Submission to the LSRA Consultation on Admission Policies of the Legal Professions in 2026



CCPC

Coimisiún um Iomaíocht agus Cosaint Tomhaltóirí | Competition and Consumer Protection Commission

Introduction

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) public consultation for its 2025 Annual Report on the Admission Policies of the Legal Professions.

The observations of the CCPC are provided in the context of work currently being progressed by the LSRA as highlighted in its Statement of Strategy 2025-20281. They also build on previous submissions that the CCPC has made in response to prior consultations in relation to the LSRA.

There are two key persistent issues on which the CCPC continues to advocate for change:

- There is a lack of transparency and available data about the demand and costs of legal services which constrains informed policy-making and oversight of the sector by the LSRA.
- The implementation of a number of policy recommendations in relation to pathways into the legal profession.

We provide detailed views on these issues below.

[1] LSRA_StrategicPlan_2022_2025_FINAL_SP.pdf

Data Availability and Transparency

Comprehensive data on legal supply, demand, price and performance is needed to ensure policy measures are based on the highest quality evidence. Current gaps in transparency impede consumer choice and limit the LSRA's ability to assess whether admissions policies and training align with the public interest[2].

It is welcome that the LSRA's latest strategy statement commits to work with professional bodies and other stakeholders to improve the information available to consumers on the provision of legal services (including the costs of such services) and the standards of legal services they should expect. In this context the CCPC recommends that the LSRA:

Build an evidence base

- The LSRA should engage with the CSO on the inclusion of granular data on legal costs in the Service Producer Price Index (SPPI) (at present, all profession costs are included together)[3].
- As recommended by the CCPC previously, the LSRA should establish a method of tracking legal costs over time and issuing annual reports on cost and price trends.

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[2] The LSRA's previous annual reports on Admission to the Legal Professions highlighted that the lack available statistical data about the demand and costs of legal services constrains its assessment of admissions. For example in 2025: LSRA-Pathways-S33-Annual-Report-2024-FINAL.pdf

[3] See Action 2 of the Action Plan for Insurance Reform available here: https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-finance/publications/action-plan-for-insurance-reform-july-2025/

Create Practical Transparency Tools for Consumers

- The LSRA should consider using its website to include dashboards and other web tools and resources to provide metrics relevant to the supply, demand, price and performance[4] of legal services. The CCPC has a number of web tools and resources that we have made available for consumers[5] and would be happy to share our experiences and assist the LSRA.

Implement sector wide price transparency rules

- The LSRA's recommendation that it should be provided with statutory powers to introduce enhanced transparency requirements for solicitors in relation to conveyancing services and their costs should be progressed[6]. Furthermore, this approach to price transparency should be adopted across the legal sector[7].
- Rules requiring price transparency should be included in codes of practice for the professions.

Pathways to the Legal Professions

Admission policies should ensure equity of access, skills aligned to market demand, and mobility across branches while safeguarding standards. Slow implementation of reforms means that improvements needed to promote a competitive and innovative legal services market have been delayed. There are a number of reforms currently being progressed by the LSRA and which the CCPC considers a priority for implementation.

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[4] Legal Services Board features a number of dashboards on its webpage based on its research on the legal services market. Market structure dashboard - The Legal Services Board

[5] Money Hub - CCPC Consumers

[6] https://www.lsra.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/LSRA-PressRelease-ConveyancerReportApril2024.pdf

[7] https://www.ccpc.ie/business/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2024/05/2024.04.19-Submission-re-Legal-Partnerships-Framework.pdf

LSRA education and training reforms

- The CCPC welcomes the establishment of the Education and Training Committee under Section 16 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 which will undertake the preparatory work necessary for the introduction of the Legal Practitioner Education and Training (LPET) Committee. The CCPC believes that the legislation to establish the LPET Committee should be prioritised.
- The CCPC also welcomes the recommendations of the LSRA's 2024 *'Breaking Down Barriers Implementation'* report to improve equity of access and entry into the legal profession. The CCPC strongly believes that systematic data collection and analysis on access initiatives is needed for the admission policies of the legal sector. It therefore welcomes recommendations for the professional bodies to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of their access initiatives.

Align training with market needs

- The LPET Committee and the LSRA should ensure that any competency framework for solicitors and barristers reflects the skills needed and takes into account market demand in the sector.

Service delivery reforms

- The CCPC welcomes the introduction of direct professional access to barristers in non-contentious matters and the publication of the LSRA's Guidance Note for Barristers on Direct Access[8]. A key priority for the LSRA should now be to progress work on a scheme for expanded direct access to barristers in contentious matters.
- Multi-disciplinary practices (MDPs) should be introduced under proportionate regulatory safeguards.

[8] LSRA Guidance Note for Barristers on Direct Access - Legal Services Regulatory Authority

Improve entry and mobility into the profession

- The LSRA and the LPET Committee, in consultation with the professional bodies, should consider how entry requirements for transfers between both branches of the legal profession should be reduced, including through a mutual recognition framework for solicitors and barristers with less than three years post-qualification experience.
- They should also review training arrangements for non-EEA students to determine whether unnecessary restrictions are in place.

Conclusion

In this submission, the CCPC has set out its views on key priorities for admission policies of the legal profession including:

1. How the LSRA could support filling in the gaps around the collection of data on demand and costs of legal services and improve transparency and availability of information for consumers.
2. Delivery of education, training and access reforms.

We look forward to continued engagement with the LSRA and other relevant stakeholders to address matters raised in this submission and progress implementation of the recommendations therein.

ENDS



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