



THE BAR
OF IRELAND

The Law Library

STRATEGIC PLAN

OCTOBER 2015 - OCTOBER 2018

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
--------------	---

Who we are	4
------------	---

Organisation identity and brand	5
---------------------------------	---

Mission statement	6
-------------------	---

Our values	6
------------	---

Strategic objectives	7
----------------------	---

- Library services	8
--------------------	---

- Membership engagement and benefits	10
--------------------------------------	----

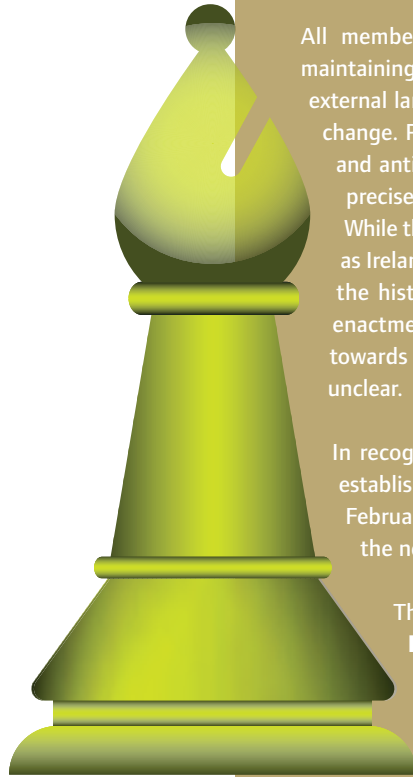
- Promotion, policy and public affairs	12
--	----

- Education and training	14
--------------------------	----

- Regulation	16
--------------	----

Running effective operations	17
------------------------------	----

Financial assumptions, policies and investment strategy	19
---	----



THE BAR OF IRELAND

INTRODUCTION

All membership organisations are continuously challenged in maintaining their relevance, and even more so at a time when the external landscape is shifting on foot of economic and legislative change. Professional bodies must compete, reinvent themselves and anticipate change to survive, evolve and grow, and that is precisely the juncture at which The Bar of Ireland finds itself.

While there is undoubtedly a growing level of economic stability as Ireland emerges from the longest and deepest contraction in the history of the State, the impact of the long-anticipated enactment of the Legal Services Regulation Bill as it moves towards completion of its journey in the Oireachtas remains unclear.

In recognising the challenges that lie ahead, the Bar Council established a working group comprising members and staff in February 2015 to set a clear direction for the organisation over the next three years.

This process involved:

- achieving clarity about the role and remit of the organisation, including the identity;
- defining the mission of the organisation;
- agreeing the key strategic objectives to deliver on our mission;
- setting out the actions to be undertaken within each strategic objective; and,
- identifying the capabilities required in the organisation to deliver on the actions.

The output of the working group is this three-year strategic plan that will run from October 2015 to October 2018. Through the implementation of this plan, the Bar Council can have confidence that The Bar of Ireland will fulfil its mission and maintain its status as the pre-eminent body for barristers in Ireland.

David Barniville SC
Chairman

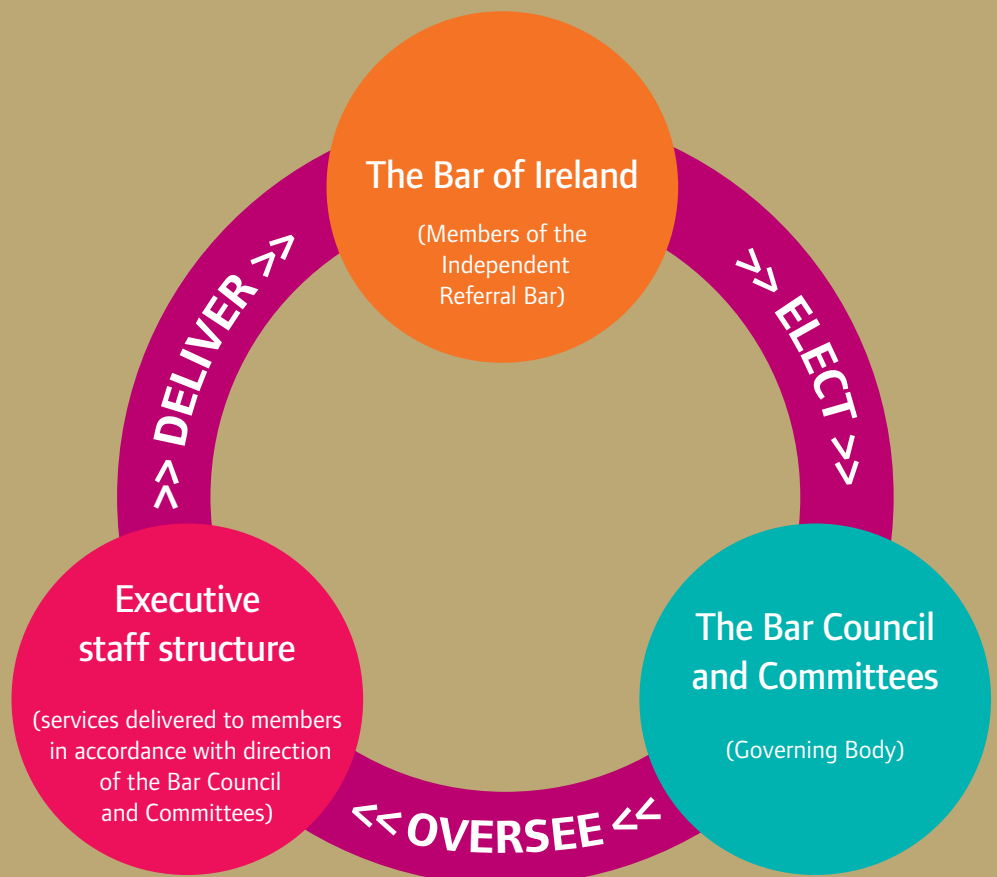
Ciara Murphy
Director

WHO WE ARE

The Bar of Ireland is an independent referral bar composed of approximately 2,300 members who provide specialised advocacy and advisory services to a wide client base at home and abroad. It ensures access to justice for all citizens by acting independently and objectively with expertise, integrity and professionalism to advocate, provide specialist advice and uphold the rule of law.

The Bar Council is the elected governing body of The Bar of Ireland that represents the profession, sets policy, upholds the code of conduct within the profession and oversees the delivery of services to its members through a range of committees who work in conjunction with the executive staff. The executive staff act under the direction of the Bar Council and its committees to implement policy and deliver core services to the profession, including:

- representing and promoting the profession in conjunction with the leadership of the elected members of the Bar Council;
- supporting the regulation of ethical and professional standards of The Bar of Ireland; and,
- enabling access to the library, facilities and services to support members in their professional practice.



ORGANISATION IDENTITY AND BRAND

Branding is all about consistency of message,
image and value.

The working group recognised that there was a lack of clarity about what the organisation and brand means to the marketplace, including members and external stakeholders. Adding to this lack of clarity, it was noted that there are challenges surrounding the identity and logo of the organisation.

The working group felt that it was of fundamental importance to confirm the identity and brand of the organisation. Following a series of workshops, a new identity and logo has been created:



This identity retains the pillars and dome of the Four Courts as a visual icon for the profession while presenting The Bar of Ireland identity in a new, clean and classic design.

Twelve pillars represent the 12 jurors in a trial and the barristers who work individually under the collective identity of The Bar of Ireland, represented by the dome. The design is an evolution rather than a revolution in style and substance.

The refreshed identity and brand, along with detailed guidelines for its use will be launched in October 2015.

MISSION STATEMENT

“To provide leadership and representation on behalf of members of the independent Bar of Ireland, ensure the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct within the profession and to deliver valued and quality services for the benefit of members”

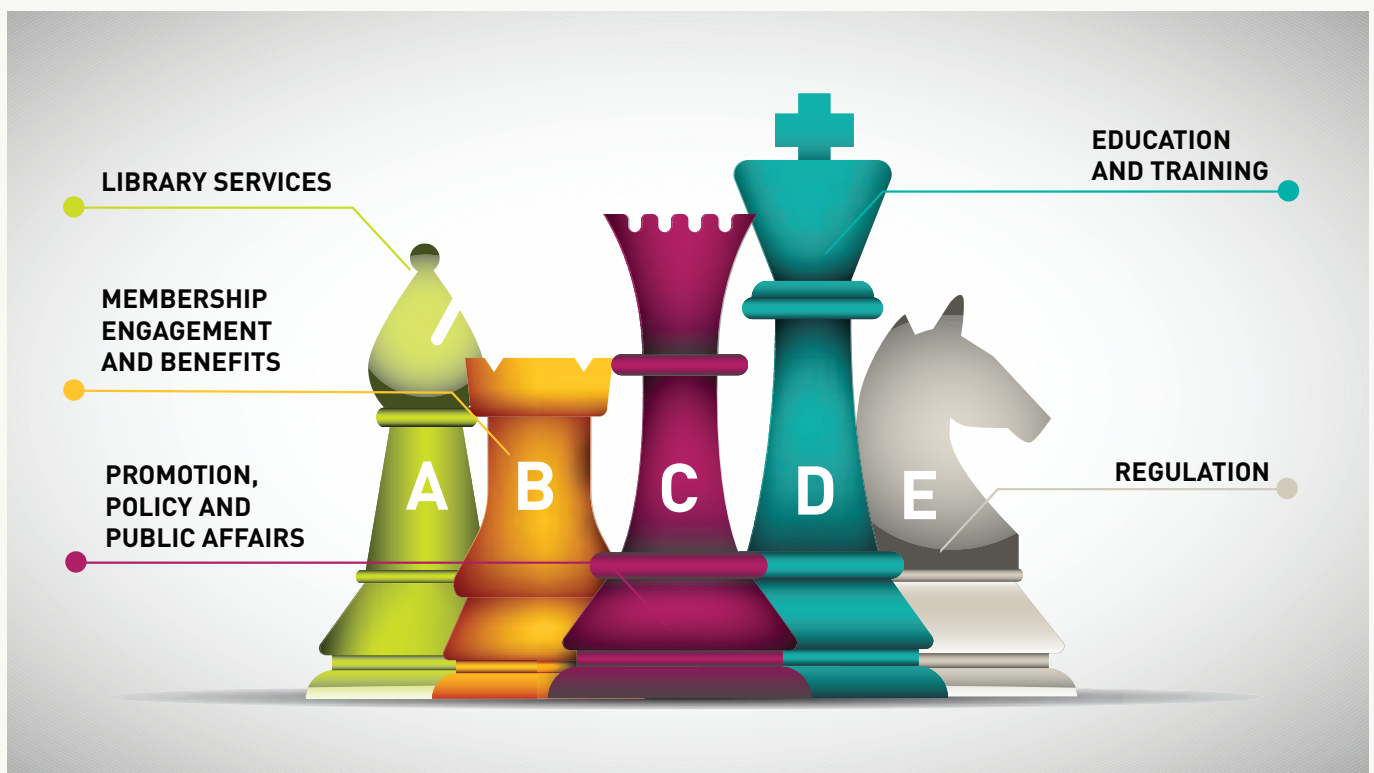
OUR VALUES

The core values of the organisation are:

- professionalism
 - accountability
 - efficiency
 - effectiveness
 - transparency
-

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To achieve its mission, The Bar of Ireland has identified five key strategic objectives within which our activities will be prioritised and where we will invest resources over the next three years:



A) Library services

To provide a library and information service to facilitate total, full-spectrum provision of relevant legal information and knowledge for members of the Law Library in the most readily accessible and user-friendly manner, to enable them to deliver on their professional services and expertise to clients.

B) Membership engagement and benefits

To ensure that members can work efficiently and effectively, and derive clear benefit from our investment in infrastructure, facilities and services.

C) Promotion, policy and public affairs

To proactively represent and promote members of The Bar of Ireland to a wide stakeholder network including the general public, Government, business community, voluntary sector and media, as independent and professional advocates ensuring access to justice and upholding the rule of law, and to ensure the independent Bar's reputation as an expert voice on legal matters through the production of policy papers and events on a range of relevant topics.

D) Education and training

To ensure that members are aware of the importance, objective and requirement for obtaining continuing professional development (CPD) throughout their career; to provide access for members to a wide range of informative training and education events and resources; and, to promote the profession to those who are considering embarking on a career as a practising barrister in the Law Library.

E) Regulation

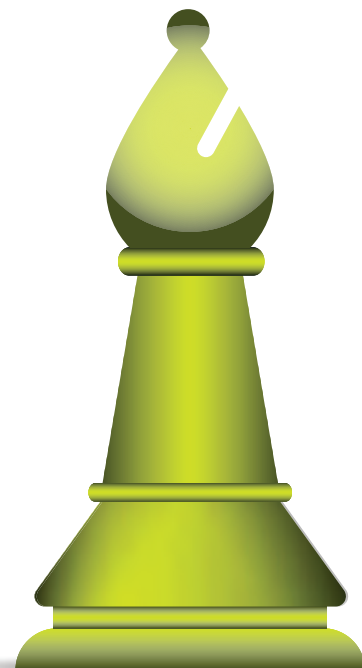
To enhance and advance regulation of the independent Bar for the benefit of the general public and ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct of the Bar of Ireland in the context of the principles of better regulation for the benefit of all.

The following section of the strategic plan sets out the actions to deliver upon each of the strategic objectives.



Library services

To provide a library and information service to facilitate total, full-spectrum provision of relevant legal information and knowledge for members of the Law Library in the most readily accessible and user-friendly manner to enable them to deliver on their professional services and expertise to clients.



The library and information service aims to:

- be highly effective, efficient and flexible;
- provide environments, both physical and virtual, that enable timely access to relevant legal information – provision of a one-stop-shop for comprehensive collections of legal information;
- connect members with services, information and expertise – our services work through every communications medium (in person, telephone, DX, Web 2.0/social media and other emerging communications media);
- provide a service that includes everything, everywhere – 24/7 – “always on”;
- offer support by service-led staff who combine the traditional skill set of librarianship and the skills required in the ICT-led digital world; and,
- continue to be a learning organisation by keeping pace with rapidly changing technology and consequent changes in the information profession.

Goal 1: Deliver a user-centred service to meet the needs of the 21st century barrister:

- 1 Provide and promote access to the information resources available to members.
- 2 Through our policies, ensure the optimal opening hours of our libraries, optimal staff support and the maximum availability of online services to members.
- 3 Ensure that an open and supportive experience for users of all library services, both within the physical and virtual library.
- 4 Ensure that our services remain relevant by engaging with members to ensure we are delivering the services they need with regard to time, place and format.
- 5 Deliver a range of training to promote 21st century information skills relevant to members’ needs.
- 6 Ensure that the physical environment is fit for purpose and conducive to providing a proper working environment for both members and staff. Investigate the possibilities of providing more quiet spaces within the library.

Goal 2: Develop support services that ensure continuous innovation in service delivery.

- 1 Continuously monitor, measure and evaluate the range, scope and delivery of our services to members.
- 2 Continue to exploit technology to ensure access to information. Review the content and usage of Barrister’s Desktop and, as necessary, implement the optimal solutions for delivering online services.
- 3 Further develop a programme of information and research skills education to support members in their research needs.
- 4 Co-operate with other departments to develop an internal marketing campaign to create awareness of our resources and services, and showcase the work of a modern, forward-thinking information and library service.
- 5 Through co-operation with other departments, ensure that equipment and other infrastructural resources within the library space are operating and fit for purpose.

Goal 3: Collections to meet the needs of members regardless of format and regardless of location.

- 1 Develop and review our collection development and management policies to ensure that the scope of our collections and the allocation of funds are aligned with the needs of members.
- 2 Review – and publicise widely – a collection development and management policy that recognises the move to digital/electronic rather than hard copy, and the potential economies to the benefit of members. It should ensure that the library collections policy emphasises the potential for accessibility while being as economic as possible.
- 3 Review – and publicise widely – a collection development and management policy to assess the policies governing our traditional print-based collections with a view to rationalising and streamlining. It is recognised that the appropriate balance must be achieved and maintained between print and electronic material.
- 4 Investigate developments in patron-driven purchasing acquisition for the benefit of members.
- 5 Liaise with specialist Bar associations to identify and address gaps in our collections.
- 6 Identify existing library material that needs to be preserved for future generations (either in hard copy form or in digitised form).
- 7 Investigate the requirement for a digital repository to capture the institutional memory.
- 8 Review – and publicise widely – our policies for relegation of material and disposal on a systematic basis.
- 9 Review – and publicise widely – our policy for the acceptance of gifts and donations to our collections.

Goal 4: Ensure access to the collections regardless of format and regardless of location.

- 1 Negotiate optimal purchasing agreements with publishers and other information providers.
- 2 Negotiate and agree licensing agreements with publishers and other information providers to ensure maximum flexibility. The emphasis is on providing universal access to resources by all members, regardless of location, subject to resource implications.
- 3 Continuously identify and evaluate developments in technology and its application to enable increased access to information for the benefit of members.
- 4 Ensure the development of metadata standards to accommodate the growth in digital resources.
- 5 Communicate and liaise with our information, communications and technology sections to ensure that an infrastructure (both physical and virtual) is in place to support mission-critical activities.
- 6 Keep under review developments in our current Library Management System to ensure that its vision and future strategy is aligned with our strategy and development plans. Keep a watching brief and compare with similar offerings in the market.

Goal 5: Access over holdings is the preferred model, subject to empirical evidence and cost-benefit analyses.

- 1 Continue to subscribe to resource-sharing services such as the British Library, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies and TCD Library. Investigate developments in document supply and delivery.
- 2 Co-operate and collaborate with peer libraries in Ireland to maximise resource sharing.
- 3 Explore the possibilities to establish a co-ordinated purchasing and collection development in collaboration with identified peer libraries in Ireland.
- 4 Identify and implement the tools and systems needed to enable collections analysis and management decision making.

Goal 6: Ensure high quality staff with a range of competencies and skills appropriate to the opportunities and challenges presented in meeting the needs of a 21st century information and library service.

- 1 Identify required competencies and skills necessary to deliver a service relevant to members' needs.
- 2 Carry out a skills audit and identify gaps.
- 3 In collaboration with the HR and OD Department, identify and implement a programme of staff development and training to enhance staff contribution to organisation and library strategic objectives.
- 4 Build on the current library organisational structure to develop a structure that supports the organisational and library strategic goals and meets the challenges of a modern, 21st century library service.
- 5 Review budget planning and allocation of resources to ensure proper provision of finances to meet and support the library strategic goals, and thus enhance and contribute to the strategic goals of the organisation.



Membership engagement and benefits

To ensure that members can work efficiently and effectively, and derive clear benefit from our investment in infrastructure, facilities and services.



Goal 1: To ensure that member facilities are fit for purpose to enable members to practise efficiently and effectively.

- 1 Confirm the range of shared infrastructure facilities available to members and ensure that they are fit for purpose and properly communicated to members.
- 2 Continuously review and invest in facilities that support and assist members in their professional practice, e.g., property, printing, copying, seating, lockers, storage, IT connectivity, email, data storage, etc.

Goal 2: To enhance the suite of membership benefits and ensure that they are actively communicated and promoted among the membership.

- 1 Confirm current suite of membership benefits and ensure that they are appropriately communicated to members through promotional leaflets and website content.
- 2 Identify opportunities to increase the range of membership benefits that are of value.



Goal 3: To harness and engage the Young Bar.

- 1 Support the Young Bar Committee, through its meetings and events.
- 2 Seek out opportunities to promote the Young Bar.
- 3 Establish a series of joint events with other professions.
- 4 Continuously support and develop the mentoring scheme and create opportunities for the Young Bar to meet with the senior members through appropriately organised events.
- 5 Organise a series of career support initiatives aimed at the Young Bar, e.g., CV development, tendering procedures, interviewing techniques, etc.

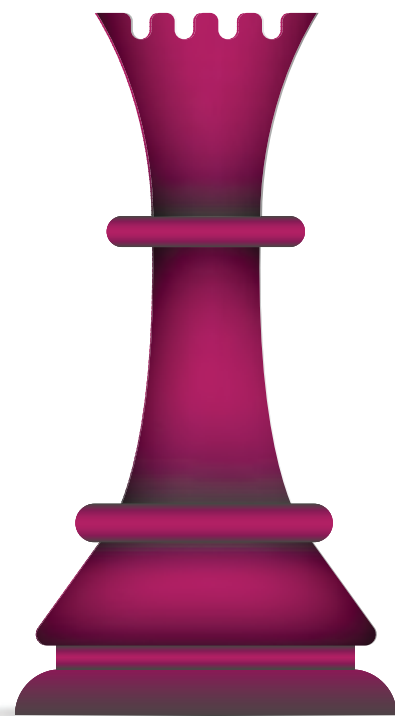
Goal 4: To foster camaraderie and collegiality within the profession.

- 1 Support and develop the social clubs, societies and events within the organisation, including, but not limited to:
 - Men's Soccer Club
 - Rugby Club
 - Golf Society
 - Cricket Club
 - Tennis Club
 - Men's Hockey Club
 - Ladies' Hockey Club
 - Tag Rugby Club
 - Gaelic Football Club
 - The Bar's Got Talent
 - Martial Arts Society
 - Bar Flies Running Club
 - Choir
- 2 Ensure transparency of funding and equal opportunity for all social clubs to submit proposals for funding.
- 3 Promote awareness of the clubs and societies and their events among the membership to encourage participation.
- 4 To continuously support the corporate social responsibility initiatives of The Bar of Ireland.



Promotion, policy and public affairs

To proactively represent and promote members of The Bar of Ireland to a wide stakeholder network including the general public, Government, business community, voluntary sector and media, as independent and professional advocates ensuring access to justice and upholding the rule of law, and to ensure The Bar of Ireland's reputation as an expert voice on legal matters through the production of policy papers and events on a range of relevant topics.

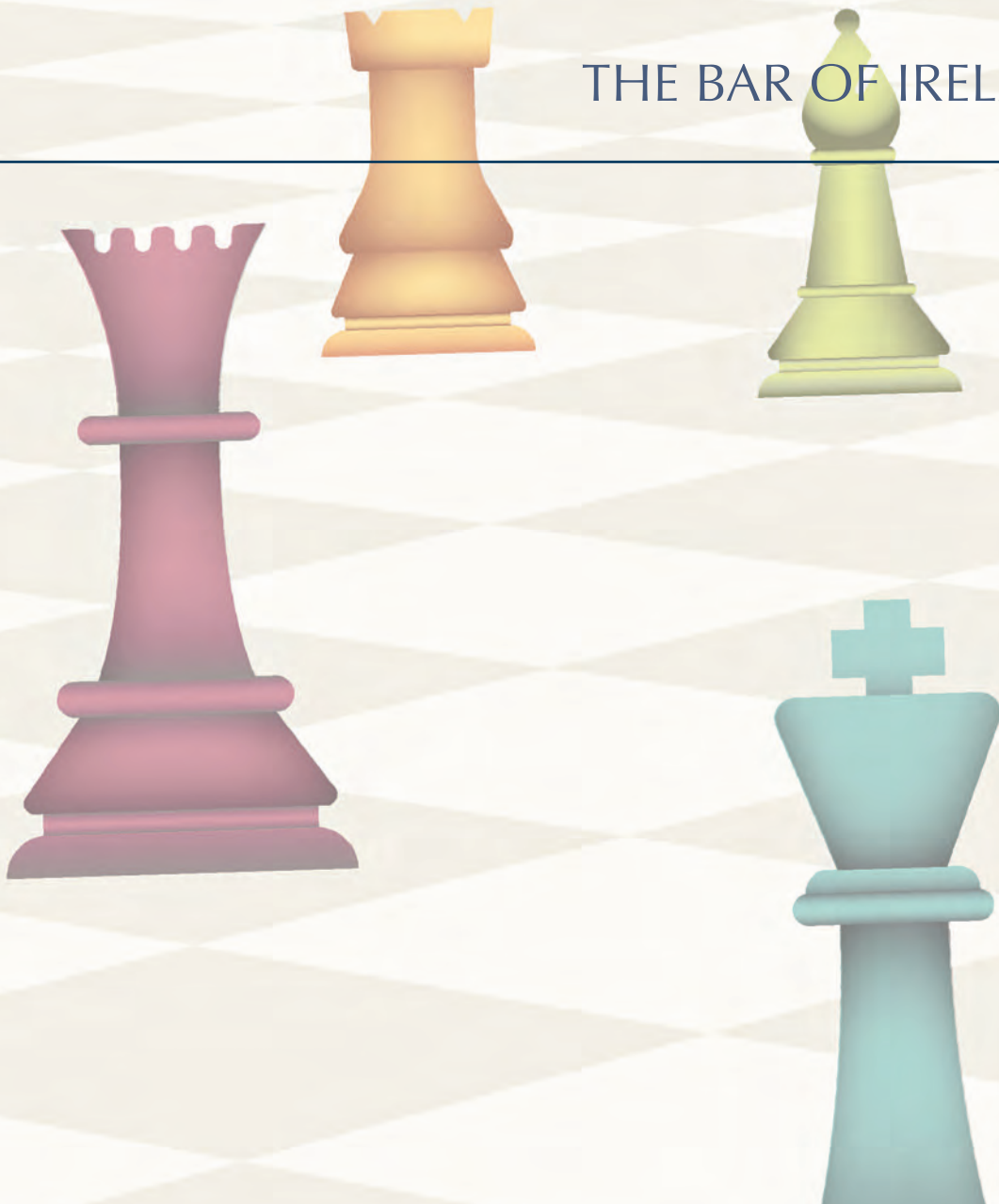


Goal 1: To define the appropriate range of communication platforms for internal communications.

- 1 Streamlining of member communications, including development of an effective and engaging weekly e-zine to include schedule of events (CPD and social), Bar Council/Committee news and media digest.
- 2 Development of a member-only section of the website to sit alongside Barrister's Desktop (which will evolve towards a specialised library communication platform).
- 3 Development of appropriate social media platforms (Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube).
- 4 Review and refresh of *The Bar Review*.
- 5 Drafting and issuing of communications policy and procedural guidelines on the use of communications channels including email, website, noticeboards and social media.

Goal 2: To market The Bar of Ireland brand both domestically and internationally.

- 1 Launch of new brand, including a member event and advertising in legal publications, other professional journals and national media.
- 2 Development of brand guidelines for use of the organisation and members.
- 3 Development of suite of marketing brochures to promote the profession and its expertise.
- 4 Identification of expert speaker opportunities to participate in the events of other stakeholders to promote the expertise of The Bar of Ireland.
- 5 Review of appropriate channels to invest in ongoing marketing of the brand both domestically and internationally.
- 6 Active participation in international forums and conferences for lawyers as appropriate to raise awareness of the Bar of Ireland.



Goal 3: To engage in public relations and media activities to raise the profile of The Bar of Ireland as the authoritative expert voice on legal matters.

- 1 Devise annual media plan with identification of weekly/monthly topics.
- 2 Proactively identify PR opportunities in all The Bar of Ireland activities including for events and programmes.
- 3 Ongoing media monitoring and engaging on issues as appropriate.
- 4 Hosting a range of relevant events including annual conference, and a series of breakfast briefings for external stakeholders to promote the expertise of The Bar of Ireland.
- 5 Establish a member panel of expert speakers and provide media training.

Goal 4: To produce policy papers and make submissions on a range of relevant issues to represent the profession.

- 1 Identify and review current drivers of policy within The Bar of Ireland including liaison with specialist Bar associations.
- 2 Identify key areas for policy development and engage with all relevant stakeholders, including the production of expert reports on topical issues and/or commissioning of research where appropriate to demonstrate the expertise of the profession, e.g., analysis of court waiting times, consumer guides, overview of legal aid system.
- 3 Ongoing monitoring and engagement on Legal Services Regulation Bill.
- 4 Leading policy agenda with key audiences including hosting stakeholder briefings, issuing communications and other policy-related events.
- 5 Representing the best interests of the profession and meeting the reporting requirements of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015.
- 6 Strengthening relationships with international Bar associations with an emphasis on the unique independence of The Bar of Ireland.
- 7 Making submissions on matters affecting the profession and ensuring effective working relationships with all agencies of the State (AG, DPP, CSSO, DOJ, LAB, etc.).

Education and training

To ensure that members are aware of the importance, objective and requirement for obtaining continuing professional development (CPD) throughout their career; to provide access for members to a wide range of informative training and education events and resources; and, to promote the profession to those who are considering embarking on a career as a practising barrister.

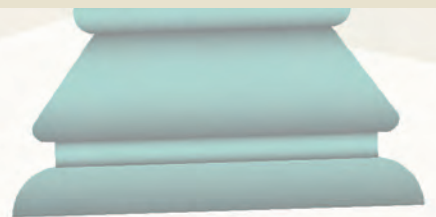


Goal 1: To ensure that barristers can keep abreast of and meet the highest standards of competence and professionalism through education, training and CPD that meets their needs, and can easily access same.

- 1 Ensure that members are aware of the importance, objective and requirement for obtaining CPD throughout their career.
- 2 Develop a programme of training courses of high standard in terms of content, delivery and administration nationwide that are commercially viable and contribute as a growing source of income through sponsorship and paid events.
- 3 Ensure appropriate provision of CPD and training relating to up-to-date technical, professional practice and practice management-related matters.
- 4 Timely and targeted publication of information to communicate upcoming CPD events and training courses.
- 5 Ensure that all members have access to CPD and training in a flexible and convenient manner, including traditional learning and online learning facilities.
- 6 Redevelop and enhance the CPD section of the website and an app as a user-friendly tool to assist members in accessing, recording and evaluating their CPD.
- 7 In tandem with the ongoing CPD calendar, develop and provide online training courses and tutorials relating to ethical, technical and practice management-related skills.
- 8 Promote recognition of The Bar of Ireland's CPD and training by other related professional bodies, including the establishment of a staff point of contact in the Library for other bodies. arranging CPD events at which they require barristers to speak.
- 9 Ensure continued review of CPD compliance policy, cognisant of requirements imposed on other professions of similar standing.
- 10 Ensure, through the development and provision of CPD, that The Bar or Ireland assists members in respect of membership and statutory regulation requirements.

Goal 2: To ensure continued and appropriate support for newly qualified barristers in their devilling/pupillage year(s) and appropriate training, support and guidance for masters.

- 1 Develop a short briefing programme and a suite of materials/ guidance notes to assist masters in their role, emphasising the Advanced Advocacy Training Programme.
- 2 Investigate the feasibility of The Bar of Ireland bursaries with appropriate criteria.
- 3 Enhance the induction programme for new devils together with a suite of compulsory CPD events, including compulsory ethics, Code of Conduct and advocacy modules.
- 4 Identify a series of opportunities to ensure that devils connect in a meaningful way with the activities of the Bar Council, e.g., volunteering and/or participation in events including: activity such as school visits; contribution of articles to the student section of the website; and, one-off attendances at committee meetings.
- 5 Encourage the Young Bar Committee within The Bar of Ireland to provide a forum to enable discussion among devils regarding any challenges in their early years and provide feedback directly to the Bar Council.
- 6 Develop a devils' section of the website.
- 7 Develop a consistent pre-devilling programme of advice for Kings Inn students.



Goal 3: To promote the profession to potential new entrants.

- 1 Develop a suite of marketing material (print and online) suitable for second- and third-level students.
- 2 Identify, target and distribute promotional material via schools, career guidance counsellors, career fairs, website, media, etc.
- 3 Develop stakeholder relationships with the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, careers websites and careers fair organisers to ensure a presence in schools nationwide, on all relevant websites and at all relevant events.
- 4 Develop and enhance the annual transition year (TY) programme with the aim of attracting the brightest and most diverse range of entrants to the profession, with emphasis on DEIS schools.
- 5 Establish a nationwide school and third-level Moot Courts programme, sponsored by The Bar of Ireland.
- 6 Develop appropriate promotional and communications tools, including the production of a careers video, and ensure that the profession is continually and visibly promoted on website and all relevant social media channels.
- 7 Investigate the feasibility of developing The Bar of Ireland Scholarship.
- 8 Undertake a series of third-level college visits to promote The Bar of Ireland and services of the Bar Council in institutes where Kings Inns' accredited degrees are delivered.

Goal 4: To support progression of membership from Junior Counsel to Senior Counsel.

- 1 Establishment of a mentoring programme aimed at encouraging women to progress towards Senior Counsel status.
- 2 Promote benefits and opportunities to acquire Senior Counsel status.
- 3 Advocate for implementation by Government of appropriate criteria for 'taking silk'.



Regulation

To enhance and advance regulation of barristers for the benefit of the public and ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct of The Bar of Ireland in the context of the principles of better regulation for the benefit of all.

Goal 1: To put in place an advisory service for members to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

In the context of the Legal Services Regulation Bill (LSRB) upon enactment:

- 1 Ensure compliance with the requirements of LSRB and develop appropriate communication channels to assist members in understanding those requirements.
- 2 Development of information leaflets/website content on regulatory compliance matters: client monies; professional indemnity; CPD, etc.
- 3 Development of information/website content on complaint handling.
- 4 Development and provision of service offering on supporting members where complaints may be made against them, in terms of interaction with complainant and various stages of the complaints process as handled by the Legal Service Regulation Authority (LSRA).

In the context of membership of The Bar of Ireland:

- 5 Review and adapt the Code of Conduct of The Bar of Ireland to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
- 6 Ensure compliance with requirements of membership of the Law Library and develop appropriate communication channels to assist members in understanding those requirements.
- 7 Promulgation of rules and standards to members, including development of information leaflets/website content on compliance with the Code of Conduct.
- 8 Development of professional guidance for members to assist them with aspects of compliance with the Code of Conduct and appropriate communication of same through information leaflets/website/FAQs/CPD, etc.
- 9 Consideration of the development and provision of a service supporting members where complaints may be made against them, in terms of interaction with complainants and various stages of the complaints process as handled by the LSRA.

Goal 2: To put in place processes and procedures to ensure compliance of members with regulatory requirements and enforcement as necessary.

- 1 Develop an in-house operational guide on implementing the compliance framework for reference by the appropriate committee/staff, as appropriate.
- 2 Guide to CPD monitoring, auditing and compliance.
- 3 Guide to professional indemnity insurance (PII) monitoring, auditing and compliance.
- 4 Any other guidance or activities to ensure compliance with the LSRA requirements.
- 5 Administer the enforcement process under the direction of the Professional Practice Committee.



Goal 3: To promote and communicate regulatory requirements with members and other stakeholders.

- 1 Establish the basis for ongoing interaction with the statutory regulators and for monitoring of relevant legislation and policy developments that have regulatory significance to the profession, i.e., LSRB impact.
- 2 Develop and publish appropriate and relevant real-time public and consumer information/brochures to outline regulation of members.
- 3 Increase public awareness of independent barristers as a regulated profession, free of external influence.
- 4 Development and delivery of appropriate communications strategy in the area of regulation.

Goal 4: To enforce better regulation to ensure the highest standards of professional practice and to protect the public interest.

- 1 Monitor compliance.
- 2 Investigate and prosecute complaints within the remit of the Barristers Professional Conduct Tribunal (BPCT).
- 3 Publish the outcome of investigations/complaints, as may be appropriate.

RUNNING EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS

The delivery of the strategic plan is dependent on the capability of the organisation to ensure that it can run effective operations across the organisation.

The capabilities of the organisation under the following headings need to be reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose:

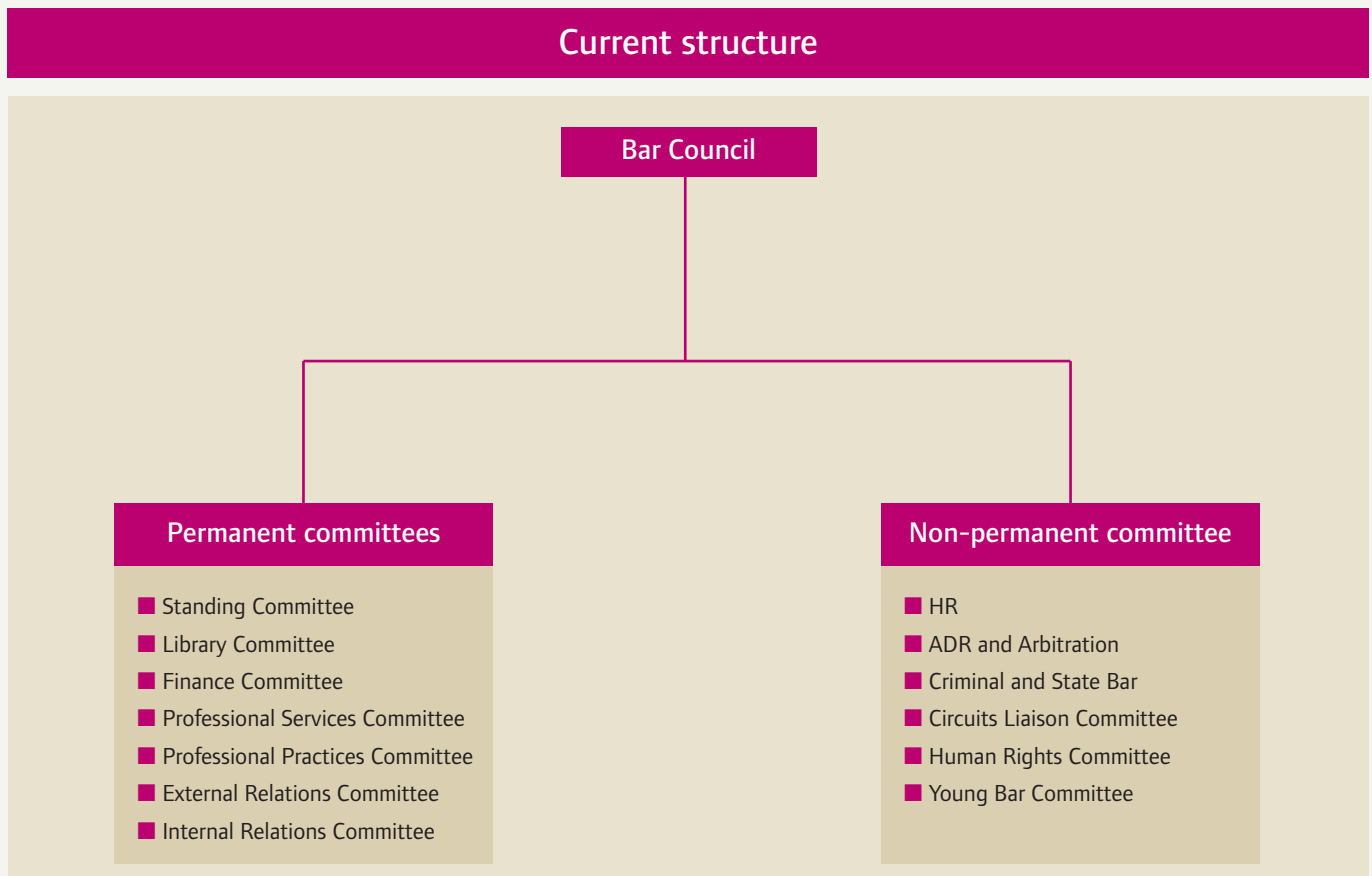
- governance;
- human resources;
- information and communications technology (ICT); and,
- property.

Governance

There is a need to review the Constitution of the General Council of the Bar of Ireland to ensure that the governance oversight of the organisation through both the composition of the Bar Council and the committee structure is fit for purpose. The aim should be to provide for a cost-effective governance model with clearly defined accountabilities in order to deliver on this strategic plan and the stated objectives.

The Permanent Committees of the Bar Council, of which there are seven, are primarily functional in nature and are established to conduct the business of the Council. Consequently, many of the day-to-day 'operational' functions of the organisation are being managed through large committees that often have overlapping agendas (e.g., Finance, Professional Services, Internal Relations and Library). Committees such as these have a vital role to play in discussing and leading on strategic items and the organisation would derive greater benefit from harnessing the strategic input from the members of these committees. In reviewing the committee structure, consideration should be given to streamlining the role and remit of each committee and perhaps refocus and reinvigorate the role of other committees having regard to the strategic objectives.

The governance of each committee also needs to be enhanced, to include a written 'Terms of Reference' for each committee setting out



THE BAR OF IRELAND

its purpose, membership, duration of tenure, reporting, etc.

The Bar of Ireland should continuously strive to ensure best practice in governance through:

- the setting of clear purpose and direction;
- regularly reviewing outcomes;
- promoting agreed values and behaviours;
- operating in a transparent manner when taking informed decisions; and,
- managing risk.

In this regard, the following objectives will be adhered to:

- ensure compliance with the Constitution of the General Council of The Bar of Ireland;
- ensure effective corporate governance with clear accountabilities, roles and responsibilities, and a framework of delegation and control;
- ensure that the membership of the various committees, groups and working parties is established in line with the agreed processes and procedures;
- define the roles and responsibilities of the various committee members and staff, and provide induction, training and development where required;
- support the Chairman and the Bar Council in leading The Bar of Ireland through implementation of the strategic plan; and,
- ensure openness, accountability and clear communication of direction, decisions, actions and performance to members.

Human resources

To deliver the strategic objectives of the organisation, it is imperative that there is an appropriate staff structure capable of and enabled to implement the initiatives agreed. There are three aspects to ensuring such operational capabilities:

- ensuring the appropriate skill sets are available within the staff;
- ensuring the appropriate level of resources to deliver on the plan; and,
- ensuring the appropriate structure and reporting lines.

It is essential that all employees understand and are fully engaged with and committed to achieving the goals of the organisation.

Over the next three years, the following will be the aims:

- to ensure that the composition and competence of the staff in the organisation underpins the achievement of this strategic plan and supports future development and opportunities;
- to retain and recruit the best people to ensure an ongoing high performance culture;
- to embrace and encourage change, with a focus on delivering strategic objectives;
- to utilise staff to greatest effect and to nurture innovation;
- to ensure that staff are appropriately encouraged to deliver enhanced results and that personal performance is recognised and acknowledged; and,
- to review, update and provide staff with easy access to the HR policies and a staff handbook in relation to their employment with the The Bar of Ireland.

Information and communications technology

In March 2014, a strategic review of the information and communications technology (ICT) services for The Bar of Ireland was undertaken with the following purpose:

- review the existing ICT systems with a view to understanding:
 - existing systems that are working well;
 - existing systems that need to be enhanced;
 - systems which are not in place but are needed; and,
 - wireless access needs and security considerations;
- review the existing network connectivity and resilience;
- review the resource and skill-set needs for the IT department and funding implications; and,
- make recommendations as necessary on emerging solutions, best practice and strategies needed by The Bar of Ireland to serve its clients.

Against this background, a working group of staff and members was established in May 2015 to review optimisation of ICT services in the context of the ICT strategic review and to better understand the needs of our individual members and our organisation. A key goal is to work towards improvement in the management and integration of information systems and business intelligence. The achievement of progress on this front is fundamental to the effective operations of all other sections of the organisation.

Property

The Bar of Ireland is both the owner and occupier of a substantial property portfolio. The annual budget of the organisation that is assigned to the physical space owned and occupied by the organisation is substantial. Priority should be given to:

- clarifying the responsibility within the staff structure for overseeing and managing the property assets of the organisation;
- ensuring the effectiveness of the property management company;
- co-ordination and implementation of a property strategy to look at how the properties are meeting their original intention, i.e., the needs of the membership, and identify any shortfalls in this service;
- continue to ensure effective and secure conditions for members, staff and visitors to the premises;
- continue to ensure health and safety compliance and record all areas of concern and/or non-compliance;
- continue to ensure the timely and appropriate maintenance of the premises, including structure, fabric and aesthetics, in keeping with the 10-year maintenance plan in place; and,
- manage a central repository of property information including letting agreements and refurbishment/repair programmes.

The Bar Council has recently signed off on a proposal to centralise the executive staff of the organisation in an area identified within the Distillery Building and will contribute towards service improvements for the benefit of members.

FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

It is envisaged that 2015/2016 will be a period of significant investment to ensure that The Bar of Ireland secures its position as the leading body for independent referral barristers. Some of the key areas of major investment and expenditure include:

- centralisation of staff in Distillery Building;
- investment in branding and marketing of the organisation;
- investment in communications activities;
- investment in regulation activities; and,
- investment in systems.

Assumptions

In preparing the plan for the next three years, the following assumptions have been made:

- membership subscription rates to be maintained at the current levels;
- member retention rate is assumed at 2015 level;

- services expenditure will be managed in order to keep costs of delivering services to a minimum with best practice procurement policies employed; and,
- material short-term expenditure variances, with particular reference to the initial costs associated with the LSRB, will be funded from accumulated reserves.

Reserves policy

The organisation should seek to ensure that a reserve of six months' subscription income is maintained on deposit.

Investment strategy

The organisation will maintain a risk-averse investment strategy and will review this annually in consideration of conditions prevailing at the time.



THE BAR
OF IRELAND

The Law Library

Distillery Building

145-151 Church Street

Dublin 7 D07 WDX8

T: +353 1 817 5000

F: +353 1 817 5150

E: thebarofireland@lawlibrary.ie

www.lawlibrary.ie