



Comhairle na mBreithiúna
The Judicial Council

Annual Report 2024



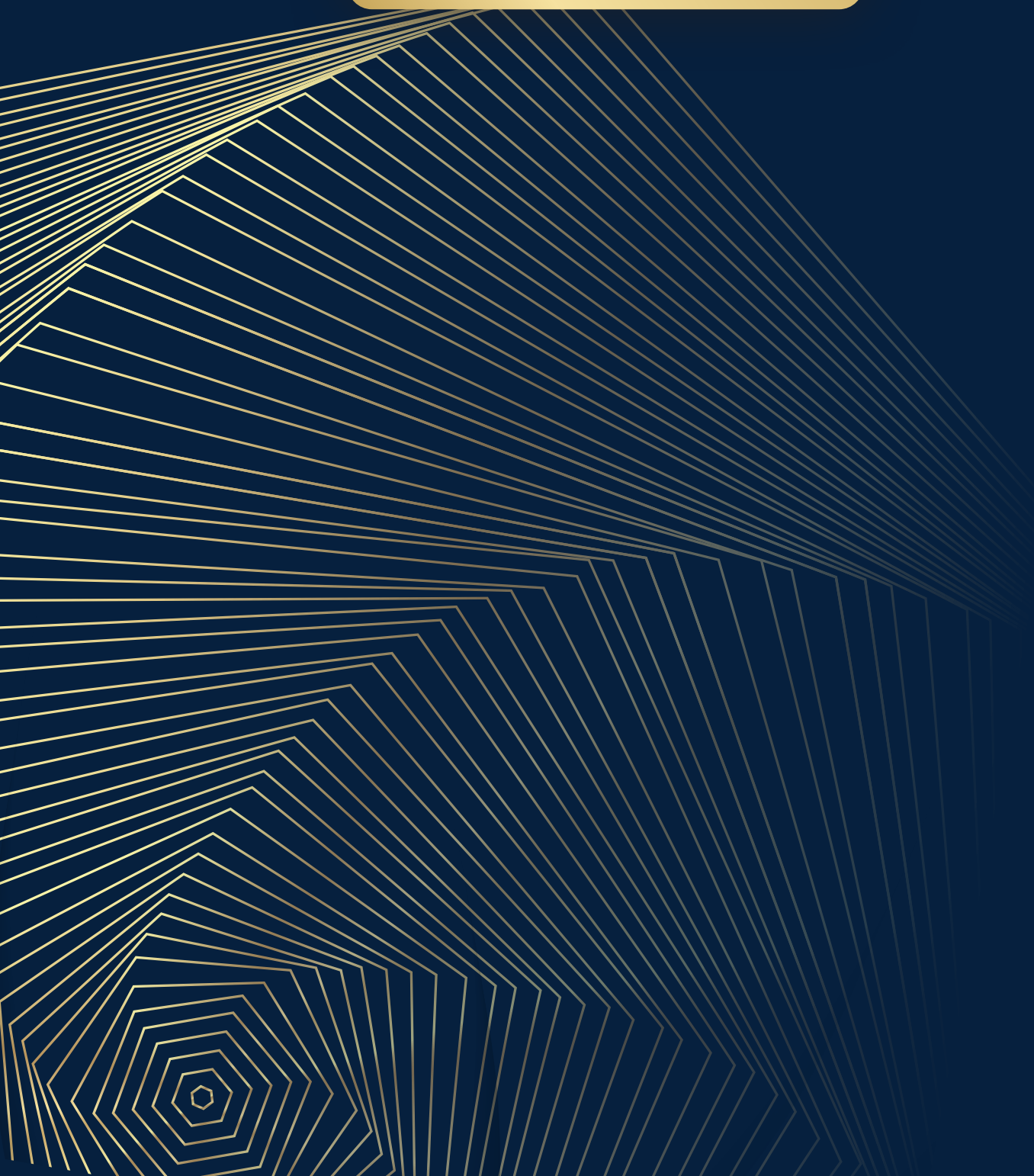


**Promoting judicial
excellence and
independence to ensure
public confidence
in the judiciary and
the administration of
justice in Ireland**

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Annual Report of the Judicial Council 2024



Foreword by the Chairperson of the Judicial Council



Mr Justice Donal O'Donnell,
Chief Justice,
*Chairperson of the
Judicial Council*

I am pleased to introduce the Judicial Council's Annual Report for 2024.

This is the Judicial Council's fifth report and, after five full years of operation, it is timely to note the changes enabled by the Judicial Council Act 2019 and what has been achieved in that period.

It is scarcely necessary to say that, prior to the Council's functions coming on stream throughout 2020, there was no judicial conduct committee, no sentencing or personal injuries guidelines being developed and only a limited judicial training offering available. It is therefore very satisfactory to see significant progress in these, and indeed many other, areas.

The Council has met all of the numerous statutory deadlines created in the Act. This included the adoption of the first Personal Injuries Guidelines, with the first review of those guidelines completed by the relevant committee in March 2024. Those guidelines were approved by the Board by the end of the year, and it is intended, subject to consideration by the Judicial Council, that they will follow the revised statutory procedure and be referred to the Minister for Justice in early 2025. The onerous task given to the committee charged with drafting sentencing guidelines and information continued in 2024. The committee has published in recent years its extensive research

and sentencing information, and the first draft guideline, in relation to violence in the context of a relationship, will be completed in early 2025. It seems clear at this stage that the level of research required to support that function into the future will be required to expand if significant progress is to be made.

This annual report provides some detail in relation to the ongoing work of the Judicial Studies Committee in providing training for judges from all of our court jurisdictions. Prior to the Judicial Council, a large part of our training took place outside Ireland through the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), or by judges travelling to neighbouring jurisdictions to avail of their training facilities. Building on the somewhat ad hoc nature of our pre-existing training, it is now clearly the case that Ireland has a fit for purpose judicial training offering, available at our premises in Green Street Courthouse, which is constantly developing, and unrecognisable from that which existed in 2019.

A key feature of the Act is that it addressed the absence of a formal regime for guiding and managing judicial conduct. In fact, the absence of such served to create an impression that the conduct of judges in Ireland could not be open to any question. While that impression was not necessarily correct, the creation of a robust mechanism whereby complaints about judicial conduct may be considered and dealt with under an independent statutory process has served to enhance public confidence in the judiciary. The Judicial Conduct Committee's Annual Report for 2024 and previous years describes the procedures and statistics in relation to judicial complaints since commencement in October 2022. A pattern is emerging of a small number of regular

complainants generating a large number of the complaints dealt with, and also a significant number of complaints made by individual litigants which are often inadmissible as they are complaints about the outcome of a case rather than the conduct of the judge. In 2024 the committee sought, in the light of two years' experience, to clarify the complaints process while also emphasising that the Act does not contemplate complaints about judicial or court decisions as being capable of consideration within this process. Nevertheless, the picture presented by these statistics and the pattern of complaints, particularly when set against the number of cases dealt with by judges in Ireland, is significant. It is apparent again from the 2024 data that judges in Ireland hold themselves to the high standards which they themselves set by their adoption of conduct guidelines in 2022.

In 2024 the implementation recommendations in the Report of the Judicial Planning Working Group (JPWG) again guided some of our progress. That Report, published in 2023, recognised the additional work for judges as a result of the establishment of the Judicial Council and factored that into its recommendations. The Judicial Council has continued to engage with and implement the recommendations of the Report, particularly in relation to the judicial training topics identified and of significant importance, the recommendations in relation to judicial welfare and wellbeing. In that latter respect, it is welcome to see the developments being made by the end of 2024.

International engagement with other judiciaries continues to be of particular importance for the purpose of sharing experiences and learning from each other. In 2024 the Council hosted meetings of the Consultative Council of European Judges, the Sentencing Councils of Northern Ireland, Scotland and England and Wales, as well as meetings of the EJTN and the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary.

I express my gratitude to those who serve as Board members, to all of the judges who

are members of the various committees and those who train and mentor their colleagues. It is important to acknowledge the amount of time that judges in Ireland dedicate to the functions of the Judicial Council. All of those who do so, and the number amounts to in excess of 60 judges, have added this workload to their daily judicial functions. The necessary and consequential work associated with these roles is difficult for those judges who serve in several capacities and particularly in the context of further emerging obligations at the end of 2024, such as the advent of the new Judicial Appointments Commission. All of the roles are important and require appropriate time in order to be attended to in the appropriate manner. That is not to lose sight of the challenges faced by Court Presidents in freeing judges from court commitments to attend training.

I would like to take this opportunity to refer to a key aspiration of the judiciary in a general sense and which is reflected in the Judicial Council Act 2019. That is public confidence in the judiciary in Ireland and in the administration of justice. The Judicial Council has a key role in this regard and will continue through its functions in relation to wellbeing, training and preparing guidelines to support judges in their decision making. Judges carry out the majority of their functions in the public spotlight and are therefore open to public scrutiny to a level incomparable to most other professions. They do not however seek to interact with public opinion in relation to cases, including after a decision is made. It is not the role of a judge to be popular or to adhere to public opinion in making decisions. The role is to implement the law and, if and when that does not align with the opinion of the public at large, it does not automatically mean that the judge "got it wrong". If a judge is considered to have made a mistake there are procedures, including by way of appeal to a higher court, to seek redress.

The administration of justice is a vital function in today's world and public discussion, commentary and criticism is important in

ensuring that the task is performed as well as possible. Judges must be resilient enough to accept such commentary and recognise the positive role it can play. It is however important that any rush to “judge judges” is well informed and not based on limited understanding or knowledge of what has taken place. The importance of accurate reporting of what occurs in our courtrooms cannot be overstated.

Finally, the Board and I continue to be grateful to the Secretary and staff of the Council for their continued dedication to supporting and driving the Council’s work. In addition, the work of our lay members has continued to greatly contribute to the achievements of 2024. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to one and all for their contributions to the Judicial Council. It is intended that, having reached several milestones in 2024, the expansion of the staffing complement be sought during 2025 to provide the corporate and research support necessary to continue and build on the work into the future. On a personal note, I should say

that since the matters dealt with in this report I have exercised the power under Section 12(3) of the Judicial Council Act to nominate Ms. Justice O’Malley to perform the functions of the Chief Justice as Chairperson of the Board for a year to allow me to focus on the work involved in establishing the Judicial Appointments Commission. However as Chief Justice I will remain chair of the Council.

Donal O’Donnell, Chief Justice,
Chairperson of the Judicial Council
June 2025



Introduction by the Secretary



Kevin O'Neill
*Secretary to the
Judicial Council*

I am very pleased to introduce the fifth Annual Report of the Judicial Council. In addition to outlining the continuing progress made in 2024, this report reflects on a number of key milestones since establishment and our plans to build for the future.

From establishment, the Judicial Council Act 2019 set out the statutory timetable for the Judicial Council's goals, in essence, our strategic plan. The focus, of both judges and staff, has always been on meeting the requirements of that Act. That has involved, in arriving at each milestone, ensuring that the necessary staffing and other requirements were in place to support each function.

The first meeting of the Board of the Judicial Council took place in March 2020, and a short few days later the challenges of operating during a pandemic were added to those of establishing a new public body. Notwithstanding those challenges, the Council has succeeded in meeting every target. The Act envisages that the various committee members, and indeed the Board members, serve an initial term of four years, and for that reason many of the judges appointed in 2020 and who were key to overcoming the early challenges were replaced in 2024.

The preparation of the first Personal Injuries Guidelines was the Council's first significant challenge, in 2020. The first review of those guidelines under the Act, which was required to follow the same criteria as applied in 2020, was supported by the staff of the Council, and was completed and referred to the Board in 2024. The Council's Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee commenced its own

work in 2020, albeit the task being significantly more complex. Having commissioned and carried out research, 2024 saw the finalisation of the work required to draft the first guideline, focusing on the application of Section 40 of the Domestic Violence Act 2018.

The Judicial Conduct Committee report on page 30 has outlined many of the Committee's key observations arising from the operation of the judicial conduct and complaints system since October 2022, including drawing on my own experiences as Registrar to the Judicial Conduct Committee. It unfortunately continues to be the experience that many complainants continue to incorrectly perceive this system as an opportunity to express dissatisfaction with the outcome of court cases, whether or not they were actively involved in those cases.

My own experience is that many complaints fall far short of the threshold for admissibility set out in the Act. The prevalence of complaints from unrepresented parties continues to suggest that persons who do not have the benefit of legal advice have greater difficulty understanding the court process and what has occurred and why. Persons attending court, particularly for the first time, understandably find the experience to be overwhelming and difficult to comprehend. However, the baseless conclusions that a judge is biased in favour of the opposing parties by reason of not listening to everything which a complainant wishes to say, or because of dissatisfaction with a decision, is regularly raised as a complaint. This is usually borne out of that lack of understanding of the court process and particularly of the judge's role.

I am precluded from commenting on individual complaints. However, in my own view, having considered in excess of 500 complaints by the end of 2024, including listening to the audio recording of many hearings, the conduct of the Irish judiciary is of the highest standard. In addition, our judges in my experience show remarkable restraint, including when encountering significant provocation.

Having been familiar with the professional development offerings available to judges five years ago, it is very satisfying to witness the development of judicial education and training programmes. There is now a fit for purpose training and education offering in place for judges in Ireland. The chairpersons and members, past and present, of the Judicial Studies Committee have in my experience displayed great vision and energy in the creation and expansion of the function. Added to that, our two Directors of Judicial Studies have led in developing and delivering training programmes to support judges, both in the application of the law and equipping them with the personal skills to carry out their roles. The Associate Director, a member of the Council's staff, has added expertise to the area and, with her staff, supported the committee in bringing it to a new level. In 2024 this function continued to flourish.

As the Chief Justice has referred to, judicial training is unrecognisable compared with five years ago. It is now not just a resource to judges which is nice to have, but one which is required and demanded. It is notable that almost half of the current judiciary was appointed since the Council was established. The cultural change which emerged in recent years is rightly one of expectation when it comes to the provision of a comprehensive training programme.

It is a very positive development to see the emergence of a wellbeing and welfare function for the judiciary. Most of us civil and public servants have enjoyed and benefitted from the availability of these essential supports for many years. Judges on the other hand tended to rely on informal networks. Similar to the experience in neighbouring jurisdictions, judicial wellbeing lagged behind other areas of the public sector and the progress being made by the committee, and supported by our staff, is an essential feature to support a judge in carrying out their role.

I have previously referred to the importance of maintaining strong relationships with international courts and judicial bodies. While it is undoubtedly the position that judicial interactions with colleagues from other

countries are important, at official level the same applies. Our colleagues in Northern Ireland, England and Wales, and in Scotland were hugely supportive as we grew our functions. Of note are those involved in judicial training and in the sentencing functions in those jurisdictions. At conferences in Dublin and in Edinburgh in 2024, it is positive to say that, as well as continuing to learn from their experiences, we are now confidently adding our own voices. I would acknowledge the collegiality of staff at the EJTN, ENCJ and CCJE and we were happy to have met delegates from all organisations in Dublin in 2024.

I look forward to 2025 with the expectation of developing further, in particular through a judicial Learning Management System and a complaints Case Management System, and providing enhanced support to the Sentencing Committee. It is also intended to seek to expand the Council's corporate supports for the Council's other functions.

I would like to thank the members of the Board, those on the Council's committees and innumerable other judges who contributed in many ways to the Judicial Council's progress in 2024, and indeed since 2020. For many this involves onerous additional workloads to what is already a challenging role as a judge in court. At this point I would add that two champions of the Judicial Council were Judge Elizabeth MacGrath and Judge Marie Quirke, both of whom sadly passed away in the past twelve months. In their respective roles, as board member and in judicial training, as well as innumerable other roles, they were fully supportive of the Judicial Council and unfailing in their support for me and my staff. I again express my gratitude for the support of everyone working for the Council in 2024 and those judges actively supporting us in our roles. None of the foregoing would have been realised without their talents and dedication.

Kevin O'Neill

Secretary to the Judicial Council

June 2025

Overview of 2024



WEBSITE

judicialcouncil.ie

6,467
visitors



JUDICIAL CONDUCT

111
Judges Complained of

273
Complaints

237
Determinations

0
Admissible Complaint

58
Complaints Reviewed



JUDICIAL TRAINING

10
new judges inducted

5
conferences supported

100
training events offered

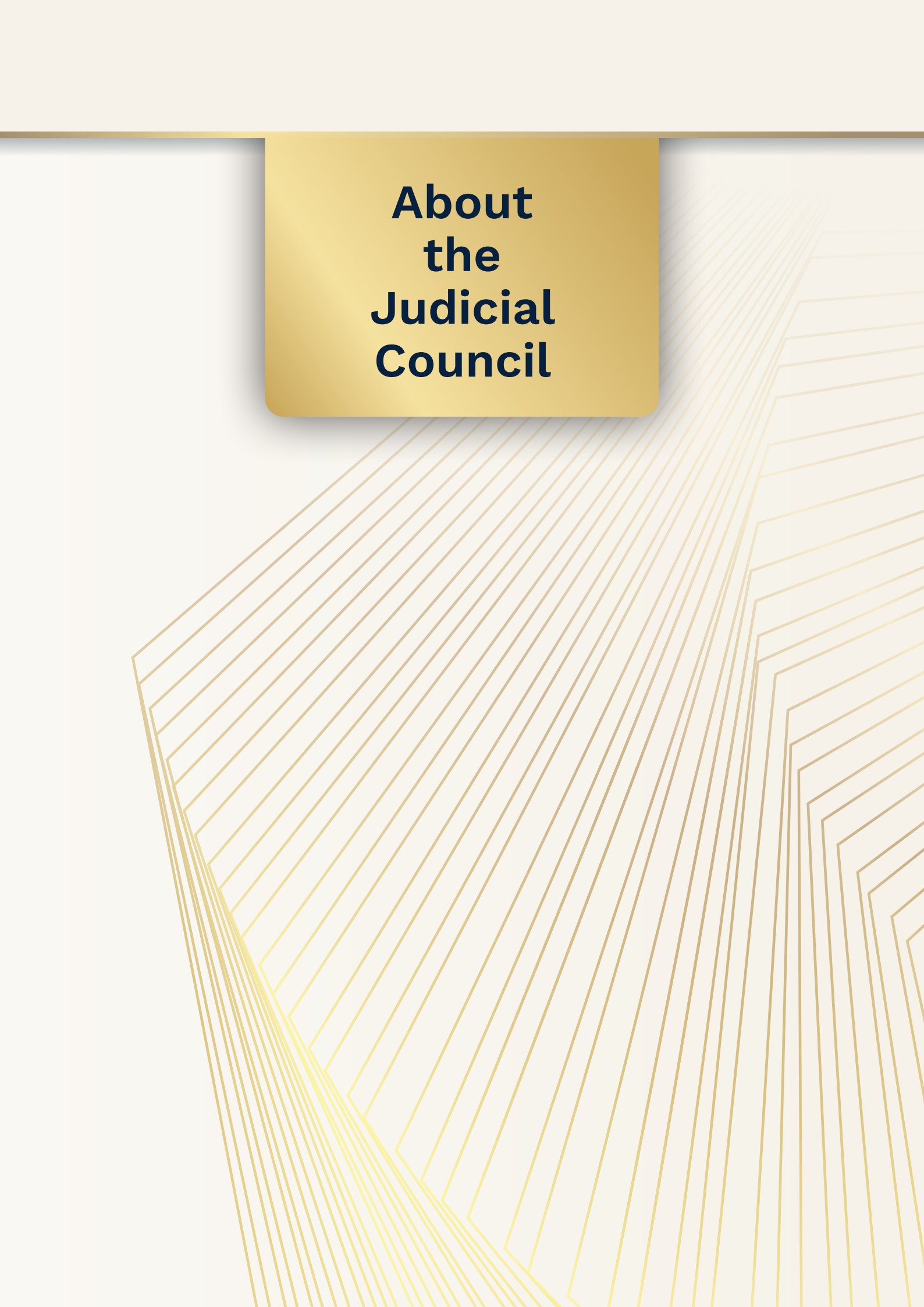
97%
of judges attended
a JSC training event



JUDGES

195
council
members

About the Judicial Council

The background features a large, light beige square with rounded corners. Inside this square, centered, is a smaller, solid gold square. The gold square contains the text 'About the Judicial Council' in a dark blue, sans-serif font. The gold square has a subtle drop shadow, making it appear to float above the larger square. The larger square is filled with a pattern of thin, parallel, light beige lines that radiate from the bottom left corner towards the top right, creating a sense of depth and movement.

About the Judicial Council

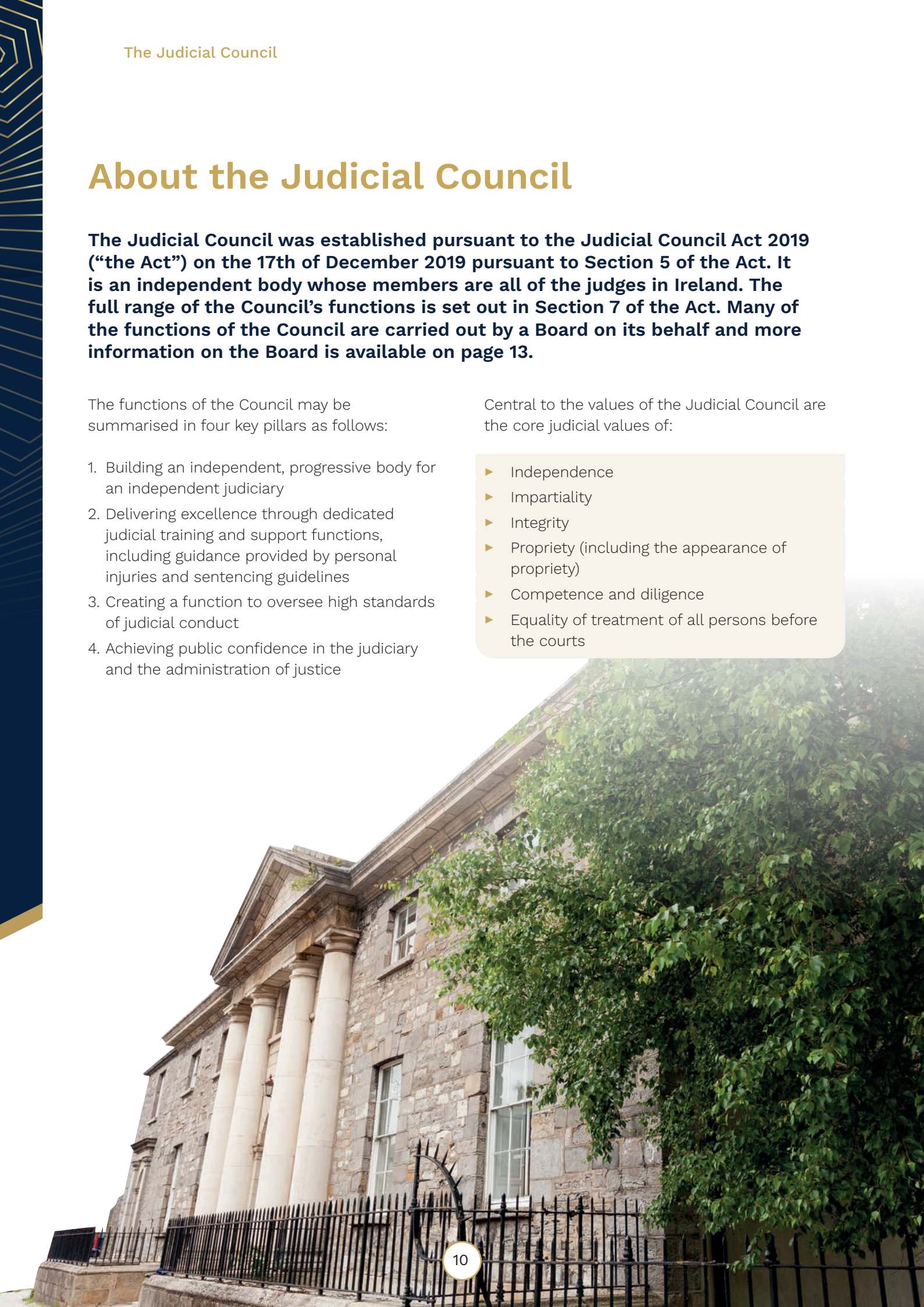
The Judicial Council was established pursuant to the Judicial Council Act 2019 (“the Act”) on the 17th of December 2019 pursuant to Section 5 of the Act. It is an independent body whose members are all of the judges in Ireland. The full range of the Council’s functions is set out in Section 7 of the Act. Many of the functions of the Council are carried out by a Board on its behalf and more information on the Board is available on page 13.

The functions of the Council may be summarised in four key pillars as follows:

1. Building an independent, progressive body for an independent judiciary
2. Delivering excellence through dedicated judicial training and support functions, including guidance provided by personal injuries and sentencing guidelines
3. Creating a function to oversee high standards of judicial conduct
4. Achieving public confidence in the judiciary and the administration of justice

Central to the values of the Judicial Council are the core judicial values of:

- ▶ Independence
- ▶ Impartiality
- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Propriety (including the appearance of propriety)
- ▶ Competence and diligence
- ▶ Equality of treatment of all persons before the courts



The Council has specific functions which include adopting and publishing:

- ▶ Guidelines concerning judicial conduct and ethics prepared by the Judicial Conduct Committee
- ▶ Draft Personal Injuries Guidelines and amendments prepared by the Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee and promoting amongst judges an understanding of the principles governing the assessment and award of damages for personal injuries
- ▶ Sentencing Guidelines prepared by the Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee and promoting an understanding of sentencing principles

In addition to these functions, the Council has a more general role to establish, maintain and improve communication with bodies representing judges appointed to courts outside Ireland and international bodies representing judges. Many of the functions may be performed by the Board of the Council or the Council's committees, though adopting the guidelines previously referred to is reserved to the Council alone. The Judicial Council is required to meet once per annum. The Chief Justice is the chairperson of the Council. Administrative support for the Council is managed by the Secretary to the Judicial Council, who reports to the Board in relation to the performance of his functions and who accounts to the Public Accounts Committee and other Oireachtas committees as regards the accounts and general administration of the Council. The Council was funded from the Vote of the Department of Justice in 2024.

The Judicial Council in 2024

There follows in this Annual Report accounts of the activities of all of the Council's committees, and the Chief Justice and the Secretary have also referred to many of the matters which took place during the year. In addition to those matters, and the important work carried out by the Board, the Council was also active in a number of areas.

The Judicial Council is required to hold a meeting of all of its members once per year. It held its annual statutory meeting in February 2024. The Council was addressed in relation to matters affecting the judiciary generally, with a keynote speaker presenting in relation to the role of decision makers in the public eye. There was also a training element to the meeting and the procedure for nomination of two members to the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) discussed. A training workshop was also held dealing with Assisted Decision-Making.





Delegates from the Judicial Commission of the Republic of Indonesia met the Secretary and members of the Judicial Council

The Council continued its international engagement with judicial bodies throughout 2024, a function of the Council provided for in Section 7 (2) (k) of the Judicial Council Act 2019. A delegation of judges from Spain was hosted by Council members in October. Council members also met with delegates from the Judicial Commission of the Republic of Indonesia. An event was co-hosted in Dublin with the International Association of Women Judges. In early 2024 a Dialogue Meeting of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ) was hosted for the first time in Dublin. This body consists of national judicial institutions of EU member states whose goal is to support national judiciaries in the independent delivery of justice. The Council also welcomed the Consultative Council of European Judges, a judicial body in the Council of Europe, to Dublin for a three-day meeting under the Irish Presidency of that body.

The Council continued to engage with the implementation of the recommendations of the Judicial Planning Working Group Report. In particular the focus was on implementing the recommendations in relation to judicial training. In addition, the Council decided that it was best

placed to implement those recommendations in relation to developing a welfare and wellbeing function for judges. This builds on the work already underway within the Judicial Support and Welfare Committee.

Finally, the Council continued to focus in 2024 on its governance obligations. In addition to meetings of its Audit and Risk Committee, and contracting for its Internal Audit function, a number of policies and oversight procedures were drafted and approved. Ongoing establishment challenges encountered in relation to payroll and pension were overcome, and contracted to an external contractor.

The Board

The Board of the Judicial Council comprises 11 judges and the Act sets out the basis for their appointment:

- ▶ The Chief Justice and the four Court Presidents are ex officio members
- ▶ One judge from each of the five jurisdictions is elected by their colleagues
- ▶ One judge is co-opted in accordance with the Act (from the Supreme Court until March 2024 and then from the Court of Appeal for four years)

Each elected and co-opted term of membership is for a period of four years. A full list of Board members at the end of 2024 is set out on the following page.

Board functions

The functions of the Board are set out in Section 11 of the Act.

The functions of the Council, save in relation to the adoption of guidelines, are performed by the Board on behalf of the Council in accordance with directions (if any) as the Council may give to the Board.

Broadly, the Board considers and determines policy in relation to the performance of the Council's functions and oversees the implementation of that policy by the Secretary.

It also has an important statutory role in reviewing:

- ▶ draft Personal Injuries Guidelines prepared and submitted by the Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee
- ▶ draft amendments to Personal Injuries Guidelines prepared by that Committee
- ▶ draft Sentencing Guidelines prepared and submitted by the Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee
- ▶ draft amendments to Sentencing Guidelines prepared by that Committee
- ▶ draft Guidelines concerning judicial conduct and ethics prepared and submitted by the Judicial Conduct Committee and

- ▶ draft amendments to Guidelines concerning judicial conduct and ethics prepared by that Committee

The Board is required to meet at least four times per annum. In 2024 it met on five occasions. It finalised in 2024 the process whereby two of the Council's members are required to be elected to the Judicial Appointments Commission. The Board, in November, exercised its powers under the Act to modify the draft amendments to the Personal Injuries Guidelines which it considered appropriate.

This followed from the Committee's review of the guidelines which was completed in March 2024.

During the year, Board membership changed with the appointment of Ms Justice Caroline Costello of the Court of Appeal to replace Mr Justice George Birmingham on his retirement and Ms Justice Marguerite Bolger to replace Mr Justice Michael MacGrath upon his appointment to the Court of Appeal.

Judge Elizabeth MacGrath, who was elected as District Court representative on the Board from its original establishment in 2020 and again in February 2024 sadly passed away in July 2024. She was replaced by Judge Brian O'Shea.

The Board adheres to the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, although alternative considerations apply where that Code is incompatible with judicial independence, enshrined in the Irish Constitution. The Board may, and has, delegated a number of its functions to the Secretary.

The Board receives regular reports from the Secretary on the operation of the Judicial Council, the implementation of the provisions of the Act, expenditure and budgetary matters and other relevant matters. The Board regularly receives reports in relation to the implementation of risk management systems.

The Members of the Board



**Mr Justice
Donal O'Donnell**
*Chief Justice,
Chairperson*



**Ms Justice
Caroline Costello**
*President of the
Court of Appeal*



**Mr Justice
David Barniville**
*President of the
High Court*



**Ms Justice
Patricia Ryan**
*President of the
Circuit Court*



**Judge
Paul Kelly**
*President of the
District Court*



**Ms Justice
Iseult O'Malley**
Supreme Court



**Mr Justice
Patrick McCarthy**
Court of Appeal



**Ms Justice
Marguerite Bolger**
High Court



**Judge
John Aylmer**
Circuit Court



**Judge
Brian O'Shea**
District Court

The Secretary to the Judicial Council is Mr Kevin O'Neill

The secretary to the Board is Ms Mary Murphy

There was a vacancy at the end of 2024 for a Court of Appeal member to be co-opted in 2025.

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The Judicial Studies Committee

Judicial Studies Committee



**Ms Justice
Nuala Butler**
*Chairperson of the
Judicial Studies
Committee*



**Mr Justice
Peter Charleton**
*Director of Judicial
Studies*

Director of Judicial Studies

Since his appointment in November 2023, Mr Justice Peter Charleton, Director of Judicial Studies, has developed and delivered a significant number of seminars on substantive justice. He also undertook the updating of several judicial handbooks/Benchbooks and developed other guidance materials for the judiciary. Under his direction, the existing workshop-style judgecraft training was expanded to include seminars on black-letter law and significant court judgments, thereby offering a more comprehensive education and training programme.

Overview

The Judicial Studies Committee (“the Committee”) was established in February 2020 under Section 17 of the Judicial Council Act 2019. Its functions include the provision of induction and continuing professional learning to the Irish judiciary in areas such as law, ethics and conduct, human rights and equality, judgecraft, and information technology. The Committee is dedicated to maintaining public trust in the judiciary and the administration of justice by delivering appropriate, effective, and timely training, as set out in the Work Plan 2023–2026. This training is grounded in the core values and principles set out in the *Guidelines for the Judiciary on Conduct and Ethics*, including independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, competence, and diligence.

A key focus is the provision of high-quality, judge-led training. To ensure a cohort of judges trained as judicial trainers, the Committee funded 15 judges to attend the Dutch Judicial Training Institute (SSR) to upskill as trainers, bringing the total number of judicial trainers to 40. The establishment and maintenance of strong links with national and international agencies in judicial education and training is a key objective of the Committee.

Membership

In 2024, a partial rotation of members occurred, with new representatives from the Circuit and High Courts nominated to the Committee. In October, Ms Justice Nuala Butler succeeded Ms Justice Aileen Donnelly as Chairperson of the Committee.

Committee Members 2024

- ▶ Mr Justice Brian Murray
- ▶ Ms Justice Aileen Donnelly (Chairperson January–October)
- ▶ Ms Justice Nuala Butler (Chairperson from October)
- ▶ Ms Justice Niamh Hyland
- ▶ Mr Justice Liam Kennedy (from December)
- ▶ Judge Mary O’Malley Costello (January–March)
- ▶ Judge Geoffrey Shannon (from March)
- ▶ Judge Paul Kelly, President of the District Court
- ▶ Judge Marie Quirke
- ▶ Mr Justice Peter Charleton, Director of Judicial Studies (ex officio)



Ms Maria Fitzgerald
Associate Director of Judicial Studies

Education and Training Provision

Training Data Overview

In contrast to 2023, the number of judges remained relatively consistent in 2024, starting with 196 in January and ending with 195 in December. Fluctuations occurred during the year primarily due to ten new appointments, eight retirements, and three elevations to a higher court which has a slight impact on the data. Overall, of the 205 individual judges eligible to attend education and training, 97% attended a training event. When conferences and language sessions are excluded, 87% of judges attended at least one training programme with 66% of these attending five or more training events.

The Committee organised 100 training events, comprising 52 training seminars, five conferences, and 43 language sessions. The seminars included both initial training and continuous professional learning.

It is worth noting that many judges also engage in training with external organisations; this activity is outside the scope of this report.

Training Survey 2024

The Committee identified the implementation of a comprehensive training needs analysis as a key priority for 2024. This was also a recommendation of the JPWG Report. The survey was launched at the National Conference in November and achieved an 83% response rate. The results of the survey, combined with other identified training requirements and legislative developments, provide direction and guidance for the future work of the Committee.

Initial Training

Commencing in late 2020, all newly appointed judges participate in a structured Induction Programme. The programme expanded further in 2024 in response to ongoing feedback and now includes three core components: Induction Modules, Mentoring, and Shadowing.

Newly appointed judges attend the Induction Modules before sitting as a judge for the first time. The core modules include:

- ▶ Procedural Justice
- ▶ Courtroom Dynamics
- ▶ Judicial Conduct and Ethics
- ▶ Unconscious Bias

These modules are delivered in a cross-jurisdictional manner. Additional modules and one-to-one support are provided as required to address jurisdiction-specific needs.



The Mentoring Programme, introduced in 2021, supports judges during their first year of appointment. It includes tailored training for mentors and mentees, underpinned by clear programme guidelines. A total of 42 judges have been trained as mentors, supporting 44 newly appointed judges who commenced or completed the process during the reporting period.

The Shadowing Programme, previously available to District Court judges, was extended in late 2024 to include newly appointed judges of the Circuit and High Courts. The Training Survey 2024 identified this initiative as particularly beneficial and effective.

Continuing Professional Education and Training

As in previous years, the Committee provided a variety of ongoing education and training programmes for the judiciary. Formats included two-hour lectures with Q&A, half-day interactive workshops focusing on skills development, and full-day conferences covering multiple topics. Online, in-person, and hybrid delivery methods were used to ensure accessibility while minimising disruption to court business.

Where relevant, the programmes included input from NGOs, academics, and other subject matter experts. Judges from the UK, Canada, and the United States also collaborated on several programmes.

Annual programmes delivered in 2024:

- ▶ *Avoiding Re-traumatisation*: A workshop for criminal trial judges on reducing trauma for victims in sexual offence cases, with input from relevant organisations
- ▶ *Coercive Control*: Delivered by judicial trainers with contributions from NGOs and academics, this programme covers legal provisions, psychological impact, and case law
- ▶ *Assisted Decision-Making*: These seminars explore the implications of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, with input from the judiciary, the Decision Support Service, and NGOs
- ▶ *Personal Insolvency*: Regular training for

Circuit Court judges on legislation, practical challenges, and case management

- ▶ *Courtroom Control*: An interactive session aimed at supporting judges in managing the courtroom effectively
- ▶ Judicial Conduct and Ethics
- ▶ Judgment Writing

Under the leadership of Mr Justice Peter Charleton, the judicial education programmes expanded to include additional seminars on substantive justice, complementing judgecraft workshops with sessions on black-letter law and case law.

Substantive Law 2024:

- ▶ Mortgage Repossessions
- ▶ Competition Law
- ▶ Judgment Writing
- ▶ Four seminars on significant Supreme Court decisions

Key Seminars and Events

- ▶ *Law of Evidence Series (March–April)*: Five sessions covering privilege, corroboration, hearsay, confessions, and child witnesses, delivered in hybrid format
- ▶ *Our New Society Series (April–May)*: Focused on Ireland's increasingly diverse communities, with speakers from the Russian Orthodox, Muslim, African, and Traveller communities
- ▶ *Train the Trainer Programme (May)*: Developed with SSR, this programme trained 15 additional judges, bringing the total number of judicial trainers to 40
- ▶ *Site Visits (June–September)*: Five site visits were organised to eight prisons and a juvenile detention centre
- ▶ *Sexual Violence Seminar (September)*: Delivered to criminal court judges with contributions from academia, legal professionals, and the judiciary; included a witness's account
- ▶ *Voice of the Child Conference (November)*: Explored best practices for ensuring children's voices are heard in family law, with multidisciplinary input from a range of agencies

Language Skills

The Committee supports judges in enhancing language proficiency through:

- *Irish*: Fortnightly lunchtime conversation classes, evening programmes, and an annual immersive Gaeltacht course
- *French*: Weekly 30-minute sessions introduced in 2024, which have proved highly popular

Judicial Conferences

The Committee supported five judicial conferences in 2024, each tailored to address emerging legal and legislative developments. Topics included bail, sentencing, domestic violence, DNA evidence, artificial intelligence, and personal injuries guidelines. Contributions were multidisciplinary, including input from academics, medical professionals, NGOs, state agencies, and judges.

International Collaboration

International collaboration remains central to the Committee's work. Key partners in 2024 included:

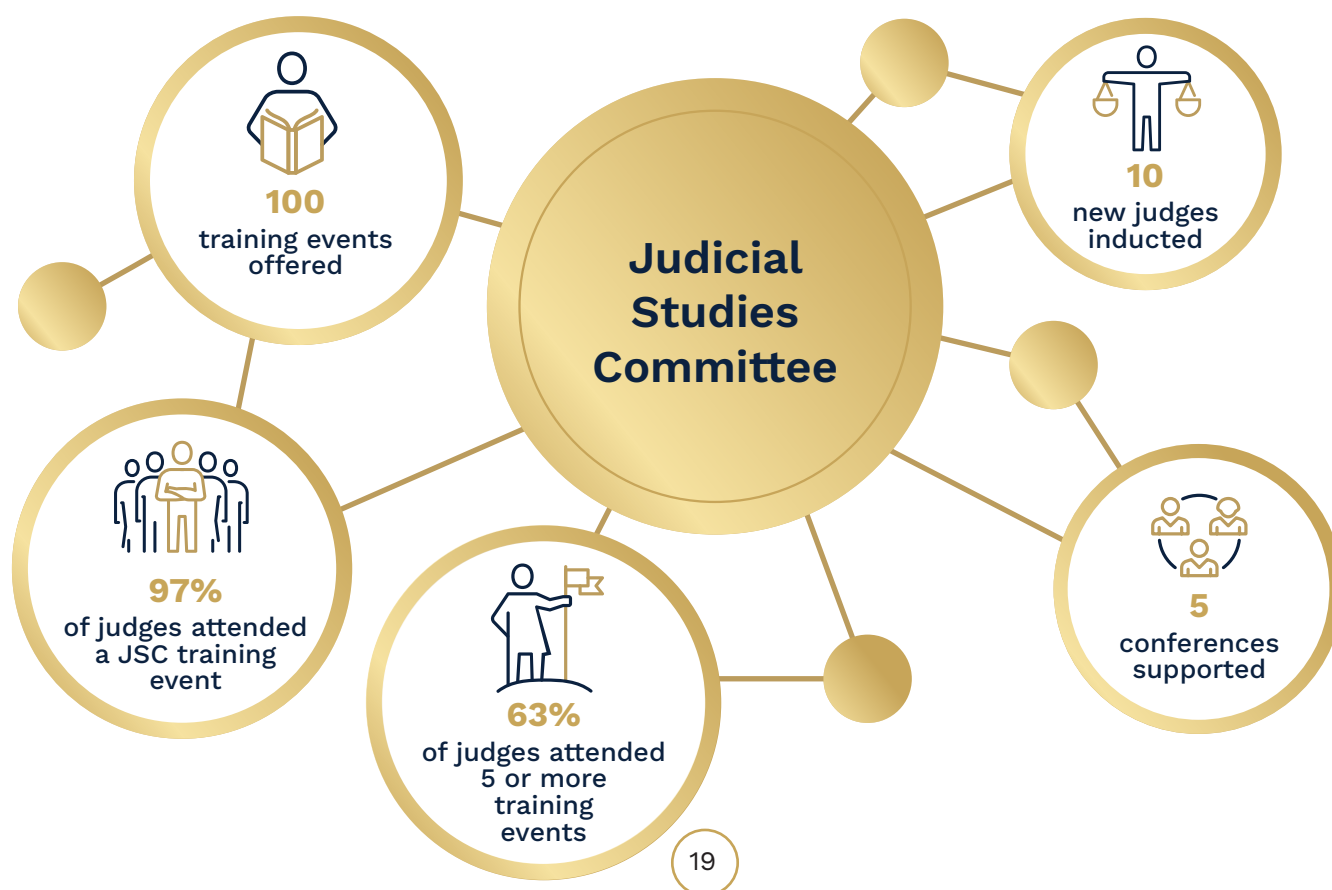
- Dutch Judicial Training Institute (SSR)

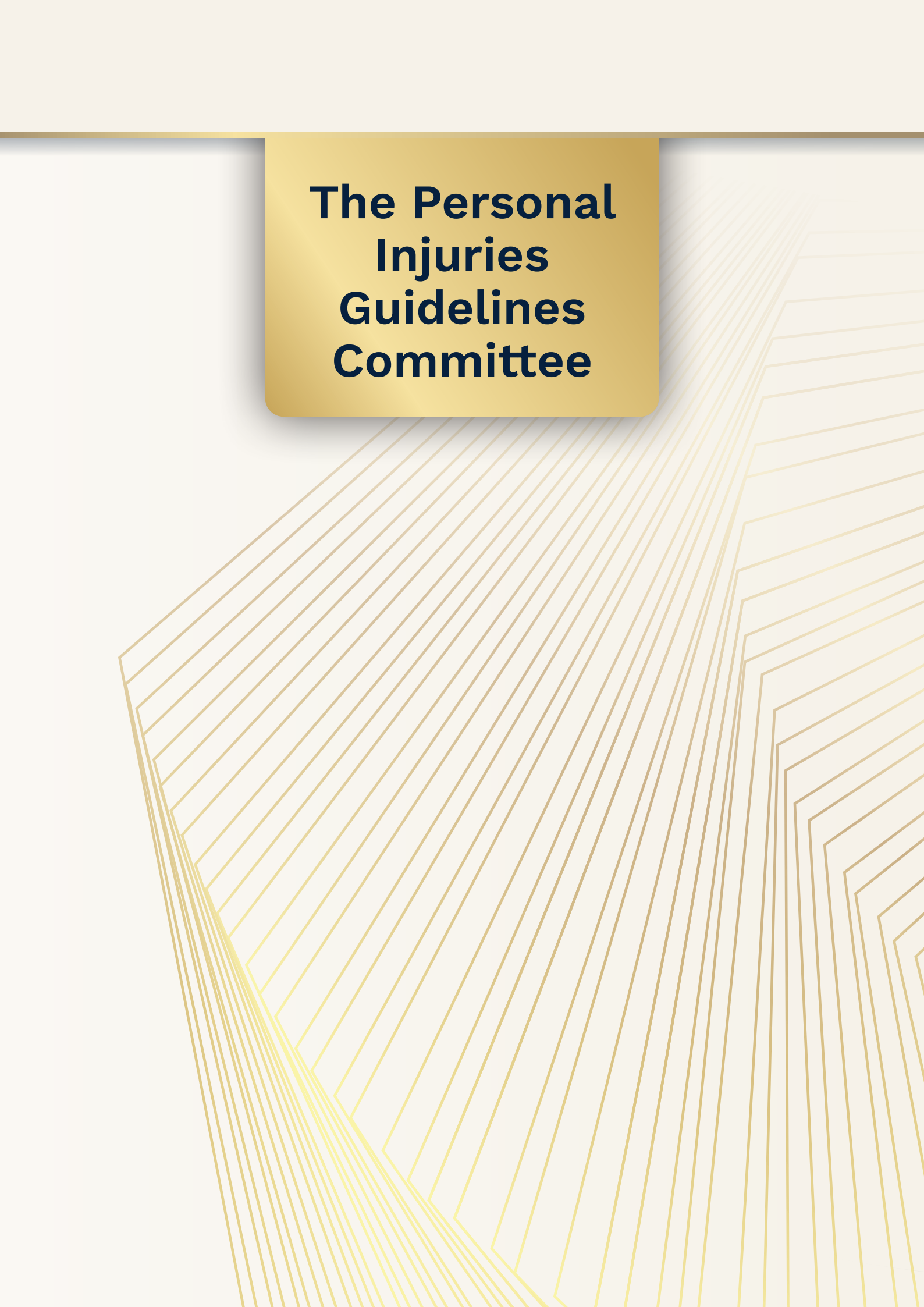
- Judicial College of England and Wales
- Judicial Institute for Scotland
- Judicial Studies Board of Northern Ireland
- European Judicial Training Network (EJTN)
- Academy of European Law (ERA)

Irish judges contributed to and participated in over 20 international events, including International Organisation for Judicial Training (IOJT) conferences, EJTN, and ERA programmes. They also delivered papers and training, reflecting Ireland's continued engagement in global judicial cooperation.

Looking Ahead to 2025

The Judicial Studies Committee remains committed to delivering high-quality judicial education and training. Under the guidance of Mr Justice Peter Charleton, Director of Judicial Studies, and Ms Justice Nuala Butler, Chairperson of the Committee, 2025 will build on existing successes while introducing innovative approaches. With the continued implementation of the Work Plan 2023–2026 and insights from the Training Survey 2024, the Committee will adapt and enhance its offerings to meet the evolving needs of the judiciary.



The background features a light beige color with a series of thin, parallel gold lines radiating from the top right corner towards the bottom left. A solid gold square is positioned in the upper left quadrant, containing the title text.

The Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee

The Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee

The functions of the Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee are set out in Section 18 (2) of the Judicial Council Act 2019. They are to prepare and submit to the Board of the Council for its review

**(a) draft personal injuries guidelines in accordance with Section 90, and
(b) draft amendments to the personal injuries guidelines in accordance with that section**

The initial statutory requirement of the Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee was to draft Personal Injuries Guidelines for submission to the Board of the Judicial Council, as referred to at (a) above. The Committee submitted the draft Personal Injuries Guidelines to the Board of the Judicial Council on the 9th December 2020 pursuant to Section 18 (4) as amended, concluding its work on this first requirement. The adoption of those Guidelines by the Judicial Council in March 2021 completed the first stage of the process.

The Committee, consisting of seven judges, was therefore not required to carry out any activities until those Guidelines came to be reviewed within three years of the adoption by the Council.

Report of the Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee in 2024

The Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee is required pursuant to Section 18 (11) of the Judicial Council Act to submit a report of its activities to the Judicial Council for inclusion in this Annual Report. This is the report prepared in order to comply with that obligation.

As referred to, the Committee is required to review the Guidelines from time to time in accordance with Section 18 (5) of the Act. The Committee for the purpose of this review is required under Section 90 of the Act to have



Ms Justice Elizabeth Dunne
Chairperson of the Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee

regard to the same factors as applied when preparing the Guidelines, including:

- ▶ the level of damages awarded for personal injuries by courts in Ireland and such places outside Ireland as the Committee considers relevant
- ▶ principles for the assessment and award of damages for personal injuries determined by the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court
- ▶ guidelines relating to the classification of personal injuries
- ▶ the need to promote consistency in the level of damages awarded for personal injuries

The Committee commenced the first review of the Guidelines in late 2022, meeting throughout 2023 and once in 2024. On the 5th of March 2024, it completed its review and submitted the outcome to the Board of the Judicial Council. That review included recommendations for amendments to the Guidelines. The outcome of the review (subject to some modifications subsequently made by the Board) was published in December 2024.

The next review is required to be completed within three years of 5th of March 2024.

The membership of the Personal Injuries Guidelines Committee is as follows:

- ▶ Ms Justice Elizabeth Dunne, Chairperson
- ▶ Mr Justice Seamus Noonan
- ▶ Mr Justice Paul Coffey
- ▶ Mr Justice Michael MacGrath*

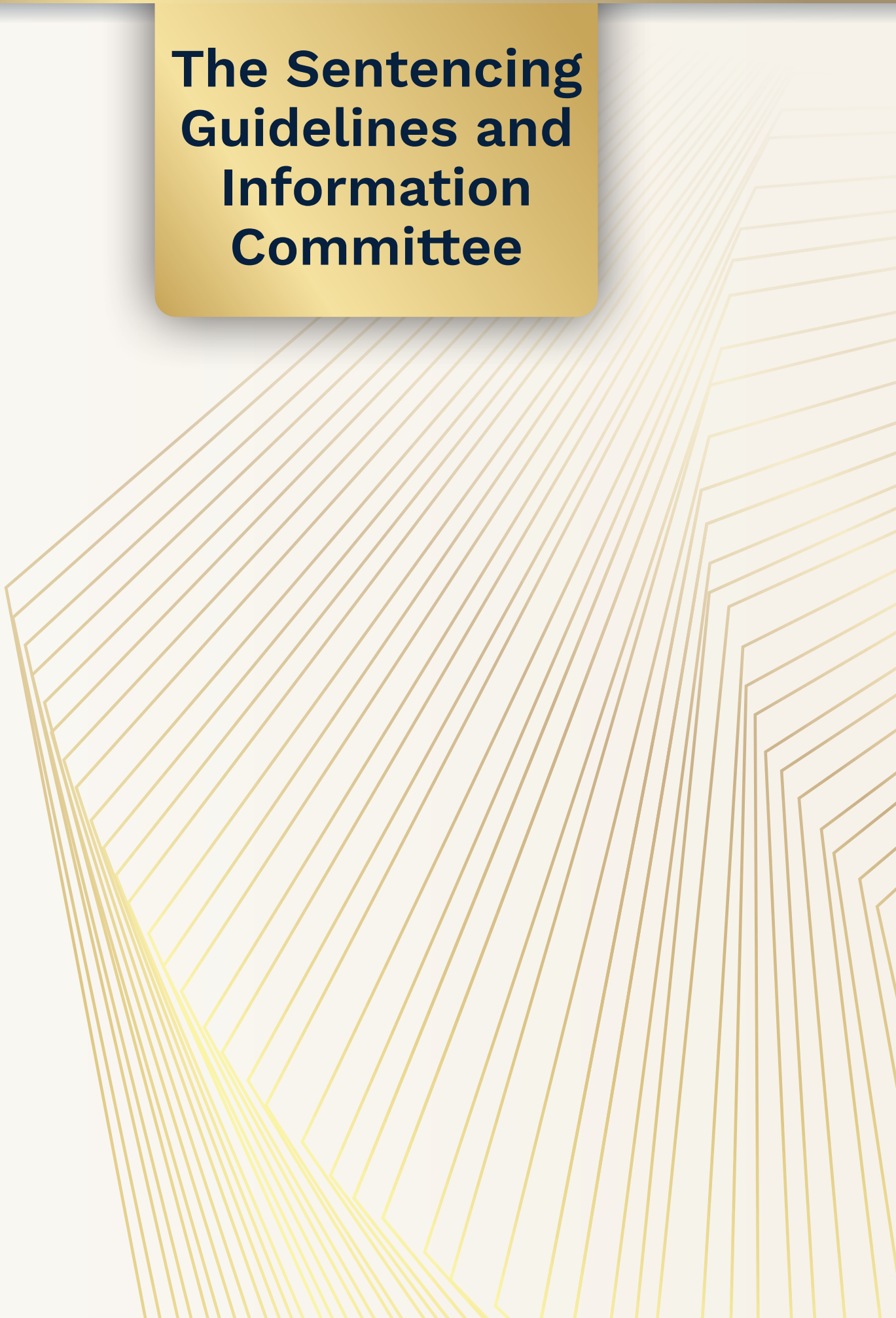
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- ▶ Ms Justice Emily Egan*
- ▶ Judge Sarah Berkeley
- ▶ Judge James Mc Court
- ▶ Judge Brian O'Shea

*Mr Justice MacGrath's term ended on 14th of June 2024 upon his appointment to the Court of Appeal. Ms Justice Egan replaced him on the Committee with effect from 15th of June 2024.



The Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee



The Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee



Ms Justice Iseult O'Malley
Chairperson of the Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee

Introduction

The Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee was established on the 30th of June 2020 by the Judicial Council. Its membership consists of 13 members in total, from two categories; eight judges nominated by the Chief Justice who are representative of each jurisdiction and five lay members appointed by the Government who each serve for a term of four years. Full details of the membership of the Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee is set out on page 26.

The Committee's functions pursuant to Section 23 of the Act are to:

- ▶ prepare and submit to the Board of the Council for its review draft Sentencing Guidelines
- ▶ prepare and submit to the Board for its review draft amendments to Sentencing Guidelines adopted by the Council
- ▶ monitor the operation of Sentencing Guidelines
- ▶ collate, in such manner as it considers appropriate, information on sentences imposed by the courts
- ▶ disseminate that information from time to time to judges and persons other than judges

Once sentencing guidelines are adopted by the Judicial Council, a court must have regard to any relevant guidelines when imposing a sentence unless it is satisfied that to do so would be contrary to the interests of justice. In such a case, the court must give its reasons.

The factors to be considered by the Committee are wide-ranging and include:

- ▶ sentences currently imposed by the courts
- ▶ the need to promote consistency in sentences
- ▶ the impact of decisions of the courts relating to sentences on the victims of the offences concerned
- ▶ the need to promote public confidence in the system of criminal justice
- ▶ the financial costs involved in the execution of different types of sentence and the relative effectiveness of them in the prevention of re-offending

The judges nominated to the Committee have particular interest and expertise in sentencing. Their expertise is enhanced by the five lay members, each of whom was re-appointed for a further four years. In appointing a person to be a Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee member, the Government has to be satisfied that amongst the members, there is experience and knowledge of:

- ▶ the prosecution of criminal proceedings
- ▶ the defence of criminal proceedings
- ▶ policing
- ▶ the administration of justice
- ▶ sentencing policy

Report of the Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee in 2024

The Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee is obliged pursuant to Section 23 (8) to submit this Report of its activities annually for inclusion in the Judicial Council's Annual Report. The Committee met on five occasions in 2024. In addition several subcommittees were established and met to consider specific sentencing topics.

A key priority for the Committee in 2024 was to progress work on its first draft Guideline which is focused on the operation of Section 40 of the Domestic Violence Act 2018. As part of this process, the Committee published research it had commissioned from Prof. Niamh Maguire of South East Technological University in which she interviewed District Court judges in relation to sentencing cases involving relationship violence. Section 40 of the Domestic Violence Act 2018 sets out a range of offences, including sexual offences, offences involving violence, as well as other matters, in respect of which the fact that the victim and offender are or were married, in a civil partnership or in an intimate relationship is to be treated as an aggravating factor.

During the year the Committee worked on collating a list of key stakeholders including NGOs and public bodies for targeted consultation. Prior to finalising its draft Guideline, the Committee commissioned a literature review from a number of researchers. It also finalised a paper which sets out to discuss community sanctions and related issues insofar as they are used by the District Court and more specifically considers the

application of community-based sanctions to offences under Domestic Violence legislation. This was published in December 2024.

The Committee hosted a successful Sentencing Conference in November 2024 welcoming Sentencing Councils from Northern Ireland, England and Wales and Scotland to Dublin. The conference heard updates and recent developments from each jurisdiction. This biennial event is an invaluable opportunity for judges and officials to share experiences, and is particularly valuable to Ireland, as the most recently established sentencing guidelines body. An innovative component of the conference was a facilitated discussion with court reporters on public perceptions of court sentences pronounced by judges and the challenges faced by journalists in reporting on sentencing in the courts.

Looking forward to 2025 the Committee has identified as its next priority the development of a draft guideline on fatal driving offences. This is an area of particular challenge in sentencing at the level of the Circuit Court since the offences are not easily compared



to other offences which might normally come before that court and is an area in which very limited data is available. Judges of the Circuit Court have commenced a pilot data gathering exercise to assist the Committee in collecting information in relation to the reasons behind sentences in this area. Research in relation to sentencing in the Central Criminal Court involving sexual offences and manslaughter cases will also commence in 2025. The Committee is also pursuing and identifying alternative sources of data, the unavailability of which currently presents one of the greatest challenges faced in developing guidelines.

It is intended in 2025 to seek to establish a Research Unit as recommended by the University of Strathclyde as part of its research for the Judicial Council. During 2024, Committee members participated in prison visits arranged in conjunction with the Judicial Studies Committee.

The members of the Committee at the end of 2024:

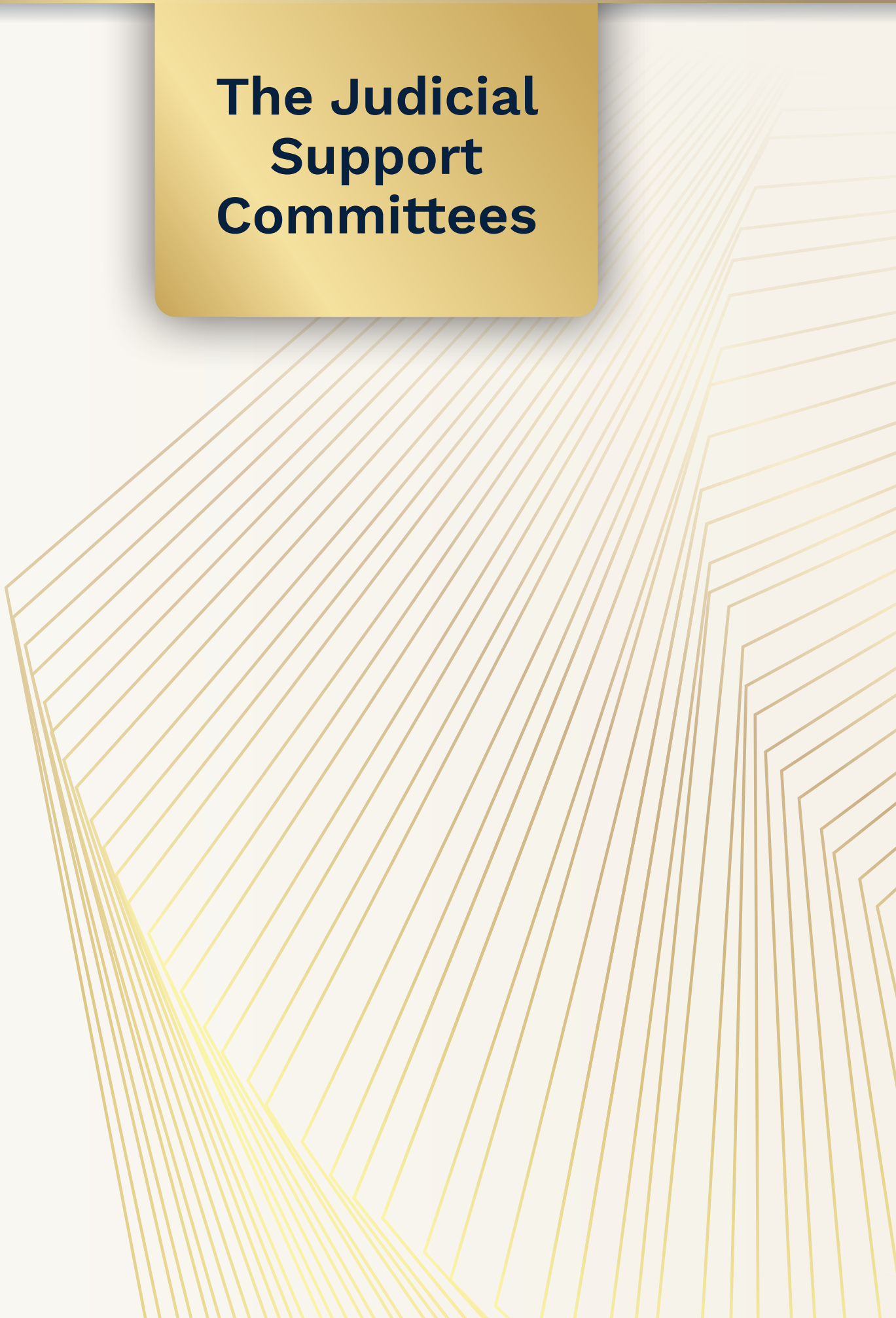
- ▶ Ms Justice Iseult O'Malley, Chairperson
- ▶ Mr Justice John Edwards
- ▶ Mr Justice Tony Hunt
- ▶ Mr Justice Paul Burns
- ▶ Judge Francis Comerford
- ▶ Judge Kenneth Connolly
- ▶ Judge Grainne Malone
- ▶ Judge Paula Murphy
- ▶ Mr Vivian Geiran
- ▶ Dr Diarmuid Griffin
- ▶ Ms Marianne O'Kane
- ▶ Mr Michael O'Sullivan
- ▶ Dr Sinéad Ring

Judge Keenan Johnson's membership ended on 5th June 2024

Judge John King's membership ended on 19th July 2024



The Judicial Support Committees



The Judicial Support Committees



**Ms Justice
Aileen Donnelly**
*Chairperson of the
Judicial Support &
Welfare Committee*

Support and Welfare

The Judicial Council Act 2019 provides for the establishment of five statutory Judicial Support Committees, one for each jurisdiction. In addition, the Act provides for the establishment of further committees to assist in achieving the Council's objectives.

Judicial Support Committees

Section 30 (3) of the Act states that the function of a Judicial Support Committee shall be to advise and assist the Council in the performance of its functions under this Act insofar as matters relevant to the Court to which the Committee relates are concerned.

Date of establishment of all five committees:
31st March 2020.

Membership of each jurisdictional committee is made up of (i) the jurisdictional President plus (ii) the elected member(s) from that jurisdiction. Further to elections taking place, the following judges are members for their respective courts as at 31st December 2024:

- (i) Supreme Court**
Ms Justice Elizabeth Dunne
- (ii) Court of Appeal**
Mr Justice Charles Meenan
- (iii) High Court**
Ms Justice Leonie Reynolds and Mr Justice Rory Mulcahy
- (iv) Circuit Court**
Judge Eoin Garavan
- (v) District Court**
Judge Marie Keane

Judicial Welfare and Support Committee – established pursuant to Section 7 (3) (a)

The Judicial Council established the Judicial Welfare and Support Committee in 2020 for the purpose of assisting and supporting judges in the carrying out of their functions. The Terms of Reference, as adopted at the first meeting of the Judicial Council on the 7th February 2020, are to assist and advise the Judicial Council in the performance of its functions set out in Section 7 (2) (l) of the Act to assist with the provision of support to judges generally.

In addition, following on from the recommendations in the Judicial Planning Working Group (JPWG), which reported in 2023, the Board of the Judicial Council decided that realisation of the recommendations in relation to welfare and wellbeing were best placed within the Judicial Council. The Judicial Welfare and Support Committee was charged with implementation of those recommendations.

The Committee comprises one judge from each court jurisdiction. At the end of 2024, the five judges nominated by the Chief Justice are as follows:

- 1. Supreme Court**
Ms Justice Aileen Donnelly, Chairperson
- 2. Court of Appeal**
Ms Justice Isobel Kennedy
- 3. High Court**
Ms Justice Siobhán Phelan
- 4. Circuit Court**
Judge Elma Sheahan
- 5. District Court**
Judge John Brennan

The term of office of a member of the Support and Welfare Committee is four years.

Prior to the appointment of the current chairperson, the roles of Ms Justice Marie Baker and Ms Justice Caroline Costello were pivotal in building the foundations for this function.

The committee met four times during 2024. It explored and identified various options to support judicial welfare and wellbeing and the means of delivery. It favoured the establishment of a formal welfare structure within the wider context of the recommendations made by the JPWG.

The judiciary was canvassed for views on the requirements for, and the provision of, support services. A suite of online support and wellness services was sourced and made available to

all judges in December 2024. Presentation seminars on the optimal use of the online support and wellness services are planned for early in January 2025.

The Committee plans to develop a strategy for judicial wellbeing in 2025. It is intended that a key feature of the Judicial Council meeting in January 2025, to be attended by all of the judges in Ireland, will be in relation to adopting, individually and as a body, key objectives. They include to promote judicial wellbeing through raising awareness of and providing access to supports, to develop accessible and transparent assistance and intervention pathways for judges, and to respond to occupational training and development needs.



**Annual Report
of the Judicial
Conduct
Committee
2024**



This Annual Report of the Judicial Conduct Committee is prepared pursuant to Section 87 of the Judicial Council Act 2019, whereby the Committee is required to submit a report of its activities annually to the Minister for Justice and to the Judicial Council. The Minister, pursuant to Section 87 (3), shall cause copies of this Report to be laid before each of the Houses of the Oireachtas.

Background

The Judicial Conduct Committee (“the Committee”) was established on the 30th of June 2020 and met for the first time in July 2020. The Committee is independent in the performance of its functions. Its principal function is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct among judges, having regard to the principles of judicial conduct requiring judges to uphold and exemplify judicial independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety (including the appearance of propriety), competence and diligence and to ensure equality of treatment of all persons before the courts. It is required to:

- ▶ prepare and submit to the Board of the Judicial Council for its review draft guidelines

concerning judicial conduct and ethics, including guidance as to when a judge should consider recusing himself or herself from presiding over legal proceedings, for adoption by the Council

- ▶ consider admissible complaints and refer them for resolution by informal means or undertake investigations into the conduct of individual judges in accordance with Part 5 of the Act
- ▶ take such action, if any, in accordance with that Part as it considers necessary for the purposes of safeguarding the administration of justice whether as a result of its consideration of a complaint and its referral for resolution by informal means or the undertaking of an investigation under Part 5 or otherwise



- ▶ prepare and publish guidelines providing for the resolution by informal means of complaints that are determined to be admissible under this Part

It may also,

- ▶ of its own volition or shall, on the request of the Board or the Council, prepare and submit to the Board for its review draft amendments to guidelines concerning judicial conduct and ethics adopted by the Council
- ▶ provide such advice and recommendations to an individual judge or to judges generally on judicial conduct and ethics as it sees fit

The Committee's role in relation to judicial conduct

The Committee considers complaints alleging judicial misconduct after a complaint is deemed admissible and referred by the Registrar to the Judicial Conduct Committee or the Complaints Review Committee. Complaints must be made within three months from the date of the conduct complained of, though the Committee has power to extend that period in certain circumstances. The Committee may upon referral of a complaint consider whether the complaint is suitable for resolution by informal means. This only arises where the complainant and the judge consent to this process. As the name suggests, it involves a process to ascertain whether the matter can be resolved without having to follow the formal statutory process set out when conducting an investigation. If a complaint is not suitable to be resolved informally the Committee will convene a panel of inquiry to carry out an investigation.

That panel comprises a judge from the same court as the judge complained of, a judge from a different jurisdiction and a lay member appointed by the Government to panels of inquiry.

The Committee may also, in the absence of a complaint about a judge's conduct and where it considers it necessary to safeguard the administration of justice, refer a matter for

investigation by a panel. The panel of inquiry has various powers under the Act and the procedures developed by the Committee. Those powers include the option to conduct a hearing in relation to the matter.

There are a number of courses available to the panel during an investigation but ultimately it leads to the panel preparing a report for the Committee. That report may include matters such as the panel's findings, any action which it is recommended should be taken, and whether there is a concern in relation to the health of the judge which has become apparent. In the case of a reprimand a panel can recommend advice be given to the judge, a specific course of action or admonishment, as well as any further matter to safeguard the administration of justice.

The Committee, having considered a panel's report, has further powers which may result in the complaint being referred back to the panel or leading it to a determination as to whether the complaint has been substantiated. It may decide that no action is required, adopt the recommendation of the panel or refer the matter to the Minister for Justice for the purpose of Article 35.4 of the Constitution.

Where the judge is required to follow a course of action decided upon by the Committee, the Committee will monitor compliance. Failure to comply by that judge may also result in a referral to the Minister.

Membership

The Committee is made up of 13 members:

- ▶ The Chief Justice and four Court Presidents who are ex officio members
- ▶ Three judges elected by the judiciary from the membership of the Council
- ▶ Five lay members nominated by the Government

Each elected and lay member's term is for a period of four years. The lay members are appointed by the Government following recommendations made by the Public Appointments Service. In appointing a person



to be a lay member of the Judicial Conduct Committee, the Act provides that it is desirable that amongst the members there is experience and knowledge of:

- ▶ the maintenance of standards in professions regulated by a statutory or other body
- ▶ dealing with complaints made against such professionals
- ▶ mediation or other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms
- ▶ the administration of justice
- ▶ the management and provision of services to the public

The Act also provides that the Judicial Conduct Committee may appoint a panel of inquiry to investigate a complaint, if required, made up of three persons, namely two judges and one lay member. That lay member is from a designated list of persons nominated by the Government following recommendations made by the Public Appointments Service.

The members of the Committee at 31st December 2024 are as follows:

- ▶ Mr Justice Donal O'Donnell, Chairperson
- ▶ Ms Justice Caroline Costello
- ▶ Mr Justice David Barniville
- ▶ Ms Justice Patricia Ryan
- ▶ Judge Paul Kelly
- ▶ Mr Justice Charles Meenan
- ▶ Judge Karen Fergus
- ▶ Judge James Faughnan
- ▶ Prof Claire Archbold
- ▶ Prof Maeve Conrick
- ▶ Prof Bernard McCartan
- ▶ Two Lay Member Vacancies

Several members of the Committee were appointed to the Complaints Review Committee during 2024. The members of the Complaints Review Committee at 31st December 2024 are:

- ▶ Mr Justice Charles Meenan
- ▶ Judge James Faughnan
- ▶ Prof Bernard McCartan

The Registrar to the Judicial Conduct Committee is Mr Kevin O'Neill.

Report of the Judicial Conduct Committee in 2024

The key insight from the year is that complainants continue to make complaints in the erroneous belief that, in doing so, the outcome of their court case can be changed. In addition, where a complaint calls into question a judge's conduct, the experience was that the matters complained of fell well short of the threshold to be considered judicial misconduct.

The experience in 2024, the second full year of the complaints process under the Judicial Council Act 2019, was in many ways similar to that of 2023. A significant majority of the complaints made during the period continued to be made by litigants, almost all of whom had represented themselves in court proceedings. It is not always identifiable which complaints are made by unrepresented parties, but it is conservative to say that in excess of 90% of complaints emanate from persons in this category.

It is very important to again highlight that making a complaint to the Judicial Council cannot alter the outcome of a court case. The Judicial Council is not a court. It has no power to overturn or review a judicial decision, regardless of the basis for that decision. That is a function reserved to the courts. It is unfortunately the position that 167 complaints (70% of the total received) were found inadmissible as relating to decisions made in cases with which the complainant was dissatisfied.

Based on the experience from 2023, the Judicial Conduct Committee undertook in 2024 a review of the complaint procedures pursuant to Section 52 of the 2019 Act. It also reviewed the complaint form provided for in those procedures. The form and the information accompanying it include at the very outset a clear statement, bringing to the attention of any complainant, that it is important to be

aware that the making of a complaint to the Committee in relation to the conduct of a judge will not change the outcome of any court case and that the Committee has no power to overturn or review a judge's decision made during or at the conclusion of a case.

A further observation is that it was apparent that many complaints stemmed from a misunderstanding of the court's decision, or a lack of knowledge or familiarity with the court system or understanding of the role of the judge in a case. In addition, some disappointed litigants complained that they considered that the judge had favoured the other side. Where a complaint made related to how a judge acted in court, the conduct alleged was considered in the context of the admissibility requirements under Section 53 of the 2019 Act (and including where required the Digital Audio Recording). No complaint made during 2024 was, after such consideration, identified by the Registrar or the Complaints Review Committee as having disclosed a stateable case of judicial misconduct.

A continuing feature in 2024 was multiple complaints were made by the same complainant. Two complainants made a total of 43 complaints between them in 2024. Several complainants continue to make inadmissible complaints directed at the same judge. To a large extent, the increase in complaints made compared with 2023 was for this reason.

These brief descriptions are intended to provide some insight into and the reason why such a large proportion of complaints have been deemed inadmissible. While each determination of the Registrar, and the Complaints Review Committee, provides the reasons upon which a complaint is being found inadmissible, those determinations are only accessible by the individual complainant and the judge complained of.

The Committee's own oversight role under Part 5 of the Act continued, which included the process and procedural review referred to. It was considered in 2024 whether one complaint determined to be admissible in 2023 was capable of resolution by informal means. The Committee appointed a panel of inquiry to investigate that complaint, including appointing a registrar to the panel. That investigation was ongoing at the end of 2024. Two new judicial members were elected to the Committee in July 2024.

The following information has been prepared by the Committee to illustrate the number of complaints dealt with and the outcomes.

Summary of complaints made, and determinations issued in 2024

The Registrar

The total number of complaints for consideration in 2024 was 296.

- ▶ 23 complaints had remained for consideration from 2023
- ▶ 283 new complaints were received during 2024.
10 of that number did not come within the scope of Part 5 of the Judicial Council Act 2019. The Registrar had no authority to consider those 10 matters and they could not proceed to a determination in relation to admissibility.
273 complaints were therefore received under the Act.

This was a 26% increase on the corresponding figure in 2023, which was 216 new complaints.

Of the 296 complaints for consideration by the Registrar in 2024

- ▶ 237 were determined to be not admissible
- ▶ no complaint was determined to be admissible
- ▶ 27 complaints concluded because the Act ceased to apply
- ▶ 2 complaints were withdrawn
- ▶ 30 complaints remained for consideration on the 31st of December 2024 (received in November and December)

111 individual judges were complained of in 2024.

The Complaints Review Committee

- ▶ 14 reviews were on hands at the end of 2023
- ▶ 51 requests to review the Registrar's determination were received in 2024. This was a 23% decrease on the number received in 2023
- ▶ 7 reviews were on hands at end of 2024
- ▶ 58 Determinations were made in 2024

Panels of Inquiry

- ▶ 1 panel of inquiry was established in 2024 for the purpose of investigating a complaint admitted in 2023. That investigation was ongoing at 31st December 2024.

Breakdown of complainants

- ▶ 136 complainants made a single complaint
- ▶ 17 complainants made 2 complaints each
- ▶ 17 complainants made 3 complaints each
- ▶ 1 complainant made 4 complaints
- ▶ 1 complainant made 6 complaints
- ▶ 1 complainant made 9 complaints
- ▶ 1 complainant made 15 complaints
- ▶ 1 complainant made 28 complaints

The following information is specified to be published pursuant to Section 87 (4)

2024		2023
273	(a) the number of complaints received,	216
0	(b) the number of complaints determined to be admissible by the Registrar	1
58	(c) the number of complaints considered by the Complaints Review Committee and	62
0	the number of complaints determined to be admissible, by the Complaints Review Committee,	0
0	(d) the number of complaints resolved by informal means in accordance with Chapter 4,	0
0	(e) the number of investigations initiated pursuant to a referral under section 59,	0
1	(f) the number of investigations conducted by a panel of inquiry under this Part of complaints or consequent on a referral under section 59,	0
0	(g) the number of complaints considered by the Judicial Conduct Committee that were not substantiated,	0
0	(h) the number of determinations made by the Judicial Conduct Committee under section 71 (5) or 79,	0
0	(i) the number of judges who consented to the issuing of reprimands to them in accordance with section 58 or 73 , and	0
2	(j) the number of complaints that were withdrawn in the circumstances referred to in section 57 or 74	2



Comhairle na mBreithiúna
The Judicial Council

