



LAW SOCIETY
OF IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2020/2021



Members of the Law Society of Ireland
C/o Blackhall Place
Dublin 7

21 October 2021

Dear Members,

In accordance with Bye-law 4 of the Society's Bye-laws, we have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report for 2020/21 of the Law Society of Ireland.



James Cahill
President,
Law Society of Ireland



Mary Keane
Director General,
Law Society of Ireland

CONTENTS

3	ABOUT THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND
4	President's report
8	Director General's report
11	PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW
11	Strategic Objectives 2019-2023
12	Top ten achievements of 2020/21
14	Facts about the profession
18	THE YEAR IN REVIEW
18	News stories
19	DG steps down First woman DG
20	Calcutta Run
21	News stories
28	AML Activities
29	ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW
29	Organisational structure
30	Council of the Law Society for the year ending 4 November 2021
31	Report of the senior management team
	Reports from
32	Policy and Public Affairs Department
33	Representation and Member Services Department
34	Education Department
35	Regulation Department
36	Finance and Administration Department
37	Human Resources Department
39	COMMITTEE OVERVIEW
40	Standing committee reports
50	Non-standing committee reports
65	Committee membership
70	Staff list
73	FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
73	Law Society of Ireland Reports and consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020
105	Law Society of Ireland Compensation Fund Reports and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020



ABOUT THE LAW SOCIETY

The Law Society exercises statutory functions under the *Solicitors Acts 1954 to 2015* in relation to the education, admission, enrolment, discipline and regulation of the solicitors' profession. These statutory functions are exercised by the Council or by committees to which the Council delegates those statutory functions. It is the professional body for its solicitor members, to whom it also provides services and support.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Law Society is governed by a Council, comprising elected and nominated members of the solicitors' profession. The director general is the chief executive of the Law Society, with all of the powers and responsibilities usually vested in a chief executive.

A new Council is elected every year in November. It delegates statutory functions to a range of committees. A president and two vice-presidents are elected each year from among the elected Council members.

A photograph of a traditional wooden boat with a thatched roof made of sticks, set against a backdrop of a mountain range under a cloudy sky. The boat is positioned on a grassy slope, and the thatched roof is the central focus, showing the intricate weaving of the sticks. The background features a large, rounded mountain peak under a dramatic, overcast sky with some light breaking through the clouds. The overall mood is rustic and historical.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



As I began my year as president, I made a commitment to lead the profession during the next phase of the pandemic – business recovery. ‘Working together, apart’ during the highest level of restrictions, the collegiality long associated with our profession has been the unwavering lynchpin that will enable us to work together to build a stable foundation for the future.

SMALL PRACTICES

I am a long-standing advocate for the need to enable solicitors to provide much-needed legal services in their local communities. The Small Practice Traineeship Grant was offered for a second consecutive year to help with the cost of employing a trainee solicitor. This grant can help to ensure a continuity of legal services in our communities.

Small practices have shown great resilience, and they continue to adapt to meet the challenges of the day. The Small Practice Information Sessions, launched in 2020, have proved especially popular. These weekly online sessions are free to access and cover a breadth of topics, including cyber-security, developing a paperless office, and merging or retiring from practice. Links to past information sessions and all other practice supports, advice, and tools can be viewed in the Law Society’s online [‘Small Practice Business Hub’](#).

I offer my thanks to all colleagues who took the time to participate in the Business Recovery Survey. Your feedback and experiences of the impact of the pandemic will help to inform the Law Society’s small practice supports as we prepare for the future.

NEGATIVE INTEREST RATES

New bank charges on client accounts – so-called ‘negative interest’ – was a key issue facing the profession this year. I proudly sat on the Negative Interest Rates Task Force and advocated the concerns of colleagues to the financial institutions. The Law Society initiated a public-facing campaign to highlight the injustice of these new charges to our clients, with a focus on the impact on home buyers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank local bar associations for their support of this collaborative effort. Work on this matter is ongoing.

PERSONAL INJURIES GUIDELINES

In April 2021, I called out insurance industry spin – aimed against solicitors – that serves solely to deflect blame for ever-rising premiums. Following the introduction of the new *Personal Injuries Guidelines* that month, it was vital to defend the profession and our clients by calling on the insurance industry to commit to passing on savings arising from reduced damages to consumers. While our call was widely reported in the media, the insurance industry has not yet published such a commitment.

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

During an appearance before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice in May, I, together with director general Mary Keane, advocated for balance among the membership of the Judicial Appointments Commission. It is critically important that a representative from each branch of the profession, including solicitors, is appointed to this commission.

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

In a time of continued threats to democracy globally, it has never been more important for international law societies and bar associations to stand together to ensure that the rule of law is upheld in all jurisdictions. The Law Societies of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland issued two joint statements in the past year, to condemn threats against lawyers following the Myanmar coup, and sanctions by China against lawyers providing legal advice on human-rights violations against the Uyghur people in Xinjiang. The Law Society also supported the inaugural International Fair Trial Day in June to highlight the deteriorating human-rights situation and lack of fair trial standards reported in Turkey.

WELLBEING

The impact of COVID-19 is still being felt. Solicitors have continued to work in the heart of communities nationwide throughout the pandemic, but we must be conscious of minding our own mental health and look out for our colleagues. I encourage you to access the online [Professional Wellbeing Hub](#) to learn about the wellbeing supports available to members.

The Dignity Matters survey, launched in April, marked further progress in the Society’s commitment to improving gender equality, diversity and inclusion across the solicitors’ profession. I wish to extend my thanks to each colleague who participated in this important survey, mindful that this may have been difficult for some. The results will play an important role in creating recommendations on how to tackle bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in our profession.

SENIOR COUNSEL

In June 2021, it was announced that a further 12 solicitors would be granted Patents of Precedence, including two past-presidents of the Law Society. I congratulate my colleagues on this professional achievement. May we



continue to demonstrate the leadership that will pave the way for a more inclusive and balanced legal profession, to reflect modern Irish society.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHT

To reiterate my statement at the start of my term, it is a great honour and a wonderful privilege to serve as President of the Law Society of Ireland and to lead the Irish solicitors' profession. A personal highlight of this time is the real possibility of being able to present a unique bronze plaque to each solicitor who has practised for 40 years.

Despite the great challenges we may have faced this year, we have emerged a stronger profession, looking forward together. And though the current situation has prevented me from meeting many of you in person through the course of my work, I have benefited from your contributions and support no less.

I ask members to join me in a special word of thanks to our Council members and director general, who have attended a record number of Council meetings this year, with robust debates and contributions. Your Council is composed of a remarkable body of people. This word of thanks extends to all the members of the specialist committees.

Despite the great challenges we may have faced this year, we have emerged a stronger profession, looking forward together. And though the current situation has prevented me from meeting many of you in person through the course of my work, I have benefited from your contributions and support no less.

Finally, I would like to thank former director general Ken Murphy for his remarkable contribution to the Law Society and the profession over the past 26 years.

James Cahill
President

Perseverance in the pursuit of access to justice continues to be the driving force for the solicitors' profession.

Faced with evolving restrictions on society and business, resilience and innovation prevailed, as our members have continued to work diligently on behalf of their clients. Indeed, the Law Society's advertising campaign reflects the unwavering commitment that solicitors give to their clients.

VOLUNTEERISM

In my first annual report update as director general, I would like to reflect on the spirit of collegiality among our committee and Council members. Many hundreds of solicitors contribute to the work of the Law Society through membership of our committees, task forces, and working groups. In doing so, these solicitors volunteer countless hours to provide expertise and guidance to advance access to justice for all citizens.

With 'essential-service provider' designation, solicitors have adapted and remained open for business through each phase of the pandemic to date. So, too, has the Law Society, and my colleagues on the Society's staff have continued to embrace new ways of working and technology to deliver world-class education, services, and supports for members. Collegiality has triumphed, despite limited opportunities to collaborate in person.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with the Minister for Justice, the Courts Service, other State bodies, and Government departments has continued, as issues are debated and preparations to emerge from pandemic restrictions progress. We work closely with colleagues and decision-makers across the legal landscape to share your valuable feedback and experiences of working on the frontlines of the justice system.

Over the past year, we engaged with our members on important issues through various surveys, the results of which will help to inform the development of future Law Society supports.

As part of our COVID-19 response, the Business Recovery Survey sought to identify the impact of the pandemic on firms of all sizes. The findings revealed that the profession adapted with speed, innovated, and invested in new technologies to maintain or expand business. The Law Society is here for you every step along the road to recovery.

DIGNITY MATTERS

You will have heard much about the Dignity Matters survey over the past year – and for good reason. This is the first survey of its kind to address bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment in the solicitors' profession in Ireland. Following concerning findings about the global legal profession published in the International Bar Association 'Us Too?' report in 2019, and a motion from members at the 2020 annual general meeting, it was time for the Law Society to assess these issues in an Irish context.

The resulting Dignity Matters report is, undoubtedly, stark reading. Bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment were reported by practitioners – past and present. Incidents are rarely reported, for reasons that include fear of repercussion. Where reporting occurs, perpetrators are unlikely to face adequate consequences.

I commend our members for providing experiences of difficult situations concerning this highly sensitive subject matter. Please know that your participation will contribute to the future of the profession where workplace culture is grounded in dignity and respect.





The Law Society is proud, as I trust you are also, to have taken this proactive approach to understand the extent of the issues. We must now come together and do the work to stamp out behaviour that has no place in the solicitors' profession.

The profession is predicated on the highest ethical standards. For this reason, in particular, the findings detailed in this report, authored by independent consultants Crowe, present an uncomfortable reality. Yet, having the true workplace experience of our members before us, we can now take meaningful action to ensure dignity at work for all.

The evidence-based recommendations for change in the report show that it is within our collective power to create a workplace that reflects the values of the profession – integrity, trust, collegiality, and respect. This is the first step in an important journey. I ask that you join us as we embark on an ambitious programme of change to support a culture of dignity, respect, and inclusivity in the solicitors' profession.

I urge members who experience distress due to the findings detailed in the report to contact LegalMind (1800 814 177) – and for trainees, support is available through Law School Psychological Services.

Significant progress was made on the Law Society's digital-first strategy. In December, the online practising certificate renewal application launched to streamline the process. The digital *Law Directory* was launched in July to positive feedback. In addition to reducing the environmental impact of the annual hard-copy directory, the convenient online format allows members to access the most up-to-date information in real time.

OIREACHTAS APPEARANCE

Alongside President James Cahill, I addressed the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice to express deep concern at the exclusion of the solicitors' profession from the proposed Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC). Solicitors are subject-matter experts across a broad range of areas of law, operate at every level of seniority, and have first-hand experience of the impact of the courts system on the public.

It is inconceivable that solicitors would be excluded from the proposed JAC, and balance across judicial appointments is needed to reflect the diversity of modern Irish society. As I noted during this address: "Diversity is being invited to the party, but inclusion is being asked to dance. We'd like to see more solicitors being asked to dance!"

SEWING THE SAIL

The resilience and collegiality demonstrated within the profession and the Society this year draws to mind a favourite impressionist painting, *Sewing the Sail* by the Spanish master of light, Joaquin Sorolla. This colourful oil painting depicts a community coming together to mend the sail of a boat at the beginning of the annual fishing season, and it is a personal favourite. It illustrates such a strong collegiate spirit, with the community driven by a shared goal at the start of another season of endeavour.

Its message might resonate with many within the profession as we emerge from recent dark times and start another legal year in anticipation of brighter days ahead.

Mary Keane
Director General

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2019-2023

The Law Society of Ireland's Strategy Statement 2019-2023 sets out the strategic objectives that the Society will follow

- 1** We will use our voice, our experience and our relationships to represent the solicitors' profession and to champion its contribution to the Irish economy, the vindication of citizens' rights and the rule of law.

- 2** We will provide a strong voice in policy debate in order to inform decision-making on matters pertaining to the justice system and law reform.

- 3** We will enable our members to achieve their potential as respected and trusted advisors and successful businesses.

- 4** We will fulfil our statutory regulation functions to ensure fair and effective regulation of solicitors in the interests of the profession and the public.

- 5** We will fulfil our statutory education functions in delivering a premier qualification and high-quality ongoing education and training.

- 6** We will be a valued resource for our members as a high-performance professional body.

- 7** We will continue our tradition of engaged citizenship and civic responsibility by promoting legal awareness, encouraging social diversity within the profession, supporting local community initiatives, and providing accessibility to our resources at Blackhall Place, in line with our Corporate Social Responsibility Statement.

TOP TEN OF 2020/2021

1

HISTORY MADE AS SOLICITORS GRANTED PATENTS OF PRECEDENCE

History was made on 9 October 2020 as 17 solicitors from throughout Ireland were formally granted Patents of Precedence, and given the designation of Senior Counsel, in an online ceremony presided over by the then Chief Justice Frank Clarke. Another batch of 12 solicitors received their Patents of Precedence on 15 June 2021, bringing the total number of solicitors to 29 who are currently permitted to use the 'SC' designation.

2

LANDMARK 'DIGNITY MATTERS' STUDY LAUNCHED

In May 2021, the Society launched a first-of-its-kind, evidence-based study into bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in the Irish solicitors' profession. The study followed a motion proposed by Law Society members and approved at the Society's AGM in November 2020. The research included an independent and confidential survey of all solicitor trainees and solicitors who are practising or have previously practised in Ireland.

3

KEEPING LEGAL SERVICES OPEN DURING THE COVID CRISIS

At a meeting of the Oireachtas Special Committee on COVID-19 Response, in September 2020, the Law Society recommended mitigating Constitutional and legal risk arising from swiftly enacted emergency legislation; enhancing the clarity of regulations and communications; investment in fit-for-purpose technology platforms in support of remote court hearings; investment in the Courts Service infrastructure and resources; and consistent application of robust safety measures for people in custody and their solicitors in garda stations.

4

SOCIETY CALLS FOR CLIENT-ACCOUNT EXEMPTION FROM NEW BANK CHARGES

The Law Society called for solicitor client accounts to be exempt from a proposed new charge, so-called 'negative interest', from two of the country's leading national banks. The call, in February 2021, came as solicitors who are customers of AIB and Bank of Ireland were notified of the banks' intentions to introduce a charge on all moneys, including home mortgage loans, held in solicitor client accounts. The Society described the proposed new charges as "unjust, over-charging, and contrary to public policy and consumer protection".

5

OVER 3,500 SOLICITORS AND TRAINEE SOLICITORS BENEFIT FROM FREE CPD

The Law Society of Ireland's response to the COVID-19 crisis saw more than 3,500 solicitors and trainee solicitors register for free continuous professional development (CPD) courses. The Society provided these courses free of charge to assist with learning and upskilling during the pandemic restrictions. In addition, it offered discounts to solicitors whose employment has been affected by the crisis.

TOP TEN OF 2020/2021

NEW PI GUIDELINES FALL SHORT OF PROTECTING CONSUMERS

The Law Society warned in April 2021 that the commencement of the “much-lauded” *Personal Injuries Guidelines* represented a new and unwelcome departure for compensation to victims of personal injury. The effect of the severe reductions outlined in the guidelines would leave many injured people substantially undercompensated, the Society argued. “The insurance companies like to put the blame on victims and their solicitors, while they are the ones reaping enormous profits,” President Cahill said.

6

SMALL PRACTICE TRAINEESHIP GRANT SCHEME WORTH €125K

The Law Society announced its 2021 Small Practice Traineeship Grant scheme in June 2021 to assist with the cost of employing a trainee solicitor and boost smaller solicitor practices in rural Ireland. Each of the five grants includes funding of €18,000 to the training firm over the course of the two-year training contract, and funding of €7,000 to the trainee solicitor by way of a discount on the PPC1 fee.

7

RECIPROCAL QUALIFYING AGREEMENT WITH ENGLAND AND WALES

The Law Society reached a reciprocal qualifying agreement with the Solicitors Regulation Authority in England and Wales in April 2021, which allows an Irish-qualified solicitor to add their name to the Roll of Solicitors in England and Wales without having to sit the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme. Irish solicitors will also be exempt from the Solicitors Qualifying Examination. Similarly, solicitors qualified in England and Wales can apply for a certificate of admission to the Irish Roll without having to sit additional examinations.

8

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME 2021/22

Female solicitors from all areas of practice were invited by the Law Society to apply for the Women in Leadership Programme 2021/22. This mentorship programme aims to empower and support women in advancing their careers to senior leadership positions. The programme is offered to female solicitors across the country who have been qualified for a minimum of five years, while applications to become a mentor are welcomed from both female and male colleagues. It is presented by the Law Society in collaboration with Law Society Finuas Skillnet.

9

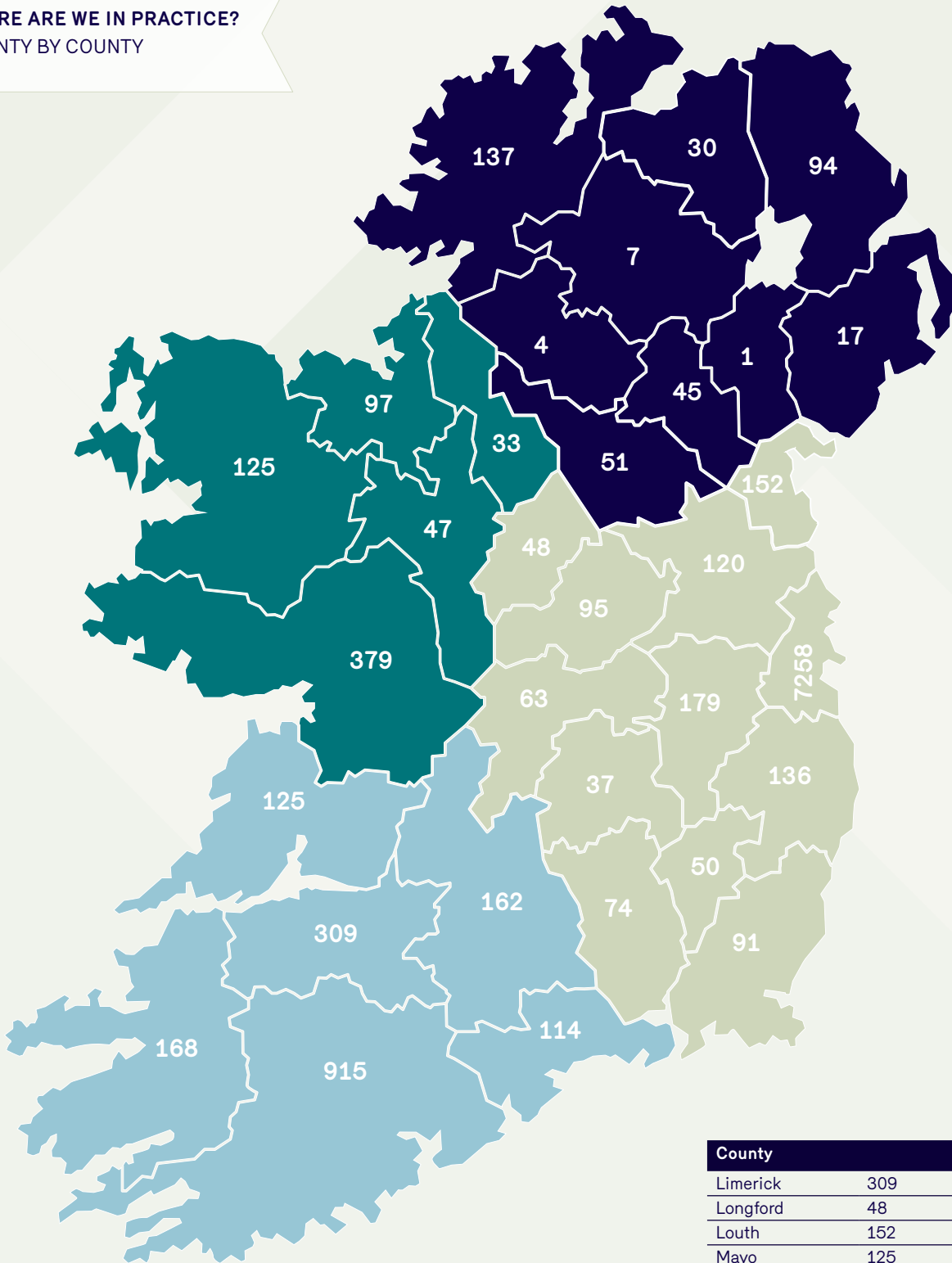
ABANDONING THE OUTDATED ‘DEAR SIR’S’ SALUTATION

The Law Society launched a new policy in October 2020 to discontinue the outdated male-centric ‘Dear Sirs’ salutation, saying that the move would make “our written communications reflect a more equal, diverse and inclusive profession”. The Society is encouraging all colleagues across the legal profession to adopt greetings that have a more inclusive, modern approach. Women now make up over 51% of the profession.

10

WHERE ARE WE IN PRACTICE?
COUNTY BY COUNTY

FACTS ABOUT THE PROFESSION



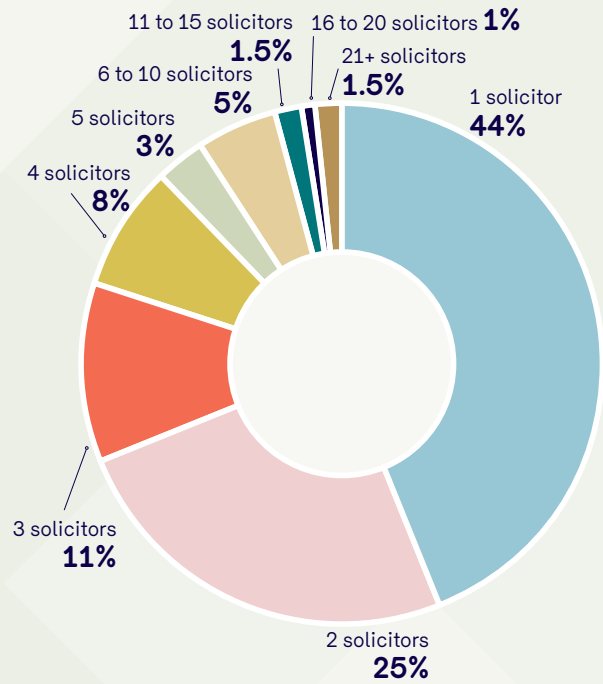
County	
Antrim	94
Armagh	1
Carlow	50
Cavan	51
Clare	125
Cork	915

County	
Derry	30
Donegal	137
Down	17
Dublin	7,258
Fermanagh	4
Galway	379
Kerry	168
Kildare	179
Kilkenny	74
Laois	37
Leitrim	33

County	
Limerick	309
Longford	48
Louth	152
Mayo	125
Meath	120
Monaghan	45
Offaly	63
Roscommon	47
Sligo	97
Tipperary	162
Tyrone	7
Waterford	114
Westmeath	95
Wexford	91
Wicklow	136
Unknown	3
Total	11,166

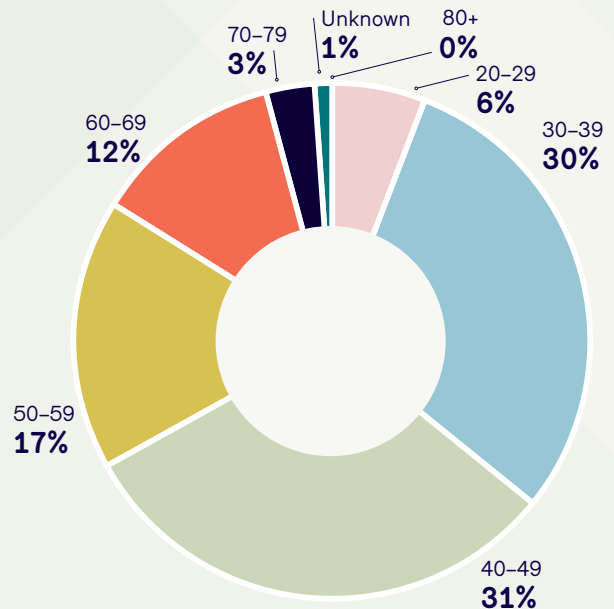
FIRMS BY NUMBER OF SOLICITORS

Solicitors	Firms	%
1 solicitor	835	44%
2 solicitors	489	25%
3 solicitors	211	11%
4 solicitors	149	8%
5 solicitors	59	3%
6 to 10 solicitors	97	5%
11 to 15 solicitors	30	1.5%
16 to 20 solicitors	19	1%
21+ solicitors	30	1.5%
Total	1,919	100%



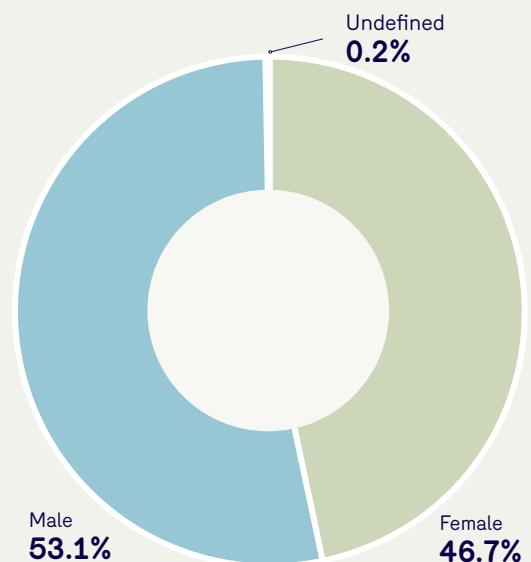
AGE PROFILE | MEMBERS

Age	Amount	%
20-29	747	6%
30-39	3,607	30%
40-49	3,621	31%
50-59	2,050	17%
60-69	1,367	12%
70-79	309	3%
80+	30	0%
Unknown	105	1%
Total	11,836	100%



GENDER BALANCE | MEMBERS

Female	5,534	46.7%
Male	6,282	53.1%
Undefined	20	0.2%
Total	11,836	100.0%



*Ciarán Mulholland and his daughter
Máire-Aoibhlinn (5) remote working by the sea*



CIARÁN MULHOLLAND

During the pandemic, Louth-based Ciarán Mulholland was hospitalised after contracting COVID-19. He was also helping to care for his father, who was diagnosed with stomach cancer.

“This all put things in perspective for me, and the priority I should have for my health and family,” he says.

A solicitor since 2012, Ciarán opened his own litigation practice this year, moving closer to home from a partnership in Dublin. He also tutors on the criminal litigation professional practice course at Blackhall Place.

He is married to a barrister, and they have three young children. “As a solicitor, I had it easier than my wife, who couldn’t escape to the office,” he says.

Ciarán believes that the pandemic has drastically changed the work pattern for solicitors, who are “more confident and content” working remotely.

Remote court hearings have allowed him to act in matters all over the country but, as a criminal-defence practitioner, he was frustrated by the Garda Commissioner’s refusal to facilitate remote interviews with clients.



THE YEAR IN REVIEW



NEW SOLICITOR SCS NOMINATED

Twelve solicitors and 25 barristers were granted patents of precedence on 7 October 2021, allowing them to use the designation 'senior counsel'. This is only the second time that solicitors have been able to apply to become SCs. They join the 17 solicitors who were approved in 2020.

Of the 12 solicitor recipients, all are based in Dublin and five are women. Only five of the 25 new barrister SCs are women.

The solicitor SCs received their patents of precedence from outgoing Chief Justice Frank Clarke at a ceremony at the Supreme Court. They are Raymond Bradley, Geraldine Clarke, Nicola Dunleavy, Alison Fanagan, Larry Fenelon, Stuart Gilhooly, Damien Keogh, Conor Linehan, Rachel Minch, Geoffrey Shannon, Helen Sheehy, and Keith Walsh.

SURVEY ON PANDEMIC IMPACT

The Law Society undertook research to assess the impact of the COVID pandemic on law firms.

The business recovery survey, conducted with the help of consultants Crowe, was sent to managing partners and firm principals. The data gathered will be used to represent the profession at all levels, including interactions with Government. It will also inform the new supports that the Society will introduce to help firms emerging from the crisis.

SIGNING ON THE DOTTED LINE

The Law Society has invited firms across Ireland to show their commitment to workplace wellbeing by signing up to its *Professional Wellbeing Charter*.

The charter is an initiative of the Society's Professional Wellbeing Project, which is committed to the wellbeing of all members and the creation and maintenance of positive workplace cultures that support both wellbeing and psychological health.

Project coordinator Julie Breen says: "Having the charter in place makes clear to employees that a firm really cares about mental health. The charter should help to reduce stigma, but no one firm can do this on its own, since there has to be a collaborative effort across the legal profession.

"In terms of talent retention, there is absolutely a business gain to this. Productivity levels go up where there is psychological safety and where people feel more aligned to the purpose of the firm. That engenders a deep sense of belonging."



DG STEPS DOWN AFTER 26 YEARS

Ken Murphy retired as the Law Society's director general in March 2021. He served 26 years in the role and had almost 40 years of service in total, including his 12 years on Council prior to his appointment as DG in 1995.

Murphy was, by far, the longest-serving CEO of any national bar or law society in the world. He guided the Society through a period of great change and expansion, from approximately 5,000 solicitors on the Roll of Solicitors when he took up office, to over 22,000 today.

The Council paid tribute to him at his final meeting on 19 March, presenting him with a silver salver bearing the signatures of all the presidents who had served during his term of office. Law Society President James Cahill described him as "a forward-looking, yet lateral thinker" who was "fiercely, fearlessly and clinically defensive of the profession in his endless meetings, discussions, negotiations, and media appearances over the years".



FIRST WOMAN DG

Mary Keane was appointed as the Law Society's director general on an interim basis by the Council at its meeting on 19 March. She made history by becoming the Society's first-ever female DG.

Keane joined the Society in 1992 as policy development executive, working alongside then director general Noel Ryan. She was appointed deputy director general in 1996, becoming the first woman to be appointed to a director's role in the Society's history.

She became director of the Policy, Communication and Member Services Department in December 1997. Currently, she is director of the Policy and Public Affairs Department, and continues in that role.

Keane is also chair of the National Gallery of Ireland, serving on the 17-member board since 2014 and taking the chair in March 2020.

CALCUTTA RUN IN STRONG FIGHT TO THE FINISH

The Virtual Calcutta Run took place from 17-26 September 2021 – the second year for the event to go virtual.

Once again, members of the profession, their families, and friends got fully behind the event to fundraise by running, walking, or cycling a collective target of 10,000km – representing the distance from Ireland to Kolkata.

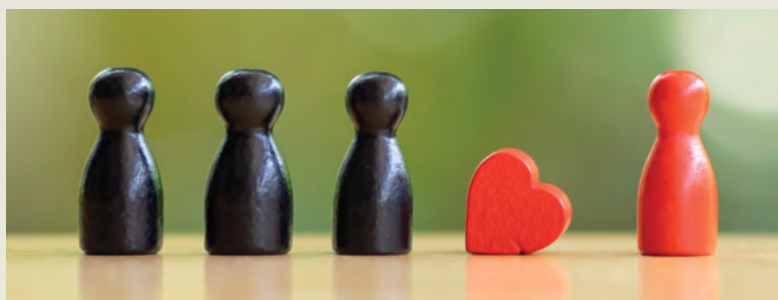
Following the success of the 2020 event, which saw €300,000 raised for those experiencing homelessness in Ireland and Kolkata, the same target was set this year.

On the final day of the 23rd Calcutta Run, over 900 participants had taken part, covering an astounding 30,000km to raise funds for the Peter McVerry Trust and the Hope Foundation.



International participants Ferdinando and Ilaria went hiking in the Dolomites for the Peter McVerry Trust and the Hope Foundation; The Glendalough Hike – Part 1: “What a beautiful day we got,” said Diane Sutton of King’s Inns; Law Society staff heading out on their 5km Phoenix Park run from Blackhall Place; This team from A&L Goodbody finished their evening run at the traditional finishing line at Blackhall Place, on 22 September; A big thanks to everyone who took part from the Hope Foundation, Kolkata

DIGNITY MATTERS SURVEY LAUNCHED



In a bid to tackle oppressive workplace cultures, the Law Society carried out an independent study on bullying, sexual, and other forms of harassment in the solicitors' profession. The aim is to provide an objective assessment of the current work environment as it relates to these matters.

The confidential 'Dignity Matters' survey was carried out in mid-2021 with the help of external consultants Crowe. Law Society members, both practising and non-practising, as well as Blackhall Place trainees, were invited by Crowe to participate.

The goal is to help transform workplace culture. The research provides recommendations on how best to tackle bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment in the profession. A change programme to implement the recommendations will follow, upon approval by the Law Society Council.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

SOCIETY ALARMED AT PROPOSED JAC SOLICITOR EXCLUSION

In an address to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice in May, Law Society President James Cahill and director general Mary Keane expressed deep concern about the proposed exclusion of the profession from the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC).

"It is critically important that a representative from each branch of the profession is appointed to the commission," President Cahill stressed.

"After 25 years of faithful service to the Judicial Appointments Advisory Board, we get sent outside the door on the proposed JAC?" Mary Keane said.

The Society retained substantial expertise, having served on the board since its establishment. "We don't embrace the reduction in [JAC] numbers to nine if it means that the representatives of the practising professions are excluded," Keane continued. The bid to embrace diversity must include solicitor expertise in judicial appointments. She added: "You can have all the diversity you want in terms of eligibility, but if people aren't actually appointed, then diversity becomes meaningless."

Of 90 judicial appointments made to the superior courts from 2002 (when solicitors became eligible for appointment) to 2016, only eight have been solicitors.



JOINT
COMMITTEE
JUSTICE

Pre-legislative scrutiny of the general scheme of the
Judicial Appointments Commission Bill 2020

LEGAL SERVICES EXCELLENCE STANDARD



The Law Society will soon be launching the Legal Services Excellence Standard. This voluntary new practice-management standard for members was first announced at the AGM in 2020.

The standard is the result of six years of design and development by the Practice Management Standard Working Group. It will be certified through the National Standards Authority of Ireland.

There are four requirements in the standard, with a specific set of criteria for each:

- Business planning, development and continuity,
- Infrastructure,
- Operational systems (client care), and
- Human resources, competence and knowledge management.

Applicants can acquire all of the information relating to the certification process through the Legal Services Excellence Standard online portal, which is currently under development.

SPECIAL HONOUR FOR EAMONN HALL



A special tribute was paid to a very special solicitor in Blackhall Place on 18 August 2020. A room was named in honour of Dr Eamonn Hall, in recognition of a lifetime's contribution to education in the Law Society and to the solicitors' profession generally.

Eamonn was only the second individual to receive this honour in their lifetime – the other being former Law

Society President Michael V O'Mahony (1993/94), who was present for this event.

Dr Hall was the chief examiner in constitutional law for the FEIs from 1981 to 2006. He was also a regular contributor to the professional practice courses.

He was an outstanding contributor for many years to the *Gazette* as a member of the editorial board, serving as its chair for seven years. In addition, he co-edited, with Dara Hogan, the leading book on the history of the solicitors' profession in Ireland, *Portrait of a Profession*.

He was also a central figure in the work of the Faculty of Notaries Public in Ireland, and his contribution to law reporting in Ireland is considered to be unparalleled. He served as a member of the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for more than 30 years, working closely with leading members of the judiciary and the Bar in the production of the *Irish Reports*. He is the only solicitor in its long history to have chaired the Council of Law Reporting.

Eamonn is now honoured by a room permanently in his name in the Education Department's Green Hall at Blackhall Place. The legal luminary passed away on 21 November 2020 following a brave battle with illness. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.*

SECOND CAPTAINS' WIN

A podcast series that took a deep-dive into the child-abuse allegations surrounding one of Ireland's most famous swimming coaches won the Overall Award at the 2021 Justice Media Awards.

Mark Horgan and Ciarán Cassidy, of the *Second Captains* programme for BBC Sounds, won the award for their production 'Where is George Gibney?' The judges described the series as "a remarkable piece of journalism and an extraordinary listen". It also took the top prize in the 'Broadcast Journalism (Radio/ Podcast – National)' category.

The overall winner was selected from a total of 200 entries, received from more than 130 journalists across Ireland. In total, 39 awards and merits were presented across 12 categories, including four prizes in the new category of 'Best Student Journalism'.



Overall winners of the Justice Media Awards 2021 were Ciarán Cassidy and Mark Horgan of *Second Captains*

ECO-LAW MOOC MOST SUCCESSFUL YET

Over 4,000 people participated in the seventh annual massive open online course (MOOC) in environmental law and climate change, delivered by the Diploma Centre team in summer 2021.

The MOOC provided a short, incisive overview of the legal and ethical considerations for those involved in environmental law, and the environmental and conservation spheres.

Participants hailed from 50 countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Switzerland, France, Britain, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Nigeria, Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.



LAW SOCIETY
OF IRELAND
GENDER EQUALITY,
DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION
CHARTER SIGNATORY



LAW SOCIETY
OF IRELAND
PROFESSIONAL
WELLBEING
CHARTER SIGNATORY

NEW INSIGNIA LAUNCHED

The Law Society has developed exclusive insignias for signatories to the *Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Charter* and the *Professional Wellbeing Charter*.

Signatories can use the insignias on firm stationery, websites, social media, business cards, and other marketing materials to publicly promote their commitment to the charters.

The charters and their insignias can also help inform future employees, clients and colleagues that a firm takes professional wellbeing and gender equality, diversity and inclusion seriously, and is striving to improve these in its workplace.

For more information on the charters and their insignias, visit www.lawsociety.ie/gedi and www.lawsociety.ie/wellbeingcharter.

PIGS V WOLF JUDGMENT SHOCKER!

There was a surprise twist in the *Three Little Pigs* case at the St Francis Xavier's Street Law Court on 4 June, when Alex T Wolf (aka 'Big Bad') was acquitted on all charges – including two for murder.

The mock trial, *DPP vs Big Bad Wolf*, was the culmination of weeks of work by over 30 primary pupils through the Street Law programme, run by the Law Society. Street Law is a programme that adopts a practical approach, tapping into students' interest in the law and aiming to promote legal literacy, access to law, and social skills through learning about legal matters.

The St Francis Xavier's pupils started their programme in April 2021 in a specially created 'outdoor classroom'. It dealt with topics such as natural justice, the structure of the Constitution, and how the court system works. Courtroom practices included witness testimony and how to make objections during a criminal trial.

The school plans to continue with the Street Law programme for many years to come – there are rumours of *Rapunzel v Witch* being set down for trial in 2022.





SCHOOL'S IN FOR SUMMER

Over 1,500 transition and fifth-year students from across Ireland took part in the Law Society's inaugural online Legal Ambitions Summer School in July 2020. Such was its success, it was repeated in July 2021, with a similar intake.

The outreach programme is designed to encourage students to consider a career in law, and offers an insight into the role of a solicitor in practice. The summer school was delivered entirely online and covered themes such as social justice, human rights, and climate change.



SIGN OF THE TIMES

The Law Society's PPC1 trainees were incredibly busy this year, setting up social and cultural groups never before seen at Blackhall Place. The Legal Sign Language Society hosted classes tailored to the legal profession, with courses by TCD assistant professor of deaf studies Patrick Matthews and ISL interpreter Pauline McMahon. In all, five six-week courses were held, with a total of 61 trainees completing their certification.

ELAINE BYRNE

For Elaine Byrne, home is a working farm, where she spent the pandemic with her husband and three young children. Elaine found the experience a positive one, and she believes technology has led to faster resolutions for clients, from the first meeting to completion.

She works for Trim-based Regan McEntee & Partners, and praises the firm's managing partner Anthony Murphy for being supportive and "embracing wellness" during the pandemic. Elaine used some of her saved commuting time to take up running, which she has continued.

In future, Elaine believes a mixed-working model would work best, combining the camaraderie of the office with the advantages – particularly for a parent – of remote working.

She qualified as a solicitor in 2008 and, as a specialist in wills and probate, has noticed a significant COVID-inspired increase in the number of clients making wills over the past year.







ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING ACTIVITIES

The legal profession is being targeted globally by professional money-launderers and, at the same time, solicitors are subject to complex statutory anti-money laundering (AML) obligations. Likewise, the Society itself has statutory duties with regard to supervising and enforcing solicitor AML compliance. International and European evaluations of effectiveness have become non-stop, with new policy and law reform initiatives constantly emerging. While the scale of the challenge may be daunting, the Society has developed a number of measures to aid solicitors' understanding of the risk to their firms, as well as their compliance duties, through outreach, guidance, training, and supervision – while also responding to the evolving landscape for both solicitor and supervisor AML.

AML GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

The anti-money laundering (AML) webpage (www.lawsociety.ie/aml) has been visited over 6,000 times, with an average download rate of 1,900. The business risk assessment (2,263) and policies, controls and procedures forms (2,072) remain the most popular sample adaptable forms for AML compliance. Throughout the pandemic crisis, email and telephone support continued to be provided to solicitors navigating complex AML and countering the financing of terrorism (CFT) duties.

AML TRAINING

Working together, the Policy and Public Affairs and Education Departments have provided:

- Free online AML training to over 3,500 solicitors,
- Bespoke AML training for PPC students,
- AML training at the annual Law Society Professional Training and Dublin Solicitors' Bar Association practice regulation conference,
- Training on EU lawyer AML to over 1,000 European lawyers as part of the European Commission's funded training, delivered by ELF and CCBE.

SUPERVISION AND ENFORCEMENT

The Regulation Department continues to supervise solicitor AML compliance as part of the Law Society's responsibility for financial regulation of the profession. These activities satisfy EU requirements with regard to fit and proper persons. The Society's 11 investigating

accountants examine AML compliance, with approximately 300 firms inspected this year.

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions on movement, the Society continued to monitor solicitors' compliance with their AML duties through a system of desktop reviews. Assessments involve a review of the firms' policies, controls and procedures, with evidence required of business-risk assessment, client-risk assessments, client due diligence, and staff training. Investigation reports that issue after every inspection contain a dedicated section examining AML matters. The Society has the power to refer evidence of non-compliance to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal and/or take any other steps necessary. Some of the referrals during the year included AML issues. Updated implementing regulations were published in November 2020 and, in compliance with the statutory duty to report suspicions of non-compliance, the Law Society's Money Laundering Reporting Committee submitted four reports to Ireland's relevant authorities.

REPRESENTATION AND LAW REFORM

The Law Society made submissions to the relevant Government departments in relation to the transposition of the *Fourth and Fifth Money Laundering Directives* and enactment of the *Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) (Amendment) Act 2021*. AML activities also included (a) participation in EU Commission/ Council of Europe assessments of AML compliance and supervision, (b) contribution to EU-level AML policy development and assessments, and (c) continued engagement in Ireland's FATF Progress Reports.

PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR

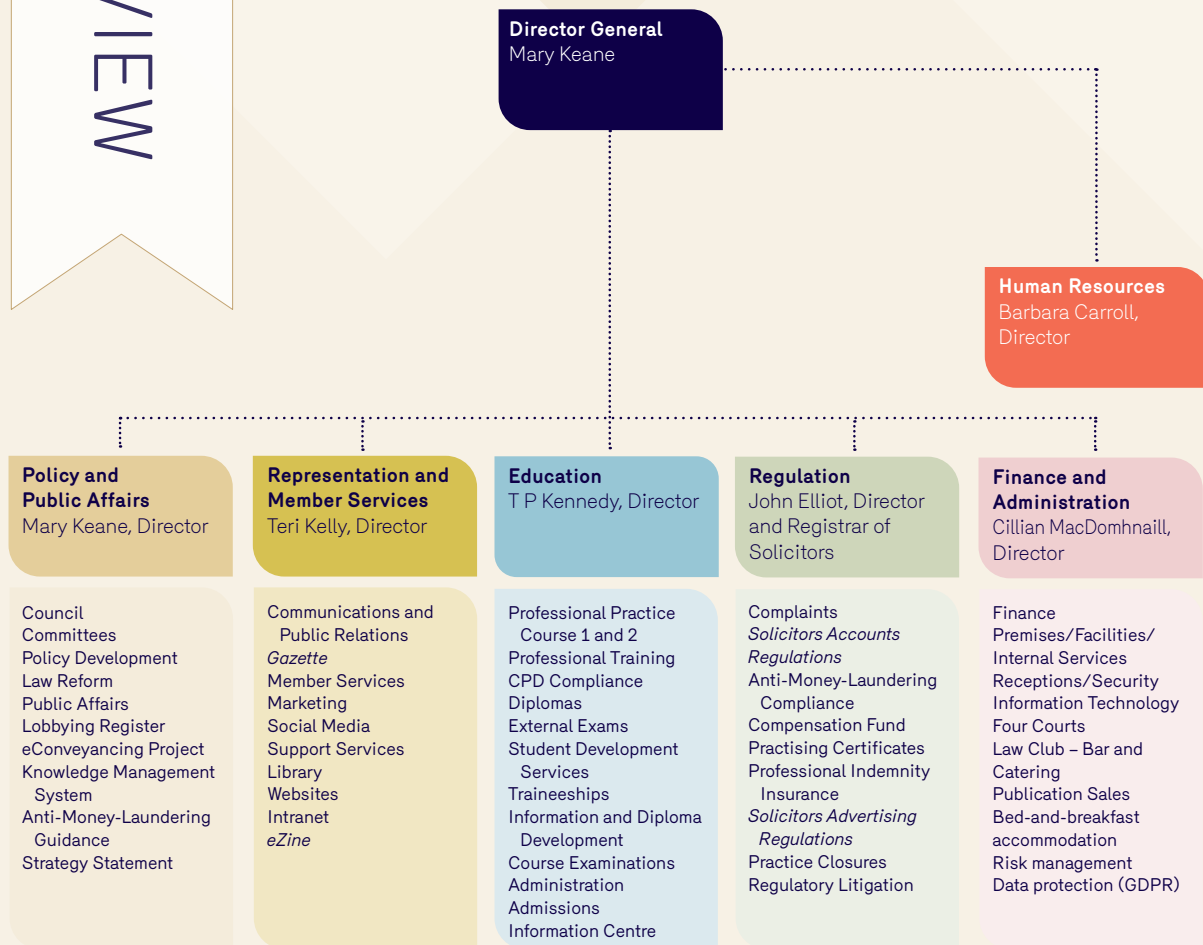
The Law Society's AML priorities for 2021/22 include publishing guidance to help solicitors transitioning to the 2021 act, responding to the outcome of the Council of Europe's assessment of the 4AMLD transposition, contributing to the work of the national AML Steering Committee, as well as the EU's AML Action Plan. The Society remains especially focused on helping demystify AML and de-risk firms by increasing awareness of money-laundering vulnerabilities of the legal sector.

ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

The Law Society is led on a day-to-day basis by the director general Mary Keane, who leads a team of six departmental heads as part of her management team.

The management team meets weekly, overseeing the implementation of the strategic plan, and providing the main conduit between the Council and its staff.

The following functional organisational chart provides an overview of the management team and information on the responsibilities of each department.





The Law Society Council held its September 2021 meeting in the Town Hall Theatre, Westport, Co Mayo – the first time that it has met in the county. The meeting was the first opportunity for Council members to meet face-to-face in 18 months.

COUNCIL OF THE LAW SOCIETY

The Law Society of Ireland is governed by a Council, comprising elected and nominated members of the solicitors' profession. It also delegates statutory functions to a range of committees.

The purpose of the Council is identified in the charter of 1852 to act "for the better rule and government of the Society, and for the better direction and management of the concerns thereof". The statutory functions of the Society, as set out in the *Solicitors Acts 1954-2015*, are exercised by the Council or by committees to which the Council delegates those statutory functions. The Council represents the Society and its members, both in the interests of the public and of the solicitors' profession generally.

The functions performed by the Council can be divided into:

- Representation of the members,
- Education and admission,
- Regulation and discipline, and
- Protection of clients.

COUNCIL OF THE LAW SOCIETY (Year ending 4 November 2021)

President: James Cahill

Senior vice-president: Michelle Ní Longáin

Junior vice-president: Barry MacCarthy

Council members

Christopher Callan, Justine Carty, Helen Coughlan, Brendan Cunningham, Maura Derivan, Tara Doyle, Paul Egan, Richard Grogan, Richard Hammond, Eamon Harrington, Aine Hynes, Bill Holohan, Siún Hurley, Paul Keane, Liam A Kennedy, Morette Kinsella, Martin Lawlor, Gary Lee, Rosemarie Loftus, Flor McCarthy, Sonia McEntee, Michele O'Boyle, Daniel O'Connor, Valerie Peart, Carol Plunkett, Imelda Reynolds, Brendan J Twomey and Keith Walsh

Past-presidents: Patrick Dorgan, Stuart Gilhooly, Michael Quinlan

Provincial delegates: Martin Crotty (Leinster), Shane McCarthy (Munster), Garry Clarke (Ulster), David Higgins (Connaught)

Dublin Solicitors Bar Association representatives: Tony O'Sullivan, Matthew Kenny, Susan Martin

Southern Law Association representatives: Robert Baker, Joan Byrne, Veronica Neville, Julie Rea

Law Society of Northern Ireland representatives:

Rowan White (president), Suzanne Rice (senior vice-president), Brigid Napier (junior vice-president), Eileen Ewing, John Guerin

Our purpose: to provide leadership and management to the Law Society and its staff, and to deliver the organisation’s strategic objectives as we support each other, solve problems, and move forward collectively.

The purpose of the senior management team is to provide leadership and management to the Law Society and its staff in order to deliver the strategic objectives as identified by the Council. The Society acts to protect and champion the rights of the profession, clients, and the public interest, while providing a responsive, courteous and efficient service to our members and the public.

At its core, the senior management team works collaboratively, with members and staff, to help fulfil the vision of the Society, which is to be the trusted voice of a respected solicitors’ profession.

The team functions as a senior executive committee, running the day-to-day operations of the Society to the highest professional standards. In addition, we continually review our systems and processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

We carry out our duties guided by the values of the Law Society, including gender equality, diversity and inclusion. We act with integrity and fairness, and report on our activities in a transparent manner.

Through the pandemic, the team has worked to provide clear leadership to staff, as the Society maintains all services to the highest possible standards that our members have come to expect. We have done this while maintaining strict control over costs, during what has been a challenging time for many of our members.





MARY KEANE | Director General

POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

The Policy and Public Affairs Department supports the Law Society's president, Council, and committees in their representative functions with Government departments, the Oireachtas, policymakers, other law societies, and external bodies, including the International Bar Association and the CCBE (Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe).

Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and the mobile phone have replaced in-person meetings for the past 12 months (1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021) and will remain into the future, albeit alongside more traditional methods of interaction.

The feverish activities that followed the first lockdown have yielded, thankfully, to a steadier rhythm, although working days have remained lengthy and the virtual world is a constant.

During the relevant period, the Policy and Public Affairs Department:

- Provided 30 submissions to State departments and agencies on issues that included the *Consumer Insurance Contracts Act 2019*, implementation of the *O'Malley Report*, the *Companies (Corporate Enforcement Authority) Bill*, the *Competition (Amendment) Bill*, the *Family Court Bill*, reform of the *Mental Health Act*, and transposition of the *Collective Action Directive*,
- Participated in two Oireachtas committee hearings (on the response to COVID-19 and the General Scheme of the *Judicial Appointments Commission Bill*),
- Attended 16 meetings of the CCBE (plenary sessions, the CCBE Standing Committee, and the Brexit Task Force),
- Circulated three *Policy and Law Reform Agenda* newsletters to elected representatives, senior decision-makers, media, and other interested parties,
- Made 58 lobbying returns to the Standards in Public Office Commission,
- Uploaded 40 entries to the Law Society's Knowledge Management System, including policy positions, law-reform submissions, and legal research,
- Participated in online training provision to 3,500 solicitors on anti-money-laundering (AML) requirements (see separate report on AML activities on page 28), and
- Supported eight scheduled and two special meetings of the Council, 12 meetings of the Coordination Committee, and ten meetings of the Committee Secretaries Group.



58

lobbying returns to the Standards in Public Office Commission



30

submissions to State departments and agencies



3,500

solicitors provided with online AML training



TERI KELLY | Director

REPRESENTATION AND MEMBER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The past year has seen our members and the Law Society continue to face unprecedented challenges, while taking practical steps to help the profession prepare for recovery and renewal.

In order to understand the depth of financial impact the pandemic has had on the profession, we conducted the 'Business Recovery' research project, which included a survey of firms. The final report lays out what steps the Law Society and firms should take to help firms achieve success and sustainability through the recovery. Implementation is beginning now.

A Crisis Support helpline has continued to provide solicitors with pandemic-related assistance, and our Small Practice Support information sessions have remained popular. Career Support organised 20 career information sessions in collaboration with the Younger Members' Committee. They also delivered the 'Boost' initiative to newly qualified solicitors and the 'Resolve/Returners' programme to solicitors seeking a return to work. The good news is that legal vacancies jobs advertising gradually improved through the course of the year, reaching pre-pandemic levels.

This year, we also began work on the implementation and launch on the much-anticipated Legal Services Excellence Standard, which will help firms achieve business success. It is due to launch in the first quarter of 2022.

Engaging with our members, even though we were physically apart, has been key this year. We relaunched our *Member eZine* as a weekly publication to ensure you have the most relevant practice updates, as and when they happen. We have significantly increased the use of video on our digital platforms. We have enhanced our 'Welcome' communications, signposting our member benefits and supports. We also initiated a PPC2 open day to share with trainees the work the Society does on behalf of our members. We ran the 'Women in Leadership' mentoring programme and a series of online career-information sessions for newly qualified members. As part of our digital-first strategy, we launched the digital *Law Directory* as an easily accessible and green alternative to the annual hard copy.

To align with our gender equality, diversity and inclusion goals, an innovative campaign was launched to retire the inaccurate and outdated 'Dear Sirs' phrase from all correspondence and to encourage the use of more inclusive salutations within the solicitors' profession.

With new client-account bank charges looming, the Law Society ran an extensive national media campaign and a simultaneous regional media campaign with the support of local bar associations. This campaign championed the concerns of the profession and outlined the imposition these so-called 'negative interest rates' will have on ordinary consumers.

A media campaign on family law and courts reform was run to show the impact of COVID-19 on the family courts, receiving coverage across national and regional media. Subsequently, discussions between the Law Society, the Bar of Ireland, and the Courts Service resulted in the reopening of the Dublin Circuit Family Court to clear some of the backlog of cases due to the pandemic.

We have refreshed the radio and print marketing campaign to include a 'brand' message (titled 'Commitment'), showcasing the fundamental benefits of using a solicitor.

The **Professional Wellbeing** project has continued to provide invaluable supports for our members' mental health, including LegalMind, the independent, confidential helpline and counselling service. The Professional Wellbeing Charter was also launched to assist firms support their own employees' wellbeing. Myriad wellbeing CPD events were held, including the 'Business of Wellbeing' summit.

The Dignity Matters research, including member survey, was conducted, culminating in a final report, which will see action taken by the Law Society and members to stamp out bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment within the profession. Implementation is beginning now.

The library, our most important member service, has continued to serve members every day throughout the pandemic, and has even managed to increase enquiries this year. As a support to members during COVID-19, the library supplied over 5,000 free documents in the period May 2020-June 2021.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the *Law Society Gazette* and its daily online news service *Gazette.ie* delivered an incredibly strong performance during the year under review. The magazine, which is produced to the highest professional and ecological standards, had a monthly print-run of 13,000, which was supplemented by 12,853 downloads of the magazine in PDF format – an increase of 7.7% over the previous year. *Gazette.ie* excelled – setting new annual readership records. Unique pageviews grew by 31% to 860,264 (compared with 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020). The total number of pageviews hit its highest-ever total of 1.18 million readers (plus 52%).



TP KENNEDY | Director

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

This year has been one of uncertainty and continued change. Pre- and post-qualification education continued to operate as if there was no ongoing emergency.

In September 2020, a total of 418 trainees started their PPC1 on-site in Blackhall Place – we had not planned to run this course in an online format. However, fresh lockdowns intervened, and this course and the succeeding PPC2 were both run through Zoom, Panopto and other online platforms. The second Hybrid PPC started in early 2021 with 56 students, an increase on the 48 who had attended the initial course. Our planning for the 2021 PPC (which started in September) has led to the reintroduction of on-site teaching for smaller groups, while retaining the online provision of lectures.

Students have responded to the online offering very well. Participation levels have seen a greater level of engagement and interaction in terms of in-person teaching, and we have witnessed better exam results than in other years. Additional optional programmes were provided and were taken up very enthusiastically.

International skills competitions continued in an online format, and student teams won the International Client Consultation Competition for 2020 and 2021, the International Environmental Moot Court Competition, were ranked as the top negotiation team in the ADR/ODR Online Mediation Competition, and were ranked highly in every international competition entered.

Our examination section was also kept very busy. Owing to the lockdown, all examinations held over the past year had to be provided in an online format. This was done relatively quickly, and all examinations during the year were provided online, with remote invigilation.

Post-qualification education was also brought online. A variety of free courses have been provided to solicitors and trainees alike: 122 online seminars and 33 Diploma Centre courses were provided.

The year 2019 had been remarkable for admissions, with 2,381 new solicitors being admitted to the Roll. This was largely owing to the Brexit wave of 1,836 English and Welsh solicitors. Numbers fell back to 906 in 2020, with 476 admissions from the UK jurisdictions. New reciprocal agreements are now in place with the UK, but we anticipate that the number of transferring UK solicitors will fall further.



418

trainees started PPC 1 on-site in September 2020, but completed the course online due to COVID-19



56

students started the second Hybrid PPC in Q1 2021



906

new solicitors were admitted to the roll in 2020, with 476 from Britain



JOHN ELLIOT | Director and Registrar of Solicitors

REGULATION DEPARTMENT

It has continued to be a case of regulation as usual, under unprecedented circumstances. Throughout the pandemic, the Law Society's regulatory functions have remained operational on a continuous basis.

This year's practising certificate renewal saw a significant leap forward in the achievement of the Society's 'digital first' objective, with all applications online. Other innovations included online query handling, online-chat helpline functionality, and digital practising certificates.

There are now 11,458 practising certificate holders in the jurisdiction, of which 53% are female and 47% male. From July 2020 to June 2021, a total of 96 new firms of solicitors opened, and 76 firms closed. During that period, two solicitors were struck off the Roll of Solicitors, and one solicitor was suspended.

The Society decided to issue practising certificates only to solicitors providing legal services from an establishment based in Ireland, and to issue what are called 'certificates of attestation' to Irish-qualified solicitors practising solely outside the jurisdiction seeking to be admitted to a foreign bar. So far, 269 certificates of attestation have been issued.

The Regulation Department continues to meet regularly with representatives of the Legal Services Regulatory Authority. Much of the work of the Legal Services Regulation Act Task Force, supported by the Regulation Department, was focused on legal costs, redrafting 'Section 150' precedents, and guidance for the new legal costs regime under the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. This should provide both practitioners and clients with better documentation for legal costs. These documents can be found on the [Society's website](#).

As always, providing comprehensive support to the business of the Regulation of Practice Committee, the Professional Indemnity Insurance Committee, the Money Laundering Reporting Committee, and the Complaints and Client Relations Committee is a huge part of the work of the Regulation Department. The reports of these committees complete the picture of what the department has achieved during the year under review.



11,854

practising certificate holders
in the jurisdiction



96

new firms opened between
July 2020 and June 2021



53

percent of practising
solicitors in the profession
are now female



CILLIAN MACDOMHNAILL | Director

The Finance and Administration Department provides a range of internal services and supports to the Society's core functional areas of representation, education and regulation, which in turn provide services and support to members, students and the public. We like to regard ourselves as the 'oil in the machine'.

Much of the department's work over the past 12 months was driven by reacting to the COVID-19 emergency, which put huge demands on our finances, facilities and information-technology (IT) infrastructures. Despite significant hits to our income, we have weathered the financial storm. Our IT team members proved themselves very resilient, and set up almost 200 staff for remote working in a matter of days in March 2020. They have kept us up and running since then.

The facilities team worked tirelessly to ensure our buildings were safe for whatever activities we could maintain on site, and have put in place robust control measures to support our 'Return to Office Plan'. Unfortunately, at various times over the last 12 months, up to 30 staff within the department have been on short-time or lay-off.

PRUDENT MANAGEMENT

The Finance Section ensures prudent financial management, achieving value for all money spent, and has appropriate financial processes and controls in place to protect the Society's financial and physical assets. Financial planning is managed through a detailed budgeting process, close monitoring of finances throughout the year, and long-term financial planning through a five-year planning process. Financial controls are assured through an internal audit process.

COVID-19 brought major financial challenges. All operational spending, as well as capital expenditure, has been significantly reduced in order to preserve the Society's finances, and a detailed expenditure review is currently ongoing in order to lessen the impact of the reduction in the 2021 Practising Certificate fee, which has reduced the Society's income by €4 million.

AN ILL WIND

The facilities function, which has responsibility for maintaining and protecting the historic building of Blackhall Place and the operation of the overall site, continued its work in implementing a conservation plan. The pandemic (it is an ill wind!) afforded, due to the absence of staff and students, an opportunity to

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

undertake a number of long-delayed projects, including three phases of a rewiring project, fire upgrades, and stonework repairs.

Unfortunately, the catering, bar and B&B facilities, and the Four Courts' consultation rooms have been closed for the duration of the pandemic. However, on a positive note, the consultation rooms reopened in June 2021 and the other services are likely to resume in September. The IT section's main focus continues to be the implementation of 'System 360', which is a significant investment in a member-management system, approved by AGM in 2015 and 2019, with a budget of €4.2 million. We are now in phase 3 (member services) of the project, with phase 1 (which primarily covers regulation and PCs) having bedded in very successfully, and phase 2 (education) just completed. Without System 360, we would not have been able to undertake the 2021 PC renewal process, where we achieved 100% online renewal. Similarly, in other areas of our operation, such as the Law School's online training programmes, FE1 remote exams, library services, PII renewal, etc, service delivery would not have been possible without System 360.

CYBERSECURITY

The protection of our information assets is a priority, and cybersecurity continued to exercise the minds and resources of the IT section throughout the period. At the heart of the Society's cyber-strategy is an ongoing external review of the robustness of our IT security systems, and an education/awareness programme for all our staff. Of course, while cybersecurity has always been a high priority, after the HSE attack it was even more so. The risk and data-privacy functions continue to keep a close oversight in their areas, ensuring we have robust risk-management strategies and procedures in place, and data privacy and protection are embedded in the organisation's culture.

Work on a feasibility study and options on the Benburb Street site have been put on hold until the impact of COVID-19 on the Society's and the profession's finances becomes clearer.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Against all the odds, the Calcutta Run 2020, which went 'virtual', was amazingly successful, raising €285,000 (emulating 2019) thanks to the generosity and commitment of solicitors and their firms. The Peter McVerry Trust and the HOPE Foundation, which both share the funds, were astonished and grateful for the commitment of those involved.

They say that a person's true nature is only seen in adversity, and I am happy to say that every woman and man rose to the challenges and flexibility demanded by the COVID crisis in working to ensure that the department lived up to the Society's objective of 'business as usual, delivered differently'.



BARBARA CARROLL | Director

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

The Human Resources Department plays a pivotal role in providing a positive, fair, and open working environment, underpinned by the right structures and skills for our colleagues, so they can make a difference to the interests of our members, students, and the wider public.

The Human Resources Department plays a pivotal role in providing a positive, fair, and open working environment, underpinned by the right structures and skills for our colleagues, so they can make a difference to the interests of our members, students, and the wider public.

We work collectively with others to develop, motivate and retain our people. Our metrics scored well in a national context: our absence rate was 0.42%, compared with a 2.68% national average; and our voluntary turnover was 6.87%, compared with a 14% national average.

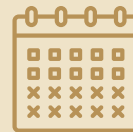
This year, despite the pandemic, the Law Society progressed with its strategic projects. This is down to the talents and loyalty of its people. For this reason, we invest in our people to enable their own success, and to contribute invaluable to the solicitors' profession and the public we serve.

In January 2021, we launched a new learning and development programme, in partnership with Law Society Professional Training, focusing on six key areas: leadership and coaching skills, management development, professional development, compliance and technology, future core capabilities, and mental health and wellbeing.

We recognise the importance of providing an inclusive workplace for colleagues to feel safe and supported at work. Meaningful work, positive peer relationships, and a trusting environment are important components of our culture. In the year under review, along with many of our members, the Law Society signed two important charters to demonstrate our commitment to these principles: the *GEDI (Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Charter*, and the *Professional Wellbeing Charter*.

The department played a key role in the Society's rapid response to the COVID-19 crisis. We learned that cultivating awareness, resilience, and adaptability will continue to be important during recovery, and that changes to the future of work will accelerate, particularly through the increased use of technology.

As we shape our future collectively, we will adopt what we have learned, so we can emerge stronger than before.



0.42

percent absent rate compared with 2.68% national average



6.87

percent voluntary turnover, compared with a 14% national average



FRANK HALLEY

Waterford-based Frank Halley has been a solicitor for ten years, and he works for MM Halley & Son, a medium-sized family firm in the city.

His firm closed its office in the first week of lockdown, but returned with a skeleton staff over the subsequent months. Frank describes those first few weeks as “gloriously quiet”, with fewer telephone calls giving him more time to work on more demanding tasks.

“I’ve become a little better now at giving myself permission not to take calls on certain mornings,” he says.

During the restrictions, Frank visited the houses of elderly clients and completed their wills at their windowsills. He says that he also became more proficient at taking instructions from clients via video-chat.

Demand for litigation services “fell dramatically” during the lockdown, he says, while probate business has increased. Frank also says conveyancing has been “wildly busy” for the past six months.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Law Society's committees are appointed by the Council. Their term of office runs from the November Council meeting each year until the November Council meeting the following year. The incoming president selects the chair and members of each committee and places their names before the Council for approval. The Council regulations divide the committees into two categories: 'standing committees' and 'non-standing committees'. In addition, various subcommittees, task forces, and working groups are established to deal with different legislative and operational matters, as they arise.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The *Solicitors Acts* state that the Council exercises the statutory functions of the Society, which are set out in the acts. The Council may delegate the exercise of any of its functions to a committee established for that purpose. This allows the Council to appoint standing committees that exercise statutory functions on its behalf.

NON-STANDING COMMITTEES

The Council appoints non-standing committees where it believes that these can better assist the Society in carrying out its work. These committees do not perform statutory functions.



FLOR McCARTHY
Chair

COMPLAINTS AND CLIENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

On 7 October 2019, responsibility for the investigation of all complaints against solicitors transferred from the Law Society of Ireland to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority.

Throughout the year under review, the Complaints and Client Relations Committee (CCRC) continued to resolve all complaints made prior to 7 October 2019.

In 2020, the work of the CCRC transferred to remote meetings, and this has continued during 2021. The remote format has improved how the committee carries out its function, and the committee recommends its continuation.

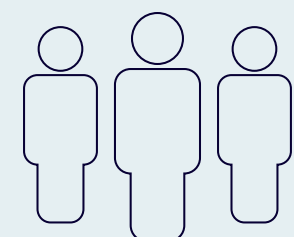
Since July 2020, a total of 23 meetings have taken place remotely. In all, 285 items were considered during this period. In July 2020, there were 43 items before the committee. As of 30 June 2021, a total of 27 items remain before the CCRC. Such a reduction in complaints is testament to the hard work of both the committee and the executive.

The CCRC expects to be in a position to reduce itself from two divisions to one by the end of 2021, further reflecting the reduction in the number of outstanding complaints.

The investigation of complaints remains subject to review by the Independent Adjudicator of the Law Society and by the Office of the Ombudsman.

The CCRC will continue its annual review of applications for practising certificates from solicitors who are the subject of multiple complaints. The committee can direct the registrar to refuse to issue a practising certificate, or to issue a certificate with conditions.

During the year under review, the CCRC saw the retirement of Linda Kirwan, Helene Blayney and Catriona O'Mara, who have provided invaluable service to the committee and the profession over many years. I would like to thank them for their contributions and wish them the very best for the future. I also wish to thank the rest of the Society's executive, the CCRC team, and all CCRC members for their ongoing hard work and dedication.



STANDING
COMMITTEES



JAMES CAHILL
Chair



COORDINATION COMMITTEE

The Coordination Committee operates as a link between the Law Society's committees and the Council, with an oversight role for projects undertaken by each of the Society's committees and task forces. In this capacity, it reviews the benefit of committee projects in terms of resources and timelines, and allocates finances within an overall budget determined by the Finance Committee. It considers requests to pursue specific proposals or seek expert advice during the course of the year, and ensures that the direction and priority of projects are appropriate to the Society's overall objectives.

At the commencement of each Council year, the Coordination Committee meets with the chairs of the Law Society's standing committees and task forces to consider ongoing issues and to plan for the year ahead. All meetings during late 2020 and throughout 2021 have been conducted remotely, and have been concerned with the myriad of issues arising for the Society and the profession as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the committee has overseen the Society's response to the *Judicial Appointments Commission Bill*, with the president and director general attending before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice. The officers and director general have operated as a steering group to manage an external review of the leadership and effectiveness aspects of the Council, which yielded a report and action plan in July 2021, with short, medium and long-term objectives. In addition, the committee approved the provision of unconscious-bias awareness training to all Council members, which will be offered to all committee members in due course.

The committee made recommendations to the Council for the appointment of Society representatives on a range of State bodies, including the Courts Service Board, the Circuit Court Rules Committee, the Legal Services Regulatory Authority, the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal, the Irish Takeover Panel, the Data Governance Board, the Parole Board, the Medical Bureau of Road Safety, the Advisory Group on Family Justice, and the National Anti-Money-Laundering Steering Committee.

A further function of the Coordination Committee is the consideration of matters falling outside the remit of any of the other committees. During the past year, the committee addressed a number of such issues, including:

- Approval of the roll-out timetable and implementation plan for the Legal Services Excellence Standard,
- The transition from LawCare to the Professional Wellbeing Project in late 2020,
- A letter to the British Ambassador expressing the Law Society's concerns regarding the refusal of the British Government to institute a public inquiry into the murder of Pat Finucane and collusion by British agencies in his murder, and
- A joint statement with the law societies of Northern Ireland and Scotland condemning the sanctions by China against lawyers providing legal advice on human-rights violations in Xinjiang.



CHRIS CALLAN
Chair

FINANCE COMMITTEE

As with every other business and organisation in the country, 2020 was a turbulent year for the Law Society. We were all operating in a very uncertain environment, from both a social and economic perspective and, as it turned out, for a duration none of us expected in March 2020.

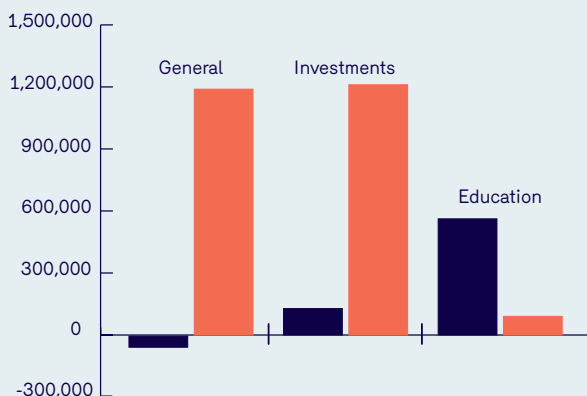
The 2020 budget was based on maintaining the practising certificate (PC) fee at its 2019 level and achieving a break-even position despite cost pressures. Even with anticipated increases, there was no SMDF levy, and the LSRA levy was maintained at the 2019 level. Although suffering significant income losses from both subscriptions and trading activities and, at one point, suffering significant investment losses, I am pleased to say that the Society's general activities ended the year very close to the original break-even budget.

The Law School performed much better than budget, despite a significant fall in income. This was achieved through notable reductions in budgeted expenditure, both on the Society's side and on the Law School's side.

The Finance Committee moved very swiftly to implement measures to curtail expenditure, which included, unfortunately, 30 staff being put on lay-off or part-time, a recruitment freeze on new positions, a pay freeze, and a significant curtailment in capital and operational projects. At the same time, the committee made resources available to fund initiatives that would ease the impact of the pandemic on practitioners.

The general activities surplus (including investment gains) was €73k (2019: €2.4m). This was effectively a break-even position and almost in line with the budgeted surplus of €18k. Education activities made a surplus of €562k against a budgeted deficit of €165k. Reserve funds, which include amounts allocated to the Capital Expenditure, Litigation, Capital Reserve and LSRA Levy Funds (after provision of €2.8m for the LSRA levy for 2020), increased by €2.2m (2019: €3.5m). €600k of this increase arose from an over-provision for the LSRA levy, and will be used to reduce the cost of the levy in future years.

OPERATING SURPLUS 2020



Surplus/deficit	After tax 2020 (€)	After tax 2019 (€)
General	-53,912	1,189,365
Investments	127,852	1,210,333
Education	561,911	90,180

In the Audited Financial Statements, operational surpluses for the Society are incorporated in 'Group' accounts, which include all of the Society's subsidiaries. The group accounts give a full picture of the financial performance and financial position of all Society operations, but they can distort the view of the performance of the different elements of our operation, given that inter-entity trading must be eliminated. The overall pre-tax operational surplus from general activities, education activities and Funds was €2.9m, but is shown in the audited accounts as €2m.

In the Audited Financial Statements, there are a number of revaluations and exceptional items that must be included, albeit they are outside normal operations. A revaluation of the Benburb Street site resulted in a small write-down of €350k (2019: increase €2.6m), and there was a cost of €22k allocated to the SMDF Levy Fund with income to the fund having ceased in 2019.

In accordance with the accounting standard FRS102, the financial performance of the staff pension scheme must also be shown in both the income statement and the balance sheet. This has introduced significant variances in our audited accounts over the last six years since we applied the standard. Over that period, adjustments



in the pension liability have ranged from a positive €2.5m adjustment to a negative €4.8m adjustment. These adjustments are primarily driven by the bond rate used in the calculation of the scheme liabilities. This rate decreased by 0.3% in 2020, resulting in liabilities increasing by €1.5m more than investment returns. However, the Finance Committee and Trustees do not manage the scheme on the basis of the FRS102 valuation, as the variables that impact on the valuation are different to those used in our triennial actuarial valuations, which are used to manage the scheme. Measured, through actuarial valuations conducted by Mercer, our pension scheme is in reasonable health.

Overall, in the audited accounts, the Society's Group made a surplus of €923k (2019: €7.2m) after tax and exceptional items. The 'Overall Results' table shows the management accounts results, which are the actual operating outcomes of the various elements of the Society's operations and also how they are presented in the Audited Financial Statements.

OVERALL RESULTS

ENTITY	MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS	GROUP STATEMENTS
General activities	73,940	-534,917
Funds	2,233,929	2,233,929
General activities (including funds)	2,307,869	1,699,012
Education activities	561,911	302,181
Operating surplus pre-tax	2,869,780	2,001,193
Group taxation	-107,399	-109,102
Operating surplus after tax	2,762,381	1,892,091
Sundry income	122,500	84,693
Unrealised investment gains	—	127,852
S MDF Levy Fund Income	-21,773	-21,773
FRS 102 Pension Charge	-1,500,000	-592,000
Law Club of Ireland	5,594	-122,161
Benburb St Property Co Ltd	-445,675	-445,675
Overall surplus	923,026	923,026

OUR INCOME

Total income for the year, excluding investment gains, was €31.2m, which was €1m or 3% lower than 2019. On the general activities side, income was €20m (2019: €21.2m). PC, membership and admission fees were €19.5m (2019: €19.8m), with most of the decrease being attributable to the fall-off in 'Brexit' PCs and admission fees. An area of concern when budgeting for 2020 was the extent to which 'Brexit' PCs would fall off. While these fell by 30%, this was well below the anticipated 50%. Education income, at €11.2m, had a marginal increase of 3% from €10.9m. Income from other sources, such as advertising, publications and the Four Courts, at €544k, was almost €1m (-64%) below 2019, reflecting the impact of the public health emergency on our trading income.

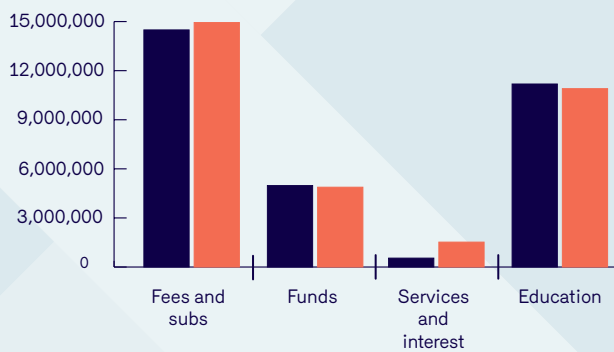
In 2020, there were 11,854 (2019: 11,879) PC holders, which was a decrease of 25 on 2019. While normally there would be an increase of about 400 PCs, this decrease was anticipated due to the expected fall-off in 'Brexit' PCs. The reduced numbers had only a minor impact on income of €83k. Membership numbers, at 13,196 (2019: 12,906), increased by 290. Membership numbers include 177 solicitors who avail of free membership on the basis of being over 50 years admitted or being unemployed. Admissions to the Roll during the year, at 906, were, as expected, well below the 2,387 record set in 2019 due to 'Brexit' admissions. Between 2016 and 2020, there were 4,300 such admissions. PC fee income totalling €1.6m (2019: €1.6m) was allocated to the Capital Expenditure, Litigation and Capital Reserve Funds. Income to the LSRA Levy Fund was €3.4m, in anticipation of an LSRA levy of that amount. However, this only materialised as a levy of €2.8m, leaving a net increase in the LSRA Levy Fund of €600k.

Education activities income was €11.2m (2019: €10.9m). While year-on-year income was very similar, the mix across the Law School's income sources was very different. Professional Practice Courses, exams, etc, accounted for €7.5m (2019: €7.0m), and professional training (LSPT) seminars, diploma courses and grants accounted for €3.6m (2019: €3.9m). There were 418 PPC1 students in September 2020 (2019: 455), and 55 students enrolled for the new Hybrid PPC that commenced in late 2020. PPC2 numbers were at 448 (2019: 412). FE1 sittings, at 3,869 (2019: 2,496), were a result of three sittings in 2020 – two of them online. Diploma course



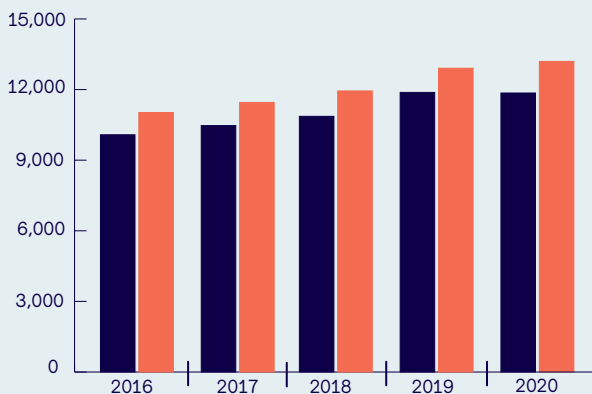
income, at €2.6m, was ahead of 2019 (€2.2m) due to increased demand driven by the pandemic. LSPT, with its Skillnet and Finuas programmes, had an overall income, including grants, of €1.1m (2019: €1.7m). This decrease is mainly attributable to the 30 free seminars delivered, with their courses reaching over 30,000 participants, as against 8,900 in 2019.

INCOME SOURCES 2020



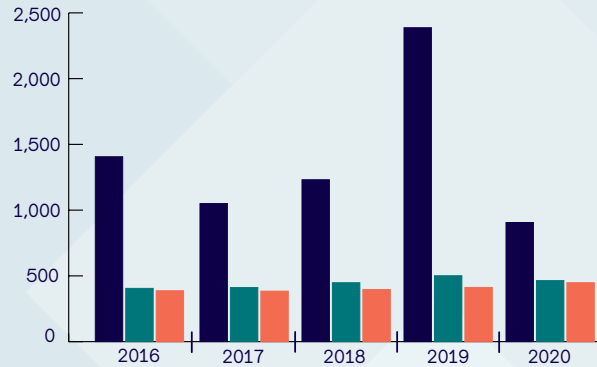
	2020 (€)	2019 (€)
Fees and subs	14,489,382	14,938,479
Funds	4,976,533	4,878,065
Services and interest	544,128	1,522,547
Education	11,184,119	10,899,327

PRACTISING CERTIFICATE HOLDERS AND MEMBERS 2016-2020



	PC HOLDERS	MEMBERS
2020	11,854	13,196
2019	11,879	12,906
2018	10,863	11,941
2017	10,470	11,454
2016	10,080	11,025

ADMISSIONS AND COURSES 2016-2020



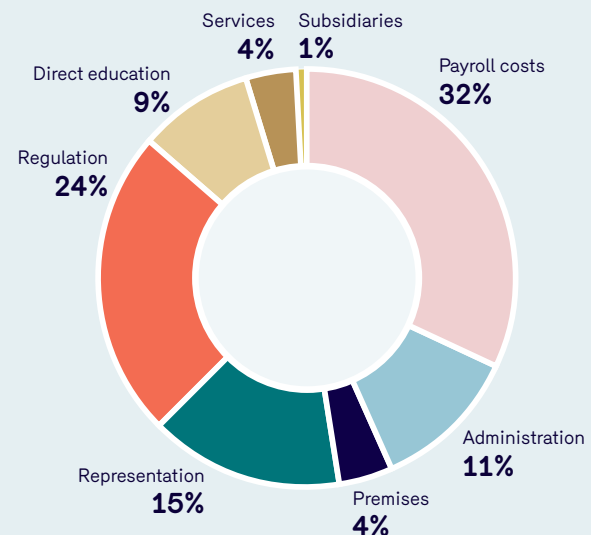
	ADMISSIONS	PPC1*	PPC2
2020	906	464	448
2019	2,387	501	412
2018	1,231	448	396
2017	1,050	411	384
2016	1,406	405	387

*(Plus Hybrid)

OUR EXPENDITURE

Despite falls and variations across income sources, these were offset, or exceeded, by very significant reductions in budgeted expenditure. Overall expenditure was €29.3m, which was an increase of 4% or €1.2m on 2019, which was an increase of 4% or €1.2m on 2019. On the general activities side, an increase of €1.4m (9%) was fully accounted for by an equivalent increase of €1.4m in the provision for LSRA costs. Significant savings across a number of areas were offset by additional costs in relation to member supports.

AREAS OF EXPENDITURE 2020





Education activities' operational charges, at €10.9m, were on a par with 2019, despite the increase in activity levels and student numbers.

'Other expenditure' noted in the accounts includes the costs associated with our subsidiaries and were €249k (2019: €437k) – mainly reflecting reduced activity in the Law Club of Ireland's bed-and-breakfast, premises hire, catering, and bar operations.

The 'areas of expenditure' graph on the previous page shows the categories of expenditure for 2020. The LSRA cost of €2.8m significantly inflates the regulation cost and, if this is excluded, the spend on representation exceeds the spend on regulation, which was an objective set by the Society in 2014.

OUR BALANCE SHEET

The position shown by our balance sheet is very distorted by FRS102 accounting-standard requirements. These require three significant adjustments. The first is a negative one, of a decrease in the valuation of the Benburb Street site from €20.35m to €20m.

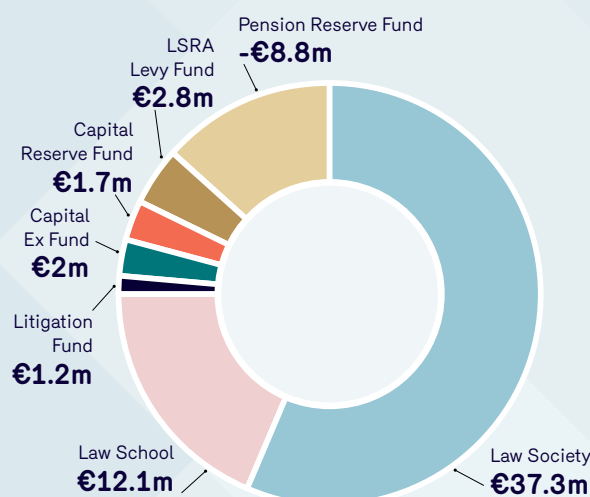
The second is the inclusion of a €1.8m provision for the remaining deferred cost of the sale of the SMDF, albeit this is fully offset by €1.86m in the SMDF Levy Fund. The estimated overall cost to members of the SMDF financial support is approximately €11.5m, compared with the original approval by members of €16m.

The third adjustment is for the increase in the deficit on the staff pension scheme (closed to new entrants since 2009) from €7.3m to €8.8m. This deficit arises from the value of the liabilities based on FRS102 assumptions. Our actuaries have determined, based on their actuarial model, that the current contribution rate will eliminate any real deficit over the long term. As a consequence of our financial performance in 2020 and these three adjustments, our net asset position now stands at €48.6m (2019: €47.7m). Of our reserves, €37.5m are accounted for by fixed assets (2019: €38.4m).

The reserves also include two contingency funds: the Capital Expenditure Fund, at €2m, and the Litigation Fund, at €1.2m. Both funds are designed to meet costs in these areas as they arise, and avoid fluctuations in the PC fee. The Capital Reserve Fund amount of €1.7m is to meet future development costs.

Additionally, there is a balance of €2.8m in the LSRA Levy Fund, being the balance of funds raised over the last three years since the imposition of the levy, and the amounts ultimately levied by the LSRA. This will be used to keep this levy at its current level over the coming years, despite anticipated LSRA cost increases.

RESERVES 2020



SUBSIDIARIES

The Group structure includes a number of subsidiary entities that are effectively run on a break-even basis. The Law Club of Ireland operates the commercial elements of the Blackhall Place premises and, after subsidies, net of management fees of €25k, made an operational surplus of €6k (2019: surplus €54k), despite only trading for Q1 of 2020. Benburb Street Property Company Limited, which owns and manages the Benburb Street site, made an operational deficit of €96k (2019: surplus €33k) before allowing for the revaluation of the site, which brought the deficit to €446k (2019: surplus €2.6m).

The full Audited Financial Statements of the Law Society for 2020 are available on the Society's website at www.lawsociety.ie.

2021

At an early stage in 2020, the Finance Committee committed to, if possible, giving a significant reduction in the 2021 PC fee. Ultimately, the committee recommended to Council a €350 (13%) reduction, which had a net impact on income of €2.9m for the Society and €1.1m for the Compensation Fund. This highlights how sensitive the Society's finances are to any reduction in the PC fee. This was done in the context of having no 'Brexit' PCs in 2021 (a fall of 500) and was considered by the Finance Committee as the maximum prudent reduction possible. The committee had to balance the impact of a reduction in the fee with its obligation to ensure prudent management of the Society's finances over the medium term.

As part of the process of determining the PC fee reduction, the Finance Committee committed to an expenditure review programme, which is currently ongoing. We are unlikely to be able to maintain the PC fee at the same level of reduction, but there are a number of contingencies that might enable us to ease back to the full fee over 2022 and 2023.



RICHARD HAMMOND
Chair

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee focused on implementing the recommendations of the Peart Commission and ensuring that the Law School met the challenges and demands of providing training to solicitors and trainees during the pandemic.

The committee also:

- Completed a consultation process with firms concerning the syllabus of the new fused Professional Practice Course, due to start in 2022,
- Continued our ongoing engagement with the Legal Services Regulatory Authority,
- Negotiated successfully with the Solicitors Regulatory Authority and ensured that Irish solicitors continue to be entitled to automatic admission as solicitors in England and Wales, post-Brexit,
- Awarded the first five grants under the Small Practice Traineeship Grants Scheme, which aims to help small firms in rural areas provide training contracts,
- Launched the Legal Ambitions Summer School in July 2020 (1,500 fifth- and transition-year students participated in the free online programme, which encourages students to consider a career in law and offers an insight into the role of a solicitor in practice),
- Introduced the Law School Ambassador Programme, which enables a number of PPC2 trainees to represent the Law School throughout the year and act as a point of contact for those starting the PPC1, and
- Provided funding for specialised training on suicide assessment and intervention for the Law School's counselling team.

Finally, we were delighted that we were able to hold a small, socially distanced ceremony attended by the late Dr Eamonn Hall and his family to mark the naming of a seminar room in the Green Hall in his honour.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members, the education officer, and the director of education for their hard work, assistance, and valuable input.



MARTIN CROTTY
Chair

MONEY-LAUNDERING REPORTING COMMITTEE

The committee is charged with carrying out the Law Society's statutory obligations in relation to mandatory reporting of suspected offences relating to money-laundering, terrorist financing, and relevant offences. In line with corporate governance best-practice, the committee is comprised of six solicitors and two lay members.

The Society is required to report any suspicions that money-laundering or an offence of financing terrorism has been committed by a practising solicitor (or any other person, who the Society, in the course of monitoring solicitors, suspects has been engaged in such activities) to the relevant authorities, that is, An Garda Síochána and the Revenue Commissioners.

Suspicious transaction reports are filed with the authorities pursuant to the provisions of section 63 of the *Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Acts* (as amended). During the past year, the committee directed that three such reports be made.

The Law Society is also required, pursuant to the provisions of section 19 of the *Criminal Justice Act 2011*, to report to An Garda Síochána, as soon as practicable, information in its possession that it knows or believes might be of material assistance in preventing the commission of a relevant offence or in securing the apprehension, prosecution, or conviction of a person for a relevant offence. Relevant offences are listed in schedule 1 of the act, and include fraud-related offences. During the past year, the committee directed that three such reports be made.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their work during the year. My gratitude goes to committee secretary Tina Beattie and her colleagues in the Regulation Department for their assistance.



BARRY MacCARTHY
Chair



PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE COMMITTEE

The function of the Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) Committee is to deal with all matters pertaining to the regulation of solicitors' PII, including monitoring the implementation of the PII regulations and associated documentation, maintenance of a stable PII market, provision of guidance to the profession, and attending to PII queries arising. The committee reviews drafts and publishes updated PII regulations and associated documentation on an annual basis.

The committee maintains a regular dialogue with insurers participating in the Irish market for solicitors' PII. It monitors the management and running of the Special Purpose Fund (the Assigned Risks Pool and the Run-off Fund) through the Special Purpose Fund Management Committee, which comprises representatives of the PII Committee, the Special Purpose Fund manager, and the two participating insurers with the highest market share by premium.

The committee provides information and documentation to the public and the profession through the PII website at www.lawsociety.ie/PII, which contains current and historic information and documentation on PII matters, including news items, regulations, minimum terms and conditions, the common proposal form, participating insurers' agreements, Special Purpose Fund documentation, lists of insurers and brokers, and guidance notes. Information on the current insurance details of firms continues to be available through the Society's online 'firm insurance details' search facility.

The most recent PII renewal saw significant increases in premiums, albeit at a lower level than those seen by other professions and solicitors in other jurisdictions. These increases in premiums were due to a hardening of the global market due to issues such as COVID-19, increased risk, lack of profitability in international PII markets, and solvency requirements, rather than due to an increase in claims in the solicitors' market. The Society made significant changes to the minimum terms and conditions in advance of the renewal to minimise the increases in premiums, including reducing the period of free run-off cover to six years, introducing a run-off premium for non-compliant firms, and removing the 1% minimum contribution to the Special Purpose Fund for insurers.

A last-minute change in underwriting criteria by a specific insurer in the market caused difficulties for firms previously covered by that insurer. The Law Society liaised extensively with insurers and brokers to find additional capacity in the market to assist these firms, and the Society suspended usual regulatory deadlines to give firms more time to find alternative cover. *eBulletins* were issued to keep the profession up to date, and one-to-one assistance was provided through the Society's helplines.

Despite these premium increases, the market remained stable, with no insurers exiting the market and only ten firms availing of the Assigned Risks Pool. The numbers entering the Run-off Fund also remained stable, with no increase in the number of firms closing.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members and committee secretary for their hard work, assistance, and valuable input.



IMELDA REYNOLDS
Chair

REGULATION OF PRACTICE COMMITTEE

The Regulation of Practice Committee administers the Compensation Fund, maintained in order to compensate clients for losses due to dishonesty by solicitors or their employees. The committee also polices the profession's compliance with regulations regarding accounts, anti-money-laundering, and regulatory requirements under the *Solicitors Acts 1954-2015* not assigned to other regulatory committees.

OVERALL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The income and expenditure account of the Compensation Fund reflects a surplus (representing an excess of income over expenditure after taxation) of €1,996,914 for the year ended 31 December 2020, compared with a surplus of €950,115 for the year ended 31 December 2019. The increase of €1,046,799 in the surplus for 2020 compared with 2019 is attributable to an increase in 2020 of €310,287 in income, a decrease of €3,214,870 in expenditure compared with 2019, and an increased adjustment of €2,478,358 in the fair-value movements arising on revaluation of investments.

INCOME STREAMS

The increase of €310,287 in income in 2020 is attributed mainly to an increase of €846,401 in income and return on investments, together with an increase of contributions receivable of €163,323, offset by a decrease of €669,055 in recoveries from defaulting solicitors.

EXPENDITURE

The decrease of €3,214,870 in expenditure between the two years is attributable to a decrease in the provision for claims of €3,224,182.

BALANCE SHEET

The net assets of the fund as at 31 December 2020 stood at €25,293,253, compared with €23,296,339 at 31 December 2019. The increase of €1,996,914 in the net asset position of the fund between the two years' ends is reflected in an increase of €3,025,027 in revenue reserves, together with a decrease of €1,028,113 in the unrealised profit on the investment portfolio.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE DECEMBER 2020

In the six months ended 30 June 2021, a total of 57 claims were received. Excluding invalid claims refused, these claims amounted to €594,082. Payments were made in the sum of €180,176 in respect of claims, and claims

amounting to €413,906 are still under consideration. The net assets of the fund are valued at €26 million as at 30 June 2021. The annual contribution to the fund was €620 per solicitor for 2021. Insurance cover for €50 million in excess of €5 million is in place for the year ending 31 December 2021.

The year 2020 saw the appointment of BDO as the new auditors to the Compensation Fund.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The committee met 52 times for scheduled, special, and emergency meetings, demonstrating that, while the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the format of meetings from in-person to virtual, there was no decrease in the committee's considerable workload. Due to the committee's wide statutory remit, and to ensure efficiency, the committee meets in divisions for general business and has subcommittees dealing with investments and audit.

Arising from these meetings, the committee decided to:

- Levy contributions amounting to €13,000 towards the cost of investigations,
- Refer three solicitors to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal,
- Refer 12 solicitors to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (ten of these cases related to the late filing of accountants' reports),
- Apply to the High Court in two cases, and
- Withdraw approval of an accountancy firm from the panel of approved accountants.

As on-site inspections could not take place during the COVID pandemic, the Society ensured continued protection for client moneys through off-site 'desktop reviews', whereby solicitors sent information directly to the authorised person, preferably in password-protected electronic format. The Society completed approximately 300 off-site inspections in the year to June 2021. The level of cooperation from the profession has been excellent.

The committee, following a rigorous review of the financial position of the Compensation Fund, decided that it was appropriate to reduce the Compensation Fund element of the practising certificate fee to €620 in 2021, from €720 in 2020.



A **practice note** about interest charges on solicitor client accounts was issued in February 2021, setting out the regulatory implications of negative interest charges that banks are now imposing on solicitor client accounts, and how negative interest is to be treated as outlay. Amendments to the *Solicitors Accounts Regulations* have been approved by the Society, and should become law later this year, to provide clarity and certainty regarding the obligations of solicitors where interest charging on client accounts occurs.

The committee continues to monitor the evolving cybersecurity landscape, and committee members are participating in a dedicated working group to investigate further methods, procedures and policies that would assist the profession in mitigating the risk of a cyber-attack.

The *Solicitors (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Regulations 2020 (SI 377 of 2020)* came into effect on 1 November 2020, and a related **practice note** was published. The regulations do not impose any additional regulatory burden on the profession, as they simply codify existing law and encapsulate solicitors' obligations in one place.

The committee was responsible for presentation of practising certificate regulations to Council in advance of the renewal process, facilitating the introduction of an online-only renewal process.

It also oversaw a policy review in relation to solicitors outside the jurisdiction, to realign the regulatory framework in the light of Brexit and ensure that it was legally robust. This confirmed our view that a practising certificate only entitles a solicitor to practice from an establishment in Ireland, and should be issued on that basis. The committee approved issuing 'certificates of attestation' in place of practising certificates to Irish-qualified solicitors seeking registration with foreign bars.

The Law Society published a **practice note** on the retention of professional fees in client accounts, emphasising that any money properly available to be applied in satisfaction of professional fees must be transferred to the office account within three months.

On 18 December 2020, the Legal Services Regulatory Authority assumed responsibility for regulating advertising by legal practitioners. In its submission to the authority, the Society confirmed that the new regulations were a "positive and effective realignment of the previous regulatory regime". The Society no longer provides an advertisement-vetting service.

I would like to thank the committee vice-chairs, the lay members, all other committee members, the Registrar of Solicitors and director of regulation (the committee secretary), and his team in the Regulation Department for their highly valued participation in the work of the committee.



ALISON KELLEHER
Chair

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

It is with great pleasure that we report on our committee's work over the past 12 months, which could not happen without the enthusiasm and commitment of our vice-chair, committee secretary, and all volunteer members listed in the annual report. A key goal of the committee is to promote ADR, and the committee continues to look for seminars and speaking opportunities to promote all forms of ADR.

In October 2020, the committee collaborated with the Southern Law Association and the ICMA in presenting a joint webinar titled 'Making the most of mediation' to over 200 practitioners. In April 2021, we collaborated with the Litigation Committee and LSPT on a joint webinar titled 'Effective mediation in Ireland'. The committee also published a related guidance note on 'Top tips for remote mediations' in the April *Gazette*.

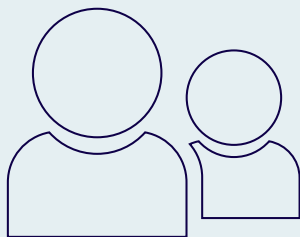
We continue to engage with stakeholders regarding the establishment of a Mediation Council, and welcome the commitment in the Department of Justice's plan for 2021 to establish such a council.

An aim this year was to seek greater diversity of representation on the Law Society's Arbitration Panel, and a number of female applicants were successfully appointed.

In May 2021, in collaboration with the president, the committee organised a well-received round-table discussion for panel members. The committee continues to work with Arbitration Ireland, the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and others to support the development of ADR for domestic and international dispute resolution.

A notable contribution this year was the raising of concerns to the President of the High Court in relation to the process in place in the Irish courts for enforcement of adjudication decisions pursuant to the *Construction Contracts Act 2013*. This resulted in the new Practice Direction HC 105.

The committee's appointees to the ICC National Committee and the ICC Court of Arbitration Commission continue to represent the profession's interests at an international level, and the committee's vice chair, Eamonn Conlon SC, has been appointed alternate member of the ICC International Court of Arbitration.



NON-STANDING COMMITTEES



NEIL KEENAN
Chair

BUSINESS LAW COMMITTEE

It has been a busy year for the committee, with the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent challenges and increased risks to businesses and practitioners who advise businesses.

A key focus of the committee under my chairmanship has been to try and assist with the burden that is placed on practitioners in navigating our regulatory requirements and managing risks in a way that allows business transactions to proceed as seamlessly as possible.

The committee made the following submissions:

- **September 2020** – *Civil Law and Criminal Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020*, section 32 (execution of documents in counterpart),
- **December 2020** – General Scheme of the *Companies (Corporate Enforcement Authority) Bill*,
- December 2020 – letter to the CRO regarding timing of the CORE closure,
- January 2021 – *Competition (Amendment) Bill 2021*,
- March 2021 – Letter to the CRO outlining issues with the new CORE platform, and
- June 2021 – scheme of a *Consumer Rights Bill*.

The committee also issued the following notes in May 2021:

- ‘COVID-19: due diligence and warranties’,
- ‘Guidance for practitioners on response to audit queries’.

It also had detailed engagements with the CRO in regard to the various technical issues that arose following the transition to the new CORE platform in December 2020. It also ran a very successful and well-attended business law conference in November 2020.

The committee continues to be represented on, and is engaged in, the CRO Fora, the Company Law Review Group, and the CCBE Private Law and Company Law Committees.

I am very grateful to the committee’s vice-chair, Máire Cunningham, the committee members, and secretary Joanne Cox for all of their work, support and commitment. They are unstintingly generous with their time, notwithstanding their commitments to their own very busy practices.



ORLA COYNE
Chair

CONVEYANCING COMMITTEE

The Conveyancing Committee has had another very busy year, as it continued to work remotely to deal with a broad range of matters affecting conveyancing practice and procedure.

The committee invested a lot of time this year in a project on prescriptive easements, mindful of the looming deadline of 1 December 2021 for registration of such easements. The task force set up to deal with this topic made a submission to Government seeking a six-year extension of the time within which to register these easements and a referral of the whole area of easements to the Law Reform Commission. It also made a submission to the PRAI in relation to issues with the Form 68 required to register these easements. Several practice notes on easements were published for the assistance of the profession, and the committee collaborated with Law Society Professional Training to provide a webinar on easements in July. Work continues as the December deadline draws closer.

The committee represents solicitors’ interests in its engagement with external bodies representing various stakeholders in the conveyancing process, including:

- Meetings with the Property Registration Authority in relation to Form 3, registration of easements, Forms 5 and 6, data protection, and other registration matters,
- Liaison with Revenue’s Local Property Tax (LPT) section on various issues to do with LPT,
- Meetings with the Banking and Payments Federation Ireland in relation to the residential certificate-of-title system, with qualified redemption figures, delays in obtaining title deeds on accountable trust receipt, and delays in issuing releases still being some of the main problems for solicitors,
- Ongoing liaison with Revenue and the Taxes Administration Liaison Committee on electronic stamping, in conjunction with the Taxation and Technology Committees.

The committee’s task forces issued guidance to the profession on various matters throughout the year, and they continue to work on a broad range of issues:

- The Anti-Money-Laundering/Know Your Customer Task Force published a practice note to assist practitioners with the data-protection issues associated with continued demands from equity



NON-STANDING
COMMITTEES



HELENA KIELY
Chair

CRIMINAL LAW COMMITTEE

funds and other lenders for personal data on third parties,

- The Commercial Certificate of Title Task Force issued guidance on a non-Law Society certificate of title currently in use in the market,
- The Landlord and Tenant Task Force issued guidance on service charges and break clauses, and will soon conclude its work on green leases,
- The review of practice issues to do with MUDs/ managed properties is ongoing, with the intention of seeking an agreement for a protocol on obtaining information from managing agents,
- The Conveyancing Practice Reform Task Force published a practice note on the digitisation of the conveyancing process, and it continues to consider how to bring about changes in conveyancing practice that will make the process more efficient for solicitors and their clients, and will engage with the Society's eConveyancing Task Force in this regard,
- The Planning Task Force continues to engage with both the RIAI and SCSi in relation to their respective forms of certificate of compliance with planning and building regulations,
- The group dealing with NPPR matters issued a practice note on the operation of the statute of limitations, and the committee was pleased to note the recent letter from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage confirming the phased expiry of the NPPR charge.

Alongside these activities, the committee continued to deal with its usual volume of day-to-day practice queries from conveyancing solicitors:

- The committee's telephone and email helpline, run by the committee secretary, dealt with 812 queries,
- There were 62 new written queries for consideration at the committee's monthly meetings, along with a rolling agenda of about 30 ongoing topics,
- The committee issued 21 new practice notes (www.lawsociety.ie/practicenotes) on a variety of topics.

Renewed thanks are due to all committee members and consultants, vice-chair Michael Walsh (who replaced former vice-chair Sandra Murphy during the year, following her appointment as a judge of the District Court), and committee secretary Catherine O'Flaherty for all their hard work and support throughout the year.

The committee had a busy and productive year. The consequences of the pandemic continued to play a central role in the work of practitioners, with positive and ongoing engagement by the committee with the following agencies, particularly in relation to the impact of the coronavirus on the courts and access to legal advice for persons detained in prisons and garda stations:

- Irish Prison Service – on difficulties in gaining access to prisoners for legal consultations, in particular in prisons, and discussions around improvement in services, both in terms of online and physical consultations,
- An Garda Síochána – resulting in renewed instructions by An Garda Síochána to members, on protections to be put in place for detained persons and legal advisers during detentions, and the identification of garda stations suitable to host garda interviews and detentions remotely,
- Courts Service,
- Policing Authority – to discuss the experiences of solicitors providing legal advice to clients detained in garda stations during the pandemic.

The committee has continued to engage with the Department of Justice in relation to restoration of fees for legal aid. Members met with the department regarding payment of fees for review of disclosure, clearly outlining the position of the defence solicitor.

The committee provided submissions to the Oireachtas and the Department of Justice on:

- COVID-19 regulations,
- Victims' testimony,
- Review of the *Offences against the State Acts 1939*, and
- The implementation of the recommendations of the *O'Malley Report*.

Members engaged in the subgroup reviewing the training recommendations in the *O'Malley Report*. Our annual conference was held in March 2021, partly designed to address the recommendations in the report around the training of legal professionals.

The committee organised an online conference on Brexit in November 2020.

Work is ongoing on the relaunch of the 'Find a Solicitor' website, in collaboration with An Garda Síochána.



BRENDAN TWOMEY
Chair

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT

The mission of the Society's Law School and Diploma Centre is to enable solicitors to provide excellence in legal services to the public. The Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) oversees that objective. It meets with the teams running the courses in professional conduct and management, all diplomas and certificates, and continuing professional development.

It reviews curricula and materials furnished to students of the Law School to ensure that the courses offered at every level are at the highest possible standard. The CDU suggests improvements for existing courses and topics for new courses and, if considered appropriate, adoption by the Law School through the Education Committee.

We kept up to date on the diplomas offered and on the Legal Ambitions Summer School. We considered reports on the PPC Hybrid course and monitored the introduction and commencement of the SQE in England and Wales.

We reviewed the Access Initiative, the Outreach Programme, the Law School Psychological Services, the LLM and the professional doctorate, Law Society Professional Training, and courses in litigation (PPC1), technology, skills, business law, legal practice Irish and advanced legal practice Irish, criminal litigation, PPC2 conveyancing electives (including commercial and complex property transactions), land law, PPC1 probate, insolvency, medical law, and ethics and professionalism.

We continue to keep the recommendations of the Peart Commission report on solicitor education under review.

Thanks to each committee member from a wide range of firms, and to Dr Geoffrey Shannon SC (deputy director of education) for his dedicated support as our secretary, and to all the managers and tutors of the Law School, CPD and Diploma centre.



CATHERINE O'FLYNN
Chair

EMPLOYMENT AND EQUALITY LAW COMMITTEE

The Employment and Equality Law Committee has provided a strong voice in policy debate in order to inform decision-making, for example by:

- Providing preliminary observations on the need for further guidance on remote working, in response to a consultation run by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation,
- Making a full submission to that department in response to a separate public consultation on the introduction of a right to request remote working, and
- Making a submission to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in response to a separate public consultation on flexible working.

Throughout this period, committee members monitored the experience of practitioners attending before the Workplace Relations Committee (WRC). We organised a meeting with representatives of the WRC in relation to the conduct of remote hearings during the pandemic, and to consider how all parties might facilitate best practice. The committee subsequently prepared an update to the profession on the benefits of actively consenting to remote hearings, and to encourage agreement to email contact with the WRC. This update was done by way of the *eZine*, and also encouraged early submissions.

Furthermore, the committee provided a submission to the WRC about its mediation process in terms of the committee's experiences, and gave suggestions as to how the process might be improved.

An official liaison was established with the Labour Court to facilitate a similar exchange of information to that enjoyed with the WRC.

Other developments include:

- A review of the employment and equality law precedents available to the profession on the Law Society's website, updating template contracts and agreements, workplace policies, and guidelines to ensure that they fully comply with current legislation and case law, and
- The provision of updates to the profession on relevant legislative, case law, and practice-and-procedure developments via regular *eZine* and *Gazette* articles, and the annual employment and equality law LSPT seminar.



CORMAC LITTLE SC
Chair

EU AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The EU and International Affairs Committee enjoyed another busy year in 2020/21.

The committee currently provides the Head of Irish Delegation and the Society's representative to the Council of Bars and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE). Relations with representatives of the legal profession in other EU member states are also maintained through annual round-table discussions with the Brussels-based representatives of other European bar associations. The most recent of these took place in October 2020.

In 2020, the committee established a formal relationship with the International Law Section of the California Lawyers' Association (CLA). The committee and the CLA organised a webinar on 30 November 2020 titled 'Unilateral action by big tech'.

Through these relationships, representation of the Law Society and the solicitors' profession at an international level is fostered, while facilitating exchanges of information and debate on recent legal developments.

In early 2021, the committee held a webinar titled 'Rethinking *Marleasing* – a conversation with (then) Advocate General Gerard Hogan'. The committee also organised a webinar on 'COVID-19 and the rise of big tech – how is competition law coping?' The presentation was made available in late 2020 under the LegalEd series on the Law Society's website.

In April 2021, the committee launched, in conjunction with the Council of Europe HELP (Human-rights Education for Legal Professionals) programme, a free online course on asylum and human rights.

Throughout the year, committee members have contributed articles for publication in the 'Eurlegal' section of the *Gazette* on various topics, including Brexit and migration.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all members of the committee for their hard work and valuable contributions, and to our secretaries Deirdre Flynn and Suzanne Crilly for their unstinting support.



HELEN COUGHLAN
Chair

FAMILY AND CHILD LAW COMMITTEE

It has been a privilege to chair the Family and Child Law Committee during what has been an extremely busy year. I have the good fortune of having exceptionally hard-working and enthusiastic members who volunteer their time and expertise so generously to the committee.

Our remit to inform and update the profession, as well as the public, came into sharp focus throughout the last year, as COVID-19 affected every aspect of our lives. Our committee provided clear guidelines for both the profession and parents, covering such issues as access, maintenance, domestic violence, and attending court safely. We consulted widely during this time, and were delighted to build on the already strong relationships with our colleagues in the Bar and the Family Lawyers Association.

The committee engaged with the Courts Service and judiciary to ensure access to justice in the context of family-law proceedings. We successfully advocated for the reopening of the courts in a safe manner, and the use of remote hearings for procedural court applications.

Family law is set to undergo fundamental changes, with the *Family Court Bill* having been approved by Cabinet and currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny. Our committee made detailed submissions to both the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and the Department of Justice's Family Justice Oversight Group on the proposed legislation. Members of the committee participated in media interviews to highlight the need for reform, and the need to properly resource a family-law justice system. We also made detailed submissions to reform maintenance.

The committee's educational role has been facilitated through our annual conference (which was held online for the first time last November) and a number of articles, practice and guidance notes in the *Gazette*. Members have also contributed to CPD seminars and Law School programmes.

I wish to thank sincerely each and every member of the committee for their unstinting support, commitment, and hard work throughout the year, in particular Dr Geoffrey Shannon SC, my predecessor Keith Walsh SC, my vice-chair Aidan Reynolds, and our excellent secretary Fergal Mawe.



MICHAEL KEALEY
Chair

GAZETTE EDITORIAL BOARD

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the *Law Society Gazette* and its daily online news service [Gazette.ie](https://www.gazette.ie) (active since 14 November 2018) continue to go from strength to strength. Solicitors rely heavily on both media channels to keep them informed of the most important legal news and analysis.

The *Gazette* magazine has a monthly print run of 13,000 and is produced to the highest ecological standards, using carbon-balanced paper, eco-friendly inks, and compostable bio-wraps.

The magazine's interactive PDF (available online) continues to grow in popularity. There were 12,853 downloads of the magazine in PDF format from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 – an increase of 7.7% over the previous year.

Piggybacking on the popularity of the magazine, *Gazette.ie* excelled during the year under review, setting new annual readership figures. There were 860,264 unique pageviews on the site – up 31% compared with the previous 12 months. Total pageviews recorded 1.18 million readers (up 52%).

The coronavirus lockdowns undoubtedly contributed to the growth in the readership base, both at home and overseas. Irish readers comprised 67% of the total, with 301,207 readers. Britain was in second place, with 35,799 readers (8%). The USA had 22,143 (5%), India 10,452 (2.3%), and Norway 5,084 (1%). The 'average time spent on page' was 1 minute, 24 seconds.

The *Gazette* team has been producing the magazine remotely now for 18 months, having successfully dealt with many challenges during that period. On a bright note, advertising revenue has been showing strong signs of recovery since the beginning of 2021. This is a welcome development, and one that the *Gazette* plans to build on in the year ahead.

I am most grateful to my Editorial Board colleagues for their dedication, commitment, and valuable contributions throughout the year. My congratulations, too, to the *Gazette* team on continuing to publish the magazine and *Gazette.ie* remotely, with a constant emphasis on production excellence.



JUSTINE CARTY
Chair

GUIDANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Despite the impact of COVID-19, this has proved to be a highly productive year for the committee.

During the year under review, we produced a number of practice notes for the assistance of the profession, and we are currently engaged in a project to update the *Guide to Good Professional Conduct for Solicitors*.

The 'Ten Steps' project continued this year. In 2021, six 'ten-step' notes were published. These concise and easily accessible articles are published in the *Gazette* and on the Society's website. They have focused on matters such as ethical decisions as a solicitor, strengthening your firm in a crisis, managing data and data protection in your firm, running a more costs-compliant firm, and how to create a more inclusive workplace.

The committee updated and republished two practice notes: 'Emergency succession planning in a sole practitioner/principal's firm'; and 'Legal representation at the Mental Health Commission – guidelines for solicitors'. Both practice notes are available on the Law Society's website.

As previously stated, the committee is currently updating the *Guide to Good Professional Conduct for Solicitors*, which will be the fourth edition of the guide. This publication provides best-practice guidance to members of the profession on matters of ethics and conduct. The booklet will be available for the profession in autumn 2021.

The committee continues to support the profession through the Guidance and Ethics Helpline, where members of the profession can seek guidance on matters of conduct and ethics.

We also continue to support the work of the Panel to Assist Solicitors in Regulatory Difficulty, details of which are available on the Society's website. The committee also maintains and updates the online 'Get a Quote' platform, which provides members of the public with access to a list of participating solicitors, available on the Society's website. Currently, 377 firms participate.



SINEAD LUCEY
Chair



ANNA-MARIE CURRY
Chair

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Despite the challenges of the past year, the Human Rights and Equality Committee has continued to expand its membership, as well as its programme of work in promoting the law and practice of human rights among the profession and the public. Through committee member Alma Clissmann, the Law Society maintains representation at the Access to Justice Committee and the Human Rights Committee of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CBBE).

The 18th annual **Human Rights Conference**, marking the 70th anniversary of the *European Convention on Human Rights*, was hosted online and explored issues around the procedural requirements of article 2 of the convention, post-death investigations, and the right to life. It specifically considered its application in the Irish context and examined international developments – most prominently the *Hillsborough* case. The event enjoyed a large audience and received very positive feedback from practitioners.

The committee prepared numerous submissions, including collaborating with other Society committees. In September 2020, jointly with the Litigation Committee and the Criminal Law Committee, a submission was made to the Oireachtas Special Committee on COVID-19 Response. Some of the Society's recommendations were included in the **final report** of the special committee. In March 2021, the committee made a submission on Ireland's **Third National Report to the UN Universal Periodic Review 2021**, in addition to providing observations on the General Scheme of the **Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill** and the **Dying with Dignity Bill 2020**.

The committee is engaged with the organisation of the annual Human Rights Conference, as well as continuing its awareness initiatives with regular contributions to the *Gazette*.

My sincere thanks go to all members of the committee for their valuable contributions, hard work, and insightful input throughout the year. In particular, I wish to express my appreciation to vice-chair Gary Lee, and to Michelle Lynch and Nadya Lazarova as secretaries to the committee, for their work and assistance.

IN-HOUSE AND PUBLIC SECTOR COMMITTEE

On 5 November 2020, the committee held its annual conference, 'Enhancing the effectiveness of the in-house legal team and legal professional privilege for the in-house solicitor.'

We liaised with the Litigation Committee regarding submissions made by the Society on section 16(10) of the *Consumer Insurance Contracts Act 2019* in August 2020 and January 2021.

We liaised with the Regulation Department regarding the production of the Professional Indemnity Insurance Committee's practice note, 'In-house solicitors and *pro bono* work', published in the June 2021 *Gazette*. The committee continued to liaise with the *Gazette* to ensure that content relevant to in-house solicitors was included. Our vice-chair, Caroline Dee Brown, is the committee's liaison on the *Gazette* Editorial Board. The monthly 'In-house update' continued to be published on the Society's website and in the members' *eZine*.

We provided input to the Guidance and Ethics Committee regarding the updating of its *Guide to Good Professional Conduct for Solicitors*.

On 27 May 2021, the committee held its panel discussion, 'Remote working and the in-house solicitor'. On 14 October 2021, the committee will hold its annual conference. Topics will include hybrid working, wellbeing, and Ireland as a choice of law for jurisdiction and arbitration clauses.

The chair continued to represent the Society at General Assemblies of the European Company Lawyers' Association.

The committee continued to provide guidance on queries received. ***A Guide for In-house Solicitors Employed in the Corporate and Public Sectors*** provides prospective and existing in-house solicitors with key information, coupled with the Society's ***Regulatory Guide for In-house Solicitors Employed in the Corporate and Public Sectors***.

I wish to thank all committee members for their contributions this year, with special thanks to Caroline Dee Brown (vice-chair) and Louise Campbell (secretary).



DEIRDRE KILROY
Chair

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DATA-PROTECTION LAW COMMITTEE

The committee has had an exceptionally active year, partly due to the implementation of EU legislation, Brexit, and the implications of COVID-19.

Interactions with other organisations of interest included constructive meetings with:

- The IP Unit of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, to discuss the implementation of the *Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market*, among other topics,
- The Data Protection Commission, to discuss a range of data issues, including international transfers and data-collecting and processing in post-Brexit and COVID-19 contexts,
- The Revenue Commissioners, to discuss issues involving the importation of counterfeit goods arising from Brexit, and
- The Intellectual Property Office of Ireland, to discuss a range of topics, including feedback in relation to user experiences with its website.

In June 2021, we responded to the World Intellectual Property Organisation's [questionnaire](#) on IP and private international law issues, and made a [submission](#) in response to the Data Protection Commission's consultation on its strategic policy.

The committee also had discussions with the [Ireland for Law](#) group members on a range of issues. In the first part of 2021, we made a submission to the Department of Justice recommending changes to the *Data Protection Act 2018* to address an Irish law issue regarding the European Commission's new [standard contractual clauses](#) for international transfers. A statutory instrument dealing with this issue was passed in June 2021.

The committee continues to assist practitioners in their implementation of data-protection obligations, including by liaising with the Litigation, Employment, Probate, Guidance and Ethics, and other committees. Committee members have written articles for the *Gazette* and guidance notes for the profession. Members also worked with Law Society Finuas Skillnet to provide an IP CPD webinar and on-demand online GDPR training.

I wish to thank the committee members for their collaboration, good humour, support and hard work throughout the year.



LISA CARTY
Chair

LITIGATION COMMITTEE

The Litigation Committee has had another busy year supporting the profession. Unfortunately, COVID-19 was still dominant in our professional and personal lives, and a substantial amount of our work was spent dealing with:

- Remote hearings, continuity of service, and access to justice,
- Developing a remote-hearings protocol and guide for the Law Society and Courts Service (this was done by vice-chair Joe O'Malley in conjunction with Eamonn Harrington and Ernest Cantillon, whose contributions – despite not being members of the committee – were greatly appreciated),
- Remote swearing of affidavits, resulting in the passing of Statutory Instrument 127/2021.

We have also engaged on other significant issues, such as:

- Personal-injuries guidelines (in addition to updates to the profession, members of the committee arranged, and presented at, a seminar for members in May 2021),
- District Court scale costs,
- The discount rate (as it relates to personal injuries),
- Public consultation on the transposition of [Directive 2020/1828](#) on representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers,
- Public consultation on enhancing and reforming PIAB,
- The Review of the Administration of Civil Justice,
- Continued engagement with external bodies, such as VHI and PIAB,
- Negative interest rates in the context of the Accountant's Office,
- Working (with other committees) on issues such as data protection, the *Consumer Insurance Contracts Act 2019* (implications for legal-advice privilege), and the presentation of a seminar on mediation.

The annual seminar took place remotely on 29 October 2020. It proved to be a great success due to the presence of several distinguished speakers.

I wish to recognise the well-deserved granting of patents of precedence to a number of our committee members, including Stuart Gilhooly SC, Aine Hynes SC, Liam Kennedy SC, and Damien Tansey SC. Finally, I would like to thank every member of the committee for their generous contributions this year, in particular Joe O'Malley (vice-chair) and Riona Leahy (our new secretary), who ensured we met our objectives and our deadlines.



PAT BRADLEY
Chair

PROBATE, ADMINISTRATION AND TRUSTS COMMITTEE

As with other committees, the most significant issue facing our committee was the ongoing pandemic and the various levels of opening and reopening of Government departments and society at large, and the effect this had on practitioners dealing with the Probate Office, the Revenue Commissioners, the Wards of Court Office, and financial institutions in particular.

The other significant change this year was the introduction of the online version of the Inland Revenue Affidavit, the Statement of Affairs (Probate) Form SA 2, and the ongoing engagement required to ensure that initial 'teething troubles' were adequately catered for, and that issues that arose in relation to the implementation of the online form were dealt with in a timely fashion by the Revenue Commissioners. This is an ongoing matter that the committee deals with as issues both technical and legal come to our attention. In addition, the committee continues to interact with the Revenue Commissioners on areas of concern through TALC and the relevant subcommittees.

A related issue was the delay in obtaining PPS numbers for overseas beneficiaries from Client Identity Services in the Department of Social Protection. Following high-level engagement with the department by the committee, adequate resources were allocated to this area in December, with a dedicated email address for long-standing applications being provided. While this issue appears to be resolved, the committee will keep it under review. Another significant issue was the introduction by the Probate Office of new forms of oath of executor, and oath and bond for administrators, either on intestacy or with will annexed. It is hoped that the new-form oath, and oath and bond together, with a rationalised fee structure, will aid practitioners in applying for grants in the future.

The committee continues to liaise with the Probate Office on matters including delays reported by members and issues arising in relation to changes in probate-practice procedure and the related updating of the probate section of the Courts Service website. Delays and inconsistencies continue to be an issue for practitioners dealing with the Probate Office. One change to practice from the Probate Office that we welcome is the use of email to clarify points of concern with practitioners, instead of rejecting applications.



As usual, the committee provided guidance to colleagues on areas of the law and practice as they relate to probate and trusts, and provided specific guidance on best practice, both through the *eZine* and to colleagues individually.

We continue to protect the right of clients in nursing homes to have free access to their solicitor without third-party interference, in cooperation with the Mental Health and Capacity Task Force. We continue to engage with the relevant Government departments on the *Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015*.

GDPR came up as an issue before the committee for the first time this year, and we continue to engage with financial institutions to remind them of their unchanged duty to provide certain details in relation to surviving joint-account holders.

Following successful engagement with the Department of Justice on the proposed private member's *Registration of Wills Bill 2016*, the minister has stated that it is not her intention to continue with this bill.

We are continuing to liaise with the Charities Regulatory Authority about their online version of the PAS 3 Charitable Bequest Form, with a view to making improvements.

We continued our work regarding the *Fourth*, and now the *Fifth AML Directive*, in conjunction with the AML Task Force, and highlighting the potential unintended consequences of its transposition into Irish law in relation to simple will trusts for minor or incapacitated beneficiaries. In particular, we continue to engage with our colleagues on the AML Task Force on the registration of trusts and the responsibilities for solicitors and our clients in this regard. The issue of difficulties being encountered by trustees in opening trust accounts is also being addressed.

With the assistance of our colleagues in Law Society Professional Training, the committee held an online conference in March 2021 covering the recent changes to the forms of oath and bond, the form SA 2, and other changes to probate practice and procedure. This conference was well attended and positively received. In addition, committee members continue to speak at Law Society and other online events and seminars.

Challenges for 2021/22 include dealing with the ongoing effect of the pandemic on practice, including lobbying for reform of the law in relation to 'presence' when witnessing a will or when swearing or affirming an affidavit.

We will continue to explore the possibility of solicitors availing of the dormant-accounts legislation for relatively small sums languishing in client accounts: this has become more urgent since the introduction of negative interest rates. We continue to lobby for an increase in Probate Office staff, the continuation of the District Probate Registries, greater technical support for the Probate Office, and a review of the CAT ROS system in order to remove ongoing technical difficulties, and to ensure that solicitors have access to the relevant information they need in order to provide this to their clients.

My thanks to committee secretary Padraic Courtney and all the committee members for their hard work over the year.



SONIA MCENTEE
Chair

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Public Relations Committee works alongside the director of representation and member services, Teri Kelly, and the RMS Department on key communications projects for, and on behalf of, Law Society members.

In early 2020, a PR campaign was approved to reassure clients and members of the public that solicitors were designated as essential service providers and that, although doors may be closed, solicitors continued to work and were available to assist. Advertisements were placed in *The Irish Times*, on local and national radio stations, and in several local papers across Ireland in May and June 2020. The second phase of that campaign took a different approach, focusing on key areas of legal services, including property and employment law. Once again, the advertisement was placed in *The Irish Times*, regional newspapers, on local and national radio, and on social media. In 2021, a new campaign was designed, focusing on the commitment solicitors make to their clients.

One of the annual highlights of the Society's year – the Justice Media Awards – was once again presented online. The overall winner for 2021 was *Second Captains*, for the BBC Sounds podcast detailing the efforts made by journalist Mark Horgan and filmmaker Ciarán Cassidy to track down George Gibney in the US. A total of 200 entries were received this year, and a new category of 'Best Student Journalism' was successfully launched. The online presentation can be enjoyed on www.jmawards.ie.

Our annual Communications Day is planned for November 2021. The event is always well attended. The PR Committee was engaged with the Taskforce on Negative Interest Rate Charges and assisted in delivering a presentation to representatives of over 20 bar associations, who then contributed to a high-profile campaign (at national and regional level) against the charges being levied on solicitors' clients' accounts. The format for this presentation was highly successful, and is one to be used further when required.

Meetings continued to be held online during 2020/21. This format has worked well for the committee, and online accessibility to meetings will be retained into the future.

I wish to thank the members of the committee for their engagement, commitment, and valuable contributions, and I look forward to continuing this work in the year ahead.



JOHN CUDDIGAN
Chair

TAXATION COMMITTEE

The Taxation Committee has had another busy year representing the Law Society and its members in its engagement with the Revenue Commissioners and other stakeholders.

Committee members actively participate in the Tax Administration Liaison Committee (TALC) and its relevant subcommittees, which deal with direct taxes, indirect taxes, capital taxes, audit, tax technical, collection tax issues, base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS), KDB, R&D, and the Leasing Working Group. The committee is also represented on the CCBE Taxation Group and the Letters of No Audit (LONA) subgroup.

The committee also reviewed, to the extent appropriate, and commented on the provisions of the *Finance Act 2020* as it passed through the legislative process, and summarised its relevant consequences in the annual *Tax Guide*, published and distributed to members.

The committee made numerous submissions to Revenue, both via the TALC forum and directly to Revenue/ Department of Finance in respect of issues concerning practitioners. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the committee made tax and other recommendations to assist business and individuals.

We prepared a pre-budget submission, submitted to the Minister for Finance and other relevant Government departments. The dedication of committee members in this regard is acknowledged, as the time commitment has been considerable in light of the continually changing fiscal environment.

We continue to provide updates to the profession (via practice notes and CPD) on changes to tax legislation and Revenue practice and procedures. We responded to the taxation queries raised by members throughout the year.

The chair was notified by Michael O'Connor – one of our most committed and able members – of his wish to retire from the committee. I would like to specifically acknowledge Michael's excellent contribution to the committee over a long number of years. I have been ably assisted in my role by the committee's secretary Dr Rachael Hession, and I thank her for her support and assistance throughout the year. My thanks also to vice-chair Andrew Quinn and the committee members for their commitment and contributions.



JANE BOURKE
Chair

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

The Technology Committee monitors the use of technology for the benefit of the profession, and it continues to represent solicitors and the Law Society through its interactions with the Courts Service, Revenue Commissioners, Property Registration Authority, and other Government agencies.

The committee is very aware of the need to alert members to the possibility of a cyber-attack, to which end it organised four webinars through the Law Society's Small Practice Business Hub on this topic. The committee urges members to be vigilant, to educate their staff, and to report any attack to the Society. A report outlining the problems with the banks' EFT validation process – which, in the committee's view, was affording fraudsters an opportunity to target members – was forwarded to the president.

Representatives from the committee continue to work with the Courts Service on the implementation of the Remote Courts Hearing Project. This project is long-term, and Government investment, both in resources and infrastructure, will determine its success.

Committee members attend regular meetings with Revenue on e-stamping and e-licensing, and with the Property Registration Authority user group.

This year, the committee published guidance notes on tips for Zoom/virtual meetings, and on due-diligence questions for prospective case-management software providers.

The committee is also preparing a submission on the digitisation of justice in the EU, as well as a series of articles for the *Gazette* on the use of technology and disability inclusion. Other activity includes the submission of proposals on ways of using IT to reduce our carbon footprint, and keeping a watching brief on developments with blockchain technology and how it will affect the legal profession.

I wish to thank my vice-chair Michael Monahan for all his support and valued input; our hard-working committee members, who ensure that we achieve our goals; and our diligent secretary, Veronica Donnelly.



AVRIL FLANNERY
Chair

YOUNGER MEMBERS COMMITTEE

The Younger Members Committee represents members of the profession who are in their first seven years of practice (regardless of age). We aim to promote the professional development of younger members, and we advocate their interests by engagement, networking, and holding events.

We work closely with the Law Society's career-support section on innovative projects. We have proposed a new approach and design of the 'CV Register'. Furthermore, while we were unable to run our annual conference in 2020, we pivoted and developed a series of online career-information sessions with Career Support.

Committee members have volunteered as 'Law School ambassadors' and have contributed to the work of the Society's Environmental and Sustainability in Practice Task Force, the Remote Courts Task Force, the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Task Force, the Law School's Competency Framework Round Table, the Employment Committee's submission on remote working, the Guidance and Ethics Committee, and the Legal Services Regulatory Authority's upcoming survey on access to the profession.

We continue to raise awareness among trainee solicitors about the work of the Law Society and the benefits of membership by regularly addressing trainees during PPC2.

We are also in the process of launching a survey of all members on the future of working. It is hoped that the results will be shared at our autumn annual conference, titled 'The Future Lawyer – 2030'.

The committee became a member of the European Young Bar Association and has fostered connections internationally with the England and Wales Junior Lawyers Division, the Scottish Young Lawyers' Association, and the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division.

Nationally, we collaborate with other groups, such as OUTLaw and the Irish Women Lawyers Association. Earlier this year, we co-hosted a virtual book review of Colm Tóibín's *The Heather Blazing* with the Bar of Ireland's Young Bar Committee.

I wish to thank all of our committee members for their hard work this year, with special thanks to our vice-chair Brendan Hayes and Michelle Nolan (committee secretary).





KAY COGAN

The pandemic did not bring about any major change in Kay Cogan's office routine. She is a sole practitioner, who works with her husband Michael Daly from the basement of the family home in Rathgar, Dublin.

Kay, who celebrated 40 years in the profession on 24 June 2021, is a strong believer in lifelong learning and took the opportunities presented during the pandemic to participate in a number of courses and webinars.

She worries, however, about the effect of remote working on mental health, and believes that younger solicitors should go back to the office – and that the Law Society should encourage this.

During the pandemic, Kay saw an increase in employment-law queries, while conveyancing work has “gone through the roof”. In the longer term, however, she is pessimistic about the future for sole practitioners, who face rising costs, as well as a profession she believes is now “over-regulated”.



LIAM FITZGERALD

Liam Fitzgerald is a sole practitioner who owns and operates a general practice in Lusk, Co Dublin. Married with two children, he qualified in 2007 and opened his own practice in 2014.

One of the positives of being a solicitor during the pandemic, he says, was simply the ability to continue working – and to do so from his office.

“I think I would have struggled emotionally and psychologically if I was knocked out of my routine – especially during the early days of the lockdown,” Liam says. He does believe, however, that the pandemic will change the way solicitors work in the future. “We have seen that you don’t need to be in the office to get work done.”

Though he experienced a lack of work in the early days of the restrictions, Liam, like many other practitioners, noticed an increase in requests for wills.

STANDING COMMITTEES

COORDINATION

Chair: James Cahill

Members:

Michelle Ní Longáin
Barry MacCarthy
Michele O'Boyle
Dan O'Connor
Maura Derivan
Mary Keane

Secretary: Mary Keane

COMPLAINTS AND CLIENT RELATIONS

Chair: Flor McCarthy

Vice-chairs: Jonathan White

Solicitor members:

Elaine Given
Joyce Good Hammond
Peter Groarke
Waheed Mudah

Lay members:

Chair: Dan Murphy
Brian Callanan
Michael Carr
Ultan Courtney
Frank Cunneen
Tom O'Sullivan
Chris Rowland

Secretary: Eamonn Maguire

EDUCATION

Chair: Richard Hammond SC

Vice-chair: Brendan Cunningham

Members:

Justine Carty
Martin Crotty
Paul Egan SC
Barbara Galvin
Eamon Harrington
James Murphy
Carol Plunkett

Ex officio:

James Cahill
Michelle Ní Longáin
Barry MacCarthy

Consultants:

Colm Costello
Alison Egan
John O'Connor
Michael V O'Mahony
Michael Peart
Valerie Peart
Brendan Twomey

Secretary: Paula Sheedy

FINANCE

Chair: Chris Callan

Vice-chair: Paul Keane

Members:

Maura Derivan
Patrick Dorgan
Paul Egan SC
Stuart Gilhooly SC
Eamon Harrington
Julie Herlihy
Rosemarie Loftus
Eugene McCague
Michele O'Boyle
Dan O'Connor
Martin Lawlor
Michael Quinlan
Imelda Reynolds
Austin Slattery
Brendan Twomey

Ex officio:

James Cahill
Michelle Ní Longáin
Barry MacCarthy
Secretary: Cillian MacDomhnaill

MONEY-LAUNDERING REPORTING

Chair: Martin Crotty

Frank Bowen
Chris Callan
Brendan Cunningham
John Elliot
Frank Mee

James Murphy
Dara Robinson SC

Secretary: Tina Beattie

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

Chair: Barry MacCarthy

Vice-chair: Bill Holohan SC

Members:

John Elliot
Derek Gately
Maria Lakes
Lorna McAuliffe
Flor McCarthy
Shane Neville
Louise O'Reilly
Lorraine Rowland
Adrian Shanley
Brendan Twomey

Lay member: Jim O'Mahoney

Consultant: David Curran

Secretary: Sorcha Hayes

REGULATION OF PRACTICE

Chair: Imelda Reynolds

Vice-chairs: Garry Clarke

Brendan Cunningham
Terry Leggett
Martin Crotty (Advertising Regulations Division)
Dara Robinson SC

Members:

Chris Callan
Gerard Carroll
Deborah Crowley
Anne-Marie Dermody
Leonora Doyle
Tara Doyle
Frank Gearty
Theresa Ham
David Higgins
Siún Hurley
Áine Hynes SC
David Lavelle
Rosemarie Loftus
Mary McAveety
Shane McCarthy
Katherine McMahon
Patrick McNeice
James Murphy
Juli Rea
Noeleen Redmond
Claire Ryan
Eamonn Shannon
James Ward

Lay members:

Frank Bowen
Richard George
Frank Mee
Tony Weldon

Secretary: John Elliot

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2020/2021

NON-STANDING COMMITTEES

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Chair: William Aylmer
Vice-chair: Éamonn Conlon SC
Members:
Michael Carrigan
Liam Guidera
Deirdre Hennessy
Noreen Howard
Karen Killoran
Helen Kilroy
James Kinch
Brian McMullin
Barry Sheehan
Keith Walsh SC
Secretary: John Lunney

BUSINESS LAW

Chair: Neil Keenan
Vice-chair: Maire Cunningham
Members:
Philip Andrews
Cillian Balfe
Joy Compton
Niamh Counihan
Eleanor Daly
Philip Daly
JP Gilmartin
Richard Grey
Michael Hanley
Patricia Heavey
Suzanne Kearney
Adrian Mannion
Justin McKenna
Seán Nolan
Fiona O'Connell
Gavin O'Flaherty
John Olden
Alvin Price
Paul Ryan
Eamonn Shannon
Lorcan Tiernan
Consultant: Paul Keane
Secretary: Joanne Cox

CONVEYANCING

Chair: Orla Coyne
Vice-chair: Michael Walsh
Members:
Suzanne Bainton
Mark Barr
Gabriel Brennan
Joan Byrne
Tom Davy
Majella Egan
Deirdre Fox
Joyce Good Hammond
Ann Marie Keane
Geraldine Kelly
Niamh Mahon
Keith McConnell
Jason McGoey
Eleanor McKiernan
Leona McMahan
Peter O'Dea
Dermot O'Dwyer
Tony O'Sullivan
Michael P Quinlan
Patrick Sweetman
Joseph Thomas
Consultant: Sandra Murphy
Rory O'Donnell
Secretary: Catherine O'Flaherty

CRIMINAL LAW

Chair: Helena Kiely
Vice-chair: John O'Doherty
Members:
Yvonne Bambury
Amanda Connolly
Carina Davidson
Vincent Deane
Jonathan Dunphy
Alan Gannon
Matthew Kenny
Eileen McCabe
Darach McCarthy
Shane McCarthy
Margaret McEvilly
James MacGuill SC
Fergus Mullen
Joan O'Brien
Emer O'Sullivan
Robert Purcell
Richard Young
Consultants:
Hugh Sheridan
Michael Staines SC
Secretary: Geraldine Rafferty

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Chair: Brendan Twomey
Vice-chair: Martin Crotty
Members:
Aaron Boyle
Jill Callanan
Colm Costello
Ruth Craig
Emma Crowley
Patrick Diggins
Tara Doyle
Freda Grealy
Edel Hartog
Bill Holohan SC
T P Kennedy
Susan Martin
Gemma Neylon
Robert Purcell
Keavy Ryan
Bernadette Smith
Secretary: Geoffrey Shannon SC

EMPLOYMENT AND EQUALITY LAW

Chair: Catherine O'Flynn
Vice-chair: Barry Walsh
Members:
Susan Battye
Geraldine Carr
Maura Connolly
Áine Curran
Michael Doyle
Wendy Doyle
Karen Duggan
Richard Grogan
Joanne Hyde
Janice Kavanagh
Karen Killalea
Sineád Likely
Deirdre Malone
Ciara McLoughlin
Rhona Murphy
Ronnie Neville
Louise O'Byrne
Emer O'Callaghan
Anne O'Connell
Einde O'Donnell
Breda O'Malley
Hugh O'Neill
Jane O'Sullivan
Terence O'Sullivan
Barry Reynolds

Siobhra Rush
Emily Sexton
Secretary: Liam Dunne

EU AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Chair: Cormac Little SC
Vice-chair: Ross McMahon
Members:
Martin Cooney
Katrina Donnelly
Jessica Egan
Duncan Grehan
Niamh Hodnett
Anthony Joyce
Richard Kelly
Tara Kelly
T P Kennedy
Alan McCarthy
Maureen O'Neill
Barry Sheehan
Secretary: Suzanne Crilly

FAMILY AND CHILD LAW

(with responsibility also for civil legal aid)

Chair: Helen Coughlan
Vice-chair: Aidan Reynolds
Members:
Ailbhe Burke
Eamonn Carroll
Brendan Dillon
Peter Doyle
Lorna Duffy
Liz Healy
Clodagh Hopkins
Siún Hurley
Sinead Kearney
Geraldine Keehan
Denise Kirwan
Josepha Madigan
Donagh McGowan
Gareth Noble
Michele O'Boyle
Jennifer O'Brien
Geoffrey Shannon SC
Annette Sheehan
Emily Sherlock
Keith Walsh SC
Susan Webster
Consultants: Rosemary Horgan
Joan O'Mahony
Secretary: Fergal Mawe

GAZETTE EDITORIAL BOARD

Chair: Michael Kealey
Members:
Aoife Byrne
Ken Casey
Mairéad Cashman
Caroline Dee-Brown
Hilary Forde
Richard Hammond SC
Mary Keane
Teri Kelly
Paul Lavery
Aisling Meehan
Heather Murphy
Robert Purcell
Andrew Sheridan
Secretary: Mark McDermott

GUIDANCE AND ETHICS

(with responsibility also for guidance on practice management)

Chair: Justine Carty
Vice-chair: Graham Farrell

Members:

Robert Baker
 Helene Coffey
 Gus Cullen
 Conor Dalton
 Maura Derivan
 Liz Dowling
 Sean Durcan
 Charles Gilmartin
 John G Harte
 Morette Kinsella
 Susan Martin
 Sharon McElligott
 Catherine MacGinley
 Michael Moran
 Cian Moriarty
 Ann-Marie Ryan
 Madeleine Thornton

Consultant: Brendan Dillon

Secretary: Pamela Connolly

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

Chair: Sinead Lucey

Vice-chair: Gary Lee

Members:

Shalom Binchy
 Grainne Brophy
 Alma Clissmann
 Kieran Cummins
 Aine Flynn
 Diego Gallagher
 Patricia Hynes
 Barbara Joyce
 Marie Kinsella
 Stephen Kirwan
 Fred Logue
 Shane McCarthy
 Sandra Moloney
 Clare Naughton
 Patrice O'Keeffe
 Ashimedua Okonkwo
 Thomas Reilly
 Cristina Stamatescu
 Rose Wall

Consultant: Noeline Blackwell

Secretary: Nadya Lazarova

IN-HOUSE AND PUBLIC SECTOR

Chair: Anna-Marie Curry

Vice-chair: Caroline Dee-Brown

Members:

Michael Barrett
 Alison Bradshaw
 Justine Carty
 Sarah Jane Clifford
 Jeanette Codd McDonagh
 Gwen Considine
 Ciara Daly
 Aisling Fitzgerald
 Robert Heron
 Audrey Huggard
 Ronan Lennon
 Helen Lyster
 Roisin Magee
 Áine McCarthy
 Deirdre McDermott
 Laura McGovern
 Margaret Maguire
 Aideen Neylon
 Gemma Neylon
 Richard O'Sullivan
 Thomas Reilly
 Evelyn Savage
 Peter White

Secretary: Louise Campbell

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DATA PROTECTION LAW

Chair: Deirdre Kilroy

Vice-chair: Paul Lavery

Members:

Mary Bleahene
 John Cahir
 Simon Carty
 Maureen Daly
 Ann Henry
 James Hickey
 Gerard Kelly
 Fred Logue
 Flor McCarthy
 Patricia McGovern
 Elaine McGrath
 David McMunn
 Leo Moore
 Elaine Morrissey
 Olivia Mullooly
 Aoife Murphy
 Fiona O'Beirne
 Alistair Payne
 Barry Scannell
 Laura Scott
 Irina Sharapova

Consultant: Tara MacMahon

Secretary: Katherine Kane

LITIGATION

Chair: Lisa Carty

Vice-chair: Joseph O'Malley

Members:

Michael Boylan
 Amy Bradley
 Fiona Duffy
 Áine Hynes SC
 Barry Kelleher
 Liam Kennedy SC
 Martina Larkin
 Conor MacGuill
 Rowena McCormack
 Karen McDonnell
 Ann McGarry
 Conor Minogue
 Sonya Morrissy Murphy
 Jack O'Brien
 Gerald O'Flynn
 Sinead Power
 Colette Reid
 Julie Sadlier
 Damien Tansey SC
 Catherine Tarrant
 Aisling Woods

Consultant: Stuart Gilhooly SC

Secretary: Riona Leahy

PROBATE, ADMINISTRATION AND TRUSTS

Chair: Pat Bradley

Vice-chair: Anne Stephenson

Members:

Catherine Bourke
 Gareth Bourke
 Gwen Bowen
 Bernadette Cahill
 Ciara Cahill
 Georgina Drum
 Richard Hammond SC
 Damien Jordan
 Maurice Joy
 Aileen Keogan
 Morette Kinsella
 Ita Lyster
 Kevin Martin
 Tom Martyn
 Veronica Neville

Mary Nolan
 Ciara O'Callaghan
 Tracey O'Donnell
 Michael P Quinlan
 Gemma Stack
 Margaret Walsh
Secretary: Padraic Courtney

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Chair: Sonia McEntee

Vice-chair: Susan Webster

Members:

Robert Baker
 Maura Derivan
 Michael Kealey
 Teri Kelly
 Chris Murnane
 Dan O'Connor

Secretary: Miriam Taber

TAXATION

Chair: John Cuddigan

Vice-chair: Andrew Quinn

Members:

Deirdre Barnicle
 Pat Bradley
 Niamh Caffrey
 Caroline Devlin
 Maura Dineen
 Aidan Fahy
 Donal Kennedy
 David Lawless
 Sonya Manzor
 Tom Martyn
 Ruairi Mulrean
 Michael O'Connor
 Suzanne Parker
 James Somerville

Secretary: Rachael Hession

TECHNOLOGY

Chair: Jane Bourke

Vice-chair: Michael Monahan

Members:

Neil Butler
 John Furlong
 Jim Heney
 Brian Horkan
 Eamonn Keenan
 Jeanne Kelly
 Flor McCarthy
 Kate McKenna
 Peter McKenna
 Gemma Neylon
 Labhaoise Ní Fhaoláin
 Greg Ryan
 Reamonn Smith

Secretary: Veronica Donnelly

YOUNGER MEMBERS

Chair: Avril Flannery

Vice-chair: Brendan Hayes

Members:

Tarisa May Chidawanyika
 Maeve Delargy
 Jennifer Dorgan
 Amy Grant
 Fiona McNulty
 Cian Moriarty
 Jennifer O'Sullivan
 Michael Quinlan
 Hannah Shaw
 Aisling Woods

Observer: current auditor of SADS

Secretary: Michelle Nolan

SOCIETY WORKING GROUPS AND TASK FORCES

AML TASK FORCE

Chair: James MacGuill SC

Members:

Brian Bohan
David Brangam
Chris Callan
John Elliot
Mary Keane
Paul Keane
Martin Lawlor
Cormac Little SC
Paraic Madigan
John Olden

Secretary: Emma-Jane Williams

BENBURB STREET DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Chair: Patrick Dorgan

Vice-chair: Tim Bouchier-Hayes

Members:

James Cahill
Cillian Mac Domhnaill
Norman Craig
Padraic Halligan

Secretary: Kate Browne

eCONVEYANCING TASK FORCE

Chair: Eamonn Keenan

Vice-chair: Neil Butler

Members:

Gabriel Brennan
Patrick Dorgan
Majella Egan
Deirdre Fox
Sonia McEntee
Clodagh O'Hagan
Martina Ward-Clancy

Secretary: Liam Barrett

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE TASK FORCE

Chair: Flor McCarthy

Vice-chair: Jane Bourke

Members:

Margaret Austin
Teri Kelly
Conor Linehan SC
Sinead Martyn
Fergal Mawe
Rachel Minch SC
Gabriel Toolan

Secretary: Justin Purcell

LEGAL SERVICES REGULATION ACT TASK FORCE

Chair: Paul Keane

Members:

Chris Callan
Martin Crotty
Paul Egan SC
John Elliot
Stuart Gilhooly SC
Sorcha Hayes
Rachael Hession
Áine Hynes SC
Liam Kennedy SC
Morette Kinsella
Martin Lawlor
Flor McCarthy
Attracta O'Regan
Michael Quinlan
Imelda Reynolds
Robert Ryan
Keith Walsh SC

Secretary: Simon Treanor

MENTAL HEALTH AND CAPACITY TASK FORCE

Chair: Richard Hammond SC

Vice-chair: Áine Hynes SC

Members:

Padraic Courtney
Maria Dillon
Joan Doran
Olive Doyle
Mark Felton
Patricia Hickey
Katharine Kelleher
Morette Kinsella
Shane McCarthy
Anne Stephenson
Gabriel Toolan
Keith Walsh SC
Margaret Walsh

Secretary: Cian Monahan

PRACTICE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

Chair: Shane McCarthy

Vice-chair: Sonia McEntee

Members:

Richard Grogan
Richard Hammond SC
David Higgins
Morette Kinsella
Brendan Twomey

Secretary: Justin Purcell

TASK FORCE TO DEVISE A STRATEGY IN RELATION TO BANKING CHARGES ON DEPOSITS

Chair: Maura Derivan

Members:

James Cahill
Paul Egan SC
John Elliot
Richard Hammond SC
Paul Keane
Teri Kelly
Liam Kennedy SC
Imelda Reynolds
Joint secretary: Michael O'Connor (Regulation), Derek Owens (Communications)

A photograph of Rosemarie Hayden, a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a headset and a vibrant, patterned purple and black dress. She is sitting in a black office chair at a white desk, smiling warmly at the camera. The desk is equipped with a laptop, a keyboard, and a mouse. In the background, there is a window with a view of greenery and a small framed picture on the wall.

ROSEMARIE HAYDEN

Rosemarie Hayden worked from her Co Kildare home during the pandemic, alongside her husband and younger daughter.

While Rosemarie misses the interpersonal connections of the office, she tends to be more cautious now about large groups of people, having been hospitalised with COVID – despite being double-vaccinated – earlier this year. As a result, her future preference is for hybrid working, “with a heavy emphasis on remote”.

Rosemarie, who qualified as a solicitor in 2015, works in-house for technology company Ward Solutions. As she joined the firm in the middle of the pandemic, she has yet to meet many of her new colleagues in person.

As vice-chair of the Irish Women Lawyers Association, Rosemarie believes its online events during the pandemic led to better engagement and “levelled the playing field” – particularly for members from outside Dublin.

CPD Scheme

Anthea Coll, CPD scheme executive
Dana Humphrey, CPD scheme administrator

Diplomas

Claire O'Mahony, head of diplomas
Deirdre Flynn, diploma executive
Cian Monahan, diploma executive
Suzanne Crilly, diploma executive
Patricia Harvey, diploma executive
Liam Dunne, diploma executive
Riona Leahy, diploma executive (part time)
Odette O'Reilly, marketing and communications executive
Hazel Bradley, administration team leader
Aedin Twamley, diploma applications/ payments administrator (part time)
Stephen Collender, multimedia coordinator and diploma course administrator
Barry Whelan, diploma course exams administrator
Linda Byrne, diploma course administrator
Joanne Martin, diploma course administrator
Emma O'Flynn, diploma course administrator

Law Society Professional Training

Attracta O'Regan, head of professional training
Adam Hewitt, marketing and communications executive
Anne Tuite, grant compliance executive
Gayle McNally, professional training administrator
Emma Snedker, professional training administrator
Eleanor Dowling, professional training administrator

Professional Practice Courses

Antoinette Moriarty, Law School Psychological Services manager and course manager (part time)
Gabriel Brennan, course manager (part time)
Padraic Courtney, course manager
Joanne Cox, course manager
Rachael Hession, course manager
John Lunnay, course manager
Rory O'Boyle, PPC hybrid course manager
Colette Reid, course manager
Judith Tedders, course resources executive (part time)
Christina Dwyer, course assistant
Keith Kierans, course assistant
Hilary Kavanagh, PPC hybrid course administrator
Gwen McDevitt, administrator
Irene O'Reilly, secretary
Catherine Byrne, secretary/ administrator
Dara McDermott, education services assistant
Róisín Cahill, course assistant (part time)
Aoife Cooke, course assistant
Paulina Mazewska, course assistant

Traineeship

Ian Ryan, training executive
Mary Walker, administrator
Sarah Lane, traineeship administrator (part time)

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Cillian MacDomhnaill, director of finance and administration
Sandra Smith, personal secretary to the director of finance and administration
Deirdre Byrne, privacy officer
Glen Newman, risk, administration and project executive
Mary McNeice, administrator (part time)
Hilary Kavanagh, Calcutta Run event promoter executive (part time)
Giulia Berto, Calcutta Run event assistant (part time)

Accounts

Paul Baily, financial controller
Esther Salley, accountant
Jennifer Ross, payroll executive
Carol Doyle, accounts assistant
Deirdre Hogan, accounts assistant
Sarah Kearns, accounts assistant
Donna Lynch, accounts assistant
Brenda Murphy, accounts assistant

Information Technology

Tom Blennerhassett, IT manager
Caroline Kennedy, IT manager - education
Damien Carr, infrastructure and cyber-security manager
Martin Kearney, IT projects manager
Paddy Keogh-Goode, IT applications support
Kopal Dhuria, senior QA engineer
Sasikumar Paulraj, senior QA engineer
Paul Mooney, IT technical support - education
Aaron Duggan, IT technical support - education
Linda Cash, IT support (part time)
Patricia Faulkner, IT support
Robert Kavanagh, IT helpdesk support - education
Michael Keys, IT helpdesk support
Michalis Kirimidis, IT helpdesk support - education

Four Courts Office

Dolores Maguire, service assistant (part time)
Amy McDonnell, clerical assistant

Facilities/Internal Services

Tony Morgan, facilities manager
Pawel Jezak, facilities and health and safety coordinator
Wilhelmina Ryan, secretary
Deirdre Digan, receptionist (part time)
Deirdre Gilhooly, receptionist / telephonist (part time)
Gail O'Donoghue, receptionist
Thelma Gorman, receptionist
Des White, head of print/post
Charles Mulvey, facilities operative
Anthony Casey, facilities operative
John Lindsay, facilities operative
James Robinson, facilities operative

Graham Helps, facilities print and post operative
Eileen Brennan, cleaner (part time)
Joan McKeever, cleaner
Paul Kiberd, head of security/caretaker
James Byrne, security (part time)
Tom Conneely, security (part time)
Peter Fallon, security (part time)
John Leonard, security (part time)
Henry Peyton, security (part time)
Gerard Redmond, security (part time)
John Rooney, security (part time)
Antonela Tiu, security (part time)
Michael Troy, security (part time)

Law Club of Ireland

Alan Greene, bar manager

STAFF LIST 2020/2021



FINANCIAL

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND REPORTS AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee is required to prepare financial statements for each financial year. The Finance Committee have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with FRS 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (“relevant financial reporting framework”). The Finance Committee must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Group and the Society as at the financial year end date and of the Group’s surplus or deficit for the financial year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Finance Committee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the Group and the Society’s financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Society will continue in operation.

The Finance Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Group and the Society keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the Group and the Society, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and surplus of the Society to be determined with reasonable accuracy, and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Society and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Finance Committee is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the financial information included on the Society’s website.

Independent auditor's report to the members of The Law Society of Ireland

Opinion on the financial statements of the Law Society of Ireland

In our opinion the Group and Society's financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Group and Society as at 31 December 2020 and of the surplus of the Group and the Society for the year then ended; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements we have audited comprise:

the Group financial statements:

- the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings;
- the Consolidated Balance Sheet;
- the Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows; and
- the related notes 1 to 26, including a summary of significant accounting policies as set out in note 1.

the Society financial statements:

- the Society Balance Sheet; and
- the related notes 1 to 26, including a summary of significant accounting policies as set out in note 1.

The relevant financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the Group and Society financial statements is FRS 102 "the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council ("the relevant financial reporting framework").

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)). Our responsibilities under those standards are described below in the "Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements" section of our report.

We are independent of the Group and the Society in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Finance Committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Society's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Finance Committee with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Finance Committee are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Reports and Consolidated Financial Statements, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Continued on next page/

/Continued from previous page

Independent auditor's report to the members of The Law Society of Ireland

Other information (continued)

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Finance Committee, the Finance Committee are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Finance Committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Finance Committee are responsible for assessing the Group and Society's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Group and Society's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Finance Committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Finance Committees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Group and Society's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of the auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Society (or where relevant, the Group) to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the business activities within the group to express an opinion on the (consolidated) financial statements. The group auditor is responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. The group auditor remains solely responsible for the audit opinion.

Continued on next page/

/Continued from previous page

Independent auditor's report to the members of The Law Society of Ireland

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that the auditor identifies during the audit.

Our report is made solely to the Society's members, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Society's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Society and the Society's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

John O'Callaghan
For and on behalf of
BDO
Dublin
Statutory Audit Firm
AI223876

Date: 6 May 2021

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND RETAINED EARNINGS
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

	<i>Notes</i>	2020 €	2019 €
INCOME			
Fees and subscriptions	4	19,465,915	19,816,544
Education activities	5	11,184,119	10,899,327
Publications	4	168,606	289,824
Four Courts rooms	4	252,829	1,041,156
Interest income	6	6,760	35,582
Other income	7	31,240	119,195
Sundry income		84,693	36,790
		31,194,162	32,238,418
EXPENDITURE			
Operating charges:			
- General activities	4	(18,195,098)	(16,746,205)
- Education activities	5	(10,881,938)	(10,923,548)
Other expenditure	7	(249,076)	(436,528)
		(29,326,112)	(28,106,281)
SURPLUS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR BEFORE REVALUATIONS, EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS AND TAXATION		1,868,050	4,132,137
Fair value gain arising on revaluation of investments	6	127,851	1,210,333
(Deficit)/Surplus on revaluation of development land	8	(350,000)	2,600,000
Exceptional item – deferred income re sale of SMDF	24	(21,773)	391,338
SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION	9	1,624,128	8,333,808
Taxation	10	(109,102)	(60,703)
SURPLUS AFTER TAXATION	17	1,515,026	8,273,105
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Re-measurement of net defined pension benefit liability	20	(592,000)	(1,048,000)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR		923,026	7,225,105
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year		47,726,791	40,501,686
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year		48,649,817	47,726,791

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020**

	<i>Notes</i>	2020 €	2019 €
Fixed Assets			
Tangible fixed assets	11	37,553,924	38,403,101
Current Assets			
Investments	12	12,066,555	11,938,704
Stocks	13	52,413	44,378
Debtors	14	2,054,351	2,704,290
Cash at bank and in hand		27,484,569	21,528,958
		41,657,888	36,216,330
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	15	(19,984,995)	(17,815,640)
Net Current Assets		21,672,893	18,400,690
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES	16	(1,801,000)	(1,801,000)
NET ASSETS EXCLUDING PENSION LIABILITY		57,425,817	55,002,791
Pension liability	20	(8,776,000)	(7,276,000)
NET ASSETS INCLUDING PENSION LIABILITY		48,649,817	47,726,791
ACCUMULATED RESERVES			
Society reserves		37,560,804	37,341,344
Law school reserves		12,100,667	11,505,178
Litigation fund		1,192,913	1,417,783
Capital expenditure fund		2,002,663	1,849,030
Capital reserve fund		1,740,676	664,700
LSRA levy fund		2,828,094	2,224,756
Pension reserve fund		(8,776,000)	(7,276,000)
TOTAL	17	48,649,817	47,726,791

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Finance Committee on 6 May 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

Chris Callan
Chairman of the Finance Committee

James Cahill
President of Law Society of Ireland

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**SOCIETY BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020**

	<i>Notes</i>	2020 €	2019 €
Fixed Assets			
Tangible fixed assets	<i>11</i>	17,545,746	18,042,137
Current Assets			
Investments	<i>12</i>	12,066,555	11,938,704
Stocks	<i>13</i>	39,766	29,591
Debtors	<i>14</i>	22,186,571	23,040,093
Cash at bank and in hand		27,136,525	21,316,974
		61,429,417	56,325,362
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	<i>15</i>	(19,980,989)	(17,790,760)
Net Current Assets		41,448,428	38,534,602
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES	<i>16</i>	(1,801,000)	(1,801,000)
NET ASSETS EXCLUDING PENSION LIABILITY		39,647,428	54,775,739
Pension liability	<i>20</i>	(8,776,000)	(7,276,000)
NET ASSETS INCLUDING PENSION LIABILITY		48,417,174	47,499,739
ACCUMULATED RESERVES			
Society reserves		37,313,048	37,099,179
Law school reserves		12,115,780	11,520,291
Litigation fund		1,192,913	1,417,783
Capital expenditure fund		2,002,663	1,849,030
Capital reserve fund		1,740,676	664,700
LSRA levy fund		2,828,094	2,224,756
Pension reserve fund		(8,776,000)	(7,276,000)
TOTAL	<i>17</i>	48,417,174	47,499,739

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Finance Committee on 6 May 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

Chris Callan
Chairman of the Finance Committee

James Cahill
President of Law Society of Ireland

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

	<i>Notes</i>	2020 €	2019 €
Net cash flows from operating activities	<i>19</i>	6,978,257	9,574,505
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable	<i>6</i>	6,760	35,582
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	<i>11</i>	(1,029,406)	(3,609,847)
Net cash flows from investing activities		(1,022,646)	(3,574,265)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		5,955,611	6,000,240
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		21,528,958	15,528,718
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		27,484,569	21,528,958

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out below.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

General Information and Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value, and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

The Law Society of Ireland is incorporated by Charter and its principal place of business is Blackhall Place, Dublin 7. The Law Society of Ireland's primary business functions are representation, education and regulation of solicitors in the Republic of Ireland.

The functional currency of the Law Society of Ireland is considered to be euro because that is the currency of the primary economic environment in which the Society operates.

The consolidated financial statements include the financial statements of the Law Society of Ireland and the financial statements of its subsidiary undertakings as detailed in note 22.

Basis of Consolidation

The Society consolidates its interests in subsidiary undertakings as detailed in note 22 which make up the financial statements to 31 December 2020.

Going Concern

The Society's forecasts and projections, taking account of reasonable possible changes in performance, show that the Society will be able to operate within the level of its current cash and investment resources. The Finance Committee of the Society have a reasonable expectation that the Society has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Consequently, they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the annual financial statements.

In particular, the Finance Committee have formed the view that, taking appropriate actions, the Society's reserves are sufficient to absorb the financial impact of the current Covid 19 pandemic public health emergency and any consequent recession.

Income

Income is recognised in the statement of comprehensive income in the year to which it relates. Course fee income received in advance of course participation is deferred and disclosed as deferred income in the balance sheet.

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Development land, which is included in Group tangible fixed assets, is measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value annually with any change recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings.

All other fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation.

Depreciation is provided on a straight line basis at the rates shown below which are estimated to reduce the assets to their residual values of nil by the end of their expected useful lives. Land is not depreciated.

Premises	:	2% per annum
Furniture, fittings and equipment	:	20% per annum
Leasehold improvements	:	20% per annum
I.T. equipment	:	20% per annum
Motor vehicles	:	25% per annum

Financial Instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Society becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Financial liabilities are classified according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into.

Financial assets and liabilities

All financial assets and liabilities are initially measured at transaction price (including transaction costs), except for those financial assets classified at fair value through the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings, which are initially measured at fair value (which is normally the transaction price excluding transaction costs), unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction. If an arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, the financial asset or financial liability is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are only offset in the balance sheet when, and only when there exists a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and the Society intends either to settle on a net basis, or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Financial assets are derecognised when and only when a) the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire or are settled, b) the Society transfers to another party substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership of the financial asset, or c) the Society, despite having retained some, but not all, significant risks and rewards of ownership, has transferred control of the asset to another party.

Financial liabilities are derecognised only when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expires.

(i) Investments

Investments are measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised through the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings. Where fair value cannot be measured reliably, investments are measured at cost less impairment.

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Financial Instruments (Continued)

(ii) Fair value measurement

The best evidence of fair value is a quoted price for an identical asset in an active market. When quoted prices are unavailable, the price of a recent transaction for an identical asset provides evidence of fair value as long as there has not been a significant change in economic circumstances or a significant lapse of time since the transaction took place. If the market is not active and recent transactions of an identical asset on their own are not a good estimate of fair value, the fair value is estimated by using a valuation technique.

Publications

Costs relating to the purchase or creation of publications, including books, electronic information and library additions are written off in the year in which they are incurred.

Retirement Benefits

For defined benefit schemes the amounts charged to the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings are the costs arising from employee services rendered during the period and the cost of plan introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs. The net interest cost on the net defined liability is charged to the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings. Re-measurement comprising actuarial gains and losses and the return on scheme (excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability) are recognised immediately in other comprehensive income.

A defined benefit scheme is funded, with the assets of the scheme held separately from those of the Society, in separate trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the prospective benefits method. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date.

For the defined contribution scheme the amount charged to the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings in respect of pension costs and other post-retirement benefits is the contributions payable in the year. Differences between contributions payable in the year and contributions actually paid are shown as either accruals or prepayments in the balance sheet.

Exceptional Items

Income and expenditure received or incurred in the normal course of the Society's business are charged to the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings as exceptional items. Non-operational liabilities assumed by the Society during the year are also charged as exceptional items. Where there is an asset to match such a liability, in whole or in part, the net amount is charged to the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings.

Taxation

Current tax is provided at amounts expected to be paid (or recovered) using the tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the balance sheet date.

The Society is chargeable to taxation on bank and other interest, investment gains, and on net surpluses arising from certain activities, such as publishing and courses, to the extent that they relate to transactions with non-members.

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Taxation (Continued)

Deferred tax is recognised in respect of all timing differences that have originated but not reversed at the balance sheet date where transactions or events that result in an obligation to pay more tax in the future or a right to pay less tax in the future have occurred at the balance sheet date. Timing differences are differences arising between the Society's taxable profits and its results as stated in the financial statements and the gains and losses calculated in tax assessments in periods different from those in which they are recognised in the financial statements.

Unrelieved tax losses and other deferred tax assets are recognised only to the extent that, on the basis of all available evidence, it can be regarded as more likely than not that there will be suitable taxable profits from which the future reversal of the underlying timing differences can be deducted.

Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell, which is equivalent to the net realisable value. Cost includes all expenditure that has been incurred in the normal course of business in bringing them to their present location and condition.

Grants

Revenue based grants are credited to the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings in the period in which the grant is receivable to match income and expenditure.

2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

In the application of the Law Society of Ireland's accounting policies, which are described in note 1, the Finance Committee members are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

The following are the critical judgements and estimates that the Finance Committee have made in the process of applying the Society's accounting policies, including consideration of the impact of the current Covid 19 pandemic public health emergency and any consequent recession on valuations, and that have the most significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements:

Defined Benefit Pension Scheme

The Society has a defined benefit pension scheme in operation for staff who joined the scheme prior to 30 September 2009. There are estimates with respect to certain key assumptions made in calculating the actuarial liability relating to the scheme including the discount rate, inflation and mortality rates, as disclosed in note 20 to the financial statements.

Development Land

The valuation of development land is based on the outcome of the related calculations of the land's net realisable value. These calculations are based on assumptions relating to future market developments, interest rates and future cost and price increases. The Group uses external valuations to determine the net realisable value.

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

3. STAFF COSTS	2020 General activities €	2020 Education activities €	2020 Other €	2020 Total €	2019 Total €
Salaries and wages	6,946,664	4,390,980	22,540	11,360,184	10,925,887
PRSI	730,068	474,762	2,491	1,207,321	1,178,326
Pension costs	1,221,118	671,417	1,742	1,894,277	1,745,855
Total	8,897,850	5,537,159	26,773	14,461,782	13,850,068

General Activities (note 4) above includes pay and related costs allocated to premises expenditure, representation expenditure and regulation expenditure.

The average aggregate number of employees during 2020 was 146 (2019: 151).

KEY MANAGEMENT REMUNERATION

The total remuneration for key management personnel which consists of the 8 Directors and 9 Section Heads/Managers for the financial year totalled €2,868,819 (2019: €2,759,968). This amount includes the President's Subvention, as approved by Council, of €124,500 (2019: €122,500). Remuneration includes salary, social security costs and pension costs.

4. GENERAL ACTIVITIES (including funds)	2020 €	2019 €
INCOME		
Fees and subscriptions		
Practising certificates	13,157,965	13,245,464
Members' subscriptions	1,047,554	977,311
Admission fees	283,863	715,704
Fund Contributions:		
- LSRA fund	3,345,942	3,298,882
- Litigation fund	331,152	754,567
- Capital expenditure fund	223,463	159,916
- Capital reserve fund	1,075,976	664,700
	19,465,915	19,816,544
Services and interest		
Publications	168,606	289,824
Four Courts rooms	252,829	1,041,156
Interest (note 6)	6,760	35,582
Total income	19,894,110	21,183,106

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

4. GENERAL ACTIVITIES (including funds) (Continued)

OPERATING CHARGES

General activities

Pay and related expenditure	3,640,824	3,418,930
Administration expenditure	1,348,461	1,259,305
Premises expenditure	738,678	904,442
Representation expenditure	4,391,996	3,957,266
Regulation expenditure	6,947,717	5,950,258
Admission expenditure	11,143	20,351

Services

Publications	926,591	871,967
Four Courts rooms	189,688	363,686

Total operating charges

18,195,098	16,746,205
-------------------	------------

Surplus

1,699,012	4,436,901
------------------	-----------

5. EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

2020

2019

€

€

INCOME

Professional Practice Course 1 fees	4,068,234	3,671,349
Professional Practice Course 2 fees	2,085,524	1,934,383
Indentures and registration	375,555	415,410
Examination fees	1,004,452	975,091
Diploma courses	2,565,059	2,247,136
Professional training	348,694	1,492,615
Miscellaneous income	736,601	163,343

Total income

11,184,119	10,899,327
-------------------	------------

OPERATING CHARGES

Pay and related expenditure	5,765,976	5,532,263
Administration expenditure	1,950,621	1,738,181
Direct expenditure	2,627,011	2,959,545
Premises expenditure	538,330	693,559

Total operating charges

10,881,938	10,923,548
-------------------	------------

Surplus/(Deficit)

302,181	(24,221)
----------------	----------

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

6. INTEREST AND INVESTMENT GAINS	2020	2019
	€	€
Interest – Society (note 4)	6,760	35,582
Fair Value gain arising on revaluation of investment	127,851	1,210,333
	134,611	1,245,915

7. OTHER INCOME/EXPENDITURE	2020	2019
	€	€
Income		
Bar and catering income	1,388	19,828
Bed and breakfast income	11,431	53,258
Functions and consultation room income	18,421	46,109
	31,240	119,195
Expenditure		
Bar and catering cost of sales	112,988	332,605
Bed and breakfast cost of sales	1,337	10,972
Premises expenditure	3,525	(149,384)
Professional fees	97,059	121,394
Other administration expenditure	34,167	120,941
	249,076	436,528
Deficit	(217,836)	(317,333)

8. SURPLUS ON REVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT LAND

The development land, included in tangible fixed assets, was valued at €20,000,000 by qualified external valuers Mason Owen & Lyons on a fair value basis at 31 December 2020. There was a decrease in valuation of €350,000 from the prior year based on valuations achieved on other properties in Dublin 7. There was an upward revaluation of €2,600,000 in 2019.

9. SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION	2020	2019
	€	€
The surplus before taxation is stated after charging:		
- Depreciation	1,528,583	1,373,467
- Auditors' remuneration	28,500	35,000
and after crediting:		
- Deposit interest	6,760	35,582
All income recognised arose in the Republic of Ireland.		

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

10. TAXATION	2020	2019
	€	€
Based on the surplus for the financial year:		
Taxation charge	91,284	60,703
Prior financial year under provision	17,818	-
	<u>109,102</u>	<u>60,703</u>

The effective tax rate for the financial year is lower than the standard rate of corporation tax in Ireland, which is 12.5%. The differences are explained below:

	2020	2019
	€	€
Surplus before taxation	1,624,128	8,333,808
Surplus for financial year multiplied by standard rate of corporation tax of 12.5% (2019: 12.5%)	203,016	1,041,726
Effects of:		
Net income and expenditure not subject to taxation	(563,315)	(1,045,712)
Depreciation in excess capital allowances	437,587	52,691
Higher tax rates on interest and rental income	16,642	19,239
Retention tax paid	(2,646)	(7,241)
Prior year under provision	17,818	-
Total tax charge for period	<u>109,102</u>	<u>60,703</u>

The Society is chargeable to taxation on bank and other interest, gains, and on net surpluses arising from certain activities, such as publishing, courses and property rental, to the extent that they relate to transactions with non-members.

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Group

	Premises €	Development Land €	Leasehold Improvements €	Furniture Fittings & Equipment €	I.T. Equipment €	Motor Vehicles €	Total €
Cost/Valuation:							
At 1 January 2020	22,165,263	20,350,000	2,044,890	6,056,534	7,155,784	126,200	57,898,671
Additions	190,864	-	-	169,277	669,265	-	1,029,406
Impairment		(350,000)	-	-	-	-	(350,000)
At 31 December 2020	<u>22,356,127</u>	<u>20,000,000</u>	<u>2,044,890</u>	<u>6,225,811</u>	<u>7,825,049</u>	<u>126,200</u>	<u>58,578,077</u>
Depreciation:							
At 1 January 2020	6,966,045	-	2,032,015	5,550,797	4,837,689	109,024	19,495,570
Charge for financial year	443,066	-	3,336	194,201	871,396	16,584	1,528,583
At 31 December 2020	<u>7,409,111</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,035,351</u>	<u>5,744,998</u>	<u>5,709,085</u>	<u>125,608</u>	<u>21,024,153</u>
Net book value:							
At 31 December 2020	<u>14,947,016</u>	<u>20,000,000</u>	<u>9,539</u>	<u>480,813</u>	<u>2,115,964</u>	<u>592</u>	<u>37,553,924</u>
At 31 December 2019	<u>15,199,218</u>	<u>20,350,000</u>	<u>12,875</u>	<u>505,737</u>	<u>2,318,095</u>	<u>17,176</u>	<u>38,403,101</u>

The development land was valued at €20,000,000 by qualified external valuers Mason Owen & Lyons on a fair value basis at 31 December 2020. The original cost of the development land when purchased in 2005 was €21,718,981.

**NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS (CONTINUED)

Society						
	Premises €	Leasehold Improvements €	Furniture, Fittings & Equipment €	I.T. Equipment €	Motor Vehicles €	Total €
Cost:						
At 1 January 2020	22,165,263	2,044,890	5,744,499	7,155,784	126,200	37,236,636
Additions	<u>190,864</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>169,277</u>	<u>669,265</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,029,406</u>
At 31 December 2020	<u>22,356,127</u>	<u>2,044,890</u>	<u>5,913,776</u>	<u>7,825,049</u>	<u>126,200</u>	<u>38,266,042</u>
Depreciation:						
At 1 January 2020	6,966,045	2,032,015	5,249,726	4,837,689	109,024	19,194,499
Charge for financial year	<u>443,066</u>	<u>3,336</u>	<u>191,415</u>	<u>871,396</u>	<u>16,584</u>	<u>1,525,797</u>
At 31 December 2020	<u>7,409,111</u>	<u>2,035,351</u>	<u>5,441,141</u>	<u>5,709,085</u>	<u>125,608</u>	<u>20,720,296</u>
Net book value:						
At 31 December 2020	<u>14,947,016</u>	<u>9,539</u>	<u>472,635</u>	<u>2,115,964</u>	<u>592</u>	<u>17,545,746</u>
At 31 December 2019	<u>15,199,218</u>	<u>12,875</u>	<u>494,773</u>	<u>2,318,095</u>	<u>17,176</u>	<u>18,042,137</u>

Group and Society

Total assets under construction which have not been depreciated in the financial year:
Premises: €25,312 (2019: €40,550) and I.T. equipment: €Nil. (2019: €Nil).

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS (CONTINUED)

Group and Society

Included in the above are assets relating to education activities:

	Cost €	Accumulated Depreciation €	Net Book Value €
Premises	10,297,623	2,762,343	7,535,280
Furniture, fittings and equipment	3,187,749	3,035,819	151,930
I.T. equipment	3,234,257	2,565,965	668,292
	<u>16,719,629</u>	<u>8,364,127</u>	<u>8,355,502</u>

12. INVESTMENTS

Group and Society

	2020 €	2019 €
Balance at 1 January	11,938,704	10,728,371
Fair value gain/(loss)	127,851	1,210,333
Balance at 31 December	<u>12,066,555</u>	<u>11,938,704</u>

At 31 December 2020, the fair value of investments exceeded cost by €1,566,555 (2019: €1,438,704)

The investments are comprised of the following:

- (a) Multi-Asset Conservative Growth Fund ("MACGF")
- (b) Davy Defensive Growth Fund ("DDGF")
- (c) Davy Passive Growth Fund ("DPGF")

The Policy MACFG, DDGF & DPGF have a low risk profile.

The equity investment by the Society in subsidiary undertakings is carried at €Nil (2019 €Nil).

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

13. STOCKS	2020	2019
	€	€
Group		
Stock in trade	52,413	44,378
	<u><u>52,413</u></u>	<u><u>44,378</u></u>
Society		
Stock in trade	39,766	29,591
	<u><u>39,766</u></u>	<u><u>29,591</u></u>

The replacement cost of stock is not significantly different from the above stated cost.

14. DEBTORS	2020	2019
	€	€
Group		
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Debtors and prepayments	2,033,020	2,628,801
Corporation tax	-	27,577
Amounts due from Law Society of Ireland Scholarship Fund	21,331	20,701
Value added tax	-	27,211
	<u><u>2,054,351</u></u>	<u><u>2,704,290</u></u>
Society		
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Debtors and prepayments	2,033,020	2,616,792
Income tax	-	27,577
Amounts due from Law Society of Ireland Scholarship Fund	21,331	20,701
Amounts due from subsidiary undertakings:		
- Benburb Street Property Company Limited	20,132,220	20,375,023
	<u><u>22,186,571</u></u>	<u><u>23,040,093</u></u>

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

15. CREDITORS	2020	2019
	€	€
Group		
Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors and accruals	8,263,236	6,894,923
Amounts due to Law Society Compensation Fund	8,688,435	7,824,067
Deferred income*	2,370,698	2,415,821
PAYE / PRSI	634,653	633,502
VAT	25,430	47,327
Income Tax	2,543	-
	19,984,995	17,815,640
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Society		
Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors and accruals	8,232,767	6,867,696
Amounts due to Law Society Compensation Fund	8,688,435	7,824,067
Amounts due to subsidiary undertakings:		
- The Law Club of Ireland	12,598	2,347
Deferred income*	2,370,698	2,415,821
PAYE / PRSI	634,653	633,502
VAT	39,295	47,327
Income tax	2,543	-
	19,980,989	17,790,760
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

* Deferred income represents fees for the 2021 financial year received in the financial year to 31 December 2020.

16. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES	2020	2019
	€	€
Group and Society		
Provision for settlement of SMDF liability		
Opening balance	1,801,000	3,201,000
Paid	-	(1,400,000)
Closing balance	1,801,000	1,801,000
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

17. ACCUMULATED RESERVES

Group

	Total €	Society Accumulated Reserves €	Law School Accumulated Reserves €	Litigation Fund €	Capital Expenditure Fund €	Capital Reserve Fund €	Pension Reserve Fund €	LSRA Levy Fund €
Balance at 1/1/2020	47,726,791	37,341,344	11,505,178	1,417,783	1,849,030	664,700	(7,276,000)	2,224,756
Surplus for year	923,026	(406,395)	595,489	331,155	223,463	1,075,976	(1,500,000)	603,338
Transfers	-	625,855	-	(556,025)	(69,830)	-	-	-
Balance at 31/12/2020	<u>48,649,817</u>	<u>37,560,804</u>	<u>12,100,667</u>	<u>1,192,913</u>	<u>2,002,663</u>	<u>1,740,676</u>	<u>(8,776,000)</u>	<u>2,828,094</u>

Society

	Total €	Society Accumulated Reserves €	Law School Accumulated Reserves €	Litigation Fund €	Capital Expenditure Fund €	Capital Reserve Fund €	Pension Reserve Fund €	LSRA Levy Fund €
Balance at 1/1/2020	47,499,739	37,099,179	11,520,291	1,417,783	1,849,030	664,700	(7,276,000)	2,224,756
Surplus for year	917,435	(411,986)	595,489	331,155	223,463	1,075,976	(1,500,000)	603,338
Transfers	-	625,855	-	(556,025)	(69,830)	-	-	-
Balance at 31/12/2020	<u>48,417,174</u>	<u>37,313,048</u>	<u>12,115,780</u>	<u>1,192,913</u>	<u>2,002,663</u>	<u>1,740,676</u>	<u>(8,776,000)</u>	<u>2,828,094</u>

Group and Society

The Finance Committee established the above funds to make prudent allocation of reserves for anticipated expenditure in these areas. On an annual basis, monies from fees and subscriptions income and interest income are allocated to these funds. Transfers between the funds represent internal transfers for projects and other income and expenditure identified by the Finance Committee as being more appropriate to particular funds or reserves.

THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

**NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

17. ACCUMULATED RESERVES (CONTINUED)

Reconciliation of surplus per consolidated statement of comprehensive income to surplus for the year per accumulated reserves:

	Total €	General Activities €	Education Activities €	Litigation Fund €	Capital Expenditure Fund €	Capital Reserve Fund €	Pension Reserve Fund €	LSRA Levy Fund €	Other €
Surplus before tax & exceptional items (Note 4 & 5)	2,001,193	1,699,012	302,181	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deficit before tax (Note 7)	(217,836)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(217,836)
Sundry income	84,693	84,693	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment on development Land (Note 8)	(350,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(350,000)
S MDF sale (Note 24)	(21,773)	(21,773)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Taxation (Note 10)	(109,102)	(20,179)	(88,923)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment gain (Note 6)	<u>127,851</u>	<u>127,851</u>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1,515,026	1,869,604	213,258	-	-	-	-	-	(567,836)
Surplus after tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Remeasurement of pension	(592,000)	-	-	-	-	-	(592,000)	-	-
Income allocated to specific fund	-	(4,976,536)	-	331,155	223,463	1,075,976	-	3,345,942	-
Expense allocated to specific fund	-	2,742,604	-	-	-	-	-	(2,742,604)	-
Inter group trading	-	(327,667)	109,831	-	-	-	-	-	217,836
Reallocation of pension costs	-	635,600	272,400	-	-	-	(908,000)	-	-
Impairment on development Land	-	(350,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	350,000
Total comprehensive income	<u>923,026</u>	<u>(406,395)</u>	<u>595,489</u>	<u>331,155</u>	<u>223,463</u>	<u>1,075,976</u>	<u>(1,500,000)</u>	<u>603,338</u>	<u>-</u>

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

18. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Group

The carrying value of the financial assets and liabilities are summarised by the categories below:

	2020 €	2019 €
Financial assets		
<i>Measured at fair value through the income statement</i>		
Listed investments (Note 12)	12,066,555	11,938,704
<i>Measured at undiscounted amounts receivable</i>		
Debtors and prepayments (Note 14)	2,136,603	2,628,801
Amounts owed from related undertakings (Note 14)	21,331	20,701
	14,224,489	14,588,206
Financial Liabilities		
<i>Measured at undiscounted amounts payable</i>		
Trade and other payables (Note 15)	8,366,819	6,894,923
Amounts owed from related undertakings (Note 14)	8,688,435	7,824,067
Amount due on sale of SMDF Limited (Note 16)	1,801,000	1,801,000
	18,856,254	16,519,990

Society

The carrying value of the financial assets and liabilities are summarised by the categories below:

	2020 €	2019 €
Financial assets		
<i>Measured at fair value through the income statement</i>		
Listed investments (Note 12)	12,066,555	11,938,704
<i>Measured at undiscounted amounts receivable</i>		
Debtors and prepayments (Note 14)	2,033,020	2,616,792
Amounts owed from subsidiaries (Note 14)	20,132,220	20,375,023
Amounts owed from related undertakings (Note 14)	21,331	20,701
	34,253,126	34,951,220
Financial Liabilities		
<i>Measured at undiscounted amounts payable</i>		
Trade and other payables (Note 15)	8,232,767	6,867,696
Amounts owed to related undertakings (Note 15)	8,668,435	7,824,067
Amounts owed to subsidiaries (Note 15)	12,598	2,347
Amount due on sale of SMDF Limited (Note 16)	1,801,000	1,801,000
	18,714,800	16,495,110

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

19. RECONCILIATION OF SURPLUS
TO NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2020 €	2019 €
Surplus before taxation	1,624,128	8,333,808
Depreciation charge	1,528,583	1,373,467
Interest received	(6,760)	(35,582)
(Loss)/gain on development land	350,000	(2,600,000)
Fair value (gain) on investments	(127,851)	(1,210,333)
(Increase)/decrease in stock	(8,035)	4,707
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	622,362	(538,692)
Increase in creditors and provisions	2,166,812	3,637,761
Income tax paid	(78,982)	(141,631)
Net impact of pension	908,000	751,000
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	6,978,257	9,574,505

20. PENSION COMMITMENTS

The Society operates two pension schemes. A defined benefit scheme was available to all eligible employees who chose to join before 30 September 2009, at which date the scheme was closed to new entrants. Thereafter eligible employees could opt to join a hybrid arrangement with the defined benefit element capped at a salary of €45,500 (2019: €45,500) and the balance being in a defined contribution scheme.

Defined contribution scheme

The Society operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all eligible employees. The total expense charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings in the financial year ended 31 December 2020 was €100,253 (2019: €72,439).

Defined benefit scheme

The Society operates a defined benefit pension scheme which has been closed to new entrants since 2009. The information set out in this note relates to the defined benefit pension scheme. The scheme is funded by the payment of contributions to a separately administered trust.

Determination of contributions and funding

The contributions are determined by a qualified actuary on the basis of valuations every three years, using the prospective benefits method. The most recent valuation was completed as at 31 December 2018. The assumptions which have the most significant effect on the results of the valuation are those relating to the discount rate, the rates of increase in salaries and the rate of increase in pensions in payment. In preparing that valuation, it was assumed that the discount rate would be 3.75% per annum pre retirement and 1.75% per annum post retirement, that future salary increases would average 2.00% per annum, and that pensions in payment will increase at 0.90% per annum on average, (*60% of inflation). In effect, this means that the investment return pre retirement would be 1.75% higher per annum than future salary increases and the investment return post retirement would be 0.85% higher per annum than pension increases.

20. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

The actuarial valuation at 31 December 2018 indicated that the market value of the assets of the scheme was €36,856,000 and that the assets were sufficient to cover 97% of the benefits that had accrued to members, after allowing for expected future increases in pensionable salaries and increases to pensions in payment which are discretionary. It was recommended that the Society's annual contribution continue at 20% of pensionable salaries in 2020 and this has been paid by the Society. The defined benefit section has been closed to new entrants since 30 September 2009 and was replaced by a hybrid arrangement with the defined benefit element capped at a salary of €45,000 (now €45,500).

The Trustees obtain the consent of the Society to, on a discretionary basis, index pensions in payment on an annual basis. Increases are the lesser of the CPI increase or 3%. No increases were awarded in 2017 as inflation was marginally positive for the relevant period. As mentioned above, the Society decided to fund for increases equal to 60% of inflation at the most recent valuation and will review this decision at the next actuarial valuation. Members of the Scheme who wish to be considered for this indexation pay a higher contribution rate of 8% of pensionable salary.

The actuary carries out an annual update of the Funding Standard position of the scheme. The scheme met the Funding Standard at 31 December 2020. The next actuarial valuation of the scheme to determine the contributions will be carried out as at 31 December 2021.

Requirements

The Society is the sponsoring employer of the scheme and has the legal responsibility for the scheme. The Law Society of Ireland's Compensation Fund also participates in the scheme.

There is no stated policy for charging the net defined benefit cost of the scheme to either entity as both entities availed of an exemption under the previous accounting standard, Financial Reporting Standard 17. Under Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Society has decided that it will recognise the entire net defined benefit cost and the relevant net defined benefit liability in its financial statements. Pension costs for the defined benefit scheme are assessed in accordance with the advice of an independent qualified actuary using the projected unit method. Below are the relevant disclosures together with the comparative figures for the previous year.

Changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligation in the year were as follows:

	2020	2019
	€'000	€'000
Opening defined benefit obligation	(49,653)	(42,281)
Service cost (including employee contributions)	(2,532)	(2,383)
Interest cost	(741)	(920)
Benefits paid	671	998
Actuarial (gains)/losses	(2,475)	(5,067)
Closing defined benefit obligation	(54,730)	(49,653)

20. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

Changes in the fair value of plan assets in the year were as follows:

	2020	2019
	€'000	€'000
Opening fair value of plan assets	42,377	36,804
Contributions (including employee contributions)	1,721	1,734
Benefits paid	(671)	(998)
Interest income	644	818
Actuarial (gains)/losses	1,883	4,019
Closing fair value of plan assets	45,954	42,377

The principal actuarial assumptions at the balance sheet date:

	2020	2019
	%	%
Rate of general increase in salaries	1.8	1.8
Discount rate of scheme liabilities	1.2	1.5
Rate of pension increase	1.3	1.3
Inflation	1.3	1.3
Post retirement mortality		
Current pensioners at 65 - male	22.5	22.5
Current pensioners at 65 - female	24.4	24.3
Future pensioners at 65 - male married	24.3	24.2
Future pensioners at 65 - female married	26.3	26.2
% of pension commuted for cash at retirement	12.5	12.5

The post retirement mortality assumptions allow for expected increases in longevity. The 'current' disclosures above relate to the assumptions based on longevity (in years) following retirement at the balance sheet date, with 'future' being that relating to an employee retiring in 2040.

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

20. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

The market value of the scheme's assets at the year end were as follows:

	At Year End 31 December	
	2020	2019
	€'000	€'000
Equities	15,285	16,156
Bonds	27,358	22,839
Cash	10	14
Other	3,301	3,368
	45,954	42,377
	2020	2019
	€'000	€'000
The actual return on plan assets	2,527	4,837
The amounts recognised in the balance sheet are as follows:		
Fair value of plan assets	45,954	42,377
Present value of funded obligations	(54,730)	(49,653)
Deficit in the scheme	(8,776)	(7,276)
The amounts included in the performance statements are as follows:		
	2020	2019
	€'000	€'000
Current service cost	(2,076)	(1,921)
Past service cost	-	-
Interest income on pension scheme assets	644	818
Interest expense on pension scheme liabilities	(741)	(920)
Net interest charge	(97)	(102)
Actual return less expected return on pension scheme's assets	1883	4,019
Experience losses arising on the scheme's liabilities	888	19
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of the scheme's liabilities	(3,363)	(5,086)
Actuarial (loss)/gain included in Statement of Comprehensive Income	(592)	(1,048)

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

20. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

The movements in the deficit in the scheme during the year arose as follows:

	2020 €'000	2019 €'000
Deficit at beginning of year	(7,276)	(5,477)
Current service cost	(2,076)	(1,921)
Net interest cost	(97)	(102)
Contributions (excluding employees)	1,265	1,272
Actuarial gain	(592)	(1,048)
Deficit at end of year	(8,776)	(7,276)

History of defined benefit obligations, assets and experience gains/losses:

	2020 €'000	2019 €'000
Defined benefit obligation	(54,730)	(49,653)
Fair value of plan assets	45,954	42,377
Deficit	(8,776)	(7,276)

	2020 €'000	2019 €'000
--	-----------------------------	---------------

Difference between the expected and actual return on plan assets:

Amount €'000	(1,883)	(4,019)
--------------	----------------	---------

Experience losses on plan liabilities:

Amount €'000	888	19
--------------	------------	----

Future contributions:

The Society expects to contribute €1,265,000 to the defined benefit pension scheme in 2021.

21. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Law Society Compensation Fund	2020 €
Opening balance at 1 January	(7,824,067)
Charges	7,578,661
Receipts	(8,443,029)
Closing balance at 31 December	(8,668,435)
Law Society of Ireland Scholarship Fund	2020 €
Opening balance at 1 January	20,701
Charges	15,730
Receipts	(15,100)
Closing balance at 31 December	21,331
Irish Rule of Law International	2020 €
Opening balance at 1 January	-
Charges	42,000
Receipts	(42,000)
Closing balance at 31 December	-

The related undertakings are controlled by the Law Society of Ireland.

Transactions with Council Members during 2020 totalled €211,468 (2019: €334,588) which includes the President's Subvention, as approved by Council, of €124,500 (2019: €122,500).

22. SUBSIDIARY AND RELATED UNDERTAKINGS

The Society holds investments in subsidiaries and controls related undertakings as follows:

Subsidiary undertakings:

- Benburb Street Property Company Limited
- Law Club of Ireland*.

* The Law Club of Ireland is considered a subsidiary, as it is controlled by the Law Society of Ireland.

Related undertakings:

- Law Society of Ireland Compensation Fund
- Law Society of Ireland Scholarship Fund
- Irish Rule of Law International.

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

23. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS	2020	2019
	€	€
At the end of the year, the following expenditure had been authorised by the Finance Committee:		
Contracted for	364,115	320,904
Not contracted for	1,286,747	1,771,110
	<u>1,650,862</u>	<u>2,092,014</u>

24. SOLICITORS' MUTUAL DEFENCE FUND LIMITED

In 2011, the members of the Law Society approved the provision of financial support to Solicitors' Mutual Defence Fund Limited (SMDF), which was insolvent, to a maximum of €16m.

In 2016, the Law Society entered into an agreement with R&Q Ireland Limited (R&QI) for the sale of SMDF. The agreement included deferring part of the agreed payment to R&Q Ireland Claims Services Limited (a subsidiary of R&QI). At 31 December 2016 a liability of €5 million was recognised in the financial statements. At that date there was €0.82m in the SMDF Levy Fund, resulting in a net deferred cost of sale of €4.18 million. This was recognised in the financial statements as an Exceptional Item. At 31 December 2017 the provision in the financial statements for liabilities under the agreement was €5 million. At that date there was a balance of €2.79million in the SMDF Levy Fund available for use under the financial support commitment. At 31 December 2018 the provision in the financial statements for liabilities under the agreement was €3.2 million. At that date there was a balance of €3 million in the SMDF Levy Fund available for use under the financial support commitment. At 31 December 2019, the provision in the financial statements for liabilities under the agreement was €1.8 million. At that date there was a balance of €1.9 million in the SMDF Levy Fund available for use under the financial support commitment. The practising certificate SMDF levy ceased in 2019.

In 2020, there was a charge to the SMDF Levy Fund of €21,773 (2019: €391,338 of practising certificate fee income was allocated to the SMDF Levy Fund). At 31 December 2020 the provision in the financial statements for liabilities under the agreement was €1.8 million. At that date there was a balance of €1.86m million in the SMDF Levy Fund available for use under the financial support commitment.

Given the current trend in claims development and other elements in the run-down of the SMDF, the Society is optimistic that the liability of €1.8m may not materialise on termination of the agreement with R&QI in 2021. In that event the overall cost to Law Society members to cover the rundown of operations and the sale to R&QI would be approximately €11.5m.

25. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The Society is from time to time, a party to legal proceedings and claims, which arise in the ordinary course of its activities. The Finance Committee is satisfied that there are no additional claims that require provision by the Society at 31 December 2020. Legal costs incurred by the Society to 31 December 2020, in connection with these matters, have been charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings.

26. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

The Finance Committee has assessed the financial impact of the current Covid 19 pandemic public health emergency and any subsequent recession on these accounts and does not consider any adjustments necessary.

FINANCIAL

COMPENSATION FUND REPORTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGULATION OF PRACTICE COMMITTEE

The Regulation of Practice Committee is required to prepare financial statements for each financial year. The Regulation of Practice Committee have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with FRS 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (“relevant financial reporting framework”). The Regulation of Practice Committee must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Compensation Fund as at the financial year end date and of the Compensation Fund’s surplus or deficit for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements The Regulation of Practice Committee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the Compensation Fund financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The Regulation of Practice Committee is responsible for keeping proper books of account which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Compensation Fund. The Regulation of Practice Committee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Compensation Fund and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

Opinion on the financial statements of the Law Society of Ireland Compensation Fund (the 'Compensation Fund')

In our opinion the Compensation Fund's financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Compensation Fund as at 31 December 2020 and of the surplus of the Compensation Fund for the year then ended; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements we have audited comprise:

- Statement of Income and Retained Earnings;
- the Balance Sheet;
- the Statement of Cash Flows and
- the related notes 1 to 17, including a summary of significant accounting policies as set out in note 1.

The relevant financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council ("the relevant financial reporting framework").

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)). Our responsibilities under those standards are described below in the "Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements" section of our report.

We are independent of the Compensation Fund in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Regulation of Practice Committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Society's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Regulation of Practice Committee with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Regulation of Practice Committee are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Reports and Financial Statements, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Continued on next page/

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

/Continued from previous page

Responsibilities of the Regulation of Practice Committee

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Regulation of Practice Committee, the Regulation of Practice Committee are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Regulation of Practice Committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Regulation of Practice Committee are responsible for assessing the Compensation Fund's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Regulation of Practice Committee either intend to liquidate the Compensation Fund or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Compensation Fund's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Regulation of Practice Committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Regulation of Practice Committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Compensation Fund's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of the auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Compensation Fund to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

Continued on next page/

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND**

/Continued from previous page

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that the auditor identifies during the audit.

This report is made solely to the Compensation Fund's members, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Compensation Fund's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Compensation Fund and the Compensation Fund's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

John O'Callaghan
For and on behalf of
BDO
Dublin
Statutory Audit Firm
AI223876

Date: 21 May 2021

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND RETAINED EARNINGS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	<i>Notes</i>	2020 €	2019 €
INCOME			
Contributions receivable		8,416,290	8,252,967
Income and returns on investments	5	1,692,238	845,837
Recoveries from defaulting solicitors	6	543,340	1,212,395
Disciplinary fines and investigation levies		21,950	49,710
Other Income		-	2,622
		10,673,818	10,363,531
EXPENDITURE			
Provision for claims	6	1,745,636	4,969,818
Insurance		738,519	721,352
Overheads allocated from the Law Society of Ireland		1,483,672	1,483,068
Financial regulation direct administration costs		2,567,068	2,549,302
Practice closure direct administration costs		748,483	759,666
Legal and other professional fees		165,359	180,455
Other expenditure		54	-
		7,448,791	10,663,661
Surplus/(deficit) for financial year before revaluations		3,225,027	(300,130)
Fair value movements arising on revaluation of investments	13	(1,028,113)	1,450,245
SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION	7	2,196,914	1,150,115
Taxation	8	(200,000)	(200,000)
SURPLUS AFTER TAXATION		1,996,914	950,115
Retained earnings at beginning of financial year		23,296,339	22,346,224
RETAINED EARNINGS AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR		25,293,253	23,296,339

All recognised gains and losses arose from continuing activities.

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

	<i>Notes</i>	2020 €	2019 €
Fixed Assets			
Financial assets	9	21,633,944	20,969,819
Current Assets			
Debtors	10	8,747,261	7,879,615
Cash at bank and in hand		1,511,418	1,663,153
		10,258,679	9,542,768
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	11	(2,497,041)	(1,943,766)
Net current assets		7,761,638	7,599,002
Total assets less current liabilities		29,395,582	28,568,821
Provisions for liabilities and charges	12	(4,102,329)	(5,272,482)
NET ASSETS		25,293,253	23,296,339
Revenue reserves		23,579,656	20,554,629
Unrealised profit/(loss) on investment portfolio	13	1,713,597	2,741,710
		25,293,253	23,296,339

The financial statements were approved by the Regulation of Practice Committee on 21/05/2021.

Imelda Reynolds
Chair of the Regulation of Practice Committee

James Cahill
President of Law Society of Ireland

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

	<i>Notes</i>	2020 €	2019 €
Net cash flows from operating activities	<i>15</i>	(151,735)	(2,367,079)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Dividends received	<i>5</i>	-	64,328
Purchase of investments	<i>9</i>	-	(2,870,000)
Disposal of investments	<i>9</i>	-	6,328,985
Net cash flows from investing activities		(151,735)	3,523,313
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents			1,156,234
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		1,663,153	506,919
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		1,511,418	1,663,153

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

General Information and Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value, and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

The functional currency of the Law Society of Ireland Compensation Fund is considered to be euro because that is the currency of the primary economic environment in which the Fund operates.

The financial statements cover the activities of the Law Society of Ireland Compensation Fund. Separate financial statements are prepared in respect of the other activities of the Law Society of Ireland.

Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Compensation Fund becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial liabilities are classified according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into.

All financial assets and liabilities are initially measured at transaction price (including transaction costs), unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction. If an arrangement constitutes a finance transaction, the financial asset or financial liability is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Financial assets are derecognised when and only when a) the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire or are settled, b) the entity transfers to another party substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership of the financial asset, or c) the entity, despite having retained some significant risks and rewards of ownership, has transferred control of the asset to another party and the other party has the practical ability to sell the asset in its entirety to an unrelated third party and is able to exercise that ability unilaterally and without needing to impose additional restrictions on the transfer.

Financial liabilities are derecognised only when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expires.

(i) Investments

Investments are measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised through the Statement of Income and Retained Earnings. Where fair value cannot be measured reliably, investments are measured at cost less impairment.

(ii) Fair value measurement

The best evidence of fair value is a quoted price for an identical asset in an active market. When quoted prices are unavailable, the price of a recent transaction for an identical asset provides evidence of fair value as long as there has not been a significant change in economic circumstances or a significant lapse of time since the transaction took place.

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Revenue Recognition

Recoveries from defaulting solicitors, disciplinary fines and levies imposed on solicitors are recognised when received. Contribution income and all miscellaneous income is recognised on a receivable basis.

Recoveries from stop loss insurance policies are recognised when notification of payment has been received.

Claims

Provisions are made in respect of notified claims and related expenses, where the Regulation of Practice Committee and the executive considers it likely that the Compensation Fund is liable for such claims and expenses.

Solicitors Funds

When the Society obtain a High Court Order to take up client funds from a solicitor's practice these funds, when received, by the Society are initially recognised as solicitors funds held. As the Fund discharges claims in relation to a solicitor recoveries are made from the funds held in relation to that solicitor.

Taxation

Current tax is provided at amounts expected to be paid using the tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the balance sheet date.

Deferred tax is accounted for, on a full provision basis, on all timing differences that have originated but have not reversed by the balance sheet date. Deferred tax assets are recognised to the extent that they are regarded as more likely than not to be recoverable.

Deferred tax is recognised on timing differences arising on revaluation of investments to the extent that the Compensation Fund has, at the balance sheet date, entered into a binding agreement to sell the revalued investments.

Pension Costs

The Society operates a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme and a hybrid scheme. Contributions are charged in the income and expenditure account over the anticipated working lives of employee members currently in service.

2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

In the application of the Law Society of Ireland Compensation Fund's accounting policies, which are described in note 1, the Committee members are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

Critical judgements in applying the Law Society of Ireland Compensation Fund's accounting policies

Provision for claims

The directors are of the view that an adequate allowance has been made to reflect the claims provisions in the financial statements. The estimate has been assessed by the Regulation of Practice Committee and/or the executive. The committee has reviewed the provision and consider it to be the best estimate of any liability due.

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

3. GOING CONCERN

The Compensation Fund earned a surplus before taxation for the financial year of €2,196,914 (2019: €1,150,115) and had net current assets of €7,761,638 (2019: €7,599,002) at the balance sheet date.

The Compensation Fund has €21,633,944 (2019: €20,969,819) of financial assets at its disposal that are readily convertible to cash. Therefore, the Regulation of Practice Committee have formed the view that, taking appropriate actions, the Compensation Fund's reserves are sufficient to absorb the financial impact of the current Covid 19 pandemic public health emergency and any subsequent recession and considers it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

The financial statements do not include any adjustments to the carrying amount and classification of assets and liabilities that may arise if the Compensation Fund was unable to continue as a going concern.

4. STAFF COSTS	2020 €	2019 €
Salaries and wages	2,599,976	2,514,553
PRSI	281,204	268,142
Pension (Note 17)	285,519	270,006
Total	<u>3,166,699</u>	<u>3,052,701</u>
5. INCOME AND RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS	2020 €	2019 €
Realised movement of investments (Note 9)	1,692,238	781,509
Dividends receivable	-	64,328
	<u>1,692,238</u>	<u>845,837</u>
6. NET COST OF CLAIMS AFTER RECOVERIES	2020 €	2019 €
Provision for claims (Note 12)	1,745,636	4,969,818
Recoveries from defaulting solicitors	(543,340)	(1,212,395)
Net cost of claims	<u>1,202,296</u>	<u>3,757,423</u>

The Compensation Fund has stop loss insurance policies in place which are subject to an excess of €5,000,000 in any financial year. No insurance recoveries apply in respect of the 2020 or 2019 claim years.

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

7. SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION	2020	2019
	€	€
The surplus before taxation is stated after charging:		
Auditor's remuneration	5,000	5,000
Increase/(decrease) in fair value movement in investments	(1,028,113)	1,450,245
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

8. TAXATION

The Compensation Fund is liable to income tax on investment income and gains.

	2020	2019
	€	€
Income tax	200,000	200,000
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The effective tax rate for the financial year is different to the standard rate of income tax, which is 20%. The differences are explained as follows:

	2020	2019
	€	€
Surplus before taxation	2,196,914	1,150,115
Surplus multiplied by standard rate of income tax of 20%	439,383	230,023
Effects of:		
Income not subject to taxation	(664,125)	(2,162,755)
	424,742	
Expenses not deductible for tax purposes		2,132,732
Current tax charge for the financial year	200,000	200,000
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

9. FINANCIAL ASSETS

Listed investments – at fair value	€
Balance at 1 January 2020	20,969,819
Additions at cost	-
Disposals at cost	-
Unrealised movement arising on revaluation of investments	(1,028,113)
Realised movement of investments	1,692,238
Balance at 31 December 2020	21,633,944

The investments are comprised of the following:

- (a) SSgA EMU Government Bond Index
- (b) SSgA Global Value Equity Investment Fund
- (c) SSgA Diversified Alternatives Fund
- (d) Standard Life Enhanced Diversified Fund
- (e) Standard Life Global Bond Strategy

All the investments noted above have a low risk profile.

At 31 December 2020, the fair value of investments exceeded cost by €1,713,597 (2019: €2,741,710)

In respect of prior financial year:

Listed investments – at fair value	€
Balance at 1 January 2019	22,197,050
Additions at cost	2,870,000
Disposals at cost	(6,328,985)
Unrealised movement arising on revaluation of investments	1,450,245
Realised movement arising on the disposal of investments	781,509
Balance at 31 December 2019	20,969,819

The investments are comprised of the following:

- (f) SSgA EMU Government Bond Index
- (g) SSgA Global Value Equity Investment Fund
- (h) SSgA Diversified Alternatives Fund
- (i) Standard Life Enhanced Diversified Fund
- (j) Standard Life Global Bond Strategy

All the investments noted above have a low risk profile.

At 31 December 2019, the fair value of investments exceeded cost by €2,741,710 (2018: €1,291,495).

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

10. DEBTORS: Amounts falling due within one year	2020	2019
	€	€
Other debtors	58,826	55,548
Amounts due from the Law Society of Ireland	8,688,435	7,824,067
	<u>8,747,261</u>	<u>7,879,615</u>
	<u><u>8,747,261</u></u>	<u><u>7,879,615</u></u>
11. CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	2020	2019
	€	€
Accruals and other creditors	122,298	116,249
Solicitors funds held	2,149,951	1,694,632
Income tax	224,792	132,885
	<u>2,497,041</u>	<u>1,943,766</u>
	<u><u>2,497,041</u></u>	<u><u>1,943,766</u></u>
12. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES	2020	2019
	€	€
Provision for claims:		
At beginning of financial year	5,272,482	2,919,570
Provision made (Note 6)	1,745,636	4,969,818
Claims paid	(2,915,789)	(2,616,906)
	<u>4,102,329</u>	<u>5,272,482</u>
At end of financial year	<u><u>4,102,329</u></u>	<u><u>5,272,482</u></u>

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND COMPENSATION FUND

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

13. UNREALISED PROFIT/(LOSS) ON INVESTMENTS	2020	2019
	€	€
Unrealised movement on investments:		
At beginning of financial year	2,741,710	1,291,465
Movement during financial year	(1,028,113)	1,450,245
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At end of financial year	1,713,597	2,741,710
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

14. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The carrying value of the Fund, financial assets and liabilities are summarised by the category below:

Financial assets	2020	2019
	€	€
<i>Measured at fair value through the income statement</i>		
Listed investments (see Note 9)	21,633,944	20,969,819
<i>Measured at undiscounted amounts receivable</i>		
Debtors and prepayments (see Note 10)	58,826	55,548
Amounts due from related undertakings (see Note 10)	8,688,435	7,824,067
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	30,381,205	28,849,434
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Financial Liabilities		
Measured at undiscounted amounts payable		
Creditors (see Note 11)	2,272,249	1,810,881
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

15. CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2020	2019
	€	€
Surplus before taxation	2,196,914	1,150,115
Dividends received	-	(64,328)
Realised movement of investments	(1,692,238)	(781,509)
Fair value movement on investments	1,028,113	(1,450,245)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(867,646)	(3,617,002)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(708,785)	2,267,397
Income tax refunded/(paid)	(108,093)	128,493
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash flows from operating activities	(151,735)	(2,367,079)
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

16. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the financial year the expenditure of the Compensation Fund included expenses and payroll costs totalling €4,944,029 (2019: €4,816,827), which were recharged to it by the Law Society of Ireland. The amount due from the Law Society of Ireland at the financial year end is shown at note 10.

The total remuneration for key management personnel which consists of the 3 Directors and 4 Section Heads/Managers (2.25 fulltime equivalents) for the financial year totalled €437,695 (2019: €423,034; 4 Section Heads/Managers – 2.25 full time equivalents).

17. PENSIONS

The Society and the Law Society of Ireland Compensation Fund are the participants in a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme, operated by the Society. Under FRS 102, the Society as sponsoring employer of the schemes will recognise the entire net defined benefit cost and the relevant net defined benefit liability in its financial statements. Pension costs for the defined benefit scheme are assessed in accordance with the advice of an independent qualified actuary using the projected unit method.

The contributions are determined by a qualified actuary on the basis of valuations every three years, using the prospective benefits method. The most recent valuation was completed as at 31 December 2018. The assumptions which have the most significant effect on the results of the valuation are those relating to the discount rate, the rates of increase in salaries and the rate of increase in pensions in payment. In preparing that valuation, it was assumed that the discount rate would be 3.75% per annum pre retirement and 1.75% per annum post retirement, that future salary increases would average 2.00% per annum, and that pensions in payment will increase at 0.90% per annum on average (60% of inflation). In effect, this means that the investment return pre retirement would be 1.75% higher per annum than future salary increases and the investment return post retirement would be 0.85% higher per annum than pension increases.

The actuarial valuation at 31 December 2018 indicated that the market value of the assets of the scheme was €36,856,000 and that the assets were sufficient to cover 97% of the benefits that had accrued to members, after allowing for expected future increases in pensionable salaries and increases to pensions in payment which are discretionary. It was recommended that the Society's annual contribution continue at 20% of pensionable salaries in 2020 and this has been paid by the Society. The defined benefit section has been closed to new entrants since 30 September 2009 and was replaced by a hybrid arrangement with the defined benefit element capped at a salary of €45,000 (now €45,500).

The Trustees obtain the consent of the Society to, on a discretionary basis, index pensions in payment on an annual basis. Increases are the lesser of the CPI increase or 3%. As mentioned above, the Society decided to fund for increases equal to 60% of inflation at the most recent valuation and will review this decision at the next actuarial valuation. Members of the Scheme who wish to be considered for indexation pay a higher contribution rate of 8% of pensionable salary.

The actuary carries out an annual update of the Funding Standard position of the scheme. The scheme met the Funding Standard at 31 December 2020. The next actuarial valuation of the scheme to determine the contributions will be carried out as at 31 December 2021.

The pension charge for the Compensation Fund for the financial year was €285,519 (2019: €270,006).



COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The Law Society of Ireland is committed to energy efficiency, minimising waste, reducing water consumption, encouraging greener modes of transport, and generally encouraging a culture of sustainability and an awareness of our impact on the environment.

A limited number of hard-copy annual reports have been produced for administrative, accessibility and archival purposes.

Our full Corporate Responsibility Statement is available at:

www.lawsociety.ie/csr

Production: Representation and Member Services Department

Design: Eugenea Leddy

Photography: Cover and solicitor profile photos: Cian Redmond Photography. Other photographs: Cian Redmond Photography, Michael McLaughlin Photography, Bryan Meade Photography, Lensmen, Shutterstock, *Gazette* Studio

Printing: Fine Print Ltd. Perigord Group



WORLD
LAND
TRUST™

www.carbonbalancedpaper.com
CBP009165

© Law Society of Ireland 2021



Blackhall Place
Dublin 7

T +353 1 672 4800
F +353 1 672 4801

E general@lawsociety.ie
W www.lawsociety.ie



During the coronavirus pandemic, solicitors went the extra mile – and then some – for their clients. While always operating within Government guidelines, our members devised new and creative ways of working – doing business, differently – in order to continue serving the diverse needs of their clients. The Annual Report contains profiles of six solicitors from around the country, representing a broad range of practices, who share their experiences of working through the pandemic, including: Frank Halley (Co Waterford, who appears on the cover), Ciarán Mullholland (Co Louth), Elaine Byrne (Co Meath), Kay Cogan (Dublin), Liam Fitzgerald (Co Dublin), and Rosemarie Hayden (Co Kildare).