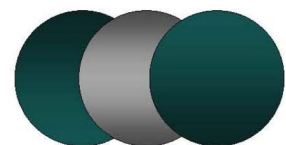
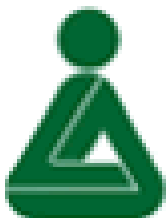


Legal Aid Board Annual Report 2012



Access To Justice

www.legalaidboard.ie



Family Mediation Service



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 civil 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.



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Overview	3
Foreword by the Chairperson and Chief Executive	8
The Board	11
Staff and Structure	12-13
Key Achievements and Developments in 2012	14
Service Provided in 2012	16
Developing the Service	48
Supporting Service Delivery	52
Finance	60
Appendix 1 – Financial Statements	65
Appendix 2 – Energy Usage 2012	92
Appendix 3 – List of Law Centres	94
Appendix 4 – List of Family Mediation Service Offices	100

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”). Section 54 of the Act was amended by the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 and 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 the Attorney General’s Scheme) on the 1st June 2012.

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 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

Legal aid and advice are provided primarily through a network of law centres by solicitors employed by the Board. A complementary service is provided by solicitors in private practice who are engaged by the Board on a case-by-case basis.

Offices in Dublin, Cork and Galway include an asylum speciality and there are also dedicated units in Dublin dealing with medical negligence cases and cases involving children at risk of being taken into the care of the State.



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. The FMS provides its services through four full time offices and twelve part time offices.

Service provision in the two criminal legal aid ad-hoc schemes, the Garda Station Advice Scheme and the Legal Aid - Custody Issues Scheme, comes through private solicitors and barristers with the schemes administered by the Board.

2. Obtaining 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 legal services will be offered an appointment with a solicitor within a maximum period of four months from the time the application is completed. In certain cases, a priority service is provided. 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 Legal Services

All 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 €10 for legal advice and €50 for legal aid. 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 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. The Board is endeavouring to keep waiting times in all offices to a maximum of two months. There is currently no charge for the service.

5. Criminal Legal Aid Ad Hoc Schemes

Both of the criminal legal aid ad hoc schemes referred to at the beginning of this section 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 by telephone and face-to-face. The scheme provides for payments to solicitors for a set number of visits. The second ad hoc scheme administered by the Board is the Legal Aid - Custody Issues Scheme which provides for payment of legal costs on the recommendation of the Court in certain types of litigation not covered by the civil legal aid scheme or the main criminal legal aid scheme. Further details of the schemes and the outturn for 2012 are provided later in the Report.

6. Head Office

The Board's head office is located in Cahirciveen, County Kerry where some 45 staff are located. Some of the headquarter functions also operate from Dublin.

7. Corporate Governance

The Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 makes provision for the appointment of a Chairperson and 12 member Board. The current Board was appointed by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Mr Alan Shatter T.D. in December 2012. Membership of the current Board is set out at page 11.



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 2012, the Board held 11 Board meetings, 5 of which were in Cahirciveen.

Attendance at these 11 meetings in 2012 was as follows:

Member	No. of meetings	Member	No. of meetings
Muriel Walls (Chair)	11	Donncha O’Connell	10
Oonagh Buckley	8	Micheál O’Connell	7
Mary Dalton	8	John O’Gorman	11
David Garvey	10	Philip O’Leary	10
Kate Hayes	10	Michelle O’Neill	8
Joy Mc Glynn	10	Ger Power	10
Oonagh Mc Phillips	10		



The committees of the Board met as follows in 2012:

Committee	No. of meetings held
Appeal Committee	17
Finance Committee	6
Audit and Risk Management Committee	4
Lawyers' Committee	5
Human Resources Committee	3
Performance Committee	1

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. 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 relevant guidelines issued by the Department of Finance.

Foreword by the Chairperson and Chief Executive

We are pleased to present the 2012 Annual Report for the Legal Aid Board.

The notable features in the past year have been a continuing extremely strong demand for civil legal aid services; considerable difficulties in meeting this increased demand with reduced resources; a further expansion in the remit of the Board with a second criminal legal aid ad hoc scheme transferring; and the first full year of the Family Mediation Service (FMS) within the Legal Aid Board. While the combination of these reflected a greater coherence and clarity in terms of governance of legal aid as a whole, each area inevitably posed significant challenges to the organisation and our commitment to providing efficient, effective and appropriate services.

Need for civil legal aid services, other than asylum services, remains extremely strong. Between 2006 and 2011 demand increased by over 90 per cent. Last year saw a modest reduction of 9 per cent but the increase for such services over the six years to 2012 is still well over 70 per cent. The big challenge for the Board is our capacity to meet such demand. Staffing resources have reduced by over 16 per cent in the past four years and the combination of this significant increase and reduced resources makes it well nigh impossible to provide the service we aspire to and that clients deserve. The main difference in this respect between Ireland and the jurisdictions closest to us is that while we are restricted in our spending to the budget provided on an annual basis, the other countries are not so restricted.

The Board has certainly sought to respond to the difficulties faced. We still provide a priority service in respect of certain areas such as domestic violence, child abduction and child care cases. These comprise some 15 per cent of all applications. A triage process was introduced in 2012 whereby all applicants will be seen for a short meeting with a solicitor within six weeks of applying. The solicitor will offer legal advice on the issue presented and also explain other options such as mediation or other alternative dispute resolution (ADR) intervention. It may also be that a meeting with the Money Advice and Budgeting Service



(MABS) or another relevant agency is an appropriate next step. Initial indications from clients who have received this service have been extremely positive and we hope to have the service in place in most centres in 2013. The Board, though, is still faced with considerable waiting times in many Law Centres for those clients who require a substantive legal service. This has, understandably, been a cause of frustration for clients and, on occasion, members of the judiciary.

The Board continues to extensively utilise the Private Practitioner scheme. Last year more than 5,000 of the Board's cases (certain family law matters in the District Court) were handled by private practitioners. We are very conscious that the Board gets extremely good value from private solicitors in respect of these cases and, indeed, would like to use the process to a greater extent but are constrained by lack of resources.

We were very pleased that responsibility for the Family Mediation Service (FMS) passed to the Board at the end of 2011. Considerable progress was made during the year in reducing waiting times in all the FMS centres. We have also made progress in meeting the Minister's objective of achieving synergies between the two services. We want to focus on facilitating the most effective resolution of the problem presented which may be through informal negotiation, alternative dispute resolution (with a particular focus on mediation) or, if necessary, litigation. It must be remembered, though, that the FMS has been modestly financed and, while benefits, including financial benefits, accrue from directing people away from courts-based resolution of certain family disputes, costs accrue to the FMS. We are firmly of the view that these monies are well spent and result in significant individual family and societal benefits.

A notable continuing success has been the Dolphin House initiative which is an integrated and co-operative approach between the Courts Service, the FMS and the Board in seeking to direct certain family law court applications towards a mediated approach to resolution. There have been significant financial savings accruing from this project but probably of greater importance has been the long term benefit to the parties and children involved. The ongoing support of the judiciary has been essential in the initiative's ongoing success.



The Minister for Justice and Equality has regularly expressed his support for the approach and has now confirmed the initiative on a permanent basis. The success of the initiative has also prompted the Board to extend it outside Dublin to Cork and to Naas. There are, of course, limitations to what can be achieved with the budget available.

As noted earlier, it has been a regular refrain of the Board that there needs to be overall coherence in terms of accountability, governance, finance and inter-dependence in relation to legal aid generally. This has been a matter that has long been accepted by the current Minister and initial steps have been taken to transfer responsibility for criminal legal aid to the Board. Two of the ad hoc schemes are already with the Board with the main scheme awaiting the necessary legislation. Government has also approved the transfer of the Mental Health Commission legal aid scheme to the Board and this, too, awaits legislation.

2013 is certainly likely to present considerable challenges. The most significant is the budgetary one and our capacity to meet the demand on the civil law side. Being successful in having a greater number of cases resolved through mediation rather than through the courts is also not resource-free. There will be challenges too in extending the Board's remit in criminal legal aid, Mental Health Commission legal aid and further developments on the civil law side. The Board is determined to ensure that the extra responsibilities taken on and challenges faced will be addressed with the same commitment, resolution and professionalism that we bring to bear on an ongoing basis to all our work.

We would like to express our thanks to the Minister for Justice and Equality for his continued interest in and support for legal aid at a time of considerable financial pressures at a national level. Thanks too to the Secretary General and his staff for their ongoing engagement and support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Muriel Walls', with a horizontal line underneath.

Muriel Walls
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Moling Ryan', with a horizontal line underneath.

Moling Ryan
Chief executive



The Board

As at 31 December 2012:

Muriel Walls

Chairperson

Oonagh Buckley

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Mary Dalton

Staff Representative

Kate Hayes

Business Person

Joy McGlynn

Health Service Executive

Oonagh McPhillips

Department of Justice and Equality

Donncha O'Connell

National University of Ireland, Galway

Micheál O'Connell

Barrister at law

John O'Gorman

Staff Representative – Solicitor

Philip O'Leary

Solicitor

Michelle O'Neill

Barrister at law

Ger Power

Department of Social Protection

David Garvey

Chartered Accountant

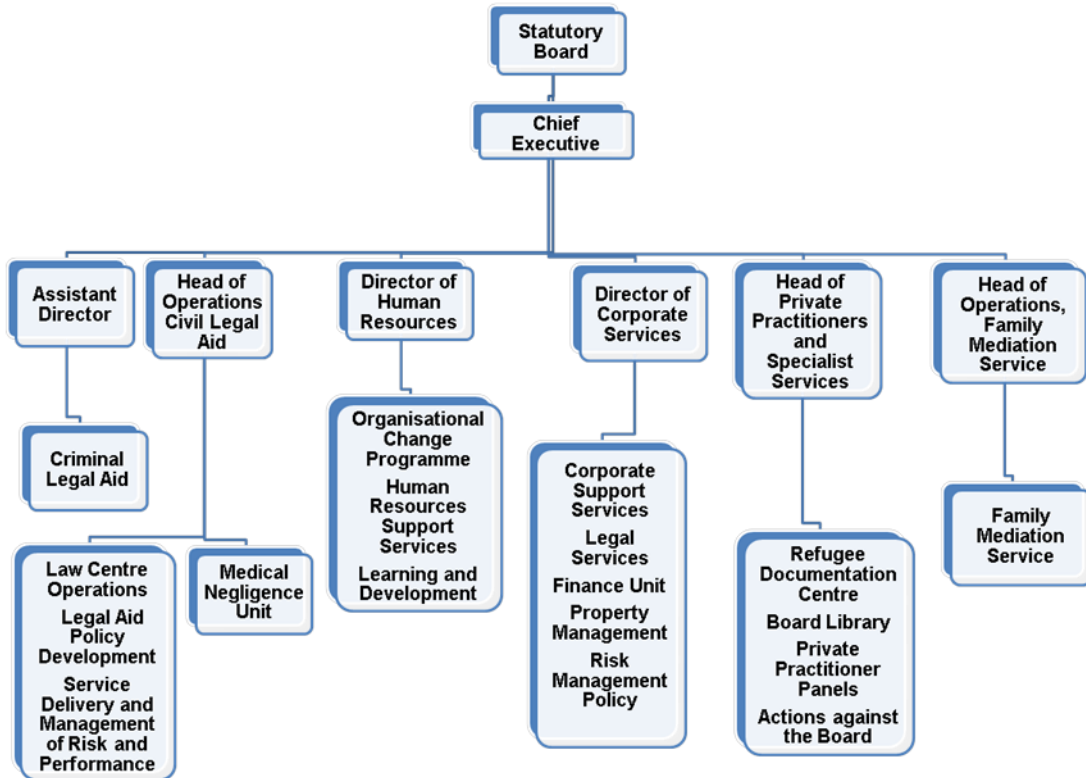


Head Office Executive Staff

Chief Executive Officer:	Moling Ryan
Head of Operations Civil Legal Aid:	John McDaid
Director of Human Resources:	Pat Fitzsimons
Director of Corporate Services:	Eileen Bowden
Head of Private Practitioner and Specialist Legal Services:	Frank Caffrey
Head of Operations, 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



Structure





Key Achievements and Developments in 2012

After several years of continued increases in applications for legal services law centres experienced a decrease of 10% in 2012. This followed a 9% increase in 2011 and a 21% increase in 2010.

The number of new clients registering with the Board's **Refugee Legal Service** fell by 26%, in line with the reduction in recent years of the number of persons seeking asylum in this country.

Exchequer funding for the Legal Aid Board in 2012 was €32.922 million. This included provision for the traditional legal services provided by the Board as well as for the Family Mediation Service which came within the Board's remit in November 2011. The combined funding reflected a small reduction of €0.143m on 2012. Overall, staffing levels fell from 368 wholetime equivalents at the end of 2011 to 363 at the end of 2012.

Responsibility for the administration of the Attorney General's ad-hoc Scheme (now re-named the Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme) transferred to the Board on 1 June. Expenditure on this scheme in 2012 came to €3.5 million down from €3.6 million in 2011.

Expenditure on the Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme in 2012 came to €0.9 million down from €1.2 million in 2011 and €1.3 million in 2010. Expenditure in relation to both Schemes is paid out of the Justice Vote.

The number of **cases processed** during the year by the law centre network decreased slightly from 2011 to over 17,600. The number of child care cases increased by 12%.

Waiting times for an appointment with a solicitor came under increasing pressure in 2012 due to increased demand and the constraints on the Board's resources. The issue of accessibility to timely legal services continued to prove difficult in 2012. 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 16 of the Board's law centres at the end of the year.

However, the Board continued to provide a priority service where it considered that an immediate or near immediate service was needed. 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.

The Board continued to make use of **private practitioners** to help reduce the numbers of



clients waiting for legal services. The private practitioner service currently operates for certain family law matters in the District Court although some restrictions are in place for budgetary reasons. The Scheme for involving private practitioners in divorce and separation matters in the Circuit Court has been constrained for budgetary reasons.

During the course of 2012 the Board introduced a 'triage' approach in a number of its 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 aim is ultimately a month). 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 that is deemed necessary).

The pilot '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 2012. 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. A review during the year indicated a net annualised saving of over €110,000. The initiative was extended to Cork and Naas during 2012.

Waiting times for services from the Family Mediation Service have been reduced to 3 months or less in every centre bar one. There was an increase of over 30% in the number of couples agreeing to mediate with 710 mediated agreements concluded during the year.

Significant progress was made during the year on the implementation 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 legal work aside from asylum cases is managed on the new system. The system allows greater flexibility and effectiveness in the use of the Board's staffing resources.

The Board hosted its annual family law conference in June 2012. The theme of the Conference was 'Resolving Family Law Disputes - Alternatives to Litigation.' The conference was addressed by a number of high profile speakers on various aspects of civil law in Ireland and abroad.



Service Provided in 2012

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 Legal Service
 - ◊ Refugee Documentation Centre
- Family Mediation
- Criminal Legal Aid Ad-Hoc Schemes

Civil Legal Aid

The Board experienced a particularly challenging year in 2012. Although demand for its services fell on the 2011 figure, it remained extremely high at a time when its resources were constrained. It will be noted that over 17,500 applicants sought legal services from the Board’s law centres in 2012 with nearly 16,900 of these relating to matters other than asylum. This compares with a figure of less than 10,200 for non-asylum matters in 2007. There continued to be a fall off in demand for asylum services and that has enabled the Board to redeploy some resources.

The type of problems for which the Board provides legal services extends to most areas of civil law although in 2012, 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 2012 was in the region of 23,450. This was a marginal drop on the number dealt with in 2011.

Demand for the service

The following table gives the number of persons who applied for services to the Board in 2012 and the two previous years.

Table 1 – Number of applicants

Year	2012	2011	2010
Law centres	16,870	18,657	17,175
Refugee Legal Service	725	979	1,448
Total	17,595	19,636	18,623



Overall, the decrease in the number of new applications in 2012 was of the order of just over 10% on the 2011 figure. In 2012, the number of new clients registering with the Refugee Legal Service fell by over 26% to 725. This was consistent with the sustained fall-off in applications for asylum which has occurred in recent years.

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

While the numbers seeking legal services are not generally recorded by reference to the legal issues in respect of which they are seeking help, the breakdown of legal issues in respect of persons given a first appointment with a solicitor in 2012 (new cases) is likely to be indicative of the nature of the demand. Table 2 below gives that breakdown. It should be noted that this includes cases that were referred to private solicitors for the provision of a service.

Table 2 – Initial appointments by subject matter 2012

Subject matter	Number of new clients
General family law matters	6,800
Divorce / separation / nullity	2,671
Cases involving possible State care of children	554
Asylum and related matters	725
Other civil matters	888
Total	11,638

Law centres

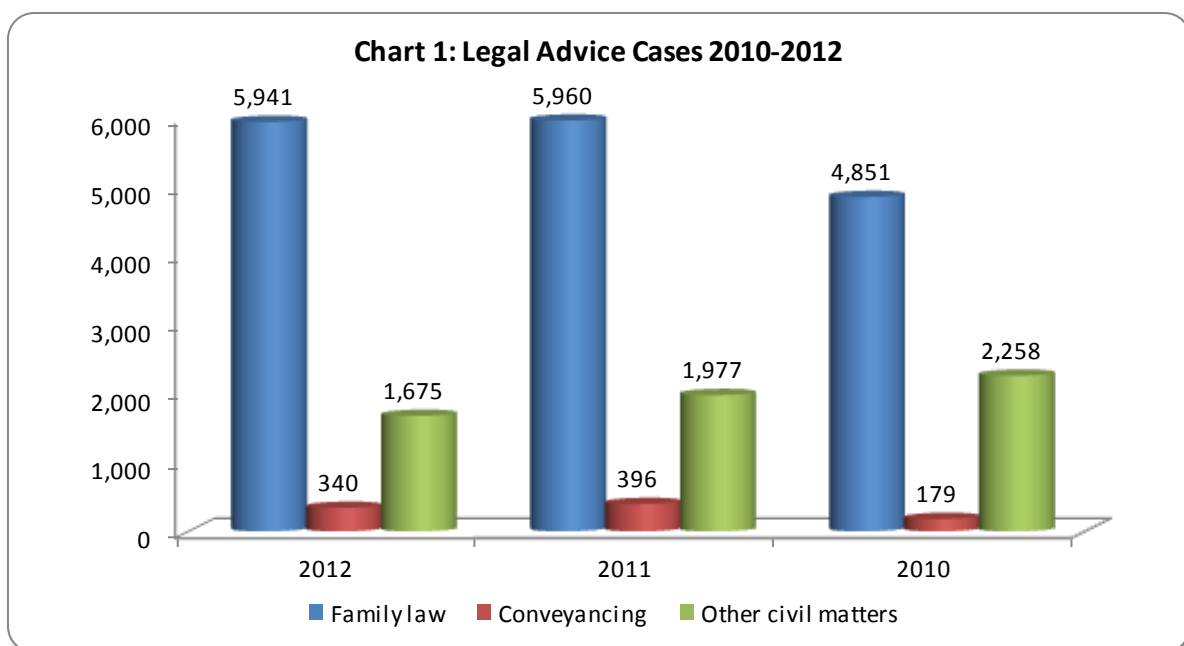
Legal aid and advice was provided through the Board’s general law centres in 17,652 cases in 2012 which was a slight reduction on 2011 though still ahead of 2010 as can be seen from the table below. Comparative information for the two previous years and a breakdown between aid and advice cases are set out below.

Table 3 – Cases handled in law centres

Year	2012	2011	2010
Advice only	7,956	8,333	7,288
Court proceedings	9,696	9,492	9,344
Total	17,652	17,825	16,632

Legal advice cases

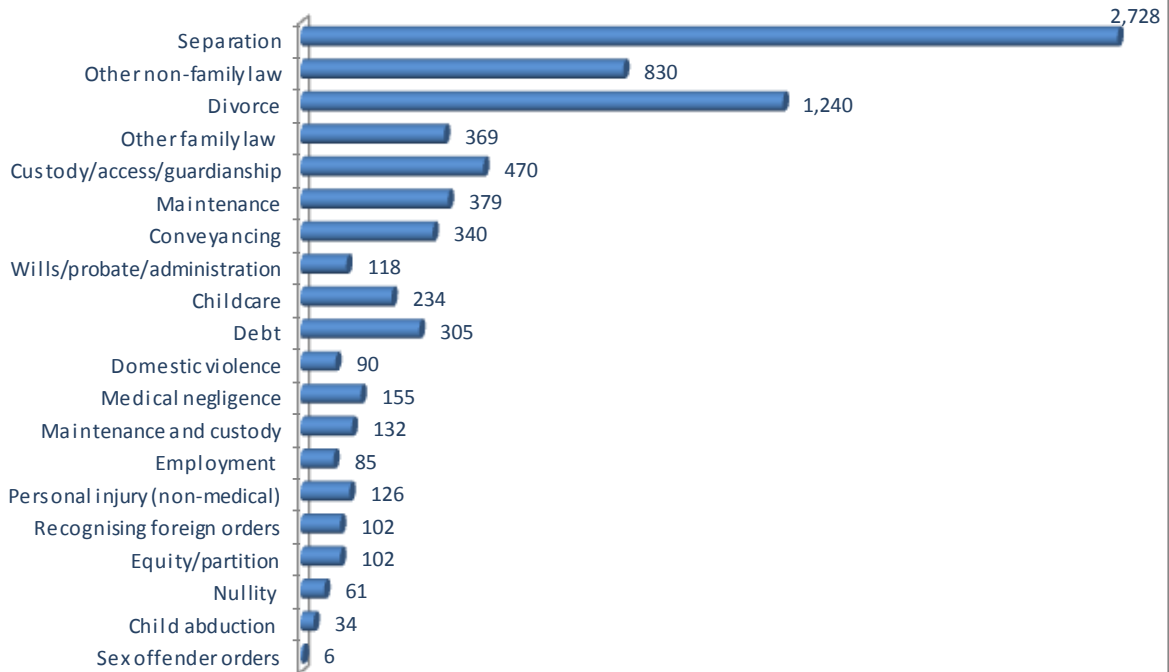
Chart 1 below highlights that family law continues to constitute the predominant area where the Board provides legal advice. Of the 'advice' cases handled in 2012, nearly 75% were in the family law area. Legal advice cases are those where advice has been provided to the client but legal aid, i.e. representation in court, has not. Some of the persons who received advice in 2012 will subsequently be granted legal aid, depending on the circumstances of the case.



A more detailed breakdown of the main issues giving rise to these legal advice cases in 2012 is provided below in Chart 1a. In relation to a significant number of separation and divorce cases, it is likely that advice was also given on matters such as maintenance, domestic violence, and child welfare. Such additional advices are not separately recorded here.



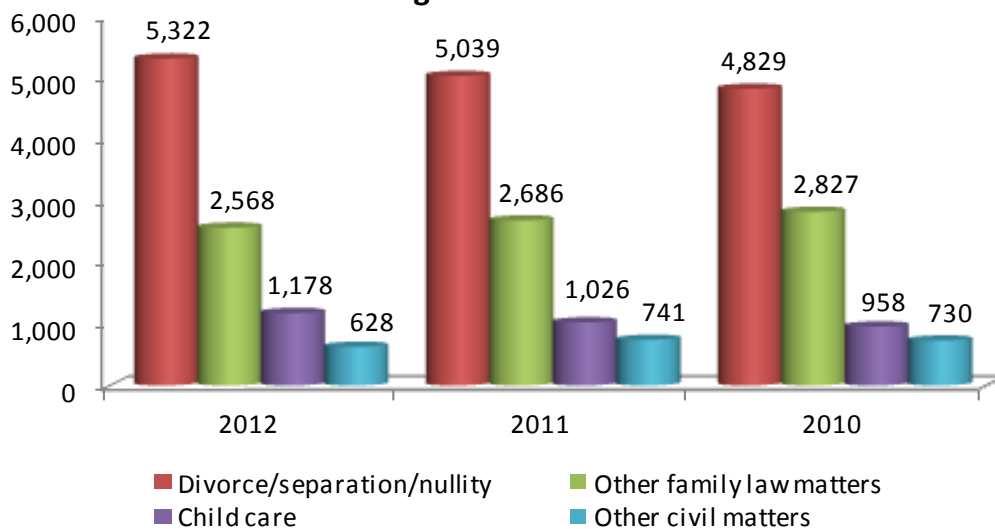
Chart 1a: Advice Cases by Subject Matter 2012



Legal aid cases

The issues in relation to which the Board’s law centre solicitors provided court representation in 2012 and the comparative information for the two previous years are set out in chart 2 below.

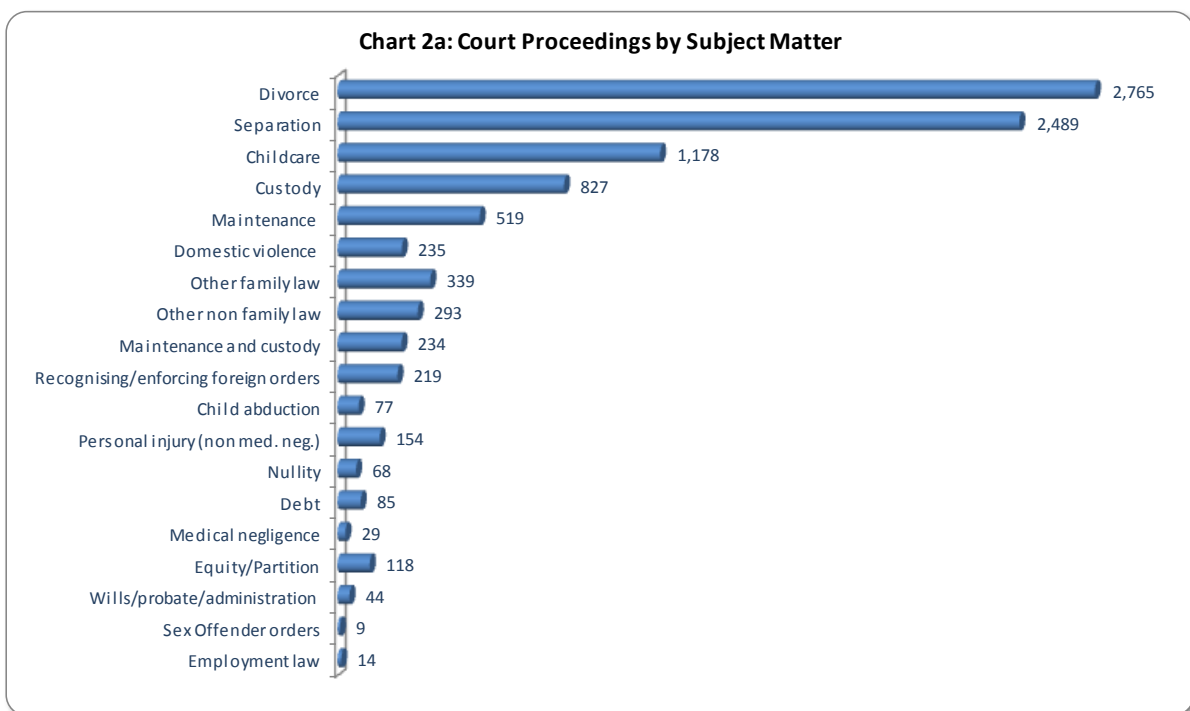
Chart 2: Legal Aid Cases 2010-2012





In 2012, the number of legal aid cases handled remained relatively consistent with the previous year. Within that figure the number of child care cases (cases involving children at risk of being taken into the care of the HSE) handled showed a 15% increase. It is not clear if this increase was due to cases taking longer or there being more of them.

A more comprehensive breakdown of the issues in respect of which legal aid was given in 2012 is provided below. In relation to a significant number of separation and divorce cases, it is likely that those cases also involved issues such as maintenance, domestic violence, and custody/access/guardianship. It is also the case that a number of custody and access matters may have had domestic violence issues which were running contemporaneously. These are not separately recorded here.





Case turnover

It can be seen from Table 4 below that there was a decrease in the number of new cases taken on in the law centre network in 2012. During the course of 2012 the Board launched a new case management system. It is the intention that most management information will be obtained from the system. There was a ‘cross-over’ in systems in 2012 and it is considered that this has given rise to an element of under-reporting of cases, particularly new cases, in 2012. There was also significant time lost in adapting to the new system though it is anticipated that the long term gain of the new system will far outweigh the lost productivity in 2012.

Table 4 – New cases in law centres

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009
New Cases	5,831	7,506	7,069	7,240

Duration of court cases

Table 5 below provides an age profile of cases in which legal aid was provided in 2012, by court. The year is indicative of when the file was opened.

Table 5 – Legal aid cases handled in 2012; year file opened

Year	2012	2011	2010	Pre-2010	Total
District	1,146	1,026	342	264	2,778
Circuit	1,227	1,706	1,344	1,963	6,240
High	183	189	122	215	709
Supreme	0	2	3	7	12
Total	2,556	2,923	1,811	2,449	9,739

As has been evident in previous years, case progression in the Circuit Court (where divorce and separation cases are heard) tends to be significantly slower than in the District Court. Of the Circuit Court cases dealt with by the Board in 2012, 31% of them commenced prior to 2009.

Of the 9,739 legal aid cases handled in the law centres in 2012, 3,408 (35%) were completed by the end of the year. Table 6 below gives an age profile of those cases involving court proceedings completed in 2012 by subject matter.



Table 6 – Legal aid cases completed in 2012; year file opened

Year	2012	2011	2010	Pre-2010	Total
Divorce/separation/nullity	69	352	416	663	1,500
Child care	86	167	94	60	407
Other family law matters	387	568	196	164	1,315
Non-family law matters	20	53	48	65	186
Total	562	1,140	754	952	3,408

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 44% of divorce, separation and nullity cases completed in 2012 had been ongoing since before 2010.

Cases on hand

Table 7 below gives the status of all of the Board’s active legal aid cases as of the 31st December 2012.

Table 7 – Legal aid cases active as at 31/12/2012

Status	No. of Cases
Legal aid certificate granted	507
Counsel briefed	704
Proceedings issued	1,149
At hearing	2,062
Final Orders made	1,757
Re-entry / under appeal	150
Total	6,329

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

Private practitioners in family law matters

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). The scheme for involving private practitioners in divorce and separation matters in the Circuit Court has been constrained for budgetary



reasons. Some restrictions had to be placed on the availability of the District Court scheme in 2011, likewise for budgetary reasons, and these were continued into 2012.

A breakdown is given in Table 8 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 8 – PP certificates granted

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009
District Court	5,077	4,854	5,220	3,921
Circuit Court	5	8	59	91
Total	5,082	4,862	5,279	4,012

In respect of certificates granted under the Circuit Court Scheme, as a result of the time involved in finalising such cases, there tends to be a time lag between the granting of the certificate and the claim for payment. Thus, certificates granted in a particular year will only materialise in subsequent years.

This payment time lag is much less of an issue for certificates granted in respect of District Court matters, which tend to be resolved more quickly. In addition, fees paid to private practitioners for District Court cases are only 10-15% of the fee payable for Circuit Court cases.

Timeliness of the service

There was significant pressure on waiting times caused by the increase in demand for the Board’s services. The following table sets out the number of persons waiting on the 31st December 2012 and on the same date in the previous 3 years for a first appointment with a solicitor.

Table 9 – Numbers on waiting list

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009
Number waiting	5,014	4,443	3,153	2,228



The maximum waiting time in months, as of the 31st December 2012, is set out for the various law centres in table 10 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.

During the course of 2012 the Board introduced a ‘triage’ approach in a number of its 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 aim is ultimately a month). Thus the waiting times below for a number of centres set out both the time waiting for a triage appointment and a second consultation.

Table 10 – Waiting times in months on the 31st December 2012

Law centre	General	Waiting time for a ‘triage’ consultation	Waiting time for a second consultation (triage only)
Athlone		1	10
Castlebar	7	1	7
Cavan		2	11
Cork			
Popes Quay	8		
South Mall	10		
Dublin			
Blanchardstown	3		
Clondalkin	7		
Finglas	15		
Gardiner St.	10		
Nth. Brunswick St.	13		
Tallaght	10		
Dundalk	4		
Ennis	12		
Galway	9		
Kilkenny		7	13
Letterkenny	6		
Limerick	8		
Longford		2	11
Monaghan	1		
Navan		3	7
Nenagh		1	5
Newbridge		10	11
Portlaoise		6	17
Sligo		3	7
Tralee	6		
Tullamore	5		
Waterford	7		
Wexford	6		
Wicklow		4	15



PRIORITY SERVICE

The Board continued to provide a priority service where it considered that an immediate, or near immediate, service was needed. 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 2012, the Appeal Committee of the Board met on 19 occasions. This is a statutory 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 172 appeals heard in 2012. Of the appeals heard in 2012, the decision of the executive was upheld in 138 cases. There were 28 appeals where the original decision was overturned. Table 11 below provides an outline of the position.

Table 11– Appeal committee

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009
Number of decisions upheld	138	102	85	98
- <i>Financial criteria</i>	29	21	25	24
- <i>Merits criteria</i>	109	81	60	74
Number of decisions overturned	28	22	36	36
Number of appeals on hand	0	4	5	2
Withdrawn/resolved	6	7	5	3
Number of appeals	172	135	131	139



Sample cases –Civil Legal Aid

Child Abduction

The Board represented both parties in a case in which a nine year old child from an Eastern European country came to visit his father who was from the same country and who had resided in Ireland for a number of years. The father was in a long term relationship with another party and had a child by that relationship. At the end of the scheduled visit the child was not returned in accordance with the arrangements and child abduction proceedings were instituted on behalf of the child's mother. On foot of the proceedings a psychologist interviewed the child and in her report she noted the child's preference to remain in this jurisdiction. She also noted that there was no particularly serious reason why the child couldn't be returned to his own country and she drew a distinction between the child expressing an objection to returning and a preference for remaining here. In the High Court the Judge determined that while the child might wish to remain with his father in Ireland, this was not a case where the discretion not to return the child ought to be exercised and accordingly he ordered the child's return. The matter was adjourned to allow the practical arrangements to be made and the child returned to his own country shortly thereafter.

Debt

A client sought legal advice in relation to a Civil Bill that had been served upon him seeking the recovery of a significant sum of money. The client had borrowed the money to carry out certain home repairs but had then lost his job unexpectedly and found that he was unable to pay it. The client acknowledged that the debt was due. The client was advised in relation to the process that the creditor had initiated to obtain a judgement. He was advised that there was little merit in defending the proceedings if he acknowledged that the debt was due. Greater concentration was spent on advising the client about the enforcement options that would be available to the creditor in the event that a judgement was obtained. The client had had little or no contact with the creditor since he had defaulted on the debt and the solicitor advised him to make contact and to see if he could come to his own arrangement with the creditor. The solicitor was satisfied that the client had the capacity to engage meaningfully with the creditor. The client subsequently advised



that he had been able to come to an arrangement with the creditor and that the arrangement was being honoured.

Domestic Violence

The client and her husband had three young children. She was granted a legal aid certificate to take proceedings against her husband for a barring order.

Her application arose from an incident after the First Communion of one of the children. Her husband had been drinking heavily at a post Communion party and when they got home that evening he became increasingly verbally abusive initially. He refused to calm down and proceeded to physically assault her on a number of occasions. She was left with bruising and was traumatised. She took photographs of the bruising. With some reluctance she initiated a barring application. Her husband indicated that he had no recollection of the incident though he acknowledged that he had been drinking heavily on the day in question. Ultimately, the Judge granted a barring order for a period of six months and he adjourned the matter to a date six months hence to see what efforts the husband made in the meantime to address concerns about his drinking and also about his anger management. The client acknowledged that her husband's behaviour was fine when he was not drinking and she confirmed that she had no difficulty with her husband taking the children out on the proviso that he would not consume alcohol while they were with him.

Separation

An applicant sought legal services in relation to her separation from her husband. The parties had been living apart for just over a year. The applicant remained in the family home with the two dependent children of the marriage. The husband was living in rented accommodation. The solicitor advised the client in relation to the possibility of getting marriage guidance counselling. The client advised that the parties had undergone counselling but that it had not been successful. The solicitor then advised the client about mediation. The client was interested in mediation and thought that her husband might be also. The file was left open and the client returned a number of months later. She advised that both she and her husband had attended the Board's mediation service and she



furnished a copy of a mediated agreement. A Separation Agreement was prepared on the basis of the terms set out in the mediated agreement and both parties signed up to the Separation Agreement. The terms included a provision that the client remain in the family home until the children were no longer dependent and that thereafter it would be sold and the proceeds split. There were further terms in relation to maintenance payments and pension benefits. The client was satisfied with the outcome and was confident that the Agreement would be adhered to, given that it was a negotiated solution rather than an imposed one.

Medical Negligence

The Medical Negligence Unit - a specialist unit - represented a plaintiff in a High Court action based on professional clinical negligence. The plaintiff had undergone surgery following an accident to repair a complex fracture to his leg. The surgery was performed by an experienced orthopaedic registrar in the absence of the consultant orthopaedic surgeon. Apart from the inherent risks attaching to the surgery, this particular plaintiff was a high risk candidate for a general anaesthetic period due to several unrelated medical conditions. The plaintiff was discharged home and treated conservatively. The plaintiff continued to suffer high levels of pain and discomfort. During the course of the next months following the initial surgery the plaintiff underwent additional surgical procedures none of which had a particularly positive outcome. Ultimately the plaintiff experienced an amputation.

A Personal Injuries Summons was issued. It was alleged by the medical personnel that the client had failed to take any proper responsibility for his own health prior to and post the initial surgery and had failed to take medical advice given to him with regard to his smoking habit. The case required considerable complex medical and legal input to secure a successful outcome. A number of independent medical experts were retained on the part of the plaintiff as were a number of other experts. The case was given an estimated hearing time of two to three weeks. Unfortunately, some months in advance of the due date of trial the client became ill. Following unsuccessful attempts to negotiate a settlement an urgent application was made for an early hearing date. When the case ultimately came to trial protracted negotiations took place over two days and a settlement was agreed. The settlement was made without admission of liability.

Asylum Services

Refugee Legal Service

The Refugee Legal Service (RLS) provides legal services at all stages of the asylum process and, in appropriate cases, on immigration and deportation matters. In 2012 it continued to provide services through offices in Dublin, Cork and Galway. With the fall off in demand for its services, a consequence of falling asylum applications generally, a level of integration into the general law centre network has occurred particularly in relation to the Cork and Galway offices. Both of these are now fully integrated into the Law Centres while Dublin RLS maintains its separate identity, with solicitor/paralegal staff now dividing their time between asylum and specialist child-care work. Dublin based administration staff who had formerly been assigned specifically to the RLS, now operate an integrated reception, call handling, registration and finance service for the three co-located Law Centres on the premises. This level of integration was achieved without a reduction of service and without affecting the quality and timeliness of service.

RLS: new client registrations

There were 725 new clients registered in 2012. This is a decrease of 26% from the previous year and is a direct consequence of the decline in the number of new asylum seekers registering in the state. RLS registrations in 2012 represented the equivalent of 76% of all asylum applicants registered with the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) in the year, similar to 2011 and slightly higher than 2010.

Table 12 - Asylum Applications

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009
RLS Registrations	725	979	1,448	2,298
ORAC Applications	956	1,290	1,939	2,691

Of the new clients that registered with the service in 2012, approximately 56% of them required services for the first stage of the asylum process, while the remainder required services for appeals or other related issues.



Minors

The RLS has a dedicated Children’s Unit located in Dublin to handle asylum applications by unaccompanied minors. Staff in the Unit have received relevant specialised training. In 2012, a total of 119 minors applied for legal aid in asylum cases. This was down on the comparable figure for 2011 of 162.

Legal aid certificates

The Board granted 450 legal aid certificates in asylum cases last year to enable representation before the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT). This was a significant drop on the figure of 649 certificates issued in 2011. The RAT decides appeals of those asylum seekers whose application for refugee status has not been recommended by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner. The following table shows the breakdown between the numbers of certificates in which representation was provided by RLS solicitors and by private solicitors/barristers, acting on behalf of the RLS.

Table 13 – RLS certificates granted

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009
RLS solicitors	171	210	548	876
Private solicitors on RLS Panels	231	360	310	601
Barristers instructed by the RLS	47	79	155	532
Total	449	649	1013	2009

The use of private practitioners by the RLS in asylum matters was extended in 2010 to include advice/representation at Subsidiary Protection/Leave to Remain stage as well as appeals to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Subsidiary Protection

Subsidiary Protection is protection **other than refugee status** against a real risk of suffering "serious harm" which consists of: death penalty or execution; or torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of an applicant in the country of origin; or serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict. Applications for Subsidiary Protection must be made within 15 days of an invitation to do so by the Minister for Justice and Equality. Up until the end of 2010 the RLS handled all these applications internally.



Because of the tight deadline, the transfer of these cases back from private solicitors posed heavy burdens on prospective applicants, those solicitors and the Board’s administrative staff.

The number of applications for Subsidiary Protection submitted by the RLS in 2012 decreased significantly from the previous year. This was attributable to the fact that such submissions can only be made by invitation of the Minister for Justice and Equality and the number of such invitations dropped in the past year. In addition, the Board retained private solicitors to make such submissions if they had processed the client’s appeal to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. There is an ongoing need to update submissions already made on account of changing circumstances in many of the countries of origin.

Table 14 – Applications for subsidiary protection

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009
Number of applications	155	417	1,339	1,822

Judicial review in asylum related matters

The Board instituted judicial review proceedings in two asylum cases in 2012.

One of these proceedings was instituted against the Refugee Appeals Tribunal and the Minister for Justice and Equality and the other was instituted against the HSE, the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, Ireland and the Attorney General. In both cases the applicants were minors. A process exists whereby attempts are made to resolve matters between the relevant bodies in appropriate cases prior to the taking of proceedings.

Trafficking

In late 2009 the Legal Aid 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 and a potential victim of human trafficking is not required to make a financial contribution to the Legal Aid 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.

In 2012, 73 potential victims of human trafficking had been notified to the Board by GNIB, 53 of whom were registered with the Board and had received their first consultation.

A number did not pursue the matter with the Board.

Chart 3: Human Trafficking

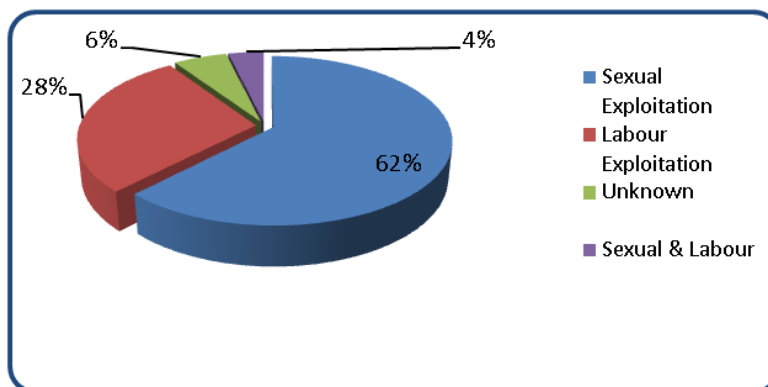


Table 15 - Trafficking Purpose

Trafficking Purpose	
Sexual Exploitation	33
Labour Exploitation	15
Unknown	3
Sexual & Labour	2
Total	53

Sample cases –Asylum

Asylum

An asylum seeker claimed to have a well-founded fear of persecution in her own Middle Eastern country on grounds of her imputed political opinion and, in particular, persecution from the State apparatus in her country. The Applicant advised that her husband became involved in demonstrations against the State. On one such demonstration he was arrested and detained for a period of two days. He continued to demonstrate and a number of days later the family home was attacked by three men all dressed in civilian clothes. Both she and her husband were violently assaulted. Her husband was taken away. The next day she became aware that her father, a man of extreme religious views, had become aware of the events that had occurred in his daughter's home and was minded to seek revenge, not on the perpetrators, but on his own daughter because she had brought 'shame' on his family. She and her son fled the country and have sought asylum in this jurisdiction. A final decision in relation to their application is currently awaited.

Asylum

An asylum seeker from an east African country had worked a lawyer and had defended people accused of involvement in genocide. As a result of her work she received anonymous phone calls and was told to stop her work. The police called to her house on several occasions and she was detained in a police station for a short period. On her release she escaped to Uganda while travel documents were arranged for her. She claimed that she fears for her life if she is returned to her country of origin. At the Refugee Appeals Tribunal it was found that she presented as a plausible and credible witness. Country of Origin Information was submitted on her behalf which supported the assertions of fact which she made. She had submitted personal documentation to confirm many aspects of her claim and the medical evidence she has submitted strongly supported her account of the difficulties she experienced. The Tribunal found that the difficulties she experienced amounted to persecution of her by the authorities in her country and that she should be granted refugee status.

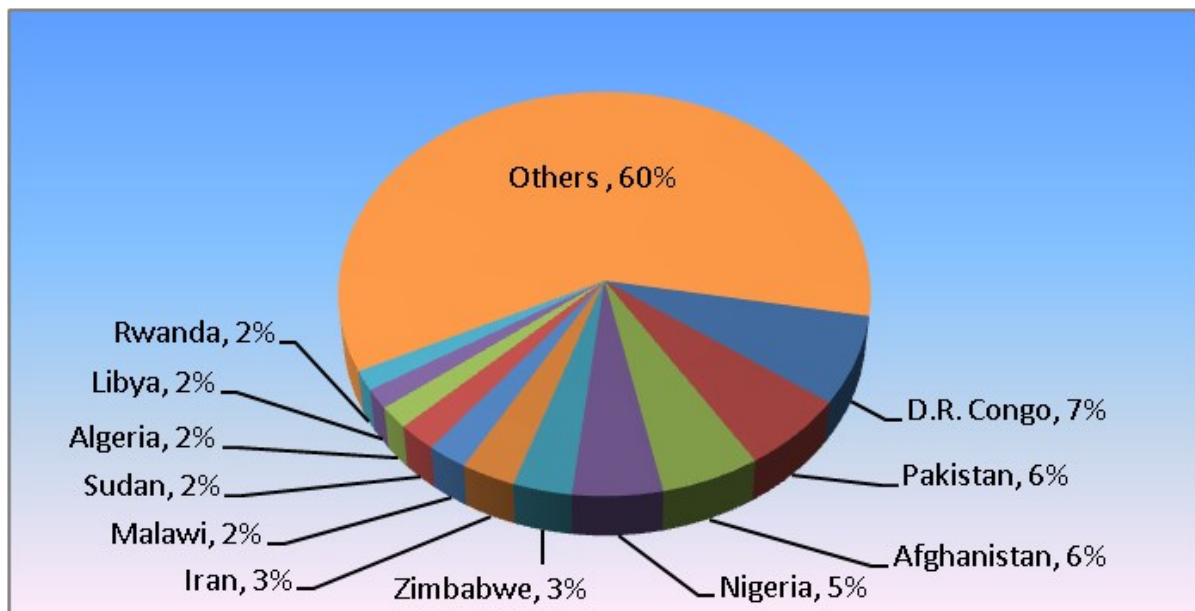
Refugee Documentation Centre

The Refugee Documentation Centre (RDC) is an independent service operating under the aegis of the Legal Aid 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 UNHCR.

In 2012, the RDC Query Service provided a total of 1,392 query responses. This represented a decrease of 6% on 2011. On average, about 70% of queries related to COI, with the remaining 30% split between legal/quasi-legal and library queries. The country which gave rise to the largest single number of queries in 2012 was Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The main countries subject to COI queries are set out in Chart 4 below.

Chart 4: RDC Queries 2012





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

- What is the legal status of homosexuality in Pakistan? What penalties apply if it is illegal? How are homosexuals treated by government and by society?
- Recent reports regarding the treatment of persons who convert from Islam to Christianity in Nigeria. Recent reports on Sharia law in relation to religious conversion.
- What is the procedure for Ugandan nationals seeking UK Visas? What sort of documentation is required?
- Information on the armed group in the DRC known as M23. Information on leadership, number of fighters, recent activities, when it was founded.
- Honour killings and the availability of police protection in India.
- Treatment of returned failed asylum seekers in Iran.
- Information on the level of police corruption in Cameroon.
- Information on death threats / warning letters issued by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The RDC continued to work closely with ORAC (Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner) and other users of its services in 2012, with a view to strengthening co-operation and meeting the various needs of its users.

There were two editions of the RDC's periodical *The Researcher* published in 2012, which were made available internally and to relevant external agencies. 77 COI information packs on specialist topics were prepared and updated throughout 2012.

Training activities took place throughout 2012 in the areas of COI and also on the use of the RDC's electronic library and COI database (E-Library). COI Network project work in the area of training continued in 2012. Blended learning courses were provided domestically and internationally to groups of Irish and international asylum agencies. The RDC participated in two international projects in the areas of Medical COI and the European COI Portal. A successful European Refugee Fund application to connect the RDC COI database to the European COI Portal was made in 2012 with this project expected to commence in 2013.



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 FMS is a free, confidential service in which a professional mediator assists those involved in family breakdown and, in particular, separating or divorcing couples, both married and non-married, to negotiate the terms of their separation or divorce. It also assists same sex couples and couples who have never lived together or even had a relationship but have a child together. The mediator assists people to communicate better with one another for the sake of their children and to reach their own agreed and informed decisions concerning some or all of the issues. The FMS 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 16 locations; there are 5 full-time offices (Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin (now Ormond Quay), Cork, Galway, Limerick and Blanchardstown) and 11 offices open for mediation two to three days a week. The number of full time offices will be increased in 2013.

Since coming within the remit of the Legal Aid Board in November 2011, a very strong emphasis has been placed on reducing the Family Mediation Service waiting lists 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 two to three months for an appointment with a mediator. The objective has, generally, been maintained in 2012 by using private mediators from a panel, where necessary, to supplement the work of the Board's own permanent mediators.



Table 16 - Comparative waiting times December 2012 and December 2011

Office	Waiting times (months) End December 2012	Waiting times (months) End December 2011
Dublin:		
<i>Earlsfort Terrace</i>	4	3
<i>Tallaght</i>	3	6
<i>Blanchardstown</i>	3	4
<i>Raheny</i>	3	4
Athlone	2	3
Castlebar	2	2
Cork	5	1
Dundalk	3	3
Galway	3	3
Letterkenny	2	3
Limerick	3	3
Portlaoise	2	4
Sligo	3	4
Tralee	2	3
Waterford	2	2
Wexford	3	4

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

Waiting times in 2012 have continued to reduce in 9 centres, remained static in 5 centres, and increased in Cork and Earlsfort Terrace. Additional mediation is being made available in the Cork office to address this.



Table 17 - Number of couples agreeing to engage in mediation in 2012 and 2011

Centre	2012	2011
Dublin:		
<i>Blanchardstown</i>	158	83
<i>Earlsfort Tce</i>	330	302
<i>Raheny</i>	87	57
<i>Tallaght</i>	77	80
Athlone	89	66
Castlebar	70	30
Cork	178	63
Dundalk	82	81
Galway	138	113
Letterkenny	36	44
Limerick	131	102
Portlaoise	98	77
Sligo	44	38
Tralee	62	61
Waterford	73	62
Wexford	69	64
Total	1,722	1,323

Table 18 - FMS service provision in 2012

	Carried forward from 2011	1st mediation sessions attended	Reached agreement	% reached full agreement	Carried over to 2013
Dublin:					
<i>Earlsfort Tce</i>	144	233	113	30%	93
<i>Tallaght</i>	29	61	27	30%	25
<i>Blanchardstown</i>	18	133	42	28%	88
<i>Raheny</i>	44	34	26	32%	23
Athlone	24	88	49	44%	19
Castlebar	18	60	26	33%	25
Cork	42	114	57	37%	52
Dundalk	16	70	41	48%	22
Galway	45	114	81	51%	52
Letterkenny	13	35	23	48%	15
Limerick	59	104	51	31%	65
Portlaoise	25	70	28	29%	39
Sligo	15	45	22	37%	23
Tralee	19	68	41	47%	33
Waterford	35	83	41	35%	12
Wexford	19	75	42	45%	21
TOTAL	565	1387	710	36%	576



2012 (Summary)

565 couples were carried forward from 2011.

1,387 couples attended a First Mediation Session in 2012.

Total number of couples in Mediation in 2012 was 1,952 – an increase of 572 couples from 2011.

710 (36%) reached agreement. 576 couples in the mediation process were carried forward to 2013.

In 2012, 65% of couples entering into the mediation process either reached agreement or remained in the process (710 reaching agreement, 576 continuing in process out of 1,952).

Dolphin House tripartite initiative

This tripartite initiative between the Family Mediation Service, the Legal Aid Board and the Courts Service based on-site at the District Court's offices in Dolphin House, Dublin 2 commenced in March 2011.

In 2012 information on mediation was provided to 1,718 individuals, of whom 748 reached agreements on matters that would otherwise have gone before a District Judge. A review of the initiative concluded that annualised savings of over €113,000 were realised in 2012. The review also concluded that:

- There are clear cost benefits arising from the initiative and there is potential for further capacity and further savings solely from the current initiative;
- These cost benefits would be increased significantly if the initiative were extended;
- There are considerable individual, system and societal benefits to this approach;
- Based on international experience this approach has the potential to have a significant impact for people involved in family disputes. Benefits extend beyond the parties to the dispute, notably to children, families and even to society;
- It also has the potential to impact quite significantly on the administration of justice



in family law cases. Notably, it can impact on the number of cases going through the courts system;

- It has real potential to speed up the resolution of disputes and to do so more cheaply than through the courts process;
- It generates considerable ‘down-stream’ savings on other State services;
- It is an excellent example of the benefits of an integrated approach by State bodies providing related services.

Mediation process at Dolphin House

After referral, in the main by the Courts Service in Dolphin House, first 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 cumulative statistics for the Dolphin House Family Mediation Service for 2012 were as follows:

Table 19 - Dolphin House cumulative statistics for 2012

	1st contact info session attended	2nd contact info session attended	Mediated sessions attended	Agreements
Jan	125	60	67	31
Feb	101	64	76	27
Mar	85	55	98	29
Apr	76	47	79	35
May	100	41	75	20
Jun	115	51	61	26
Jul	96	61	71	21
Aug	69	47	68	35
Sep	72	48	67	30
Oct	95	58	79	32
Nov	115	67	52	48
Dec	36	34	74	40
Total	1,085	633	867	374

Naas District Court Initiative

Working from the model established in Dolphin House, the Family Mediation Service and the Courts Service in Naas District Court commenced a similarly structured project operating from Naas Courthouse from 10th September 2012. An FMS mediator is in-situ 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 FMS mediator contacts the second party and offers them an information appointment. If both parties are interested in proceeding with mediation they begin the process.

The cumulative statistics from 10th September to 31st December 2012 are as follows:

Table 20 - Naas cumulative statistics for 2012

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1st Contact info session attended	5	11	11	5	32
2nd Contact info session attended	3	5	7	3	18
Mediated sessions attended	2	7	8	8	25
Agreements	2	2	5	9	18

Cork (District Court) Family Mediation Project

From September 2012 the FMS/Legal Aid Board and the Courts Service have been working together setting up a court-related mediation project in Cork which commenced in January 2013. This project differs from the initiatives in Dolphin House in Dublin and in Naas in that the FMS will not have a presence in the Courthouse but will be delivering information and mediation sessions from its offices in South Mall only a few minutes from the Courthouse across the river. Parties will be referred to FMS by the Cork District Court.

All of the above court-related initiatives are limited to parties applying for Custody, Access, Maintenance and Guardianship orders.



FMS/NUI Maynooth Family Mediation Training

The Family Mediation Service's professional mediation training is accredited by NUI Maynooth as part of its Post Graduate Certificate in Family Mediation and Conflict Intervention. This annual training programme is the only third-level University-linked training programme in Ireland. The training runs annually from September to April. There are currently six trainees placed with the FMS for the 2012-2013 training programme. The continuance of the training programme ensures the standard and numbers of family mediators available for contract work for the FMS are maintained and increased.

Criminal Legal Aid Ad-Hoc Schemes

Criminal Legal Aid

While historically the Legal Aid Board's statutory remit has primarily pertained to civil legal aid, it was decided by Government in 2010 to broaden the Board's remit by transferring the responsibility for the administration and management of the various Criminal Legal Aid Schemes from the Department of Justice and Equality to the Legal Aid 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 Legal Aid Ad-hoc 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 that for the Attorney General's Ad-hoc Scheme on the 1st June 2012. Expenditure on the above mentioned schemes comes from the Justice Vote.

It is expected that the remit for the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) Scheme will transfer to the Board in 2013. Legislation providing for the transfer of the main Criminal Legal Aid Scheme is anticipated in 2014.



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

Garda station legal advice scheme

The Garda Station Scheme is designed to provide free legal advice to persons detained in Garda Stations who qualify under specific qualifying criteria. Overall post-tax expenditure on the Scheme in recent years is as follows:

Table 21 - Expenditure on Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009
Expenditure	0.9m	1.2m	1.3m	1m

Expenditure on this scheme comes from the Justice Vote. During 2012, the first full year in which the Scheme fell within its remit, the Board processed over 4,000 claims received from 225 solicitor firms in respect of over 8,000 Garda Station detainee consultations.

In addition, in 2012 the Board finalised a thorough review of the Scheme’s implementation. Resulting from that process, the Board streamlined the claims process with the introduction of a new single claim form to replace the three separate forms previously employed. This has delivered a noticeable increase in efficiency for both claimants and the Board coupled with a significant decrease in the amount of paper in circulation under the Scheme. In conjunction with this, the Board introduced a new Guidance Document which provides a historical background to the Scheme, information pertaining to its provisions and guidance for the process of submitting applications and claiming fees.

2012 also saw the first full year of operation of a new database developed by the Board to drive the Scheme’s implementation. This bespoke database facilitates accurate recording of the detainees, the dates of their detentions and the subsequent claims for solicitor’s fees while also facilitating the collation of a wide range of information and statistics not previously available on the operation of the Scheme.



Legal Aid Board / Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme

Annual Statistical Report 2012

Table 22 - General Statistics

General Statistics		
1	Total cost of authorised claims (pre-tax)	€718,739
2	Cost of mileage authorised	€13,610
3	Overall number of claims authorised	4,155
4	Total claims authorised under Section 30, Offences Against the State Act 1939 (as amended)	401
5	Total claims authorised under Section 4, Criminal Justice Act 1984 (as amended)	3,350
6	Total claims authorised under Section 2, Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act 1996 (as amended)	345
7	Total claims authorised under Section 50, Criminal Justice Act 2007 (as amended)	59
8	Total claims authorised in respect of Extension Hearings	27
9	Total cost of Extension Hearings	€5,568
10	Total number of individual consultations authorised in respect of day-time period (9am-7pm)	2,897
11	Total number of individual consultations authorised in respect of night-time period (7pm-9am)	1,289
12	Total number of individual consultations authorised in respect of weekend or bank holiday period	853
13	Total number of individual phone consultations authorised	3,178
14	Total number of solicitor firms who had authorised claims	225



Table 23 - Payments in 2012

Payments in 2012	
Average payment to a solicitor firm	€3,194
Average cost per solicitor claim	€173
Average cost per individual consultation	€87
Average number of claims per solicitor firm	18
Highest cost of an individual claim processed	€1,637
Lowest cost of an individual claim processed	€40



Attorney General's Ad-Hoc Scheme

The year 2012 witnessed a range of changes to the Attorney General's Ad-hoc Scheme. In the first instance, the remit for the administration of the Scheme was transferred to the Legal Aid Board on 1st June 2012. Secondly, a decision was made to transfer the responsibility for the Scheme's budget from the Chief State Solicitor's Office to the Department of Justice and Equality with effect from the 1st January 2013. Expenditure on this scheme comes from the Justice Vote. Finally, it was decided by the Department to rename the Scheme as the "Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme" from the 1st January 2013.

The purpose of the 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 of the Court 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.

Since taking on the responsibility for the Scheme on 1st June 2012 the Board has carried out a review of the Scheme's implementation and, resulting from that process, has introduced a number of changes to the manner under which claims are submitted, considered and processed through to payment. This has had a notable impact on the Scheme's efficiency and, to further improve the governance of the process, it is planned to introduce a comprehensive Guidance Document on the Scheme's provisions together with new claim and attendance forms in early 2013.

On the non-bail side of the Scheme, the Board processed and authorised 160 claims totalling some €800,000 (pre-tax) over the period 1st June to 31st December 2012. Claims may include a number of individual payments to solicitors, barristers, interpreters and



others who provided services to represent the Respondent. For administrative purposes, a separate process applies for High Court Bail Applications in criminal matters. Under that process some 1,600 claims were processed in 2012 to a total value of €1.2 million. Set out below is a report on the Board’s implementation of the Scheme for the period 01 June – 31 December 2012 and also some historic expenditure figures which provide some context to the 2012 figures.

Table 24 - Attorney General’s Scheme

Attorney General’s Scheme (Statistics cover the period 01 June – 31 December 2012).		
1	Number of live cases taken over from the Department on 1 st June	68
2	Number of new cases received in Board	144
3	Number of cases received back from CSSO	138
4	Number of cases received back from DPP	9
5	Overall number of cases awaiting a response from CSSO at end 2012	33
6	Overall number of cases awaiting a response from DPP at end 2012	21
7	Number of cases returned to solicitors under query	90
8	Number of cases authorised and forwarded to FSS	160
9	Average cost per authorised claim	€4,988
10	Total value of claims authorised *	€798,129

*The Legal Aid Board commenced the administration of the Scheme on the 1st June 2012. Accordingly, the LAB table above only covers a seven month period.

Table 25 - Attorney General’s Scheme- Historic Annual Expenditure

Attorney General's Scheme / Historic Annual Expenditure	
2008	2m
2009	1.6m
2010	2.85m
2011	3.6m
2012	3.5m

Note: These statistics are based on the final post tax output figures.



Developing the Service

The new Corporate Plan 2012-2014 approved by the Board in early 2012 commits the Board to:

- Building on initiatives already underway to improve the cost effectiveness and quality of services provided.
- Developing new service delivery initiatives, to address increasing demand with an emphasis on:
 - Embracing new technology to better manage risk and performance and improve the effectiveness of service delivery;
 - Developing more cost effective methods of service delivery, including the full exploitation of the potential to utilise non-legal means of resolving disputes; and
 - Developing the capacity to successfully integrate new areas of work into the organisation's operations.

As with 2011, the downturn in the economy in recent times has created a very difficult environment for the Board, notably in the area of civil legal aid. The huge increase in demand for services combined with reduced resources with which to provide such service has meant that the Board, in most of our centres, has been unable to meet its target of ensuring that every eligible applicant gets to see a solicitor for a first appointment within a four month period with a substantive service following.

As a result of the above factors the Board has seen a significant increase in waiting times at law centres for non priority appointments (see Table 9). In recognition of the impact that long delays in service delivery can mean for applicants the Board has sought to be more creative in its approach to the provision of service.



Develop new service delivery initiatives to address increasing demand and the need to provide services in a resource constrained environment

The Board has been extremely conscious of the impact of lengthy waiting times for applicants. Waiting for an appointment with a solicitor can lead to resolution of problems becoming more difficult; to creating long term difficulties in respect of relationships between parents involved in a dispute and their children; to associated problems arising; and to impacts on peoples' wider families and even communities. To address this problem the Board has initiated a 'triage' process whereby the intention is that applicants will have a meeting of no more than 45 minutes duration with their solicitor within a month of applying to a law centre. This allows for an assessment of the problem and a consideration of the best means of addressing it. If a case is appropriate for a different approach, for example mediation, this can be proposed. If the applicant would be better served going to an organisation such as MABS this too can be suggested. If court resolution is the best approach, a person will be so advised but, save for priority cases, will have to wait for that service. The Board is conscious that this is not the ultimate solution to the problem of waiting times but feels it is an appropriate and humane approach at a time of limited available resources.

The Board is also conscious of the increasing prevalence and complexity of child care cases i.e. applications by the State to take children into care. To seek to meet the extra demand in this area in Dublin, two solicitors are now placed full time on such service in Dolphin House. Even with this extra provision the Board is not always in a position to offer immediate representation in cases where the notice provided is minimal. We are also extremely conscious that the resources we are in a position to provide are a fraction of that expended by the HSE in the same cases.

The Board introduced a new set of terms and conditions for the retention of barristers from 1st August 2012. These are tailored to meet the Board's requirements and it is anticipated that, as a result of the new terms and conditions, savings will accrue in the coming years.



The Board, too, has begun seeking to develop the synergies between the Family Mediation Service and the Law Centres with a view to ensuring that the most effective means of resolving disputes is identified and utilised. There has been a considerable emphasis in the past year on reducing waiting times in FMS centres thus allowing for a relatively easy transfer of appropriate cases from law centres to the FMS.

As has been noted earlier, the integrated mediation initiative involving the Courts Service, the FMS and the Board in Dolphin House in Dublin continues to develop and has now been extended to Naas and Cork. The Dolphin project generates annualised savings of over €110,000 as well as having a significant impact to date through nearly 500 mediated agreements.

Since taking over responsibility for the criminal legal aid ad hoc schemes the Board has developed a new guidance document and claim form for the Garda Station Advice Scheme which has improved the efficiency of the service. Greater efficiency has also been achieved with the Attorney General's Scheme (now the Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme).

Developing the capacity to successfully integrate new areas of work into the organisation's operations

In 2012, the process of integrating the Family Mediation Service into the Board continued. The FMS transferred to the Board in November 2011 and 2012 was the first year of the unified operation. Considerable progress was made on waiting times in FMS centres. All the support operations have now been centralised and a new IT database has been developed to facilitate detailed reporting of its operations. Progress was also made in exploiting synergies between the FMS centres and law centres and there will be a greater organisational approach in this area in 2013.

The transfer of responsibility for elements of criminal legal aid to the Board also continued in 2012 with the Attorney General's Scheme (now titled the Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme) coming to the Board during the year.

It is anticipated that further functions associated with legal aid will come to the Board in 2013.



Making effective use of technology

The Board is aware that technology has become an increasingly important element of the provision of legal aid services internationally. The Board's focus during 2012 has been on the further development of its case management system which has been its largest ever IT initiative. Significant progress was made during the year and the system is now in place in all law centres. It has not been without its teething problems but we are confident that the system will contribute significantly to both overall efficiency and accountability and our capacity to effectively manage risk.

The Board would hope to further develop the capacity to provide information and certain services online when work on the case management system has finally been completed.

In the meantime, new databases have been developed in respect of the FMS and the two criminal legal aid ad hoc schemes now within the Board's remit.



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

The difficult operating environment in which the Board finds itself places particular importance on the role of the Board's Legal Services Section, which is based in Cahirciveen. Legal Services is the area which has the primary decision making function on the granting or refusal of legal aid certificates in cases apart from the routine District Court matters, where the function rests with the local law centre. The grant or refusal of legal aid certificates is governed by the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995, and associated Regulations. The unit also has a decision making role in respect of additional expenditures on cases where a certificate has issued. 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 a time of reduced resources and high demand, this is a challenging task which has a significant role in how the Board's finances develop.

In 2012, there were approximately 3,300 certificates granted by Legal Services on foot of submissions made by law centres on behalf of applicants. This was slightly up on the previous year. The unit also granted in the region of 1,650 amendments to legal aid certificates in the year. These amendments are, effectively, authorisations for additional services on a certificate, such as a barrister or a medical report. Legal Services is also tasked with decisions to refuse applications for legal aid certificates, where the application is refused on its merits, in line with the Board's governing legislation. As can be seen in the section dealing with the Appeal Committee, 172 of these refusals were the subject of a formal appeal in 2012, with the original decision upheld in 138 cases.



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. As can be seen in the Service Delivery chapter, there were 5,077 District Court certificates issued in the year. This unit is also the main contact point for queries from the public and other stakeholders, whether via telephone or email. The amount of telephone and email contact in recent years has been at a high level, reflecting the high level of demand for the Board's services.

Civil Legal Aid (Operations)

This Unit is responsible for the operational delivery of legal services through the law centre network. A significant focus in 2012 was to continue the engagement with the law centres and, in particular, to roll out and embed the new case management system. Engagement with the Managing Solicitors focussed on making best use of the resources available to the Board and to explore ways that the Board, and individual law centres can provide services more efficiently and more effectively. This was particularly important in the light of the ongoing increase in demand for the Board's services against a backdrop of limited resources. It was informed by the value for money review undertaken in 2010. In 2012 the Unit was responsible for revising the terms and conditions for the retention of barristers.

Human Resources

The impact of increased demand and reduced resources has been referred to earlier. The moratorium on public service recruitment, in particular, continued to impact on the Board's ability to meet the demand on its services. 24 staff, including 7 solicitors, left the Board during the year due to retirements, resignations and the non-renewal of the contracts of some temporary staff. The deployment of the Board's workforce was therefore a key challenge during the year.



The redeployment of staffing resources as appropriate to areas of priority, principally to front-line service delivery areas, is also a key feature of the Board's workforce planning process. The Board has also continued to focus on the active management of absenteeism, and as a result, the Board's lost-time rate, which is 4.5%, continues to be below the average for the Civil Service.

During 2012, there was a significant input from HR Section to ensure that the transfer of the Family Mediation Service (FMS) to the Board, which had taken effect from 1st November 2011, was effective. This involved dealing with a number of industrial relations and organisational issues to ensure the smooth integration of the FMS services into the Board's overall operations.

The Board continued to support the National Intern Strategy (JobBridge) during 2012 by offering work placement opportunities of up to nine months duration to unemployed solicitors in receipt of Job-Seekers allowance. The Board also facilitated some placements in front-line administrative roles. During 2012, solicitors availed of placements under the scheme in Cork, Sligo, Cavan, Nenagh, Wicklow, Portlaoise and Ennis as well as in the Board's seven Dublin-based law centres. Administrative staff seeking work experience were placed in approximately half of the Board's locations during the year.

Learning and Development

A new Learning and Development Strategy was devised during 2012 to cover the three year period up to the end of 2014. The Strategy outlines how the Learning and Development Unit will continue to foster 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 111 professional training sessions (or 1341 training days) during 2012. The activity undertaken was an increase on recent years, due largely to the training involved in preparing staff for the new legal case



management system. The training provided overall was more than sufficient to meet targeted organisational learning and development priorities, including Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements for the Board's solicitors.

Skills and Qualifications Audit

In October 2012, a comprehensive online Skills and Qualifications audit was carried out. The analysis of information gathered during this exercise has contributed to the Board's workforce and succession planning processes. It has also identified individuals with the skills, qualifications and experience to assist the Learning and Development Unit to deliver low cost training across the organisation.

Payment of Course Fees (Advance/Refund of Fees for Third Level courses)

The Board supported 55 applications for staff who pursued a course of education outside of working hours which represents a significant increase on 2011 when 33 staff were supported.

Family Law Conference

The Learning and Development Unit organised the Board's annual Family Law Conference. The Conference took place in Chartered Accountants House in Dublin, with 152 delegates in attendance, the majority of whom were staff of the board. The theme of the Conference was *Resolving Family Law Disputes – Alternatives to Litigation*. The conference was formally opened by Senator Ivana Bacik and included among its varied speakers Ms. Muriel Walls, Chairperson of the Legal Aid Board, Judge Petria McDonnell, Dr Anne Egan of NUI Galway, Jane Robey, Chief Executive of UK based National Family Mediation, Padraig O' Morain, Journalist and Donagh McGowan, Partner, Mason Hayes & Curran Solicitors.

Further details of the conference can be obtained from the Board's website www.legalaidboard.ie.



The Partnership Process

The Board's Partnership Committee met on three occasions in 2012. Issues discussed by the Committee during the year included:

- The evolving role and function of the Partnership Committee;
- A review of the provision of Civil Legal Aid services;
- The transfer of the Family Mediation Service into the Board;
- The transfer of responsibility for Criminal Legal Aid and associated schemes into the Board;
- The budgetary position of the Board;
- The operation of triage; and
- Liaising with central government Departments and the Board's parent Department on the public service reform agenda.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

The primary focus of the ICT unit of the Board during 2012 was the completion and implementation of the new legal case management system (EOS).

This system is a single repository for all applicant and legal case management data. It includes standard workflows, letters and precedents for the proceedings undertaken by the Board. It incorporates time management, financial management, scanning, reporting, central calendar / diaries and a reminder system. It gives the staff a view of the full client / case file from first application to closure of file. The roll out of EOS included the introduction of scanning at all law centre locations. EOS also includes document collation whereby different types of documents (including scanned documents) can be automatically collated, indexed and paginated. The reporting software which accompanies EOS is being used to both monitor usage of EOS and generate a wide variety of business intelligence reports. Significant time resources currently being applied to manually generate reports can be directed elsewhere.



The development of this legal case management system is the most significant ICT project in 2012. It is, in fact, the largest ICT Project undertaken by the Board to date. The project went “live” in August 2012. It is now available on approximately 270 desktops in the Board.

In addition, the Family Mediation Service’s ICT systems were migrated to the Board’s network in September 2012. The Board now supports a network of 52 sites.

In late 2012, planning commenced on the connection of the Refugee Documentation Centre’s Country of Origin information database to the EU Country of Origin information portal. This project has been approved for EU funding.

In ongoing work, enhancements and upgrades were applied to our existing systems including the Refugee Documentation Centre’s query management system and the criminal legal aid database. Hardware and software upgrades were also implemented.

Organisational Support

In 2012, the main challenge for the Board’s Organisation Unit was to continue to manage and support the Board’s 33 locations whilst at the same time taking on responsibility for an additional 16 locations operated by the Family Mediation Service. The Unit took over the management of the FMS facilities with regard to lease issues, the payment of rent and service charges, maintenance issues and the area of office supplies and services. The FMS offices are now fully integrated into the Board’s facilities management systems.

Significant sustained reductions in running costs for its law centre and administrative offices made in previous years have allowed the Board to divert much needed resources towards the provision of legal services.



Official Languages Scheme

The Board prepared its second Language Scheme under the Official Languages Act which was submitted to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in July 2011. An implementation plan for the revised Scheme was also drafted by the end of 2011. The revised Scheme again commits the Board to a number of actions intended to promote the availability of the services provided by the Board through the Irish language and builds on the achievements of the first Scheme. Approval of the Scheme is pending from the Department but, in the interim, the Board is continuing to meet its commitments under the first Scheme and has taken steps in 2012 to make some of the changes outlined in the implementation plan for the second Scheme.

Equality and Disability

The Legal Aid Board is fully committed to its responsibility to provide 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 complied with by implementing its Equality and Disability Strategy. Further progress was made in 2012 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 pivotal 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 2012, 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 Unit successfully facilitated the annual audit carried out on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General.



Internal Audit

The Board's internal audit function was staffed on a part-time basis by two staff members. Their work in previous years had focused mainly on examination of the financial procedures in law centres. Additionally, audits of head office expenditure were conducted on a number of areas of expenditure in the Board.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee of the Board proposed during the year that the role be expanded to take greater account of the major risk factors, notably in law centres. The remit of internal audit was expanded to include matters such as confirmation that the anti-money laundering legislation was being complied with in all relevant cases, that the risk register in centres is being appropriately maintained and that legal aid certificates have been issued in accordance with guidelines.

During 2012 the Internal Audit Unit conducted financial audits of seven law centres. These were considered and approved by the Audit and Risk Management Committee. The Committee also approved a report by the Unit on travel and subsistence payments within the Board.

Finance

The Board's financial statements for 2012 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 2012 was €32.922 million, as compared with €30.370 million in 2011. The Board received a single line of funding in 2012 meaning the funding for the Refugee Legal Service is included in the 2012 figure.

(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 is €10 for legal advice and €50 for representation in court. This minimum contribution can be waived in cases of hardship. Contributions received in 2012 (€832,292) were nearly 3% higher than in 2011 (€809,967).

(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 2012 (€685,873) were 30% lower than in 2011 (€974,331).



Expenditure

The following are comments on the major items of expenditure shown in the 2012 financial statements:

1) Salaries

Salary and related costs increased by €1,273,000 in 2012. This was as a result of the transfer of the Family Mediation Service staff to the Board on January 1 2012.

2) Accommodation and establishment costs

Expenditure in this area has increased by €951,000 (26%) in 2012. This was largely down to costs associated 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 increased by €142,641 (3%) when compared with 2011. An increased level of expenditure in respect of the LAB was a factor in this. The increase in the demand for civil legal aid during 2012 would also have an impact on counsel fees.

The accrual for counsel fees, where work has been undertaken but not yet presented for payment at December 31st 2012, stands at €4.645 million, 8.4% lower than at the end of 2011.

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

Table 26 – Counsel Fees

Year	Counsel Fees
2006	€6,847,000
2007	€4,903,000
2008	€3,986,500
2009	€5,125,472
2010	€4,793,475
2011	€4,889,622
2012	€5,032,263



(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 a decrease in expenditure of 15% from 2011 to 2012.

(iii) Private practitioner scheme

Expenditure on the private practitioner scheme was €3 million in 2012, which was just 1% higher than the 2011 outturn.

At December 31st 2012, the accrual for private practitioner fees, where work has been incurred but not yet presented for payment, stood at €2.537 million. The accrual for 2011 was €2.019 million.

(iv) 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 2012 was significantly higher than in 2011. In 2012, €274,000 was paid to mediators for work carried out on behalf of the Family Mediation Service. The increase is also due to an increase in the number of cases where independent legal advice is sought.

(v) Other expenses

This category saw a 4% drop in expenditure in 2012. This was largely down to reduced spending in the area of training and education.

4) General administration

Costs under this heading were 32% higher in 2012 at €2.121 million. The main reason for the increase was the transfer of the Family Mediation Service.



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

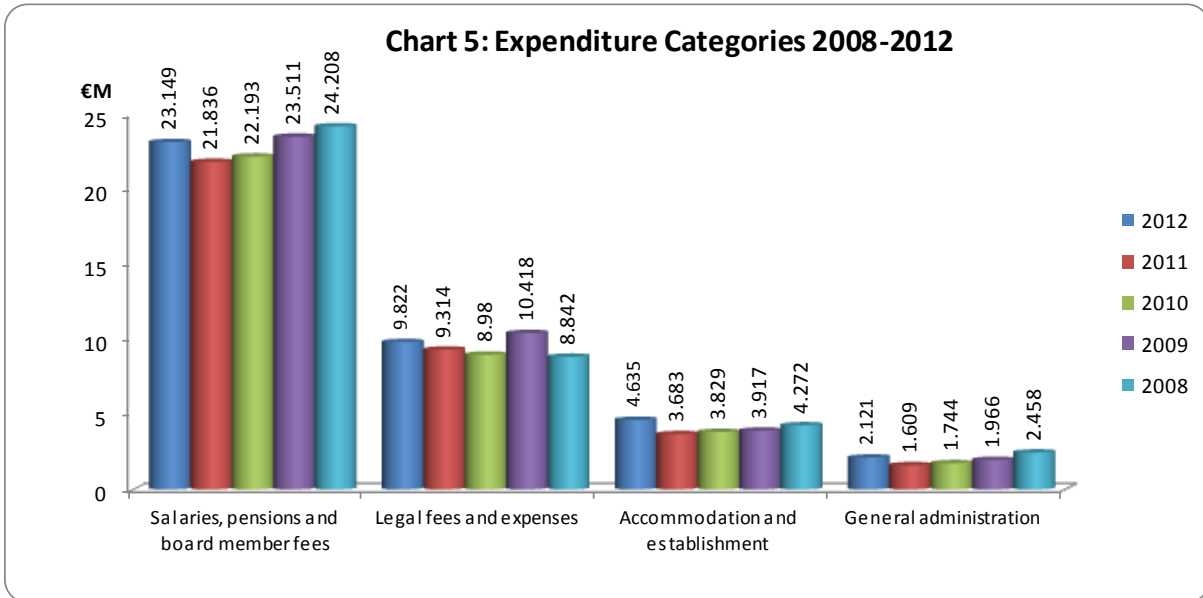
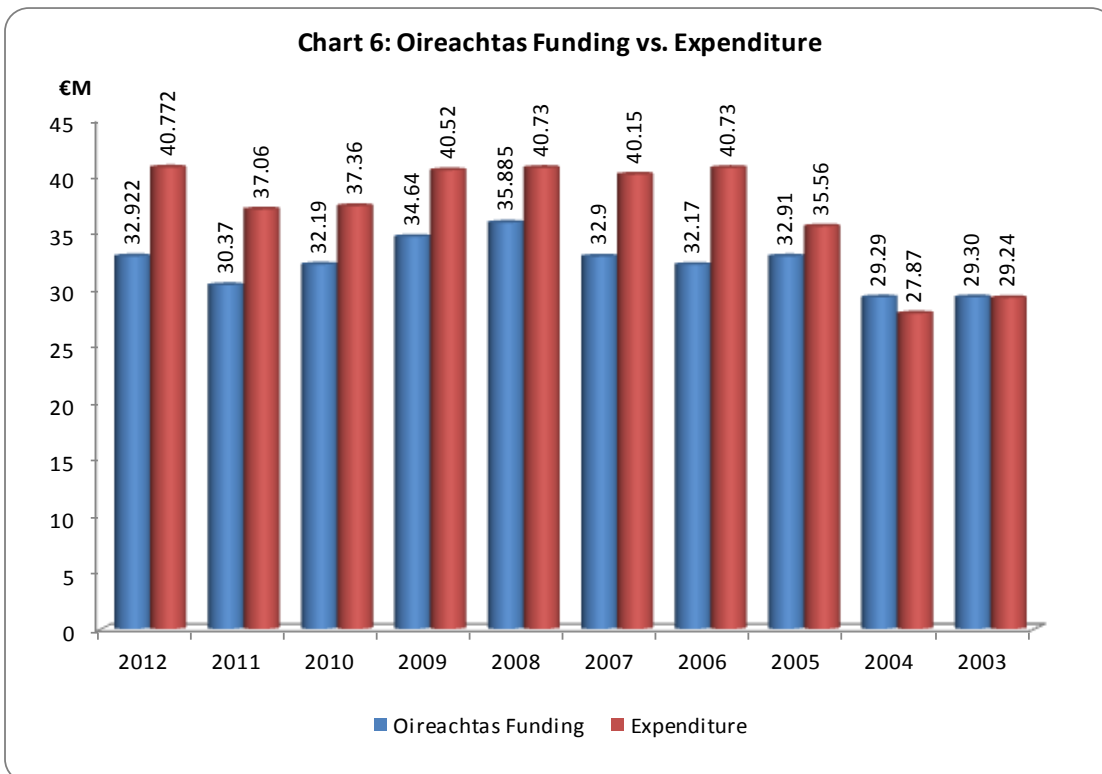


Chart 6 below shows the relationship between Oireachtas funding and actual expenditure over the last ten years.





Cash at bank and on hand

The Balance Sheet shows that the Board had €2.5 million on hand at the end of 2012. This included €0.79 million held on behalf of clients. It can be seen from Note 14 to the accounts that the throughput of client funds in 2012 was €4.42 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 2012 amounted to €0.



Appendix 1

Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2012

Contents	Page
Statement of Board Responsibilities	66
Statement on Internal Financial Control	67
Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General	72
Statement of Accounting Policies	73
Income and Expenditure Account	77
Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses	78
Balance Sheet	79
Cash Flow	80
Notes to the Financial Statements	81

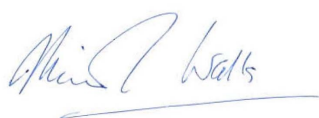
STATEMENT OF BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

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 monies 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.



Muriel Walls
Chairperson

Date: 10th December 2013



David Garvey
Board Member



LEGAL AID BOARD

Statement on Internal Financial Control

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, who report to it at its monthly meetings and 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. 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 fully 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 corrective action is taken where 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 2012 and, as part of its functions, examined in detail five key areas of expenditure: Computer Maintenance; Computerisation; Payroll; Rent and Travel and Subsistence. Over the past five years, twenty five key areas of expenditure have been examined by the former and current Committee. During 2012, in addition to the monthly financial reports, the Committee also considered two quarterly financial reviews.



- 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. Both the risk register and the risk materialisation reports were presented to the former Committee in March and October 2012. 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. In 2012, the Audit and Risk Management Committee agreed proposals which provided for a greater role for the internal audit function in examining client files. The Committee met on three occasions in 2012.



- 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 2012, the internal audit function of the Board carried out audits of accounts and procedures in seven 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. In 2012, the Department of Justice and Equality carried out a follow up review in relation to the implementation of recommendations of two previous audits which was considered by the Audit and Risk Management Committee to ensure that appropriate action has been taken by the Board. I can



confirm that all issues raised since the 2011 audit have been addressed and any relevant recommendations adopted. 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 2013 and was presented to the Board in conjunction with the Management response at its meeting on 20th March 2013.

4. I confirm that during the year ended 31 December 2012, the Board conducted a review of the effectiveness of the Board's system of internal financial controls.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Alison P. Watts', with a horizontal line underneath.

Chairperson

Date: 10th December 2013



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 2012 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 2012 and of its income and expenditure for 2012.

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.

I have nothing to report in regard to those matters upon which reporting is by exception.

Seamus McCarthy

Seamus McCarthy
Comptroller and Auditor General

12 December 2013



STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

General

The Legal Aid Board, 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 2012, the Board operated out of 33 full-time centres and 12 part-time centres throughout the country.

Family Mediation Service

Responsibility for this service was transferred to the Board in November 2011.

Expenditure for this service is included in the financial statements as follows;

	€000
Salaries	1,457
Professional Mediation Fees	273
Accommodation and establishment expenses	841
General administration	202
Total 2012 Expenditure	2,773

Transfer of Functions

Criminal Legal Aid Scheme

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 and the Attorney General ad-hoc scheme.

The schemes costs continue to be met from the Department of Justice and Equality Subhead C.1.

The Board estimates the total cost of administering the schemes as €250,000.

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 2012 shows an excess of liabilities over assets of €3,862,639. 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 Secretary 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, 2012 was approximately €17,000. There were no bad debts written off in 2012.



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 monies/property received by the person as a result of the provision of legal services.

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	20%
computer equipment	33%

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 2012, on foot of awards or settlements made in favour of clients represented by the Board. The Board may recover these from 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.

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.

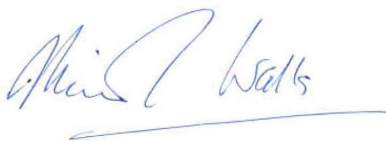
In estimating the provision, the Board has adopted prudent measurement techniques based on the latest data available. Improved data capture methods have been utilised in the Board's estimate for the current year. No income is anticipated for cases that may recover costs.

LEGAL AID FUND
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the year ended 31 December 2012

	Note	2012		2011	
		€	€	€	€
Income					
State funding	1	32,922,000		30,370,000	
Net deferred funding for pensions	2c	3,629,305		3,959,943	
Contributions from aided persons		832,292		809,967	
Costs recovered		685,873		974,331	
Loss on sale of assets		0		0	
Other income	3	507,906		377,960	
			38,577,376		36,492,201
Transfer from Capital Account	4		542,739		(547,767)
			39,120,115		35,944,434
Expenditure					
Salaries and related expenses	5	19,183,719		17,911,108	
Pension Costs	2a	3,927,101		3,842,426	
Fees to Board members		38,115		82,573	
Accommodation and establishment expenses	8	4,635,141		3,683,821	
Legal fees & expenses	9	9,821,881		9,314,872	
General administration	10	2,120,732		1,609,479	
Depreciation	11	1,027,269		603,170	
Audit fee		18,095		18,095	
			40,772,054		37,065,544
Deficit for year			(1,651,939)		(1,121,110)
Opening balance as at 1 January			(3,831,615)		(2,710,505)
Closing balance as at 31 December			(5,483,554)		(3,831,615)

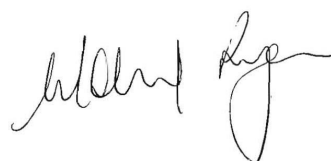
All income and expenditure for the year 31 December 2012 relates to continuing activities.

The Statement of Accounting Policies, together with Notes 1 to 20, form part of these financial statements.



Chairperson

Date: 10th December 2013



Chief Executive



Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses
for the year ended 31 December 2012

		2012		2011	
		€	€	€	€
Surplus / (Deficit) for year			(1,651,939)		(1,121,110)
Experience losses / (gains) on pension scheme liability	2d	(1,529,305)		(2,659,943)	
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of pension scheme liabilities			0		0
Actuarial loss / (gain) on Pension Liabilities	2b		(1,529,305)		(2,659,943)
Adjustment to Deferred Pension Funding			1,529,305		2,659,943
Total Recognised Gains / Losses			(1,651,939)		(1,121,110)

The Statement of Accounting Policies, together with Notes 1 to 20, form part of these financial statements.

Chairperson

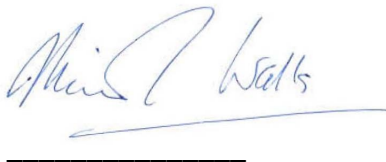
Date: 10th December 2013

Chief Executive

Balance Sheet
As at 31 December 2012


	Note	2012		2011	
		€	€	€	€
Fixed assets	11		1,604,305		2,147,044
Current assets					
Cash at bank and on hand		2,489,673		3,815,835	
Debtors and prepayments	12	880,457		899,698	
		<u>3,370,130</u>		<u>4,715,533</u>	
Less current liabilities					
Creditors and accruals	13	8,087,605		7,834,418	
Clients' funds	14	766,079		712,730	
		<u>8,853,684</u>		<u>8,547,148</u>	
Net current (liabilities)			(5,483,554)		(3,831,615)
Total assets less current Liabilities before Pension			(3,879,249)		(1,684,571)
Deferred pension funding	2c		39,800,000		37,700,000
Pension liabilities	2b		<u>(39,800,000)</u>		<u>(37,700,000)</u>
			0		0
Total assets			<u><u>(3,879,249)</u></u>		<u><u>(1,684,571)</u></u>
Represented by:					
Income and Expenditure Account			(5,483,554)		(3,831,615)
Capital Account	4		<u>1,604,305</u>		<u>2,147,044</u>
			<u><u>(3,879,249)</u></u>		<u><u>(1,684,571)</u></u>

The Statement of Accounting Policies, together with Notes 1 to 20, form part of these financial statements.



Chairperson

Date: 10th December 2013



Chief Executive

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
for the year ended 31 December 2012

	Note	2012 €	2011 €
Net cash (outflow) from operating activities	16	(979,569)	(1,402,431)
Returns on investment and servicing of finance			
Interest received		148,698	110,623
Interest paid on client settlements		(10,761)	(10,062)
Investing activities			
Sale of tangible assets		0	0
Purchase of tangible assets		(484,530)	(1,154,513)
Net cash (outflow)		<u>(1,326,162)</u>	(2,456,382)
(Decrease) in cash	17	<u>(1,326,162)</u>	<u>(2,456,382)</u>

The Statement of Accounting Policies, together with Notes 1 to 20, form part of these financial statements.



Chairperson

Date: 10th December 2013



Chief Executive



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. State funding

State Funding was received from Vote 19 - Office of the Minister for Justice and Equality as follows

Subhead:	2012	2011
	€	€
C.2 Grant-in-Aid	32,922,000	24,125,000
D.2 Asylum Seekers Taskforce - Legal Aid*	0	6,245,000
	<u>32,922,000</u>	<u>30,370,000</u>

- This funding was provided towards the expenditure incurred on the Refugee Legal Service in 2011. See Note 18.



2. Pension Costs

(a) Analysis of total pension costs charged to Expenditure	2012	2011
	€	€
Current service cost	2,250,000	2,300,000
Interest on Pension Scheme Liabilities	2,100,000	2,000,000
Employee Contributions	<u>(422,899)</u>	<u>(457,574)</u>
	<u>3,927,101</u>	<u>3,842,426</u>

(b) Movement in Net Pension Liability during the financial year	2012	2011
	€	€
Net Pension Liability at 1 January	37,700,000	36,400,000
Current Service Cost	2,250,000	2,300,000
Interest Costs	2,100,000	2,000,000
Actuarial (Profit)/Loss	<u>(1,529,305)</u>	<u>(2,659,943)</u>
Pensions paid in the year	<u>(720,695)</u>	<u>(340,057)</u>
Net Pension Liability at 31 December	<u>39,800,000</u>	<u>37,700,000</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:

	2012	2011
	€	€
Funding recoverable in respect of current year pension	4,350,000	4,300,000
State grant applied to pay pensioners	<u>(720,695)</u>	<u>(340,057)</u>
	<u>3,629,305</u>	<u>3,959,943</u>

The deferred funding asset for pensions as at 31 December 2012 amounted to €39.8 million (€37.7 million in 2011).



Pension Costs Continued

(d) History of defined benefit obligations

	2012	2011	2010
	€	€	€
Defined Benefit obligations	39,800,000	37,700,000	36,400,000
Experience losses / (gains) on Scheme Liabilities	(1,529,305)	(2,659,943)	(4,865,932)
Percentage of the present value of the scheme	-4%	-7%	-13%

The cumulative actuarial gain recognised in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses amounts to €3,863,453.

(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 (May '13) by a qualified independent actuary taking account of the requirements of the FRS in order to assess the scheme liabilities at 31 December 2012.

The principal actuarial assumptions were as follows:

	2012	2011
Rate of increase in salaries	4%	4%
Rate of increase in pensions in payment	4%	4%
Discount Rate	5.5%	5.5%
Inflation Rate	2%	2%

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

	2012	2011
Male aged 65	22	22
Female aged 65	25	25



3. Other Income

	2012 €	2011 €
Interest received and receivable	109,395	74,226
Sundry receipts	398,511	303,734
	<u>507,906</u>	<u>377,960</u>

4. Capital Account

	€	€
Balance as at 1 January 2012		2,147,044
Transfer to Income and Expenditure Account		
- Income used to purchase fixed assets	484,530	
- Amount released on disposal of fixed assets	0	
- Income amortised in year in line with depreciation of assets	<u>(1,027,269)</u>	<u>(542,739)</u>
Balance as at 31 December 2012		<u>1,604,305</u>

5. Employee Numbers and Costs

The total staff complement as approved by the Minister at 31 December, 2012 was 373. The number of staff actually employed by the Board at 31 December, 2012 was 365 (2011 - 346). The average number of employees in the Board during the year was 364 (2011 - 351). Employee and related costs were as follows:

	2012 €	2011 €
Salaries	17,825,109	16,676,058
Cost of Secondment	57,717	55,920
Employer PRSI	1,300,893	1,179,130
	<u>19,183,719</u>	<u>17,911,108</u>

€1,015,386 was deducted from staff by way of pension levy and was paid over to the Department of Justice and Equality.



6. Chief Executive Officer Salary and Expenses

	2012 €	2011 €
CEO Salary	145,894	145,912
CEO Expenses	3,079	4,200
	<u>148,973</u>	<u>150,112</u>

The CEO received salary payments of €145,894. The pre-existing performance related pay scheme was discontinued in 2008 and no bonus has been paid in 2011. The CEO also received an amount of €3,079 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

	2012 €	2011 €
Board Members Fees	39,621	82,572
Board Members Expenses	19,444	32,440
	<u>59,065</u>	<u>115,012</u>

Board Members	Fees	Board Members	Fees
David Garvey	€7,336	Philip O'Leary	€8,071
Catherine Hayes	€8,071	Michelle O'Neill	€8,071
Micheal O'Connell	€8,071		



8. Accommodation and Establishment Expenses

	2012	2011
	€	€
Rents	3,096,440	2,505,710
Cleaning	310,089	255,438
Lighting and heating	323,633	236,394
Maintenance - Premises	561,715	385,411
Maintenance - Equipment	343,264	300,868
	<u>4,635,141</u>	<u>3,683,821</u>

9. Legal Fees and other Expenses

	2012	2011
	€	€
Counsel fees	5,032,263	4,889,622
Legal fees (incl. expert witness fees)	591,021	698,263
Private Practitioner Schemes	3,027,992	2,998,231
Other professional fees	679,158	257,275
Other expenses	491,448	471,481
	<u>9,821,881</u>	<u>9,314,872</u>

10. General Administration

	2012	2011
	€	€
Stationery and office expenses	305,886	267,052
Books and printing	121,189	100,663
Postage and telephone	1,054,848	722,510
Insurance	62,632	43,085
Travel and subsistence	576,178	476,169
	<u>2,120,732</u>	<u>1,609,479</u>



11. Fixed Assets

	Lease €	Office Furniture €	Equipment & Computers €	Premises Fit Out €	Total €
Cost					
Balance as at 01/01/12	2,292,177	2,154,939	3,935,871	3,413,701	11,796,688
Acquisitions	0	1,207	483,323	0	484,530
Disposals	0	0	(151,295)	0	(151,295)
Balance as at 31/12/12	2,292,177	2,156,146	4,267,899	3,413,701	12,129,923
Depreciation of fixed assets					
Balance as at 01/01/12	2,291,645	1,354,025	2,720,748	3,283,226	9,649,644
Charge in year	532	337,941	607,431	81,365	1,027,269
Disposals	0	0	(151,295)	0	(151,295)
Balance as at 31/12/12	2,292,177	1,691,966	3,176,884	3,364,591	10,525,618
Net book value as at 31/12/12	<u>0</u>	<u>464,180</u>	<u>1,091,015</u>	<u>49,110</u>	<u>1,604,305</u>
Net book value as at 31/12/11	<u>532</u>	<u>800,914</u>	<u>1,215,123</u>	<u>130,475</u>	<u>2,147,044</u>

12. Debtors and Prepayments

	2012 €	2011 €
Debtors - deposit interest	45,211	81,743
Prepayments		
- Rent	167,130	135,852
- Insurance	29,816	17,907
- Salaries	26,290	15,977
- Other	340,635	330,064
- Practising Certificates	271,375	318,155
	<u>880,457</u>	<u>899,698</u>



13. Creditors and Accruals

	2012 €	2011 €
Amounts falling due within one year: Creditors & accruals	8,087,605	7,834,418
	<u>8,087,605</u>	<u>7,834,418</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 2012, the amount provided for in relation to unbilled cases was €7,182,662 (2011 - €7,089,581)

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.

14. Clients' Funds

	2012 €	2011 €
Client funds held at 1 January (Gross)	712,730	1,222,484
Interest	<u>(23,533)</u>	<u>(21,954)</u>
Client funds held at 1 January (Net of Interest)	689,197	1,200,530
<i>Add</i> Awards/settlements received during 2011	4,484,763	3,960,539
<i>Less</i> Settlements paid out, including interest allowed and costs recovered	<u>(4,423,424)</u>	<u>(4,471,871)</u>
Client funds held at 31 December	750,536	689,198
Interest accruing on client funds held	15,543	23,533
Total due to clients	<u>766,079</u>	<u>712,730</u>

15. Commitments

(a) Commitments under operating leases

The Board occupies premises at Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry and Mount Street, Dublin and operates out of 47 other centres throughout the country. The Board is committed to pay rent of € 2,887,964 during 2013 in respect of leases expiring as follows:

	2012 €	2011 €
2013	206,554	178,384
2014-2017	1,039,315	1,011,613
2018 onwards	1,642,095	1,669,875

(b) Commitments in respect of Legal Fees

Commitments in respect of Legal Fees
Counsel Fees and Private Practitioner Schemes

	Total €	Total €
Open cases certified at 1 January 2012	14,564,077	15,336,892
Additional fees certified in 2012	7,750,564	7,205,033
2012 Payments	<u>(7,967,171)</u>	<u>(7,977,848)</u>
	14,347,470	14,564,077
Provided for at 31 December 2012	<u>(7,182,662)</u>	<u>(7,089,580)</u>
Outstanding commitments at 31 December 2012	7,164,808	7,474,497

At 31 December 2012, 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 2012, the Legal Aid Board had provided for legal fees of € 7,182,662 and had outstanding commitments in the amount of € 7,164,808.



16. Reconciliation of surplus for year to cash from operating activities

	2012 €	2011 €
(Deficit) for year	(1,651,939)	(1,121,110)
Adjustment for non-operating items		
Bank interest receivable	(109,395)	(74,226)
Movement on Capital Account	(542,739)	547,767
Adjustment for non-cash items		
Depreciation	1,027,269	603,170
(Increase) / Decrease in debtors	(17,291)	(156,797)
Increase / (Decrease) in creditors	314,526	(1,201,235)
	<u>(979,569)</u>	<u>(1,402,431)</u>

17. Movement of Cash

	2012 €	2011 €
Balance at 1 January	3,815,835	6,272,217
Net cash inflow	(1,326,162)	(2,456,382)
Balance at 31 December	<u>2,489,673</u>	<u>3,815,835</u>



18. Refugee Legal Service

	2012 €	2011 €
Expenditure and income relating to the Refugee Legal Service are included in the financial statements as follows:		
Salaries and related expenses	3,769,254	4,096,383
Accommodation expenses	1,245,179	1,207,620
Legal fees and professional fees	822,082	895,487
General administration	78,700	272,891
Fixed assets purchased	<u>203,872</u>	<u>390,480</u>
	6,119,087	6,862,861
Less contributions from legally aided persons and costs recovered	320,735	(290,308)
Total net expenditure in the year	<u><u>5,798,352</u></u>	<u><u>6,572,553</u></u>

19. Comparative Figures

Some changes have been made to the presentation of items in the financial statements and the comparative figures have been restated where necessary on a basis consistent with the current year presentation.

20. Approval of Financial Statements

The Financial Statements were approved by the Board on May 23rd 2013.



Appendix 2:

Energy Usage 2012

Managing energy usage

The Board has a network of 50 offices throughout the country, 34 Legal Aid Board and 16 Family Mediation Service (FMS). 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 2012

Total energy consumption for the board in 2012 was 1,754 MWh. In 2012 the Board consumed 1,439 MWh of electricity across its network of offices, 1,238 MWh in Legal Aid Board office and 201 MWh in FMS offices. There was a total of 114 MWh of gas consumed. 2012 was the first full year that the FMS offices were part of the Board. Oil Consumption in 2012 was 201 MWh. This was a reduction of 13.36% on the figure of 232 MWh in 2011.

Actions undertaken in 2012

In 2012 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. The audits on head office in Cahirciveen show that the office maintained the low consumption figures for electricity and made a significant reduction on oil consumption over last year.
- Advising staff in each of the locations to turn off lighting and office machinery when not in use.
- Minor adjustments to air conditioning levels in ICT comms rooms.
- Introduced managed print services in a number of offices in the second half of 2012.



Actions planned for 2013

The Board will concentrate on controlling and reducing consumption in offices in 2013, as well as maintaining progress in offices where decreased consumption was recorded. The Board has been proactive in recent years in introducing measures to ensure that all PCs are automatically turned off at night and at weekends. All staff will be advised to turn off lights when the office is not in use. All machines, photocopiers, printers, PCs will be turned off, (rather than left on standby) when not in use, particularly at evenings and weekends. Minor adjustments to heating and air conditioning controls will be made where possible to reduce energy consumption.



Appendix 3

List of law centres

Full Time Law Centres

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
<p>CAVAN Newcourt Shopping Centre, Church Street, Cavan Tel: (049) 433 1110 Fax: (049) 433 1304</p>	<p>Patricia O'Reilly</p>
<p>CLARE Unit 6A, Merchant's Square, Ennis, Co Clare Tel: (065) 682 1929 Fax: (065) 682 1939</p>	<p>Mary Cuffe</p>
<p>CORK North Quay House, Popes Quay, Cork Tel: (021) 455 1686 Fax: (021) 455 1690 Fifth Floor, Irish Life Building, 1A South Mall, Cork Tel: (021) 427 5998 Fax: (021) 427 6927</p>	<p>Betty Dineen Deirdre Kissane</p>
<p>DONEGAL Unit B9, Letterkenny Town Centre, Justice Walsh Road, Letterkenny, Co Donegal Tel: (074) 912 6177 Fax: (074) 912 6086</p>	<p>Ray Finucane</p>
<p>DUBLIN 45 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1 Tel: (01) 874 5440 Fax: (01) 874 6896</p>	<p>Shane Dooley</p>
<p>DUBLIN Tower Centre, Clondalkin Village, Dublin 22 Tel: (01) 457 6011 Fax: (01) 457 6007</p>	<p>Tom Nally</p>
<p>DUBLIN Village Green, Tallaght, Dublin 24 Tel: (01) 451 1519 Fax: (01) 451 7989</p>	<p>Pauline Corcoran</p>
<p>DUBLIN 44/49 Main Street, Finglas, Dublin 11 Tel: (01) 864 0314 Fax: (01) 864 0362</p>	<p>Anke Hartas</p>



Full Time Law centres (continued)

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
DUBLIN 48/49 North Brunswick Street, Georges Lane, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 646 9700 Fax: (01) 646 9799	Hugh Cunniam
DUBLIN Unit 6-8, Blanchardstown Business Centre, Clonsilla Road Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 Tel: (01) 820 0455 Fax: (01) 820 0450	Joan Crawford
DUBLIN Medical Negligence Unit Montague Court, 7–11 Montague St, Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 477 6208 Fax: (01) 477 6241	Margaret O’Shea-Grewcock
DUBLIN George’s Lane, 48/49 North Brunswick Street, George’s Lane, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 646 9740 Fax: (01) 646 9750	Grainne Brophy
DUBLIN Dolphin House office 3rd Floor, Dolphin House, East Essex Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01) 675 5566/(01) 675 5565 Fax: (01) 764 5116	Garret Searson
GALWAY 9 St. Francis Street, Galway Tel: (091) 561650 Fax: (091) 563825	Mary Griffin
GALWAY Seville House, New Dock Street, Galway Tel: (091) 562480 Fax: (091) 562599	Cormac Faherty
KERRY 1 Day Place, Tralee, Co Kerry Tel: (066) 712 6900 Fax: (066) 712 3631	Carol Anne Coolican



Full Time Law centres (continued)

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
KILDARE Canning Place, Newbridge, Co Kildare Tel: (045) 435777 Fax: (045) 435766	Edel Poole
KILKENNY 87 Maudlin Street, Kilkenny Tel: (056) 776 1611 Fax: (056) 776 1562	Niall Murphy
LAOIS Unit 6A, Bridge Street, Portlaoise, Co Laois Tel: (057) 866 1366 Fax: (057) 866 1362	Catherine Martin
LIMERICK Unit F, Lock Quay, Limerick Tel: (061) 314599 Fax: (061) 318330	Fergal Rooney
LONGFORD Credit Union Courtyard, 50A Main Street, Longford Tel: (043) 334 7590 Fax: (043) 334 7594	Edel Hamilton
LOUTH Condil House, Roden Place, Dundalk, Co Louth Tel: (042) 933 0448 Fax: (042) 933 0991	Deirdre McMichael
MAYO Humbert Mall, Main Street, Castlebar, Co Mayo Tel: (094) 902 4334 Fax: (094) 902 3721	Thomas O' Mahony
MEATH Kennedy Road, Navan, Co Meath Tel: (046) 907 2515 Fax: (046) 907 2519	Mary Pat Ahern
MONAGHAN Alma House, The Diamond, Monaghan Tel: (047) 84888 Fax: (047) 84879	Stephanie Coggans
OFFALY Harbour Street, Tullamore Tel: (057) 935 1177 Fax: (057) 935 1544	Deirdre O'Connor



Full Time Law centres (continued)

LAW CENTRE	MANAGING SOLICITOR
SLIGO Bridgewater House, Rockwood Parade, Sligo Tel: (071) 916 1670 Fax: (071) 916 1681	Fiona McGuire
TIPPERARY Friars Court, Abbey Street, Nenagh, Co Tipperary Tel: (067) 34181 Fax: (067) 34083	Catherine Ryan
WATERFORD Canada House, Canada Street, Waterford Tel: (051) 855814 Fax: (051) 871237	Aidan Lynch
WESTMEATH Paynes Lane, Irishtown, Athlone, Co Westmeath Tel: (090) 647 4694 Fax: (090) 647 2160	Phil O’Laoide
WEXFORD Unit 8, Redmond Square, Wexford Tel: (053) 912 2622 Fax: (053) 912 4927	Niamh Murran
WICKLOW Bridge Street, Wicklow Tel: (0404) 66166 Fax: (0404) 66197	Barbara Smyth
REFUGEE LEGAL SERVICE 48/49 North Brunswick Street, George’s Lane, Dublin 7 Tel: (01) 646 9600 Fax: (01) 671 0200	Gráinne Brophy



Part Time Law Centres

Location and telephone	Open	Law Centre
CARLOW		
St. Catherine's Citizens Info. Bureau, St. Joseph's Road, Carlow. Tel: (059) 913 8700	Twice a month	Kilkenny
CORK		
Citizens Info. Bureau, 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
MAYO		
The Pastoral Centre (Cathedral Grounds) Ballina, Co. Mayo Tel: (094) 902 4334	Once a month	Castlebar
Health Centre, Knock Road, Ballyhaunis Tel: (094) 902 4334	Fourth Tuesday of every month	Castlebar



Part Time Law Centres Cont'd

Location and telephone	Open	Law Centre
ROSCOMMON		
Citizens Information Centre, 7 Elphin Street, Boyle Tel: (071) 916 1670	Once every 2 months	Sligo
TIPPERARY		
Thurles Community Social Services, Rossa Street, Thurles Tel: (0504) 22169	Second Tuesday of every month	Nenagh
Citizens' Information Centre, 14 Wellington Street, Clonmel. Tel: (052) 22267	Four times a month	Nenagh
WESTMEATH		
Unit 11, Enterprise Centre, Bishopgate Street, Mullingar Tel: (090) 647 4694	Once a month	Athlone

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.



Appendix 4

List of Family Mediation Service Offices

Full Time FMS Offices

Family Mediation Service Offices	Open
Dublin	
<p>Blanchardstown West End House, West End Business Park, Snugborough Road Extension, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15. Phone: (01) 811 8650</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm.</p>
<p>Dolphin House Family Mediation Service, 4th Floor, Dolphin House, Dublin 2. Phone (01) 672 5886</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9.30am - 1pm, 2pm – 4.30pm.</p>
<p>Raheny Skillings House, 1st floor offices, Raheny Shopping Centre, Howth Rd, Dublin 5 Phone (01) 851 0730</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm</p>
<p>Ormond Quay 9 Lower Ormond Quay, Dublin 1, Phone (01) 874 7446</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm.</p>
<p>Tallaght The Rere, Tallaght Social Services Centre, The Square, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Phone: (01) 414 5180</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9.30am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm</p>



Full Time FMS Offices Cont'd

Family Mediation Service Offices	Open
<p>Cork 3rd & 4th Floor, Hibernian House, 80A South Mall, Cork Phone: (021) 425 2200</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9am – 1pm, 2pm - 5pm</p>
<p>Galway 3rd Floor, Merchant's Square, New Dock Street, Galway Phone: (091) 509730</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9am – 1pm, 2pm - 5pm</p>
<p>Limerick 3rd Floor, Riverpoint, Lower Mallow Street, Limerick Phone: (061) 214310</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9am – 1pm, 2pm - 5pm</p>

Part Time FMS Offices

Family Mediation Service Offices	Open
<p>Donegal 3rd Floor, Riverfront House, Pearse Rd, Letterkenny, Co Donegal. Phone : (074) 910 2240</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday & Tuesday 9am -1pm, 2pm - 5pm. Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm (admin cover)</p>
<p>Kerry Unit 2, Market Place, Main Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry. Phone: (066) 718 6100</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday & Tuesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm. Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm (admin cover)</p>
<p>Laois Level 2, Grattan House, Grattan House Business Centre, Portlaoise, Co Laois. Phone: (057) 869 5730</p>	<p>Opening hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 9am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm, Thursday 9am - 12.30pm (admin cover)</p>



Part Time FMS Offices Cont'd

Family Mediation Service Offices	Open
<p>Louth 10 Seatown, Dundalk, Co. Louth Phone: (042) 935 9410</p>	<p>Opening hours: Tuesday & Thursday 9.30am - 1pm, 2pm - 5.30pm. Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm (admin cover)</p>
<p>Mayo c/o Family Centre, Chapel St, Castlebar, Co. Mayo Phone: (094) 903 5120</p>	<p>Opening hours: Thursday & Friday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm. Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm (admin cover)</p>
<p>Sligo Level 6, Quayside Shopping Centre, Wine Street, Sligo. Phone: (071) 915 4260</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday & Tuesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm. Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm (admin cover)</p>
<p>Waterford 13B Wallace House, Maritana Gate, Canada St, Waterford. Phone (051) 860460</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday & Tuesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm. Wed 9am - 12.30pm (admin only)</p>
<p>Westmeath Suite 10, 1st Floor, Inish Carraig Business Centre, Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath Phone: (0906) 420970</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday & Tuesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm. Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm (Admin only)</p>
<p>Wexford 32 Key West, Custom House Quay, Wexford Tel: (053) 916 3050</p>	<p>Opening hours: Monday & Tuesday 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm. Wednesday 9am - 12.30pm (admin cover)</p>