

Assembly Section

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Mr Shane McAteer
Clerk
Committee for Finance and Personnel
Room 419
Parliament Buildings
Stormont

Our Ref CFP/355/11-15

21 August 2014

Dear Shane,

Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill

Thank you for your letter of 8th July, 2014 in relation to the Departmental briefing on the above draft Bill, held on 25th June.

Officials indicated at that meeting that they would check to confirm that maximum penalty that could be applied on the professional body failing to meet its targets in respect of handling complaints. As you know, in England and Wales, complaints handling is no longer the responsibility of the professional bodies, but under the scheme that was in place prior to the implementation of the Legal Services Act 2007, the maximum penalty that could be applied to the Law Society of England and Wales by the then Legal Services Complaints Commissioner was, as officials outlined in their evidence to the Committee, fixed at £1,000,000.

The Commissioner in that jurisdiction penalised the Law Society on two occasions, in 2006 for £220,000 and then again, in 2008 for £275,000.

Yours sincerely,

Gearoid Cassidy

GEARÓID CASSIDY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer