



An Bord Um
Chúnammh Dílthiúil
Legal Aid Board

Providing access to justice since 1979



OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT
TO DELIVERING OUR MISSION

Annual Report 2023
Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2023



About Us

We are the statutory, independent body responsible for the provision of civil legal aid and advice to persons of modest means in the State, family mediation and vulnerable witness related services and for the administration of a number of ad hoc legal aid schemes in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 and the Civil Legal Aid Regulations 1996 to 2021.

Civil legal aid and advice are provided by the Legal Aid Board primarily through a network of 34 full-time law centres with 3 part-time centres by solicitors employed by the Board. Specific law centres in Dublin, Cork and Galway include an international protection specialty and there are also dedicated units in Dublin dealing with medical negligence/personal injury cases and cases involving children at risk. The Legal Aid Board also provides a Family Mediation Service to couples who are separating or divorcing. This service is administered through twenty family mediation offices, some of which are co-located with law centres. The Board also operates a specialised, independent and professional research and library service for all of the main bodies involved in the international protection process. The Board also engages private solicitors in certain areas of law in: District Court family law matters; Circuit Court judicial separation and divorce cases; and international protection cases.

Our Mission

We will deliver timely, effective, inclusive and just resolution of family and civil disputes to those most in need of our assistance, through high quality legal representation and advice and / or mediation and to manage other aspects of legal aid which have been entrusted to us.

Our Vision

We will be instrumental in ensuring access to justice to those most in need, through a highly motivated and trained workforce, external providers and working with stakeholders across the justice framework and beyond.



At the launch of the Access to Justice report,
(L-R) Minister for Justice Helen McEntee, The Hon. Mr. Justice Donal O'Donnell,
Chief Justice, and CEO Ms Joan Crawford

Contents

Our Locations	3	- Information and Communications	25
Our Values	4	Reporting Obligations	27
Chairperson and CEO Statement	5	Governance Statement and Board Members' Report 2023	30
How We Deliver Our Mission	7	Appendix	39
Our 2023 Mission Activities	8		
The People Delivering Our Mission	10		
Our Core Client Services	11		
- Civil Legal Aid Services	12		
- Family Mediation Service	15		
- Decision Making and External Services	17		
Supporting Our Client Services	20		
- Corporate Services	21		
- Human Resources	23		



Our Locations



Our Values

➔ Respect

We respect, treat equally and with dignity, the diverse users of our services and our colleagues both within the Legal Aid Board and across the justice sector.

➔ Client centred

We put the client, access to justice, and problem solving at the centre of our decision making.

➔ Openness

We continue to be open in the manner in which we reach decisions, and the client is at the centre of our decision making.

➔ Collaboration

We work in partnerships and consultation with stakeholders across the justice system to seek the achievement of shared objectives.

➔ Learning

Recognising that knowledge and agility are key to the organisation's future, we foster a culture of learning (including specialist learning), development, innovation and problem solving.

➔ Influence

We seek to maximise our influence in the area of access to justice, ensuring we highlight when necessary, where our statutory framework may be denying those in need.

➔ Integrity

We are at all times honest and accountable. We strive to ensure fairness. We continue to ensure value for money in the manner we offer our services

➔ Child centred

We recognise that children are at the heart of many of the disputes we seek to resolve, and we will seek to ensure those whom we provide services to understand this approach.



At our Annual Conference 2023, (L-R) former Chairperson Ms. Justice Nuala Jackson, Minister of State James Browne, and CEO Ms Joan Crawford.



Chairperson and CEO Statement

It is with great pride and a deep sense of responsibility that we present the Legal Aid Board's Annual Report for the year 2023. This year has been marked by significant achievements and milestones in our mission to deliver timely, effective, inclusive and just resolution of family and civil disputes. Our commitment to this mission has never been stronger, and this report highlights the strides we have made and the challenges we have faced.

In 2023, the Legal Aid Board continued to navigate a complex landscape, marked by evolving legal needs and societal changes. This report encapsulates our performance over the past year, including the expansion of our services under the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015, our response to greater demands for our services from those seeking international protection, our responsibilities under the Family Justice Strategy, and, at the core, our enduring and profound commitment to delivering our mission. Throughout 2023, we remained steadfast in our dedication to ensuring that justice is not a privilege for a few but a right for all. As we look ahead, we remain committed to our core values of respect, client centred, openness, collaboration, learning, influence, integrity and child centred.

“Throughout 2023, we remained steadfast in our dedication to ensuring that justice is not a privilege for a few but a right for all. As we look ahead, we remain committed to our core values of respect, client centred, openness, collaboration, learning, influence, integrity and child centred.”

Our Ongoing Commitment to Delivering Our Mission

Our achievements throughout 2023 demonstrate our ongoing commitment to delivering our mission, and they include:

Civil Legal Aid Services

- 24,472 applications for legal aid and advice.
- 59% of these applications were in the private family law area.
- 9,918 people sought international protection.

Family Mediation Services

- 1,513 new cases.
- 928 total agreements.
- 2,016 cases reached a conclusion within the year.

Decision-making and External Services

- 16,278 referrals to our private practitioner panels.
- 865 cases under the Abhaile Scheme.
- 7,082 legal aid certificates granted in the District Court on foot of the District Court Private Practitioner Scheme in 2022

Our Deep Appreciation for Those We Work With

Our efforts have been supported by the tireless work of our dedicated staff members, the significant collaboration of our stakeholders, and the insightful guidance of our Board. As CEO and Chairperson, we wish to thank the staff members of the Legal Aid Board for their continued passion and commitment over the past year. Their outstanding contributions continue to be pivotal to the delivery of our societal mission. We are very grateful for the strong relationships we have with the Department for Justice and give special thanks to Minister for Justice Helen McEntee for her ongoing support. We also wish to sincerely thank our statutory Board for their strategic oversight, effectiveness, and governance. On this note, we wish the very best to our former chairperson, Ms. Justice Nuala Jackson, who was appointed to the High Court in October 2023.

“As CEO and Chairperson, we wish to thank the staff members of the Legal Aid Board for their continued passion and commitment over the past year.”

Together, we look forward to building on our 2023 achievements and further delivering on our mission in 2024.



Nuala Egan
Chairperson

Nuala Egan



Joan Crawford
CEO

Joan Crawford

How We Deliver Our Mission

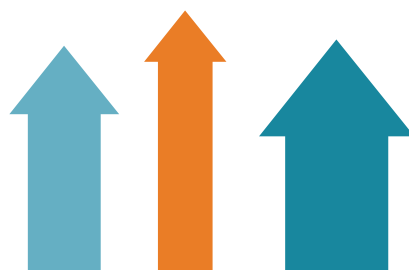
We provide three core services to our clients:



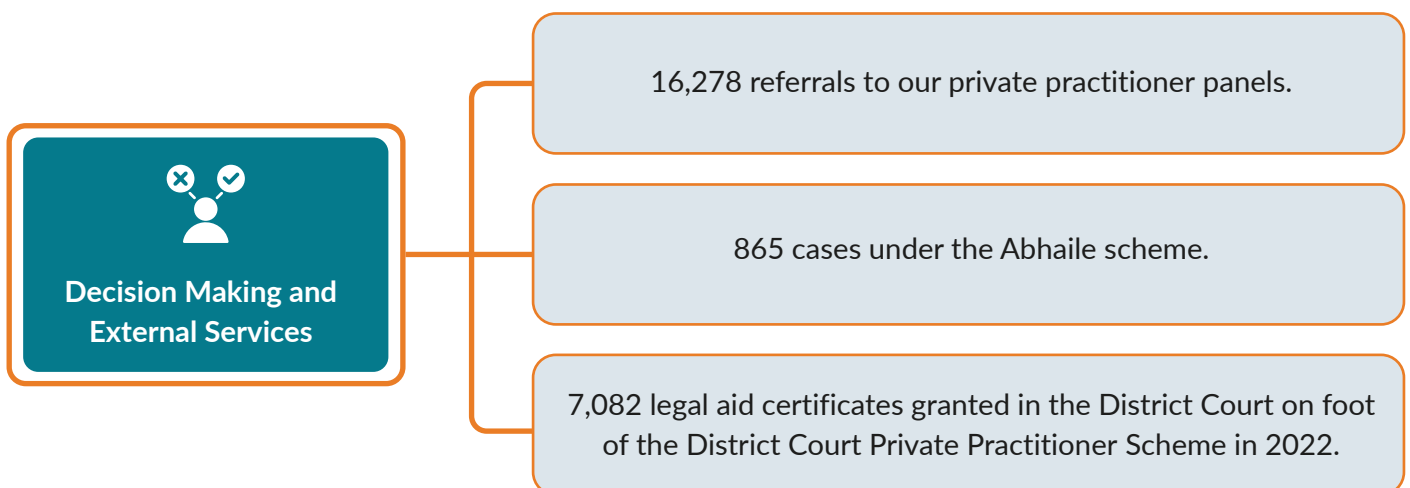
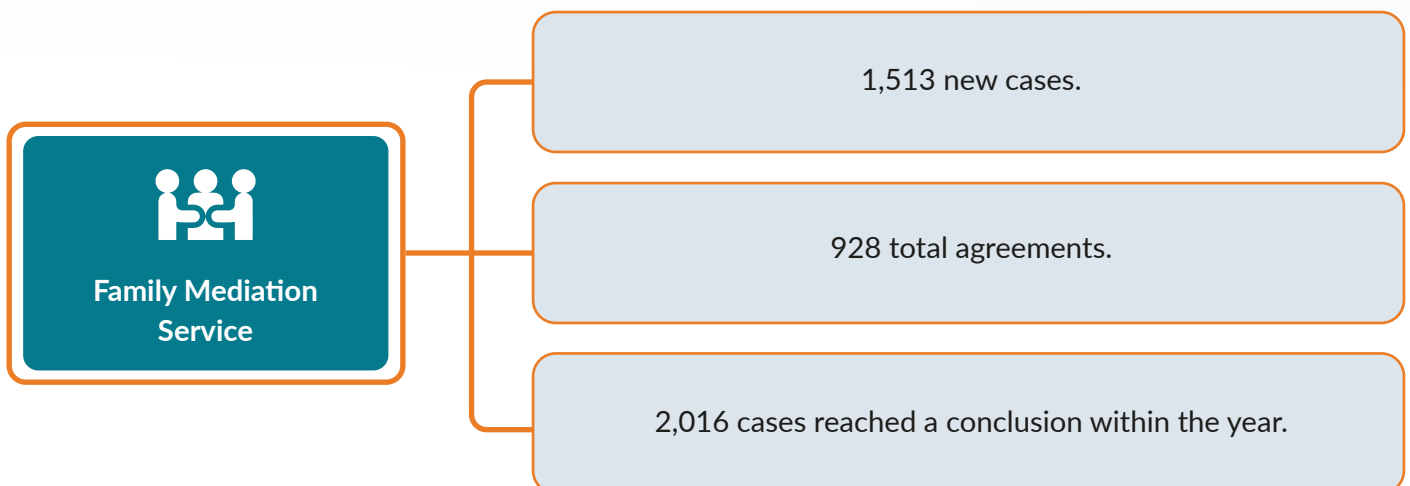
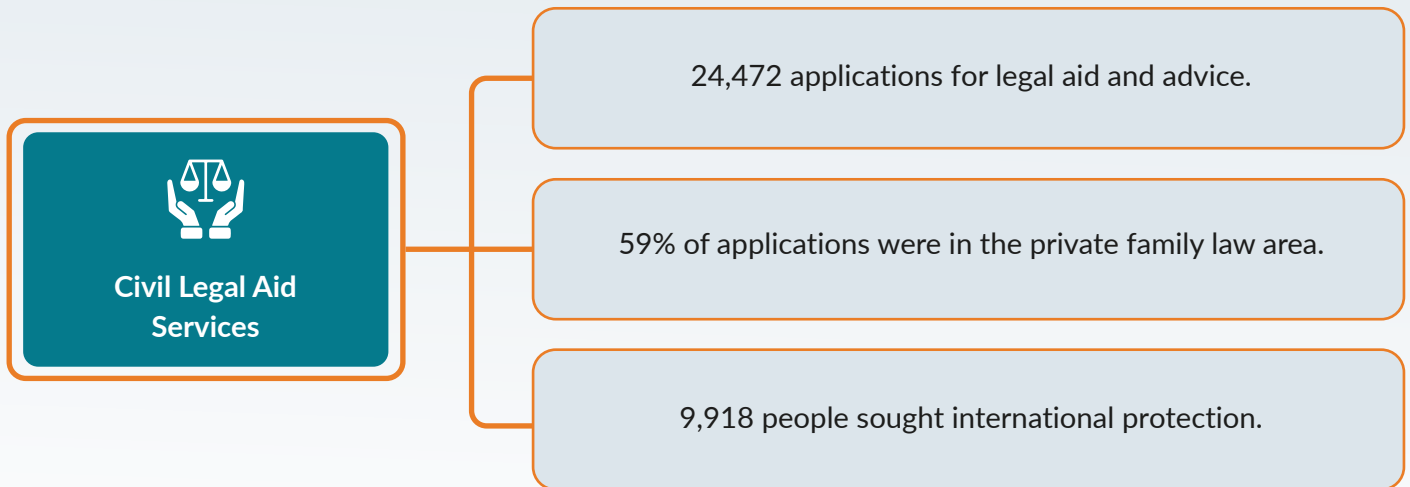
These services are supported by:



During a visit to our Wicklow Law Centre in 2023, (L-R) Director of Family Mediation Ms Fiona McAuslan, Director of Internal Service Delivery (Civil) Ms Emily Sherlock, CEO Ms Joan Crawford, former Minister of Justice now Taoiseach Simon Harris, former Chairperson Ms. Justice Nuala Jackson, and Managing Solicitor Ms Toni Monaghan.



Our 2023 Mission Activities






Corporate
Services

- 6,076 service user requests for facilities management actioned.
- 57 parliamentary questions processed.
- 3,148 criminal legal aid claims authorised for payment.


Human
Resources

- 59 staff members were recognised for completing 43 different academic courses, ranging from undergraduate certificates to PhD research
- 50 staff members were selected as mentors through our mentoring programme.
- 238 attendances at 46 different courses on the One Learning platform.


Information and
Communications

- 11 external and internal events.
- 37,776 queries managed by our IT helpdesk.
- 1,239 country of origin queries.

The People Delivering Our Mission



Our Core Client Services



Civil Legal Aid Services



Decision Making and External Services



Family Mediation Service

Civil Legal Aid Services: Your Bridge to a Just Resolution

Our Civil Operations Directorate provides access to civil legal aid and advice to those who would not otherwise be able to afford it.



This service is delivered through a network of 34 Law Centres nationwide. Situated in communities throughout the country, these centres deliver services in numerous civil legal areas, including: family law, medical negligence, personal injuries, international protection, and services under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 (as amended). Alongside this, our Minceir/Traveller Legal Support Service is our separate unit for members of the Traveller community. Some of the services that we offer are completely free while some services require a means or a merits test, and some services require people to pay a fee called a contribution.

Our Mission Activities

24,472
applications for legal aid
and advice.

59%
of applications were in
the private family
law area.

9,918
people sought
international protection.

Our Significant Accomplishments

Commencement of the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015

The Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 commenced on the 26th April 2023. The Act provides for a new legal framework for supported decision making in Ireland, empowering people who may have difficulties making certain types of decisions. Any adult who needs support to exercise their decision-making capacity will benefit from this Act. This may include but is not limited to people with an intellectual disability, mental illness, dementia or acquired brain injury, as well as people with age-related conditions.

In delivering this, we provide legal aid to those navigating the provision of this Act, ensuring their rights and choices are respected and upheld. Through this service, we are enhancing support for vulnerable people, promoting autonomy and safeguarding the legal rights of those who require decision-making assistance. Throughout 2023, 155 applications in accordance with this Act were received.

Delivering Legal Support for Those Seeking International Protection

Amidst growing global challenges, we significantly enhanced our support for those seeking international protection in 2023. Our efforts in this regard underscore our commitment to justice and our pivotal role in helping some of the most vulnerable people seeking protection under the law. In providing support to 9,918 people, this was a 45% increase on applications from the previous year, and also included legal support to 150 unaccompanied minors.

Civil Legal Aid Services in Numbers

You can see further data in our Appendix

Table 1
Number of Applicants 2019-2023

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
General	15,458	13,209	13,827	13,849	14,554
International Protection	2,539	1,174	1,464	6,858	9,918
Total	17,997	14,383	15,291	20,707	24,472



Chart 1
Number of Applications by Case Type 2023

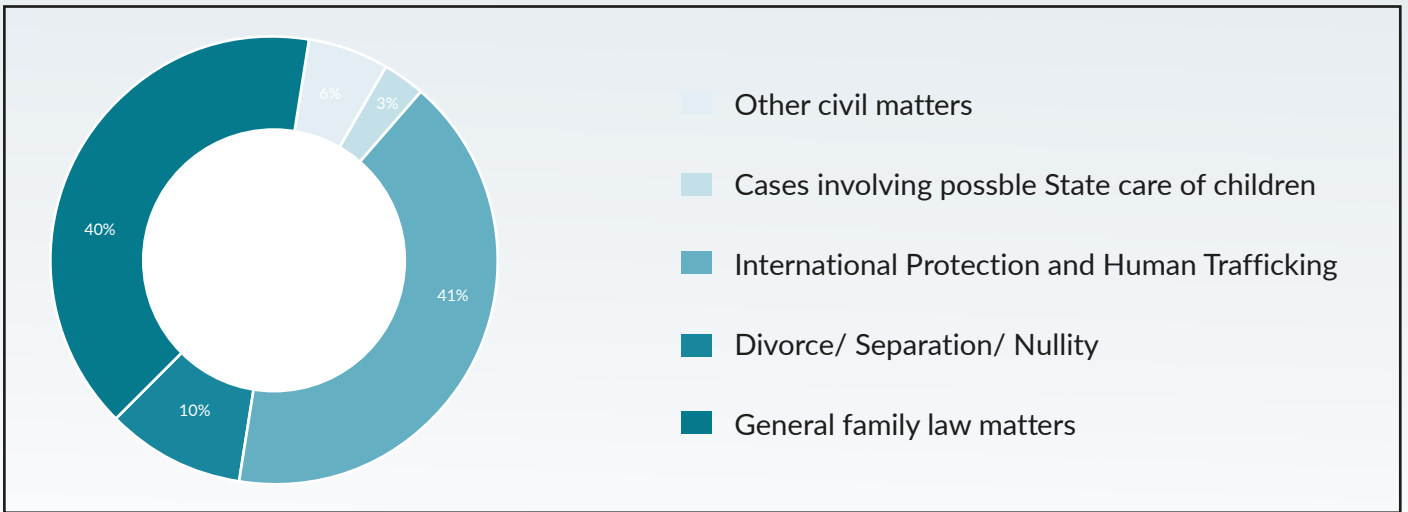


Table 2
International Protection Applications

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
LAB Applications	2,539	1,174	1,464	6,858	9,918
International Protection Office (IPO) Applications	4,781	1,566	2,649	13,651	13,277



Family Mediation Service: Your Partner in Building a Plan for Your Brighter Tomorrow

Our Family Mediation Service provides free mediation services to couples who are divorcing, separating or living apart as well as those navigating challenges in the aftermath of these decisions, in the areas of parenting, communication, finances, and the family home.



The Family Mediation Service at the Legal Aid Board is delivered through our national network of 34 centres. Our service is free to all and provides help to families whose relationship has broken down, empowering them to negotiate their own agreement through understanding, communication and compassion. As core outcomes, we seek to improve communication with the other person, improve the parenting relationship, understanding and agree on financial matters such as budget, money, and pensions, and understanding and agreeing on what to do with the family home and other property.

Our Mission Activities

1,513
new cases.

928
total agreements.

2,016
cases reached a
conclusion within the
year.

Our Significant Accomplishments

Delivering under the Family Justice Strategy

The vision of the Family Justice Strategy is a modern, streamlined and user-friendly family justice system that supports simple, early, fair and – where possible – non-adversarial outcomes. There is a strong emphasis within this national strategy, on encouraging the use of less adversarial solutions to help people resolve their family issues.

Under this strategy, we:

- » Developed a new call back function that will be placed on our website in 2024. This will allow people to make first contact with the Family Mediation Service, making it easier for families to access the right services and support during a really difficult time in their lives.
- » Conducted training sessions for our colleagues in the Courts Service, aimed at fostering collaborative approaches and reducing adversarial methods in resolving disputes among people, children, and families. The training emphasised providing information and support to assist people in making the best choices for their circumstances, as well as supporting legal and Alternative Dispute Resolution practitioners in delivering the highest level of service to their clients.
- » Established a private family mediators panel on a pilot basis, helping us to create even greater access to our service. In 2023, this pilot panel dealt with 158 family mediation cases.

The Family Mediation Service in Numbers

You can see further data in our Appendix

Table 3
New Cases 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
All Issues (couples)	2,057	1,091	1,186	1,148	1,199
Court Based	554	251	326	355	314
Telephone Helpline Cases	-	248	-	-	-
Total	2,611	1,590	1,512	1,503	1,513

Table 4
Total Agreements 2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
All Issues (couples)	849	581	819	726	707
Court Based	363	162	187	291	221
Telephone Helpline Cases	-	173	-	-	-
Total	1,212	916	1,006	1,017	928

Decision Making and External Services: Empowering Justice, Shaping Policy

Our Decision Making and External Services Directorate decide on legal aid applications, develop policy, and administer both the Abhaile scheme and the private practitioner panels.



Our Decision Making and External Services Directorate grant legal aid in more complex cases, develop policy on decision-making, improve knowledge, understanding and capability, and oversee the administration of the private practitioner panels, composed of private solicitors and barristers who support our service delivery. Additionally, they manage the Abhaile scheme, offering legal and insolvency advice to people facing serious mortgage arrears.

Our Mission Activities

16,278
referrals to our private
practitioner panels.

865
cases under the Abhaile
scheme.

7,082
legal aid certificates
granted in the District
Court on foot of the
District Court Private
Practitioner Scheme in
2022.

Our Significant Accomplishments

Supporting the Commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015

The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 commenced on the 26th April 2023. The Act provides for a new legal framework for supported decision making in Ireland, empowering people who may have difficulties with making certain types of decision. Difficulties with decision making might arise, for example, because of an acquired brain injury, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, mental health difficulty or intellectual disability.

Under this, this Directorate accomplished two significant actions. Firstly, it established an Assisted Decision-Making Solicitors Panel, enabling us to refer such cases to private solicitors. The Panel was established and operational by the legislation's commencement on 26th April 2023. Secondly, it successfully conducted a training programme for our staff members and private practitioners in preparation for the Act's commencement.

Establishing an International Protection Barristers Sub-Panel

In response to the continuing demand for services in this area, we established a novel sub-panel of barristers willing to provide advice to applicants for international protection. This was in place in early 2023 and continues to provide support.

Central Financial Assessment Facility

Commenced as a pilot project in March 2023, this initiative involved centralising means testing for four Munster Law Centres. The pilot project aims to assess the feasibility of centralising certain aspects of the application process at the Head Office. Evaluation of the pilot is planned for 2024.

Decision Making and External Services in Numbers

You can see further data in our Appendix

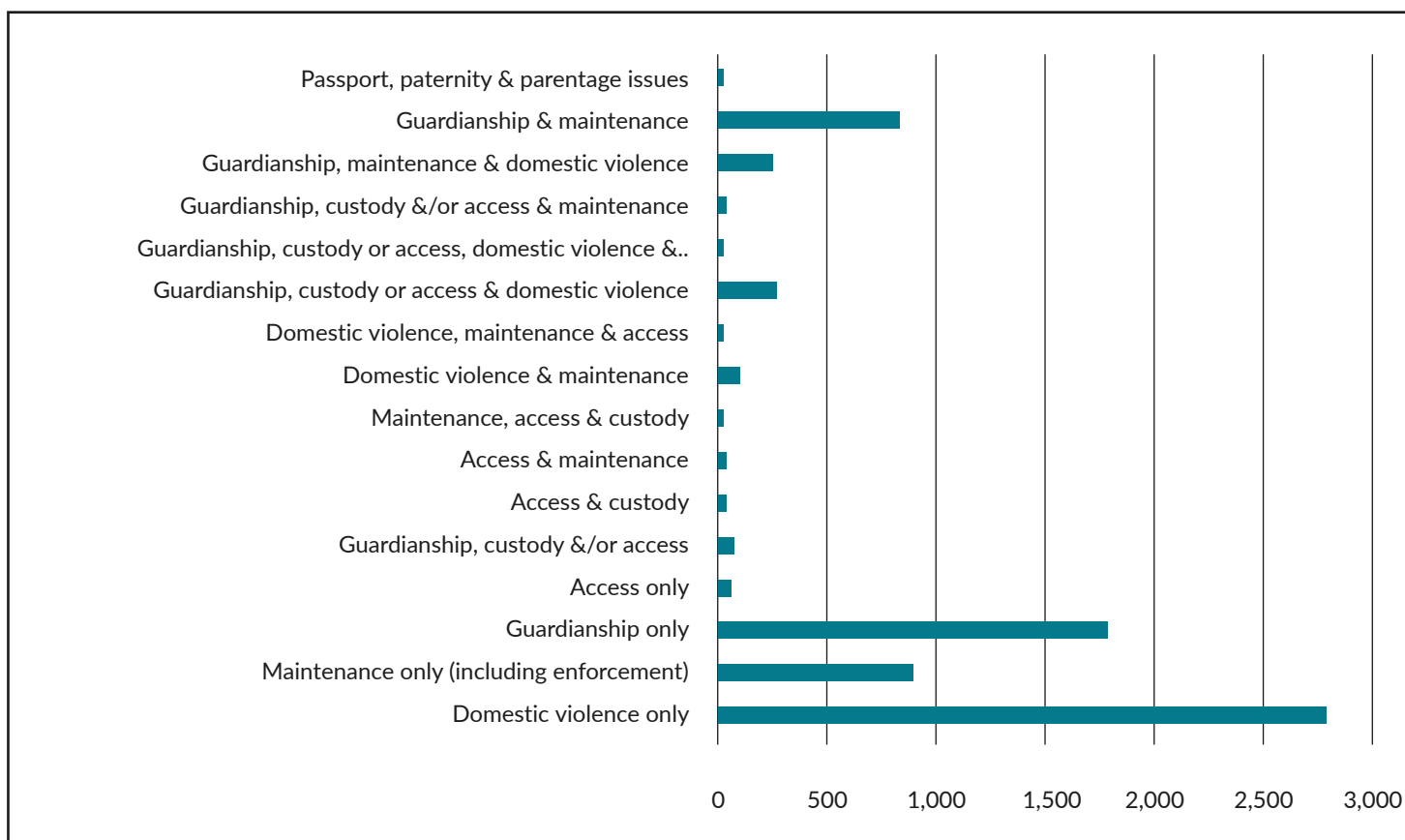
Table 5
Number of Referrals 2019-2023

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
District Court Private Family Law	7,839	6,042	6,961	7,086	7,082
District Court Childcare	71	47	55	92	172
Circuit Court	10	7	145	327	101
International Protection	2,061	941	918	5,725	8,850
Coroner's Inquest	14	7	50	15	32
Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	41
Total	9,995	7,044	8,129	13,245	16,278

Table 6
Abhaile Scheme Cases

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Consultations using MABS voucher	540	346	219	301	238
Authority to conduct further negotiations	48	51	25	12	3
Number of duty solicitor days scheduled	493	264	272	262	351
Legal Aid certificates granted for PIA reviews	352	414	324	254	229
Legal aid certificates granted for PIA appeals	197	148	101	70	21
Counsel granted for Circuit Court	407	259	139	41	23

Chart 2
Legal Aid Certificates Granted in the District Court on Foot of the District Court PP Scheme 2023



Supporting Our Client Services



Corporate Services

Our Corporate Service Directorate encompasses a range of essential support functions that enable our organisation to operate efficiently and effectively.



Providing support to our 544 staff members, the Corporate Services Directorate oversees Facilities Management, Health & Safety, Portfolio and Property Management, Finance, Governance, and Risk Management on behalf of the organisation. Additionally, it manages our Criminal Legal Aid Unit.

Our Mission Activities

6,076

service user requests for facilities management actioned.

57

parliamentary questions processed.

3,148

criminal legal aid claims authorised for payment.

Our Significant Accomplishments

Establishing a Health and Safety Unit

During 2023, a Health and Safety Workplan was developed, outlining a road map for creating and developing a Health and Safety Management System in accordance with industry best standards, such as ISO 45001: 2018. This system will be implemented at both staff and management level, enhancing health and safety awareness in daily service delivery, fostering a culture of risk identification and management, empowering staff to raise health and safety concerns, and developing our safety representative and other key roles in the organisation. In September 2023, we also appointed our first Health and Safety Officer.

Ballymun Law and Family Mediation Centre

In October 2023, we acquired a new Centre for the greater North Dublin area in Ballymun, Dublin 11. This new office consists of the Finglas Law Centre, Blanchardstown Family Mediation Services and a dedicated Traveller Unit. With the goal of providing a modern office space for both clients and staff, the services at this new centre include supported decision-making under the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015. This new office, our 34th nationwide centre, is due to open in February 2024.

Refurbishment of Law Centres

Both the Limerick and Longford Law Centres underwent refurbishments in 2023. Additionally, the Galway Law Centre was refurbished due to flooding.



Human Resources

Our Human Resource Directorate is responsible for people matters. Both operational and strategic, this includes recruitment, promotion, probation, leave management, employment law litigation, compliance and industrial relations.



Our Human Resources (HR) Directorate offers support to our 544 staff members. They disseminate internal HR policy and guidance as well as updates on broader civil service HR developments throughout our organisation. Additionally, they address staff member inquiries related to employment and offer meaningful support during personal challenges.

Our Mission Activities

59

staff members were recognised for completing 43 different academic courses, ranging from undergraduate certificates to PhD research.

50

staff members were selected as mentors through our mentoring programme.

238

attendances at 46 different courses on the One Learning platform.

Our Significant Accomplishments

Recruiting Additional Staff Members for International Protection Applications

To address the increasing demands in providing civil legal assistance to those seeking international protection, we submitted a business case to the Department of Justice in Q1 2023, requesting authorisation to hire the necessary staff. Our business case was approved, initiating the recruitment process for 44 additional staff members across service delivery offices and corporate support functions.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

We will soon publish an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy for the period 2023 – 2026. This strategy aims to ensure that we evaluate, tackle, and report on our responsibilities to eradicate discrimination, foster equality, and safeguard the human rights of our staff members and the people we serve. The strategy emphasises the establishment of a safe, fair, and inclusive environment for our staff members, clients, and other external stakeholders.

Staff Support and Wellbeing Programme

As part of our Staff Support and Wellbeing Programme, the following initiatives were implemented during 2023:

- » The rolling out of cross professional supervision for our staff members wishing to participate. Supervision offers a secure and non-judgmental learning environment, providing a reflective space for group participants to step back, review, and reflect on all aspects of their work
- » Provision of trauma-informed practice training to empower our staff to address the challenges of trauma and equip themselves with approaches to respond effectively as trauma-informed practitioners



Information and Communications

The Information and Communications Directorate empowers a connected, informed, collaborative future for our clients, for our staff members and for our services.



The Information & Communications Directorate consists of three Units, each with a distinct yet interconnected role in supporting our client services. These dedicated Units are:

Information Technology (IT) Unit

Communications & Change Unit

Knowledge & Information Unit

Our Mission Activities

11

external and internal events.

37,776

internal queries managed by our IT helpdesk.

1,239

country of origin queries.

Our Significant Accomplishments

Established the Legal Aid Board's first-ever Specialist Communications Function

We established our first-ever specialist communications function in the history of the Legal Aid Board in 2023. This newly created Unit is focused on fostering staff connectivity and driving client outreach. This new specialist function represents a significant milestone, showcasing our dedication to modernisation.

Development of a Call Back Facility

Working with the Family Mediation Service, the IT Unit developed a new call back facility that will be placed on our website in 2024. This will allow people to make first contact with the Family Mediation Service when it suits them.

Delivery of Hardware Upgrades

The IT Unit completed a major hardware upgrade this year. This hardware upgrade will play a significant part in modernising client services for our 34 nationwide centres.

Consolidation of Information Services

The Knowledge & Information Unit consolidated its information services for staff members, strengthening its loan service, removing dated library stock, and increased its delivery of County of Origin Information requests for solicitors who support clients seeking international protection.

Comprehensive Data Protection Audit by a Third-Party

During 2023, the Knowledge & Information Unit guided the organisation through a comprehensive data protection audit that was undertaken by a third-party. The objective was to determine existing strengths and areas for development in how we collect and protect client, staff members, and contractor data when conducting our work. Its findings resulted in an action plan to be delivered across 2024 and intended to render us fully compliant with data protection expectations in all areas.



Reporting Obligations

Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 introduced the legislative basis for gender pay gap reporting in Ireland. Regulations under the Act came into operation on 31 May 2022. The regulations require organisations with over 250 employees to report on their gender pay gap and to report on their hourly gender pay gap across a range of metrics. The Legal Aid Board has published reports related to 2022 and 2023 on its website. In 2022, the mean gender pay gap for the Legal Aid Board indicates that, on average, men are paid 10.07% higher than women. In 2023, this figure decreased to 4.97%.

Protected Disclosures Act 2014

Each public body is required under Section 22 of the Act to publish an annual report setting out the number of protected disclosures received in the preceding year and the action taken (if any). The Legal Aid Board publishes this each year on its website. The Legal Aid Board received and addressed concerns under the relevant policy in respect of one protected disclosure during the reporting period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

Disability Act 2005

In accordance with section 26(2) of the Disability Act 2005, the Legal Aid Board must appoint an Access Officer. The Access Officer is the Legal Aid Board's nominated point of contact for people with disabilities wishing to access our services. In 2023, over 180 individual contacts (numerous phone calls/emails), which generated inbox email traffic of 1,200 emails/phone calls, were responded to. The type of case request which the Board's Access Officer dealt with ranged from application process/instructions/contacting the Law Centres on behalf of applicants, complaints with regard to legal representation,

Interpreter/Translation services under Section 38 Disability Act, case progression, requests for advocates and those unhappy with the decision on a case.

Public Sector Energy Performance - Statement of Energy Use

In order to determine the Legal Aid Board's trajectory towards its 2030 Climate Change Emissions, and Climate Change Energy Efficiency Targets, the Legal Aid Board provides data annually to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's (SEAI) Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system. In future, progress on the implementation of the Climate Action Mandate will also be tracked through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's (SEAI) Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system.

Official Languages Scheme

Provisions 4(B)(a) and 4(B)(b) of the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 came into effect on 5 May 2023. As a public body the Legal Aid Board was obliged to (a) appoint, from senior management, another member of staff of the body to oversee the performance of the body's obligations under this Act and to report to him or her, as appropriate, in relation to the body's obligations under this Act, and (b) ensure that a summary of any of the matters reported to him or her in accordance with paragraph (a) is included in the annual report of the body concerned.

Currently the Legal Aid Board website contains a large volume of information and is available in both English and Irish. This includes information on the range of services provided by Law Centres and the Family Mediation Service. Application forms for Legal Services are available in both English and



Irish. Currently there is limited demand for Legal Aid Board services and the Family Mediation Service in Irish. In 2023 a number of employees completed Irish language courses at varying levels. Other employees have expressed an interest in expanding their knowledge of the Irish language to deal with queries from the public. Any new information or job advertisements are on the Legal Aid Board's social media platforms in both English and Irish.

The CEO outlined a commitment to complying with the new statutory obligations and to promoting the use of Irish generally within the Legal Aid Board.

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014

The Legal Aid Board recognises its obligations under the relevant legislation to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment for its staff and the individuals it serves, and protect the human rights of its members, staff, and service users.

To support these goals, the Legal Aid Board continues to provide the Minceir/Traveller Legal Support Service, staffed by a solicitor and a support staff member, specifically tasked with providing legal services to the Traveller community. Established on a permanent basis in 2022, this service includes, within the framework of standard legal aid rules, litigating on behalf of clients regarding accommodation issues, applications under section 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003, and other legal matters. Additionally, the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015, which commenced on 26th April 2023, introduces a new legal framework for supported decision-making in Ireland. This Act empowers individuals who may have difficulties making certain types of decisions. We provide legal

aid to those navigating the provisions of this Act, ensuring their rights and choices are respected and upheld. Through this service, we are enhancing support for vulnerable individuals, promoting autonomy, and safeguarding the legal rights of those requiring decision-making assistance.

The Public Sector Duty is equally relevant to the experience of our staff. In line with our values, we are committed to creating an environment where we promote positive engagement, open and honest communication, embracing diverse perspectives while striving to be inclusive in all that we do. A consultation process with all staff facilitated input into the Board's latest Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The Legal Aid Board has two Disability Liaison Officers who facilitate both new colleagues, and long-term staff with emergent needs, the assistance they require for full participation in the workplace. To that end, a number of applications for Reasonable Workplace Accommodation in line with the Equality Acts were granted in 2023. The percentage of staff members that declared a disability was 6%. The Legal Aid Board's Human Resources Unit facilitates applicants in recruitment competitions with Reasonable Accommodations to ensure full and equal participation while competing for opportunities. Our Learning and Development Unit rolls out relevant initiatives throughout the year such as mental health awareness, EDI awareness and Pride month events.

Access to Information on the Environment

The Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) Regulations 2007-2018 gives the public the right to access environmental information held by, or for, Public Authorities. The Legal Aid Board received no Access to Environment requests in 2023.



Section 15 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.

The Legal Aid Board in the performance of its functions, has regard to 15.(1) (d) the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the state. The Board has, throughout 2023, continued to work with the Office of Public Works (OPW) via its Optimising Power @ Work campaign to focus on staff awareness campaigns, behavioural change and minor works projects that generate savings in energy usage along with associated reduction in carbon emissions.

Public Sector Climate Action Mandate

The Board achieved a 38.4% reduction of energy consumption in 2022. (Over a 2009 baseline). Returns are made to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) on an annual basis. We predict the annual figures in 2023 to follow the trajectory from 2022 to meet our goals in 2030 following the LAB's Climate Action Roadmap. The Legal Aid Board's Climate Action Roadmap sets out a plan for our organization to achieve its targets of a 50% reduction in Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and an improvement in energy efficiency from 33% to 50% by 2030, as outlined in the Government's Climate Action Plan 2023. You can find information regarding implementation of the mandate in the Climate Action Roadmap. The titles of reporting, engaging in training staff, green public procurement, our building and vehicles sections cover this. In regard to Circular 1/2020, the Legal Aid Board will be recording the carbon emissions associated with all official travel in tonnes for 2023 and will value the emissions on the prevailing rate of Ireland's domestic Carbon Tax for the 2023 year. The amount due is €34.68 as per our calculations. This expense will be recorded as an Administration Non-Pay current expense within the Board's travel and subsistence budget.



Governance Statement and Board Members' Report 2023

Board Members	Nuala Egan (appointed interim Chairperson on 27th October 2023 to present)	Office Address	Quay St., Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry
Chairperson		Board Secretary	Mary O'Connor
Members	Maurice Lawlor Nuala Jackson (resigned as Chairperson on 21st October 2023) Niamh O'Hanlon Gordon Jeyes Freda McKittrick Catherine Keane Tracy O'Keeffe Michael Patrick Bourke Patrick Durcan Marianne Nolan Catherine Ryan Liam Ryan	Banker	Allied Irish Banks 24 Main Street, Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry
		Solicitor	Holmes O'Malley Sexton Bishopsgate Henry Street Limerick
		Auditor	Comptroller and Auditor General 3A Mayor Street Upper, Dublin 1

Governance

The Legal Aid Board is accountable to the Minister for Justice and is responsible for ensuring good governance and performs this task by setting strategic objectives and targets and taking strategic decisions on all key business issues. The regular day-to-day management, control and direction of the Legal Aid Board are the responsibility of the Chief Executive and the senior management team. The Chief Executive and the senior management team must follow the broad strategic direction set by the Board, and must ensure that all Board members have a clear understanding of the key activities and decisions related to the entity, and of any significant risks likely to arise. The Chief Executive acts as a direct liaison between the Board and management of the Legal Aid Board.



Board Responsibilities

The functions of the statutory Board are set out in Section 5 of the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 (as amended) – “the Act” – and its responsibilities are set out in the Board’s Governance Manual, as follows:

- » 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.

Section 20 of the Act requires the Board to keep in such form as may be approved by the Minister for Justice, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, all proper and usual accounts of the resources of the Board.

In preparing these financial statements, the Board of the Legal Aid Board is required to:

- » select suitable accounting policies and 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 it 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 adequate accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, its financial position and enables it to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 20 of the Act. The maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information on the Legal Aid Board’s website is the responsibility of the Board.

The Board is responsible for approving the annual plan and budget. It approved the 2023 budget at its meeting on 19th January 2023. A Statement of Strategy for the period 2021 – 2023 was approved by the previous Board in February 2021. Reflecting the objectives in that Statement of Strategy, a set of organisational priorities for 2023 was reviewed by the Board in January 2023.

The Board reviewed the level of expenditure against the budgeted figures in July 2023 and November 2023. The full-year review of the budgetary outturn for 2023 took place at the Board meeting held on the 25th of January 2024.

The Board is also responsible for safeguarding its assets and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Board considers that the financial statements of the Legal Aid Board give a true and fair view of the financial performance and the financial position of the Legal Aid Board at 31 December 2023.

Board Structure

The Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 makes provision for the appointment of a Chairperson and 12 ordinary members to the Board. The current Board was appointed by the Minister for Justice Ms. Helen McEntee TD, on 10th November 2021.

The table below details the appointment period for the outgoing and current Board members who served during 2023:



Legal Aid Board 2021-2026

Name	Date of first Appointment (and date of re-appointment where applicable)	Date on which term expired / Board member resigned
Nuala Jackson Chairperson 2021-2026	08/11/2016 (01/11/2021) re-appointed	Resigned 21/10/2023
Nuala Egan Senior Counsel - Interim Chair 21/10/2023 – 31/12/2023	21/02/2017 (01/11/2021) re-appointed	31/10/2026
Catherine Keane Solicitor	09/06/2020 (01/11/2021) re-appointed	31/10/2026
Gordon Jeyes Former Chief Executive of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency	08/11/2016 (01/11/2021) re-appointed	31/10/2026
Maurice Lawlor Department of Social Protection	08/11/2016 (01/11/2021) re-appointed	31/10/2026
Freda McKittrick Assistant Director, Barnardos	08/11/2016 (01/11/2021) re-appointed	31/10/2026
Tracy O’Keeffe Department of Justice	22/07/2021 (01/11/2021) re-appointed	31/10/2026
Michael Patrick Bourke Solicitor	01/11/2021	31/10/2026
Patrick Durcan Retired District Court Judge	01/11/2021	31/10/2026
Marianne Nolan Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	01/11/2021	<u>Resigned 02/01/2024</u>
Niamh O’Hanlon Civil Servant (staff member)	01/11/2021	31/10/2026
Catherine Ryan Civil Servant (staff member)	01/11/2021	31/10/2026
Liam Ryan Solicitor	01/11/2021	31/10/2026



The Board has established seven committees, as follows:

Appeal Committee

The Appeal Committee is a statutory committee of the Board, and comprised the following members in 2023:

Ms. Nuala Egan (Chair, resigned 23/11/2023), Mr. Michael Bourke (Chair from 23/11/2023), Mr. Maurice Lawlor, Ms. Marianne Nolan, Mr. Liam Ryan.

This committee considers requests by legal aid applicants for decisions made by the executive in a particular case to be reversed. The Appeal Committee met 17 times in 2023.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee considers organisational and other risks identified in the risk assessment reports or otherwise and reports to the main Board on the extent to which such risks are managed or mitigated in a structured and on an on-going basis. The members of the Audit and Risk Committee in 2023 were as follows:

Mr. Gordon Jeyes (Chair), Ms. Nuala Egan, Ms. Freda McKittrick, Ms. Tracy O' Keeffe, Ms. Catherine Ryan, Mr. Michael Flynn (external member of Committee).

The Committee held 5 meetings in 2023 in February, March, May, September and November.

Finance and Effectiveness Committee

The Committee 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 approval of the Board's annual accounts and detailed consideration of financial matters in order to make appropriate recommendations to the Board and to advise management. The Committee's membership in 2023 was as follows:

Ms. Catherine Keane (Chair), Ms. Marianne Nolan, Mr. Patrick Durcan, Ms. Nuala Jackson (resigned 21/10/2023), Ms. Nuala Egan (appointed 23/11/2023), Mr. Gordon Jeyes and Mr. Michael Flynn (External Member).

In light of the media attention around poor financial governance practices within the public service broadcaster in 2023, the Committee convened a special meeting in July 2023 to discuss matters related to governance within the Legal Aid Board. It was noted that the CEO had provided verbal reassurances with regard to same at a recent Board meeting and that the Legal Aid Board is a public sector body which is subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that the Committee would seek further assurances from the Executive in relation to governance matters. The Committee drafted a list of questions pertaining to governance within the Board for the Executive to respond to. These questions would subsequently become an annual governance checklist for completion and presentation by the Executive to the Committee.

Following a comprehensive review by the Executive of the governance arrangements in place, a further committee meeting was convened in October 2023 wherein the Executive presented a report detailing the governance and control framework currently in place within the Legal Aid Board. This report outlined in the current framework of accountability, risk management and control, providing further assurance that the organisation's policies, procedures and control measures continue to function as intended. This paper also covered the subject of financial decision-making and procedures within the Legal Aid Board.

The Board has clearly defined financial guidelines 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 and Effectiveness Committee of the statutory Board is notified of all contracts with value in excess of €10,000 and less than €65,000.

The Committee held ten meetings in 2023.



Strategy and Opportunity Committee

The role of the Strategy and Opportunity Committee is to consider matters relating to new areas of work of the Board and any relevant areas of reform in relation to the approaches adopted by the Board. The Committee considers Board policy and interpretation of legislation and reports and makes recommendations to the Board as deemed appropriate. The members of the Committee in 2023 were as follows:

Ms. Catherine Ryan (Chair), Mr. Michael Bourke, Mr. Patrick Durcan, Ms. Nuala Egan, Ms. Niamh O'Hanlon, Ms. Tracy O'Keeffe.

The Committee held six meetings in 2023.

Performance Committee

The Performance Committee is set up to consider the objectives of the Chief Executive and the extent to which those objectives have been achieved. Its members in 2023 were as follows:

Mr. Gordon Jeyes (Chair), Ms. Nuala Jackson (resigned 21/10/2023), Ms. Freda McKittrick, Ms Nuala Egan (appointed 23/11/2023).

People and Culture Committee

The role of the People and Culture Committee is to consider policies, procedures and actions as they relate to staff and the organisational culture and will report and make recommendations to the Board as deemed appropriate.

The membership of the Committee in 2023 was as follows:

Ms. Freda McKittrick (Chair), Ms. Niamh O'Hanlon, Mr. Maurice Lawlor, Mr. Liam Ryan, Ms. Stephanie Coggans (Staff member resigned 05/09/2023), Ms. Aisling O'Meara (Staff member), Mr. Jonathan Coyle (Staff member).

Environment Committee

The Environment Committee was established in 2022 to consider matters relating to the Government's policies in response to the challenges of climate change, to monitor and oversee the organisation's compliance with these policies, and to examine areas of potential reform in the Board's own practices and policies that would assist in further reducing the climate and environmental impact of its operations.

The Committee members in 2023 were as follows: Ms Freda McKittrick (Joint chair), Ms Nuala Egan (Joint Chair), Ms Tracy O'Keeffe, Ms Cathy Farrell, staff member, Ms Helena Murphy, staff member, Mr Michael O'Connell, staff member. Mr John Sugrue replaced Mr Michael O'Connell in June 2023.

This Committee convened on three occasions in 2023.

Key Personnel Changes 2023

Ms Joan Crawford was acting CEO from 18th October 2022 until 02nd December 2022. She was subsequently formally appointed to the role on 1st April 2023.

Ms Nuala Jackson resigned from the Board on 21st October 2023 and Ms Nuala Egan was appointed as Interim Chairperson. Ms Egan has subsequently been formally appointed as Chairperson to the Board in January 2024.

Mr Donal Reddington, Director of Corporate Services & Criminal Legal Aid left on mobility in September 2023.



Matters specifically reserved to the Board itself


In compliance with the requirement in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, the Board has a formal schedule of matters specifically reserved to it for decision to ensure that the direction and control of the body is firmly in its hands. In the case of the Legal Aid Board, the matters specifically reserved are:

- » Significant acquisition, disposal and retirement of assets. The Board must approve acquisitions, disposals and retirement of assets with an anticipated value at or above a threshold level of €65,000. The Board is to be notified of any acquisitions/disposals/retirement of assets with a value at or above €10,000;
- » No contract valued over €65,000 can be entered into, directly or by way of draw down, without the prior approval of the Board. The Finance and Effectiveness Committee is to be notified of the awarding of contracts with a value over €10,000.;
- » Approval of terms of major contracts;
- » Assurances of compliance with statutory and administrative requirements in relation to the approval of the appointment, number, grading, and conditions of all staff, including remuneration and superannuation;
- » Approval of the Annual Budget;
- » Approval of the Board's Corporate Plans which are prepared every 3 years;
- » Approval of the annual report and financial statements consistent with the Board's obligations under the 1995 Act;
- » Approval of recommendations to the Minister for the amendment of legislation;
- » Approval of Board policy documents which it is proposed to publish or disseminate;
- » Responsibility for systems of internal financial and other controls;
- » Delegated authority levels and risk management policies;
- » Appointment, remuneration and assessment of the performance of, and succession planning for, the Chief Executive; and
- » Significant amendments to the pension benefits of the Chief Executive and staff (which may require Ministerial approval).

The Code of Practice provides that the Board should meet at least twice a year without executive Board members or management present to discuss any matters deemed relevant.

In the case of the Legal Aid Board, Section 4 (6) of the 1995 Act states that the Board shall hold such and so many meetings as may be necessary for the performance of its functions.





Delegations to Management

Under the provisions of Section 10(2) of the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995, the Board may assign certain functions to the Chief Executive. It has formally assigned responsibility for the day-to-day management of the provision of a legal aid and advice service to the Chief Executive, subject to the provisions of the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995 and any Regulations made under the Act.

Specifically, the Board has assigned the following particular functions to the Chief Executive:

- » reporting to and advising the Board on the operation of the legal aid and advice service;
- » ensuring that the service is administered in the most efficient and cost effective manner;
- » decision making in relation to the provision of legal aid and advice in individual cases;
- » management of the dissemination, for the benefit of those for whom its services are made available, of information in relation to those services and their availability;
- » the nomination of solicitors and barristers for the purpose of providing a person with legal aid and advice or the referral of a person to the solicitors' panel as appropriate;
- » liaison between the Board and relevant interests including its clients and the public generally;
- » monitoring and evaluating the performance of the law centres and their staff;
- » maintaining a high standard of communication with the Board, law centres and staff;
- » subject to any policy directives of the Minister and / or of the Board, policy development and the formulation and implementation of suitable strategies;
- » management of the Board's resources, including physical resources;
- » management of human resource matters; and
- » financial management, including the keeping of appropriate accounts and records as provided for in Section 20 of the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995.

In turn, the Chief Executive may, with the consent of the Board, specify any of these functions to be performed by a member of staff. The Board's resolutions set out the decisions taken by the Board in these matters.

The Chief Executive is accountable to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Oireachtas. This is on the basis that the financial statements of the State body are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General and laid before the Oireachtas in accordance with the State body's governing legislation.

Schedule of Attendance

In 2023, the Board held 12 Board meetings. The meetings took place in a combination of videoconference and in-person formats.

Disclosures Required by the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the Legal Aid Board has complied with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (“the Code”), as published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in August 2016. The following disclosures are required by the Code:

Employees Short-Term Benefits Breakdown

Employees’ short-term benefits in excess of €60,000 are shown in note 6(b) to the Financial Statements 2023.

Key Management Personnel

The key management personnel in the Legal Aid Board are the Chief Executive, the Director of Decision Making and External Services (Civil), the Director of Human Resources, the Director of Information & Communications, the Director of Family Mediation, the Director and Regional Managers of Internal Service Delivery (Civil), and the Director of Corporate and Criminal Legal Aid Services. From 2023, the Board is including the Regional Managers under Internal Service Delivery (Civil) as part of key management personnel as they form part of the Executive Management Team of the organisation.

Risk Management

The Board has carried out an appropriate assessment of the State body’s principal risks. These include issues relating to cyber security, health and safety at Board offices, data protection, and the availability of sufficient skilled staff to ensure the effective delivery of services to clients.

The Board has a comprehensive set of internal controls across all of its functional areas. These are reviewed annually by the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board. There is a programme of regular reporting to the Board on developments in relation to risk, including a Risk Register and Risk Materialisation Report.



External Review of the Board

In line with Section 4.6 of the Code of Practice (CoP) for the Governance of State Bodies 2016, an external review of the Board and its Committees was completed in 2023. Seven committees of the Board were included in this evaluation which primarily focused on issues of effectiveness of governance and continuous improvement of Board practices. This review consisted of a survey to each Board member on a range of matters relating to the governance of the Board and the engagement between the Board and the Executive. As part of the process, there was also a survey of Board members in respect of each Board Committee to which they were appointed. A detailed report was provided to the Board including observations on the effectiveness of the corporate governance arrangements in place and identifying key areas in which recommendations have been made to support the continued evolution of the Board.

Public Spending Code

The Board seeks to obtain maximum value for all of its expenditures. Its primary area of non-pay expenditure is in the referral of client cases to private legal practitioners. The fee rates for such referrals are set out by the Board in the terms and conditions for the panels of private legal practitioners.

In other procurements, the Board operates under Public Procurement Guidelines, and utilises the Office of Government Procurement centralised purchasing arrangements wherever this is possible.

The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 came into force on 26th April 2023. The Board established a private practitioner panel to deal with cases under the Act. Uptake of services in connection with the Act was much slower than anticipated, pent-up demand failed to materialise. Applications have primarily been made in cases where the former jurisdiction of the Court to appoint a care representative would have been invoked. The Board has been in a position to deal with most of these matters in house. Spending under this programme includes the cost of private practitioners,

counsel and medical reports in connection with these cases.

The Board's statutory remit was widened in 2011 to include responsibility for providing a Family Mediation Service. The Private Mediator Scheme for the provision of Family Mediation Services in certain Family Matters ("a Panel") was set up under Section 5 (1) and Section 11A (1) of the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 (as amended). The commencement of a Family Mediator Panel to provide this critical service was established in 2023. The cases which are either within the jurisdiction of the District Court (primarily parenting and maintenance) or the Circuit Court (separation and divorce jurisdiction) are referred to private practitioners on the panel. This programme aims to ensure that family mediation clients receive as prompt a service as possible and that any waiting period is kept to a very modest level. It is also used to increase the geographical spread of the mediation support. It is principally aimed at improving the availability and access to mediation for all those who are in need of the service.

Statement of Compliance

The Board has adopted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) and has put procedures in place to ensure compliance with the Code. The Legal Aid Board was in compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies in 2023.



Nuala Egan
Chairperson

Nuala Egan



Joan Crawford
CEO

Joan Crawford

Appendix



Table 7
Cases Handled in Law Centres

Year	2019*	2020*	2021*	2022*	2023
Total	17,419	16,236	16,400	16,477	16,526

*Including international protection cases

Chart 3
Cases Handled in Law Centres 2019-2023

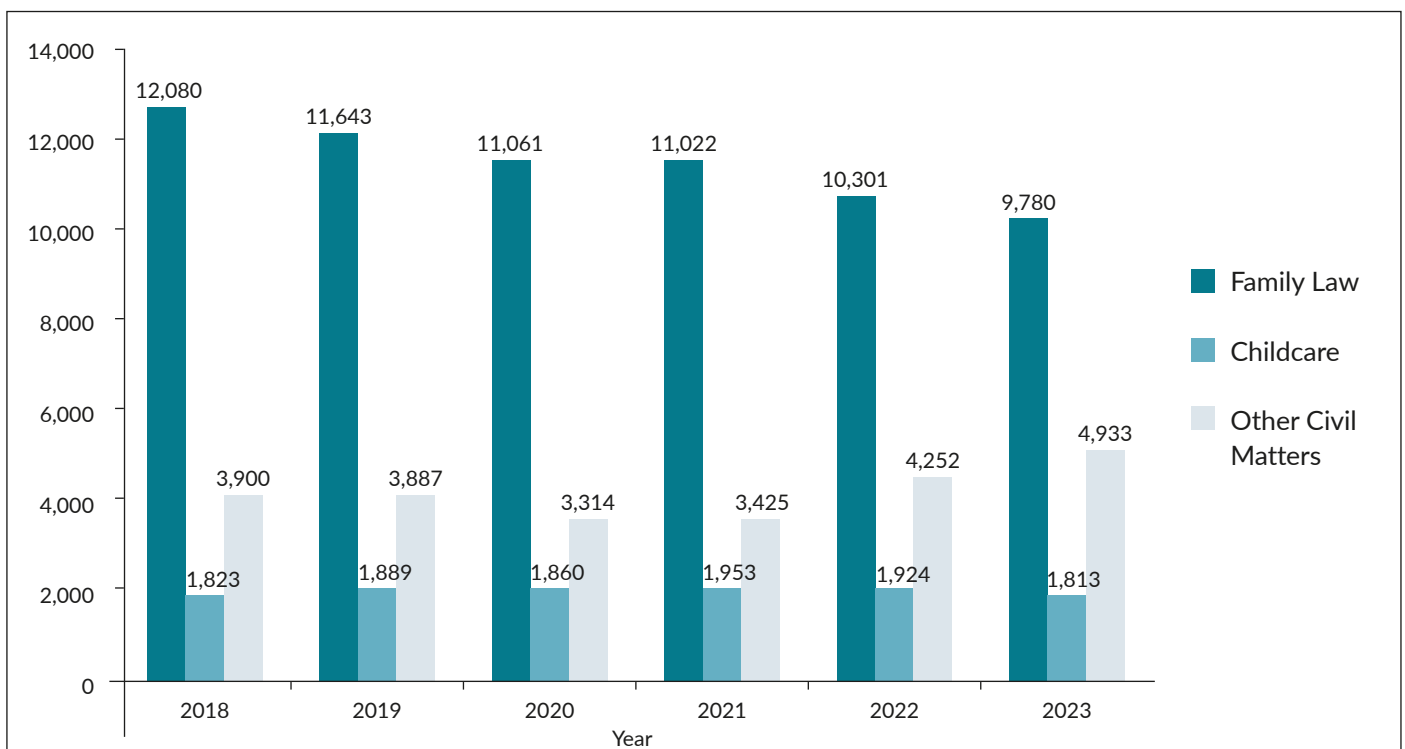


Chart 4
Cases by Subject Matter 2023

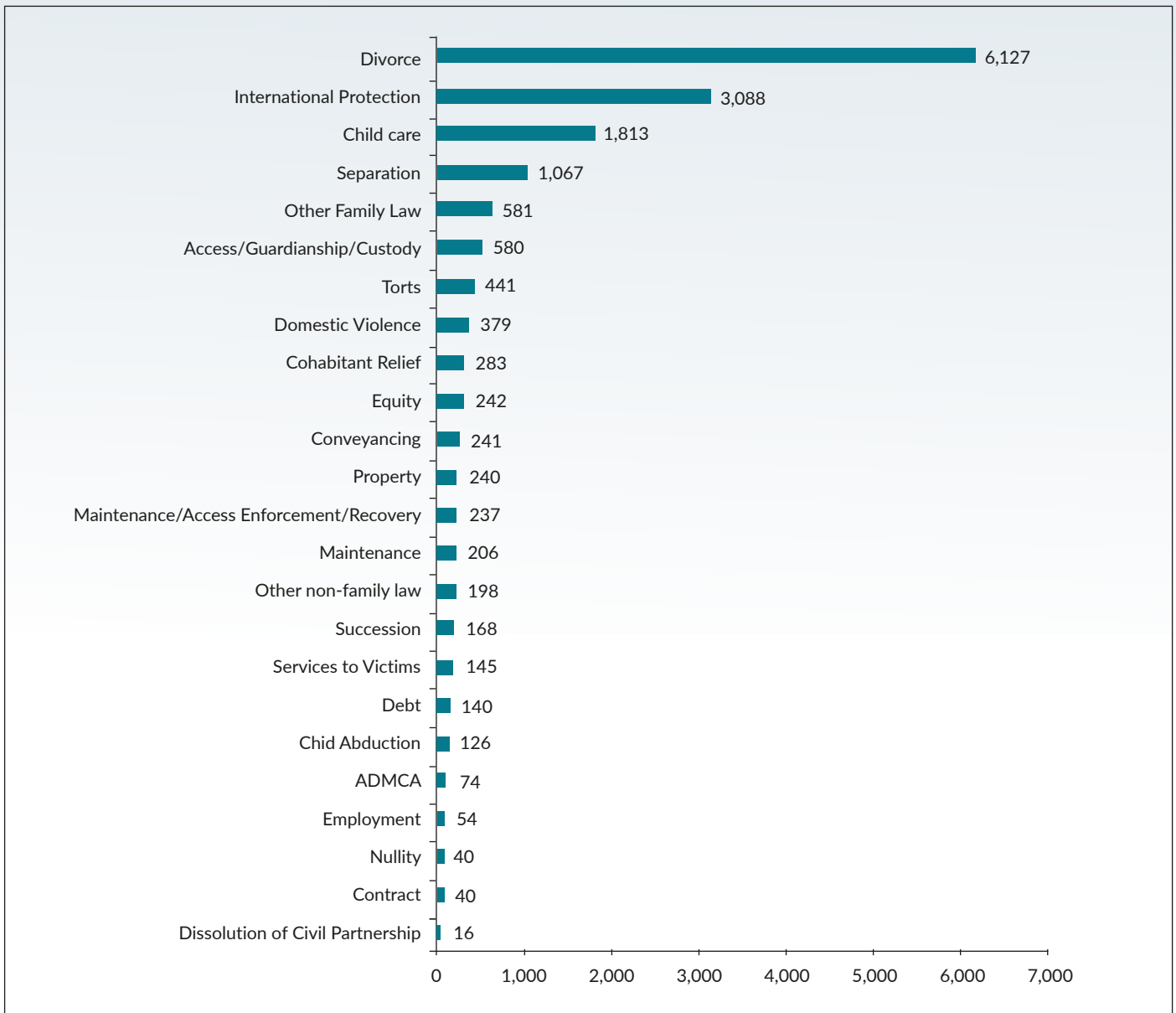


Table 8.
New Cases in Law Centres

Year	2019*	2020*	2021	2022	2023
New Cases	5,717	5,261	5,025	5,289	6,118

*Including international protection cases

Table 9
Cases Handled in 2023, Year of Application

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number	1,317	1,706	2,279	3,780	5,199



Table 10
Number of Cases Closed

Year	2019*	2020*	2021*	2022*	2023*
Cases Closed	6,193	4,841	4,903	5,561	5,360

*Including international protection cases

Table 11
Cases Completed in 2023, Length of Time Open

Case Type	<1 Year	1-2 Year	2-3 Years	3+ Years	Total
International protection	253	229	53	148	683
Child care	152	139	89	163	543
Divorce/separation/ nullity	407	388	482	1,109	2,386
Non-family law	424	174	56	86	740
Other family law	545	213	90	159	1,007
Total	1,781	1,143	770	1,665	5,359

Chart 5
Civil and Family Law Cases Active at 31 December 2023

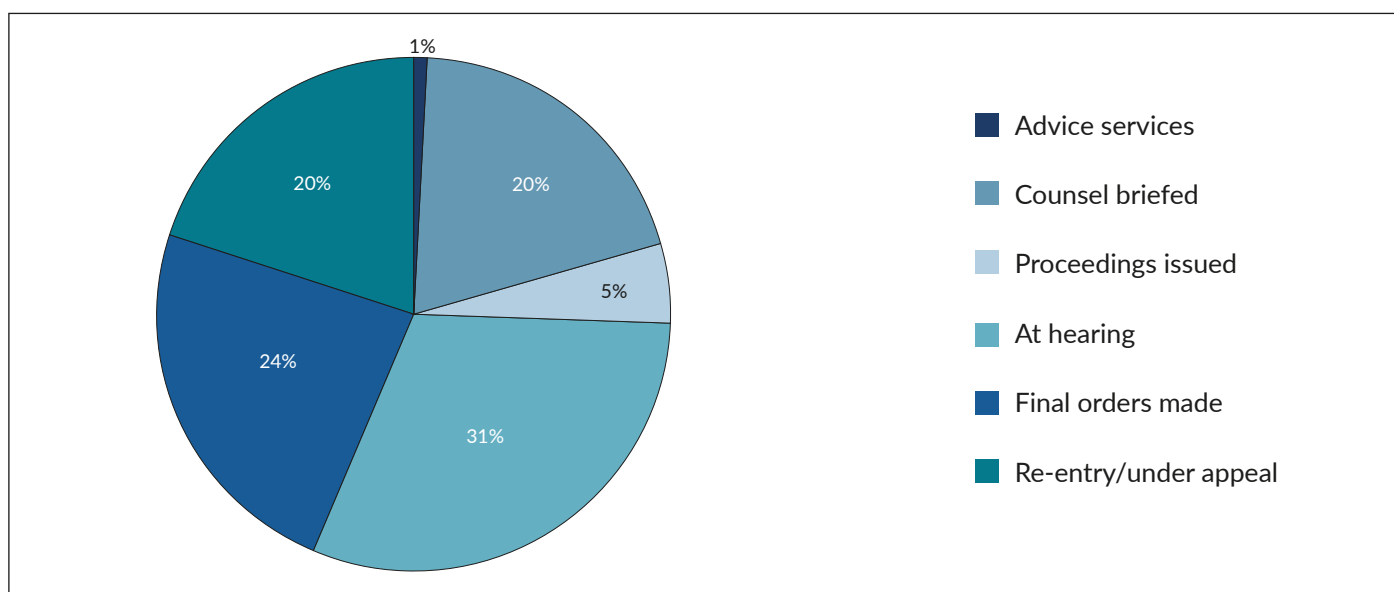


Table 12
Number of Persons Waiting at 31 December 2023

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number Waiting	2,019	1,588	1,279	950	1,269



Table 13
Waiting Times for First Consultation in Law Centres
at 31 December 2023

Law Centre	Waiting time (weeks)
Athlone	6
Blanchardstown	38
Castlebar	25
Cavan	10
Clondalkin	23
Cork-Popes Quay	24
Cork-South Mall	11
Dundalk	31
Ennis	10
Finglas	18
Galway - Francis St	12
Galway - Seville House	10
Jervis St	10
Kilkenny	32
Letterkenny	3
Limerick	21
Longford	31
Minceir Traveller Legal Support Service	0
Monaghan	18
Navan	14
Nenagh	11
Newbridge	11
Portlaoise	32
Sligo	40
Smithfield	11
Tallaght	28
Tralee	7
Tullamore	4
Waterford	11
Wexford	11
Wicklow	14

Table 14
Breakdown by Type of Cases Receiving Priority Service

Case Type	Total
Childcare	629
Child abduction	70
Family Law, including Domestic Violence	7,443
International Protection	10,768
Legal Services for victims of crime	101
Personal Injuries & Negligence	130

Chart 6
International Protection Case Outcomes 2023

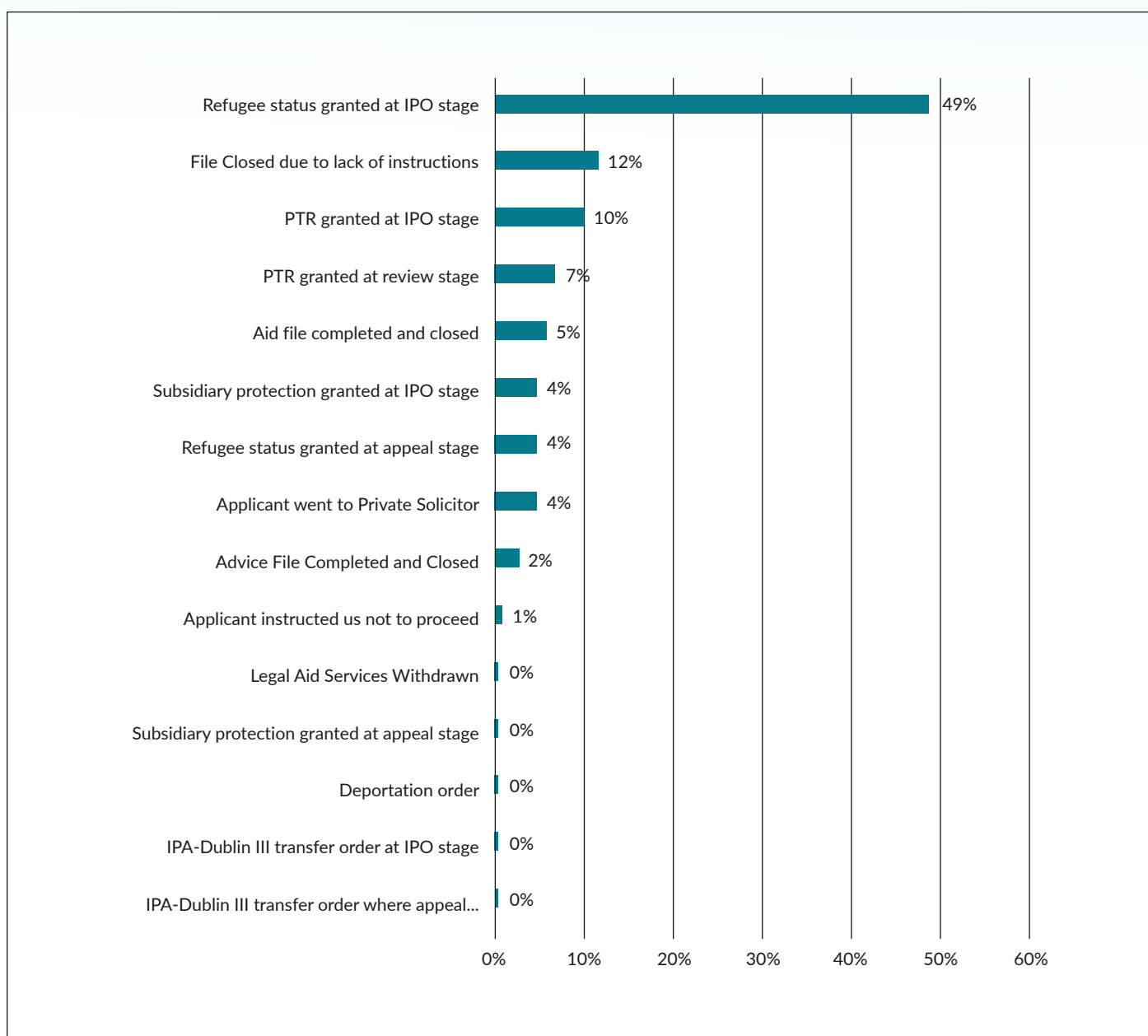


Chart 7
Country of Origin Registration 2023

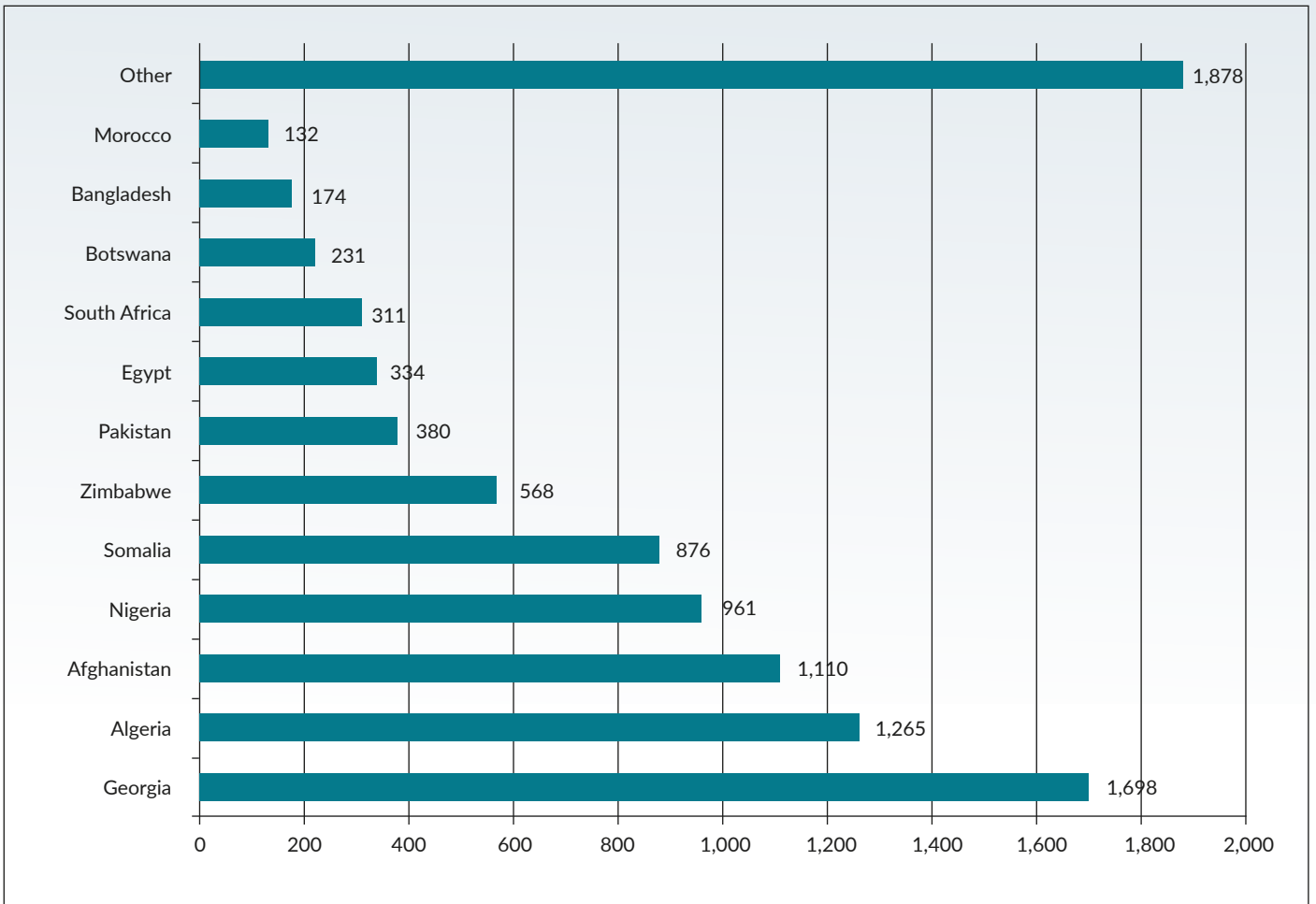


Chart 8
Human Trafficking Cases Referred to the Legal Aid Board During 2023

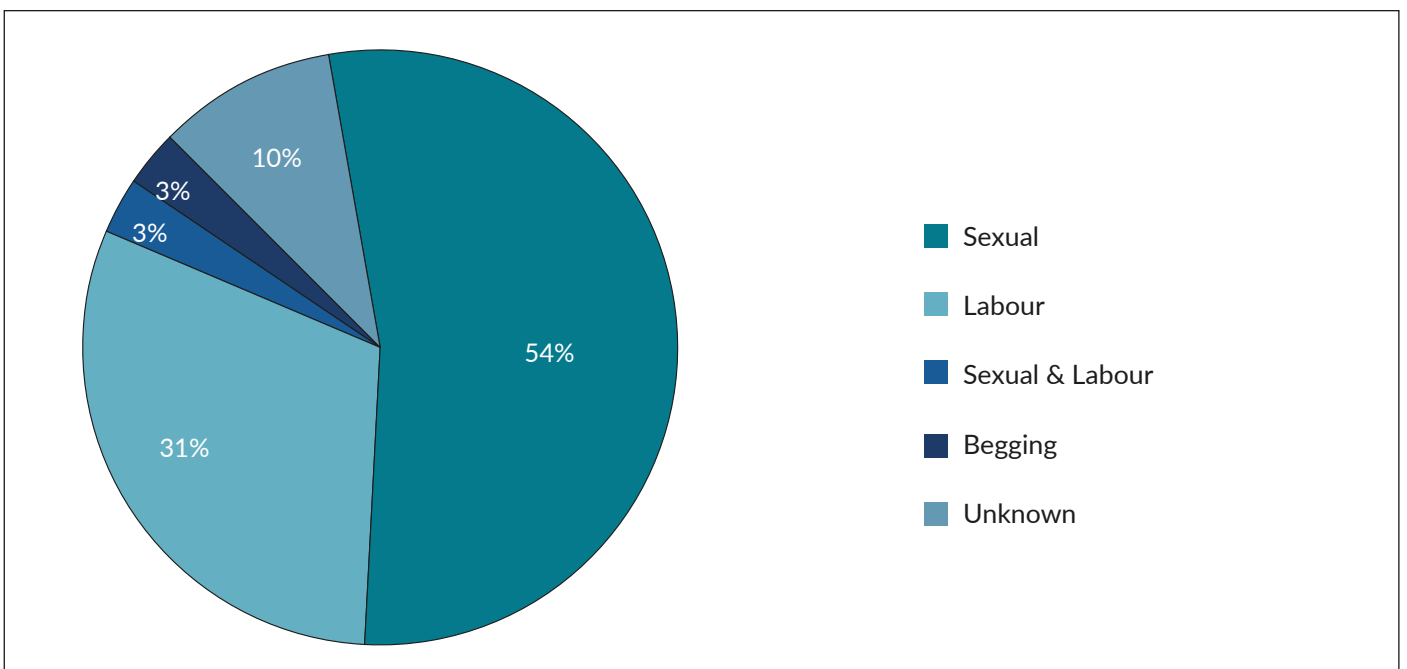


Table 15
Total Joint Mediation Sessions and Information Sessions 2019-2023

	Sessions	All Issues (Couples)	Court Based	Telephone Helpline Cases	Total
2019	Joint	7,700	1,534	-	9,234
	Information	466	1,617	-	2,083
2020	Joint	7,563	1,886	1,906	11,355
	Information	438	780**	733	1,951
2021	Joint	5,716	1,233	-	6,949
	Pre Mediation	1,340	971**	-	2,311
2022	Joint	5,201	910**	-	6,111
	Pre Mediation	2,494	992**	-	3,486
2023	Joint	5,286	693	-	5,979
	Information	2,459	1,038	-	3,497

**Additional court cases completed in full-time offices

Table 16
Cases Closed

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Cases Closed (including Information Sessions)	3,256	2,687	3,867	3,196	2,911
Cases not progressed to Mediation	512	695	665	796	776
Total Mediation Cases Closed (excluding cases opened but not progressed beyond Information Sessions/Pre-mediation Sessions)	2,744	1,992	3,202	2,400	2,135



Table 17
Demand/ Service Provision

Law Centre	New Cases 2023	Total Mediation Sessions	Reached agreement 2023
Athlone	40	113	19
Blanchardstown	53	292	43
Carlow	56	232	26
Castlebar	23	65	3
Cork	173	751	109
Dolphin House	294	766	232
Dundalk	39	235	18
Ennis	51	185	47
Galway	101	388	74
Jervis Street	139	652	85
Kilkenny	27	112	22
Letterkenny	32	169	16
Limerick*	134	541	57
Mullingar	0	0	0
Portlaoise	21	67	6
Sligo	20	78	13
Tallaght	104	470	65
Tralee	104	465	49
Waterford	44	206	19
Wexford	58	192	25
Total	1,513	5,979	928

*Includes Nenagh



Table 18
Family Mediation Law Centre Referrals 2023

Centre	1st Pre-Mediation Session	2nd Pre-Mediation Session	Total Mediation Sessions	Reached Agreement
Athlone	13	13	39	4
Blanchardstown	1	1	4	0
Carlow	4	4	17	1
Castlebar	4	4	6	0
Cork	10	10	40	7
Dolphin House	1	1	5	0
Dundalk	2	2	10	0
Ennis	21	18	47	15
Galway	1	1	1	1
Jervis Street	7	5	11	0
Kilkenny	7	7	13	2
Letterkenny	10	10	27	2
Limerick	9	9	24	4
Mullingar	0	0	0	0
Nenagh	3	3	4	1
Portlaoise	0	0	0	0
Sligo	4	4	12	2
Tallaght	5	6	26	5
Tralee	20	25	26	5
Waterford	0	0	2	0
Wexford	6	6	8	1
Total	133	129	372	54



Table 19
Court-Based Mediation Initiatives 2023

Office	New Cases (1st Joint Mediation Session)	Total Sessions	Agreements
Athlone	2	1	0
Blanchardstown	0	0	0
Carlow	30	41	8
Castlebar	0	0	0
Cork	20	35	11
Dolphin	211	199	171
Dundalk	1	0	0
Ennis	10	9	15
Galway	0	0	0
Jervis House	4	19	6
Kilkenny	3	4	1
Letterkenny	0	0	0
Limerick	22	48	6
Mullingar	0	0	0
Nenagh	5	6	2
Portlaoise	0	0	0
Sligo	2	5	0
Tallaght	0	0	0
Tralee	4	12	1
Waterford	0	0	0
Wexford	0	0	0
Total	314	379	221



Table 20
Family Mediation Office Waiting Times

Office	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Athlone	20	49	8	32	13
Blanchardstown	16	24	12	24	17
Carlow	0	8	15	14	24
Castlebar	24	Vacant	26	Vacant	16
Cork	14	24	14	7	13
Dundalk	10	32	24	11	26
Galway	12	16	12	10	18
Jervis House	16	24	24	16	15
Kilkenny	8	8	15	14	20
Letterkenny	16	20	6	8	14
Limerick	20	12	15	5	15
Portlaoise	24	28	10	20	7
Sligo	18	15	10	12	31
Tallaght	16	36	15	22	20
Tralee	8	24	10	2	13
Waterford	6	16	4	7	15
Wexford	8	28	13	10	16

Table 21
Number of Submissions Granted and Refused

	Granted	Refused
Family Law Legal Aid Certificate	10,166	22
International Protection Legal Aid Certificate	9,496	0
Review of PIA Legal Aid Certificate	250	3
Non-Family Law Legal Aid Certificate	282	99
Amendments to all types of certificates	6,899	19
Authorisations - all case types	514	7
Waiver or reduction of Contribution	5,439	52
Waiver of Costs	177	31
Termination & Revocation of Legal Aid Certificate	140	2
Instalment Arrangement	283	0
Coroners' Inquest Certificates	31	0

Table 22
Annual Expenditure of Claims Processed Under the Scheme by the
Financial Shared Services (inclusive of VAT)*

Year	Number of claims authorised for payment	Annual Expenditure*
2011	Not available**	1,173,000
2012	4,155	887,000
2013	3,947	812,000
2014	4,289	1,010,000
2015	4,384	1,444,000
2016	4,258	1,711,000
2017	4,125	1,864,000
2018	4,307	1,948,000
2019	3,970	1,715,000
2020	4,534	1,983,000
2021	4,177	1,888,000
2022	3,266	1,435,000
2023	3,148	1,439,569

*The expenditure figures above are **inclusive** of VAT and collated by Financial Shared Services. As the figures in Table 1 draw on the Department of Justice IT system, they may differ with financial figures in this report that were drawn from the Board's database.

** 2012 was the first full year that the Board managed the Scheme. Consequently, claim details are not available for previous years.

Table 23
Garda Station Legal Advice Revised Scheme Payment Information

	2021	2022	2023
The highest cost for an individual claim processed	€ 6,693	€ 6,690	€ 5,922
Average cost per individual consultation*	€110	€106	€121

* Excluding extension hearings.

Table 24
Number of Detainees Accessing the Scheme

	2021	2022	2023
Number of detainees	4,178	3,267	2,796



Table 25
Expenditure by Type of Detention

Description	Average cost per claim	Cost of claims processed*
Offences Against the State Acts legislation	78	€46,472
Criminal Justice Act, 1984-2006 legislation	2753	€845,964
Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act 1996 legislation	233	€134,218
Section 50, Criminal Justice Act, 2007 legislation	84	€77,810
Total Authorised Claims	3148	€1,104,464
Add: Value of mileage claims authorised		€9,316
Total Expenditure		€1,113,780

Table 26
Expenditure by Category of Solicitor Engagement

	Number	Cost
Claims authorised in respect of Extension Hearings	9	€1,814
Individual client consultations authorised (excl. attendance for interviews) in respect of a daytime period visit (8am-8pm)	3476	€337,937
Individual client consultations authorised (excl. attendance for interviews) in respect of a night-time period visit (8pm-8am)	764	€100,861
Individual client consultations authorised (excl. attendance for interviews) in respect of a weekend or bank holiday period visit	945	€124,920
Individual phone consultations authorised	1633	€64,611
Total consultations authorised	6827	€630,143
Attendances	Number	Cost
Authorised day attendance hours for Garda interview (excl. consultation) between 8am-8pm	3945	€284,004
Authorised night attendance hours/ WE/ BH attendance for Garda interview (excl. consultation) between 8pm-8am	2049	€190,557
Total authorised hours at Garda interview	5994	€474,561
Total value of authorised hearings, consultations and attendances		€1,104,704



Notes



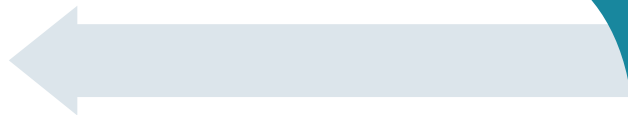
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