

The Taxation Disciplinary Board Limited Chair's Report for the year ending 31st December 2024

I took over from Susan Humble as Chair on 1st February 2024. Jane Brothwood joined the board as lay director shortly thereafter. The Articles of Association were amended at the 2024 AGM to allow for the appointment of either one or two lay directors. We continue to consider whether the board should have a second lay director, noting that this is the model followed throughout the professional regulatory sector.

The board is grateful to Sarah Gardiner for her service as Executive and Strategy Officer. She has made a huge contribution, in particular overhauling and documenting our internal processes, bringing all our policies up to date, supporting the outsourced front-line complaints handling and case management embedded in our sponsors' Professional Standards department, and bringing on board Ellie Hudson-Rawlings as administrative assistant. We will be sorry to see Sarah leave next month and wish her the very best for the future.

For a significant part of the year there were vacancies within case management resulting in delays in the processing of cases, which was reflected in operational performance. The team is now up to full strength and is reported to have capacity to both handle the flow of incoming cases and to reduce the backlog of cases to meet the target the company has set itself for no case over which we have control (ie we are not awaiting the outcome of third party proceedings) taking more than 12 months from the complaint being received to the completion of the Disciplinary Tribunal's proceedings, and the median time from complaint to completion being no more than 6 months. To support the flow of cases moving through to completion, a programme of recruitment for legally qualified chairs and panel members for the Disciplinary Tribunal was undertaken. In addition, the Regulations were amended to allow for uncontested cases to be resolved through the introduction of Consent Orders (following example of most other professional regulators), which means that some cases can be closed at the Investigation Committee stage, sparing the members involved both the cost and personal stress of a full Disciplinary Tribunal hearing.

During 2024, TDB received 70 complaints about members of the sponsor organisations. Complaints include AML related matters, poor tax planning, Incorrect or poor advice and service, conduct including gross misconduct and criminal convictions and fraud and disciplinary findings made by another professional body.

Of the 2024 complaints, 17 were against ATT members, 42 against CIOT members, and 11 concerned joint members. 35 came from members of the public, 8 were notified by another professional body, 8 came from HMRC, 18 were referred by either ATT or CIOT, and 1 came from TDB.

10 of the cases referred to TDB in 2024 were closed with no further action, 2 cases concluded at the Investigation Committee stage, 4 cases were resolved by Consent Order which meant that the costs and delay involved in a full Disciplinary Hearing were avoided and 1 case was concluded following a Disciplinary Hearing. 53 cases remained open at the year-end, of which 47 were still at the review stage (at least partially reflecting the delays arising from staff shortages during the year) with the remaining 6 cases being at some point in the process between readiness to proceed to the Investigation Committee through to settlement of a cost order following a finding by the Disciplinary Committee. In addition to the complaints from 2024 remaining open at the end of December 2024, a further 40 cases remained open relating to complaints brought in previous years, of which 6 were delayed by third party proceedings.