

Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators

Annual Report 2025



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service



Contents

2025 at a Glance	3
Foreword	4
About the Office	5
Our Mission	5
Our Vision	5
Our Values	5
What We Do	5
Governance and Management Structure	7
The Year in Review	8
Strategic Priority 1: Supporting the Legal Costs Adjudicators	8
Strategic Priority 2: Providing High Quality Service to Court Users	8
Strategic Priority 3: Develop and Support Our People	8
Strategic Priority 4: Improve Processes and Case Management	9
Strategic Priority 5: Optimise Use of Technology	9
Strategic Priority 6: Ensure Effective Governance and Accountability	9
Possible Shifts and Trends	9
Activity in 2025	12
Applications in 2025	12
Completed Cases	14
Determined Cases	16
Year End Case Status	18
Adjourned Cases	20
Register of Determinations	21
Time from Application to Hearing	19
Request for Consideration	19
County Registrars Summary	22

2025 at a Glance



- 905 cases filed
- 826 cases completed



- €145,122,000 in claims filed
- €17,102,164 in claims determined
- €6,728,010 in deductions made



- 153 cases determined
- 170 Sittings
- 7 weeks from filing to hearing date

Foreword

I have the honour of presenting the Annual Report of the Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators for the year 2025.

In 2025, the Office received 905 valid applications and completed 826 matters. A total of 153 cases proceeded to formal determination.

A defining feature of the year was the maintenance of an average period of seven weeks from receipt of a valid application to the assignment of the first hearing date. This performance, consistent with the standard achieved since 2021, confirms that there continues to be no delays in the Office listing matters for hearing. Such timeliness is essential to ensuring effective access to justice and upholding the confidence of court users in the adjudication system.

Leonora Doyle was appointed as Legal Costs Adjudicator in 2025, and I look forward to working with her in the coming years.

The contribution of Adjudicator Boggs and Adjudicator Doyle, together with that of the administrative staff, has strengthened the capacity of the Office to discharge its functions in accordance with the principles of independence, impartiality and procedural fairness.

The effective operation of the Office depends upon the dedication of its staff. I wish to formally acknowledge their professionalism, diligence and unfailing commitment to public service. I am equally grateful for the ongoing support provided by the Courts Service, including the Senior Management Team, Courts IT, ICT, the Estates Management Unit, the Legal Research Unit, and all those whose work ensures the smooth and orderly conduct of the Office's business. The continued support of the Department of Justice and the senior management of the Courts Service in matters of recruitment and governance also merits particular recognition.

This report sets out in detail the work undertaken during 2025 and the trends observed across the broad range of matters coming before the Office. It is my hope that it will assist practitioners, litigants, policy makers and the wider public in understanding the role of the Office.

Barry Magee

Chief Legal Costs Adjudicator

About the Office

Our Mission

The Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators mission is to:

1. Enable access to independent, impartial and objective resolution of legal costs disputes, through the provision of a courteous and professional service in the performance of its statutory function.
2. Maintain and provide transparency throughout the process from inception to completion, with reasoned outcomes being published, in so far as is permitted by the law, and accessible via the register of determinations, to inform both legal practitioners and the public.
3. Provide this service in a timely manner, providing and supporting access to justice.

A core part of our mission is the provision of a consistent, impartial, timely and excellent service to court users, consistent with the limitation of the Office's statutory remit.

Our Vision

Over time, as adjudications are completed and the register of determinations is updated, a body of information will be publicly available to inform the public and practitioners of the range of legal costs, the way they are determined and the reasons underlying the determination.

Our Values

We are committed, in performing our functions and fulfilling our responsibilities, to independence, fairness, integrity, professionalism, innovation and accountability. Our strengths derive from the expertise of the staff within the office, a commitment to improving services, adapting innovative processes, adherence to best practices and developing strategies for improvement.

What We Do

The Office was established in October 2019 and took over the functions of the Office of the Taxing Master. The statutory powers, functions and duties of the Office are set out in Part 10 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 and Order 99 of the Rules of the Superior Courts.

By its statutory powers, the Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators, in addition to having the previous powers of the Taxing Master, deals with disputes on

legal costs, usually but not always, as between parties involved in litigation in the Superior Courts. There are other matters such as disputes between a legal practitioner and his or her client which also fall within the remit of the office.

Party and party costs are the most common legal costs dealt with on Adjudication. These usually derive from an Order of the Court, which directs one party to an action to pay the costs of another. The Office only deals with Court Orders of the Superior Courts, i.e. the High Court, Court of Appeal or Supreme Court.

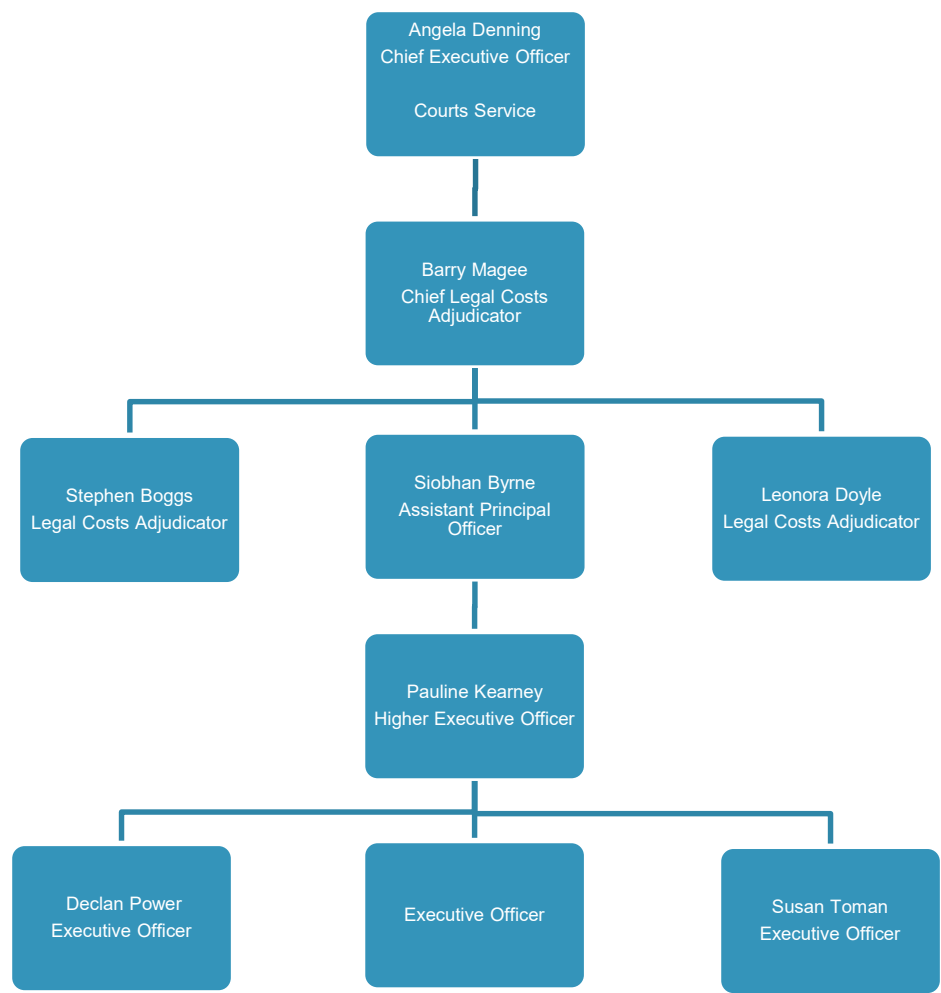
Circuit Court costs arising in proceedings are determined by County Registrars, as is provided in s.141 of The Legal Services Regulation Act, 2015 and the Circuit Court Rules. The Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicator does not have any jurisdiction or power to deal with Circuit Court party and party costs.

District Court costs are dealt with by the District Court Judge.

Disputes relating to legal costs and expenses as between legal practitioners and their clients fall within the remit of the Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators. The Office has sole jurisdiction to deal with such costs irrespective of value or subject matter. Legal Practitioners have prescribed duties relating to legal costs contained within the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. The Legal Costs Adjudicators have a duty to hear and determine disputes relating to the amount and whether such costs represented work actually undertaken and whether such charges have been reasonably incurred and are reasonable in amount.

Importantly the Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators does not have any power to deal with complaints about, or touching upon, matters of poor or inadequate services, or complaints relating to misconduct by a Legal Practitioner. These matters are dealt with by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority.

Governance and Management Structure



The Year in Review

The Office set out 6 strategic priorities in our Strategic Plan. In this section we set out the steps we took in 2025 to achieve those priorities.

Strategic Priority 1: Supporting the Legal Costs Adjudicators

The Legal Costs Adjudicators sat for adjudication on 170 dates in 2025. These were a mix of physical, online or hybrid sittings. A core role of the Office is the provision of support for adjudication sittings, the necessary resources and assistance which allow the Legal Costs Adjudicators to administer independent, impartial and objective resolutions of legal costs disputes.

The Office experienced another year of sustained demand in 2025, with 905 valid applications received and 826 cases completed. The overall value of claims filed totalled €145.12 million.

Strategic Priority 2: Providing High Quality Service to Court Users

In accordance with s.140 of the Legal Services Act 2015, the Office continues to populate the on-line register of determinations, and the reasons for determination in accordance with law. Publication levels remain consistent with statutory constraints in s.140 of the 2015 Act. Decisions are published where legally permissible and where they contribute to transparency and the development of jurisprudence on legal costs.

The Office determined 153 matters at formal hearing, assessing €17.10 million in costs and making deductions totalling €6.73 million. This represents an average reduction of 39 per cent across all determinations.

Part of the function of the Office is to facilitate the settlement of disputes without a need for a formal hearing. In 2025 approximately 675 cases were concluded without a need for the dispute to be determined by an Adjudicator.

Strategic Priority 3: Develop and Support Our People

In 2025 the office continued to invest in and support our staff to ensure a skilled, high-performing office delivering quality services to stakeholders. The Office has a compliment of two full time Adjudicators and a Chief Legal Costs Adjudicator who dedicates two days per week to strategic development. A new Assistant Principal Officer also joined the existing administrative staff at the end of 2025.

Strategic Priority 4: Improve Processes and Case Management

The Office maintained a consistently efficient service with an average time of seven weeks to first hearing date, unchanged since 2021. This stability demonstrates effective resource allocation and a mature case management structure.

No scheduling delays occurred between hearing allocation and listing. Once listed the parties may wish for the hearing to be adjourned for various reasons. The Adjudicators will generally facilitate the parties whilst ensuring that matters are not unnecessarily prolonged.

There was strong throughput with 826 completions v's 905 filings. With a clearance rate of 91 per cent for 2025, the Office continues to ensure that legal costs disputes are resolved in an efficient and timely manner.

Strategic Priority 5: Optimise Use of Technology

The case reporting system was utilised to track case progression and financial tracking. The Office continued to hold online hearings using the Courts Service online hearing platform where appropriate.

The Adjudicators have access to a suite of legal resources that assist them in their determinations.

Strategic Priority 6: Ensure Effective Governance and Accountability

Effective governance and accountability are priorities for the Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators. To ensure the continuity of business activities in case of a major incident or disaster the office conducted the annual review and update of the Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators Business Continuity Plan in 2025.

The Office also finalised the next Strategy Statement for the Office covering the next 3 years.¹

Possible Shifts and Trends

Until the Office Case Management system is updated to the new Universal Case Management system, any trends in the data will always be qualified and

¹ See OLCA Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029 available on the website.

speculative to a great extent. Nevertheless, the data is suggestive of rising complexity, growth in Judicial Review Costs, increased planning and environmental cases and a higher volume of appeals.

It remains the case that there is no obvious correlation in the data between output of the Superior Courts and applications to the Office. Once the Office moves to the new Case Management system it is hoped that the data will provide a clearer picture on the drivers of applications to the Office.

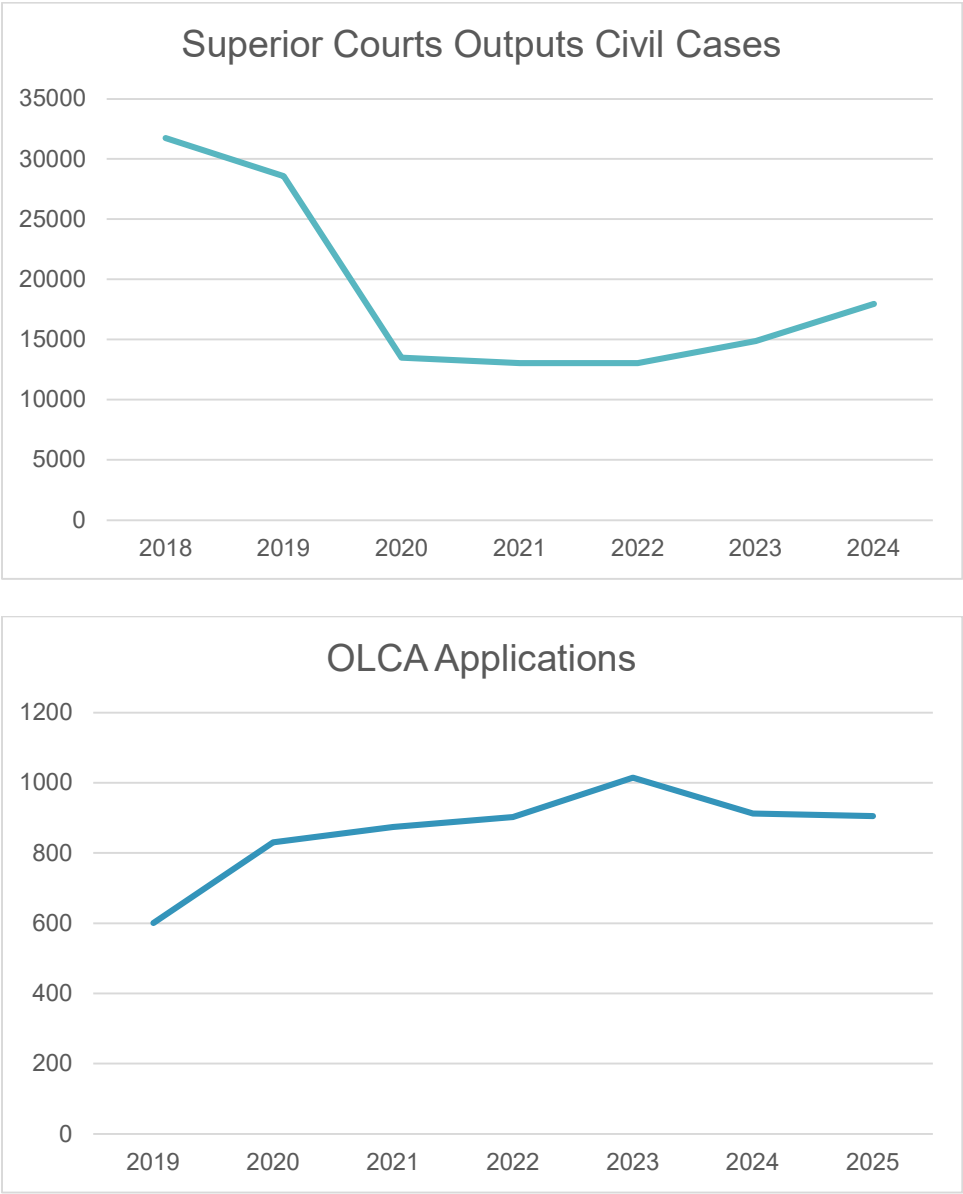


Figure 1: Superior Courts Outputs & OLCA Applications

The composition of applications continued to evolve in 2025, with notable increases observed in Planning, Professional Negligence, and general Litigation matters. Traditional categories such as Road Traffic and Medical Negligence saw modest reductions. This likely reflects broader shifts in Superior Court activity, including an increase in public law and commercial challenges and a stabilisation of personal-injury-related litigation.

The increase in Judicial Review applications filed with the Office aligns with the continuing upward trend in JR proceedings in the Superior Courts. As complex public-law cases increasingly dominate the High Court list, the associated costs require more frequent adjudication.

Planning-related adjudications increased significantly in 2025, reflecting the broader rise in strategic housing, infrastructure, and environmental litigation. The Office anticipates this trend to continue as national development projects intensify and the Courts determine more cases.

The rise in Supreme Court cost adjudication requests reflects a year where several high-complexity matters progressed to final appeal. While Court of Appeal figures remain broadly stable, the proportion of high-value appeal-related bills increased.

Activity in 2025

This section sets out the data for our caseload dealt with in 2025. We have also set out the associated figures for 2024 where relevant.

Applications in 2025

The following table shows valid applications filed with the Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators in 2024 and 2025.

Originating Case Type	2025		2024	
	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €
Road Traffic Accidents	166	17,605,842	181	14,373,430
Medical Negligence	122	33,419,481	136	42,937,766
Employer & Occupiers Liability	114	13,015,653	152	16,090,889
Other Litigation	102	16,609,878	78	11,990,815
Judicial Review	101	14,914,968	88	27,349,535
Wards of Court	50	4,390,901	43	2,229,322
Contract	30	6,269,825	27	3,446,217
Professional Negligence	29	6,200,992	18	3,378,629
Public Liability	28	2,238,272	23	1,919,796
Appeal - Court of Appeal	19	4,439,723	22	3,340,211
Motions Interlocutory	18	584,456	39	3,071,247
Planning Matters	14	3,357,893	1	104,390
Injunctions	15	1,900,260	7	1,815,234
Assault & Battery	13	3,503,831	13	1,687,308
Legal Practitioner and Client	13	873,632	5	428,607
Arbitration	12	2,531,080	6	920,782
Probate Matters	10	1,243,882	13	998,283

Originating Case Type	2025		2024	
	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €
Defamation. Libel & Slander	9	2,467,462	6	1,803,204
Nuisance	6	1,130,601	4	595,220
Employment Law	5	488,092	11	1,020,197
Family Law	5	527,767	11	849,898
Conveyancing	4	351,173	1	62,824
Commercial Court	4	5,388,254	3	1,811,090
Appeal - Supreme Court	4	115,630	2	1,331,032
Companies Act	3	367,122	4	430,425
Garda Compensation Acts	2	104,166	1	26,144
Bankruptcy	2	87,036	1	90,418
Immigration Law	2	136,711	n/a	n/a
Constitutional Law	1	725,103	3	908,917
Article 40/Habeas Corpus	1	67,622	2	71,082
Case Stated	1	64,692	n/a	n/a
Sale of Land	n/a	n/a	1	219,489
Judgement Mortgage/Land	n/a	n/a	9	19,372
Security for Costs	n/a	n/a	1	9,209
Total	905	€145,122,000	912	€145,330,983

Figure 2: Valid Applications Filed by Type and Value 2024/25

Completed Cases

It is part of the remit of the Office to facilitate the resolution of legal costs disputes as part of the wider public policy objectives to encourage parties to a dispute to resolve them, whether by formal or informal mechanisms. A matter may settle between the parties after it is filed with the Office and before any adjudication takes place.

Originating Case Type	2025		2024	
	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €
Road Traffic Accidents	169	15,589,727	195	15,091,344
Medical Negligence	129	35,929,965	164	56,975,118
Employer & Occupiers Liability	108	12,492,412	160	22,444,535
Judicial Review	88	12,837,894	92	27,080,872
Other Litigation	75	8,843,243	93	15,427,275
Wards of Court	38	3,304,601	55	2,859,964
Motions Interlocutory	30	1,155,240	32	1,930,929
Contract	27	4,462,736	34	4,657,839
Appeal - Court of Appeal	24	5,863,925	30	4,385,862
Public Liability	23	1,859,468	27	2,400,957
Professional Negligence	22	4,624,130	16	2,468,241
Assault & Battery	11	1,205,057	13	1,720,085
Injunctions	10	2,132,107	11	978,111
Defamation. Libel & Slander	9	2,245,427	9	1,349,508
Probate Matters	8	973,912	6	380,806
Legal Practitioner and Client	8	463,390	4	268,593
Employment Law	7	769,152	6	722,322
Arbitration	7	1,073,326	5	841,679

Originating Case Type	2025		2024	
	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €
Family Law	6	723,515	11	886,654
Nuisance	5	628,400	1	56,082
Judgement Mortgage/Land	5	10,618	6	14,942
Planning Matters	3	399,657	11	4,884,332
Appeal - Supreme Court	2	527,665	3	2,004,159
Garda Compensation Acts	2	104,166	4	240,473
Constitutional Law	2	862,579	2	119,347
Immigration	2	136,711	n/a	n/a
Bankruptcy	2	137,390	4	326,843
Commercial Court	1	924,695	4	2,320,129
Security for Costs	1	24,548	2	577,504
Companies Act	1	201,910	3	392,007
Conveyancing	1	59,443	1	43,877
Sale of Land	n/a	n/a	1	219,489
Article 40/Habeas Corpus	n/a	n/a	5	182,439
Pension Matters	n/a	n/a	1	182,103
Solicitors Acts	n/a	n/a	3	175,308
Case Stated	n/a	n/a	1	279,650
Residential Institutions Redress Board	n/a	n/a	1	28,117
Tribunal of Inquiry	n/a	n/a	3	1,191,124
TOTAL	826	€120,567,007	1019	€176,108,620

Figure 3: Completed Cases by Type and Value

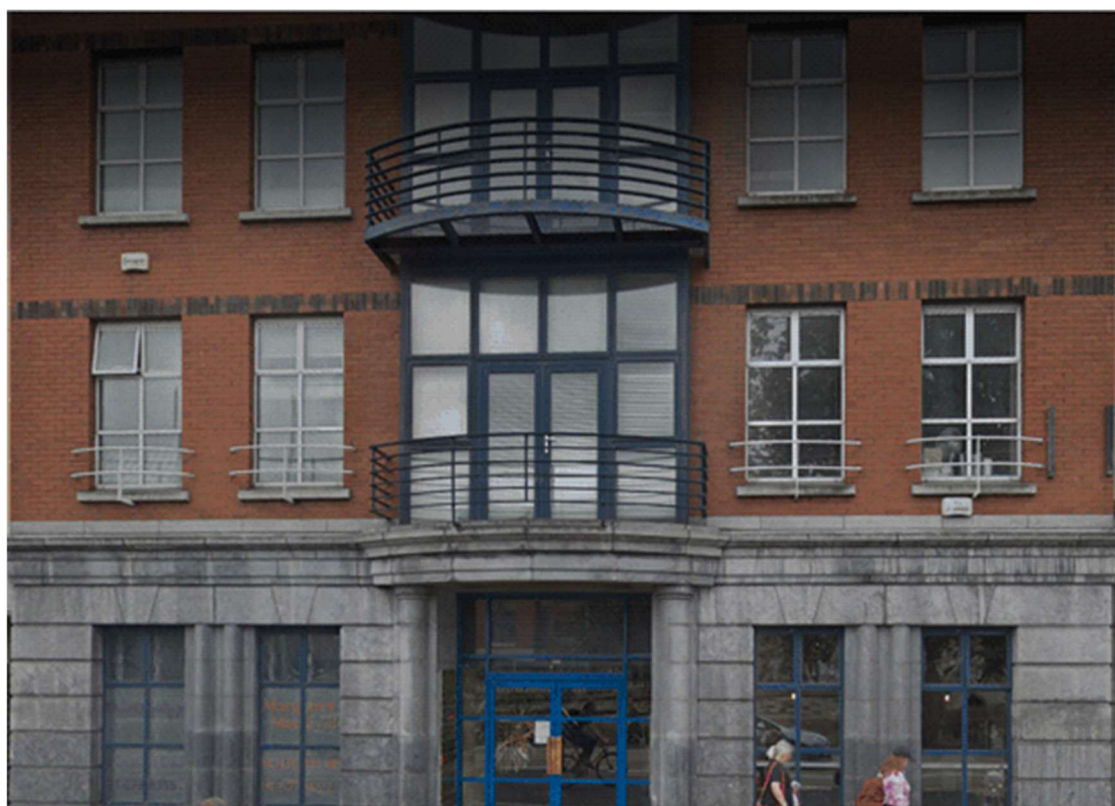
Determined Cases

153 cases were determined in 2025. These cases were heard by a Legal Costs Adjudicator at a hearing with a reasoned decision then being furnished to the parties either orally or in writing.

Originating Case Type	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €	Amount Deducted	Amount Allowed
Other Litigation	20	2,255,128	886,602	1,368,526
Road Traffic Accidents	17	1,891,073	787,660	1,103,413
Employer & Occupiers Liability	15	1,911,644	647,522	1,264,123
Medical Negligence	15	2,752,674	1,126,329	1,626,345
Judicial Review	14	1,902,020	817,228	1,084,792
Motions Interlocutory	11	463,344	126,285	337,059
Appeal - Court of Appeal	10	814,200	217,130	597,070
Probate Matters	9	620,830	140,784	480,046
Wards of Court	8	356,986	126,009	230,977
Appeal - Supreme Court	5	58,543	2,035	56,508
Injunctions	5	261,114	73,409	187,704
Contract	5	869,516	384,225	485,292
Public Liability	4	404,722	169,896	234,826
Professional Negligence	3	454,660	181,033	273,627
Employment Law	2	176,156	46,215	129,942
Legal Practitioner and Client	2	46,968	3,220	43,748
Assault & Battery	2	901,237	535,680	365,556
Family Law	2	175,332	52,576	122,755
Planning Matters	1	263,252	134,667	128,585
Commercial	1	376,699	224,536	152,164
Arbitration	1	78,444	23,887	54,556

Originating Case Type	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €	Amount Deducted	Amount Allowed
Article 40/Habeas Corpus	1	67,622	21,082	46,540
Total	153	€17,102,164	€6,728,010	€10,374,154

Figure 4: Cases Determined by Type and Value



Year End Case Status

Cases on hand at year end are cases previously lodged with the Office that are not yet completed. This can be for a variety of reasons, including the parties having sought an adjournment, the matter not having been heard, a decision being prepared or a S.160 consideration has been sought.

Originating Case Type	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €
Road Traffic Accidents	41	5,216,709
Employer & Occupiers Liability	34	3,761,723
Other Litigation	34	9,115,849
Judicial Review	32	4,965,470
Medical Negligence	32	18,219,668
Contract	22	9,913,081
Motions Interlocutory	19	2,587,850
Wards of Court	18	1,420,245
Professional Negligence	14	3,800,128
Appeal - Court of Appeal	13	1,533,356
Probate Matters	12	933,138
Legal Practitioner and Client	11	1,110,876
Planning Matters	11	2,752,147
Public Liability	8	501,918
Injunctions	8	1,272,054
Assault & Battery	5	2,580,280
Companies Act	5	313,134
Arbitration	5	1,774,756
Family Law	5	239,526
Commercial Court	4	4,840,258

Originating Case Type	No. of Cases	Amount Claimed €
Appeal - Supreme Court	4	115,635
Defamation. Libel & Slander	3	1,443,141
Nuisance	3	794,808
Conveyancing	3	291,730
Employment Law	2	131,462
Constitutional Law	2	2,527,876
Solicitors Act	2	134,357
Article 40/Habeas Corpus	1	36,597
Case Stated	1	64,692
Total	354	€82,392,463

Figure 5: Cases on Hand at Year End by Type and Value

Time from Application to Hearing

The average time from an application being lodged to the first hearing date was 7 weeks in 2025. This is consistent with the average time of 7 weeks in 2021 through to 2024.

It is not considered possible or advisable to seek to reduce this period further. Once an application is made to the Office, the application must then be served on the other party. Negotiations will usually take place with the possibility of the solicitor's file being inspected. As all this is required to take place prior to the hearing, it is considered that the average time of 7 weeks is necessary and appropriate.

Request for Consideration

Any party who is dissatisfied with a Determination made by a Legal Costs Adjudicator can apply pursuant to s.160 of the Act, for a Consideration. This involves the matter being reviewed and reconsidered by the Adjudicator.

27 new Consideration Applications were raised in 2025. 18 Consideration Applications matters were heard. A decision by a Legal Costs Adjudicator

reached following a Consideration hearing may be subject to Review by the High Court in accordance with s.161 of the Act.

Consideration Originating Case	No. of Cases	Total Amount Claimed €
Judicial Review	5	1,266,165
Road Traffic Accidents	4	229,370
Medical Negligence	3	416,965
Motions Interlocutory	2	21,537
Appeal - Court of Appeal	2	345,573
Appeal – Supreme Court	2	38,623
Probate Matters	2	217,312
Assault & Battery	2	2,141,806
Employment Law	1	128,516
Legal Practitioner and Client	1	20,667
Professional Negligence	1	274,362
Other litigation	1	70,689
Employer and Occupiers Liability	1	119,699
Total	27	€5,291,284

Figure 6: Considerations by Type and Value

Adjourned Cases

Cases may be adjourned where matters are under active discussion, a party is not in a position to proceed or for some other reason. This process continues to be managed carefully by the Legal Costs Adjudicators to maintain a balance between all parties to the process to ensure procedural fairness. This requires active case management on the part of the Adjudicators.

There were 326 Cases part heard or adjourned throughout 2025 of which there were 13 from 2019, 3 from 2020, 12 from 2021, 8 from 2022, 20 from 2023, 34 from 2024, and 236 from 2025.

Register of Determinations

The Legal Services Regulation Act, at s.140 provides that a Register of Determinations is to be maintained, with certain statutory exceptions.

Not every adjudication results in a written decision/report. Oral decisions are frequently delivered to the parties. The parties are entitled to a written decision should they so wish.

A written decision is usually only prepared where requested by a party, where the issue to be decided is of legal importance or, the Adjudicator considers is appropriate to do so. Decisions following a request for a consideration pursuant to S.160 are given in writing.

153 cases proceeded to a formal determination with €17.10 million assessed and €6.7 million in deductions applied. In 2025 14 determinations were published and 78 marked 'do not publish'.

County Registrars Summary

It is a requirement of s. 141(5) that each County Registrar is to report to the Chief Legal Costs Adjudicator providing a summary of the information contained in the register of taxation determinations maintained by him or her.

The information displayed below is from the relevant period as received by the Chief Legal Costs Adjudicator, from the County Registrars.

Applications Year End Status by Circuit	Struck Out	Adjourned	Settled	Certified	Other
Dublin Circuit	0	0	230	90	0
Cork Circuit	26	4	1	33	0
Southeastern Circuit	0	0	21	17	0
Western Circuit	0	1	14	14	0
Midland Circuit	2	5	17	8	0
Northern Circuit	8	4	37	16	0
Eastern Circuit	7	6	30	11	0
Southwestern Circuit	6	29	37	23	1
Total	49	49	387	212	1

Figure 7: County Registrar Year End Status by Circuit

