	17	(2.4%)
● Failure to pay counsel’s fees	13	(1.8%)
● Breach of confidentiality	12	(1.7%)
● Other misconduct	30	(4.2%)
TOTAL	708	

INADEQUATE LEGAL SERVICES

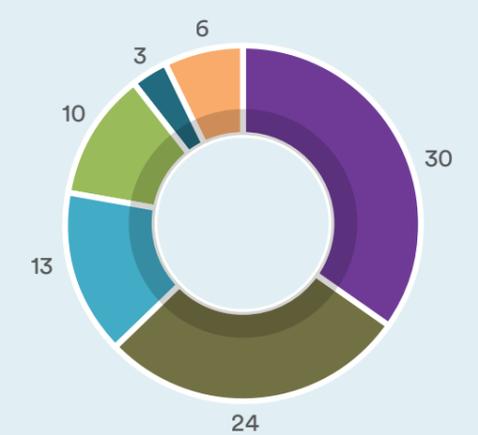
A total of 373 components of inadequate legal services were recorded across all complaints received in the period. These were classified under a range of categories based on the area of law that the complaint relates to. Of these, 117 (31%) related to litigation, 92 (25%) related to conveyancing, while 55 (15%) related to family law, and 46 (12%) related to probate and the administration of estates.



● Litigation	117	(31.4%)
● Conveyancing	92	(24.7%)
● Family	55	(14.7%)
● Probate	46	(12.3%)
● Crime	17	(4.6%)
● Employment	12	(3.2%)
● Other	34	(9.1%)
TOTAL	373	

EXCESSIVE COSTS

A total of 86 components of excessive costs were recorded across all complaints received in the period. These were classified under a range of categories based on the area of law that the complaint relates to. Of these, 30 (35%) related to litigation, with 24 (28%) related to family law, 13 (15%) related to probate and the administration of estates, and 10 (12%) related to conveyancing.



● Litigation	30	(34.9%)
● Family	24	(27.9%)
● Probate	13	(15.1%)
● Conveyancing	10	(11.6%)
● Employment	3	(3.5%)
● Other	6	(7.0%)
TOTAL	86	

COMPLAINTS COMPLETION STATISTICS

Complaints closed from 7 September 2024 to 7 March 2025

TABLE 1: Complaints Closed

Inadmissible	290	33.9%
Resolved with assistance of LSRA	244	28.5%
Not Upheld	108	12.6%
Upheld	96	11.2%
Withdrawn	17	2.0%
Referred to the LPDT	41	4.8%
Other	60	7.0%
TOTAL COMPLAINTS CLOSED	856*	

* The 856 outcomes relate to a total of 839 closed complaints. 17 complaints were on mixed grounds and therefore had multiple outcomes.

TABLE 2: Complaints Determined by LSRA Complaints Staff*

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
1	09/11/2023	Inadequate legal services in the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to furnish the final bill of costs and transfer the file
2	08/01/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €2,000 as compensation
3	10/04/2024	Inadequate legal services in a family law matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation
4	11/04/2024	Inadequate legal services in a probate matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €2,000 as compensation
5	26/04/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in a probate matter	Services complaint upheld. Practitioner directed to apply a discount of €250 (ex VAT) to the professional fee. A costs complaint was not upheld
6	02/05/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in a personal injury matter	Not upheld
7	22/05/2024	Inadequate legal services in a family law matter	Not upheld
8	22/05/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Not upheld
9	23/05/2024	Inadequate legal services in a personal injury matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to furnish the final bill of costs
10	28/05/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in a family law matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation and waive the right to recover €1,995 in costs

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
11	30/05/2024	Inadequate legal services in a personal injury matter	Not upheld
12	30/05/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a business premises and property transaction matters	Not upheld
13	06/06/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Not upheld
14	06/06/2024	Inadequate legal services in a family law matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file to another legal practitioner and pay €2,500 as compensation
15	13/06/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property sale matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation
16	17/06/2024	Inadequate legal services with respect to communication and discussion during the settlement of a case	Not upheld
17	18/06/2024	Inadequate legal services in a court proceedings matter	Not upheld
18	01/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property registration matter	Not upheld
19	04/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a court proceedings matter	Upheld. No direction
20	04/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a family law matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide the client a fee note and receipt in relation to the bill

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
21	05/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Not upheld
22	05/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a defamation proceedings matter	Upheld. No direction
23	19/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to furnish a bill of costs
24	19/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a civil dispute matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation
25	23/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a High Court matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to finalise the matter at no further cost and pay €1,500 as compensation
26	23/07/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a matter with the Dispute Resolution Authority	Not upheld
27	23/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property matter	Upheld. No direction
28	30/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a family law matter	Upheld. No direction
29	31/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €600 as compensation
30	31/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injuries matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €600 as compensation

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
31	07/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. No direction
32	07/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in connection with the negotiation of an offer received from an insurance company with regard to an income protection claim	Not upheld
33	07/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to compensation for a personal data breach matter	Not upheld
34	08/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a property purchase matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to secure the registration of the property, furnish the deeds to the lending institution and pay €1,000 in compensation
35	09/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a probate matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation
36	14/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a dispute with an employer	Not upheld
37	14/08/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a workplace bullying claim	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the file, pay €3,000 as compensation, refund €15,000 and waive the right to recover any costs
38	14/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a criminal proceedings matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation
39	14/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to an enduring power of attorney matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
40	21/08/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. No direction
41	21/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €600 as compensation
42	27/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation/will matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €200 as compensation
43	27/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and monies belonging to the Estate to another practitioner and pay €1,000 as compensation
44	28/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to property transactions	Not upheld
45	28/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property sale matter	Not upheld
46	28/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property purchase matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to release all relevant papers to the client without charging further fees, hand over the file to another practitioner and pay €1,500 as compensation
47	28/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation and WRC matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed not to charge further fees and to pay €1,000 as compensation
48	03/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Not upheld

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
49	04/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file to another practitioner and pay €1,000 as compensation
50	04/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay the costs of another practitioner to finalise the work
51	04/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide the client with a bill of costs
52	05/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to an employment law matter	Upheld. No direction
53	06/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €400 as compensation
54	09/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation
55	12/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a house purchase matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation
56	16/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter	Not upheld
57	17/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file
58	18/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €2,000 as compensation

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
59	18/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a property transfer matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to discharge any queries by Tailte Eireann, arrange for the collection of title deeds and pay €1,000 as compensation
60	19/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a house purchase matter	Not upheld
61	23/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a probate matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation
62	23/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to secure at own expense the registration of the property, provide weekly updates and pay €2,000 as compensation
63	24/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a land transfer matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation
64	24/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €500 as compensation
65	25/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to discharge the fee owed by the client to their legal representative, ensure that no charges relating to [a specific piece of work] are levied against the client or the estate of the deceased and pay €750 as compensation

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
66	01/10/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in a litigation matter	Not upheld
67	01/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in family law proceedings	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,500 as compensation
68	02/10/2024	Excessive costs in a debt settlement matter	Not upheld
69	03/10/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in family law/divorce matters	Not upheld
70	03/10/2024	Excessive costs in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to revise the invoice and refund excess fees, if any, to the client
71	03/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in a personal injury matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €200 as compensation
72	03/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation
73	08/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file
74	08/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in a Labour Court matter	Upheld. No direction
75	09/10/2024	Excessive costs in a probate matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund €800 of the costs
76	14/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a property purchase matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
77	15/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a WRC and personal injuries matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation
78	15/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in a personal injury and a GDPR matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation
79	18/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to family law and conveyancing matters	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €650 as compensation
80	29/10/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a personal injury matter	Not upheld
81	30/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in a guardianship/power of attorney matter	Not upheld
82	06/11/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate services and excessive costs in a litigation matter	Not upheld
83	07/11/2024	Excessive costs in relation to the sale of a business	Not upheld
84	07/11/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to an eviction	Not upheld
85	12/11/2024	Excessive costs in a family law matter	Not upheld
86	13/11/2024	Inadequate legal services in a compensation matter	Upheld. No direction

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
87	19/11/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter	Not upheld
88	21/11/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation
89	25/11/2024	Inadequate legal services in a probate matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file
90	25/11/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to an enduring power of attorney matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation
91	04/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to criminal proceedings	Upheld. No direction
92	10/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a criminal matter	Not upheld
93	10/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a matter before the WRC	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation
94	10/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide a final Bill of Costs, finalise the issue at no extra cost to the estate and pay €500 as compensation
95	10/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation
96	11/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a property registration matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation

TABLE 2: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
97	12/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a family law matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation
98	09/01/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to the sale of various properties	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation
99	15/01/2025	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €300 as compensation
100	22/01/2025	Inadequate legal services in a property purchase matter	Upheld. No direction
101	27/01/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a property purchase matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to conclude the application for registration at own expense, transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation
102	27/01/2025	Inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injury matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation

From the list, it will be noted that 49 determinations are from the current period while 53 are from a previous period that can now be reported on.

TABLE 3: Review Committee Outcomes

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA DIRECTION	DATE OF REVIEW	OUTCOME
1	08/01/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €2,000 as compensation	14/01/2025	Did not confirm LSRA determination
2	10/04/2024	Inadequate legal services in a family law matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation	15/10/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination. Practitioner directed to deduct €1,500 from the fee instead of paying €3,000 as compensation
3	26/04/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in a probate matter	Services complaint upheld. Practitioner directed to apply a discount of €250 (ex VAT) to the professional fee. A costs complaint was not upheld	24/09/2024	Confirmed LSRA determinations
4	02/05/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in a personal injury matter	Not upheld	15/10/2024	Confirmed LSRA determinations
5	22/05/2024	Inadequate legal services in a family law matter	Not upheld	24/09/2024	Did not confirm LSRA determination. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation
6	22/05/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Not upheld	24/09/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination

TABLE 3: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA DIRECTION	DATE OF REVIEW	OUTCOME
7	23/05/2024	Inadequate legal services in a personal injury matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to furnish the final bill of costs	24/09/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
8	28/05/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in a family law matter	Upheld. Pay €1,000 as compensation and waive the right to recover €1,995 in costs	15/10/2024	Confirmed LSRA determinations
9	30/05/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a business premises and property transaction matters	Not upheld	24/09/2024	Did not confirm LSRA determination. Practitioner directed to provide the outstanding documents in a coherent manner
10	06/06/2024	Inadequate legal services in a family law matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file to another legal practitioner and pay €2,500 as compensation	25/10/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
11	13/06/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property sale matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation	24/09/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
12	17/06/2024	Inadequate legal services with respect to communication and discussion during the settlement of a case	Not upheld	15/10/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination

TABLE 3: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA DIRECTION	DATE OF REVIEW	OUTCOME
13	18/06/2024	Inadequate legal services in a court proceedings matter in relation to court proceedings	Not upheld	06/12/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
14	01/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property registration matter	Not upheld	15/10/2024	Did not confirm LSRA determination. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation
15	04/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a court proceedings matter	Upheld. No direction	10/12/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
16	05/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Not upheld	15/10/2024	Did not confirm LSRA determination. Practitioner directed to pay €2,000 as compensation
17	05/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in defamation proceedings	Upheld. No direction	10/12/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
18	19/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a civil dispute matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation	25/10/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination

TABLE 3: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA DIRECTION	DATE OF REVIEW	OUTCOME
19	23/07/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a matter with the Dispute Resolution Authority	Not upheld	25/10/2024	Confirmed LSRA determinations
20	30/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a family law matter	Upheld. No direction	25/10/2024	Did not confirm LSRA determination
21	31/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €600 as compensation	15/10/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
22	31/07/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injuries matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €600 as compensation	10/12/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
23	07/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. No direction	24/09/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
24	07/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in connection with the negotiation of an offer received from an insurance company with regard to an income protection claim	Not upheld	15/11/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination

TABLE 3: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA DIRECTION	DATE OF REVIEW	OUTCOME
25	07/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to compensation for a personal data breach matter	Not upheld	25/10/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
26	14/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a criminal proceedings matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation	15/11/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
27	21/08/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. No direction	15/11/2024	Did not confirm LSRA determinations
28	27/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to an Estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and monies belonging to the Estate to another practitioner and pay €1,000 as compensation	15/11/2024	Did not confirm LSRA determination
29	28/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property sale matter	Not upheld	15/11/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
30	28/08/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation and WRC matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed refund fees of €615 and not charge further fees and pay €1,000 as compensation	15/11/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination

TABLE 3: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA DIRECTION	DATE OF REVIEW	OUTCOME
31	03/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Not upheld	10/12/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
32	04/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to provide the client with a bill of costs	10/12/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
33	05/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to an employment law matter	Upheld. No direction	15/11/2024	Remitted the complaint to the LSRA to be dealt with again
34	16/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter	Not upheld	15/11/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
35	17/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file	10/12/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
36	18/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €2,000 as compensation	28/01/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination, reduced compensation to €400
37	19/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a house purchase matter	Not upheld	10/12/2024	Confirmed LSRA determination
38	23/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in a probate matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation	14/01/2025	Did not confirm LSRA determination

TABLE 3: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA DIRECTION	DATE OF REVIEW	OUTCOME
39	24/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a land transfer matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation	25/02/2025	Remitted the complaint to the LSRA to be dealt with again
40	25/09/2024	Inadequate legal services in the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to discharge the fee owed by the client to their legal representative, ensure that no charges relating to [a specific piece of work] are levied against the client or the estate of the deceased and pay €750 as compensation	28/01/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination, replaced directions with a direction to pay €1,500 as compensation
41	01/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in family law proceedings	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,500 as compensation	28/01/2025	Did not confirm LSRA determination - no direction
42	02/10/2024	Excessive costs in a debt settlement matter	Not upheld	14/01/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination
43	03/10/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in family law/divorce matters	Not upheld	28/01/2025	Confirmed LSRA determinations

TABLE 3: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA DIRECTION	DATE OF REVIEW	OUTCOME
44	08/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in a Labour Court matter	Upheld. No direction	28/01/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination, added compensation of €1,500
45	09/10/2024	Excessive costs in a probate matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund €800 of the costs	28/01/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination
46	14/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a property purchase matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation	28/01/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination, increased compensation to €1,500
47	18/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to family law and conveyance matters	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €650 as compensation	28/01/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination
48	29/10/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a personal injury matter	Not upheld	25/02/2025	Confirmed LSRA determinations
49	07/11/2024	Excessive costs in relation to the sale of a business	Not upheld	25/02/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination
50	19/11/2024	A mixed complaint. Inadequate legal services and excessive costs in relation to a family law matter	Not upheld	28/01/2025	Confirmed LSRA determinations

TABLE 3: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF LSRA DETERMINATION	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA DIRECTION	DATE OF REVIEW	OUTCOME
51	21/11/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a litigation matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €1,000 as compensation	25/02/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination
52	04/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to criminal proceedings	Upheld. No direction	25/02/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination
53	10/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a criminal matter	Not upheld	25/02/2025	Confirmed LSRA determination
54	10/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a matter before the WRC	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €500 as compensation	25/02/2025	Did not confirm LSRA determination

TABLE 4: Complaints Committee Outcomes

COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE OUTCOMES	
Referred to LPDT	41
Upheld	38
Not Upheld	70
Resolved	18
Withdrawn	3
Other Outcome	3
Closed prior to Complaints Committee Consideration	40
TOTAL	213

TABLE 5: Complaints Committee Directions and Referrals

NO.	DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
1	20/03/2024	Failure to hand over the file	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the file
2	20/03/2024	Failure to communicate and hand over the file	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the file, pay €1,000 as compensation and €500 towards the Authority costs
3	17/04/2024	Inadequate services in High Court proceedings	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation
4	17/04/2024	Failure to communicate and transfer files	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file
5	16/07/2024	Failure to hand over the file	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the file
6	29/08/2024	Conflict of interest	Referred to the LPDT
7	03/09/2024	Lack of communication in a personal injury matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive all fees
8	03/09/2024	Failure to respond to communications and failure to hand over the file	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive fees
9	03/09/2024	Failure to progress the administration of an estate and failure to respond to requests from the new firm of solicitors to hand over the file	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the file and waive all fees
10	03/09/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
11	03/09/2024	Failure to pay Counsel's fees	Referred to the LPDT
12	03/09/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT

TABLE 5: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
13	03/09/2024	Substantial inadequate legal services in relation to a personal injury matter	Referred to the LPDT
14	03/09/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
15	03/09/2024	Failure to pay Counsel's fees	Referred to the LPDT
16	04/09/2024	Breach of Chapter 7.6 of A Guide to Good Professional Conduct for Solicitors, 'Payment of first solicitor's fees'	Upheld. No direction
17	04/09/2024	Delay in transferring share of the proceeds of sale of a house	Upheld. No direction
18	04/09/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
19	12/09/2024	Failure to hand over title documents	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over the title documents
20	12/09/2024	Failure to advise client of settlement amount and overcharged without signed agreement to fees	Referred to the LPDT
21	12/09/2024	Failure to advise the client that they were no longer acting for them	Referred to the LPDT
22	18/09/2024	Lack of contact in relation to the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file
23	18/09/2024	Non-communication with a client and failure to hand over the file or communicate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to reduce the fees by €3,000 and to refund this sum to the estate
24	18/09/2024	Failure to follow instructions or communicate	Upheld. No direction

TABLE 5: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
25	08/10/2024	Failure to carry out the work relating to the instructions given in a probate matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive all fees payable by the client
26	08/10/2024	Failure to reply to emails and telephone calls requesting a copy of the will and an inventory and failure to account for funds from the estate	Upheld. No direction
27	08/10/2024	Failure to communicate regarding enquiries concerning a Will	Upheld. No direction
28	08/10/2024	The deduction of fees without authority, non-provision of Section 150 notice, making inaccurate statements (among other things) in relation to the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund in total €853.50 to the client (amount covers two related complaints)
29	08/10/2024	Failure to provide a Section 150 Notice, failure to inform the client in relation to alleged historic debts at the outset (among other things) in relation to the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund in total €853.50 to the client (amount covers two related complaints)
30	08/10/2024	Failure to pay counsel's fees	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay to the Authority €500 towards its costs
31	08/10/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
32	08/10/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
33	08/10/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
34	08/10/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT

TABLE 5: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
35	08/10/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
36	08/10/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
37	08/10/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
38	08/10/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
39	08/10/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
40	10/10/2024	Failure to provide the deeds, wills and other legal papers	Upheld. Practitioner directed to hand over all files
41	16/10/2024	Refusal to release the file, even though he has the money for fees	Upheld. No direction
42	16/10/2024	Conflict of interest and failure to hand over the file	Upheld. No direction
43	16/10/2024	Refusal to return a sum of money paid to his offices by the complainant in part payment of an agreed family settlement	Upheld. No direction
44	16/10/2024	Allegation that the practitioner took cash without giving a receipt and having an arrangement to deal in cash	Referred to the LPDT
45	24/10/2024	Failure to provide section 68/section 150 notice in relation to a probate matter until the matter was almost completed and the Bill of costs had been received	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive €1,250 plus VAT of the fee and participate in a one hour CPD course

TABLE 5: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
46	24/10/2024	Adding additional charges to the bill for the time spent responding to a prior complaint	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive €2,160 plus VAT of the fees
47	30/10/2024	Failure to provide a s68 letter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive €1,000 of the fees
48	30/10/2024	Breach of the Regulations regarding the advertising of legal services	Upheld. Practitioner directed to remove the video found to be in breach of the regulations
49	12/11/2024	Failure to register a property	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay the bill issued by the complainant
50	12/11/2024	Substantially inadequate service in relation to a family law matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive €4,489.50 in fees
51	12/11/2024	Failure to communicate with regard to a personal injury matter	Referred to the LPDT
52	12/11/2024	Failure to answer emails or progress the registration of an Enduring Power of Attorney	Referred to the LPDT
53	21/11/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
54	05/12/2024	Deduction of costs from a settlement without consent	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive €100 from the fee and pay to the Authority €500 towards its costs
55	05/12/2024	Failure to comply with two undertakings and ignoring correspondence	Referred to the LPDT

TABLE 5: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
56	16/12/2024	Alleged mismanagement of an estate	Referred to the LPDT
57	16/12/2024	Alleged failure to account for monies in property sales	Referred to the LPDT
58	16/12/2024	Alleged breach of client confidentiality in a property sale matter	Referred to the LPDT
59	16/12/2024	Alleged failure to account for monies in a property purchase matter	Referred to the LPDT
60	16/12/2024	Alleged failure to make progress on or return a number of legal files	Referred to the LPDT
61	16/12/2024	Alleged breach of a Court Order	Referred to the LPDT
62	17/12/2024	Failure to complete the work or answer enquiries in relation to a property purchase matter	Upheld. No direction
63	17/12/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Upheld. Direction to comply with an undertaking
64	17/12/2024	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
65	16/01/2025	Failure to refund fees paid for work not done in a conveyancing matter	Referred to the LPDT
66	22/01/2025	Failure to provide s68/s150 letter, failure to communicate or follow instructions in relation to an employment matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund fees of €922.50
67	22/01/2025	Failure to communicate in a litigation matter	Upheld. No direction

TABLE 5: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
68	22/01/2025	Retention of funds and lack of communication in a land transfer matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive any requirement by the complainant to discharge any further monies in this matter
69	30/01/2025	Failure to respond to requests for distribution accounts to be provided and to account for monies in the administration of an estate	Referred to the LPDT
70	30/01/2025	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT
71	05/02/2025	Failure to account for, or hand over monies received as part of a legal settlement	Referred to the LPDT
72	05/02/2025	Allegation of financial abuse while an Enduring Power of Attorney was in effect	Referred to the LPDT
73	05/02/2025	Allegations of conflict of interest, improperly facilitating property transaction, and financial abuse	Referred to the LPDT
74	18/02/2025	Deducting monies from a settlement without authority	Upheld. No direction
75	18/02/2025	Failure to progress a case in relation to a personal injury matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive any fees and outlay
76	18/02/2025	Alleged transfer of property without the complainant's knowledge or consent and witnessing a signature that is not the complainant's	Referred to the LPDT
77	18/02/2025	Failure to comply with an undertaking	Referred to the LPDT

TABLE 5: (Continued)

NO.	DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
78	27/02/2025	Failure to communicate and to account	Referred to the LPDT
79	27/02/2025	Failure to return title deeds	Referred to the LPDT

TABLE 6: Enforcement Orders Obtained in the High Court

NO.	DATE OF ORDER	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	LSRA/COMMITTEE DIRECTION
1	14/10/2024	Delays and a failure to complete the work in a property purchase	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund all and any fees paid and pay the €1,587.40 fees of the solicitor who completed the work
2	21/10/2024	Inadequate legal services in the administration of an estate	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive fees, transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation
3	04/11/2024	Excessive costs in a personal injury matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to refund €6,000 of professional fees
4	04/11/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property registration matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to progress the registration to conclusion at own expense and pay €3,000 as compensation
5	04/11/2024	Failure to complete the work in an insurance claim	Upheld. Practitioner directed to waive all fees and hand over the file to the new solicitor
6	11/11/2024	Failure to communicate and failure to hand over files	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €5,000 as compensation
7	02/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in a property purchase matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €2,000 as compensation
8	02/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in a personal injury matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €2,000 as compensation
9	02/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in a personal injury matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to transfer the file and pay €3,000 as compensation
10	02/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in court proceedings	Upheld. Practitioner directed to furnish the final bill of costs, transfer the file and pay €1,000 as compensation
11	09/12/2024	Failure to comply with undertaking	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay to the Authority €2,500 towards costs
12	16/12/2024	Inadequate legal services in relation to a compensation claim	Upheld. Practitioner directed not to charge fees for work done to date, transfer the file and pay €2,000 as compensation
13	03/03/2025	Inadequate legal services in a conveyancing matter	Upheld. Practitioner directed to pay €3,000 as compensation

GLOSSARY

Explanation of terms used in this report

Probate

The process of applying to a court for a Grant that entitles a person or persons to administer a deceased's estate. It confirms the validity of the will, and the executor/s appointed in the will to act. In the absence of a will, it confirms the person/s who are entitled to act as administrators.

Beneficiary

A person who is to receive all or a part of a deceased person's estate.

Executor/Administrator

A person appointed to administer a deceased's estate in the Grant referred to above.

Undertaking

A legally binding promise to do or not do something. In the context of complaints, these are specific agreements confirmed in writing by solicitors, which are given to other solicitors and/or banks and other financial institutions. Failure to comply with an undertaking can constitute misconduct.

Failure to hand over

A failure to hand over files, title deeds etc. when required.

Failure to account

An omission by a legal practitioner to provide proper or complete accounts of monies held and received.

Failure to pay counsel's fees

A solicitor either not paying a barrister (counsel) their fees (where the client has paid the solicitor) or not using their best endeavours to recover fees owed to a barrister by their client.



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