

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CILEx REGULATION LIMITED (CRL)
HELD ON 15 July 2025**

Present:

Jonathan Rees (Chair), Helen Astle, Alice Belcher, Douglas Blackstock and Patricia White

In attendance (CILEx Regulation):

John Barwick, Chief Executive Officer
Jonathan Levack, Director of Policy & Governance
Mark Wood, Head of Education (Items 8 and 9)
Gerard McCarthy, Finance Manager (Items 13 – 16)

Martin Kirke, observer
Ann Reeves, Chair, Admissions and Licensing Committee (Item 6)

Note: the formal meeting had been preceded by a private Board discussion.

Note of the private discussion (not for publication)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. All Board Members were present. The Director of Regulation sent his apologies.

2 Declarations of Interests

Helen Astle informed the Board that she has been appointed a Governor of the University of Portsmouth. The role will start in August.

Patricia White registered her interest in litigation rights.

Douglas Blackstock registered his role at ULaw.

3 Minutes of previous meetings

The Board received and **APPROVED** as a correct record the minutes of the strategy meeting on 15 May 2025, the minutes of the Board meeting on 16 May 2025 and the minutes of the Teleconference on 17 June 2025.

The Board reviewed the Action Log and noted that all outstanding actions were accounted for.

4 Chair's Update

The Chair provided an update to the Board on the following matters:

- Aaron Porter has been appointed as a lay Board member, replacing Alice Belcher. He will take up his role on September 1st. Aaron was selected from a highly competitive field.
- Karen McArthur has been appointed to the Strategic Risk Committee.
- A meeting of legal services regulators with the Minister of State for Legal Services, Sarah Sackman KC MP. There was a clear direction from the Minister that regulators need to embrace growth. In addition, there was discussion of whether the Legal Services Act needed to be looked at, where further collaboration could be beneficial and an AI Sandbox.

5 Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive introduced his report, highlighting the following:

- An Axiom Ince lessons learned report will be presented to the Strategic Risk Committee at their next meeting.
- Strategic Risk 4 (resources) has reduced following receipt of monies from CILEx to reconcile the intercompany balance. Reserves remain outstanding.
- The Regulatory Performance Assessment action plan, which the Board **AGREED**.
- Staffing issues, including 3 recent resignations.

The Board **NOTED** the report. The Board discussed operational performance. The Board welcomed recent improvements in operational performance, noting the reduction in decision times for QE and Practice Rights application, and **ASKED** that the Director of Regulation consider the plan for progressing the oldest misconduct cases and KPIs and report back to the Board in September.

6. Discussion with the Chair of the Admissions and Licensing Committee

The Chair of the ALC joined the meeting and presented her report on the work of the Admissions and Licensing Committee. The Chair of the ALC reported that meetings of the ALC are now highly focused and well supported by the Executive team. The Chair made the following recommendations:

- Improved induction process and mentoring provision for new appointees

- A clear process for appointing the Committee's Chair. The Chair noted that her role had been extended and a new Chair should be appointed.
- Consideration of whether 4 members is sufficient.
- Consideration of AI in generating content for applications and how CRL can assess professional competencies.

The Board **THANKED** the Chair for her report and the work of the ALC and **NOTED** the Chair's recommendations.

7. Director of Regulation's Report

The Chief Executive Officer introduced the Director of Regulation's report. The Board **NOTED** the report and the Director of Regulation's work on issues relating to internationally qualified lawyers, the positive impact of the AML Officer, the positive OPBAS inspection report (which will be considered by the Strategic Risk Committee), and the Designated Professional Body application continuing to be on hold – the Board suggested we highlight the impact the continuing delay has on the Government's growth agenda.

8. Director of Policy and Governance's Report

The Director of Policy and Governance introduced his report, highlighting the following:

- The CPD Sampling Report, which demonstrated high levels of compliance among CILEx members
- Developments among training providers, suggesting a buoyant market
- The publication of the First Tier Complaints Handling consultation
- Matters for Board consideration, including succession planning and the role of senior director following Alice Belcher's term coming to an end.

The Board **NOTED** the report. The Board **APPROVED** the CPD Sampling Report for publication alongside the Annual Reports, noting that it was unique among legal regulators. Douglas Blackstock **AGREED** to take on the role of senior director, once Alice Belcher's term comes to an end. The Board **NOTED** that a paper on issues of Board and Committee succession planning and process would be presented in September.

9. Standalone Litigation practice rights

The Head of Education introduced his paper on standalone litigation practice rights, noting the overwhelming support for their development. The Board **NOTED** the paper and **APPROVED** the draft consultation on proposed rule changes for publication.

10. Annual Reports

The Director of Policy and Governance presented 6 Annual Reports to the Board. The Board **APPROVED** the CRL Annual Report for publication subject to minor editorial changes. The Board **NOTED** the Admissions and Licensing Committee Annual Report, the Enforcement Annual Report, the Strategic Risk Committee Annual Report, the Compensation Arrangements Report and the CLE

Apprenticeships External Quality Assurance Report. The Chair **AGREED** to write to the authors of the Committee reports to thank them for their contributions.

11. Annual Cycle of Business

The Board **NOTED** the Annual Cycle of Business and **NOTED** that provision be included for a Remuneration Committee in November.

12. AOB

The Board **NOTED** that this was Alice Belcher's last meeting and **THANKED** her for all her contributions to CRL.

The following minutes are not for publication.

13. Communications and Engagement Strategic Review

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

14. 2026 PCF Consultation Paper and 2026 Budget

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

15. 2024 Costs Transparency Statement

[REDACTED]

16. Finance Update

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]