

Legal Aid Board

Annual Report

2014



To facilitate the effective resolution of civil disputes through the delivery of efficient and accessible legal aid and mediation services and to effectively manage and administer the State's criminal legal aid schemes.

Access to Justice

www.legalaidboard.ie

Legal Aid Board

Annual Report 2014

Mission

Our mission is to provide a professional, efficient, cost-effective and accessible legal aid and mediation service in accordance with the terms of our statutory mandate.

Vision

Our vision is to facilitate access to justice through the provision of legal aid and advice and family mediation services in a manner which compares favourably with best practice internationally.

What we Value

- High professional standards in the provision of our services.
- Responsiveness to evolving customer and other stakeholder demands and openness to change.
- High ethical standards.
- Effective leadership at all levels.
- Cost effectiveness and value for money.
- Effective accountability arrangements with an emphasis on organisational performance and active risk management.

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Overview

Function and Purpose

The Legal Aid Board is the statutory, independent body responsible for the provision of civil legal aid and advice to persons of modest means, in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 (the “Act”). The Act was amended by Section 54 of the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 which gave the Board the additional responsibility to provide a family mediation service. The Board’s remit is in the process of being further expanded, following a Government decision in 2010, to include the management and administration of the various criminal legal aid schemes previously administered by the Department of Justice and Equality. Responsibility for the administration of the Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme transferred to the Board on the 1st October 2011 and for the Legal Aid - Custody Issues Scheme (formerly titled the Attorney General’s Scheme) on the 1st June 2012. The administration of the Criminal Assets Bureau Ad-hoc Legal Aid Scheme transferred to the Board on the 1st January 2014.

Legal advice, in terms of the Board’s remit in civil cases, is any oral or written advice given by a solicitor or barrister, including writing letters and negotiations.

Legal aid is representation by a solicitor or barrister in court proceedings. A person must first obtain a legal aid certificate, which specifies the legal services being granted, and, in civil cases, must pay the legal aid contribution specified on the certificate.

Legal services are provided across a wide range of civil law matters.

1. Service Provision

Civil legal aid and advice is provided primarily through a network of law centres by solicitors employed by the Board. There are 30 full time and 12 part-time law centres. A complementary service is provided by solicitors in private practice who are engaged by the Board on a case-by-case basis.

Specific law centres in Dublin, Cork and Galway include an asylum speciality and there are also dedicated units in Dublin, in addition to the law centres, dealing with medical negligence cases and cases involving children at risk of being taken into the care of the State. During the course of 2014 an office was established to deal with personal injury matters other than medical negligence.

The Board also operates a specialised Refugee Documentation Centre, which provides an independent and professional research and library service for all of the main bodies involved in the asylum process.

Responsibility for the Family Mediation Service (FMS) was on 1st November 2011 transferred to the Legal Aid Board under ministerial order giving effect to the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011. Family mediation services are provided through eight full time offices and nine part time offices.

Service provision in the three criminal legal aid ad-hoc schemes currently under the Board's remit, the Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme and the Legal Aid - Custody Issues Scheme, and the Criminal Assets Bureau Legal Aid Scheme is provided through private solicitors and barristers.

2. Obtaining Civil Legal Aid Legal Services

A person seeking legal services in civil cases must apply to any of the law centres set out at Appendix 3 and must complete an application form, stating the subject matter on which legal advice and/or aid is sought and giving details of income and any capital resources.

The Board seeks to ensure that a person who qualifies for civil legal aid (legal services) will be offered an appointment with a solicitor within a maximum period of four months from the time the application is completed or will be offered earlier legal advice if it is not possible to provide full legal services within four months. A priority service is provided in certain cases. Such cases can include domestic violence, child abduction, cases involving applications by the State to take children into care, and cases that have statutory time limits close to expiry.

3. Payment for Civil Legal Aid Legal Services

It is important to note that the legal services provided by the Board are subject in most cases to the applicant paying a financial contribution and they are not 'free'. The vast majority of persons who are granted legal advice and/or legal aid in civil cases are required to pay a contribution to the Board. The legal advice contribution is assessed on the applicant's disposable income, i.e. income after certain deductions. The legal aid contribution is assessed on the applicant's disposable income and disposable capital. The minimum contribution is €30 for legal advice and €130 for legal aid. No fee is payable in respect of advice and representation in child care cases (involving the Child and Family Agency). The law centre advises a person of the actual contribution in each individual case. In the event that a person recovers money or property arising from the case, the Board may seek to recover the cost to the Board of providing legal services to the client.

4. Obtaining Mediation Services

A person seeking to avail of mediation to assist with the resolution of a family problem must apply to any of the offices set out at Appendix 4. The second party also needs to contact the same office to confirm his/her interest in attending mediation. Once both parties have confirmed that they wish to mediate they will be offered an appointment as soon as possible. There is currently no charge for the service.

5. Criminal Legal Aid Ad-hoc Schemes

Three criminal legal aid ad-hoc schemes are now administered by the Legal Aid Board.

Persons detained under certain legislation in Garda stations are advised of their right to seek legal advice and may be entitled to legal advice under the Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme by way of telephone and / or face-to-face consultations in the Garda station. They may also be entitled to have a solicitor in attendance with them at Garda interviews.

A person seeking legal advice under the Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme will be required to make their request to the Custody Officer in the Garda Station where they are detained and s/he will be required to complete the standard Application Form and to provide details of their financial means.

The second ad-hoc scheme currently administered by the Board is the Legal Aid - Custody Issues Scheme. This provides for payment of legal costs on the recommendation of the Court to the Legal Aid Board in certain types of litigation not covered by the civil legal aid scheme or the main criminal legal aid scheme. A person seeking legal representation under the Scheme is required to notify the relevant Court at the earliest possible opportunity of his/her intention to seek access to the Scheme's provisions. The Court will then determine if a recommendation should be made to the Board to grant such access. It is a matter for the Board to then decide to either grant or refuse legal aid under the Scheme.

The Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) Ad-hoc Scheme transferred to the Board on the 1st January 2014. The Scheme is an administrative, non-statutory arrangement whereby payments are made in respect of certain legal costs in certain types of litigation including but not limited to cases where a person is a Respondent in any court proceedings brought by the Criminal Assets Bureau under the Proceeds of Crime Act 1996, Revenue Acts and Social Welfare legislation.

The District Court (Counsel) Ad-hoc Scheme is expected to transfer to the Board in 2015. Legislation providing for the transfer of the main Criminal Legal Aid Scheme is also expected to be published in 2015.

Further details of the three ad-hoc schemes that the Board administers, and the outturn for 2014, are provided later in the Report.

6. Head Office

The Board's head office is located in Cahirciveen, County Kerry where some 45 staff, being the same level of staffing as in 2013, are located. Some of the head office functions are carried out from Dublin.

7. Corporate Governance

The Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 makes provision for the appointment of a Chairperson and 12 ordinary members to the Board. The current Board was appointed by the then Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Mr Alan Shatter T.D. in December 2011. Membership of the current Board is set out at page 10.

The statutory Board has responsibility for:

- the strategic direction of the organisation;
- determining policy and monitoring its implementation;
- overseeing the proper and effective management of the organisation;
- monitoring the implementation of effective financial procedures and providing accountability;
- approving and monitoring budgets; and
- making certain reserved decisions.

The Board continues to maintain the standards of corporate governance set out in the updated *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies*. This involves:

- at Board level, the use of six committees to assist it in achieving its objectives and in the effective discharge of its responsibilities (see below);
- a defined division of roles between the Board, the Chairperson and the Chief Executive;
- submission to the Minister of an annual report that meets the requirements of the Code;
- an internal audit function that operates effectively and as required; and
- a code of conduct, that incorporates procedures to deal with any conflict of interest issues.

In 2014, the Board held 11 Board meetings, three of which were in Cahirciveen, and eight in Dublin.

Attendance at these 11 meetings in 2014 was as follows:

Member	No. of meetings	Member	No. of meetings
Muriel Walls (Chair)	11	Donncha O'Connell	8
Mary Dalton	8	Micheál O'Connell	11
David Denny	9	John O'Gorman	10
David Garvey	9	Philip O'Leary	11
Kate Hayes	11	Michelle O'Neill	10
Joy Mc Glynn	10	Ger Power	10
Oonagh Mc Phillips	9		

The committees of the Board met as follows in 2014:

Committee	No. of meetings held in 2014
Appeal Committee	13
Audit and Risk Management Committee	5
Family Mediation Committee	3
Finance Committee	6
Human Resources Committee	3
Lawyers Committee	6
Performance Committee	1
Review of Board Functioning	1

At the December 2014 Board meeting it was decided to suspend the Lawyers Committee and to leave the committee in existence so that it may be reconvened at a future date if considered necessary. The rationale was the proposal to establish a more broad based Policy and Reform Committee in its place. The last meeting was on the 20th November 2014.

The Board utilises an in-house corporate governance manual to provide a clear and comprehensive summary of the principal aspects of corporate governance as it affects the Board and senior management. This corporate governance manual was revised in December 2013. Board members have been fully informed of their legal responsibilities and are familiar with statutory provisions relevant to their position and the key organisational issues, policies and strategies that inform their role.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee of the Board incorporates one independent external member, Mr Kieran Corcoran, in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Payment and non-payment of fees to Board members were in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Foreword by the Chairperson and Chief Executive

We are pleased to present the 2014 Annual Report for the Legal Aid Board.

In 2014 the demand for civil legal aid services reduced by close to 8% on the level of demand in 2013. There were over 16,400 applications to law centres in the year which, while less than 2013, is nevertheless 28% more than the Board received in 2007. The level of demand in recent years, combined with constrained resources, has made the operating environment difficult and there have been challenges in providing services in as timely a manner as we would wish. We recognise that providing legal services speedily to those in need of them is extremely important and that there is considerable truth in the maxim that 'justice delayed is justice denied'. We also recognise that delays in the provision of legal aid can contribute to other delays in the justice system. There is no issue that is more important for us than trying to ensure speedy access to the Board's services.

There are signs that matters are improving. The reduction in demand and the improving economy gives hope that the Board will be able to provide services more promptly and reduce the waiting times. As of the 1st January 2015 there were 3,412 persons waiting for either a first consultation or a substantive legal service from the Board which compares with a figure of 5,067 on the 1st January 2014. Within that figure of 3,412, 1,658 people have had a consultation with a solicitor and are awaiting further services. This is on foot of the Board's objective of ensuring that, if an applicant is unable to get a full legal service within a period of four months, s/he gets legal advice within six weeks of applying. Furthermore, the Board has continued to provide services promptly in areas such as domestic violence, child care and child abduction.

The challenge of meeting additional demand for legal services at a time of constrained resources has not been unique to this jurisdiction. While some other jurisdictions, most notably England / Wales, have put in place constraints on the range of problems coming within the remit of civil legal aid, Ireland has not done so and the range of problems that comes within the ambit of civil legal aid remains the same as it was pre-recession.

In 2014 civil legal aid services continued to be provided primarily through the Board's network of 30 law centres and three specialist offices. These law centres and offices remain the point of application for persons seeking legal services from the Board. The use of private solicitors to complement this delivery is extremely important. Private solicitors are used primarily for private family law matters in the District Court however there is now a very limited resumption of usage of private solicitors for certain family law matters in the Circuit Court. The Board also initiated a pilot involving the use of private solicitors to represent parents in applications by the Child and Family Agency to have children taken into its care. The involvement of private solicitors in the delivery of civil legal aid services is critical to service delivery and we are very grateful for the commitment of the many solicitors on our panels who do this work.

The Board also retains the services of barristers on a case by case basis depending on the particular needs of the individual case. The Bar are a critical provider of legal services and the Board is appreciative of the contribution that barristers make to the effective functioning of the civil legal aid system.

It is still the case that the vast majority of applicants seeking services from the Board do so in relation to a family problem. Of the over 16,400 applications in 2014 approximately 83% involved a family matter. This pattern is relatively consistent with the pattern of demand in other jurisdictions. The numbers seeking services in relation to asylum / international protection matters increased for the first time in a number of years. Just over 900 applied for services from the Board in relation to these matters. This compares to a figure of 5,700 in 2001.

On the family mediation side the Board continues to provide family mediation services in nine full time offices and eight part time offices. In the Foreword to the 2013 Annual Report the potential benefits of family mediation and the Board's commitment to try to maximise those benefits were noted. We continue to believe that enabling parties to take greater responsibility for designing their own solutions to family problems is likely to offer better and more sustainable outcomes for most families than through an adversarial court process and a Judge imposed solution. There are waiting times in a number of the Board's family mediation offices and we sought to retain contract for service mediators to assist with the delivery of the service and to keep waiting times down.

Given the numbers seeking civil legal aid services in relation to a family problem, there remains significant work to be done to improve the synergies between the Board's mediation and civil legal aid services. In 2014 the Board commenced piloting initiatives in Cork and Athlone, whereby persons seeking a legal aid certificate in relation to a family law matter where a dependent child was involved, were generally required to attend the local family mediation office for an information session about mediation, prior to being granted a legal aid certificate to take or defend court proceedings. The rationale for this is that if a family mediation service is readily available, persons should be fully informed about mediation as an option before they decide on a particular course of action to deal with that problem. The joint initiative between the Board and the Courts Service which makes family mediation freely available on site at the District Family Court in Dublin continued to operate effectively and more modified initiatives involving the Courts remain in place in Naas, Cork, Limerick and Co Tipperary.

A government decision to transfer responsibility for the administration of criminal legal aid to the Board remains in place. Already the Board is responsible for the administration of the Legal Aid Custody Issues Scheme, the Garda Station Scheme and the Criminal Assets Bureau Legal Aid Scheme. The transfer of the main criminal legal aid scheme requires a legislative intervention which has yet to be enacted however the Board has continued to work closely with the Department of Justice and Equality in anticipation of the transfer.

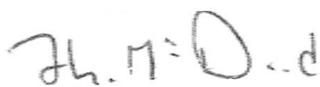
A potential legislative vehicle to transfer responsibility for the administration of the Mental Health Commission's legal aid scheme to the Board was identified and it is hoped that the transfer will take place in 2015. The Board supports the consolidation of the administration of the various legal aid schemes as it brings coherence to the whole area of legal aid.

The working environment for staff in recent years has not been easy. High levels of demand for services combined with constrained resources has meant that the Board, in common with many other organisations, has had to do more with less. Change is inevitable in the modern day and it offers both challenges and opportunities for staff and the Board. One only has to look at developments in technology and communications in recent times to see the extent of change that has already taken place and to see further changes to come. We recognise the importance of public service organisations and particularly the Board, evolving to meet the needs of those who use its services and to respond to those needs as efficiently and effectively as possible. The Board is tasked with serving the more marginalised in Irish society and we will always retain the human dimension. Staff in all areas of the Board have shown great commitment to the client base and to the organisation. We want to acknowledge the contribution of our staff as they are the Board's greatest resource.

We also wish to express our thanks to the Minister for Justice and Equality, and the Acting Secretary General of the Department and his staff for their ongoing engagement and support. We recognise that there are very considerable demands placed on the Justice sector, particularly in the last few years and that resourcing all aspects of the sector is challenging, nevertheless the Board has had continued support throughout.



Muriel Walls
Chairperson



John McDaid
Chief Executive

The Board

As at 31 December 2014:

Muriel Walls

Chairperson

Mary Dalton

Civil Servant (Staff Representative)

David Denny

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

David Garvey

Chartered Accountant

Kate Hayes

Business Person

Joy McGlynn

Child and Family Agency

Oonagh McPhillips

Department of Justice and Equality

Donncha O'Connell

School of Law, National University of Ireland, Galway

Micheál O'Connell

Barrister at Law

John O'Gorman

Solicitor (Staff Representative)

Philip O'Leary

Solicitor

Michelle O'Neill

Barrister at Law

Ger Power

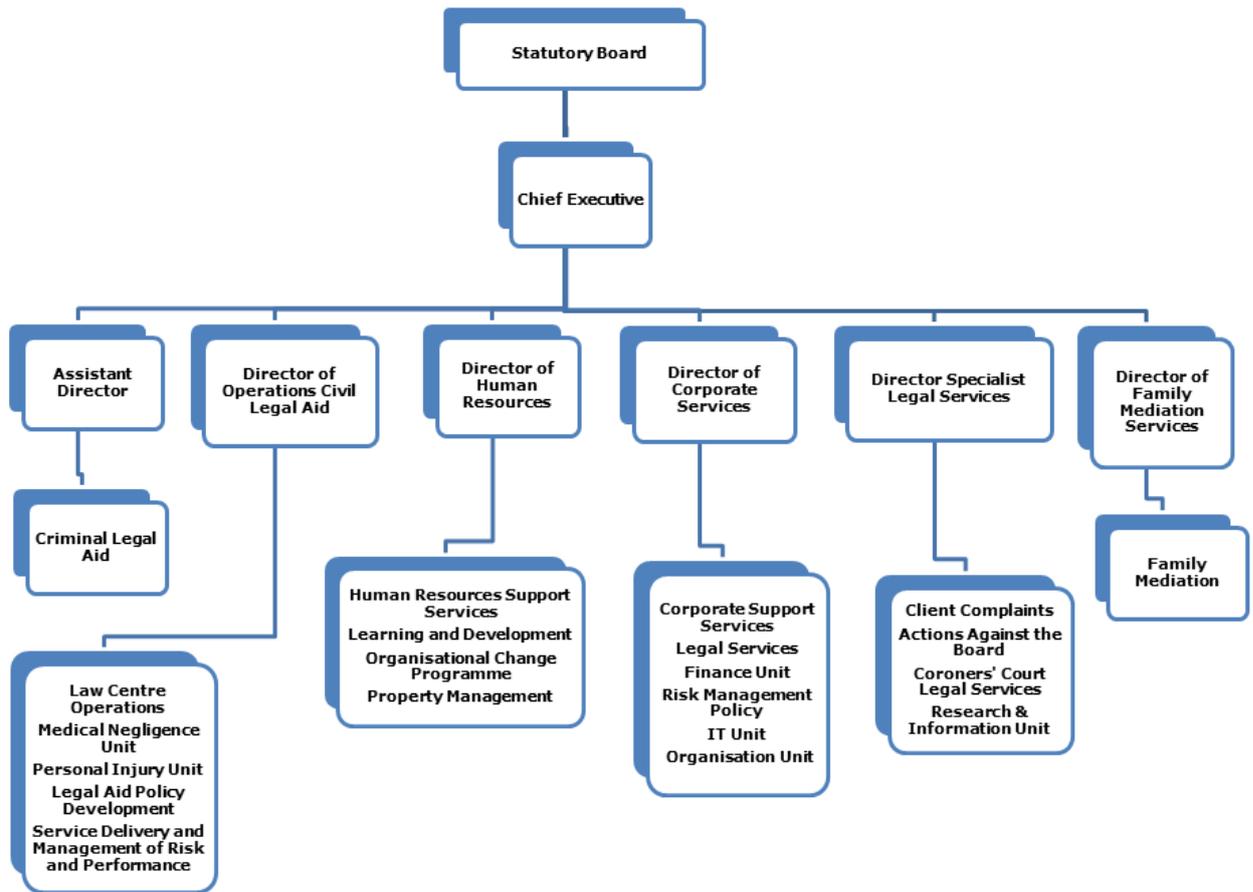
Department of Social Protection

Head Office Executive Staff

Chief Executive Officer:	Moling Ryan*/John McDaid*
Director, Civil Legal Aid:	John McDaid
Director of Human Resources:	Pat Fitzsimons
Director of Corporate Services:	Eileen Bowden
Director, Specialist Legal Services:	Frank Caffrey
Director, Family Mediation Service (FMS):	Polly Phillimore
Assistant Director, Criminal Legal Aid:	Pat Gilheaney
Financial Controller:	Joan Enright
Secretary to the Board:	Clare Kelly
Auditors:	Comptroller and Auditor General
Solicitors:	Mason Hayes and Curran
Head Office:	Quay St. Cahirciveen Co. Kerry Phone: 066 9471000 LoCall 1890 615200 Fax: 066 9471035
Dublin Office:	47 Upper Mount St. Dublin 2 Phone: 01 6441900 Fax: 01 6623661
Website:	www.legalaidboard.ie

*Dr Ryan retired in December 2014 and was replaced by Mr. McDaid in the same month.

Board Structure



Key Achievements and Developments in 2014

There were over 16,400 applications for civil legal services to the Board in 2014, a drop of close to 8% on the figure for 2013. Over 15,500 of these applications relate to matters other than asylum. This compares with a figure of less than 10,200 for non-asylum matters in 2007.

Within the new applications, the number of new clients registering for asylum related services rose by 27% to just over 900. This was the first time in a number of years that this number increased and it is consistent with an increase in the numbers seeking asylum in the State.

Over 18,300 cases were processed during the year by the law centre network, an increase of about 5% on the figure for 2013. Waiting times for an appointment with a solicitor in civil legal aid cases remained under pressure in 2014. However progress was made in reducing the numbers waiting for a first consultation or a substantive legal service. On the 1st January 2014 there were over 5,050 waiting. By the end of the year this number had reduced to just over 3,400. Nevertheless reducing the waiting times and the numbers waiting remains a key priority for the Board. The waiting time for a first appointment with a solicitor for matters other than those deemed priority cases was in excess of four months in 13 of the Board's law centres at the end of the year.

The Board continued to provide a priority service where it considered that an immediate or near immediate service was needed. Case types in which a priority service was provided included cases of domestic violence, child abduction into or out of the State, cases involving applications by the State (Child and Family Agency) to take children into care, and cases that had statutory time limits close to expiry. The number of new cases involving applications by the State (Child and Family Agency) to have a child or children taken into care decreased from 788 to 777 between 2013 and 2014.

The Board continued to make use of private solicitors to help reduce the numbers of clients waiting for legal services. The private solicitor service currently operates for certain family law matters in the District Court. Usage of the scheme dropped slightly in 2014 compared to 2013 – from over 5,600 cases to just over 5,200. The Scheme for involving private solicitors in divorce and separation matters in the Circuit Court has been constrained in recent years for budgetary reasons though there was some use of the scheme late in 2014. Furthermore, the Board commenced a limited pilot involving private solicitors in the aforementioned cases involving applications by the State (Child and Family Agency) to take children into care.

In 2012 the Board introduced a 'triage' approach in a number of its law centres. This has continued since and has been introduced in other centres. The aim of the triage approach is to ensure that if an applicant is likely to have to wait for more than four months to get a full legal service, s/he gets some level of legal advice in a timely fashion (the aim is six weeks). Thus the waiting times in respect of a number of centres

set out the time waiting for a triage appointment as well as those for a second consultation (where further legal services are necessary).

Significant progress was made during the year on the bedding in of a comprehensive legal case management system (“EOS”) which was made available across the law centre network in August 2012 and all of the Board’s civil legal work with the exception of asylum cases is managed on the new system. One particular advantage of the system is the improvement in the range and quality of management information available.

In relation to the ad-hoc criminal legal aid schemes which the Board administers, expenditure on the Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme in 2014 came to €3.23 million which was down from €3.4 million in 2013. Expenditure on the Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme in 2014 came to just over €1 million, an increase of €200,000 on 2013. This figure is likely to significantly increase in 2015 on account of the new provisions enabling persons detained to be accompanied by a solicitor at Garda interview. The amount spent on the Criminal Assets Bureau Legal Aid Scheme was €330,000 in 2014, a drop of €50,000 on 2013. While the Board administers these schemes, the expenditure is discharged by the Department of Justice and Equality.

The Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013 which was enacted in July 2013 makes provision for legal aid or advice to be provided for family members of a deceased person in certain specified instances in Coroner’s Courts.

Waiting times for family mediation services were maintained within three months in each of the mediation offices bar two. Excluding Dolphin House and the other court based initiatives there was an increase of over 2% in the number of couples agreeing to mediate. Over 900 mediated agreements were concluded during the year.

The mediation initiative in the District Family Court premises in Dublin which was established in 2011 as part of the Board’s promotion of non-court based family dispute resolution continued in 2014. Persons presenting at the District Court in relation to family disputes are provided with information on attending mediation. A key aspect is that mediators are on site in the same building, enabling ease of access to this process. Similar initiatives continued in Cork, Naas, Limerick and Co Tipperary.

A mandatory information initiative was piloted in June 2014 in Cork and also towards the end of the year in Athlone. What the pilot involves is that where there is a dependent child, a person will not be granted a legal aid certificate to take or defend family law proceedings in court until such time as they have received information from a family mediation office about mediation. The objective of the pilot is to steer more people away from the adversarial court process and towards a process that involves them taking more responsibility for working on solutions. There are exceptions to the mandatory aspect. Applicants seeking or defending remedies on foot of the domestic violence legislation are not required to attend an information session.

Exchequer funding for the Legal Aid Board in 2014 was €33.574 million. This included provision for the traditional legal services provided by the Board as well as for the provision of family mediation services. It also included a provision for the costs of administering the ad-hoc criminal legal aid schemes. Staffing levels remained at in or about the same level as in 2013 – just over 370 full time equivalents.

The Board hosted its annual family law conference in June 2014 in Dublin.

Service Provided in 2014

The extended remit of the Legal Aid Board means that services are provided by the Board in the following areas:

Civil Legal Aid

Asylum Services

Refugee Documentation Centre

Family Mediation

Criminal Legal Aid Ad-hoc Schemes

Civil Legal Aid

16,433 applicants sought legal services from the Board's law centres in 2014 with close to 15,500 of these relating to matters other than asylum. The type of problems for which the Board provides legal services extends to most areas of civil law although in 2014, as has been the case since the Board's inception in 1980, the majority of applicants sought services in relation to family problems.

The total number of cases in which legal services were provided by the Board in 2014 was in the region of 23,500. This was an increase of about 1,200 on the number dealt with in 2013.

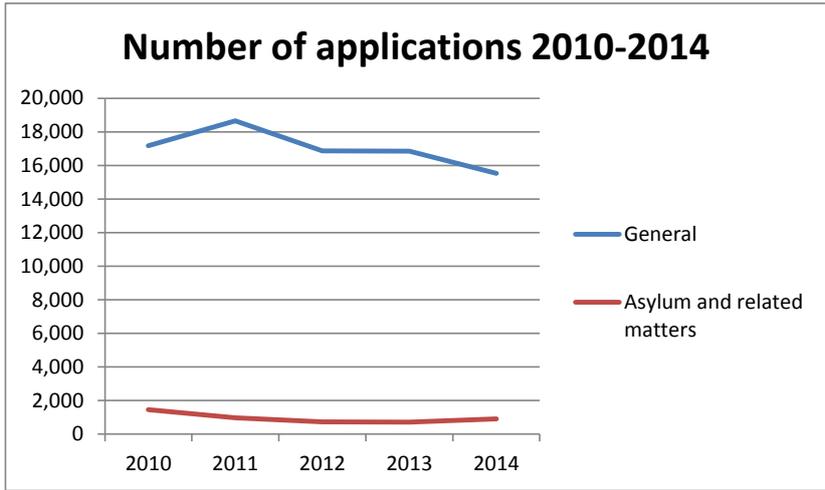
In August 2012 the Board moved to a new IT based case management system with a consequent change in data management systems and the migration of data to the new system. This has resulted in more reliable data.

Demand for the service

The following table and chart give the number of persons who applied for services to the Board in 2014 and the four previous years.

Table 1 – Number of applicants

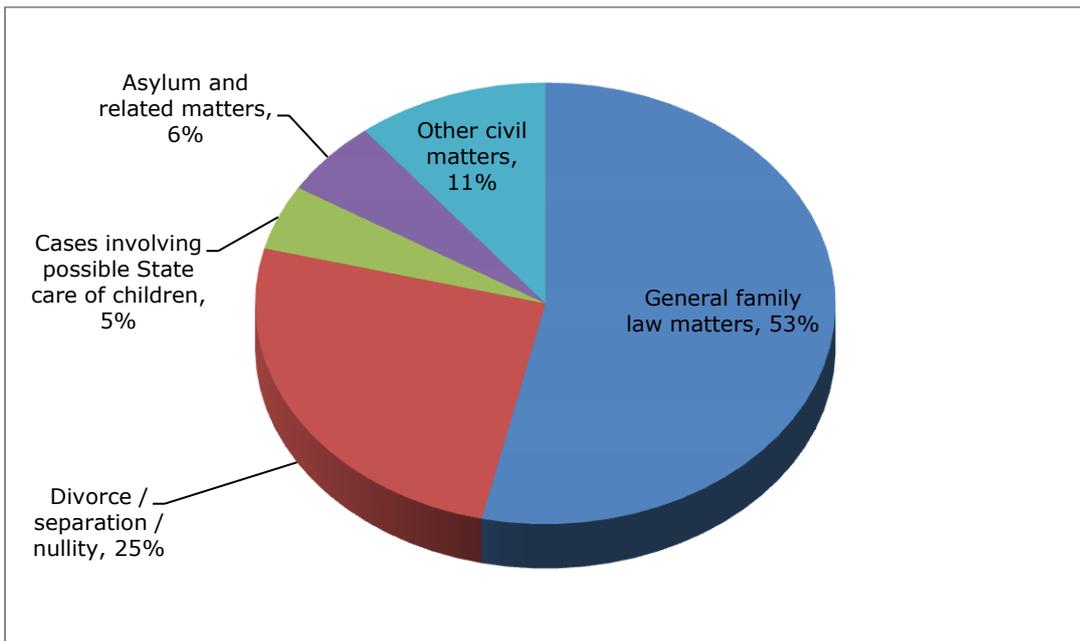
Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
General	15,531	16,851	16,870	18,657	17,175
Asylum and related matters	902	708	725	979	1,448
Total	16,433	17,559	17,595	19,636	18,623



It should be noted that not every applicant is provided with legal services. A number of applicants do not pursue their application when they are offered an appointment.

The pie chart below gives the approximate breakdown of applications by case type.

Chart 1: Percentage applications by case type 2014



Law Centres

Legal aid and advice was provided through the Board's general law centres in over 18,300 cases in 2014 which was an increase of just over 1,000 on 2013 as can be seen from the table below. Comparative information for the two previous years is set out in the table below.

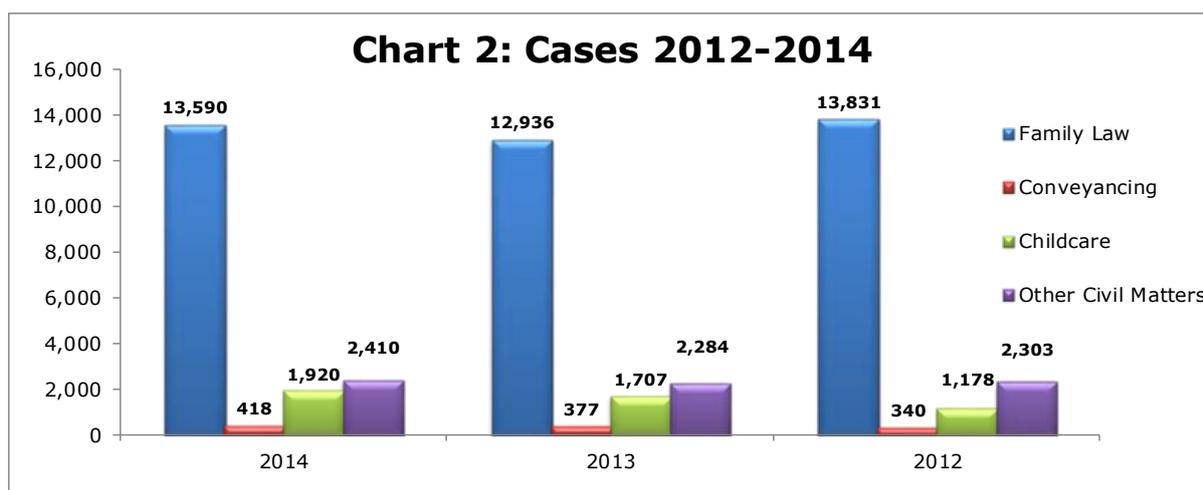
Table 2 – Cases handled in law centres

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Total	18,338	17,304	17,652	17,825	16,632

Legal aid and advice cases

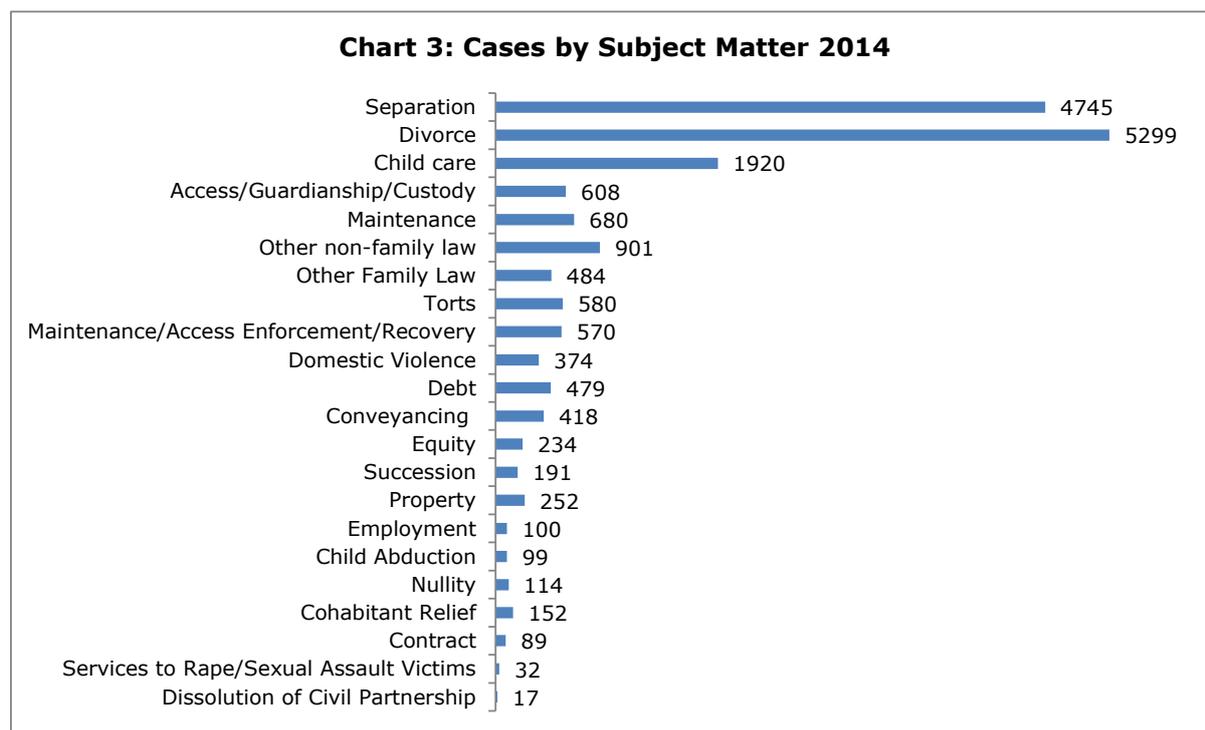
The Chart below highlights that family law continues to constitute the predominant area where the Board provides legal services. Of the cases handled in 2014, 83% were in the family law area.

Chart 2: Cases by subject matter 2012-2014



A more detailed breakdown of the main issues in respect of which legal services were provided in 2014 is provided in Chart 3. It is likely that in relation to a significant number of separation and divorce cases, advice was also given on matters such as maintenance, domestic violence, and child welfare. Such additional advices are not separately recorded here. In addition it should be noted that applicants often apply for legal services in relation to, for example, both domestic violence and custody/access, or custody/access and maintenance. For the purposes of this chart an applicant for multiple family law matters has been categorised in relation to the principal matter for which they sought legal services.

Chart 3: Cases by Subject Matter 2014



Case turnover

As can be seen from Table 3 below, there was a decrease in the number of new cases taken on in the law centre network in 2014 compared to 2013.

Table 3 – New cases in law centres (excludes asylum)

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
New Cases	6,300	6,650	5,831	7,506	7,069

Duration of cases

Table 4 below provides an age profile of cases in which legal services were provided by law centres in 2014. The year indicates when the application for legal services was first made. It should be noted that there may have been a time delay in the person getting a first appointment with a solicitor.

Table 4: Cases handled in 2014; year file opened

Year	2014	2013	2012	Pre-2012	Total
Number	4,296	5,153	3,778	5,111	18,338

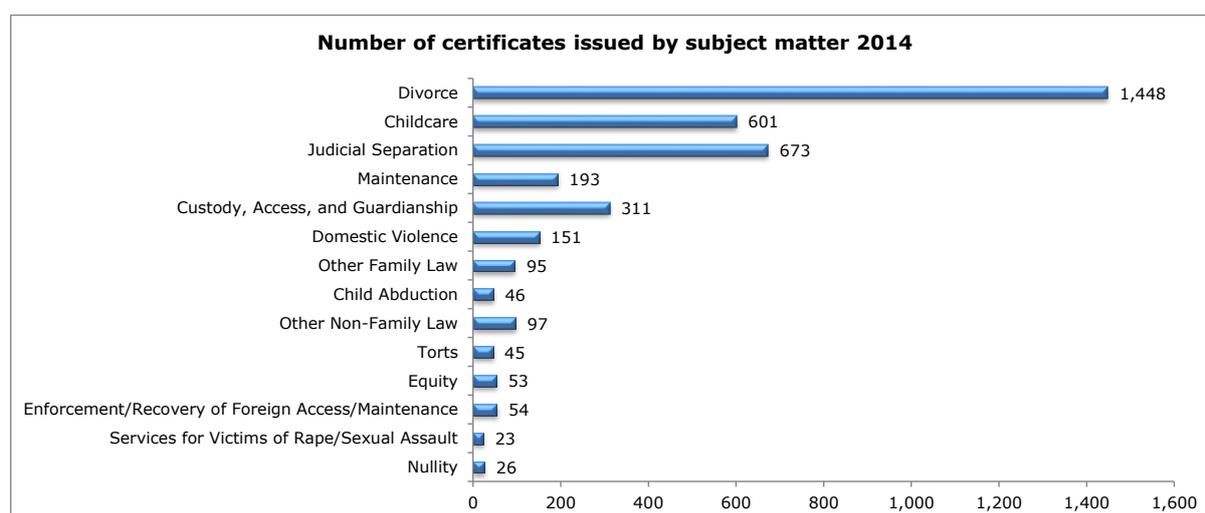
Legal aid certificates

3,816 legal aid certificates (authorisations to commence or defend proceedings in Court) were granted to persons represented by law centre solicitors during 2014. This was a very marginal reduction on the number in 2013.

The Chart below gives a breakdown of matters for which legal aid certificates were granted during the year. It should be noted that there is a large overlap in certificates granted in the areas of domestic violence, custody, access, and guardianship, and maintenance. In these areas, cases are categorised by the first subject matter listed on the certificate.

This data relates to cases handled by law centres only. Data on the number of legal aid certificates issued to persons represented by private solicitors can be found later in this section.

Chart 4: Number of Legal Aid certificates issued to law centre clients by subject matter 2014



Cases completed

Of the 18,338 cases handled in the law centres in 2014, 5,757 (31%) were completed by the end of the year. Table 5 below gives an age profile of those cases completed in 2014 by subject matter.

Table 5 –Cases completed in 2014; length of time open

	<1 Year	1-2 Years	2-3 Years	3+ Years	Total
Divorce/separation/nullity	288	695	693	996	2,672
Child care	227	188	90	60	565
Other family law	632	532	253	181	1,598
Non-family law	330	310	145	137	922
Totals	1,477	1,725	1,181	1,374	5,757

It can be seen from this table that divorce, separation and nullity cases generally take longer to reach completion than most other family law matters. Approximately 37% of divorce, separation and nullity cases completed in 2014 had been ongoing for longer than three years, compared to 11% of childcare cases and 11% of other family law matters.

Cases on Hand

Table 6 below gives the status of all of the Board’s active cases as of the 31st December 2014.

Table 6 – Cases active as at 31 December 2014

Status	No of Cases
Advice services	5,124
Counsel briefed	566
Proceedings issued	3,135
At hearing	2,523
Final orders made	1,096
Re-entry/under appeal	137

This type of information helps the Board in monitoring the progress of cases through the court process.

Private Practitioners in Family Law Matters

Private solicitors also known as private practitioners, (PPs) are engaged by the Board to provide legal aid services to complement the service provided by law centres. This service assists the Board in trying to keep the waiting times as low as possible. The PP service currently operates for certain family law matters in the District Court (such as domestic violence, maintenance, guardianship and custody/access cases). Although restrictions remain in place on the availability of the District Court scheme these were relaxed towards the end of 2014. The scheme providing for service by private practitioners in divorce and separation matters in the Circuit Court had been in effect suspended in recent years for budgetary reasons. There was a limited resumption of the scheme in late 2014. In the latter part of 2014 the Board also commenced piloting the use of PPs in certain public law cases where the State (the Child and Family Agency) was seeking to take a child into its care.

A breakdown is given in Table 7 of the number of legal aid certificates granted to enable representation to be provided in the District and Circuit Courts by solicitors in private practice who are on the Board’s panels.

Table 7 – PP certificates granted

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
District Court family law	5,224	5,640	5,077	4,854	5,220
District Court Childcare (pilot Project)	7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Circuit Court	10	0	5	8	59
Total	5,241	5,640	5,082	4,862	5,279

Fees paid to PPs for District Court family law cases are generally 10 -15% of the fee payable for Circuit Court cases.

Timeliness of the service

There has been significant pressure on waiting times for legal services caused by the increase in demand in recent years. The reduction in demand from a peak in 2011 has been of some assistance in lessening the pressure. A number of initiatives have been introduced to seek to minimise the impact on applicants. The most significant of these has been the continuation of the ‘triage’ approach in a number of law centres. The aim of the triage approach is to ensure that all applicants get some level of legal advice in a timely fashion. The model is that if an applicant is unlikely to get a full legal service within four months of applying, s/he should get a preliminary or ‘triage’ appointment with a solicitor within six.

The following table sets out the number of persons waiting on the 31st December 2014 and on the same date in the previous four years for legal services with a solicitor.

Table 8 – Numbers on waiting lists

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Number waiting	3,412	5,067	5,014	4,443	3,153

The 31st December 2014 figure comprises 1,658 who had received a first consultation appointment in a law centre operating the triage approach and who were awaiting further legal services and 1,754 still to have an appointment with a solicitor.

The maximum waiting time in weeks, as of the 31st December 2014, is set out for the various law centres in table 9 below. It must be emphasised that this table gives a snapshot of waiting times at a particular point in time. Waiting times will go up and down depending on demand and on the capacity of each law centre to offer appointments to new clients.

Table 9 – Waiting times in months on the 31st December 2014

Law Centre	General – Law centres not operating triage	Waiting time for a triage appointment	Further waiting time where triage appointment previously given
Blanchardstown	4		
Clondalkin		3	5
Finglas		5	11
Gardiner St		5	11
Smithfield		5	2
Tallaght		10	15
Cork-Popes Quay		4	6
Cork-South Mall		8	10
Galway- Francis St		5	15
Galway – Seville House		2	3
Athlone		6	8
Castlebar		2	6
Cavan		2	5
Dundalk	2		
Ennis		5	7
Kilkenny		2	10
Letterkenny		2	10
Limerick		6	2
Longford		4	3
Monaghan	4		
Navan		2	2
Nenagh		2	8
Newbridge		2	1
Portlaoise		2	11
Sligo		2	3
Tralee	5		
Tullamore	5		
Waterford	5		
Wexford		8	10
Wicklow	3		

Priority Service

The Board continued to provide a priority service where it considered that an immediate, or near immediate, service was needed. In 2014 approximately 19% of first appointments were for prioritised matters. These included cases of domestic violence, child abduction, cases involving applications by the State to take children into care, and cases that had statutory time limits close to expiry.

In addition to the cases given priority in the law centres, most of the cases referred out to solicitors on the Board’s private practitioner panels were so referred immediately or shortly after the person had applied for legal aid.

Appeal Committee

In 2014, the Appeal Committee of the Board met on 13 occasions. This is a sub-committee of the Board and it rules on cases where a person makes an appeal against a decision of the executive. Most of the cases that come before it relate to decisions to refuse legal aid.

There were 165 appeals heard in 2014. Of the appeals heard in 2014, the decision of the executive was upheld in 131 cases. There were 26 appeals where the original decision was overturned. Table 10 below provides an outline of the position.

Table 10– Appeal committee

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Number of decisions upheld	131	116	138	102	85
- Financial criteria	33	12	29	21	25
- Merits criteria	98	104	109	81	60
Number of decisions overturned	26	38	28	22	36
Number of decisions on hand	2	1	0	4	5
Withdrawn/resolved	6	1	6	7	5
Number of appeals	165	156	172	135	131

Asylum Services (including Subsidiary Protection)

The number of persons seeking legal services for asylum in 2014 was 902. This was an increase of 35% on the previous year. Services in asylum and related matters are provided in three of the Board’s law centres, namely Smithfield (Dublin), Pope’s Quay (Cork) and Seville House (Galway) and also by private solicitors on a panel. In 2001 approximately 5,700 persons sought legal advice from the Board in relation to asylum issues. However, this number dropped below 1,000 in 2011 and has remained under that figure since.

Subsidiary Protection

Until 2013 applications for subsidiary protection in the State were made in writing only. The State revised the process for considering subsidiary protection claims by transferring the function for consideration of the claims to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (“the ORAC”), by affording every applicant an opportunity to be interviewed by that Office and by affording every applicant refused subsidiary protection by the Refugee Applications Commissioner an opportunity to appeal that decision to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. In response to this change in process the Board revised its terms and conditions for private practitioners to allow for the provision of legal advice in subsidiary protection cases before the ORAC and the RAT by private practitioners. The Board organised specialised training in 2014 which was delivered in conjunction with the UNHCR to all private practitioners on the panel for asylum and related issues.

Table 11: Asylum Applications

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
RLS Registrations	902	708	725	979	1,448
ORAC Applications	1,448	946	956	1,290	1,939

Minors

The Board continued to have a dedicated Children's Unit located in Dublin to handle asylum applications by unaccompanied minors. Staff in the Unit have received relevant specialised training. The Unit has well developed interagency relationships with the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) and the Child and Family Agency with whom regular meetings take place to deal with issues of mutual interest. In addition to preparing pre-interview submissions for separated children the Unit also provides these clients with legal services in relation to family tracing and family re-unification.

Legal aid certificates for asylum / subsidiary protection matters

The Board granted 1,010 legal aid certificates in asylum and subsidiary protection cases in 2014 to enable representation before the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT). The figure is not directly comparable with 2013 when 365 certificates were issued, as the Board includes both subsidiary protection and asylum matters on the same Legal Aid Certificate when a case is handled internally. In 2014 the Board commenced issuing certificates to private practitioners to cover Subsidiary Protection representation. The RAT decides appeals of those asylum seekers whose application for refugee status has not been recommended by the Refugee Applications Commissioner. The following table shows the breakdown between the numbers of certificates in which representation was provided by law centre solicitors and by private solicitors/barristers, acting on behalf of the Board.

Table 12: Legal Aid certificates granted – asylum and related matters

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Law Centre solicitors	172	122	171	210	548
Private solicitors - Asylum	351	197	231	360	310
Private solicitors - Subsidiary Protection	467				
Barristers instructed by the RLS	20	46	47	79	155
Total	1,010	365	449	649	1,013

In late 2009 the Board commenced providing legal services on certain matters to persons identified by the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) as potential victims of human trafficking under the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008. The Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 was amended in 2011 to facilitate the provision of these services.

There is no requirement to satisfy the Board's financial eligibility or merits criteria for these cases and a potential victim of human trafficking is not required to make a financial contribution to the Board. The service is provided by Board employees who have received specialised training in human trafficking issues.

The service provides initial advice to persons identified as potential victims of human trafficking on their legal rights. It also provides legal services to suspected victims of human trafficking who may be acting as witnesses in prosecutions taken under specified provisions of the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008.

From late 2009 to the end of 2014, 105 potential victims of human trafficking had been notified to the Board by GNIB. 16 of these notifications occurred during 2014, 13 of whom were referred in relation to sexual exploitation and three in relation to labour exploitation. At the end of December 2014, 73 potential victims of human trafficking were still registered as clients of the Board. Of the 73 clients, seven were male and 66 were female, 72 were adults and one was a minor.

The trafficking purpose of the 73 clients is shown in the chart and table below.

Chart 6: Human Trafficking cases referred to the Board up to the end of 2014

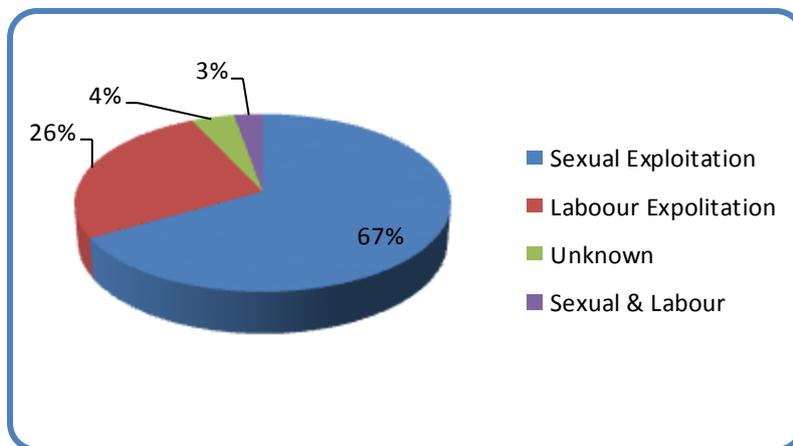


Table 13 - Trafficking Purpose

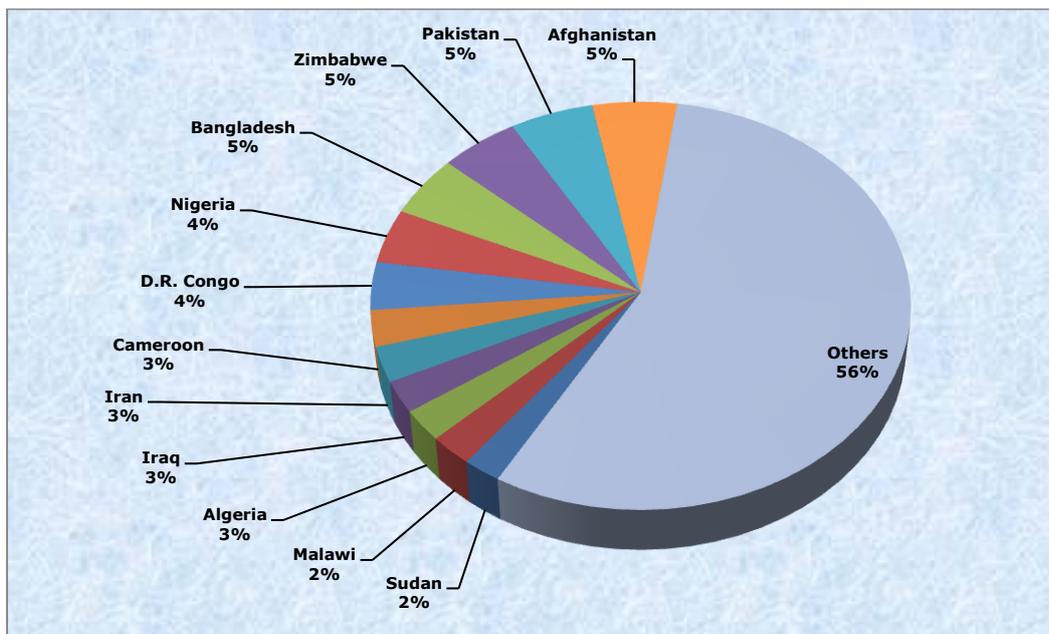
Trafficking Purpose	
Sexual Exploitation	48
Labour Exploitation	19
Unknown	3
Sexual & Labour	2
Total	72

The Refugee Documentation Centre

The Refugee Documentation Centre (RDC) is an independent service operating under the aegis of the Board. The main role of the Centre is to provide an objective research and query service for key organisations involved in the asylum process, with a particular focus on providing Country of Origin information (COI). Members of the public and other agencies may also use the RDC to conduct their own research. The RDC continues to maintain a close working relationship with the UNHCR.

In 2014, the RDC query service provided a total of 1,394 query responses. This represented an increase of 23% on 2013. On average, about 70% of queries related to COI, with the remaining 30% split between legal and library queries. The country which gave rise to the largest single number of queries in 2014 was Afghanistan followed closely by Pakistan, though the fact that queries in relation to each of these represented about 5% of total queries shows the diversity and number of countries from which asylum seekers originate. The main countries subject to COI queries are set out in Chart 7 below.

Chart 7: RDC Queries 2014



A brief sample of the type of information sought in the queries received is set out below:

- Activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria
- Freedom of religion and freedom of expression in Malaysia
- The internal registration system in China and the difficulty of relocating to a different city or province
- Discrimination against people with HIV in Malawi
- The Awami League in Bangladesh
- Treatment of failed asylum seekers in Ghana
- The Hazara people in Afghanistan

- Criminal gangs in Ukraine
- Gender violence in Albania and the police response
- Treatment of converts to Christianity in Iran
- The Jammu Kashmir Peoples National Party (JKPNP) in Pakistan
- M23 rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The RDC continued to work closely with the ORAC and other users of its services in 2014 with a view to strengthening co-operation and meeting the various needs of its users. Of particular importance was customising the provision of COI to meet the requirements arising from new subsidiary protection procedures introduced in late 2013 and preparation for anticipated legislation regarding a single procedure for protection applications.

Two editions of the RDC's periodical, *The Researcher*, were published in 2014. These were made available internally and to relevant external agencies. A further 17 Country Information Packs were prepared by the RDC in 2014 bringing the total number of packs available to 40 Country Information Packs, 37 Country Marriage Packs and 28 Country Adoption Packs. An additional 80 shorter Subsidiary Protection Packs were also created in 2014 in response to needs identified by the agencies following changes to the procedures for processing subsidiary protection cases. These shorter packs focused solely on protection issues rather than the more detailed country information provided in the 40 standard Country Information Packs.

The RDC participated in two international projects in the area of COI, MedCOI (medical COI) and the European COI Portal. Substantial work took place throughout the year on preparing to connect the RDC E-Library's digital archive to the European COI Portal and this European Refugee Fund supported project is due for completion in June 2015.

The RDC is part of the Board's Research and Information Unit (RIU) which also manages the Legal Aid Board Library. The Library provides an information and research service for Board staff. This includes a query service and the preparation of research products including general library alerts, bulletins, information documents on specific areas of law and targeted alerts for Family Mediation, Criminal Legal Aid and Medical Negligence.

Sample cases – Civil Legal Aid

(These cases have been redacted to prevent identification of the parties. Some of the cases are composites of more than one case in order both to protect the identities of individuals and to provide an illustration of the breadth of legal service provided.)

Access and Guardianship (mediated outcome)

The client was a young unmarried father who had never resided with the mother of the child. Their relationship had been brief and had ended shortly before the child was born. Following the birth of the child the client had only seen his child on a very few occasions and he felt he was being deliberately excluded from contact with the child. He was not named as the father on the birth certificate.

When the father sought legal aid at the Board's office in Dolphin House, his application for access to the child and to be appointed a legal guardian of the child had already been issued and a date given for the court hearing. The Law Centre staff referred him to the Board's mediation service which is located in Dolphin House courthouse and explained to him that his case might be suitable for mediation. They also explained to him the benefits of a mediated outcome over a contested hearing. As the case was listed for hearing within ten days, the mediator who informed the client about mediation contacted the mother who confirmed that she would be open to a mediated settlement on access. The mediator met with both parties on two occasions. The parties came to an agreement that access would take place in the mother's parents' home. The mother was moreover not opposed to the father being appointed a guardian. With the assistance of the District Court staff the case was notified to the sitting judge as having been successfully mediated. The parties agreed that the only formal order required from the court was that appointing the father a guardian as they were satisfied that access could be agreed between them on an ongoing basis.

Access and Guardianship (court hearing)

The client is the father of two children and had been living with the mother of the children. He was not their guardian and no application for guardianship had been brought in the District Court. No consent forms had been signed to agree guardianship. The client was involved in a serious accident and suffered severe injuries. He resided in a residential care institution because of those injuries. The mother of the children denied him access to their children.

The client brought an application for guardianship to the District Court. The application for guardianship was opposed by the mother of the children. A psychiatric report and a Section 20 report were available to the court which made an interim access order for monthly supervised access and telephone access to the two children. A subsequent report recommended that the father be appointed joint guardian and the fact that access to his children would need to remain supervised was not a reason not to grant guardianship. The report also recommended that the father would be consulted in matters concerning their education and other decisions regarding their lives. The mother disputed the report and the psychologist who prepared the report was called to

give evidence. After hearing the evidence the court appointed the applicant joint guardian with the mother.

Cohabitee – Repossession order for family home

The client mother had been in a long term relationship. The children of the relationship all lived with the client.

The other party's' mother assisted with the purchase of a house the ownership of which was registered in his sole name. The client, her partner and their children lived in the property. The parties split up and the client remained in the home with the children.

The other party instituted Circuit Court proceedings seeking to repossess the home. The client was granted legal aid to defend the claim and in her Counterclaim she sought title to the property on the grounds that her ex partner was holding legal title in the property on trust for her and / or the children. A claim was made that the client's ex partner was prevented from denying the client's beneficial ownership in the property, as it was the intention of his mother to provide for future accommodation needs for the client and the children. The case was subsequently settled after having been set down for hearing on the basis that the property was to be sold and the proceeds divided.

Asylum

An asylum seeker sought advice from the Board with regards to his asylum case shortly after applying for asylum in Ireland. He had fled from a war torn country, and due to the chaotic circumstances in which he fled, he became separated from his other family members. His application for asylum was refused by the ORAC. After taking his instructions and reviewing with him facts of his application and his interview with the ORAC it was felt he had a strong case. Representations were made to the ORAC to withdraw the negative recommendation, which they agreed to do, and the client was re- interviewed. Detailed Country of Origin was sourced by the Board from the Refugee Documentation Centre. The ORAC however recommended refusal of his application. The client, although advised he had a good case to appeal the decision, decided he did not wish to do so but wished to submit applications for Leave to Remain and Subsidiary Protection instead. These applications are pending.

Asylum

An asylum seeker from a country in Africa sought advice from the Board. He sought asylum on the basis that he would face persecution for reasons of his political opinion. He had been attacked in his country for failure to join an organisation. He suffered injuries and was receiving medical care. He was fearful that he would not have protection in his country because of the violent situation. He did not consider that relocation within his country was possible.

The client's application was refused by the ORAC. The client instructed that he wished to appeal his case to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

The Tribunal Member accepted the client's nationality, he further, having considered the evidence and the COI relevant to the case, found that it did appear that he would suffer persecution if returned to certain areas of his country. The Member then proceeded to consider the Internal Protection Alternative and found that in view of the applicant's medical condition that it would be impossible for him to relocate elsewhere within the country. The Tribunal Member recommended a grant of refugee status.

Child Care

The mother applied for legal aid to defend an application by the Child & Family Agency for a Care Order some days after the birth of her child. There were concerns expressed by the Child & Family Agency that the mother would not keep the child from contact with a relative who was the subject of allegations of serious abuse of an infant. The application for an Interim Care Order was refused in the District Court. The Judge put a Supervision Order in place with restrictions in relation to the alleged abuser of the child. The Child and Family Agency renewed its application for a Care Order a few months later based on renewed concerns. An updated parental capacity assessment on the mother was positive and was available to the court at the hearing. The full care order hearing was contested over a number of days. The District Court made a supervision order with specific directions with regard to access by the relative to the infant.

Judicial Separation

A client sought legal aid in order to obtain a Judicial Separation. The client had been living separate and apart from her husband for just under one continuous year at the time of her application and she said that her husband was agreeable to a decree of Judicial Separation being made. She further instructed that no normal marital relationship had existed between her and her husband for at least one year. Her husband confirmed in writing through his solicitor that he would consent to a Judicial Separation. As the children of the marriage were no longer dependant, the only major issue to be finalised was the family home. The parties had previously attended mediation but were no longer attending. The husband had never had any pension arrangements. After some very brief negotiation, terms of agreement were drafted and signed. Proceedings were issued as soon as the statutory period of one year had been met. The matter came before the Circuit Court and the settlement terms were approved and the parties granted a Judicial Separation.

Family Mediation

The Family Mediation Service (FMS) became part of the Legal Aid Board in November 2011 following the enactment of the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011.

The Board's family mediation service is a free, confidential service in which a professional mediator assists those involved in family breakdown and in particular couples, including married, civil partners and non-married, to negotiate the terms of their separation or divorce in the case of a marriage and dissolution in the case of a civil partnership. The service is available for couples who have never lived together and persons who have not been in an ongoing relationship but have a child together. The mediator assists people to communicate better with one another and to reach their own agreed and informed decisions concerning some or all of the issues. The family mediation service also deals with a small number of cases which involve conflict between other members of a family (e.g. parents and children, adopted and step children, grandparents and grandchildren, brothers and sisters involved in disputes over elderly parents, wills etc.).

It is a national service based in 17 locations; there are 8 full-time offices (Ormond Quay, Dolphin House, Raheny, Blanchardstown and Tallaght in Dublin, and also in Cork, Galway and Limerick. There are nine part-time offices open for family mediation two to three days a week.

Since the Board assumed responsibility for the provision of family mediation services in November 2011, a strong emphasis has been placed on shortening the waiting times nationally to ensure that the service complements that of the Board's law centres and that people who wish to try and resolve matters through mediation are not waiting longer than eight to twelve weeks for an appointment with a mediator. This was largely achieved in 2014 although on the 31st December 2014 the waiting time was longer in one Dublin office and in the Cork office.

Mediation Service Provision

*Waiting times are calculated from the date both parties confirm interest in attending mediation to the date they are offered their first appointment.

Table 14: Comparative waiting times December 2011 – 2014

Centre	Waiting times (weeks) End December 2014	Waiting times (weeks) End December 2013	Waiting times (weeks) End December 2012	Waiting times (weeks) End December 2011
Dublin:				
<i>Ormond Quay</i>	18	12	12	12
<i>Blanchardstown</i>	12	12	12	24
<i>Raheny</i>	12	8	12	16
<i>Tallaght</i>	14	12	12	16
Athlone	12	8	8	12
Castlebar	4	12	8	8
Cork	22	12	20	4
Dundalk	8	4	12	12
Galway	12	12	12	12
Letterkenny	8	12	8	12
Limerick	8	16	12	12
Portlaoise	12	16	8	16
Sligo	8	8	12	16
Tralee	12	12	8	12
Waterford	12	8	8	8
Wexford	12	12	12	16

Table 15: Mediation service provision in 2014

Centre	Cases Carried Forward From 2013	First Mediation Session Attended	Reached Agreement	% Reached Agreement	Carried Forward to 2015
Dublin:					
<i>Ormond Quay</i>	104	145	79	32%	83
<i>Tallaght</i>	87	151	78	33%	69
<i>Blanchardstown</i>	84	186	107	40%	83
<i>Raheny</i>	63	87	62	41%	60
Athlone	22	84	58	55%	24
Castlebar	18	90	41	38%	32
Cork	70	94	60	39%	52
Dundalk	14	80	46	49%	33
Galway	76	109	82	44%	55
Letterkenny	17	42	20	34%	14
Limerick	73	125	59	30%	71
Portlaoise	26	84	28	25%	57
Sligo	7	33	30	75%	11
Tralee	23	67	47	53%	21
Waterford	22	84	73	68%	23
Wexford	30	65	34	36%	26
TOTAL	736	1526	904	40%	714

It should be noted that the following figures relate to general family mediation services and they do not include those who obtained services on foot of the Dolphin House tripartite initiative or certain pilot initiatives which are referred to below.

736 couples were carried forward from 2013. 1,526 couples attended a first mediation session in 2014. The total number of couples in mediation in 2014 was 2,262, – an increase of 327 from 2013. Of these 904 (40%) reached agreement (43% in 2013). 714 couples in the mediation process were carried forward to 2015.

Court-related initiatives

Dolphin House

The Dolphin House tripartite initiative between the Family Mediation Service, the Legal Aid Board and the Courts Service based on-site at the District Family Court in Dolphin House, Dublin 2 commenced in March 2011. This was put on a permanent basis in June 2014. This initiative involves a significant and permanent mediation presence co-located with the District Family Court and the objective is to encourage and facilitate greater numbers to seek to resolve their family problem with the assistance of a mediator rather than using a court process. Appointments are given to people expressing an interest in mediation and if, after the second party has attended an information session and both parties are keen to proceed with mediation, a first joint mediation appointment is given and the mediation process may begin.

The statistics for the Dolphin House Service for 2014 are set out in the Table below.

Table 16: Dolphin House District Court Mediation Initiative Statistics

Contact Sessions	2014	2013
1 st contact information sessions attended:	1,108	1,124
2 nd contact information sessions attended:	635	690
Mediation sessions attended:	808	906
Agreements:	351	408

In addition to the net financial benefit there are also further benefits arising from the initiative which may be of even greater importance. These include providing parties to conflict with a sense of joint ownership of issues and the solutions with the greater likelihood of adherence by both parties; the fostering of more productive relationships between the parties relating to issues associated with the children with the consequent benefits to the children, the parents, many State systems and, ultimately, society; and more speedy resolution of issues and, thus, less likelihood of matters continuing to re-appear in court lists as is frequently the case at present.

Working from the model established in Dolphin House, the Board and the Courts Service have rolled out a number of other court-based initiatives:

Naas District Court Initiative

The Board and the Courts Service commenced a similarly structured project operating from Naas Courthouse in September 2012. A family mediator is available in the Courthouse on a Monday and Tuesday and initial referrals and appointments are made through the District Court Clerk. Once the first information appointment has been made and attended the family mediator contacts the second party and offers them an information appointment. If both parties are interested in proceeding with mediation they begin the process.

Statistics for 2014 and 2013 for comparison are set out in the Table below.

Table 17: Naas District Court Mediation Initiative

Contact Sessions	2014	2013
1 st contact information sessions attended:	115	85
2 nd contact information sessions attended:	87	59
Mediation sessions attended:	114	75
Agreements:	45	16

Cork (District Court) Family Mediation Project

In January 2013 the Board and the Courts Service worked together to set up a court-related project in Cork. It differs from the Dolphin House and Naas projects in that a family mediator was not on site in the Courthouse however since September 2014 a family mediator attends the courthouse once a week when the District Family Court is sitting.

Initially there was a mediator allocated for this initiative five days a week but this was reduced to three days a week and then two days as the take up of this service was low. Statistics for 2014 and 2013 are set out in the Table below.

Table 18: Cork District Court Mediation Initiative Statistics

Contact Sessions	2014	2013
1 st contact information sessions attended:	88	131
2 nd contact information sessions attended:	75	103
Mediation sessions attended:	121	181
Agreements:	31	41

A number of the referrals came from solicitors and law centres as well as the Courts Service.

Tipperary courts Family Mediation (Nenagh and Clonmel)

The Board commenced in September 2013 a similar service offering information sessions on one day a week on alternate weeks in Clonmel and Nenagh Courthouses. However, it was not until mid-2014 that a room in each courthouse became available and mediation sessions could also be held on site.

2014 was the first full year of operation so there are no comparative annual figures for 2013.

Table 19: Tipperary Courts Mediation Statistics

Contact Sessions	2014
1st contact information sessions attended:	105
2nd contact information sessions attended:	72
Mediation sessions attended:	82
Agreements:	11

Limerick Court Family Mediation

A similarly structured service was set up in Limerick District Courthouse in July 2014 and operates one day a week. Figures from June to December 2014 are set out in the Table below.

Table 20: Limerick Court Mediation Statistics

Contact Sessions	2014
1st contact information sessions attended:	30
2nd contact information sessions attended:	30
Mediation sessions attended:	38
Agreements:	3

Family mediation offices / Law Centres mandatory information sessions project

In June 2014 a pilot project was initiated in Cork with the objective of compelling certain applicants for legal services to attend an information session about family mediation before they can be granted a legal aid certificate to take or defend court proceedings. The mandatory information requirement applies to a person who has a dependent child and is seeking certain family law remedies. The person can get legal advice from a solicitor but the solicitor will not be able to represent him or her until the information session has been attended. The requirement does not apply to persons seeking remedies on foot of the domestic violence legislation, nor does it apply to cases involving the Child and Family Agency. A similar initiative was commenced in Athlone in November 2014.

The figures to end-December 2014 are set out in the table below.

Table 21: Cork mandatory information sessions project (6 months)

Contact Sessions	2014
1st contact information sessions attended:	134
2nd contact information sessions attended:	59
Mediation sessions attended:	37
Agreements:	3

Athlone (2 months)

Table 22: Athlone mandatory information sessions project

Contact Sessions	2014
1st contact information sessions attended:	16
2nd contact information sessions attended:	3
Mediation sessions attended:	1
Agreements:	0

Criminal Legal Aid Ad-hoc Schemes

While historically the Board's statutory remit has primarily pertained to civil legal aid, the Government decided in 2010 to transfer the responsibility for the administration and management of the various Criminal Legal Aid Schemes from the Department of Justice and Equality to the Board. The Government decision determined that responsibility for the following Schemes would be transferred to the Board:

- Criminal Legal Aid Scheme
- Attorney General's Ad-hoc Scheme
- Garda Station Legal Advice Ad-hoc Scheme
- Criminal Assets Bureau Ad-hoc Legal Aid Scheme
- District Court (Counsel) Ad-hoc Scheme.

Responsibility for the administration of the Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme transferred to the Board on the 1st October 2011 and for the Legal Aid - Custody Issues Scheme (then titled the Attorney General's Ad-hoc Scheme) on the 1st June 2012. The remit for the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) Ad-hoc Scheme transferred to the Board on the 1st January 2014. The District Court (Counsel) Ad-hoc Scheme is expected to transfer to the Board in 2015, while the legislation providing for the transfer of the main Criminal Legal Aid Scheme is expected to be published in 2015.

The experience gained in operating the Schemes taken over to date will inform and assist the Board as it prepares for the challenge of administering the remaining Schemes and, in particular, the more extensive and complex Criminal Legal Aid Scheme.

Garda Station Legal Advice (Revised Scheme)

The Garda Station Scheme is designed to provide free legal advice to persons detained in Garda Stations who qualify under specific qualifying criteria.

The Scheme was effectively expanded as a result of a decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) in May 2014 to facilitate for the first time the attendance of solicitors at interviews between Gardaí and detainees in Garda Stations. This change is likely to result in a significant increase in demand and expenditure over the coming years, and has already led to an increase in expenditure in 2014. To coincide with the introduction of the Revised Scheme, in August 2014 the Board published a new Scheme Provisions and Guidance Document. This new document provides a comprehensive account of the Revised Scheme's provisions and the manner in which the Board implements them.

Overall post-tax expenditure on the Scheme in recent years is set out in the Table below as follows:

Table 23: Expenditure on Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Expenditure €	1.0m	0.8m	0.9m	1.2m	1.3m

During 2014, the Board processed almost 4,300 claims in respect of over 8,000 Garda Station detainee consultations and 1,500 hours of attendance for interviews.

The Board has also sought to streamline the claims process and has introduced a bespoke database. The redesign of the database to cater for the Revised Scheme has enabled a wide range of statistics to be made available, which will assist the Department in its review of the operation of the Revised Scheme scheduled for 2015, as well as informing Departmental policy generally in relation to this area.

**Table 24 : Legal Aid Board/Garda Station Legal Advice Revised Scheme
Statistical Report for 2014**

	Description	Count	Cost (pre-tax)
1	Total cost of authorised claims	Claims €814215.12 & Mileage €13113.09	€827,328
2	Overall number of claims authorised during the year (of which included claims for attendance hours)	4,289 (410)	€827,328
3	Of the total claims authorised, number of claims which included consultations only	3,879	€633,850
4	Of the total claims authorised, number of claims which included attendance hours only	51	€14,721
5	Of the total number of claims authorised, number of claims which included both consultations and attendance hours	359	€178,757
6	Total number of claims authorised during the year under the Offences Against the State Acts legislation (of which included a claim for attendance hours)	219 (17)	€57,424
7	Total number of claims authorised during the year under the Criminal Justice Act, 1984-2006 legislation (of which included a claim for attendance hours)	3,727 (351)	€660,696
8	Total number of claims authorised during the year under the Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act 1996 (of which included a claim for attendance hours)	279 (37)	€77,262
9	Total number of claims authorised during the year under Section 50, Criminal Justice Act, 2007 legislation (of which included a claim for attendance hours)	64 (5)	€31,946
10	Total number of individual Extension Hearings authorised during the year	18	€3,627
11	Total number of individual day consultations authorised (excl. attendance for interviews) during the year in respect of a daytime period visit (8am - 8pm)	2,898	€281,993
12	Total number of individual night consultations authorised (excl. attendance for interviews) during the year in respect of a night-time period visit (8pm - 8am)	1,321	€174,709
13	Total number of individual consultations authorised (excl. attendance for interviews) during the year in respect of a weekend or bank holiday period visit	884	€116,783
14	Total number of individual phone consultations authorised during the year	2,969	€117,545
15	Total number of hours for day attendance for interview (excl. consultations) between 8am - 8pm	957.3 hours	€68,926
16	Total number of hours for night / WE / BH attendance for interview (excl. consultations) between 8pm - 8am	543 hours	€50,499
17	Average number of hours per claim (for claims which included attendance hours)	3.65 hours	N/A
18	Total number of solicitor firms that had authorised claims during the year	238	€827,328

Table 25 Payments in 2014 (and 2013 for comparison)

	2014	2013
Average payment to a solicitor firm	€3,476	€2,899
Average cost per solicitor claim	€193	€173
Average cost per individual consultation	€86	€87
Average number of claims per solicitor firm	18	17
Highest cost of an individual claim processed	€6,469	€1,726
Lowest cost of an individual claim processed	€40	€40

Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme

The purpose of this Scheme is to provide, in certain circumstances, legal aid to persons who need it but who cannot afford it and where the case is not covered by either Civil Legal Aid or the Criminal Legal Aid Scheme. Access to the Scheme is subject to a recommendation by the relevant Court to the Board that the provisions of the Scheme would be made available to the applicant. The Scheme is an administrative, non-statutory arrangement whereby payments are made in respect of legal costs in the following forms of litigation:

- Habeas Corpus (Article 40) Applications
- Supreme and High Court Bail Motions
- Judicial Reviews that consist of or include certiorari, mandamus or prohibition and concern criminal matters or matters where the liberty of the applicant is at risk
- Applications under Section 50 of the Extradition Act 1965, Extradition Applications and European Arrest Warrants.

On taking over responsibility for the Scheme, the Board completed an extensive review of its implementation and this resulted in the introduction in 2013 of a new claims system. The Board also introduced, in 2013, a Provisions and Guidance Document which, for the first time, provided a comprehensive guide to the Scheme's provisions along with details on the systems and structures under which it is administered by the Board. In 2014, work commenced on developing a database to enhance the implementation of the Scheme, including by way of increased efficiency in the processing of claims, improved collation and analysis of statistics and the strengthening of the governance measures. This new bespoke database was designed to apply to both the non-bail and the High Court Bail sides of the Scheme (see below) and it will also cater for the Board's implementation of the separate Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) Legal Aid Scheme. The new database became fully operational for the Legal Aid-Custody Issues Scheme at the start of 2015.

The Scheme operates under two distinct administrative processes, one dealing with High Court Bail Applications in criminal matters and a second dealing with all other legal proceedings (non-bail side) falling under the Scheme's provisions.

Table 26: Legal Aid Board/Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme

	Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme General (non Bail) Statistics 2014	Total
1	Number of new cases received in Board from solicitors in 2014	226
2	Number of cases received back from CSSO	172
3	Number of cases received back from DPP	25
4	Number of cases received back from HSE	6
5	Overall number of cases awaiting a response from CSSO at end 2014	46
6	Overall number of cases awaiting a response from DPP at end 2014	5
7	Overall number of cases awaiting a response from HSE at end 2014	3
8	Number of claims returned to solicitors under query during 2014	27
9	Number of claims finalised and authorised by Board for payment	257
10	Total cost of claims pertaining to CSSO cases (226 cases in 2014)	€1,487,086
11	Highest cost of a CSSO related claim in 2014	€62,879
12	Total cost of claims pertaining to DPP cases (25 cases in 2014)	€157,308
13	Highest cost of a DPP related claim in 2014	€17,000
14	Total cost of claims pertaining to HSE cases (6 cases in 2014)	€122,508
15	Highest cost of a HSE related claim in 2014	€40,274
16	Average cost per authorised claim in 2014	€6,875
17	Total value of claims authorised by Board for the Scheme in 2014	€1,766,902 (pre tax)

Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) Ad-hoc Legal Aid Scheme

The CAB Legal Aid Scheme was the third legal aid scheme to be transferred to the Board as a result of the Government decision to transfer the remit for the various Criminal Legal Aid Schemes from the Department of Justice and Equality to the Board. The Board took on the responsibility for the administration of the CAB Scheme on the 1st January 2014.

The CAB Scheme is an administrative, non-statutory arrangement whereby payments are made in respect of certain legal costs and types of litigation. The Scheme applies to the following types of cases:

- Where a person is a Respondent in any court proceedings brought by, or in the name of, the Criminal Assets Bureau or its Chief Bureau Officer or any member of the Criminal Assets Bureau, including court proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 1996, Revenue Acts or Social Welfare Acts;
- Social Welfare Appeals made to the Circuit Court under Section 307 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 where the Criminal Assets Bureau is a Respondent;
- Tax Appeals under the Taxes Acts where the Criminal Assets Bureau or its Chief Bureau Officer or any member of the Criminal Assets Bureau is the Respondent and/or the Defendant;
- Applications made by the Director of Public Prosecutions under Section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1994.

The Scheme is demand led and expenditure in 2014 was some €327,000 which is down 14% on the 2013 figure and down 70% on the 2011 figure. The Board authorised payments in respect of 20 cases in 2014, which is one more than the 2013 figure of 19 cases authorised by the Department, with the average cost per claim in 2014 being some €13,600. Each of the 20 claims authorised for payment included a number of separate claims and individual payments to the solicitors, barristers, forensic accountants, expert witnesses etc. who represented or provided services to the legally aided person.

Table 27: Legal Aid Board/Criminal Assets Bureau Ad-hoc Legal Aid Scheme

	Criminal Assets Bureau Legal Aid Scheme – General Statistics 2014	Total*
1	No. of live cases taken over from the Department on 1/01/2014	14
2	Number of new claims received by Board from solicitors in 2014	19
3	Number of claims received back after consultation with CAB	16
4	Number of claims received back after consultation with DPP	4
5	Overall number of claims awaiting a response from CAB at 31/12/2014	5
6	Overall number of claims awaiting a response from DPP at 31/12/2014	1
7	Number of claims returned to solicitors under query during 2014	6
8	Number of claims authorised by Board for payment in 2014	20
9	Number of claims authorised for payment in 2013	19
10	Highest cost of a CAB claim in 2014	38446
11	Highest cost of a DPP claim in 2014	3115
12	Average cost per authorised claim in 2014	€13,620
13	Total value of claims authorised for the Scheme in 2014	€272,381*

*pre-tax

Table 28: Criminal Assets Bureau Legal Aid Scheme – Historic Annual Expenditure

Year	Total Expenditure * (post tax)
2010	€257,000
2011	€1,100,000
2012	€700,000
2013	€382,000
2014	€327,000

Supporting Service Delivery

By virtue of its business model, the Legal Aid Board relies on a central support structure to facilitate and manage the delivery of services through its law centre network and other means. This central support structure is based in the Board's Head Office in Cahirciveen and a support office in Dublin.

Legal Services Support / Civil Legal Aid

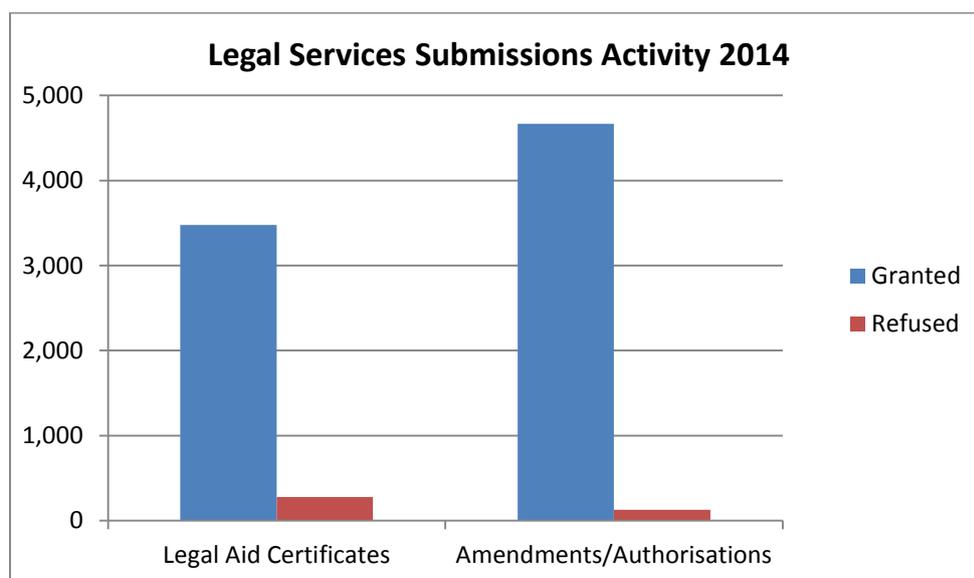
The grant or refusal of civil legal aid certificates is governed by the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995, and associated Regulations. The Board's operating model allows local law centres to grant civil legal aid certificates for most family-law District Court cases, which tend to be less complex and less expensive cases. Whilst many of these cases are dealt with directly by the relevant law centre, the majority are allocated to private practitioners on the Board's District Court panel.

For cases which require representation in the Circuit or Higher Courts, the decision-making function rests with the Board's Legal Services Section, which is based in Cahirciveen. The decision to grant or refuse legal aid is made on foot of a submission from the relevant law centre solicitor, which sets out the relevant facts and seeks to apply the law to those facts. The authority for case-related expenditure, such as briefing barrister or procuring expert reports, also rests with Legal Services. This is a central part of the cost-control and governance role of the section. The decision making role carried out by Legal Services is aimed at ensuring that the limited resources available to the Board are directed at the most appropriate cases, as required by the legislation.

In 2014, there were 3,478 certificates granted by Legal Services on foot of submissions made by law centres on behalf of applicants, an increase of 12% on the previous year. The unit also granted 3,976 amendments to legal aid certificates in the year also an increase of 12% on the previous year. These amendments are effectively authorisations for additional services on a certificate, such as a barrister or a medical report. There were 692 authorisations given on cases prior to a decision on whether a legal aid certificate should be granted; these were primarily counsel opinions to help determine the merits of certain cases and whether a legal aid certificate should be granted or not.

There were 280 formal refusals of legal aid on the merits criteria in 2014, with a further 98 refusals of amendments and other authorisations. Applicants who are refused have the right of appeal and the section on the Appeal Committee above sets out the position with regard to the number of appeals heard.

Chart 9: Legal Services Submissions Activity 2014



Legal Services also administers the Board's Private Practitioner schemes. In the case of the District Court scheme, this involves processing payment of the claims received on foot of certificates issued as well as dealing with queries and requests for additional services from the solicitors on the panel. There were 5,241 District Court certificates issued under the scheme in 2014.

This unit is also the main contact point for queries from the public and other stakeholders, such as private practitioners, whether via telephone or email.

Civil Legal Aid (Operations)

This Unit is responsible for the operational delivery of legal services through the law centre network. A significant focus in 2014 was to continue the engagement with the law centres and, in particular to continue to embed the IT based case management system that was rolled out across the organisation in 2012. Engagement with the law centres also focussed on rolling out and improving on a 'triage' type approach as a response to the waiting times for services that unfortunately are being experienced by many applicants. The 'triage' approach aims to ensure that an applicant is seen by a solicitor within a relatively short period of time in order that they can obtain early legal advice. The Unit also commenced the process of improving the synergies between the provision of legal services and the provision of mediation services to persons experiencing family problems with a view to giving clients experiencing difficulties of this nature more informed options of how the difficulties might be resolved.

Human Resources

Managing the deployment of the Board's workforce against a backdrop of the ongoing impact of the moratorium on public service recruitment and increased demand for services, continued to be a key challenge for the Board during 2014. A number of exemptions to the moratorium on recruitment were granted to the Board during the year mainly to fill vacancies in front-line service areas. In addition, the Board obtained sanction to put the integrated mediation initiative that operates out of Dolphin House in Dublin, on a permanent footing and to replace Head Office staff in Cahirciveen who transferred to Killarney to work on the Financial Management Shared Services Project located there.

In this regard, a number of public competitions were run by the Board during 2014 to fill such positions and to establish panels from which further vacancies which might arise can be filled.

The Board's outgoing CEO, Dr. Moling Ryan retired in December, 2014. Following a competition run by the Public Appointments Service, Mr. John McDaid, who had previously served in a number of roles in the Board, including most recently as Director of Civil Legal Aid, was appointed as the new CEO in December, 2014.

The Board has also continued to focus on the active management of absenteeism, and as a result, the Board's lost-time rate remains at 3.8% which is below the average for the Civil Service.

The Board continued to support the National Intern Strategy (JobBridge) during 2014 by offering work placement opportunities of up to nine months duration to unemployed solicitors and administrative/paralegal staff in receipt of Job-Seekers allowance. While the numbers expressing an interest in this scheme appear to have diminished, it has been beneficial to both the Organisation and to the participants, some of whom have been successful in getting paid contracts of employment on completion of the Internships. During 2014 the Board engaged 3 solicitor and 17 administrative interns as part of the programme.

One of the Board's objectives was to change the status of Solicitors employed by the Board from that of public servants to civil servants. This was achieved with effect from 1st June, 2014 and, as a result, the cost of future pension liabilities for solicitors will be met from the central vote for civil service pensions rather than directly from the Board's own resources.

Protected Disclosures Act, 2014

The Board also developed a new Policy on Protected Disclosure Reporting in the Workplace to comply with the provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act, 2014.

The Policy was in draft form at the end of 2014 and the draft sets out the principles underpinning the development and maintenance of an ethical culture in the organisation and the operational details of how protected disclosures might be made by workers in the Board. Training for relevant staff in this area of governance is being arranged.

Learning and Development

All training actions undertaken in 2014 were directed by the Learning and Development Strategy, which covered the period 2012 - 2014. This Strategy committed the Learning and Development Unit to fostering a learning culture in the organisation that responds to developing organisational needs while being fully aware of increasingly demanding financial restrictions.

Training Delivered

Learning and Development Unit organised/facilitated a total of 874 training days in 2014, an increase on the corresponding figure for 2013. Training provided was more than sufficient to meet targeted organisational learning and development priorities, including Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements for the Board's solicitors and mediators.

Specific Training Interventions

The Board facilitated training in a number of specific areas of interest to legal and mediation staff in 2014, including but not limited to insolvency and bankruptcy, customer service, mental health, subsidiary protection and parental alienation.

The Board supported 45 applications from staff to pursue a course of education outside of working hours in 2014, a significant increase on recent years.

Family Law Conference

The Board hosted a conference in June 2014 in Dublin. The theme of the conference was 'Civil Legal Aid in a Rapidly Changing World'. The conference was addressed by a number of high profile speakers on various aspects of civil law in Ireland and abroad and featured, inter alia presentations on "Legal Provision in the Netherlands" and "The Canadian Experience of Civil Legal Aid Reform" from Mr. Herman Schilperoort and Dr. Ab Currie respectively.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

A key focus of the ICT unit of the Board during 2014 was on refining the infrastructure changes applied in 2013. The infrastructure in the Board had reached end of life and required enhancement to address and ensure the stability of the systems. Supporting the legal case management system was also a priority.

The Board developed a remote access solution in 2005 which allows staff to work outside the office. Technology has advanced in the interim and therefore work on a new upgraded system was undertaken in 2014. This is a secure process ensuring full security of data. In 2014, a new remote access pilot project was undertaken, using multiple devices.

A new database was developed in 2014 for the ad hoc criminal legal aid schemes which the Board administers.

Organisational Support

Organisation Unit manages the provision of goods and services, including maintenance, to each of the 50 properties occupied by the Board. Whilst the Unit's primary objective is to ensure that each location is fit for purpose for the delivery of services, it has placed a particular emphasis in recent years on achieving this in the most cost-effective manner possible. The Unit follows the policies of the Office of Public Procurement closely and continues to obtain value for money when tendering for goods and services.

Total operating costs have increased in 2014 over 2013. Fit-out, refurbishment and maintenance costs were higher due to the moving of the Kilkenny and Wicklow law centres. Organisation Unit also saw an increase in postage prices due to a national increase.

The Board's portfolio of properties is maintained by the Organisation Unit, based in Cahirciveen. Two significant projects were undertaken in 2014, the moving of Wicklow Law Centre and Kilkenny Law Centre to new premises. This included a full fit-out of the new premises and moving of the office.

Health & Safety

The Safety Statement was reviewed and updated in 2014 and distributed to all law centres and offices.

32 staff members received Health & Safety training over 46 days in 2014. This included first aid, first aid refresher, fire warden and safety representative training.

There were seven incidents recorded by Organisation Unit in 2014. There were no serious incidents and none were reportable to the HSA.

Official Languages Scheme

The revised second Scheme was re-submitted to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in January 2014, taking account of changes in the Board since the original submission in 2011 and including suggested amendments from the Department received in late 2013. Communications took place between the Board and the Department to finalise the Scheme throughout the first half of 2014. Final approval was received in August 2014 and a commencement date of 11th August 2014 was notified. The Scheme was placed on the Board's website and the implementation plan for the Scheme was updated.

Equality and Disability

The Legal Aid Board remains committed to providing equal access to its services to all people, regardless of their circumstances or abilities, and continues to ensure that the provisions of the Disability Act 2005 and equality legislation are fully met. This is achieved by way of its Equality and Disability Strategy. Continued progress was made in 2014 in improving the accessibility of our services, including the Board's website, built environment, accessible information formats and procurement policy. The Board's Disability Liaison Officer and Access Officer play a key role in ensuring that the organisation meets its statutory responsibilities to provide accessible services.

Financial Management

The Board's Finance Unit is responsible for the financial management of the organisation. During 2014, the Unit continued to support the work of the Board through maintenance of effective accounting systems. Regular financial reports, together with periodic expenditure analysis reports were provided to Management, the Finance Committee and the Board to assist in the effective management of the Board's budget.

The Board's payroll and travel and subsistence functions transferred to the Payroll Shared Services in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in mid 2014.

The Unit facilitated the annual audit carried out on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Internal Audit

In 2014, the Board's internal audit function continued to be provided on a part-time basis by two staff members. Their work focused mainly on carrying out audits at law centre level, which were expanded in 2014 to consider certain aspects of client file management following a recommendation by the Audit and Risk Management Committee. Audits on the following law centres were presented to the Committee during the year: Athlone, Cavan, Cork North, Cork South, Dundalk, Ennis, Galway, Gardiner St., Nenagh, Sligo, Tallaght and Wexford.

Finance

The Board's financial statements for 2014 are shown at Appendix 1.

Income

The following are some comments on the sources of the Board's income.

(a) Grant-in-aid

As in previous years, most of the Board's income consists of a grant-in-aid received from the Department of Justice and Equality. Funding provided by the Government in 2014 was €32.574 million, as compared with €33.759 million in 2013.

(b) Contributions

Persons who are provided with legal services pay a contribution related to their income and, in some cases, their capital resources. The minimum contribution for legal advice was increased to €30 in September 2013 from €10 and the minimum contribution for representation in court was increased to €130 from €50. This minimum contribution can be waived in cases of hardship. Contributions received in 2014 (€1,292,007) were 48% higher than in 2013 (€875,482).

(c) Recovery of costs

The Board may recover the cost of providing legal services from:

- i. the other party to a dispute, either as a result of a court order or as part of an agreement to settle a dispute, or
- ii. from the legally aided person out of monies/property received by the person as a result of the provision of legal services.

The amount of costs recovered can vary significantly from year to year, especially if a legally aided person obtains an award for costs in a case in which the other party is in a position to meet the costs. This does not generally arise in family law cases, which form the bulk of the Board's caseload. Costs recovered in 2013 (€940,094) were 37% higher than in 2012 (€685,873).

Expenditure

The following are comments on the major items of expenditure shown in the 2014 financial statements:

1) Salaries

Salary and related costs decreased by €115,599 (1%) in 2014. This was mainly due to the impact of the Haddington Road agreement.

2) Accommodation and establishment costs

Expenditure in this area has decreased by €68,965 (2%) in 2014. This was largely down to efficiencies achieved with the transfer of the Family Mediation Service property leases to the Board.

3) Legal fees and expenses

There are a number of differing elements covered in this heading - see Note 9 to the accounts - and comment is provided on each of the various headings comprising the total as follows:

(i) Counsel fees

Expenditure on counsel fees decreased by €174,371 (4%) when compared with 2013.

The accrual for counsel fees, where work has been undertaken but not yet presented for payment at December 31st 2014, stands at €4.326 million, 1% lower than at the end of 2013.

The following table shows the trend in expenditure on counsel fees in respect of legal aid and advice over the past seven years.

Table 29 – Counsel Fees

Year	Counsel Fees
2007	€4,903,000
2008	€3,986,500
2009	€5,125,472
2010	€4,793,475
2011	€4,889,622
2012	€5,032,263
2013	€4,493,286
2014	€4,318,914

(ii) Legal fees (Expert witnesses etc.)

These case-related expenses are the additional expenses incurred by the Board, over and above counsel fees, in providing a civil legal aid and advice service to members of the public. The expenditure amount under this heading is derived from the requirements of the cases handled by the Board in any particular year.

There was an increase in expenditure of 8% from 2013 to 2014.

(iii) Private practitioner scheme

Expenditure on the private practitioner scheme was €2.847 million in 2014, which was 13% lower than the 2013 outturn

At December 31st 2014, the accrual for private practitioner fees, where work has been incurred but not yet presented for payment, stood at €3.508 million. The accrual for 2013 was €3.01 million.

(iv) Professional Mediation Fees

In 2014, €516,213 was paid to mediators for work carried out on behalf of the Family Mediation Service. This was an increase of 2% on the 2013 figure of €507,204.

(v) Other professional fees

Costs under this heading relate to the engagement by the Board of professionals to provide independent legal advice and other professional services to the Board. Expenditure in 2014 was 15% higher than in 2013.

(vi) Other expenses

This category saw a 9% decrease in 2014 compared to 2013.

4) General administration

Costs under this heading were 9% higher in 2014 at €1.946 million.

The following graph shows a breakdown of expenditure by the Board over the last five years.

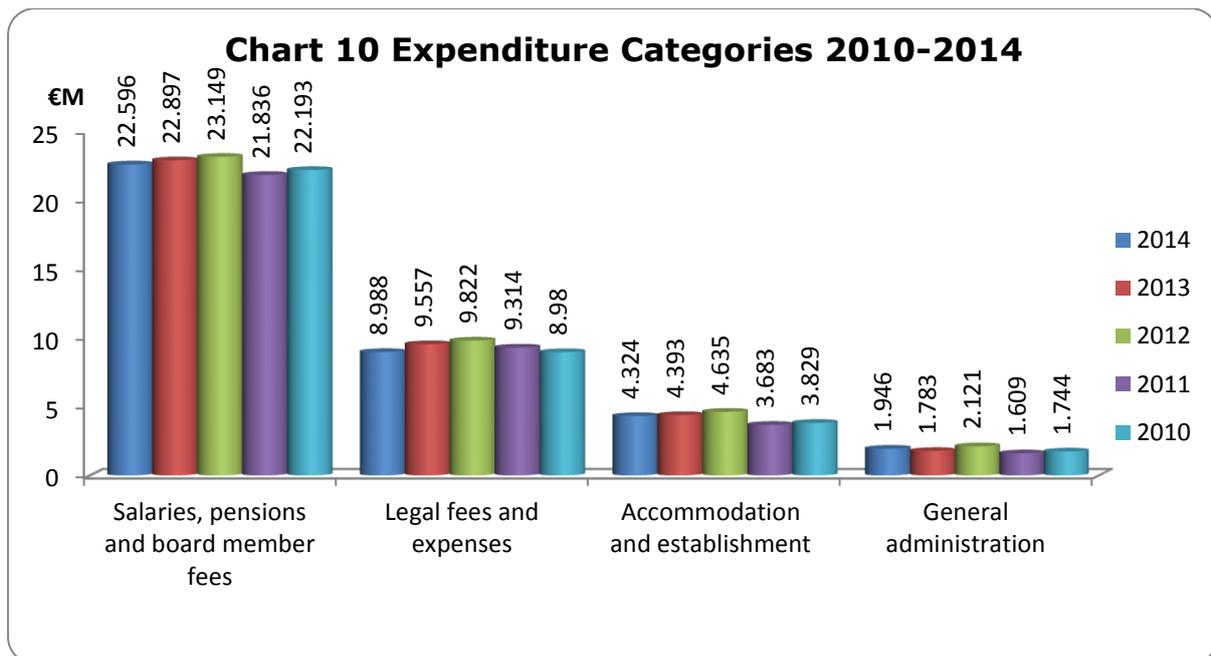
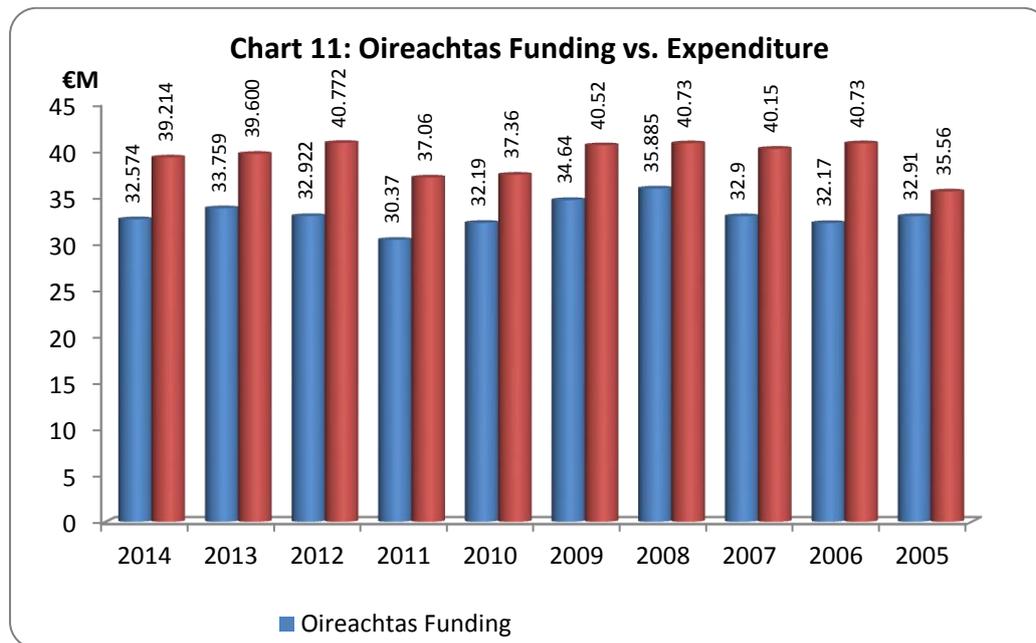


Chart 11 below shows the relationship between Oireachtas funding and actual expenditure over the last ten years.



Cash at bank and on hand

The Balance Sheet shows that the Board had €3.4 million on hand at the end of 2014. This included €1.120 million held on behalf of clients. It can be seen from Note 14 to the accounts that the throughput of client funds in 2014 was €4.53 million. This arises from cases where, as a result of legal advice or representation in court, clients received monies either from the other party or from the disposal of property. All such monies are initially lodged to the Legal Aid Client Fund Account before being returned to clients less, in some cases, an amount in respect of costs incurred by the Board in providing legal services. The cash at bank figure, apart from client funds, is similar to the level of expenditure incurred by the Board each month and is considered to be a reasonable level of funding to have on hand at any one time.

Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997

Section 4 of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997 requires the Board to pay for the supply of goods or services by the *prescribed payment date*. This date is currently 30 days after the receipt of an invoice, or a lesser period as may be specified in a written contract. If the Board fails to make payment by the prescribed payment date, interest is payable to the supplier. Procedures ensure that the Board complies in all material respects with the requirements of the Act. The total amount of late payment interest paid to suppliers of goods and services during 2014 amounted to €0.

APPENDIX 1

Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2014

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Statement of Board Responsibilities

Section 20 of the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995 requires the Board to keep, in such form as may be approved by the Minister for Justice and Equality, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, all proper and usual accounts of any moneys received or expended by it.

In preparing those Financial Statements, the Board is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate
- to presume that the Fund will continue in operation; and
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

The Board is responsible for keeping proper books of account which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Legal Aid Board and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 20 of the Act. The Board is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Legal Aid Board and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



Chairperson

Date: 24th July 2015

Muriel Walls



Board Member

Date: 24th July 2015

David Garvey

Statement on Internal Financial Control 2014

1. On behalf of the Board of the Legal Aid Board, I acknowledge that the Board is responsible for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated for the organisation.
2. Any such system can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material error. In considering the effectiveness of internal financial controls the Board has regard, among other things, to the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.
3. The key procedures that have been put in place by the Board, designed to provide effective internal financial control, include
 - **Control Environment:** the management and executive functions of the Board are delegated to the Chief Executive and senior management of the organisation by resolutions of the statutory Board, which monitors and reviews the work of senior management. The Chief Executive reports to the Board at its monthly meetings and the Chief Executive and senior management also report to it through its various committees. A Corporate Governance Manual was developed in 2006 to provide a clear and comprehensive summary of the principal aspects of corporate governance for the Board and senior management. Actions have been taken to ensure compliance with the revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, published in June 2009. These actions included the amending of the Board's own Corporate Governance Manual to take account of the 2009 Code of Practice and the revised Corporate Governance Manual was formally approved by the former Board at its meeting in November 2009. The Board's manual has been updated on two occasions since 2009, in December 2011 and 2013. A revised Code of Business Conduct for Board Members was also approved by the former Board in October 2009. As required under the 2009 Code of Practice, the Board developed and implemented a Travel Policy during 2009 which sets out how the Board complies with the current Department of Finance regulations and guidelines on travel and subsistence. A financial fraud prevention policy for the Board was approved and implemented during 2008 which includes, inter alia, procedures whereby employees of the Board may in confidence, raise concerns about possible irregularities in financial reporting and other matters and ensure that such matters are followed up in a meaningful way. A Corporate Procurement Policy was finalised in September 2010 and forwarded to the Finance and Audit and Risk Management Committees for information prior to implementation. The current Board was appointed in December 2011 and was briefed on Board roles and responsibilities.

- Budget Information Systems:** the Board has a comprehensive budgeting system that includes approval by the statutory Board of annual budgets and monitoring of monthly financial reports. Budgets are used to plan, authorise, monitor and control the way the funding of the Board is determined, allocated and spent. The arrangements for budgetary control include the provision of regular, relevant and timely financial information to monitor income and expenditure in all areas and the taking of corrective action where it is considered necessary. The Finance Committee is a committee of the Board which considers the Board's finances in detail and reports to the Board on the financial affairs and policies of the Board. This includes the review of budgets and financial reports, the recommendation of approval of the Board's annual accounts to the Board and detailed consideration of financial matters in order to make appropriate recommendations to the Board and to advise management. Decisions are taken either by the Board or by management, as appropriate, having regard to the recommendations and advice of the Committee. The Finance Committee met on six occasions during 2014 and, as part of its functions, examined in detail the recovery of costs on the income side, and payments to barristers on the expenditure side. Over the past three years, nine key areas of income and expenditure have been examined by the Committee. During 2014, the Committee was also briefed on the use of private practitioners by the Board. The issue of the reclassification of the Board's funding from Grant-in-Aid to Grant status was also considered by the Committee. During 2014, in addition to the monthly financial reports, the Committee also considered a mid year review of finances.
- Risk Management:** the Board has adopted and implemented a clearly defined Risk Management policy and maintains a formal Risk Register that documents business risks and associated mitigations, controls and actions for all aspects of the Board's activities through the application of risk analysis techniques to its business objectives. Risk analysis principles have been systematically applied to the objectives of all Business Plans for the Board and risk management forms an integral part of the Business Planning process. One of the functions of the Audit and Risk Management Committee of the Board is to provide an independent opinion on the adequacy of the Board's risk management arrangements. In February 2009, the former Committee agreed to a change in its procedures and terms of reference to reflect the increasing importance of and focus on managing corporate risk. As a result of this change, the Committee was re-titled the Audit and Risk Management Committee (previously Audit Committee). An external member to the Board was reappointed to the new Committee in January 2012. In March 2010, a formal risk materialisation reporting system on any potential and real risks that materialised or near miss occurrences was implemented. The report has been modelled on the Board's Corporate Risk Register and is updated in conjunction with the risk register on a twice yearly basis. The Board's risk

register was revised in January 2013 to reflect each individual area of the Board and the particular risks associated with each area to ensure that all risks are captured and to maximise a risk focused approach. Both the risk register and the risk materialisation reports were presented to the Committee in March and September 2014. The former Committee adopted recommendations arising from the Board's review of the internal audit process in October 2010. As part of this review, Management carried out an examination of the capacity and role of the Board's internal audit function and brought forward proposals on this issue to the former Committee. The review identified, inter alia, that the risk register should be consulted and the highest areas of risk should be identified in the context of determining the key areas for examination by the internal audit function. The current Committee agreed proposals which provided for a greater role for the internal audit function in reviewing client files. In March 2013, the scope of the internal audits on law centres was expanded to include an element of file review assurance as recommended by the Committee. The Board has developed two specific risk monitoring reports on the legal case management system to assist it in monitoring and reporting on risk and these reports were presented to the Committee. During 2014, the Committee was briefed on the update on risk management in law centres, including, the risk management systems in law centres; how cases are categorised as regards risk; and, the file review process. Remote auditing of client files will be progressed during 2015 using the legal case management system. The Committee met on five occasions in 2014.

- **Procedures:** the Board has clearly defined financial instructions and procedures, including delegated spending and authorisation limits and segregation of duties, approved by resolution of the statutory Board. In addition, the statutory Board has reserved approval of expenditure on contracts with value in excess of €65,000, while the Finance Committee of the statutory Board is notified of all contracts with value in excess of €10,000 and less than €65,000. During 2014, the internal audit function of the Board carried out audits of accounts and procedures in ten of the Board's law centres. The Audit and Risk Management Committee expanded the role of the Internal Audit function in 2012 to include an examination of other relevant matters in law centres in addition to assessing the adequacy of internal financial controls.

- Monitoring of Internal Control:** the Board has an Internal Audit function whose annual audit programme is approved by the Audit and Risk Management Committee of the statutory Board and one of whose functions is to review all aspects of internal financial controls. The Audit and Risk Management Committee reviews the work and recommendations of the Internal Audit function and monitors the action taken by management to resolve any issues that have been identified. The former Committee adopted a Charter for the Internal Audit function of the Board early in 2011. The Charter sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Internal Audit function, including the planning, reporting and accountability elements of its operation. The Committee also reviews all significant reports received by the Board from the external auditors, including management's responses to these and makes recommendations on the issues raised. Correspondence with the Comptroller and Auditor General, including the audit Management Letter, and any issues raised, are brought to the attention of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the statutory Board, which ensures that issues raised are acted upon. The Committee considered the recommendations contained in the Review of Risk Management and the Review of Outsourced Legal Services carried out by the Internal Audit Unit of the Department of Justice and Equality and reported in August 2014 and noted the Board's responses to the issues raised. The Audit and Risk Management Committee is required to produce a formal report within three months of the end of the calendar year, outlining its activities, together with such advice and recommendations as it deems appropriate. The Committee report was completed in February 2015 and was presented to the Board in conjunction with the Management response at its meeting on 25th March 2015.
- At its meeting in July 2014 the Board was informed of an audit carried out by the Revenue Commissioners at the Board's Head Office at which the Revenue auditor had raised a concern about the Board's contract for service mediators and their status. The Board was advised of legal advice received to the effect that the personnel concerned were contractors rather than employees and that it was the intention to contest any claim that the personnel in question were employees for tax purposes. The Board was informed of the progress of the matter and, at its meeting in January 2015, of the Revenue auditor's finding that the personnel in question were employees for tax purposes. The Board sought further legal advice and after very careful consideration of that advice, determined that it should accept the Revenue auditor's finding. The Board's executive is currently engaging with the Revenue Commissioners to seek to resolve the matter. The personnel in question have been given temporary employment contracts. There are a handful of outstanding 'fee per case' contract arrangements in respect of which the executive is engaged with the Revenue Commissioners to resolve. However, no new 'fee per case' referrals are being made or new contracts for

services are being put in place at the moment. Upon resolution of the financial issues, it is the executive's intention to engage with the Revenue Commissioners with a view to establishing a satisfactory arrangement that will enable contract for service mediators to be retained to assist with service delivery. The Board has considered the basis on which private solicitors on the Board's panels provide services to legally aided clients. The Board has noted the significantly different legislative basis and practical arrangements in place for the retention of those solicitors. It is the intention that the Board's Finance Committee will review any ongoing 'contract for service' arrangements that are in place to ensure appropriate controls are in place for the purpose of ensuring tax compliance.

4. I confirm that during the year ended 31 December 2014, the Board, through its Finance Committee and Audit and Risk Management Committee, and through the Board itself, continued to monitor and review the effectiveness of the Board's system of internal financial controls.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Muriel Walls", is written above a horizontal line.

Chairperson

Date: 24th July 2015

Muriel Walls



Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

Legal Aid Board

I have audited the financial statements of the Legal Aid Board for the year ended 31 December 2014 under the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995. The financial statements, which have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein, comprise the statement of accounting policies, the income and expenditure account, the statement of total recognised gains and losses, the balance sheet, the cash flow statement and the related notes. The financial statements have been prepared in the form prescribed under Section 20 of the Act, and in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in Ireland.

Responsibilities of the Board

The Board is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements, for ensuring that they give a true and fair view of the state of the Legal Aid Board's affairs and of its income and expenditure, and for ensuring the regularity of transactions.

Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements and report on them in accordance with applicable law.

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation.

My audit is carried out in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and in compliance with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of

- whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Board's circumstances, and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed
- the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made in the preparation of the financial statements, and
- the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I also seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit.

In addition, I read the Board's annual report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies, I consider the implications for my report.

Opinion on the financial statements

In my opinion, the financial statements, which have been properly prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in Ireland, give a true and fair view of the state of the Legal Aid Board's affairs at 31 December 2014 and of its income and expenditure for 2014.

In my opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the Board. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

Matters on which I report by exception

I report by exception if

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- my audit noted any material instance where money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where the transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them, or
- the information given in the Board's annual report is not consistent with the related financial statements, or
- the statement on internal financial control does not reflect the Board's compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, or
- I find there are other material matters relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

Revenue Assessment

Note 18 to the financial statements discloses the circumstance whereby the Board has made a provision of €700,000 in respect of an assessment raised by the Revenue Commissioners for the incorrect tax treatment of mediators engaged by the Legal Aid Board.

Seamus McCarthy

Comptroller and Auditor General

29 July 2015

Statement of Accounting Policies

General

The Legal Aid Fund, which is provided for under Section 19 of the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995, is managed by a Legal Aid Board appointed by the Minister for Justice and Equality. The Fund consists of all the financial resources of the Board. In 2014, the Board operated out of 50 premises throughout the country.

Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared under the accruals method of accounting, except as indicated below, and in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles under the historical cost convention. Financial Reporting Standards recommended by the recognised accountancy bodies are adopted, as they become operative.

Going Concern

The Legal Aid Board is a statutory body established under the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995. The financing of the Board's activities is predominantly met by grant-in-aid and exchequer funding from the Department of Justice and Equality.

During the financial year the Board carried out a comprehensive exercise for the purpose of assessing the Board's accrued liabilities figure, in particular, Counsel Fees and the Private Practitioner service.

The balance sheet at 31st December 2014 shows an excess of liabilities over assets of €5,253,087. This deficit arises from the timing difference between receipt of funding to pay liabilities for legal services when they are due for payment and the provision for these liabilities that is recognised in these accounts under the accruals method of accounting.

A letter of ongoing support has been received from the Acting Secretary General of the Department of Justice and Equality confirming that the Board's activities will be funded into the future.

The Board takes the view that the going concern accounting convention applies to the accounts which represent the operations of the Board as long as the provisions of the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 remain in existence.

The Board knows of no review of its operations or intention to suspend its activities or merge it with other organisations. It has therefore been considered appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of these financial statements.

State grants

Income under this heading is accounted for on a cash receipts basis.

Contributions from aided persons

Due to the nature of this income, i.e. contributions from persons of modest means, it is considered prudent to account for such income on a cash receipts basis. The estimated amount collectable at 31 December, 2014 was approximately €21,000. There were no bad debts written off in 2014.

Costs Recovered

The Board may recover the costs of providing legal services from:

- (a) the other party to a dispute, either as a result of a court order or as part of an agreement to settle a dispute, or
- (b) from the legally aided person, out of moneys/property received by the person as a result of the provision of legal services. The costs are accounted for on a cash receipts basis.

Fixed assets and depreciation

Fixed assets are shown on the Balance Sheet at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation, which is calculated over the useful life of the assets using the straight line method, is charged at the following annual rates:-

Leases, office furniture & equipment, and premises fit out computer equipment

A half year's depreciation is charged in the year of purchase and in the year of disposal.

Clients' Funds

These funds represent the gross amounts plus interest accrued, which were held by the Board at 31 December 2014, on foot of awards or settlements made in favour of clients represented by the Board. The Board may recover therefrom the total cost of providing such legal services and the balance is paid to the persons represented.

Capital Account

The Capital Account represents the unamortised amount of income used to purchase fixed assets.

Pensions

The Legal Aid Board operates a defined benefit pension scheme, which is funded annually on a pay as you go basis from monies available to it, including monies provided by the Department of Justice and Equality and from contributions deducted from solicitors' salaries.

Pension costs reflect pension benefits earned by solicitor staff in the period and are shown net of staff pension contributions which are retained by the Legal Aid Board. An amount corresponding to the pension charge is recognised as income to the extent that it is recoverable, and offset by grants received in the year to discharge pension payments.

Actuarial gains or losses arising on scheme liabilities are reflected in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses and a corresponding adjustment is recognised in the amount recoverable from the Department of Justice and Equality. Pension liabilities represent the present value of future pension payments earned by solicitor staff to date. Deferred pension funding represents the corresponding asset to be recovered in future periods from the Department of Justice and Equality.

The Minister for Justice and Equality signed an order making all solicitors in the Board civil servants with effect from 1 June 2014 so all future pension liabilities for this group passed to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's central Vote for Superannuation. The only liability left with the Board is for solicitor pensioners who retired prior to 1 June 2014 and their dependents. The Department of Justice and Equality have been asked to identify a legislative vehicle to facilitate the transfer of this liability to the Superannuation Vote for civil service pensions. In the interim, the Board's still requires an FRS17 statement to cover the above group and this is reflected in the statement for the 2014 accounts.

Provisions

A provision is recognised when an obligation (whether legal or constructive) arises as a result of a past event, and when it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required to settle the obligation and that it can be reliably estimated.

The Legal Aid Board estimates the value of unbilled live cases each year to arrive at the amounts disclosed within the accounts as a provision. The amount is an estimate of the expenditure required to settle any obligation at the balance sheet date.

In estimating the provision, the Board has adopted prudent measurement techniques based on the latest data available. Improved data capture methods have been utilised in the Board's estimate for the current year.

No income is anticipated for cases that may recover costs.

Administration of certain Legal Aid Schemes

The Board administers certain legal aid schemes on behalf of the Department of Justice and Equality, these being the Garda Station Legal Advice Ad-hoc scheme, the Attorney General Ad-hoc scheme and the Criminal Assets Bureau Ad-hoc scheme which was transferred to the Board with effect from 1 January 2014. The costs of administering these schemes continue to be met from the Department of Justice and Equality Subhead C.4. and C.5.

A Government decision in 2010 determined that the main criminal legal aid scheme should come under the administration of the Board. This requires a legislative change and publication of a Criminal Legal Aid Bill is awaited.

LEGAL AID FUND

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

for the year ended 31 December 2014

	Note	2014		2013	
		€	€	€	€
Income					
State funding	1	32,574,000		33,759,000	
Net deferred funding for pensions	2 c	3,541,774		3,185,230	
Contributions from aided persons		1,292,007		875,482	
Costs recovered		614,894		940,094	
Other income	3	267,854		390,049	
			38,290,529		39,149,855
Transfer from Capital Account	4		296,363		713,938
			38,586,892		39,863,793
Expenditure					
Salaries and related expenses	5	18,788,112		18,903,711	
Pension Costs	2 a	3,767,924		3,953,654	
Revenue Commissioners Tax Provision	18	700,000		-	
Fees to Board members		39,672		39,672	
Accommodation and establishment expenses	8	4,323,991		4,392,956	
Legal fees & expenses	9	8,988,151		9,557,462	
General administration	10	1,946,414		1,782,555	
Depreciation	11	643,264		953,284	
Audit fee		16,700		16,700	
			39,214,228		39,599,994
Surplus/Deficit for year			(627,336)		263,799
Opening balance as at 1 January			(5,219,755)		(5,483,554)
Closing balance as at 31 December			(5,847,091)		(5,219,755)

All income and expenditure for the year 31 December 2014 relates to continuing activities.

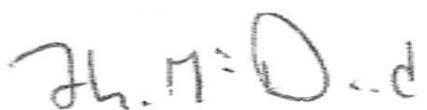
The Statement of Accounting Policies, together with Notes 1 to 19, form part of these financial statements.



Chairperson

Date: 24th July 2015

Muriel Walls



Chief Executive

Date: 24th July 2015

John McDaid

Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses

for the year ended 31 December 2014

	Note	2014 €	2013 €
Surplus / (Deficit) for year		(627,336)	263,799
Experience (losses) / gains on pension scheme liability	2 d	30,443,000	3,085,230
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of pension scheme liabilities		-	-
Actuarial (loss) / gain on Pension Liabilities	2 b	30,443,000	3,085,230
Adjustment to Deferred Pension Funding		(30,443,000)	(3,085,230)
Total Recognised Gains / Losses		(627,336)	263,799

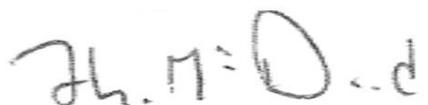
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Chairperson

Date: 24th July 2015

Muriel Walls



Chief Executive

Date: 24th July 2015

John McDaid

BALANCE SHEET

as at 31 December 2014

	Note	2014		2013	
		€	€	€	€
Fixed assets	11		594,004		890,367
Current assets					
Cash at bank and on hand			3,437,994		3,732,573
Debtors and prepayments	12		<u>1,008,238</u>		<u>610,470</u>
			4,446,232		4,343,043
Less current liabilities					
Creditors and accruals	13		9,166,732		8,541,647
Clients' funds	14		<u>1,126,591</u>		<u>1,021,151</u>
			10,293,323		9,562,798
Net current (liabilities)			<u>(5,847,091)</u>		<u>(5,219,755)</u>
Total assets less current Liabilities before Pension			(5,253,087)		(4,329,388)
Deferred pension funding	2 c		12,998,774		39,900,000
Pension liabilities	2 b		<u>(12,998,774)</u>		<u>(39,900,000)</u>
			-		-
Total assets			<u>(5,253,087)</u>		<u>(4,329,388)</u>
Represented by:					
Income and Expenditure Account			(5,847,091)		(5,219,755)
Capital Account	4		<u>594,004</u>		<u>890,367</u>
			<u>(5,253,087)</u>		<u>(4,329,388)</u>

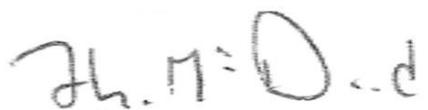
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Chairperson

Date: 24th July 2015

Muriel Walls



Chief Executive

Date: 24th July 2015

John McDaid

Cash Flow Statement

for the year ended 31 December 2014

	Note	2014 €	2013 €
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities	16	4,379	1,376,274
Returns on investment and servicing of finance			
Interest received		61,218	117,823
Interest paid on client settlements		(13,275)	(11,851)
Investing activities			
Sale of tangible assets		-	-
Purchase of tangible assets		(346,901)	(239,346)
Net cash inflow (outflow)		<u>(294,579)</u>	<u>1,242,900</u>
Increase (Decrease) in cash	17	<u>(294,579)</u>	<u>1,242,900</u>

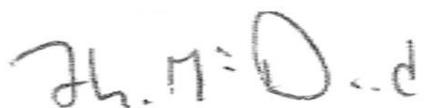
The Statement of Accounting Policies, together with Notes 1 to 19, form part of these financial statements.



Chairperson

Date: 24th July 2015

Muriel Walls



Chief Executive

Date: 24th July 2015

John McDaid

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2014

1 State funding

Subhead:	2014 €	2013 €
C.2 Grant-in-Aid	32,574,000	33,759,000

2 Pension Costs

Pension Costs are calculated for solicitor pensioners who retired prior to 1 June 2014 and their dependents. In accordance with section 11 of the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995 the Minister designated Board solicitors as civil servants in the service of the State with effect from 1 June 2014. As a result, all liabilities for solicitors serving on that date transferred to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Superannuation Vote.

(a) Analysis of total pension costs charged to Expenditure		
	2014 €	2013 €
Current service cost	2,000,000	2,200,000
Interest on Pension Scheme Liabilities	2,200,000	2,200,000
Employee Contributions	0	(446,346)
	<u>4,200,000</u>	<u>3,953,654</u>

(b) Movement in Net Pension Liability during the financial year		
	2014 €	2013 €
Net Pension Liability at 1 January	39,900,000	39,800,000
Current Service Cost	2,000,000	2,200,000
Interest Costs	2,200,000	2,200,000
Actuarial (Gain)/Loss	(30,443,000)	(3,085,230)
Pensions paid in the year	0	(1,214,770)
Net Pension Liability at 31 December	<u>13,657,000</u>	<u>39,900,000</u>

(c) Deferred Funding Asset for Pensions

The Legal Aid Board recognises these amounts as an asset corresponding to the unfunded deferred liability for pensions on the basis of the set of assumptions described above and a number of past events. These events include the statutory basis for the establishment of the superannuation scheme, and the policy and practice currently in place in relation to funding public service pensions including contributions by employees and the annual estimate process. While there is no formal agreement regarding these specific amounts with the Department of Justice and Equality, the Board has no evidence that this funding policy will not continue to meet such sums in accordance with current practice.

The Net Deferred Funding for Pensions recognised in the Income and Expenditure Account was as follows:

	2014 €	2013 €
	4,200,000	4,400,000
	(658,226)	(1,214,770)
	<u>3,541,774</u>	<u>3,185,230</u>

The deferred funding asset for pensions as at 31 December 2014 amounted to € 12.99 million (€39.9 million in 2013).

2 Pension Costs Continued

(d) History of defined benefit obligations

	2014 €	2013 €	2012 €
Defined Benefit obligations	12,998,774	39,900,000	39,800,000
Experience gains on Scheme Liabilities amount	30,443,000	3,085,230	1,529,305
Percentage of the present value of the scheme liabilities	234%	8%	4%

The cumulative actuarial gain recognised in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses amounts to € 37,388,683.

(e) General Description of the Scheme

The pension scheme is a defined benefit final salary pension arrangement with benefits and contributions defined by reference to current "model" public sector scheme regulations. The scheme provides a pension (eightieths per year of service), a gratuity or lump sum (three eightieth per year of service) and spouse's and children's pensions. Normal Retirement Age is a member's 65th birthday, and pre 2004 members have an entitlement to retire without actuarial reduction from age 60. Pensions in payment (and deferment) normally increase in line with general public sector salary inflation.

The valuation used for FRS 17 (Revised) disclosures has been based on a full actuarial valuation (Apr '15) by a qualified independent actuary taking account of the requirements of the FRS in order to assess the scheme liabilities at 31 December 2014.

The principal actuarial assumptions were as follows:

	2014	2013
Rate of increase in salaries	4.0%	4.0%
Rate of increase in pensions in payment	4.0%	4.0%
Discount Rate	5.5%	5.5%
Inflation Rate	2.0%	2.0%

The average future life expectancy according to the mortality tables used to determine the pension liabilities were as follows:

	2014	2013
Male aged 65	22	22
Female aged 65	25	25

3 Other income

	2014 €	2013 €
Interest received and receivable	19,447	86,706
Sundry receipts	248,407	303,343
	<u>267,854</u>	<u>390,049</u>

4 Capital Account

	€	€
Balance as at 1 January 2014		890,367
Transfer to Income and Expenditure Account		
- Income used to purchase fixed assets	346,901	
- Amount released on disposal of fixed assets	-	
- Income amortised in year in line with depreciation of assets	<u>(643,264)</u>	<u>(296,363)</u>
Balance as at 31 December 2014		<u>594,004</u>

5 Employee numbers and costs

The total staff complement as approved by the Minister at 31 December, 2014 was 376. The number of staff actually employed by the Board at 31 December, 2014 was 378 (2013 - 368) The average number of employees in the Board during the year was 372 (2013 - 365). Employee and related costs were as follows:

	2014 €	2013 €
Salaries	17,368,424	17,528,883
Cost of Secondment	55,946	55,945
Employer PRSI	<u>1,363,742</u>	<u>1,318,883</u>
	<u><u>18,788,112</u></u>	<u><u>18,903,711</u></u>

€938,070 was deducted from staff by way of pension related deductions and was paid over to the Department of Justice and Equality.

6 Chief Executive Officer Salary and Expenses

	2014 €	2013 €
CEO Salary	130,310	141,121
CEO Expenses	<u>3,944</u>	<u>3,531</u>
	<u><u>134,254</u></u>	<u><u>144,652</u></u>

The CEO received salary payments of € 130,310. No performance related scheme is in place for the CEO.

The CEO also received an amount of € 3,944 in respect of expenses.

The CEO is a member of an unfunded defined benefit public sector scheme and his pension entitlements do not extend beyond the standard entitlements in the public sector defined benefit superannuation scheme.

7 Board Members Fees and Expenses

	2014 €	2013 €
Board Members Fees	39,672	39,762
Board Members Expenses	<u>15,665</u>	<u>21,444</u>
	<u><u>55,337</u></u>	<u><u>61,206</u></u>

Board Members	Fees	Board Members	Fees
David Garvey	€ 7,695	Philip O'Leary	€ 7,695
Catherine Hayes	€ 7,695	Michelle O'Neill	€ 7,695
Micheal O'Connell	€ 7,695	Kieran Corcoran*	€ 1,197

* External member of audit committee

8 Accommodation and establishment expenses

	2014 €	2013 €
Rents	2,870,759	2,960,527
Cleaning	211,433	227,646
Lighting and heating	308,318	377,853
Maintenance - Premises	621,857	507,447
Maintenance - Equipment	311,624	319,483
	<u>4,323,991</u>	<u>4,392,956</u>

9 Legal fees and other expenses

	2014 €	2013 €
Counsel fees	4,318,914	4,493,285
Legal fees (incl. expert witness fees)	659,519	611,746
Private Practitioner Schemes (includes Subsidiary Protection)	2,846,993	3,279,423
Professional Mediation Fees	516,213	507,204
Other professional fees	190,364	165,768
Other expenses	456,148	500,036
	<u>8,988,151</u>	<u>9,557,462</u>

10 General administration

	2014 €	2013 €
Stationery and office expenses	310,541	300,820
Books and printing	126,785	98,943
Postage and telephone	922,669	853,086
Insurance	115,230	50,438
Travel and subsistence	471,189	479,268
	<u>1,946,414</u>	<u>1,782,555</u>

11 Fixed assets

	Leases	Office Furniture	Equipment & Computers	Premises Fit Out	Total
	€	€	€	€	€
Cost					
Balance as at 01/01/14	2,292,177	2,157,374	4,488,492	3,431,226	12,369,269
Acquisitions	-	8,727	265,883	72,291	346,901
Disposals	-	-	(44,745)	-	(44,745)
Balance as at 31/12/14	2,292,177	2,166,101	4,709,630	3,503,517	12,671,425
Depreciation of fixed assets					
Balance as at 01/01/14	2,292,177	1,952,679	3,829,793	3,404,253	11,478,902
Charge in year	-	136,850	485,184	21,230	643,264
Disposals	-	-	(44,745)	-	(44,745)
Balance as at 31/12/14	2,292,177	2,089,529	4,270,232	3,425,483	12,077,421
Net book value as at 31/12/14	-	76,572	439,398	78,034	594,004
Net book value as at 31/12/13	-	204,695	658,699	26,974	890,367

12 Debtors and prepayments

	2014 €	2013 €
Debtors - deposit interest	11,529	24,333
Prepayments		
- Rent	195,415	160,864
- Insurance	15,883	28,197
- Salaries	18,858	34,677
- Other	461,598	362,399
- Practising Certificates	304,955	-
	<u>1,008,238</u>	<u>610,470</u>

13 Creditors and accruals

	2014 €	2013 €
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Revenue Commissioners Tax Provision	700,000	-
Creditors & accruals	<u>8,466,732</u>	<u>8,541,647</u>
	<u>9,166,732</u>	<u>8,541,647</u>

The Legal Aid Board estimates the value of unbilled live cases each year to arrive at the amounts disclosed within the accounts as a provision. The amount is an estimate of the expenditure required to settle any obligation at the balance sheet date. In 2014, the amount provided for in relation to unbilled cases was €7,814,969 (2013 - €7,363,149)

In estimating the provision, the Board has adopted prudent measurement techniques based on the latest data available. Improved data capture methods have been utilised in the Board's estimate for the current year.

Please see Note 15 (b). No income is anticipated for cases that may recover costs.

An accrual for €700,000 has been included for a Revenue Commissioners Tax Provision, as per Note 18

14 Clients' funds

	2014 €	2013 €
Client funds held at 1 January (Gross)	1,021,151	766,079
Interest	<u>(13,932)</u>	<u>(15,543)</u>
Client funds held at 1 January (Net of Interest)	1,007,219	750,536
Add Awards/settlements received during 2014	4,625,779	4,832,799
Less Settlements paid out, including interest allowed and costs recovered	<u>(4,534,693)</u>	<u>(4,576,116)</u>
Client funds held at 31 December	1,098,305	1,007,219
Interest accruing on client funds held	28,286	13,932
Total due to clients	<u>1,126,591</u>	<u>1,021,151</u>

15 Commitments

(a) Commitments under operating leases

The Board occupies premises at Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry and Mount Street, Dublin and operates out of 48 other centres throughout the country. The Board is committed to pay rent of € 2,800,269 during 2015 in respect of leases expiring as follows:

	2014 €	2013 €
2015	914,003	244,306
2016-2019	500,467	1,055,935
2020 onwards	1,386,399	1,642,095

(b) Commitments in respect of Legal Fees

Commitments in respect of Legal Fees

Counsel Fees and Private Practitioner Schemes

	2014 €	2013 €
Open cases certified at 1 January	14,110,784	14,347,470
Additional fees certified	7,077,612	7,355,535
Payments	<u>(6,641,557)</u>	<u>(7,592,221)</u>
Provided for at 31 December	14,546,839	14,110,784
Outstanding commitments at 31 December	<u>(7,814,969)</u>	<u>(7,363,149)</u>
	6,731,870	6,747,635

At 31 December 2014, the Legal Aid Board had a number of ongoing cases where the matter of fees had not yet been settled. In accordance with its operating policy on these matters the Legal Aid Board makes partial provision against these fees based on a statistical model which recognises the average term to crystallise for such costs. This model is applied consistently across all cases handled. At 31 December 2014, the Legal Aid Board had provided for legal fees of € 7,814,969 and had outstanding commitments in the amount of € 6,731,870.

16 Reconciliation of surplus for year to cash from operating activities

	2014 €	2013 €
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	(627,336)	263,799
Adjustment for non-operating items		
Bank interest receivable	(19,447)	(86,706)
Movement on Capital Account	(296,363)	(713,938)
Adjustment for non-cash items		
Depreciation	643,264	953,284
(Increase) / Decrease in debtors	(410,572)	249,109
Increase / (Decrease) in creditors	714,833	710,725
	<u>4,379</u>	<u>1,376,274</u>

17 Movement of cash

	2014 €	2013 €
Balance at 1 January	3,732,573	2,489,673
Net cash inflow/outflow	(294,579)	1,242,900
Balance at 31 December	<u>3,437,994</u>	<u>3,732,573</u>

18 Revenue Commissioners Tax Provision

A revenue audit was conducted during 2014 on mediators that were contracted for service by the Legal aid Board.

In January 2015, Revenue raised assessments in relation to the contract mediators as they were of the view that the mediators should be treated as contracts of service for tax purposes and that they should have been subjected to PAYE/PRSI.

A provision of €700,000 has been made which is based on the Board's estimate of any liability that may arise.

19 Approval of Financial Statements

The Financial Statements were approved by the Board on June 25th 2015.

Appendix 2

Energy Usage 2014

Managing energy usage

The Board has a network of 50 offices throughout the country. The main source of energy is electricity, with gas heating in six offices and oil heating in the Cahirciveen head office.

Overview of energy usage in 2014

Total energy consumption for the Board in 2014 was 1938 MWh. In 2014 the Board consumed 1629 MWh of electricity across its network of offices. There was a total of 142 MWh of gas consumed. Oil Consumption in 2014 was 167 MWh. This was a reduction of 10% on the figure of 2153 MWh in 2013. An energy performance indicator (EnPI) is a way of measuring the Board's energy performance. An EnPI is calculated by dividing the total energy consumption by an activity metric which is a measure of the activity that an organisation undertakes. The activity metric the Board used was full time equivalent (FTE) employees which is a commonly used metric in the public sector. In 2014 the Board's EnPI was 11.223; this was 12.6% better than in 2013. The target EnPI for 2020 is 7.213.

Actions undertaken in 2014

In 2014 the Board undertook a number of initiatives to improve our energy performance, including:

- **Participation** of the Board's head office in Cahirciveen in the OPW *Optimising Power at Work* initiative. Head Office in Cahirciveen maintained the low consumption figures for electricity. This was due to actively controlling the use of central heating and the staff's continued effort to switch off lights and equipment when not in use and at weekends. The Board won a regional award in the OPW Optimising Power at Work Regional Awards 2014. The office was given a B3 BER rating for a second year which is an excellent rating as most buildings achieve a C or D rating,

Actions planned for 2015

The Board will continue to concentrate on controlling and reducing consumption in offices in 2015, as well as maintaining progress in offices where decreased consumption was recorded.

The Board will join a partnership with the SEAI to assist in achieving the Government's aim to improve public sector energy efficiency by 33% in 2020. This campaign will be rolled out to all staff reminding them to conserve energy and to turn off computers, lights etc. when not in use.

Appendix 3

List of Law Centres

Full Time Law Centres

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
<p>CAVAN</p> <p>Newcourt Shopping Centre, Church Street, Cavan</p> <p>Tel: (049) 433 1110 Fax: (049) 433 1304</p>	<p>Patricia O'Reilly</p>
<p>CLARE</p> <p>Unit 6A, Merchant's Square, Ennis, Co Clare</p> <p>Tel: (065) 682 1929 Fax: (065) 682 1939</p>	<p>Mary Cuffe</p>
<p>CORK</p> <p>North Quay House, Popes Quay, Cork</p> <p>Tel: (021) 455 1686 Fax: (021) 455 1690</p> <p>Fifth Floor, Irish Life Building, 1A South Mall, Cork</p> <p>Tel: (021) 427 5998 Fax: (021) 427 6927</p>	<p>Betty Dineen</p> <p>Deirdre Kissane</p>
<p>DONEGAL</p> <p>Unit B9, Letterkenny Town Centre, Justice Walsh Road, Letterkenny, Co Donegal</p> <p>Tel: (074) 912 6177 Fax: (074) 912 6086</p>	<p>Ray Finucane</p> <p>Dearbhla Deery, Sept 2014</p>
<p>DUBLIN</p> <p>45 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1</p> <p>Tel: (01) 874 5440 Fax: (01) 874 6896</p>	<p>Shane Dooley</p> <p>Anke Hartas, Oct 2014</p>
<p>1st Floor, Civic Centre, South Dublin County Council, Ninth Lock Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.</p> <p>Tel: (01) 457 6011 Fax: (01) 457 6007</p>	<p>Tom Nally</p>

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
Village Green, Tallaght, Dublin 24 Tel: (01) 451 1519 Fax: (01) 451 7989	Pauline Corcoran
44/49 Main Street, Finglas, Dublin 11 Tel: (01) 864 0314 Fax: (01) 864 0362	Anke Hartas Barbara Egan, Oct 2014
48/49 North Brunswick Street, Georges Lane, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 646 9700 Fax: (01) 646 9799	Gráinne Brophy
Unit 6-8, Blanchardstown Business Centre, Clonsilla Road, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 Tel: (01) 820 0455 Fax: (01) 820 0450	Joan Crawford
Medical Negligence Unit Montague Court, 7-11 Montague St Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 477 6208 Fax: (01) 477 6241	Margaret O'Shea-Grewcock
Personal Injuries Unit 48/49 North Brunswick Street, George's Lane, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 646 9740	Catherine Martin
Dolphin House office, 3rd Floor Dolphin House, East Essex Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 675 5566/(01) 675 5565 Fax: (01) 764 5116	Garrett Searson

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
<p>GALWAY</p> <p>9 St. Francis Street, Galway Tel: (091) 561650 Fax: (091) 563825</p> <p>Seville House, New Dock Street, Galway Tel: (091) 562480 Fax: (091) 562599</p>	<p>Mary Griffin Shane Dooley, Sept 2014</p> <p>Cormac Faherty</p>
<p>KERRY</p> <p>1 Day Place, Tralee, Co Kerry Tel: (066) 712 6900 Fax: (066) 712 3631</p>	<p>Carol Anne Coolican</p>
<p>KILDARE</p> <p>Canning Place, Newbridge, Co Kildare Tel: (045) 435777 Fax: (045) 435766</p>	<p>Edel Poole</p>
<p>KILKENNY</p> <p>Unit A, 1st Floor, Smithlands Centre, Loughboy, Kilkenny Tel: (056) 776 1611 Fax: (056) 776 1562</p>	<p>Niall Murphy</p>
<p>LAOIS</p> <p>Unit 6A, Bridge Street, Portlaoise, Co Laois Tel: (057) 866 1366 Fax: (057) 866 1362</p>	<p>Katie Gilhooly</p>
<p>LIMERICK</p> <p>Unit F, Lock Quay, Limerick Tel: (061) 314599 Fax: (061) 318330</p>	<p>Fergal Rooney</p>
<p>LONGFORD</p> <p>Credit Union Courtyard, 50A Main Street, Longford Tel: (043) 334 7590 Fax: (043) 334 7594</p>	<p>Edel Hamilton</p>

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
<p>LOUTH</p> <p>Condil House, Roden Place, Dundalk, Co Louth</p> <p>Tel: (042) 933 0448 Fax: (042) 933 0991</p>	<p>Deirdre McMichael</p>
<p>MAYO</p> <p>Humbert Mall, Main Street, Castlebar, Co Mayo</p> <p>Tel: (094) 902 4334 Fax: (094) 902 3721</p>	<p>Thomas O' Mahony</p>
<p>MEATH</p> <p>Kennedy Road, Navan, Co Meath</p> <p>Tel: (046) 907 2515 Fax: (046) 907 2519</p>	<p>Mary Pat Ahern</p>
<p>MONAGHAN</p> <p>Alma House, The Diamond, Monaghan</p> <p>Tel: (047) 84888 Fax: (047) 84879</p>	<p>Stephanie Coggans</p>
<p>OFFALY</p> <p>Harbour Street, Tullamore</p> <p>Tel: (057) 935 1177 Fax: (057) 935 1544</p>	<p>Deirdre O'Connor</p>
<p>SLIGO</p> <p>Bridgewater House, Rockwood Parade, Sligo</p> <p>Tel: (071) 916 1670 Fax: (071) 916 1681</p>	<p>Brendan Hoey</p>
<p>TIPPERARY</p> <p>Friars Court, Abbey Street, Nenagh, Co Tipperary</p> <p>Tel: (067) 34181 Fax: (067) 34083</p>	<p>Catherine Ryan</p>
<p>WATERFORD</p> <p>Canada House, Canada Street, Waterford</p> <p>Tel: (051) 855814 Fax: (051) 871237</p>	<p>Aidan Lynch</p>

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
<p>WESTMEATH</p> <p>Paynes Lane, Irishtown, Athlone, Co Westmeath</p> <p>Tel: (090) 647 4694 Fax: (090) 647 2160</p>	<p>Phil O’Laoide</p>
<p>WEXFORD</p> <p>Unit 8, Redmond Square, Wexford</p> <p>Tel: (053) 912 2622 Fax: (053) 912 4927</p>	<p>Niamh Murran</p>
<p>WICKLOW</p> <p>Floor 3, Block D, Civic Offices, Main Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow</p> <p>Tel: (01) 202 2644 Fax: (01) 202 2667</p>	<p>Barbara Smyth</p>

PART TIME LAW CENTRES		
Location and telephone	OPEN	LAW CENTRE
CARLOW St. Catherine's Citizens Information Bureau, St. Joseph's Road, Carlow Tel: (059) 913 8700	Twice a month	Kilkenny
CORK Citizens Information Centre, Wolf Tone Square, Bantry Tel: (021) 455 1686	As required	Cork (Popes Quay)
DONEGAL The Courthouse, Donegal Town Tel: (074) 912 6177	Once a month	Letterkenny
KERRY Arbutus Hotel, 52 High Street, Killarney Tel: (066) 712 6900	By appointment	Tralee
LEITRIM The Health Centre, Leitrim Road, Carrick-on-Shannon Tel: (043) 47590	Once a month	Longford
LOUTH Drogheda Community Services Centre, Scarlett Crescent, Drogheda Tel: (047) 84888/84879	By appointment	Monaghan

PART TIME LAW CENTRES		
Location and telephone	OPEN	LAW CENTRE
<p>MAYO</p> <p>The Pastoral Centre (Cathedral Grounds) Ballina, Co. Mayo Tel: (094) 902 4334</p> <p>Health Centre, Knock Road, Ballyhaunis Tel: (094) 902 4334</p>	<p>Once a month</p> <p>Fourth Tuesday of every month</p>	<p>Castlebar</p> <p>Castlebar</p>
<p>ROSCOMMON</p> <p>Citizens Information Centre, 7 Elphin Street, Boyle Tel: (071) 916 1670</p>	<p>Once every 2 months</p>	<p>Sligo</p>
<p>TIPPERARY</p> <p>Thurles Community Social Services, Rossa Street, Thurles Tel: (0504) 22169</p> <p>Citizens Information Centre, 14 Wellington Street, Clonmel Tel: (052) 22267</p>	<p>Second Tuesday of every month</p> <p>Four times a month</p>	<p>Nenagh</p> <p>Nenagh</p>
<p>WESTMEATH</p> <p>Unit 11, Enterprise Centre, Bishopgate Street, Mullingar Tel: (090) 647 4694</p>	<p>Once a month</p>	<p>Athlone</p>
<p>Please note that the dates and times that the part time law centres are open may change depending on demand for the service. Please use the contact numbers above to find out when a law centre is open.</p>		

Appendix 4

List of Mediation Service Offices

Full Time Offices

MEDIATION OFFICE	OPENING HOURS
<p>Dublin Blanchardstown West End House, West End Business Park, Snugborough Road Extension, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15. Phone: (01) 811 8650</p>	<p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p>
<p>Dolphin House Family Mediation Service, 4th Floor, Dolphin House, Dublin 2. Phone: (01) 672 5886</p>	<p>Monday to Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm</p>
<p>Raheny Skillings House, 1st Floor offices, Raheny Shopping Centre, Howth Rd, Dublin 5. Phone: (01) 851 0730</p>	<p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p>
<p>Ormond Quay 9 Lower Ormond Quay, Dublin 1, Phone: (01) 874 7446</p>	<p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p>
<p>Tallaght The Rere, Tallaght Social Services Centre, The Square, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Phone: (01) 414 5180</p>	<p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p>
<p>Cork 3rd & 4th Floor, Hibernian House, 80A South Mall, Cork. Phone: (021) 425 2200</p>	<p>Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm</p>

MEDIATION OFFICE	OPENING HOURS
<p>Galway 3rd Floor, Merchant's Square, New Dock Street, Galway. Phone: (091) 509730</p>	<p>Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm</p>
<p>Limerick 3rd Floor, Riverpoint, Lower Mallow Street, Limerick. Phone: (061) 214310</p>	<p>Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm</p>

Mediation Service Part Time Offices	
<p>Donegal 3rd Floor, Riverfront House, Pearse Rd, Letterkenny, Co Donegal. Phone: (074) 910 2240</p>	<p>Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 9am -1pm, 2pm - 5pm</p>
<p>Kerry Unit 2, Market Place, Maine Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry. Phone: (066) 718 6100</p>	<p>Monday & Tuesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm</p>
<p>Laois Level 2, Grattan House, Grattan House Business Centre, Portlaoise, Co Laois. Phone: (057) 869 5730</p>	<p>Tuesday and Wednesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm Thursday 9am - 12.30pm</p>
<p>Louth 10 Seatown, Dundalk, Co. Louth Phone: (042) 935 9410</p>	<p>Tuesday & Thursday 9.30am - 1pm, 2pm - 5.30pm Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm</p>

Mediation Service Part Time Offices	OPENING HOURS
Mayo c/o Family Centre, Chapel St, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. Phone: (094) 903 5120	Thursday & Friday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm
Sligo Level 6, Quayside Shopping Centre, Wine Street, Sligo. Phone: (071) 915 4260	Monday & Tuesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm
Waterford 13B Wallace House, Maritana Gate, Canada St, Waterford. Phone: (051) 860460	Monday & Tuesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm
Westmeath Suite 10, 1st Floor, Inish Carraig Business Centre, Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. Phone: (0906) 420970	Monday & Tuesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm
Wexford 32 Key West, Custom House Quay, Wexford. Phone: (053) 916 3050	Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 9am - 5pm