



Appointment to the Legal Aid Board

Closing Date: 15:00 on Friday 17th April 2020

**State Boards Division
Public Appointments Service
Chapter House, 26 – 30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1**

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stateboards.ie operates under the auspices of the Public Appointments Service and is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

The Public Appointments Service (PAS), established under statute in 2004, provides an independent shared service in recruitment, assessment and selection to organisations across the Civil and Public Services. On 30 September 2014, the Government decided that the PAS should also be given responsibility for putting in place an open, accessible, rigorous and transparent system to support Ministers in making appointments to State Boards. Our dedicated website, www.stateboards.ie, is the channel through which the PAS advertises vacancies on State Boards. It is also the means through which accomplished, experienced and qualified people, including people who might not previously have been identified as available for appointment, can then apply to be considered for particular vacancies.

Membership of State Boards

High standards of corporate governance in all State Agencies, whether in the commercial or non-commercial sphere, are critical to ensuring a positive contribution to the State's overall social and economic development.

Members of State Boards are appointed to act on behalf of the citizen to oversee the running of the affairs of state bodies. State bodies must serve the interests of the taxpayer, pursue value for money in their endeavours (including managing risk appropriately), and act transparently as public entities. Members of State Boards, and the relevant management team, are accountable for the proper management of the organisation.

Board members should act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the State body, subject to the objectives set by Government. In that regard and in accordance with 13.2 of the Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards, "it is advisable that no member of a State Board should serve more than two full terms of appointment or should hold appointments to more than two State Boards."

Note that the Civil Legal Aid Act precludes a Board member from serving more than two terms.

The [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016](#) (the Code) provides a framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non-commercial State bodies.

In order to be an effective contributor on a State Board it is recommended that members should:

- bring independent and objective scrutiny to the oversight of the organisation;
- be prepared to be challenging when necessary while being supportive to the delivery of organisational strategy and objectives;
- be equipped to offer considered advice on the basis of sound judgement and experience;
- be prepared to make a time commitment to their work commensurate with their role.

Appointment to the Legal Aid Board

Location:	Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry and Dublin
Number of Vacancies:	1 Ordinary Member – must be practising solicitor (see section 3 below)
Remuneration:	Ordinary member €7,695 per annum. (It should be noted that in line with the ‘One Person One Salary’ principle, no public servant will be entitled to receive remuneration in the form of board fees, save for situations that are statutorily provided for e.g. Worker Directors). Travel and subsistence is payable at the appropriate Civil Service rate.
Time Requirements:	On average 10 meetings are held per annum. Of these, six usually take place in Dublin, two in Cahirciveen, and two in another location around the country (for example to coincide with the official opening of a new office).

In addition, members are required to serve on various committees. The current Board operates with an Appeal Committee, an Audit and Risk Committee, a Finance and Effectiveness Committee, a Performance Committee, and a Strategy and Opportunity Committee. The number of meetings varies depending on the committee. The Appeals Committee will have 10-12 meetings per year and other committees will meet two to five times per year.

When Board meetings take place in Dublin, committees have generally met on the same day as the Board meeting. When a Board meeting takes place in Cahirciveen or in another location, the Committee meetings usually take place on the evening preceding the main Board meeting.

1. Background

The Legal Aid Board is a statutory body charged with providing civil legal aid to persons of modest means and also with providing a family mediation service. The Board was established on an administrative basis in 1979 and placed on a statutory footing through the enactment of the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995. A legislative amendment in 2011 transferred responsibility to the Board for the provision of the State’s family mediation services.

The Board operates 30 full time and 12 part-time law centres. The Board provides its service both via directly employed solicitors in the law centre network and via panels of private solicitors. In addition, the Board provides family mediation services in eight full time and nine part time family mediation offices.

At present the Board administers three of the State’s ad hoc criminal legal aid schemes namely the Garda Station Legal Advice Scheme, the Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme and the Criminal Assets Bureau Legal Aid Scheme.

Legislation is being drafted to transfer responsibility for the administration of these schemes and the statutory Criminal Legal Aid Scheme to the Board.

2. Functions of the Board

The Board consists of a Chairperson and twelve ordinary members, two of these members must be practising barristers, two practising solicitors, and two must be members of the staff. The Departments of Justice and Equality, Public Expenditure and Reform and Social Protection are also represented on the Board.

The Board's Mission Statement, set out in its Corporate Plan 2018-2020, is to enable the effective resolution of civil disputes through the delivery of efficient and accessible legal aid and family mediation services and to effectively manage and administer the State's criminal legal aid schemes.

The statutory Board has responsibility for:

- 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.

Further information can be found at <https://www.legalaidboard.ie/en/>

Current Board

Name	First Appointed	Reappointed	Expiry Date	Position type	Basis of appointment
Betty Dinneen	06/12/2019		01/11/2021	Board Member	Ministerial
Ellen O'Malley Dunlop	01/11/2016		01/11/2021	Board Member	PAS Process
Eoin Dormer	06/12/2019		01/11/2021	Board Member	Ministerial
Freda McKittrick	01/11/2016		01/11/2021	Board Member	PAS Process
Gordon Jeyes	01/11/2016		01/11/2021	Board Member	PAS Process
Maurice Lawlor	01/11/2016		01/11/2021	Board Member	Representative of Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Michael O'Connell	01/11/2016		01/11/2021	Board Member	Staff Member
Nuala Egan	21/02/2017		01/11/2021	Board Member	PAS Process
Nuala Jackson	01/11/2016		01/11/2021	Board Member	PAS Process

Name	First Appointed	Reappointed	Expiry Date	Position type	Basis of appointment
Philip O'Leary	01/11/2016		01/11/2021	Chair	PAS Process Appointed Chair 2016, previously a Member since 2014
Rachel Woods	24/09/2019		01/11/2021	Board Member	Ministerial
Thomas Brennan	01/11/2016		01/11/2021	Board Member	PAS Process

3. Person Specification

The Minister for Justice and Equality is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced persons for consideration for appointment as a member of the Board.

Candidate's attention is drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to the role of a Board member, where the principle states: -

- Each State body should be headed by an effective Board which is collectively responsible for the long-term sustainability of the body.
- Non-executive Board members should bring an independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance resources, key appointments and standard of conduct.

Details on the role of Board Members can be found in Section 3 of the Code which can be found [here](#).

Essential

Applicants must be a currently serving solicitor who has been engaged in practice for not less than seven years.

Candidates must demonstrate in their application evidence of experience which would be of relevance to the Board.

Desirable

- knowledge or experience of the law and/or mediation practice,
- the practice and procedure of the Courts,
- business, finance, management and administration, or of any other subject, which would in the opinion of the Minister, be of assistance to the Board in the performance of its functions.

The Minister shall have regard to the desirability for gender balance on the Board as the Minister considers appropriate and determines from time to time when making appointments.

In order to qualify for appointment a person must not have any legal impediment or conflicts of interest likely to interfere with his/her ability to assume the role of a member of the Board. Please give careful consideration to the possibility of any potential conflict of interest that may

exist and address this in your cover letter. The Assessment Panel may decide, based on the perceived level of conflict, not to forward your name for consideration.

4. Term of Appointment

Under Section 4 and 5 of the Act, the term of office of a member of the Board so appointed for the purposes of this competition will be until 01/11/2021 when the current board expires. Thereafter the person may be reappointed for the further term of not more than five years and no person shall be appointed a member of the Board for more than two terms.

- The membership of any member of the Board may be terminated by the Minister at any time, on the basis of reasons to be stated by the Minister.
- A member of the Board may resign his or her membership of the Board by notice in writing sent or given to the Minister, and the resignation shall take effect on the day on which the Minister receives the notice.
- Members of the Board shall, subject to the provisions of this Schedule, hold office upon such terms and conditions as the Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, from time to time determine.
- The roles and responsibilities of Board Members are described in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 which is available here [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies](#).
- A board member shall cease to be a member of the board if he or she is nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann, is elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or as a representative in the European Parliament, elected to the European Parliament, or becomes a member of a local authority.

5. Submitting your Application

Before submitting your expression of interest, please review the self-assessment questionnaire which can be found [here](#). This questionnaire is designed to help you in considering whether to submit an expression of interest - you are not required to submit the questionnaire as part of the application process.

Having considered the general suitability criteria for membership of a State Board, you should consider carefully how your background and experience fits with the specific appointment criteria set out in the Person Specification section in this booklet.

Your submission should be made via the following link www.stateboards.ie together with your **Curriculum Vitae** and a **cover letter** (see Appendix 1 of this booklet for help with the online process).

IMPORTANT NOTE

Please take care when submitting your expression of interest. As the Assessment Panel will generally make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation which you submit, it is most important that you do the following:

1. *Ensure your Cover Letter (and supporting CV) clearly specifies how your particular background and experience meets the requirements of the Authority position(s) specified in this booklet, and*
2. *That you fully answer any supplementary questions which are presented to you as part of our online application process.*

This will help ensure that the Assessment Panel is as informed as possible as to the basis for your candidature and why you believe you are a person who could potentially be appointed to this State Board. **Please only include information that is directly relevant to the particular role for which you are applying.**

If you have any questions regarding the application process please email info@stateboards.ie.

5. Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the "Panel") will be convened by PAS to consider and assess the applications received by PAS. The Panel will:

- review and discuss the expressions of interest received against the specific appointment criteria for the role, as advertised in this Information Booklet;
- assess potential candidates further once they meet the specified appointment criteria by undertaking any or all of the following steps:
 - Consideration of the written applications; and/or
 - Meeting/conference call; and/or
 - Referee checks; and/or
 - Any other selection or verification method deemed appropriate (this may include PAS requiring statutory declarations from shortlisted applicants as to the bona fides of the qualifications and experience contained in their applications).
- arrive at a shortlist of the most suitably qualified candidates (based on the information provided by the candidate) to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

Please note that the Public Appointments Service will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by candidates as part of our selection process.

6. Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence. All enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process.

Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.

7. Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 2018 provides that the processing of personal data shall be lawful where such processing is necessary for the performance of a statutory function of a controller. PAS is mandated by statute under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004 to act as the centralised assessment and selection body for the civil service and to carry out all the procedures necessary to undertake the recruitment, assessment and selection of suitable candidates for appointment. By submitting your personal data (including your name, address, contact details and details of your education and work history contained in your curriculum vitae and cover letter) via publicjobs.ie, you acknowledge that such data may be used by the Public Appointments Service and disclosed to and used by client departments, in connection with its statutory roles to assist and advise relevant Ministers in relation to appointments to the boards of State bodies. The information contained in your publicjobs profile is yours to manage, amend, update or delete as appropriate. For more detailed information on our Data Protection Policy, please see our [Code of Practice for the Protection of Personal Data in the Public Appointments Service](#).

If your application is assessed and you are considered to be suitable for appointment your c.v. and cover letter (and any additional supplementary information requested as part of the application process), will be forwarded to the State Board Liaison Officer in the relevant Department. Once it obtains your personal data, the Department will act as data controller of such data and will retain it for up to one year following the appointment/s. Unless you request the withdrawal of your application such data may be used in considering your suitability for other similar vacancies/roles that arise for a period of up to one year for this Board.

APPENDIX 1

Submitting your application:

In order to submit your application, you should take the following steps:

1. Go to www.stateboards.ie.
2. On the bar at the top of the page click on "Available Appointments".
3. This brings you to a page with all our advertised vacancies. Select whichever position you would like to apply for (you are welcome to apply for more than one position if you wish).
4. On the relevant page please click on the "apply for position" button at the bottom of the page
5. This will bring you to a page on www.publicjobs.ie and, if you already have a publicjobs.ie account, will prompt you for your username and password. If you do not have an account, you will be asked to create one.
6. Once you input your details you will be brought to a page where there is a prompt in the middle of the page which says "apply here". Click on the link to the online application form beside it.
7. A form will appear on your screen, some of the text boxes will be populated with information from your publicjobs.ie profile (Name, address etc.). You will need to complete the rest of the fields and enter your name and the date at the bottom of the form.
8. If there is a supplementary question, ensure that your response complies with the word limit and that it does not contain any special characters (i.e. %, & etc.) or you may receive an error message and will be unable to submit your application.
9. Click on "continue".
10. You will then be brought to a screen where you should upload your CV and Cover Letter. These are required documents and your application cannot be processed without them. Once you have selected these and uploaded them, please click on the "submit" button at the bottom of the page.
11. You will receive an e-mail confirmation (to the address listed in your publicjobs.ie profile) to confirm that your application has been submitted.

You must confirm that you do not have any conflicts of interest or legal impediment which would be likely to interfere with your ability to play a full part on the Board. You must also confirm that you can make yourself available to attend meetings and to carry out the duties of a Board member.