



**Appointments to the Legal Aid Board
Closing Date: 15:00 Friday 24th September 2021**

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

Telephone Number: 353 1 858 7441

Email: info@stateboards.ie

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. PAS also has responsibility for providing 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."

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.

Appointments to the Legal Aid Board

Location:	Cahiriveen and Dublin
Number of Vacancies:	3 ordinary members
Remuneration:	Chairperson €11,970 per annum. Ordinary member €7,695 per annum. Travel and subsistence is payable at the appropriate Civil Service rate. (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).
Time Requirements:	On average 10 meetings are held per annum. 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 Strategy and Opportunity Committee, and a Performance Committee. The number of meetings varies depending on the committee. The Appeal Committee meets on average about 12 times per year. Others meet significantly less frequently. Pre pandemic the committees tended to meet on the same day as the Board meeting though the move to virtual meetings has led to greater flexibility in this regard. Most Board members sit on two committees or thereabouts. Briefing papers are circulated in advance of meetings and there is an expectation that the papers have been read prior to the meeting.

Candidates' attention is also drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to Audit and Risk Committee membership which can be found [here](#).

1. Background

The Legal Aid Board is the statutory, independent body responsible for the provision of civil legal aid and advice to persons of modest means, in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Legal

Aid Act 1995. The Board is also responsible for the delivery of the State funded family mediation services, along with vulnerable witness related services and the administration of a number of ad hoc legal aid schemes.

The Board operates approximately 30 full-time and a number of part-time law centres, two specialist legal offices and 17 family mediation offices, some of which are co-located with law centres. It employs approximately 425 FTE staff. It provides its legal services using directly employed solicitors and also using panels of private solicitors engaged on a fee per case basis. Its family mediation services are provided exclusively by employed mediators who in addition to working out of a Board office, can also be located at a courthouse.

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, Public Expenditure and Reform and Employment and Social Protection have nominees on the Board.

The Board's Mission Statement, set out in its Statement of Strategy 2021-2023, is to deliver timely, effective, inclusive and just resolution of family and civil disputes to those most in need of our assistance, through high quality legal representation and advice and / or mediation and to manage other aspects of legal aid which have been entrusted to it.

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.

The composition of the current statutory Board is:

Name	Appointed	Expiry Date	Position type	Basis of appointment
Betty Dinneen	06/12/2019	01/11/2021	Board Member	Staff Member
Catherine Keane	09/06/2020	01/11/2021	Board Member	PAS Process
Ellen O'Malley Dunlop	01/11/2016	01/11/2021	Board Member	PAS Process
Eoin Dormer	06/12/2019	01/11/2021	Board Member	Nominee of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
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	Nominee 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
Philip O'Leary	01/11/2016	01/11/2021	Chair	PAS Process Appointed Chair 2016, previously a Member since 2011
Tracy O'Keeffe	21/07/2021	01/11/2021	Board Member	Nominee of Department of Justice
Thomas Brennan	01/11/2016	01/11/2021	Board Member	PAS Process

3. Person Specification

The Minister for Justice is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced persons for consideration for appointment to fill 3 vacancies as members of the Legal Aid 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](#).

In appointing persons to be members of the Board, the Minister shall have regard to the desirability of their having knowledge or experience of the law and/or mediation practice, the practice and procedure of the Courts, business, finance, management and administration, consumer or social affairs, 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.

While it is not necessary to be engaged in legal practice for all appointments to the Board, one of the three vacancies which will arise on the 31 October 2021 is for a solicitor who has been engaged in practice for not less than seven years prior to their appointment as a member.

For this specific position, after the closing date, you will be asked to provide evidence of 7+ years current experience as a solicitor (e.g. practising certificate), therefore please be prepared to provide this information.

Essential

Applicants for ordinary member positions must have significant senior level experience in one or more of the following areas:

a) Law

- Legal practice
- Academic background in the law
- Human rights law

b) Business

- Governance procedures
- Contract administration
- Financial management
- Human resource management
- Risk management

c) Finance

- Audit and finance procedures
- Financial management
- A relevant managerial or administrative role which demonstrates experience in the implementation of change management.

d) Advocacy

- A track record of having represented or advocated on behalf of persons that would be likely to form part of the Board's client base.

Desirable:

Experience in:

- Social Affairs
- Consumer Affairs
- Information and Communications Technology

The Minister shall have regard to the desirability for gender balance, diversity and inclusion on the Board as the Minister considers appropriate and determines from time to time when making appointments, in line with the updated Code. In this regard expressions of interest would be particularly welcome from persons who have a track record of having represented or advocated on behalf of a more marginalised community or communities to include communities that may be defined by levels of poverty or by ethnicity.

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 the Act, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1995/act/32/section/4/enacted/en/html#sec4> the term of office of a member of the Board shall be not more than five years and no person shall be appointed a member of the Board for more than two terms, subject to the following:

- 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](#).

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

5. Submitting your Expression of Interest

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. Please give careful consideration to the possibility of any potential conflict of interest that may arise if appointed to this board.

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 Board 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.

6. Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the "Panel") will be convened by PAS to consider and assess the expressions of interest 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 suitable candidates to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

7. 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.

8. 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 expression of interest

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. Click on "continue".
8. 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.
9. 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.