



Meeting: Legal Services Board
Date: 16 September 2025
Item: Paper (25) 43
Title: CEO's Progress Report
Author: Richard Orpin – Interim CEO
Status: Official

Introduction: Purpose of the paper/ Issue

1. This paper updates Board Members on key developments across the organisation since the Board's last meeting on 22 July 2025.

Recommendation

2. The Board is invited to **note** this report.

Matters Delegated to the Chief Executive

The following section contains key updates on current work priorities and developments to allow the Board to remain fully informed on critical activities and progress.

Appointment matters

LSB Board

3. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) intend to launch the recruitment campaign for the new permanent chair of LSB in September 2025.
4. The Lord Chancellor, after consultation with the Lord Chief Justice, has appointed Catherine Brown as Interim Chair from the 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025 to cover the recruitment campaign period. This extends Catherine's term as Interim Chair by three months.

Office for Legal Complaints (OLC) and Legal Services Consumer Panel (LSCP)

5. The recruitment campaign for the new Chair of the OLC launched in July and closed in August. The campaign received 19 candidates for the Chair role. Interviews are scheduled for October and the interview panel will be led by the Interim Chair. Arrangements are being made to schedule the Justice Select Committee hearing for the preferred candidate for early 2026.

6. A recruitment campaign to fill the current vacancy on the OLC Board launched in August and will be closing in September. The interview panel will be led by Kate Briscoe, with support from Elisabeth Davies, OLC Chair and an Independent Panel Member. WIG Talent is supporting with the recruitment campaign.
7. The recruitment of three members for the LSCP is progressing, with interviews having occurred in early September. The campaign received 60 candidates for three vacancies.

Governance

Office for Legal Complaints (OLC)

8. The OLC have provided the latest voluntary assurance letter following their July board meeting. See Annex A.
9. The delay in MoJ approving OLC / LeO's budget has meant LeO has been unable to recruit as quickly as planned, to meet their projected demand. That fact, combined with a sustained increase in demand overall is causing operational challenges. Board members will shortly receive the regular quarterly update from the oversight team about LeO performance which will set this out in more detail.
10. A Board-to-Board meeting with the OLC is scheduled for 22 September with a focus on closing the gap between funding and demand.
11. We understand that recruitment for a new Chief Ombudsman will begin in September and interim arrangements are being put in place..

Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal

12. We are in the closing stages of agreeing text for the renewed Memorandum of Understanding between the SDT, Law Society and LSB, which covers minor amendments to bring the agreement up to date.
13. We are preparing for the annual budget submission from the SDT which is due on 10 September 2025. As usual, we are in the process of convening a Challenge Panel to scrutinise the application on behalf of the Board. The budget will come to the Board at the October meeting to meet the approval deadline of 31 October 2025.

Regulatory Developments

Research

14. We are reviewing the proposals we received for the Small Business Legal Needs Survey and will make a decision shortly.
15. We are currently helping to collate and illustrate the diversity data the regulatory bodies have collected over time (between 2019/20 and 2024/25). The outputs will highlight the rate of progress that has been made on improving diversity within the sector, for key demographics (including sex, ethnicity, disability and

socio-economic background). This will go towards informing our consultation document for our draft statement of policy to encourage a diverse profession (see also Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update below).

Statutory Decisions

16. Since the last update, we approved the first practising fee application of the year - a joint application from TLS and the SRA seeking an increase of £19 on the individual practising fee that was charged for 2024/25. The application also includes an increase in the turnover based practising fees to be charged to firms for 2025/26. We have also approved an application from the ICAEW seeking approval for changes to its governance arrangements for legal services regulation.
17. The application from the CLC for the approval of a new Ongoing Competence Code, which would replace its existing Continuing Professional Development Code ('CPD code') and CPD Framework fell away on 29 July as the application no longer met the information requirements under the Applications to Alter Regulatory Arrangements Rules 2021. This application has been re-submitted.
18. We are currently considering four applications for alterations to regulatory arrangements. Two from the SRA: one introducing a single assessment provider model for higher rights of audience similar to the assessment model for the Solicitors Qualification Examination; and another for approval of its compensation fund contribution rates. The third application is a resubmitted application from the CLC for the approval of a new Ongoing Competence Code (see para 17) and the fourth is from the ICAEW and seeks approval of changes in relation to first tier complaints and the introduction of regulatory arrangement allowing for the administration of oaths.
19. In addition, we are considering one request for an exemption direction from ICAEW in relation to its annual compensation scheme contribution rates, and two practising fee applications. One from the CLSB, who are seeking to increase the individual practising fee by £7 (2.3%) and the other from the Master of Faculties, who are seeking approval for an average increase of approximately 11% across all turnover bands.

Access to justice

20. We are exploring the access to justice benefits that could be derived from a regulatory sandbox for consumer protection and in support of encouraging innovation. We are also preparing a response to the JSC's Inquiry into Access to Justice and will provide our proposed response to the Board later in September before the submission deadline.

Consumer Protection

21. Our proposed priorities for our policy work on consumer protection will be set out in a paper to the October Board. The paper will set out how changes in provider and consumer behaviours are increasing the risk of harm to consumers and will

include consideration of actions arising from the Civil Justice Council Review of third-party litigation funding and wider actions for regulators on mass claims.

22. We submitted a bid to the Regulators Pioneer Fund to understand the potential of voluntary standards for AI-powered business-to-consumer tools to empower informed consumer choice and increase access to justice. Additionally, we are scoping a research proposal to better understand consumer experiences of the unregulated sector.

Professional Ethics and Rule of Law

23. We have completed our analysis of the consultation responses and are drafting the consultation response document and updated policy statement. We will present the final proposed policy statement and consultation response document to Board early next year. We plan to publish a blog on our microsite in the Autumn about the emerging key themes and our proposed next steps to maintain momentum and engagement. Consultation respondents and the PERL reference group will be emailed the blog directly and we will share it across our LinkedIn networks.
24. Beyond the policy statement we are building on our established PERL Reference Group to develop a Professional Ethics Network as a catalyst for long-term change in workplace and leadership culture. This network will operate as both a strategic forum and an implementation vehicle, bringing together regulators, professional bodies, legal professionals and ethics experts to drive measurable change in professional culture. We are drafting the Terms of Reference for the network and will look to convene a roundtable early next year alongside the publication of the final policy statement.

Regulatory Performance Update: BSB

25. On 31 July we published a set of voluntary undertakings given by the BSB, to address concerns identified in our most recent Regulatory Performance Assessment. We will be monitoring progress via quarterly written reports from the BSB followed by monitoring meetings. The first report is due by the end of November.

SRA Directions monitoring

26. The SRA submitted its first quarterly report on how it is progressing its plans to comply with the Directions (attached at Annex B). We will be meeting the SRA on 8 September to discuss the report in more detail.

Technology

27. The Interim CEO attended an AI Roundtable at Number 10, hosted by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and the Prime Minister's (previous) AI Advisor Matt Clifford. Key themes included the role of safe spaces for innovators such as sandbox environments, and the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration to keep pace with the rapid pace of development. Some attendees sought further clarity on the government's approach to AI.

28. On 31 July, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) published the AI Action Plan for Justice which includes a commitment to work closely with key regulators including the LSB and extend their training on AI to regulators, where appropriate. The co-founder of Garfield Law Philip Young will be presenting at the upcoming Board Engagement session at Clifford Chance.
29. The next technology & innovation forum on 28 October will focus on uneven innovation and adoption across the sector with presentations from the BSB on their report Tech at the Bar and the SRA on research on uptake of technology by SMEs. We are inviting the Department for Business & Trade to present at our next forum on their new technology adoption scheme for professional and business services sector SMEs.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

30. The Interim Chief Executive joined the Summer Judicial Diversity Forum (JDF) meeting where the MoJ and the Judicial Office (JO) - joined by the Lord Chancellor and Lady Chief Justice - set out plans to develop a shared a joint strategic plan that aims to provide a shared articulation of the legal and judicial pipeline now and in the next 5-10 years to help ensure we have the appropriate level of skills and diversity to support the legal and judicial sector of the future. MoJ and JO colleagues are meeting with JDF partners (including LSB) in the coming months to inform the plan and we will set out the role of regulation and our commitment to being an active partner in the plan's implementation.
31. Following the discussion at the July Board we are finalising our draft policy statement and materials for consultation, to be launched in the autumn, which will be approved by the Interim Chief Executive and the Interim Chair.

Areas of delegation from the CEO to the Executive

The following sections provides additional information that the Board may find of interest to understand the ongoing work undertaken by the Executive team.

Colleague and organisational matters

Communications and Engagement

32. Following interviews in July and August, we have made three appointments to the roles of Statutory Decisions Associate (part time), Consumer Panel Associate and Regulatory Policy Manager – Regulatory Review team. All new colleagues will be starting at the end of September/beginning of October and early December.
33. Our contract was exchanged on 28 August and we moved into our new premises at Redman Place on 1 September. The team worked hard to move resources, organise colleague inductions, and provide information to support working in the new office. A social event in the QE2 park will introduce colleagues to the amenities of the area. The feedback received about the space we have chosen and the facilities is good so far.

Board stakeholder engagement 2025

34. Work is nearly complete for the London Board engagement activities:

- The event on the 16 September is being promoted, and the agenda is complete. We have the following speakers: Philip Young - Garfield AI, James Sandbach – London Citizens Advice and Nina Goswami (Head of Inclusion), Eliot Cohen (Corporate Lawyer) and Theodora Fajembola (Transformation Lead).

We have around 170 people registered for the event.

The stakeholder meetings on the 17 September are well attended and we are reaching our maximum on some of the meetings.

Stakeholder meetings will be held at: Inner Temple, Bar Council, University House and the South West London Law Centre

We have confirmed a date of 3rd December at Southampton University for our next Board engagement.

External events

35. None to report.

Meeting Schedule

36. The following senior-level meetings took place 8 July – 29 August 2025.

Date	Meeting	LSB
8 July 25	Visit by delegation from Malaysia	Interim CEO
10 July 25	4Way: LSB & Bar Council	Interim Chair, Interim CEO
21 Jul 25	Judicial Diversity Forum	Interim CEO
23 Jul 25	Roundtable on AI	Interim CEO
23 Jul 25	CEO/CEO: LSB & The Law Society	Interim CEO
30 Jul 25	Litigation report meeting with SRA and FCA	Interim CEO
5 Aug25	Chair/Chair: LSB & SRA	Interim Chair
6 Aug 25	CEO/CEO: LSB & CRL	Interim CEO
12 Aug 25	Chair mtg with MoJ	Interim Chair

Annexes

Annex A - VA letter July 2025

Annex B – SRA Implementation Plan

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol)		
Para ref	Fol exemption and summary	Expires
N/A	None	N/A