



Corporate Plan 2026

1. Introduction

CILEx Regulation Limited (CRL) provides independent regulation of CILEX's 7,600 authorised members, as well as around 9000 paralegals and other non-authorised members.

We are focused on delivering a high standard of specialist regulation of CILEX members which is risk-based, proportionate and operates in the public and consumer interest. We are proud of our strong governance, independent and cost-effective operational structure, and productive engagement with our regulated community.

This document sets out CRL's plan for delivering the second year of its 2025 – 2027 Corporate Strategy.

CRL's Strategic objectives



CRL's priorities for 2026 at a glance



2. Our mission and purpose

Our mission is to be a high performing and responsive regulator that protects and promotes consumers' interests through strong evidence-based regulation.

Our purpose is to ensure high standards of professional conduct and competence, protecting and promoting the public and consumer interests, enhancing respect and understanding for CRL qualifications and maintaining the integrity and trust of the legal profession.

We do this by overseeing the education, qualification, and continuing competence of the people and entities we regulate. We set standards, oversee compliance with those standards and investigate allegations of non-compliance – taking action where we need to.

Our approach to regulation is proportionate and constructive, promoting the nine regulatory objectives set out in the 2007 Legal Services Act. Members of our regulated community can deliver legal services in the way they think best, provided their decisions and actions are in the interests of their clients and the wider public.

3. Our strategy

CRL published its [strategy for 2025-2027](#) in November 2024. CRL has implemented and advanced that Strategy in 2025 and a progress report is regularly presented to the Board. The latest deliverables report presented at Board in September 2025 can be viewed [here](#).

We will continue to deliver CRL's core work in protecting consumers' interests into 2026 against the four key strategic objectives:

- Standards and public trust
- Access to justice and consumer empowerment
- Independence and sustainability
- Be an authoritative, inclusive and capable organisation

The 2026 Corporate Plan reflects on the progress we have made delivering the first year of the 2025-2027 strategy and sets out our priorities for 2026 against each of the four key strategic objectives. The judgment in the case of *Mazur vs Charles Russell Speechlys HC 2025* required CRL to reprioritise aspects of the 2025 Corporate Plan in order to provide guidance to CILEX professionals on the implications of the judgement and to support those CILEX members who want to apply for standalone litigation practice rights. We provided interim guidance two weeks after the judgment, secured LSB approval of our proposals for standalone litigation rights in 4 weeks, and awarded the first standalone litigation rights 3 weeks later. It also required us to streamline our processes, and increase both our staffing and external assessor capacity. It will remain our top priority for 2026, reflecting the distress and concern caused to so many of those we regulate.

4. Achievements in 2025

The 2025 Corporate Plan has been delivered against the backdrop of continuing uncertainty caused by CILEX's announcement in early 2022 of its intention to redelegate regulation of CILEX members to the Solicitors Regulation Authority. We continue to take the view that this proposal is unlawful, and are prepared to take legal action if necessary. More positively, CRL and CILEX continue to collaborate effectively on operational matters on a day to day basis. Furthermore, following a meeting convened by the LSB in September 2025, both CILEX and CRL agreed to explore options to continue to improve the current regulatory arrangements in the public interest that would avoid the need for regulatory redelegation, and the cost and disruption this would inevitably entail.

Key achievements in 2025 against the four objectives of our Strategy include:

A. Standards and Public Trust

Objective

The purpose of this objective is to promote high quality professional practice that enables the individuals and entities that we regulate to meet our standards, so they are able to adapt to changes in the delivery of legal services and utilise the benefits of innovation and law tech which meet the needs of consumers.

- In February 2025 CILEx Regulation, in collaboration with the Legal Services Board and the Legal Services Consumer Panel hosted a [Roundtable Event](#) to discuss the future shape of legal regulation in the light of research CRL published in 2024 on the unregulated legal sector.
- CRL has engaged with the Legal Services Board on its Professional Ethics and the Rule of Law (PERL) project. This has included participating in their working groups and responding to the LSB's consultation. We are awaiting the outcome of the consultation and to understand the next steps LSB proposes to take.
- We are mindful of the significant impact the collapse of Axiom Ince and SSB firms have had on consumers. We have reviewed the Directions of the LSB following their investigations into the Axiom Ince and SSB failures and have developed an action plan.

B. Access to Justice and Consumer Empowerment

Objective

This objective focuses on improving the information available to consumers to improve accessibility to legal services, so they are able to make informed choices and have confidence in the legal professionals they engage with.

- We have developed and consulted on changes to the rules on First Tier Complaint handling which will place standard requirements on the firms we regulate on how they should handle complaints and the information that

should be provided to consumers. An application is with the LSB which we hope will be approved soon.

- We have implemented new transparency rules which we consulted on last year. This requires firms to provide specific information to consumers on a range of things including price.
- We continue to be a partner on the development of the Regulatory Information Service. This is designed to be a one-stop shop for consumers looking for information about legal services. The RIS has recently gone into public beta testing.
- Soon to publish research on digital exclusion in partnership with BSB, CLC and ICAEW.
- The Board and Executive conducted a self-assessment of our approach consumer focused regulation against the Legal Services Consumer Panel (LSCP) criteria.

C. Independence and Sustainability

Objective

This objective is about promoting the value and importance of independent, specialist regulation, ensuring CRL is able to work without fear or favour and its independence is protected..

- CRL continues to work with CILEX on important issues of mutual interest including responding to the Mazur judgment. We have begun dialogue with CILEX to explore how the current regulatory approach can be improved without redelegation. CRL's position remains that we consider CILEX's original plans for regulatory redelegation to be unlawful and we remain prepared to challenge through the courts.
- Following Board approval of CRL's Resource strategy in February, we have strengthened our capacity and capability in Policy, AML supervision and our operational functions.
- In October, we prepared for the expected increase in litigation practice rights applications by recruiting additional resource to our Practitioner Authorisation and Supervision team as well as streamlining our processes.

D. Be an authoritative, inclusive and capable organisation

This objective is about ensuring CRL has the capacity and capability to quickly adapt to changes in the external environment and continues to champion fair access for all in the legal services market

- A refreshed EDI strategy for 2025-2028 was discussed at May Board meeting including alignment and input from CILEX and approved for publication at September 2025 Board.

- Publication of biennial diversity data report - scheduled for publication in autumn 2025.
- Worked with the Bridge Group to identify the data categories required to understand professional progression and barriers that may exist.
- Commissioned an independent Board Effectiveness Review which found that the CRL Board demonstrates a high level of Board Effectiveness in its governance, structures, process and Board meeting behaviours.

5. CRL's priorities in 2026

CRL's plan for 2026 comprises our core regulatory activities as well as activities specifically aligned to CRL's four strategic objectives. In summary, CRL's has six priorities in 2026:

Response to Mazur: Since the *Mazur* ruling, CRL has been working tirelessly to communicate with the regulated communities, Stakeholders, Government, CILEX and a huge number of organisations and representative bodies with a vested interest in the ruling. CRL has already acquired additional resource to manage the increased level of enquiries and Practice Rights applications, and we will prioritise the issuing of litigation rights to those who want them consistent with maintaining high standards of consumer protection. We will also work with the LSB and others to learn and apply the lessons from the judgment.

Enforcement Improvement: we will continue the improvements within the Enforcement Team to improve efficiency and reduce timescales for handling misconduct cases. This includes reviewing the existing Enforcement Rules to ensure they reflect best practice.

Improving User Experience

We will continue to deliver our core authorisation, supervision, and enforcement regulatory activities – looking always to refine and improve the way in which we deliver regulatory services in the public and professional interest. These activities are often referred to as 'business as usual', however, they represent a significant proportion of CRL's annual workplan and operational focus.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: we will implement the refreshed EDI Strategy for 2026-2028, working closely with CILEX. Our priorities are to improve access, help professionals to realise their potential, serve all consumers and be a more inclusive CRL.

Future Regulatory Landscape we will continue to engage constructively with CILEX on the future shape of regulation. CRL remain prepared to seek clarification of the lawfulness of CILEX's proposals to redelegate CRL's responsibilities to the SRA although our focus is currently in working with CILEX to determine what they

need and what we can provide. We will also contribute to the broader debate on the continued effectiveness of the 2007 Legal Services Act. Our view is that it needs major reform to become more risk-based, proportionate, transparent and reinforce the independence of regulators.

Stakeholder Engagement: CRL remains a key player across a wide range of practice and regulatory areas including PERL, First Tier Complaints Handling, Artificial Intelligence, Technology and Innovation, Digital Exclusion, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. We will also continue our programme of outreach, building on our two webinars in November 2025 which reached over 1300 members, and learning from the stakeholder survey we have initiated.

CRL's plan for 2026 comprises our core regulatory activities as well as activities specifically aligned to CRL's four strategic objectives. Our priorities for delivering our core regulatory activities next year are:

Education standards

Keeping the standards for authorisation under review, accrediting training providers, acting as External Quality Assurer for the Chartered Legal Executive apprenticeship, and carrying out an annual review of accredited providers and exemptions.

Deliverables

- Implementation of standalone litigation advocacy rights
- Review of new education standards to ensure they are accessible and remain rigorous
- Implementation of internal and external Quality Assurance strategy.

Authorisation

Authorising individuals and firms as authorised persons (includes assessment of qualifying employment, competence for admission and oversight by committees).

Deliverables

- Process the Qualifying Experience and Work Based Learning authorisation applications in line with agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and consolidate process improvements resulting from the response to Mazur.
 - Complete the review of and update of Authorisation and Supervision (PAS) Manual, application forms, and applicant facing website content to ensure it is user friendly.
- Informed by the experience of standalone litigation practice rights, implement Egress document sharing software.

Supervision

Ensuring competence of individuals through CPD activity monitoring and firm supervision via annual returns and visits.

Deliverables

- Design and implementation of 2025/2026 CPD sampling strategy including randomly selected members, non-compliant CPD members and those CILEX practitioners scoring 17 or above in the risk matrix.
- Review risk assessment of CRL Firms based on annual returns submitted by CRL entities in 2025.
- AML compliance:
 - Implementation of Action Plan following Office for Professional Body Anti-Money Laundering Supervision (OPBAS) inspection
 - Update AML Sectoral risk assessment to ensure it aligns with the National Risk Assessment 2025
 - AML Supervision Reports.

Enforcement

Includes review of the annual prior conduct declarations and investigations of misconduct together with oversight from enforcement panels.

Deliverables

- Continue process improvements to reduce the overall case load and the length of time to conclude cases.
- Publication of updated enforcement guidance.
- Implement revised KPIs and develop a performance monitoring dashboard for misconduct cases.
- Review and update enforcement rules and handbooks to reflect the introduction by CILEX of the Chartered Paralegal membership title.

Business planning, risk management and compliance

Includes engagement and communications, Board meetings and preparation, risk and performance management, strategy and business planning, stakeholder engagement and compliance activities.

Deliverables

- Respond to consultations including LSB and Legal Ombudsman (LeO) annual business plans.
- LSB Regulatory Performance information request.
- Implement strategic communications plan, informed by the outcome of the 2025 stakeholder perception survey.
- Corporate complaints reporting.

- Implement recommendations from external Board effectiveness review.
- Committee member recruitment.

General management

HR (including 3rd party provider). Finance activities including calculation of the practising certificate fee, professional fees not covered in other activities, expenses, networking, CRM development and business support and wellbeing

Deliverables

- Strategic Risk Committee review of the CRL compensation fund arrangements.
- Preparation for 2027 budget, PCF and Compensation Applications.
- CRL learning and development plan including preparation for new Employment Rights act.
- Explore with CILEX opportunities to develop the existing CRM to improve business processes and customer experience.

Strategic Objectives

This section of the Corporate Plan sets out what CRL intends to achieve in the second year of its 2025-2027 Corporate Strategy against each of the four strategic objectives.

Standards and Public Trust

Objective

We will promote high quality professional practice that enables the individuals and entities that we regulate to meet our standards, so they are able to adapt to changes in the delivery of legal services and utilise the benefits of innovation and law tech which meet the needs of consumers.

In 2026 we will:

- Complete the thematic review of enforcement practice, identifying where changes to the existing Enforcement Rules may be required.
- Develop an Action Plan in response to LSB's statement of policy on Professionalism and Ethics when this is published.
- Continue to enable the development of innovative approaches to service in legal regulation through the adoption of AI and new technology. Engagement through the LSB Innovation and Technology Forum and engagement with the regulated community.
- Implement actions from lessons learnt review of LSB's report into the SRA's handling of Axiom Ince and SSB failures.

- Continue to provide evidence to inform the debate on reviewing the suitability of the Legal Services Act 2007 and establishing a more risk-based approach to regulation.

Access to Justice and Consumer Empowerment

Objective

We will champion fair access to all in the legal services market. We will continue to improve the information available to consumers to improve accessibility to legal services, so they are able to make informed choices and have confidence in the legal professionals they engage with.

In 2026 we will:

- Implement the First Tier Complaints Handling rule changes and common First Tier Complaints Resolution Procedure in collaboration with the Legal Ombudsman (LeO).
- Implement actions from Board consumer focussed regulation self-assessment including: research and undertake a data gap analysis and use of LSCP tracker data.
- Support the delivery of the Regulatory Information Service(RIS) through the public Beta testing phase.
- Continued monitoring of compliance with CRL's revised transparency rules.
- Respond to the outcomes of the joint research with BSB, CLC and ICAEW into digitally excluded consumers.

Independence and sustainability

Objective

Promote the value and importance of independent, specialist regulation, ensuring CRL is able to work without fear or favour and its independence is protected.

In 2026 we will:

- Update resources plan to ensure CRL continues to invest in those areas of operation which are most important to consumers, the regulated community and regulated entities.
- Work with CILEX to develop alternative proposals to the CILEX *Case for Change* and develop a sustainable compensation fund.
- Be prepared to seek clarification of the lawfulness of CILEX's proposals to redelegate regulation to the SRA in the public interest if required.
- Review CRL's funding model, with particular focus on the regulation of unauthorised CILEX members.

Be an Authoritative, Inclusive and Capable Organisation

Objective

The organisation is resilient and has the capacity and capability to quickly adapt to changes in the external environment. Continue to champion fair access for all in the legal services market.

In 2026 we will:

- Implement our new EDI strategy for 2025-2028 approved at our September 2025 Board meeting.
- Develop an action plan in response to the outcomes of the CRL stakeholder engagement and perception survey conducted in 2025/26.
- Develop a CRL research plan.
- Implement the recommendations from our Board Effectiveness Review.

Budget and Costs

This Corporate Plan will be delivered predominantly from the Practising Certificate Fee for 2026, together with charges CRL levies for particular services (e.g. payment for assessment of Qualifying Experience and Work-based learning). For 2026, CRL has proposed a 2.6% increase in its Practising Certificate Fee budget to reflect additional costs bringing our budget to £1.79m. Through its Board papers, CRL regularly publishes a detailed breakdown of the costs of each of its key workstreams. We will continue this practice in 2026.

CILEx Regulation Values

Integrity	We are honest and take responsibility for our decisions. We listen to the regulated community and other stakeholders but remain independent.
Excellence	We are a learning organisation, committed to improvement and innovation.
Fairness	We respect people and treat them without prejudice.
Transparency	We are open about how we work and how we reach decisions.
Efficiency	We keep things simple, timely and cost effective.

6. CONCLUSION

This is an ambitious programme of work for a small organisation. As we have seen in 2025, external events may necessitate reprioritisation of resources as we go through the year. Our commitment is that we will do this openly continuing to publish Board papers and reporting after each Board.

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