

Message from the CEO



The growth of legal aid during the 20th Century reflected an acceptance that access to justice was a basic human right and that State intervention was necessary to secure that right. The introduction of the Scheme of Civil Legal Aid and Advice at the end of 1979 was a significant step towards the aim of facilitating justice for all in Irish society.

The four decades since the first Board was appointed have seen an extensive change in Irish social thinking, values and the expectations of citizens. The Legal Aid Board, through enhancing participation and giving voice to citizens seeking to assert their rights, has played an active part as one component of a broader framework in assisting in modifying laws, policies and practices to better achieve substantive equality.

Over the past 40 years, the Legal Aid Board has played a substantial role in redressing disadvantage by providing access to justice to people who could otherwise not afford to participate fully in the legal process. This 40 year milestone presents us with an opportunity to recognise and appreciate our achievements and to learn from the past and identify areas for renewal.

John McDaid
Chief Executive

January, 2020

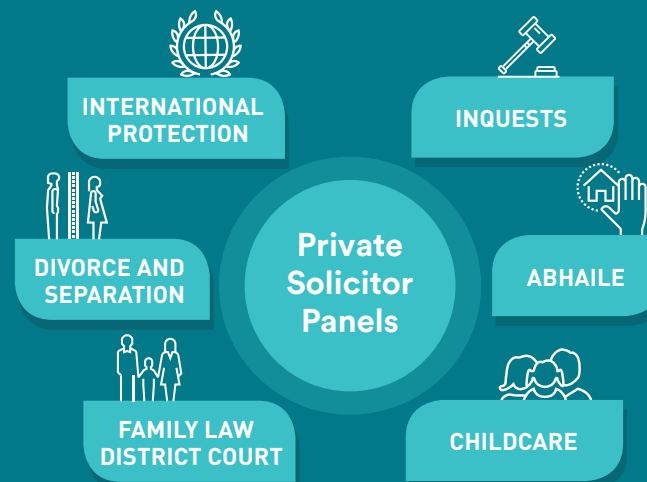
Legal Aid Board
Today
33
LAW CENTRES
6 co-locations



17 mediation centres

Court-based mediation in Dublin, Carlow, Ennis and Mullingar

3 Criminal Legal Aid Ad-Hoc Schemes



470
staff



An Bord Um Chúnamh Dlíthiúil
Legal Aid Board

Our mission is to enable the effective resolution of civil disputes through **the delivery of efficient and accessible legal aid and mediation services** and to effectively manage and administer the State's criminal legal aid schemes.

Contact us

Legal Aid Board
Quay Street,
Cahirciveen,
Co. Kerry.
V23 RD36

Phone: 066 947 1000
LoCall: 1890 615 200
Fax: 066 947 1035

✉ info@legalaidboard.ie
🌐 www.legalaidboard.ie
🐦 [Legal_Aid_Board](https://twitter.com/Legal_Aid_Board)



An Bord Um Chúnamh Dlíthiúil
Legal Aid Board

Providing access to justice since 1979



 **53,000**
people helped

 **75**
staff employed

 **97,000**
people helped

 **282**
staff employed

 **140,000**
people helped

 **370**
staff employed

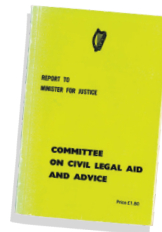
 **305,000**
people helped

 **470**
staff employed

1979–1989

1977 Pringle Report

The Committee on Civil Legal Aid and Advice recommended the introduction of a comprehensive scheme of civil legal aid and advice.



1979

Airey v. Ireland

Right to civil legal aid in complex cases was recognised by European Court of Human Rights.

Scheme of Civil Legal Aid and Advice

The Scheme was laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas and the Legal Aid Board was established on 21st December 1979.

1980

The first law centres

Seven law centres were opened. The first solicitors were hired and administrative staff seconded from the Department of Justice.

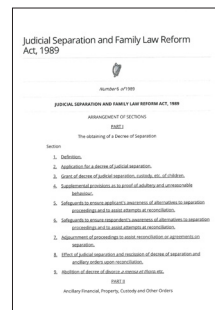
1986 State-funded family mediation starts

The first State-funded family mediation office opened in Dublin with four part-time mediators.

1989

The Judicial Separation and Family Law Reform Act 1989

No-fault judicial separation introduced and jurisdiction conferred on the Circuit Court.



1990–1999

1991



Development Plan

Fifteen new law centres opened between 1991 and 1997.

1993

First solicitor panel established

Solicitors in private practice provided civil legal aid for first time on a contract basis.

1995

Civil Legal Aid Act 1995

Civil legal aid was placed on a statutory footing.

1995
The divorce referendum took place

1996



First Statutory Board was appointed

1997



The Family Law (Divorce) Act 1996

Divorce was put on a statutory footing.

1999

The Refugee Legal Service is established

Legal Services for asylum seekers is provided by the Board.

2000–2009

2001

Head Office moves to Cahirciveen

Our purpose-built headquarters in Cahirciveen, Co Kerry was opened.



Artist, Martina Hanley, LAB

Family mediation on a statutory footing

The Family Support Agency was established with a statutory remit to provide family mediation services.

2004

O'Donoghue v. Legal Aid Board

Landmark judgement – target waiting period of four months to receive a non-priority service was endorsed.

2006

The Board established a new law centre to provide services in medical negligence cases.

2009

Dolphin House office

Office opened to provide a priority service to persons seeking family law remedies in Dublin.



Legal services to potential victims of human trafficking

Services commenced to persons identified by the Garda National Immigration Bureau as potential victims of human trafficking.

2010–2019

2011



The Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 was introduced

Mediation at Dolphin House, Dublin Metropolitan District Court

A new initiative with the Court Service began.

The Board began to provide legal services for complainants in certain sexual assault cases.



Family mediation

The Board took responsibility for State-funded family mediation services, taking on 45 new staff from the Family Support Agency.



2011–2012 Criminal legal aid ad-hoc schemes

Management of the Garda Station, CAB and Custody Issues Schemes was transferred to the board.

2016 Abhaile

The Board provides the legal services element of the scheme set up for insolvent persons in danger of having their home repossessed.



2016–2019 First co-location in Dublin

The first law centre and mediation centre located in the same premises opened.

Further co-located Family mediation and law centres opened in Dundalk, Kilkenny, Tallaght, Portlaoise and Letterkenny.