

Date	16 April 2026
Item	05.00
Title	Chief Executive's Report
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Purpose	This report updates the Board on key activities and an overview of organisational performance since the last CEO report which was presented to the Board at its February 2026 meeting.
Recommendation	To NOTE the report.
Timing	N/A
Impact assessment	None
Impact on Regulatory Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section One provides an update on activities carried out by the CEO and senior managers and a summary of other areas of the business of which the Board should be aware. These affect all the regulatory objectives. More detail will be found in other reports presented at the meeting. Section Two covers strategic performance and risk. Monitoring performance of the organisation ensures that CRL is able to meet the regulatory objectives, in particular: protection of the public and consumer interest, access to justice, promoting competition and encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession.
Implications for Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report covers staffing, operations and resource implications affecting CRL since the last Board meeting.
Impact on Consumer Empowerment	This report covers some high-level meetings linked to consumer empowerment. The consumer facing projects and issues can be found in the Director of Policy and Governance report.
Impact on Ongoing Competence	None
Publication Status	For publication
Appendices	05.01 2026 Corporate Plan Deliverables Report 05.02 Strategic Risk Register

Section 1

Mazur

1. Responding to the impact of the judgement in the case of Mazur v Charles Russell Speechlys LLP 2025 continues to be CRL's primary operational focus. Since the February Board meeting there has been a significant increase in the number of litigation practice rights applications. This is in part due to a large cohort who took the ULaw assessment route in January receiving their results in early March.
2. The Board has been provided with progress updates at its telecon meetings held in January and March 2026 and at the February 2026 Board meeting, as well as the weekly practice rights data.
3. At the time of writing:
 - 737 litigation practice rights authorisations completed. This comprises 393 through the portfolio route and 344 via the ULaw assessment route.
 - A total of 662 portfolio applications have been uploaded. This includes those applications already authorised.
 - The average end to end processing time for those portfolio applications that pass pre-screening and external assessment first time is 10.5 weeks. This is within the 11 weeks processing time which CRL committed to maintain at the start of the Mazur response.
4. Looking forward, 143 individuals are registered for the ULaw assessments in March and April. New portfolio applications have remained fairly constant at 15 new applications received per week. At the current rate, we forecast the majority of portfolio applications authorisations to have been completed by early May.
5. On 31 March 2026 the Court of Appeal upheld the appeal brought by CILEX against the judgment in the case of *Mazur vs Charles Speechlys LLP 2025*. Paragraph 187 of the ruling confirmed '*An unauthorised person may lawfully perform any tasks, which are within the scope of the conduct of litigation, for and on behalf of an authorised individual such as a solicitor or appropriately authorised CILEX member, provided the authorised individual retains responsibility for the tasks delegated to the unauthorised person (both formal responsibility and the responsibilities identified at section 1(3) of the 2007 Act) In that situation, the authorised individual is the person carrying out the conduct of litigation*'.
6. The Court of Appeal judgment places an expectation on regulators that it is for them to provide guidance on the management supervision and control arrangements that the authorised individual should have in place for the delegation of tasks to unauthorised individuals (see paragraph 187 vi of the judgment). We will update the Board as to our plans.

Communications

7. CRL has adopted a proactive approach in recognition of the uncertainty and distress the Mazur judgement has caused some CILEX members. The focus has been on supporting members who are seeking practice rights. We have moved to a regular cadence of communications to reinforce the message that obtaining litigation practice rights is the best option for being able to conduct litigation without supervision. CRL's communication approach includes:
 - a. Establishing a dedicated standalone litigation rights home page on the website
 - b. Weekly progress updates summarising the number of authorisations.
 - c. Guidance and top tips for successfully completing portfolio applications

- d. CILEX Journal article and CRL Newsletter
 - e. Learner journey information
 - f. Regular updates to FAQs
 - g. Promotion via CRL's social media channels.
8. Following contact from the Treasury Solicitor, we updated the *Interim Guidance on the conduct of litigation and supervision* in February to clarify the statutory position of Government Legal Department (GLD) colleagues as "exempt persons" under the Legal Services Act 2007 which allows them to conduct litigation on behalf of the Treasury Solicitor.
 9. CRL has also responded to various queries seeking clarification of the status of those Chartered Legal Executives (CLEs) undertaking various roles within the Court of Protection (CoP). In response, we published guidance on the most suitable litigation pathways available and the approach CRL would take when assessing particular learning outcomes that might be difficult to evidence due to the nature of CoP work.
 10. We are also in dialogue with the Court of Protection Office to address queries we have received regarding situations where the CoP has denied CLEs authorisation to conduct advocacy despite them having the necessary advocacy practice rights as conferred by CRL.
 11. As discussed at the March telecon, the Executive is preparing a package of communications to coincide with the 1000th litigation practice rights application.
 12. CRL issued a [statement](#) in response to the Mazur Court of appeal judgment. The statement confirmed that CRL would work with other regulators and stakeholders to update guidance to reflect the full implications of the judgment.

Legal Services Board

13. On 12 March 2026 the Minister Sackman announced Monisha Shah as the preferred candidate for the new Chair of the Legal Services Board (LSB). Ms Shah is chair of Publishers' Licensing Services and co-chair of the Copyright Licensing Agency. She also chairs the King's Counsel Selection Panel and serves as council member of the Advertising Standards Authority. She is a serving trustee of the Royal Collection Trust, Art Fund and chair of trustees of Caterham School. Her previous experience includes non-executive roles at the Office of Students, the Ofcom Content Board, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. She has also served as a member of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, chair of Rose Bruford College and as Trustee of Wikimedia UK, Tate, National Gallery and the Foundling Museum. Her last executive role was at BBC Worldwide (now Studios), the commercial arm of the BBC. The appointment is subject to a pre-appointment scrutiny hearing by the Justice Select Committee. This was held on 25 March 2026.
14. The CRL CEO has met with the LSB CEO on regular basis to discuss the impact of Mazur and CRL's response, including a formal on 18 March 2026.
15. The CRL CEO, Director of Policy and Governance and Director of Regulation met with the CRL Relationship Manager on the 11 February 2026.
16. On 13 October 2025 the LSB announced its review how approved regulators and regulatory bodies ensured that the information and guidance provided to the profession on conducting litigation was accurate and reliable. A request for the provision of information and documents pursuant to Section 55 of the Legal Services Act 2007 was sent to CILEX on 28 October. CRL provided a response by the 28 November submission deadline. The LSB published an [interim report](#) on 29 January 2026. The LSB has requested further information from CRL which has been

responded to.

17. On 26 March the LSB published its final statement of policy on "[Upholding professional ethical duties](#)". The policy sets out three key areas where regulators must act:

- More consistent education and training in ethics
- Clearer and more practical regulatory guidance
- Stronger workplace support for lawyers in upholding standards.

18. CRL's proposed actions in response to the policy statement will be presented to the July Board meeting.

19. The CRL CEO attended a workshop on 2 March convened by Richard Lloyd who is chairing the Public Bodies Review of the LSB. CRL also responded to the call for evidence. The Review is expected to report in the Summer.

Regulatory Performance Assessment

20. The LSB is currently reviewing its approach to the annual RPA, informed by feedback provided by the regulators on their experience of the 2024/25 assessment. We are awaiting confirmation regarding the timing of the annual assurance information request.

CILEX

21. The CRL and CILEX CEOs continue to meet on a fortnightly basis. The CRL Chair and CEO met with their CILEX counterparts on 2 March. The meeting covered a number of topics including: Finances and the PCF, stakeholder engagement, improving regulation and horizon scanning, titles, qualifications and certifications, digital and data and EDI.

22. It was agreed that the CRL and CILEX teams would meet to work through the detail of some of the issues discussed, with a meeting scheduled for later in April. A further 4-way Chair/CEO meeting will take place in July and at regular points during the year.

Consultations

23. CRL has responded to the following consultations:

- a. LSB Business Plan and Budget 2026/27
- b. Evidence submission to the Legal Services Board Independent Review team. 10 March
- c. Response to the LSB's consultation on its draft policy statement on 'Encouraging a diverse legal profession.

Staffing and Operations

24. One of the additional fixed term PAS Administrators appointed to support the Mazur response resigned and left at the end of March. This role is not being replaced in the immediate term.

25. The Enforcement Administrator started on 23 March.

26. A new Entity and Authorisation Supervision Officer started on 23 February. This has enabled a handover period with the incumbent who left at the end of March.

External meetings

27. The CRL CEO attended the following meetings:

- Home Office roundtable meeting with Ministry of Justice stakeholders on 12 February.
- Public Bodies Review: LSB workshop convened by Richard Lloyd OBE on 2 March.
- Immigration Services Commissioner on 16 March 2026.
- Bilateral meeting with the FCA on AML supervision reform on 24 March.
- Dinner hosted by the Institute of Regulation on 24 March.
- Institute of Regulation Annual Conference on 25 March. The Director of Policy and Governance and Regulatory Support Lead: Enforcement also attended. The conference theme was *Advancing Regulation Together*
- Stakeholders' perception research presentation by Eventure on 2 April.











Section 2





Corporate Plan, Risk and Performance

Balanced Scorecard

28. The CRL balanced scorecard is an assessment of the performance of CRL extracted from the various reports and tables presented to the Board at each Board meeting. The amber ratings reflect the continuing focus on reducing the length of time to progress and conclude prior conduct and misconduct cases. Additional resource is being put in place to support this, including capacity to progress the enforcement review project. The variance to budget remains at amber due to the concerns raised by the LSB in the 2026 PCF decision notice.

29. With regards CRL's authorisation activities, we are still operating within our KPIs and the mitigation measures put in place in response to Mazur have ensured performance is maintained. However, stakeholder relations with the regulated community has moved to amber to reflect complaints and social media traffic, as well as the emerging findings from the stakeholder perception survey. Shared services remains amber due to the backlog of CRM improvements.

Finance (Information from Finance Paper)		Stakeholder	
PCF v other sources of income		External stakeholder relationships	
Reserves within target range		Regulated community	
Variance to budget		CILEX (including shared services)	
Internal Processes (Information from regulatory objectives update)		Staffing	
Practitioner		Vacancies	
Entity		Sickness	

Enforcement		Learning and Development	
Governance			
General Management			

30. An updated Deliverables Progress Report (DPR) for 2026 is provided at **Appendix 0.5.01**. The progress update reflects the proximity to start of the year. .

31. Areas of note since the February Board 2026 meeting are highlighted below:

- Commencement of onsite entity inspections
- Lay and Professional Panel member recruitment
- Response to LSB Business Plan and EDI consultations
- Stakeholder perception research
- Public Bodies Review evidence submission
- Publication of the Chair's article on the future of regulation in the Law Society Gazette
- Mazur response.

Risk

Strategic Risk Register

32. This can be found at **Appendix 05.03** Each of the strategic risks have been reviewed to reflect: the impact and risks associated with the Mazur ruling and the mitigations that have been put in place and the 2026 PCF decision notice. Most of the Mazur impacts have been reflected in Strategic Risk 1 (SR1). SR 4 has been updated to reflect the concerns raised in the LSB PCF decision notice including the impact of the continued delay in the transfer of CRL's contingent reserve by CILEX on the overall liquidity of CRL's financial position.

33. CRL's 2026 risk appetite statement has been published following review by the Strategic Risk Committee (SRC) at its meeting on 3 February and approval by the Board at its February meeting.

Performance

34. CRL's financial performance for the year up to the end of 28 February 2026 showed an operational surplus of £5,152. Non-PCF income is significantly ahead of budget due to the effect of Mazur however direct costs are more than budgeted due to three additional assessor and staff costs associated with the Mazur response.

35. CRL's reserves position up to 28 February 2026 was as follows:

Description	Total £	Committed £	Uncommitted £
Total Reserves Working & Contingency	£1,095,452	£420,000	£671,452

36. The Board has been provided with regular performance dashboard for the litigation practice rights applications. Q1 KPI performance data will be provided at the next Board meeting.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- **NOTE** the update.