

Chief State Solicitor's Office

Abstract: In this brief article Jean Cassidy describes the work of the Chief State Solicitor's Office in Dublin.

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The Chief State Solicitor's Office

The Chief State Solicitor's Office (CSSO) is a constituent part of the Attorney General's Office.

The Chief State Solicitor acts as solicitor to the Attorney General and to Government departments and offices. The functions of the CSSO include:

- Provision of a solicitor service in all civil courts in which any Government department or State authority is involved
- Conveyancing of State property
- Advising and preparing commercial contracts for Government clients
- Representing the State parties in asylum and refugee law cases
- Acting as an Agent of the Government before the European Court of Justice

The CSSO has 107 solicitors, 28 legal executives and 90 administrative staff, organised into 5 legal divisions (Public Law, Asylum & Legal Services, State Property, Justice & Common Law, Advisory) and an Administration division.

The CSSO Library & Know-How Unit

The CSSO Library & Know-How Unit is part of the Administration division of the Office. Since 1999 the Office has employed professional librarians to manage and develop its legal information services. The Library supports the delivery of high-quality legal services to the CSSO's clients by providing staff with access to the most up-to-date information and knowledge resources. The single most substantial element of the Library's work is the preparation of books of authorities for court; the Library also provides searching and reference services, document supply and current awareness services, and manages a large collection of print and electronic legal information resources.

The Library has two staff: one Librarian and one Library Assistant. Two additional posts of Assistant Librarian and Know-How Officer have not been filled for a number of years, which has necessarily curtailed the Library's know-how activities and limited the development of its information services. In a difficult economic climate the Library must continue to deliver its core services with diminished financial resources, and inevitably choices have had to be made and priorities reconsidered. Recession has not, however, reduced demand for the Library's services, and meeting the information needs of CSSO staff with shrinking resources is the key strategic and operational challenge for the Library's future.

Biography

Jean Cassidy is Librarian at the Chief State Solicitor's Office.