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**The Intellectual Property
Regulation Board**
Annual Report 2023

July 2024

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Introduction

Purpose of Report

This report sets out key information about IPReg's regulatory performance and activities, and income and expenditure during the 2023 calendar year.

Who we are

IPReg is the independent regulatory body for specialist lawyers called patent attorneys and trade mark attorneys. It was set up in 2010 by the **Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys (CIPA)** and the **Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA)**. This was done to separate the regulatory and representative functions of CIPA and CITMA – a requirement of the **Legal Services Act 2007**.

IPReg is a small organisation. The IPReg executive team is led by the Chief Executive Officer, Fran Gillon and Head of Registration, Shelley Edwards. These roles are in turn supported by a Chief Finance Officer, a Director of Policy, a Compliance and Assurance Officer, an Education and Diversity Officer and an Administrative Officer.

The IPReg Board sets the organisation's strategic direction and holds its executive team to account. At its November 2023 meeting the Board re-cast the organisation's strategic priorities:

- to improve consumer knowledge and empowerment among users of intellectual property services;
- setting, promoting and enforcing high quality education and professional standards for entry to the professions;
- carrying out our regulatory activities proactively, effectively and inclusively, ensuring the efficient use of resources.

The Board has 9 members and is chaired by the **Right Honourable Lord Smith of Finsbury** who is a lay member. It has four other lay members, two patent attorney members and two trade mark attorney members. The IPReg Board members in 2023 were:

- **Rt Hon Lord Smith of Finsbury** (lay Chair)
- **Justin Bukspan** (Registered Trade Mark Attorney)
- **Alan Clamp** (lay)
- Samantha Funnell (Patent Attorney) [left March 2024]
- **Katerina Kolyva** (lay)
- Alan Kershaw (lay) [left February 2023]
- **Victor Olowe** (lay)
- **Samantha Peters** (lay)
- Emma Reeve (Registered Trade Mark Attorney) [left March 2024]

- Nigel Robinson (Patent Attorney)
[left January 2023]
- **Henrietta Rooney** (Patent Attorney)
- Caroline Seddon (lay) [left September 2023].

The Board held 7 meetings in 2023. Board papers and minutes of each meeting are published on the **[IPReg website](#)**.

Chair's foreword: Lord Smith of Finsbury

I noted in my Foreword for last year's Annual Report that we had just completed – and received LSB approval for – the comprehensive review we were conducting of our regulatory rules and guidelines. It had been a mammoth undertaking, but was one of the things I set as a priority when I started as Chair a few years back. We implemented the changes in the course of the past year, and I'm delighted (and relieved) to observe that they have gone down very well. We were above all aiming for clarity, alongside sensible, proportionate regulation. I think we've achieved that. We won't of course have got everything right, and we need to be prepared to adapt as time throws up anything we've missed. But I believe we've made a really good start.

One of the major changes we've made is to the CPD (continuous professional development) system for registered attorneys. Previously this largely consisted of box-ticking sixteen things you'd done or courses you'd been on or webinars you'd attended, and it didn't really give much of an idea of continuing competence. From 1st July of 2023 we've moved to a new approach, asking attorneys to reflect, personally, on the learning they need, the learning they undertake, and to evaluate how that contributes to their professional development. We've asked them to undertake a bespoke assessment, specific to them, their practice, and their needs. The mantra is “assess, reflect, plan,

implement and confirm”; and we know that for every attorney this will be different, and individual. It will also however be important – and I hope rather more meaningful than the previous statements of attendance at events.

We have continued to focus our attention on the routes into the profession, the education courses that are available, and the quality of the particular options on offer. We want to make sure that it is attractive to enter the IP profession, that there is a variety of options available, and that the learning offered is good and will make for excellent attorneys. We had devoted a lot of consideration to the trade mark course at Queen Mary University in London, but I'm happy to report that major improvements have now been put in place, and we were pleased to be able to confirm accreditation or Queen Mary in the course of the year. We will however want to continue our general education work and oversight, and this will form a major focus of our attention over the next few years.

There are two other areas of work that will be increasingly important for us. The first is the developing potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in legal work, including the work of patent and trade mark attorneys. There is of course major potential for the deployment of AI: some of the currently time-consuming tasks of sifting through large quantities of data will become much faster

and easier. But there will still need to be the exercise of human judgment by trained attorneys in order to ensure that intellectual property is properly protected. (This may of course need to lead to a change in the way the billing of clients occurs – to base charges on outputs rather than on time – but this is something for the future.) We at IPReg will need to ensure that our regulatory approach is attuned to new ways of working, and takes an appropriate route to assessing the protection of the interests of clients.

The other important area of work for us over the next few years will be our wish to develop the diversity of the profession. We need to encourage the widest possible range of people to come into the IP profession, from the broadest range of backgrounds, and we will want for example to provide strong backing to the excellent work of IP Inclusive in this respect. Making sure that everyone can feel welcome within the world of IP has to be part of our work for the immediate future.

We said goodbye to two stalwart Board members during the past year. One was Caroline Seddon, who had very skilfully led our education work for a number of years, and we are very grateful for her contribution. The other was Alan Kershaw, who as well as being an exemplary and wise Board member, took leadership of the oversight of our regulatory review, and shepherded it to its

successful conclusion. It is our loss, but the broader legal services system’s gain, that Alan was “poached” from our Board last year to become Chair of the Legal Services Board, a post he now occupies with great distinction. We will look forward to working closely with him in his new role. The new intake of Board members in 2023 (Henrietta Rooney, Katerina Kolyva and Alan Clamp) are proving to be excellent successors.

My final tribute has to be to our small but dedicated staff team, who have kept the IPReg show on the road with great skill over the past year. We couldn’t have achieved anything without them, and the success of the organisation is very largely due to them and their hard work. Thank you.

Chris Smith

July 2024

Chief Executive's foreword: Fran Gillon

During 2023 we reached a significant milestone in our work to modernise our regulatory arrangements – they came into force on 1 July. Their implementation has been smooth, which I think reflects the effectiveness of our stakeholder engagement throughout the review process. The changes include a pivotal shift towards a more flexible and reflective approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD). By moving away from the traditional hours-based model, we now empower attorneys to take personal responsibility for their professional growth, ensuring their competence remains relevant throughout their careers. Additionally, the introduction of independent Case Examiners in our disciplinary procedures underscores our commitment to transparency and fairness. This not only aligns us with best regulatory practice but also facilitates swifter resolution of our investigations, benefiting both the public and the attorneys we regulate.

An innovative feature of the new arrangements is our professional indemnity insurance (PII) sandbox. This enables firms to be admitted to the register (or stay on it) if they decide to get PII from an insurer that is not one of our participating insurers. We hope that, over time, it will provide evidence about how we could change our requirements for PII to support

increased competition and innovation. If you are interested in the sandbox, please do get in touch.

Improving diversity and increasing inclusion are critical to the future of the IP profession. We have therefore continued to support IP Inclusive and In2Science, providing funding for the amazing work that they do.

Looking ahead, our focus will turn to widening participation in the patent profession. We are committed to maximising stakeholder engagement in this exciting project and look forward to your involvement in it.

I am, as always, grateful for the dedication and hard work of my small but talented team; their hard work has been instrumental in achieving our goals. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the IPReg Board and our stakeholders for their unwavering support, challenge and collaboration. Together, we are building a regulatory environment that not only meets the needs of today but is also prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Fran Gillon
July 2024

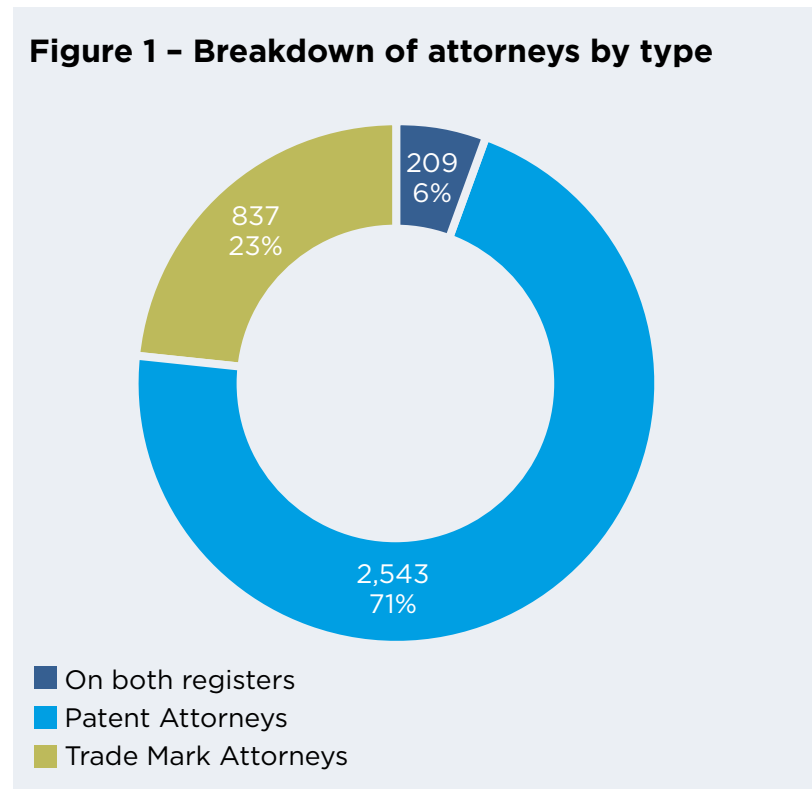
Regulation

Who we regulate

We regulate individual patent attorneys and trade mark attorneys as well as many of the firms in which they work. As of 31 December 2023, there were 3,589 attorneys on our registers (an increase of 159 from 31 December 2022):

Over two-thirds (70.9%: 2543) of attorneys on the registers were patent attorneys, there are 837 trade mark attorneys (23.3%) and 209 (5.8%) people who were both a patent attorney and a trade mark attorney.

Figure 1 - Breakdown of attorneys by type



There were 255 regulated firms. Of these, 198 are registered bodies (attorney-owned firms) and 57 are licensed bodies (alternative business structure firms with an element of non-attorney ownership).
How we regulate

How we regulate

As with all legal services regulators we must, so far as is reasonably practicable, act in a way which is compatible with the regulatory objectives and which the IPReg Board considers is most appropriate for the purpose of meeting those objectives. The regulatory objectives are:

- RO1 - Protecting and promoting the public interest
- RO2 - Supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law
- RO3 - Improving access to justice
- RO4 - Protecting and promoting the interests of consumers

- RO5 – Promoting competition in the provision of legal services
- RO6 – Encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession
- RO7 – Increasing public understanding of the citizen’s legal rights and duties
- RO8 – Promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles
- RO9 – Promoting the prevention and detection of economic crime.

Our day-to-day work covers a broad range of core regulatory activities including¹:

a) Setting registration requirements

- setting, maintaining and reviewing the examination and training requirements for qualification as an attorney;
- considering applications for entry to the registers;
- setting, maintaining and reviewing the requirements for admission to the registers for attorneys and firms;
- keeping the registers of attorneys and firms;
- a rolling accreditation process of agencies providing qualifying examinations and considering applications from new agencies;
- our new regulatory arrangements came into force on 1 July 2023. They enable us to

recognise qualifications obtained by any non-UK qualified professionals. Previously we could only recognise qualifications obtained by EU nationals.

b) Ensuring ongoing competence

- setting the requirements for continuous professional development so that the knowledge, skills and expertise of attorneys is maintained at an appropriate level;
- our new regulatory arrangements have introduced a reflective approach to continuing professional development (replacing a specified number of learning hours).

c) Standards, rules and regulations

- setting, maintaining, reviewing and enforcing rules and regulations which set out the standards required of those we regulate;
- providing advice on our regulatory arrangements;
- answering regulatory and administrative enquiries by the customer relationship management online platform and the info@ipreg.org.uk email address;
- investigation and handling of complaints of misconduct made against an attorney or firm regulated by IPReg and taking disciplinary action where necessary;

¹ Features new to 2023 are formatted in italics and are covered in more detail in section 5.

- our new regulatory arrangements provide a new new **Core Regulatory Framework, a range of Guidance**, including **Transparency and Cost Guidance** focused upon informing customer choice and a **Standard Operating Procedure** which includes new disciplinary procedures in keeping with best practice.

d) Strategy, Policy and Reviewing Performance

- development of strategies and policies to continue evolving and improving regulation and mitigation of regulatory risks;
- monitoring our regulatory performance; and
- engaging with the consultations and work programme of, and information and data requests from, our oversight body, the **Legal Services Board**.

Regulatory Performance and Action

New regulatory arrangements

Our major project to change our regulatory arrangements was approved by the Legal Services Board on 7 February 2023 and went live on 1 July 2023. The new **Core Regulatory Framework** sets out the standards of conduct expected of regulated persons and firms. It is based on overarching principles which cover the ethical behaviours that all registered attorneys must uphold.

The main changes introduced are:

- a) *Continuing Professional Development (CPD)*. We have moved away from the previous prescriptive 'hours- based' model to a more flexible approach of maintaining competence through regular self-evaluation and development. This approach helps make sure that attorneys maintain their competence in a way that is relevant to them and their practice, whatever stage they are at in their career. It puts the responsibility for remaining competent on the individual attorney who will be best placed to identify their own development needs.
- b) *New disciplinary procedures including the use of independent Case Examiners*. We can now investigate complaints about an attorney's conduct in their private life where it is relevant to their practice. The new Case Examiners are

completely independent of IPReg – consistent with best regulatory practice – and their sanctioning powers should allow more cases to be resolved at an earlier stage than under the previous rules.

- c) *New transparency requirements which will provide better costs information to clients and prospective clients*. We know that consumers and small businesses needing legal advice often do not have clear information about the price and services they would receive, the redress that is available and the regulatory status of providers. They therefore have difficulty comparing providers and it is hard for them to make informed choices. So we have introduced a requirement to be transparent about charges such as commission, foreign exchange rate uplifts, discounts or rebates as well as referral arrangements such as payment of a referral fee and fee sharing arrangements.
- d) *Implementing the professional indemnity insurance (PII) regulatory sandbox*. This was set up to facilitate innovation and competition in the provision of IP legal services. The sandbox is a way for firms or sole traders to obtain PII from insurers who are not on IPReg's list of participating insurers. We approved the first application for admission to the sandbox in July 2023.

To ensure that our regulated community understood the changes that were being introduced, we held three webinars with CIPA and CITMA:

- 8 June – this gave an overview of the new regulatory arrangements and had 480 attendees;
- 21 September – this focused on the new reflective approach to CPD and had 460 attendees;
- 16 November – this covered transparency of cost, service and quality and had 260 attendees.

Legal Services Board (LSB)

As the oversight body of the legal services regulators, the LSB can make information requests to the legal services regulators, introduce guidance and policy statements that we must follow, monitor our performance and assess rule change applications. We have to contribute to the LSB's running costs – see section 7. This section sets out some of our work that relates to the LSB's activities.

Non-Disclosure Agreements: in May, the LSB issued a **Call for Evidence** about the Misuse of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs). These are contracts which people can be asked to

sign to ensure that they keep information private. Whilst the LSB's focus was on misuse of NDAs (such as concealing unlawful activity and other wrongdoing), **our response** set out how they can be a vital tool in protecting IP rights and preserving confidentiality for individuals and businesses.

Regulatory performance assessment: in June, the LSB issued a regulatory performance information request to all legal services regulators. This was the first request issued under its **new regulatory performance framework** which came into force on 1 January 2023. We had to provide information to the LSB about our activities between October 2022 to May 2023 in relation to two areas of our work:

- that we are well-led with the resources and capability required to work for the public and to meet the regulatory objectives effectively; and
- we have an effective approach to regulation and act on behalf of the public to apply our knowledge to identify opportunities and address risks to meeting the regulatory objectives.

We also had to provide information about our governance and transparency, use of evidence, activities in the public interest and our progress implementing the LSB's requirements on **Empowering Consumers** and **Ongoing Competence**.

The LSB's **Regulatory Performance Assessment Report** was published in January 2024 and states that the LSB has amber/partial assurance that IPReg is well-led and has an effective approach to regulation.

Technology and innovation: in July, the LSB issued a **consultation** about draft statutory guidance on technology and innovation. We **responded** to the consultation in September; the **guidance** was finalised by the LSB in April 2024 and requires regulators to ensure that:

- **Outcome 1:** Regulation enables the use of technology and innovation to support improved access to legal services and to address unmet legal need;
- **Outcome 2:** Regulation balances the benefits and risks and the opportunities and costs, of technology and innovation in the interests of the public and consumers;
- **Outcome 3:** Regulation actively fosters a regulatory environment that is open to technology providers and innovators.

First Tier Complaints: in August, the LSB issued a **consultation** on proposals to increase the requirements it places on firms about how they deal with complaints that are made to them by a client. We responded in November and the new requirements were published by the LSB

in May 2024. They must be implemented by November 2025.

Enforcement powers and investigative tools: in September we responded to an LSB information request about our pre-investigative and investigative information gathering and fining powers. This relates to the LSB's work on reviewing regulators' **enforcement tools**, including financial penalties, to ensure they are sufficient to tackle wilful and serious misconduct. This LSB work programme continued into 2024.

Practising certificate fees: each year, the legal services regulators are required to apply to the LSB for approval of their fees for the following year. In July we published a **consultation** about our 2024 business plan, budget and practising fees. We proposed an 8% increase in fees. This was approved by the LSB in October.

Compensation Arrangements – in 2021, we set up a new compensation fund. This is a discretionary fund of last resort which can compensate consumers and small businesses for loss causing hardship which has arisen as a result of fraud or failure to account by an attorney. As part of that process, the LSB required us to consult before 1 May 2024 on the compensation arrangements. In November we **consulted** on continuation of the fund, with 3 changes that were designed to

improve consumer protection:

- a) extending eligibility to make a claim on the compensation fund to entities with an annual turnover of less than £2 million;²
- b) increasing the limit for an individual claim from £25,000 to £30,000;
- c) removing the ability for us to use the fund to pay any other costs, charges or expenses incurred by us in establishing and administering it (we would continue to fund these activities from our general income).

We **applied** in February 2024 for a rule change and the LSB **approved** this in April 2024. No claims have ever been made on the compensation fund but in the event of a claim, we will publish high level anonymised information in our Annual Report.

Legal choices and the Regulatory Information Service

The **Legal Choices website** helps consumers by providing independent, factual, information about legal issues and legal advisers. The legal services regulators together set up and run the website and its content.

We are working with the other legal regulators to establish an online “Regulatory Information

Service” which meets the expectations of the LSB and the CMA about information that should be provided to consumers about regulated lawyers.

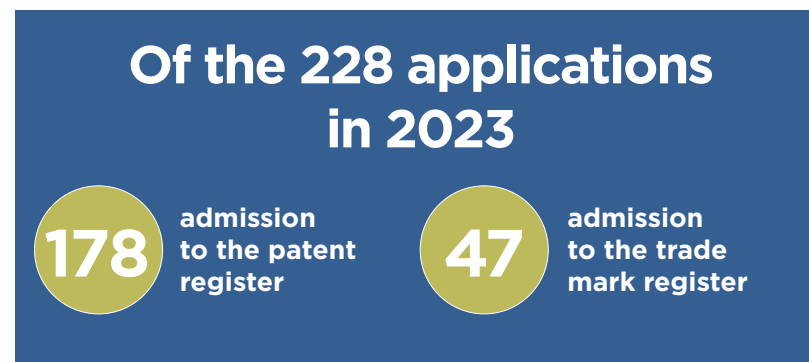
Key facts and figures

Admissions to the Registers

To be admitted to the registers, applicants must complete a rigorous **examination and training programme**. On admission, an individual or firm is subject to IPReg’s rules and regulations.

Individuals - attorneys

In 2023, there were 225 admissions to the registers. This is an increase from 186 admissions in 2022.



Of these applications, 6 were from applicants with non-UK qualifications (4 of these have been admitted and 2 are still being processed) and 1 application was withdrawn.

² The previous limit for eligibility for a micro business was having at least two of: (a) a turnover of £632,000 or less; (b) £316,000 or less on its balance sheet; or (c) 10 employees or fewer.

The longest time taken to process an application for entry to a register was 35 working days. The application was from a non-UK attorney and required additional work to consider suitability against IPReg's competency criteria. The average time to process an application was 1 day; 57% of all applications were processed within one day of receipt. No applications were refused and there were therefore no appeals.

Firms - registered and licensed bodies

A registered body is a firm which is owned by registered attorneys or other UK-regulated lawyers. A licensed body (also known as an Alternative Business Structure) is a firm which has some non-lawyer ownership. As of 31 December 2023, there were 255 firms on the registers. During the year, 13 new firms were admitted to the registers (down from 17 in 2022).

In addition, there were 2 applications from licensed bodies change their status and become registered bodies (1 on the trade mark register and 1 on both registers).

The average time taken to process an application was 7 working days. The shortest time was 1 working day and the longest was 28 working days. There were no refusals of any applications and therefore no appeals.



Regulatory enquiries

Each year IPReg receives regulatory enquiries concerning various aspects of regulation and the legal sector. This section analyses the 304 regulatory enquiries that IPReg received in 2023. Of these enquiries:

- 287 (94.4%) were answered within our 5 working days target
- 197 (64.8%) were answered within 1 working day.

The 17 enquiries answered outside the 5 working days target tended to be enquiries which had not been previously considered and therefore required more discussion before responding.

Breakdown of Regulatory Enquiry Themes received in 2023³

Regulatory Enquiry Theme	Number
<p>Qualification/how to enter on to the IPReg register(s)</p> <p>For example: qualifying as a patent attorney or registered trade mark attorney, registration of a firm, seeking recognition of those professionally qualified overseas or with historic qualifications, seeking to be re-admitted to a register, solicitors wanting to qualify as registered trade mark attorneys (there is a potential “fast track” available)</p>	192
<p>Rules of Conduct</p> <p>For example: professional indemnity insurance, conflicts of interest, difficulties with a client, entity structure, client monies, client information sharing, fees charged to clients, insolvency of a client, reporting misleading information on another legal service provider’s website, third party observations about patent applications to the Intellectual Property Office, whether a patent firm can subcontract trade mark work, regulation of non-attorney employees, winding up a regulated company</p>	91
<p>Continuing Professional Development</p> <p>For example: queries from attorneys, firms, training providers and others about CPD</p>	29
<p>Taking a leave of absence</p> <p>For example: queries from attorneys and firms about how to approach a period of time away from active practice</p>	20
	332

³ The enquirer can select more than one enquiry theme through the IPReg Customer Relationship Management online portal, which is why there are more than 332 themes listed below as a single enquiry can have more than one theme.

First Tier Complaints

One of the 8 overarching principles in the Core Regulatory Framework is to maintain proper standards of work. If a client considers this has not been the case, they can make a complaint to the regulated attorney or firm which undertook that work. These types of complaints are known as first tier complaints (FTCs). As part of the annual renewal of registrations we ask firms and sole trader attorneys to provide us with the number of FTCs they have received in that practice year so that we can monitor emerging themes and take action where necessary.

Complaints statistics for the reporting year ended 31 December 2023, were collected from:

- **Firms** – 248⁴ firms reported on the number of complaints received, with 31 of those firms declaring receipt of one or more complaints (in 2022, 43 of the 246 reporting firms had one or more complaint); and
- **Sole traders** – of the 107 sole traders who provided information to IPReg, none had received complaints (in 2022, 3 of the reporting 105 sole traders had one or more complaint).

The most frequently reported complaint theme remains costs (either that the costs were excessive or there was deficient information relating to costs). Firms reported that 60 FTCs had been received about costs; this is a reduction from the 78 complaints reported in 2022. The Core Regulatory Framework introduced new requirements about the need for transparency on costs to help consumers to understand the fees they would have to pay. Focus on this issue might have helped firms to improve their approach to providing information which could have led to these reductions. The second and third most frequent complaint themes in 2023 were failure to keep the client informed (32 complaints received) and failure to follow instructions (28 complaints).

⁴ This figure is different from the 255 firms on the register on 31 December 2023, (see paragraph 4.3) because IPReg was in the process of removing 6 entities from the register at the end of 2023 as they had ceased trading and one firm was suspended from the register. These 7 firms were exempt from submitting annual returns.

Complaint Theme	2022	2023
Costs excessive/deficient information	78	60
Conduct	14	14
Delay/failure to progress a matter	34	19
Failure to advise/poor advice	12	12
Failure to comply with agreed action	11	5
Failure to follow instructions	18	28
Failure to keep the client informed	26	32
Other	13	20

We review the data provided annually and make direct enquiries with the firm concerned where the information provided suggests it is appropriate to do so. This could be because of the number of complaints reported in each category has significantly increased from previous reports or where firms are collectively reporting high numbers in a particular category.

Escalated complaints – complaints dealt with by IPReg

In the event a complainant is not satisfied with how their first-tier complaint was dealt with, they can complain to the **Legal Ombudsman**. No complaints about IPReg regulated persons or firms were made to the Ombudsman in 2023. IPReg can investigate a complaint that goes beyond poor service and raises concerns about a potential breach of the Core Regulatory Framework.

We can also initiate complaints where information we gather during our regulatory activities suggests to us that a regulated person may have breached a requirement in our regulatory arrangements.

In 2023, we received 11 complaints. Some complainants raised concerns about more than one issue but, in summary, the complaints alleged:

- Misconduct – 7 complaints (themes include inappropriate workplace conduct, financial mismanagement, providing misleading

information, inappropriate online conduct, misleading information provided to a client, unsubstantiated allegation against a professional person)

- Failure to follow instructions – 2 complaints
- Failure to progress a matter – 2 complaints
- Excessive costs – 1 complaint
- Conflict of interest – 1 complaint.

IPReg Complaints processing timeframes in 2023

Complaint theme	Shortest time taken - working days	Average time taken - working days	Longest time taken - working days
Time taken to close a complaint received and closed in 2023	1	12	39
Time taken to close a complaint actively investigated in 2023 (includes complaints received earlier than 2023)	N/A	94	332 ^{5*}

⁵ *The 332 working days to close a case (which was opened in 2022) relates to a complaint that went to a full disciplinary hearing. It involved an attorney who was not represented and who failed to engage with the disciplinary process. Such cases often require more time to progress to ensure that the attorney involved has sufficient opportunities to participate in the hearing. Ultimately, the attorney absented himself from the process and was removed from the register.

Two of the complaints received in 2023 related to inappropriate conduct with a third party. These are currently being investigated. These are novel complaints for IPReg which we believe are prompted by our regulatory arrangements review and subsequent rule change meaning that we can investigate issues that arise in an attorney's private life where it is relevant to their practice as a regulated person.

In 2023 we closed 8 complaints (of which 3 had been received in 2022). As of 31 December 2023, there were 8 cases being actively investigated or awaiting a hearing date.

Regulatory actions

All registered attorneys and firms must renew their registration annually on 1 January. This process includes submitting an annual return where the attorney or firm will confirm their ongoing good character and competence to practise; they also have to pay an annual practising fee that funds our regulatory activities. If an attorney or a firm fails to renew their registration before 1 March and has not applied to be removed from the register, they will be suspended. Continued failure to comply with the requirements

will result in removal from the register on 1 June.

Suspensions: On 1 March 2023, 33 attorneys were suspended from the registers for failing to renew their registration. One attorney was suspended from the register pending a disciplinary hearing (which ultimately resulted in his removal). One non-trading firm was suspended pending an orderly wind up of the business following a voluntary liquidation.

Removals by IPReg: On 1 June 2023, 17 attorneys were removed from the register because they had failed to renew their registration or advise us of their intention to cease practice. In addition, one attorney was removed following a disciplinary hearing and one attorney had died.

Voluntary removals: by **voluntary removal** we mean that an attorney has made a successful application for voluntary removal of their name from the register(s). In 2023 we received 51 applications for voluntary removals; this is an increase from the 43 applications in 2022. Of these:

- 32 were patent attorneys
- 8 were trade mark attorneys
- 11 were attorneys on the patent register and the trade mark register.

Reasons cited for requesting voluntary removal from the register (more than one can be selected) included:

- Retirement - 32
- Career change - 12
- Ill health - 2
- To move to the unregulated sector - 1
- Prefer not to say - 1
- Other - 4 (1 was no longer carrying on reserved activities, 2 were practising solely as a European Patent Attorney, 1 had moved abroad).

Eight firms were removed from the registers in 2023 of which 4 were on the patent register, 2 were on the trade mark register and 2 were on both registers. Of the eight firms removed, 6 ceased to practise and 2 were merged into other SRA or IPReg regulated firms.

Complaints about IPReg

No complaints about IPReg were received in 2023.

Working Groups

Working groups are set up at the Board's discretion to provide advice and challenge to the executive team about how to take forward a particular area of work. Four working groups operated in 2023:

- a) **Governance and Transparency Group:** a significant work programme was delivered in 2023, including developing the **Governance Handbook**, which includes a range of policies about how we operate as an organisation.
- b) **Risk Group:** this was set up to develop an approach to risk management to support a bolder risk appetite and encourage innovation in the provision of intellectual property legal services. The group is supported by an external risk specialist. Work so far has included setting out what we mean by "risk", developing a new risk register and drafting our risk policy. Future editions of our Annual Report will include a section on risk.
- c) **Data Group:** this group supports the development of IPReg's data collection and analytic capabilities. In response to the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine, the UK government imposed financial sanctions through the Office for Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI). In 2023, we arranged for an independent specialist reconciliation of the sanctions

compliance data we obtained from registrants in 2022. This checked that data against the OFSI consolidated list and data held by the Intellectual Property Office on its registers for Russian, Belarussian and Georgian entities (patent and trade mark). This verification exercise confirmed our understanding that IPReg regulated firms presented very little risk in this area.

- d) **Education Group:** the IPReg Board set up this group in 2019 to help consider and make recommendations to it about the attorney qualification pathways and to oversee the accreditation cycle of **attorney qualification pathway providers**. This group helps inform Board's accreditation decisions. The group will oversee the significant project on expanding entry to the professions.

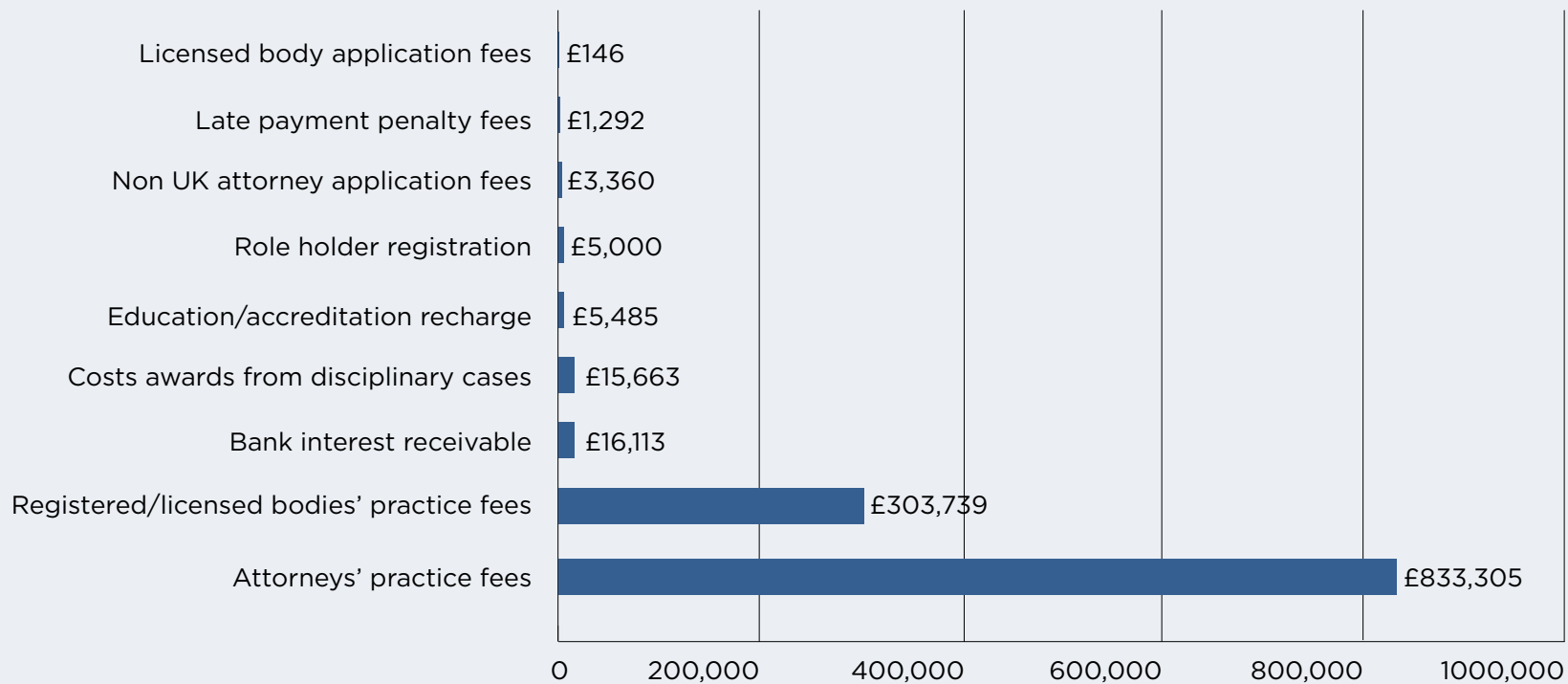
Financial Information

Income

IPReg's income derives mainly from practice fees paid by registered attorneys and firms. Some limited additional income is derived from (for example) application fees from firms applying to be regulated by IPReg.

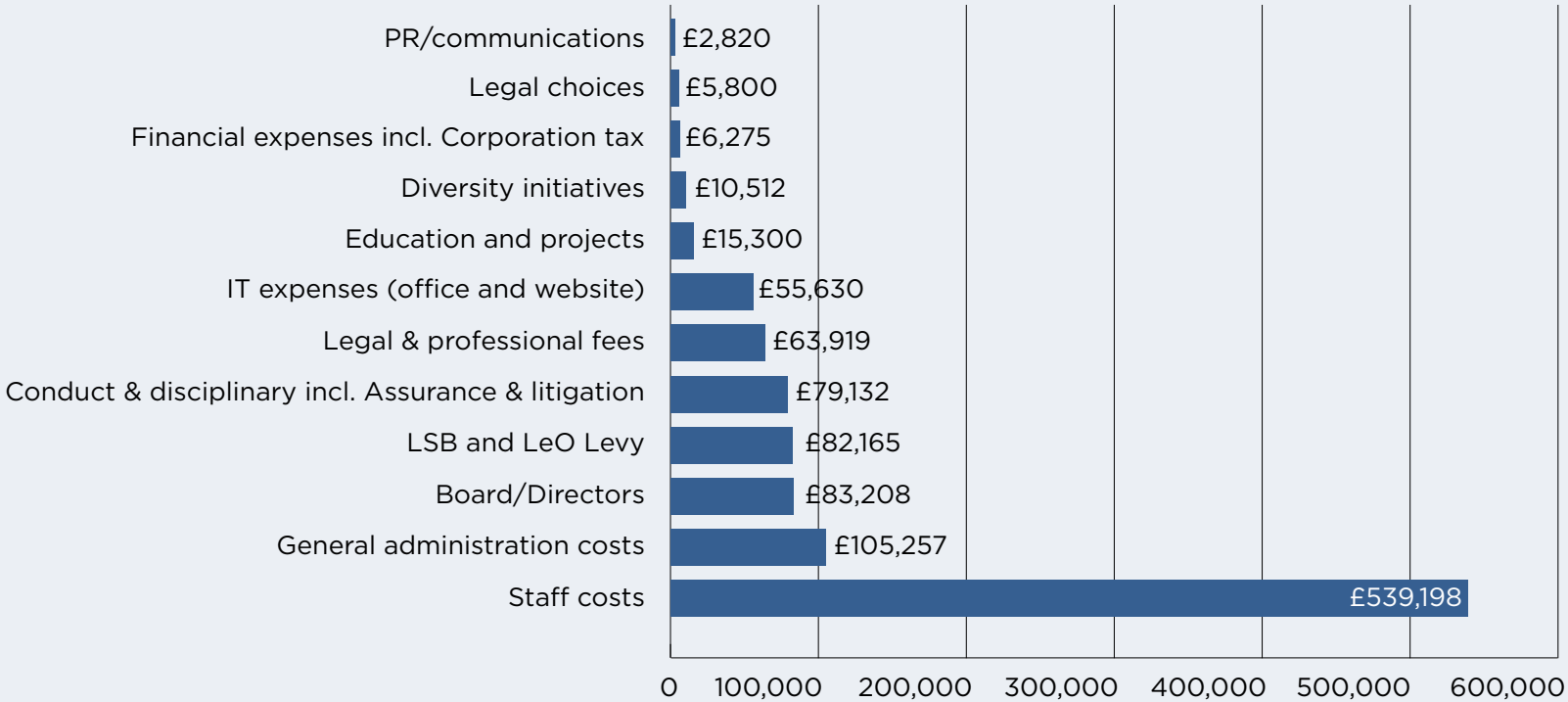
IPReg is financially independent. Since January 2010, IPReg has received no financial assistance from either CIPA or CITMA, nor does IPReg remit any practising fees to either CIPA or CITMA. A breakdown of income for the year ended 31 December 2023 is shown below.

Breakdown of income for 2023



Expenditure

Breakdown of expenditure for 2023



IPReg Board and Chief Executive Meetings

Board meetings: there were 7 Board meetings in 2023: 12 January, 24 March, 18 May, 13 July, 7 September, 2 November, 7 December.

For more information on these meetings, see the **Board meetings** webpage.

The Chair and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) attended the quarterly Regulatory Forum meetings with CIPA and CITMA in March, June, September and December. A member of the Board attended an **In2science** workshop meeting in May. Additionally, there was an informal meeting of the Boards of IPReg and the Cost Lawyers Standards Board in June and with CIPA/CITMA Council Members in September.

CEO meetings: there were 9 meetings of the CEOs of IPReg, CIPA and CITMA. The CEO attended another 25 events with a range of regulatory, business and industry representatives, including the Intellectual Property Office, IP Inclusive, the IP Federation, the IP Practice Directors Group, LawTech/ Regulatory Response Unit, the LSB and other regulators, the Legal Services Consumer Panel, CIPA Council, In2Science, the Legal Choices Governance Board and Steering Group, PAMIA insurance and the Canadian College of Patent Agents and Trade Mark Agents.

Working Group meetings: the Risk Group met 4 times in 2023, the Governance Group met once, as did the Education Working Group. The Data Group did not meet in person.

Board and CEO expenses: the Chair is paid £35,740 a year for a minimum of 50 days' work; Board members are paid £3,920 for attending 7 Board meetings and associated preparation time and a daily rate of £392 for additional activity. The CEO's salary is £91,209 for 3 days a week and her expenses for the year were £102.73.

Board – meetings, fees and expenses

Information relevant to the table which follows:

- All Board Members are Directors of the Intellectual Property Regulation Board Ltd
- Board meetings – activities, attendance and expenses relevant to IPReg Board meetings
- Working Groups – working groups set up by Board; they are composed of select Board members and IPReg staff (see section 6).
- Other – fees relating to specific work undertaken by Board Members in addition to Board meetings and travel and subsistence relating to these activities and attendance at Working Group meetings.

Board members		Board meetings			Working groups			Other		
Name	Status	Total	Fees	Travel and subsistence	Governance and transparency	Education	Risk	Disciplinary panel	LSB meetings/ other	Travel and subsistence
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Lord Christopher Smith Attended 7/7 Board meetings	Chair (lay)	36,082	35,740	342	N/A	0	N/A	0	0	0
Justin Bukspan Attended 7/7 Board meetings	Trade Mark Attorney	3,920	3,920	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0
Alan Clamp Attended 6/6 Board meetings from contract start (1 March)	Lay	3,873	3,267	606	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0
Samantha Funnell Attended 7/7 Board meetings	Patent Attorney	4,746	3,920	0	0	N/A	350	476	0	0
Alan Kershaw Attended 1/1 Board meeting before contract ended (28 February)	Lay	1,595	653	802	N/A	140	N/A	0	0	0
Katerina Kolyva Attended 2/2 Board meetings from contract start (18 September)	Lay	1,257	1,143	114	N/A	0	N/A	0	0	0

Board members		Board meetings			Working groups			Other		
Name	Status	Total	Fees	Travel and subsistence	Governance and transparency	Education	Risk	Disciplinary panel	LSB meetings/ other	Travel and subsistence
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Victor Olowe Attended 7/7 Board meetings	Lay	6,299	3,920	121	336	0	1,400	336	168	18
Samantha Peters Attended 7/7 Board meetings	Lay	5,899	3,920	820	168	0	280	476	0	235
Emma Reeve Attended 6/7 Board meetings	Trade Mark Attorney	4,061	3,920	29	0	112	N/A	0	0	0
Nigel Robinson Attended no Board meetings before contract ended (31 January)	Patent Attorney	327	327	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0
Henrietta Rooney Attended 6/7 Board meetings	Patent Attorney	4,567	3,920	3	N/A	196	N/A	392	56	0
Caroline Seddon Attended 5/5 Board meetings before contract ended (17 September)	Lay	5,837	2,777	1,744	N/A	228	N/A	868	0	0