



**PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS
DEPARTMENT**



2027 PROBATE AND OATHS FEES CONSULTATION

icaew.com/regulation

CONTENTS

Summary..... 2

2026 financial performance and activities 3

2027 budget..... 4

2027 budget and proposed fee scales..... 6

Equality, diversity and inclusion 6

How to respond and consultation questions..... 6

Timeline 7

SUMMARY

Recognising inflationary and other pressures on registered firms, we propose a 1% increase to 2027 probate and oaths accreditation fees and a 95% reduction in the levy.

Please review the information below respond to our proposed budget, fee and levy levels for 2027.

This consultation will run for 4 weeks from 13 July to 14 August 2026.

As an approved regulator and licensing authority for probate and oaths services, our activities are guided by and support the Legal Services Board's strategic themes: fairer outcomes, stronger confidence and better services.

Building on the strong results and foundations of our work in previous years, our probate and oaths activities in 2026 have been extensive and focused on the following areas which the fees, including the 2026 increase, have helped facilitate:

- ensuring that the Professional Standards Department is best set up and resourced to deliver legal services regulation;
- ensuring regulated firms deliver a good and fair service;
- investigating complaints;
- maintaining and reviewing firms' transparency on price and service information;
- developing policy including in relation to professional ethics in legal services;
- developing supporting guidance and resources in relation to changes to dealing with first-tier complaints;
- implementing steps to support the reserved legal service of oaths;
- supporting both resource and financial contributions in relation to the Legal Choices website and development of a central register of legal service providers;
- contributing financially to the Legal Ombudsman;
- maintaining the compensation scheme arrangements;
- developing a modernised disciplinary sanctions framework;
- issuing and responding to consultations;
- progressing with the further development of the Legal Services Committee;
- keeping our firms and wider community informed via [Probate News](#), [Regulation and Conduct News](#) and our [dedicated LinkedIn channel](#) which has recently achieved 13,000 followers; and
- supporting the digital exclusion consumer research project.

ICAEW's role as an improvement regulator is to help members and firms maintain high professional standards and hold them to those standards. We act in the public interest to strengthen consumer confidence and trust in ICAEW members and firms by raising standards through a programme of continuous improvement.

Our role as an improvement regulator is to strengthen confidence and trust in those regulated by ICAEW. We do this by enabling, evaluating and enforcing the standards expected by the profession, oversight regulators, government and the public.

> [Learn more about our regulation and conduct role](#)

The new Regulation and Conduct strategy was launched in 2026. The strategy guides our business planning under five pillars:

- **Public interest** - Raising professional standards by continually enhancing the effectiveness of our regulatory and disciplinary frameworks.
- **Improvement regulation** - Using data and intelligence to provide members and firms with help to improve the quality of their work and adherence to standards.

- **Regulating well** - Continuously refining our regulatory and disciplinary approach through internal quality reviews, adoption of best practices and implementing national policy changes.
- **Our people** - Attracting, developing and retaining high-quality people to strengthen our regulatory and disciplinary capabilities.
- **Continuous improvement** - Enhancing efficiency, embracing innovation in our work and proactively identifying improvements in overarching regulatory frameworks.

2026 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND ACTIVITIES

£ excluding comp scheme	2026 Forecast		2026 Budget
Income	667,987		650,690
Regulatory fees	623,987		609,284
Regulatory penalties and ombudsman	44,000		41,406
Expenditure	(654,460)		(637,310)
Staff and overheads	(503,000)	76.9%	(499,834)
Legal Services Committee	(13,000)	2.0%	(10,000)
LSB and Ombudsman	(45,000)	6.9%	(40,000)
Legal Choices c7% share	(21,000)	3.2%	(21,000)
Projects incl consultations and RIS	(56,000)	8.6%	(51,347)
Office	(1,450)	0.2%	(1,500)
Design, web, comms, surveys	(14,000)	2.1%	(12,306)
QAD review travel	(1,010)	0.2%	(1,323)
Breakeven target	13,527		13,380

- Over 90% of expenditure is considered core/business as usual activities.
- We maintain good progress in the registration of firms, records change management and annual return and quality assurance supervision work. This includes applications processed within target time, data collection, compliance assurance and firm visits to target and cycle. The [annual probate and oaths monitoring report](#) and [Regulation and Conduct Annual Report](#) provide more details.
- Extensive consultation and communication continue via the [ICAEW website](#), [Regulation and Conduct News](#), [Probate News](#) and our [Regulation and Conduct LinkedIn](#) site.
- Compliance, compensation scheme and complaint conduct work continues to a high quality.
- Compliance includes strong financial management, change applications to the LSB and meeting compensation scheme cash reserve target.
- Education and communication activity is progressing well against targets. Communications have been extensive, and we consult widely on educational topics while probate and oaths promotion and guidance continue to achieve strong engagement. Followers of the Regulation and Conduct LinkedIn channel also continue to grow and have now exceeded 13,000.
- Good progress continues with regulatory policy development and stakeholder engagement.
- We work with consumer groups and with our fellow regulators on research and continue our support of the Legal Choices website, Regulatory Information Service (RIS) and of the Legal Ombudsman.

Projects

- ICAEW has contributed to the Regulatory Information Service central register project and participated in research with some of the other legal service regulators.
- Consumers can provide feedback to us directly using functionality on our website.
- ICAEW continues to develop and update its core systems including the Annual Return and VisualFiles application and case management system.

Financial variances 2026 forecast to 2026 budget

A busy projects year again including as related to oaths administration, policy development, central registers, core systems and development of supporting guidance and resources.

- Project costs reflect a higher level of interaction with the LSB than estimated.
- Communication costs slightly higher due to paid promotional activity, as related to the annual reports and preparation for the diversity survey in 2027 (new supplier arrangements).
- The wider remit for Legal Services Committee and responsibilities transferred from the ICAEW Regulatory Board.
- Ombudsman complaint costs passed on to ICAEW and corresponding income as charged on to firms.

2027 BUDGET

The budget is targeted to break even (self-finance).

Costs have increased largely due to inflation and salary increases, plus costs in relation to policy and governance have increased due to Legal Services Board requests.

£ including comp scheme	2027 budget	
Income	668,770	
Regulatory fees (+1%)	630,744	94.3%
Comp scheme levy (-95%)	8,026	1.2%
Regulatory penalties and ombudsman	30,000	4.5%
Expenditure	(668,770)	
Staff and overheads	(517,744)	77.4%
Legal Services Committee	(12,000)	1.8%
LSB and Ombudsman	(26,000)	3.9%
Comp scheme levy transfer	(8,026)	1.2%
Legal Choices c7% share	(22,000)	3.3%
Projects incl consultations, RIS, diversity	(67,500)	10.1%
Office	(1,500)	0.2%
Design, web, comms, surveys	(12,500)	1.9%
QAD review travel	(1,500)	0.2%
Breakeven target	(0)	

£ excluding comp scheme 2027 budget

Staff and overheads	(517,744)	78.4%
Legal Services Committee	(12,000)	1.8%
LSB and Ombudsman	(26,000)	3.9%
Legal Choices c7% share	(22,000)	3.3%
Projects incl consultations, RIS, diversity	(67,500)	10.2%
Office	(1,500)	0.2%
Design, web, comms, surveys	(12,500)	1.9%
QAD review travel	(1,500)	0.2%
	<u>(660,744)</u>	

Regulatory, policy and engagement	(224,653)	34%
Registration and supervision	(185,008)	28%
Discipline and conduct	(19,822)	3%
Governance	(105,719)	16%
Education, research and projects	(125,541)	19%
	<u>(660,744)</u>	

Proposed fee scale 2027 (increased by 1% compared to 2026)

AUTHORISED FIRM

Principals	Offices			
	1	2-10	11+	
Sole	439	779	1,366	+1%
2 - 5	779	1,366	2,400	+1%
6 - 9	1,407	2,472	4,336	+1%
10 - 50	2,472	4,336	7,610	+1%
51+	4,944	8,676	15,223	+1%

LICENSED FIRM

Principals	Offices			
	1	2-10	11+	
Sole	439	779	1,366	+1%
2 - 5	1,555	4,097	9,598	+1%
6 - 9	2,813	7,414	17,351	+1%
10 - 50	4,944	13,013	30,442	+1%
51+	9,886	26,028	60,887	+1%

Operating cost increases are offset by a reduction in the budget related to insurance.

Proposed levy scale 2027 (reduced by 95% compared to 2026)

AUTHORISED FIRM

Principals	Offices			
	1	2-10	10+	
Sole	5	7	10	-95%
2 - 5	7	10	13	-95%
6 - 9	10	13	18	-95%
10 - 50	13	18	25	-95%
50+	27	36	49	-95%

LICENSED FIRM

Principals	Offices			
	1	2-10	10+	
Sole	5	7	10	-95%
2 - 5	14	29	53	-95%
6 - 9	19	40	72	-95%
10 - 50	27	54	98	-95%
50+	53	108	196	-95%

A large portion of the levy relates to building a cash fund for the compensation scheme. The cash fund target is now met so the levy can materially fall. Financial interest returns from the RLS scheme cash balance will be used to fund the basic operation of the scheme and inflation-proof the cash total.

2027 BUDGET AND PROPOSED FEE SCALES

The budget is targeted to self-finance. Anticipated costs increase largely due to wage and general inflation and establishing the Legal Services Committee. Costs decrease as there is no need to budget for compensation scheme insurance.

The compensation scheme cash balance is now in place as targeted, there is no pipeline of claims and there have not been any successful claims.

- View the 2027 budget on page 4
- View the proposed 2027 fee scales on page 5

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We do not believe the proposed changes will result in a worse outcome or quality of service for anyone due to their background or life circumstances. Please tell us if you think your firm or any of your clients will be adversely impacted by the proposals due to a protected characteristic (such as age, disability or race).

HOW TO RESPOND AND CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

- > [Respond to the consultation online](#)

If you are unable to access the online survey form, please post your response to the consultation questions listed below by writing to us with your responses at:

Director Finance, Operations and Projects
ICAEW Professional Standards Department
Metropolitan House
321 Avebury Boulevard
Milton Keynes MK9 3FZ

Please [contact us](#) if you need anything further (for example for accessibility reasons) to enable you to submit your response.

Consultation questions

1. Do you agree that ICAEW's 2027 probate and oaths fee scales are reasonable and appropriate?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please add your comments to support your response.

2. Do you agree with the 2027 legal services compensation scheme levy?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please add your comments to support your response.

3. Do you agree with ICAEW's proposed budget for 2027?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please provide any further comments that support your response.

4. Are there further activities that you would like to see included in future business planning and budgets?

Please add your contact details if you would be willing to discuss your responses further.

Name:

Firm Name:

Email:

Where questions have been asked and contact details have been provided, management will reply directly to the respondent.

Data protection information

The protection of personal privacy is an important concern to ICAEW. Any personal data collected will be treated in accordance with current data protection legislation. For more information about our data protection policy please go to [ICAEW privacy notices](#)

TIMELINE

The consultation deadline is **Friday 14 August 2026**.

Your feedback will then be reviewed and incorporated into our final fee application to the Legal Services Board. The final 2027 fee scales will be published in November.