CRL mid-year update

July 2026

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Agenda

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12:30-12:35

Welcome

Jonathan Rees

CRL Board Chair

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12:35-12:50

2026 mid-year update

John Barwick

CEO

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12:50-13:05

Mazur Lessons Learned

Jonathan Levack
Director of Policy and Governance

Karina Kar

Policy and Research Officer

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13:05-13:20

Looking ahead to 2027

John Barwick

CEO

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13:20

Q&A

Jonathan Rees

CRL Board Chair

Welcome

Jonathan Rees, Chair

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2026 mid-year update

John Barwick, CEO

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2026 mid-year update - operations

- Extremely busy start to 2026
- Mazur response has been our focus, particularly in Q1
    - Emphasis on assessing practice rights applications
    - Published updated guidance on the conduct of litigation and supervision
    - Extended the temporary Litigation Practice Rights portfolio requirements
    - Continued collaboration with stakeholders to interpret the law both pre and post appeal
    - Engagement with the LSB on their review of supervision guidance
    - Launched a lessons learned review
- Maintained regulatory operations, including all authorisation, supervision and enforcement activity

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Practice rights and the impact of Mazur

- Over 1,200 CLEs have been granted litigation practice rights since the start of the year
- Represents a ten-fold increase on 2025 as a whole
- Portfolio applications took 10.5 weeks on average, compared to 33 weeks in 2024
- We recognize our responsiveness was an issue
- Lessons learned review commissioned by the Board

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2026 mid-year update – strategic priorities

1. Standards and public trust

- Review of enforcement processes
- Response to the LSB's Professional Ethics and Rule of Law policy statement
- Developing guidance for professionals to use AI effectively

2. Access to justice and consumer empowerment

- New first tier complaint handling rules for entities came into force
- Regulatory Information Service in public beta/testing phase
- Monitoring of compliance with new transparency rules

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2026 mid-year update – strategic priorities

3. Independence and sustainability

- SRA and CILEX have now deprioritised redelegation, meaning CRL has certainty
- Established collaborative relations with CILEX to the benefit of both consumers and the profession

4. Be an authoritative, inclusive and capable organisation

- Completion of stakeholder perceptions research – we have heard from you that we need to rebuild trust with you through:
    - clear understanding of our role (and distinct from CILEX)
    - better engagement

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Emerging and current issues

- Advocacy practice rights – new certificate of eligibility guidance
- Probate – engagement with the CILEX Private Client representative group and other stakeholders to clarify the scope of probate practice rights
- Court of Protection roles – engagement with the President's Office still ongoing
- Practice rights enquiries

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Mazur Lessons Learned

Jonathan Levack, Director of Policy and Governance

Karina Kar, Policy and Research Officer

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Review

Purpose

- The Board commissioned an objective assessment of CRL's response, good and bad, focusing on four areas:
    1. Operational response
    2. Organisational resilience
    3. Communications
    4. Governance and oversight

Methodology

- Documentary review
- 10 stakeholder interviews
- Staff engagement
- Applicant survey and interviews
- Internally-led exercise overseen by a lay Board member

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What Worked Well and What Was Challenging

What worked well

- Strong leadership and agile decision-making
- Staff commitment, adaptability and collaboration
- Rapid implementation of new regulatory arrangements
- Continuous improvement through new guidance, reporting and operational changes

Key challenges

- Communications and stakeholder experience
- Manual processes
- Reliance on key individuals
- Limited crisis governance and preparedness

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Lessons Learned

- Organisational agility can overcome extraordinary operational challenges—but is not a substitute for scalable systems.
- Strong leadership and committed staff enabled success, but resilience should not depend on individual effort.
- Stakeholders judge organisations not only on outcomes, but on the quality of their experience.
- Communication shapes confidence.
- Crisis governance should be established before they are needed

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Recommendations

Operating Systems & Processes

- Modernise systems
- Improve workflow management
- Strengthen performance reporting

Organisational Resilience

- Reduce key-person dependency
- Improve knowledge management
- Increase organisational flexibility

Communications

- Strengthen communications capability
- Define service standards
- Enhance stakeholder engagement

Applicant Journey

- Simplify guidance
- Improve self-service
- Increase application visibility

Governance & Preparedness

- Formalise crisis governance
- Strengthen business continuity
- Clarify escalation routes

Strategic Positioning

- Regulatory role
- Stakeholder expectations

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Looking ahead to 2027

John Barwick, CEO

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Your feedback and increased certainty have helped shape our 2027 priorities

What you said

- We need to rebuild trust & confidence
- Better, more meaningful engagement required
- Improve our operational responsiveness

Our top three priorities

1. Rebuild relationship
2. Be more responsive
3. Engage entities

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We have considered various factors in developing our 2027 budget

The cost of Mazur
- Shift in operating model
- We do not make a profit on practice rights applications, particularly those that are resubmitted

User experience
- More focus on UX
- Opportunity to self-serve
- More direct applicant engagement with CRL

Systems investment
- Increased certainty enables us to invest in our systems
- We are already rolling out improvements incrementally

Regulatory expectations
- LSB and AML expectations have increased cost and burden
- The cost of the LSB and LeO have increased by 46% in the last 5 years

Non-authorised CILEX members
- We regulate all CILEX members, including CILEX Paralegal and Student although they do not pay the PCF

Increasing cost base
- NI increase
- Holiday pay for non-employees

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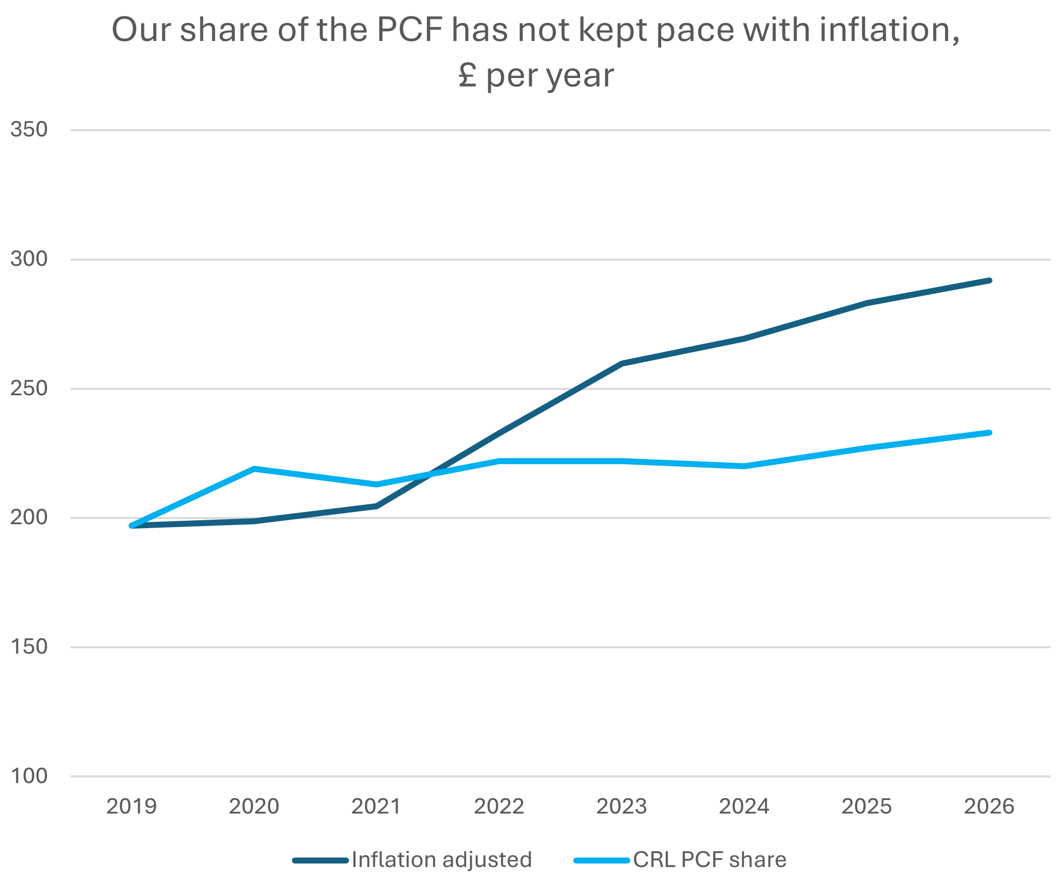
Practicing Fee – CRL share



- CRL's share of the PCF is about 55-60% of the total fee. The rest is made up of CILEX's fee and various other levies
- Increases have been kept well below inflation over the last few years
- Inflation adjusted, our share of the PCF would be £58 higher per fellow (2019 base)
- We are now looking to fund CRL for the future

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We will have to increase the PCF to meet the needs of the profession and consumers

- We have listened to your feedback and now have a positive programme of work to address some of the improvements required
- We will be consulting on a new PCF – which also includes CILEX and other levies – in the coming weeks
- For context, the SRA have consulted on a 29% increase in their PCF – we estimate that the solicitor PCF will be significantly higher than CLE’s next year

Q&A

Jonathan Rees, Chair

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