



LAW SOCIETY PRACTICE SUPPORT FACT SHEET

**HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND SUPPORT  
TOOLS AVAILABLE**

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# HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND SUPPORT TOOLS AVAILABLE



## Introduction

This fact sheet has been developed to assist those solicitors who receive a complaint from the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA). The fact sheet includes practical information to assist you with preparing a response and resolving any complaint as soon as possible. We hope you find the guidance helpful.

## Steps which may assist if you have been notified that a complaint has been made to LSRA about you (S 57(2) of the Act)

- Read and digest the information in any letter or correspondence
- Review the LSRA information guide for legal practitioners
- The LSRA advises that complaints can often be resolved by the parties through early engagement, even at pre-admissibility stage, so engage early and fully
- The LSRA offers mediation to facilitate resolution of admissible complaints about consumer matters
- Check all the details of any complaint being made
- Think back to the event and research any relevant files
- Prepare a response
- Respond to the complaint in a letter to LSRA in a considered fashion, and include supporting documentation
- Attend any disciplinary meeting with legal representation or a 'support person', avoid attending on your own
- At any stage seek to resolve the complaint if possible

## LSRA Complaints Handling

The LSRA is responsible for the regulation of legal practitioners (solicitors and barristers) in Ireland.

It was established in 2016 under the [Legal Services Regulation Act 2015](#). The LSRA is independent in the performance of its functions.

The LSRA has a statutory responsibility to regulate the services of legal practitioners and to ensure high standards. It investigates complaints against barristers, solicitors and solicitors firms.

## Information for Law Professionals

In this section, [solicitors can find useful information link on how the LSRA regulate the professions and set standards, how they are funded, and how they handle complaints.](#)

## Law Society and other resources to assist solicitors in difficulty

The Complaints and Client Relations Committee is one of the Committees which exercises the regulatory function of the Society. It considers complaints made against members of the profession prior to [7 October 2019](#). The committee is now in the final stage of its winding-up exercise.

### • Guidance and Ethics Helpline

This is co-ordinated by the Secretary to the Guidance and Ethics Committee, to assist solicitors concerned about their own position on any matter of conduct. To find out more about the Guidance and Ethics helpline or to seek assistance with your initial response call 01 672 4800, or access the [Guidance and Ethics Guide to Professional Conduct 4th Ed.](#)

### • Panel to assist solicitors in regulatory difficulty

The Guidance & Ethics Committee facilitate the work of "The Panel". Panel members assist solicitors who are in regulatory difficulty, such as complaints or difficulties in practice relating to practising certificates, accounts or professional

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indemnity insurance. To assist you with your initial response log into the [Guidance & Ethics Committee page online](#) and view contact details for [Panel members](#).

- **Seek Support provided by your Local Bar Associations**

There are 29 Bar Associations throughout the country; details are contained in the [Law Directory](#). Those who become an active member of their local Bar Association can find them to be an invaluable source of practical advice and assistance (Support of your local Bar Associations).

- **Consult a Colleague Helpline**

This is free and completely confidential helpline, co-ordinated by the Dublin Solicitors Bar Association, to assist the profession nationwide with any problem, whether professional or personal. Call 01 284 8484 or visit [www.dsba.ie](http://www.dsba.ie).

- **Solicitors' Benevolent Association**

It aims to assist solicitors and their dependants who are in need, for whatever reason. For more information, including application forms and details on how to make an application, contact Geraldine Pearse, Solicitors' Benevolent Association Secretary, 73 Park Avenue, Dublin 4.

## Law Society Psychological Services

The Law Society of Ireland recognises that receiving a complaint can be a disturbing and potentially distressing experience. Attending to the impact on your personal wellbeing is a vital aspect of being able to respond effectively. Seeking support from trusted friends, colleagues, or your local bar association can

provide practical and emotional support. In many cases solicitors benefit from additional professional support. Law Society Psychological Services offers the following supports to our members:

### LegalMind

LegalMind is a confidential, subsidised support for all Law Society members and practising certificate holders. The service is operated independently by Spectrum Life. Qualified counsellors, psychotherapists and psychologists are available 24/7 to offer support on all aspects of personal and professional life.

#### How to contact LegalMind:

- Free-phone 1800 81 41 77
- Text 'Hi' by SMS/WhatsApp to 087 369 0010 (standard rates apply) and a case manager will text you back
- Register for LegalMind's [online portal](#) to access the Live Chat feature
- Find more information at [www.lawsociety.ie/legalmind](http://www.lawsociety.ie/legalmind)

### Online Resources

The Law Society's Psychological Services webpage offers information to support solicitors with the personal and psychological impact of receiving a complaint. Please see: [www.lawsociety.ie/ps](http://www.lawsociety.ie/ps).

### Other External Supports:

- [Free Legal advice](#)
- [Citizen Information](#)
- [Samaritans](#)



[WHAT TO DO IF YOU RECEIVE A COMPLAINT FROM LSRA \(22 MARCH\)](#)

[SEE SLIDES HERE](#)

FOR MORE PRACTICE INFORMATION CONTACT: JUSTIN PURCELL PRACTICE SUPPORT EXECUTIVE [E.J.PURCELL@LAWSOCIETY.IE](mailto:E.J.PURCELL@LAWSOCIETY.IE)