



LAW SOCIETY
OF IRELAND

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

PROUD OF
TRADITION –
PREPARED
FOR THE
FUTURE

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
ENQUIRIES GUIDE	5
Enquiries principles	5
1 We must respond to enquiries in a way that reflects our Tone of Voice	5
2 We are all responsible for enquiries being answered	5
3 We do not stray outside our remit	5
4 We provide guidance not advice	6
5 We respond to enquiries from the public, not just the profession	6
6 We respond promptly	6
7 We give and expect courtesy and respect	7
Written enquiries	8
Letters addressed to Law Society of Ireland, not to a specific person/section	8
Forwarding a letter/email to another person	8
Incoherent correspondence	8
Archiving written correspondence	8
Forwarding emails to an external email address	8
Sending internal emails to a distribution list	9
Language	9
Telephone enquiries	10
Recorded telephone calls	10
Transferring a telephone call	10
Dealing with an abusive telephone caller	11
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	12
1 Comments from a member on Law Society policy	12
2 Request from a member of the Law Society for guidance/research assistance on an issue that is fully responded to on the website	13
3 Request from a member of the Law Society for guidance/research assistance from a committee on an issue about which information is available through library resources	13
4 Request from a member of the Law Society for guidance from a committee on a topical or 'live' issue	14
5 Request from a member of the Law Society for legal advice	14
6 Comments by a member of the public on Law Society practice notes	15
7 Request from a member of the public for legal advice	15
8 Request from a member of the public for legal advice and assistance with legal costs	16
9 Request from a foreign jurisdiction to serve legal documents on a person resident in Ireland	17
10 Legal documents sent to the Law Society for lodging by a member of the public	17
11 Comment sought by a member of the public on an individual case	18
12 Enquiry from a member of the public seeking a guide to estimated solicitors' fees	18
13 Request from a member of the public to recommend a solicitor with expertise in a particular area of law	19
14 Enquiry from a member of the public that should properly be addressed to another body, for example, an Garda Síochána, the Bar Council, the Legal Aid Board or the Courts Service	19

INTRODUCTION

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND RECEIVES MORE THAN 160,000 ENQUIRIES FROM OUR MEMBERS, STUDENTS, THIRD-PARTY ORGANISATIONS AND THE PUBLIC EACH YEAR. WHETHER WE RECEIVE AN ENQUIRY BY EMAIL, LETTER, TELEPHONE, SOCIAL MEDIA, FAX OR FACE-TO-FACE, RESPONDING TO THESE ENQUIRIES FORMS A CORE PART OF OUR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS.

This guide has been developed to assist staff to respond to enquiries in a consistent manner.

It is a staff document to be used for internal purposes only.

The guide has three sections:

- ENQUIRIES GUIDE – the principles, rules and responsibilities for answering enquiries,
- ENQUIRES DIRECTORY – internal and external specialists listed by subject area,
- QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – examples of how to respond to common queries.

This guide will assist all employees of the Law Society to fulfil their responsibilities when they receive or answer a query from colleagues, members, students, third-party organisations and the public. It is critical that all employees are familiar with this document and their obligations within it.

We must show our colleagues the same respect and courtesy as we would a member. Accordingly, the Enquiries Guide also applies when dealing with colleagues.

If you wish to comment on the guide or its content, please contact Michelle Nolan at m.nolan@lawsociety.ie.

This is an internal document and must not be circulated externally.

ENQUIRIES GUIDE

ENQUIRIES PRINCIPLES

1. WE RESPOND TO ENQUIRIES IN A WAY THAT REFLECTS OUR TONE OF VOICE

The way we answer questions from members and the public has a direct impact on the reputation of the Law Society. Each enquiry we receive is an opportunity to make a connection and make a positive impression. We each have a responsibility to ensure every enquiry is answered promptly, accurately, and in a way that reflects our Tone of Voice principles: *courtesy and respect, we serve* and *clear and concise*. We suggest you regularly refer to the Law Society Tone of Voice guidelines, either in hard copy or the soft copy available on the intranet.

2. WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR ENQUIRIES BEING ANSWERED

When an enquiry is received, the primary responsibility to respond lies with the person to whom the enquiry is addressed or the person to whom it has been properly transferred according to accepted Law Society business practices.

If the recipient of an enquiry lacks the knowledge needed to respond, or if the enquiry would be better answered by another staff member, then the enquiry should be transferred to him/her. Enquiries should always be answered by the available staff member with the greatest level of expertise in that particular area.

If an enquiry is particularly challenging, you should discuss how to approach it with your colleagues. If difficulties persist, you may refer it to your head of section.

ENQUIRIES TO HIGH-PROFILE PEOPLE IN THE LAW SOCIETY

Senior people in the Law Society – such as the president, the director general, the deputy director general, and other directors – attract a large volume of enquiries by virtue of their position or high public profile. The addressee can choose to respond to their correspondence as they wish, including in the following ways:

- They may respond themselves directly without assistance,
- They may ask other staff members for input prior to responding themselves,
- They may have another staff member draft the entire response, with the senior person signing their name to it,
- They may ask another staff member to respond and, in their response, to state that they are replying on behalf of the addressee,
- They may ask another staff member to respond, and the response will not contain any reference to the original addressee.

3. WE DO NOT STRAY OUTSIDE OUR REMIT

The Law Society is the professional body for solicitors and exercises statutory functions in relation to the education, admission, enrolment, discipline and regulation of the solicitors' profession. While we always aim to be helpful and provide a response when asked a question, we try not to stray outside the scope of our responsibilities as an organisation.

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

However, enquiries that lie outside the remit of the Law Society should still always be acknowledged and responded to. The response should explain why we are unable to assist the enquirer and, if possible, direct them to where they can find assistance.

4. WE PROVIDE GUIDANCE, NOT ADVICE

The Law Society can provide guidance, but never legal advice. For this reason, we should never use the words 'advice' or 'advise' when responding to a query. Instead, use words like 'guide' or 'guidance'.

If you have reasons to believe that the enquirer may have written an attendance note based on your verbal guidance and/or they intend to rely on your guidance, then you should follow up with a letter or an email confirming the details of the enquiry and the response, based on the information given.

Any written correspondence should clearly state that information provided is not legal advice and should not be interpreted as such.

Occasionally, members request information and/or guidance on an issue that requires extensive research in order to give a complete answer. It is important that we carefully manage staff resources and avoid giving complete, detailed responses to enquiries that should properly be answered by the member's own research and/or by counsel. For example, if we receive an enquiry necessitating research, there are three ways we can respond:

- If the information is available on the website, we should direct the member to the website,
- If the information is not available on the website but is accessible by reading case law, legislation, and/or academic books/journals/texts, we should direct the member to the Library,
- Only if the information is not available elsewhere, or if it is a 'live' issue, should it be directed to an advisory committee for guidance.

We cannot provide a definite list of enquiries that should be directed to the committees, as the 'live' issues do not remain constant. However, usually they are issues that cause controversy, confusion and/or difficulty for those practising within that area. There are sample questions and answers on each of the above options in the 'question and answer' section of this guide.

5. WE RESPOND TO ENQUIRIES FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, NOT JUST THE PROFESSION

Our mission statement opens with a commitment "to serve, represent, and support our members and the public". It is our responsibility to respond to all enquiries received from members of the public in a helpful manner.

6. WE RESPOND PROMPTLY

Enquiries should be answered according to the response targets indicated below. These time frames are targets rather than absolute limits. If you are unable to answer the question in the appointed time, an acknowledgement should be sent giving an estimated time when you will have a full answer.

It is acknowledged that, during peak periods, you may need to prioritise your other work. Therefore, during peak periods, these targets may be extended. Certain sections may also work to alternate arrangements with management approval.

Prior to taking leave, you are reminded to activate your out-of-office email message and voicemail. The target period commences from your return to the office.

The response targets apply to internal and external enquiries.

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

Method of enquiry	Normal target to acknowledge enquiry	Maximum target for a substantive response
Phone call	Four working hours	30 days
Social media (approved social media users only)	Four working hours	30 days
Email	One working day	30 days
Fax	Five working days	30 days
Letter by post or as an attachment by email	Five working days	30 days

7. WE GIVE AND EXPECT COURTESY AND RESPECT

On extremely rare occasions, an enquirer exhibits unacceptable behaviour. All staff are entitled to be treated with courtesy and respect in their dealings with members, students, and members of the public.

Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Aggressive, rude, or violent behaviour that causes staff to feel threatened, demeaned, intimidated or abused,
- Threats of self-harm,
- Making unreasonable demands – for example, demanding a response within unrealistic timeframes, requiring priority over other enquiries, insistence on speaking with a particular member of staff,
- Repeatedly persisting with an enquiry that has been dealt with,
- A pattern of unreasonable behaviour – for example, multiple telephone calls, submission of repetitive or irrelevant material, seeking to continuously change the nature of the enquiry,
- Taking a disproportionate amount of staff time at the expense of other enquiries.

Unacceptable behaviour should be reported to your head of section, who will explain in writing to the correspondent why their conduct is deemed to be unacceptable and how we propose to respond.

Our response will depend on circumstances and may include:

- Requiring an assurance about future conduct,
- Requesting an apology,
- Requiring contact to be in a specific form – that is, by letter only,
- Enquirers may be asked to refrain from using offensive language and advised that their correspondence will not be dealt with until they do so,
- Unreasonably persistent enquirers may be told that further correspondence will be placed on the file without response,
- Similarly, unreasonably persistent or abusive telephone callers may be informed that any further calls from them will go unanswered,
- In exceptional cases, terminating all contact (this will always occur if there is violence or threats against staff, which may also be reported to the gardaí).

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

WRITTEN ENQUIRIES

LETTERS ADDRESSED TO THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND, NOT A SPECIFIC PERSON/SECTION

Letters addressed to the Law Society generally must be opened in the post room and the contents of the letter carefully read so that the correct recipient is properly identified.

After reading the correspondence, if the staff member is still in doubt as to whom the correct recipient may be, they should contact the most likely recipients and confirm the matter falls within their area prior to forwarding the correspondence. To avoid any delay, this contact should be by telephone or email. If using email, ideally a scanned copy of the correspondence should be attached. If the correct recipient is not apparent, the staff member may check with Michelle Nolan.

FORWARDING A LETTER/EMAIL TO ANOTHER SECTION

If you receive a written enquiry that you are unable to answer and you believe a colleague may be better placed to respond, you should forward the enquiry to them. If you are not certain that the enquiry falls within their area, you should check with them prior to redirecting it. A scanned copy of the email should be used when consulting with a colleague rather than the internal post system

In the event of any confusion or dispute as to which section or staff member should deal with a particular enquiry, you may refer to your head of section (or failing that, head of department).

INCOHERENT CORRESPONDENCE

Occasionally we will receive enquiries that are incoherent. There is no definitive definition of an incoherent enquiry, but they may be comments or questions that are:

- Unclear to the reader,
- Unrelated to law and/or the legal profession, and/or
- Malicious or inflammatory in nature and content.

We should not reply to incoherent correspondence that matches the above description. However, it should be retained and placed on file.

If you are in doubt as to whether the enquiry you received is sufficiently incoherent so as not to warrant a reply, you should speak to your head of section. You may also contact Michelle Nolan at m.nolan@lawsociety.ie.

ARCHIVING WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

Unless an established policy exists for a particular department, section and/or committee, all letter and email enquiries and responses should be archived in soft or hard copy and retained for at least six years after the matter has concluded. If the enquiries are received by letter or fax, they should be retained in hard copy. Employees may deem it necessary and appropriate to retain a note on certain telephone enquiries if he/she believes it may need to be relied on at a later stage.

This approach may be amended following a planned review of the Law Society's data retention practices.

FORWARDING EMAILS TO AN EXTERNAL EMAIL ADDRESS

Emails received from colleagues for the purposes of internal circulation only should not be forwarded (for example, at the bottom of an email) to external email addresses.

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

SENDING INTERNAL EMAILS TO A DISTRIBUTION LIST

Staff should email a distribution list only when a matter relates to everyone on the distribution list. As a rule, enquiries should not be forwarded to distribution lists.

LANGUAGE

We are only obliged to answer enquiries that present in English, or Irish if they relate to our statutory obligations. If we receive documents written in another language, then they should be returned to the sender with a request to correspond in English. If we have resources internally that can translate the correspondence into English, then we always have the option of using those resources rather than returning the correspondence to the sender.

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES

RECORDED TELEPHONE CALLS

Staff members may, at their discretion, decline to be recorded during a telephone call. If they do not consent to being recorded they may give the caller the option of continuing the call unrecorded or submitting their query in writing.

TRANSFERRING A TELEPHONE CALL

If you receive a telephone enquiry that you are unable to answer and that you know can be answered by a colleague, you may transfer the call, following these guidelines:

- Explain why you are transferring to the caller and to whom,
- Ask the caller if he/she minds being transferred and if he/she is happy to leave a voicemail if your colleague isn't available,
- Make sure someone is there to pick up the call before you hang up,
- Tell the person to whom you are transferring the call the caller's name, whether or not they are a member, their solicitor number, and the nature of the call.

To ensure calls are forwarded to the correct person, you may wish to also:

- Ask the person to whom you are transferring the call if he/she is the appropriate person to deal with the enquiry and if he/she is in a position to deal with the call at that particular time, and
- If they are not in a position to deal with the enquiry at that time, inform the caller of this, take his/her contact details, and forward them to the person who has agreed to deal with the enquiry at a later point.

You should also inform your colleague to whom the call is transferred the name of the caller, whether they are a solicitor or a member of the public, and the nature of the query. We should avoid having an enquirer repeat the same detailed information to several staff members. The person to whom the call is transferred should refer to the enquiry when greeting the caller. For example, "Hello John, my name is Mary. I understand you have a query about [matter of enquiry]..."

To ensure a call is transferred to the correct person, staff members should carefully listen to the caller's enquiry in full. If a caller is unclear, staff should take extra time to identify the relevant staff member who can answer the enquiry.

An example of when an enquiry can cause confusion is when an enquirer states that he/she has a complaint. Complaints against solicitors are handled by the Complaints Section in Regulation. Any other issues or grievances should be forwarded to the section that deals with the subject matter of the issue and should not be forwarded to the Complaints Section. It is extremely important that we listen carefully to the nature of the enquiry in order to identify the proper recipient.

When a transferred call receives only a voicemail message, the caller should be informed of this before the call is put through, and they should be asked whether they wish to leave a voicemail.

If a staff member receives a misdirected call, they should transfer the call directly to the person who deals with that area, if known. Otherwise, they should transfer it back to reception. A list of internal and external specialists listed by subject area can be found in the Enquires Directory.

The default protocol should be followed unless your section has a pre-existing protocol to transfer tele-

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

phone calls and there is management approval to continue the existing practice.

All employees should personalise their voicemail message in line with Law Society of Ireland protocol, which you can access in the employee handbook.

DEALING WITH AN ABUSIVE TELEPHONE CALLER

On rare occasions staff may receive calls which they find abusive. Abusive language and/or tone includes, but is not limited to, communications which recipients find threatening, offensive, harassing, indecent, obscene, menacing and/or causes them alarm, anxiety and/or distress. No one should ever be made to feel unsafe at work. If you receive an abusive call, you may end that call following the instructions below.

First, inform the caller that you find the terms and tone of the call offensive and request that they stop using that type of tone and/or language. If the caller does not respond to your request, advise them that the call will be ended unless they stop. After three warnings, you should tell the caller that they have not heeded your warnings and that you are ending the call. You should disconnect immediately and inform your head of section.

The wording to be used is as follows:

First warning

"I find the language and/or tone you are using to be abusive. Please stop or I will have to end the call."

Second warning

"May I remind you that if you continue to behave in this manner, I will have to end the call?"

Third warning

"I have asked you twice to stop using abusive language/tone and you have carried on.
[At your discretion you may quote: "Abusive language may be interpreted as harassment and is an offence under section 10 of the Non-fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997."] Again, I ask you to stop. This is your final warning."

Ending the call

"I have asked you three times to stop using abusive language and you have carried on. I am now going to end the call."

In exceptional circumstances it may not be appropriate to give the caller three warnings prior to ending the call. If a staff member feels it is warranted because of the severity of the abusive language and/or tone, they may end the call immediately. They should inform the caller that they are ending the call because of their abusive language/tone.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A selection of example questions and answers has been developed to show the structure and style staff should follow when responding to written enquiries. The purpose of the sample answers is to empower staff to draft responses themselves consistent with the Tone of Voice Guidelines.

The sample answers are not an exhaustive list.

They should act as a guide to how to respond. These are not template responses but rather they are examples of how to answer common queries. They should never be copied and pasted in their entirety to answer questions.

The responses take a standard form, with a paragraph dedicated to each step of the response. For example, a typical response may include the following:

- Thank the enquirer for making contact and their comments,
- Answer the enquiry and give clear reasons for our position/decision,
- Explain the next steps,
- Provide any further helpful information available,
- If we cannot be of assistance but another organisation can, we direct the enquirer to that organisation.

Telephone enquiries that reflect the sample written questions can also be answered using information provided in the sample answers below.

If you wish to comment on the contents of this document, contact Michelle Nolan at m.nolan@lawsociety.ie.

1. COMMENTS FROM A MEMBER ON LAW SOCIETY POLICY

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

We received your email/letter of 00 Month Year. Thank you for taking the time to email/write to us with your comments. They have been forwarded to [insert committee name or department name] for their information.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

2. REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF THE LAW SOCIETY FOR GUIDANCE/RESEARCH ASSISTANCE ON AN ISSUE THAT IS FULLY RESPONDED TO ON THE WEBSITE

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

We received your email/letter of 00 Month Year.

We have a dedicated section on the solicitors' area of the Law Society website that provides detailed guidance on the issue you have raised. You can access the information at [insert link].

You will need to login with your username (your solicitor number) and password. If you require assistance with logging in, please see www.lawsociety.ie/help.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

3. REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF THE LAW SOCIETY FOR GUIDANCE/RESEARCH ASSISTANCE FROM A COMMITTEE ON AN ISSUE ABOUT WHICH INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE THROUGH LIBRARY RESOURCES

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your letter/email of 00 Month Year.

Law Society committees offer guidance on best practice but are unable to carry out legal research on behalf of individual members.

The Law Society Library offers an enquiry service, and we suggest you contact them. They have a wide range of published resources and may be able to assist you with your research.

[Alternative wording if you have forwarded the request directly to the library:]

The Law Society Library offers an enquiry service, and we have forwarded your enquiry to them. They have a wide range of resources and may be able to assist you with your research.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

4. REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF THE LAW SOCIETY FOR GUIDANCE FROM A COMMITTEE ON A TOPICAL OR 'LIVE' ISSUE

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your letter/email of 00 Month Year.

The [name of committee] will meet on [insert date] and will consider your enquiry then.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

5. REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF THE LAW SOCIETY FOR LEGAL ADVICE

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your letter/email of 00 Month Year.

Law Society committees offer guidance on best practice but cannot give legal advice.

The Law Society Library offers an enquiry service for members; therefore you may wish to contact them. The Library does not give legal advice, but does have a wide range of published resources and may be able to assist you with your research.

If you require further assistance and/or the subject matter of your enquiry is sufficiently complex, you may want to consider obtaining the advice of a solicitor with expertise in the area or a counsel's opinion.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

6. COMMENTS BY A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC ON LAW SOCIETY PRACTICE NOTES

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your email/letter of 00 Month Year. Your concerns and comments are noted.

We understand that your original enquiry relates to a practice note. Practice notes issued by the Law Society of Ireland are issued to solicitors for their guidance only. Accordingly, we are only able to answer enquiries from solicitors regarding practice notes.

If you have concerns relating to a practice note issued by the Law Society, you should express those concerns to a solicitor who, if appropriate, may make enquiries with the relevant Law Society committee.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

7. REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC FOR LEGAL ADVICE

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your email/letter of 00 Month Year.

The Law Society of Ireland is the professional body for solicitors. As such, we are unable to give legal advice.

We suggest you contact a solicitor to obtain legal advice in respect of your concerns. A full list of all solicitors who hold a practising certificate and professional indemnity insurance is found on the Law Society's website under 'Find a Solicitor'. The full website address for this service is www.lawsociety.ie/findasolicitor.

[If the enquirer has indicated he/she cannot afford to pay for the services of a solicitor, you may insert the below paragraph directing her/him to FLAC's and the Citizens Information Board's websites:]

In the event that you cannot afford the services of a solicitor, we suggest you make contact with your local Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC). FLAC volunteers provide free basic legal assistance. Their website address is www.flac.ie.

Alternatively, you may find the Citizens Information Board useful. It is a statutory body that supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a range of public and social services. Its website is www.citizensinformation.ie.

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

Also, the Legal Aid Board provides legal aid and advice on civil law matters to persons unable to fund those services from their own resources. Its website is www.legalaidboard.ie.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

8. REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC FOR LEGAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE WITH LEGAL COSTS

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your email/letter of 00 Month Year.

The Law Society of Ireland is the professional body for solicitors. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to be of assistance, as we are unable to give legal advice.

I suggest you contact a solicitor to obtain legal advice in respect of your concerns. A full list of all solicitors who hold a practising certificate and professional indemnity insurance is found on the Law Society's website under 'Find a Solicitor'. The full website address for this service is www.lawsociety.ie/findasolicitor.

Also, we do not operate a scheme of financial assistance to assist members of the public who find themselves unable to pay legal costs. However, if you cannot afford the services of a solicitor, I suggest you make contact with your local Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC). FLAC volunteers provide free basic legal assistance. Their website address is www.flac.ie.

Alternatively, you may find the Citizens Information Board useful. It is a statutory body that supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a range of public and social services. Its website is www.citizensinformation.ie.

The Legal Aid Board provides legal aid and advice on civil law matters to persons unable to fund those services from their own resources. Its website is www.legalaidboard.ie.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

9. REQUEST FROM A FOREIGN JURISDICTION TO SERVE LEGAL DOCUMENTS ON A PERSON RESIDENT IN IRELAND

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

We received your letter of 00 Month Year.

The Law Society of Ireland is the professional body for solicitors and does not have the capacity to act as a summons server in these circumstances. I have enclosed the original documents you sent to us.

[Insert the below paragraph if appropriate and related to a small claims matter:]

The Small Claims Registrar in Ireland, who deals with European small claims, can be contacted at 00353 1 888 6447 and will be happy to answer any queries you have.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

10. LEGAL DOCUMENTS SENT TO THE LAW SOCIETY FOR LODGING BY A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

We received your letter of 00 Month Year.

You might please note that sending your letter of 00 Month 2014 to the Law Society of Ireland has no legal effect whatsoever. The Law Society has no function in this regard.

The Law Society is the professional body for solicitors. As such we are unable to give legal advice. We suggest you contact a solicitor to assist you with this issue. A full list of all solicitors who hold a practising certificate and professional indemnity insurance is found on the Law Society's website under 'Find a Solicitor'. The full website address for this service is www.lawsociety.ie/findasolicitor.

We enclose your original letter of 00 Month 2014, which we think appropriate to return to you.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

11. COMMENT SOUGHT BY A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC ON AN INDIVIDUAL CASE

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your email/letter of 00 Month Year.

The Law Society of Ireland is the professional body for solicitors. We cannot comment on individual cases and we are unable to give legal advice.

If you require legal advice, we suggest you make contact with a solicitor of your choosing. A full list of all solicitors who hold a practising certificate and professional indemnity insurance is found on the Law Society's website under 'Find a Solicitor'. The full website address for this service is www.lawsociety.ie/findasolicitor.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

12. ENQUIRY FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC SEEKING A GUIDE TO ESTIMATED SOLICITORS' FEES

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your email/letter of 00 Month Year.

The Law Society of Ireland is the professional body for solicitors. Because it would infringe competition law, we are unable to provide a scale of estimated solicitors' fees.

Legal matters are very complex and do not lend themselves to a 'one size fits all' charging system.

We have a dedicated page on our website about legal charges, which you can access at www.lawsociety.ie/legalcharges. Also, we have produced a Legal Charges Guide, which can be downloaded from our website at www.lawsociety.ie/legalcharges.

If you believe that the fee charged by your solicitor is excessive, you have the option of filing an official complaint with the Law Society. You will find information on making a complaint on our website at www.lawsociety.ie/complaints.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

ENQUIRIES GUIDE FOR STAFF

13. REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC TO RECOMMEND A SOLICITOR WITH EXPERTISE IN A PARTICULAR AREA OF LAW

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your email/letter of 00 Month Year.

The Law Society of Ireland is the professional body for solicitors. We cannot recommend one solicitor over another, as there would be a clear conflict of interest.

A full list of all solicitors who hold a practising certificate and professional indemnity insurance is found on the Law Society's website under 'Find a Solicitor'. The full website address for this service is www.lawsociety.ie/findasolicitor.

You can also check a solicitor's disciplinary record on our website. The website address for this facility is www.lawsociety.ie/checkrecord.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]

14. ENQUIRY FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC THAT SHOULD PROPERLY BE ADDRESSED TO ANOTHER BODY, FOR EXAMPLE, AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA, THE BAR COUNCIL, THE LEGAL AID BOARD OR THE COURTS SERVICE

Sample answer:

Dear [name],

Thank you for your email/letter of 00 Month Year.

The Law Society of Ireland is the professional body for solicitors. Unfortunately, we are unable to be of assistance to you because [insert reason].

You may wish to contact [insert appropriate body/organisation]. They are [insert their purpose]. Their website address is [insert their website address or, if responding by email, the link to it].

Yours sincerely,

[name]

[department]