



LAW SOCIETY
OF IRELAND

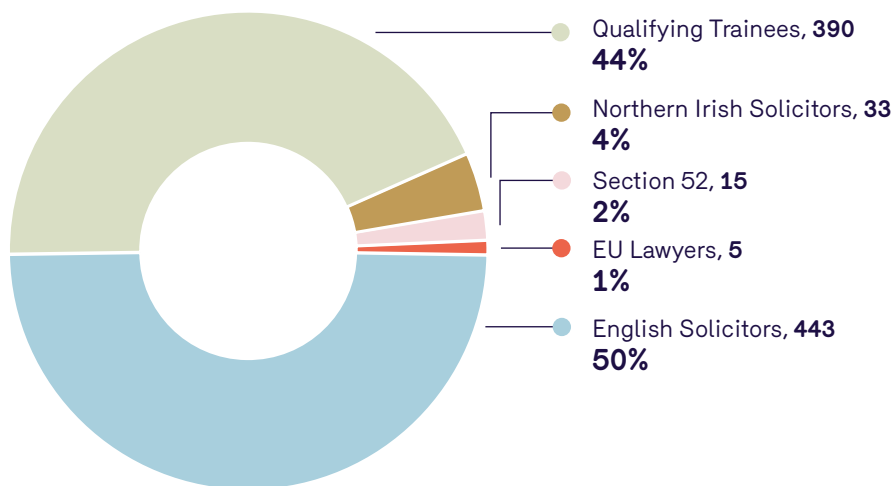
ANNUAL REPORT

ON ADMISSION POLICIES
OF LEGAL PROFESSIONS

ADMISSIONS TO THE ROLL OF SOLICITORS

- The number of solicitors who: (i) were admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in 2020, with a breakdown by category of applicant admitted.

906 SOLICITORS WERE ADMITTED TO THE ROLL OF SOLICITORS IN 2020. See breakdown below.



ROLL OF SOLICITORS FROM 2015 - 2020						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Qualifying Trainees	233	525	423	443	419	390
English Solicitors	70	806	547	690	1,836	443
Northern Irish Solicitors	30	27	29	43	61	33
Section 52 (California, New York, Pennsylvania, New South Wales & New Zealand)	7	13	12	16	18	15
Barristers	15	34	34	30	28	20
EU Lawyers	4	1	5	4	7	5
Total	359	1,406	1,050	1,229	2,381	906

- applied to be removed from the Roll in 2020 and the reasons for this;

05 solicitors were voluntarily removed from the Roll.

- who were struck off the Roll in 2020 and the reasons for this;

01 solicitor, who admitted allegations of professional misconduct, including allowing a deficit of €213,309 in client funds, has been struck off the Roll.

PRACTISING CERTIFICATES

- The number of practising certificates issued by the Law Society in 2020 (and the number of practising certificates held as at 31 December 2020 if that figure is different).

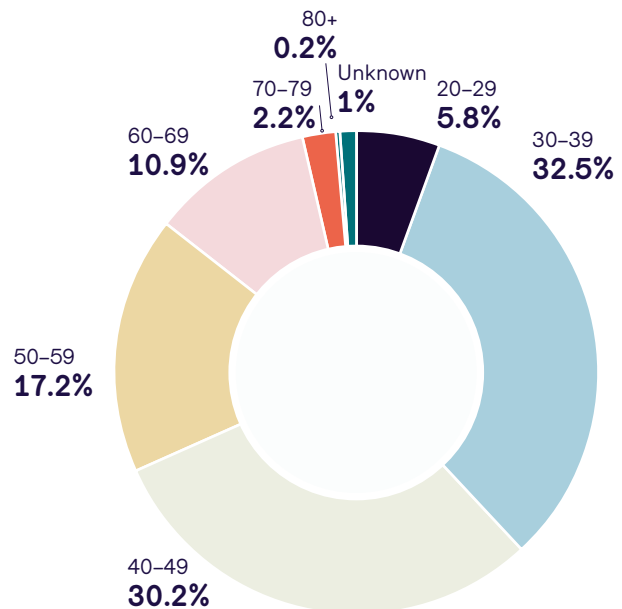
11,941 ISSUED, 87 SURRENDERED WITH **11,854** ACTIVE PCS AS OF 31 DECEMBER.

- A breakdown of 2020 practising certificate holders based on all demographic and diversity data collected and held by the Law Society (e.g. PC holder firm size and location, gender, age).

Data correct as of October 2020.

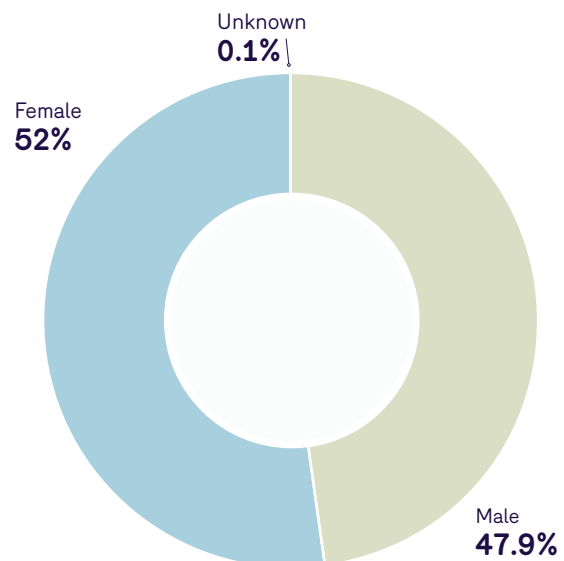
AGE PROFILE | MEMBERS

Age	Amount	%
20-29	689	5.8%
30-39	3,894	32.5%
40-49	3,618	30.2%
50-59	2,063	17.2%
60-69	1,301	10.9%
70-79	267	2.2%
80+	30	0.2%
Unknown	116	1.0%
Total	11,978	100%



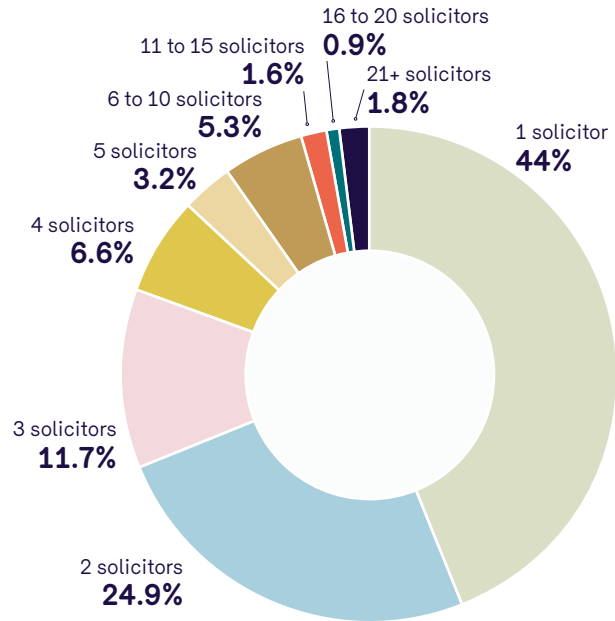
GENDER BALANCE | MEMBERS

Female	6,232	52.0%
Male	5,730	47.9%
Unknown	16	0.1%
Total	11,978	100.0%

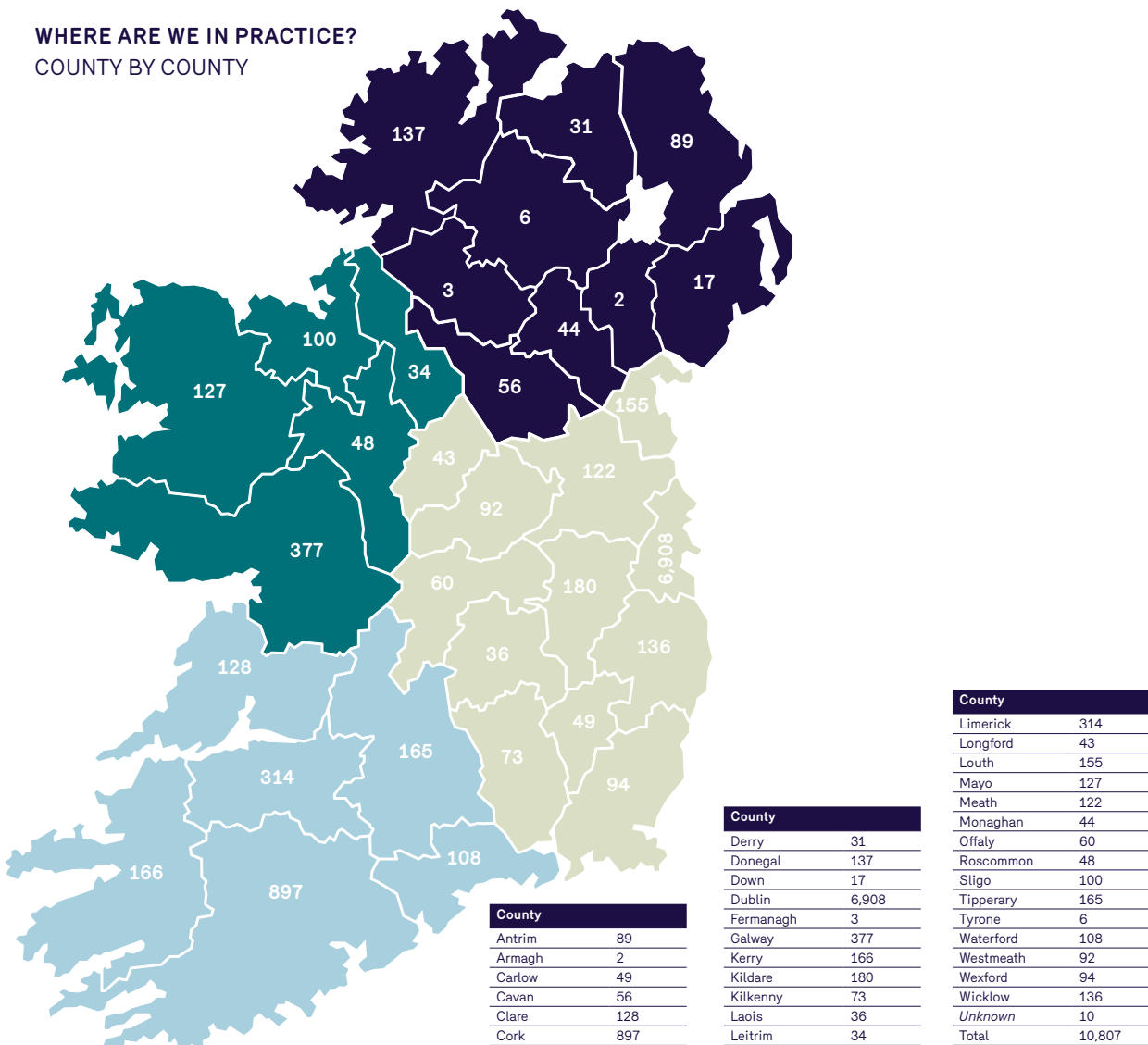


FIRMS BY NUMBER OF SOLICITORS

Solicitors	Firms	%
1 solicitor	877	44.0%
2 solicitors	495	24.9%
3 solicitors	233	11.7%
4 solicitors	131	6.6%
5 solicitors	65	3.2%
6 to 10 solicitors	105	5.3%
11 to 15 solicitors	32	1.6%
16 to 20 solicitors	18	0.9%
21+ solicitors	35	1.8%
Total	1,991	100%



WHERE ARE WE IN PRACTICE? COUNTY BY COUNTY



4. The number of practising certificates surrendered and cancelled in 2020; the reasons for this; a breakdown of these figures by demographic and diversity data of PC holders; and whether the Law Society refunded the PC fees in part or total.

87 PC APPLICATIONS WERE SURRENDERED.
See details below.

Surrender Reason	Refund Amount €	Amount Received €
Career Break	1,613.33	2,505
Redundancy	1,815	2,650
Death	1,815	2,505
Termination of Contract	1,008.33	2,505
Termination of Contract	1,210	2,505
Career Break	1,008.333	2,650
Career Break	2,016.67	2,505
2 x Termination of Contract	2,016.67	2,650
Resigned	1,613.33	2,650
6 x Maternity Leave	1,411.667	2,650
Maternity Leave	1,815	2,505
Maternity leave	1,008.33	2,505
Termination of Contract	1,411.667	2,505
Maternity Leave	1,210	2,650
Maternity Leave	806.67	2,505
Career Break	403.33	2,505
Change of career	1,613.33	2,650
Maternity Leave	806.67	2,650
Change of Career	1,815	2,650
Maternity Leave	2,218.33	2,505
Maternity Leave	2,016.67	2,650
Maternity Leave	201.67	2,505
Maternity Leave	1,815	2,420
Termination of Contract	2,218.33	2,505
Maternity Leave	1,613.33	2,650
Maternity Leave	1,008.333	2,420
Brexit	806.67	2,448.30
Maternity leave	1,008.33	2,650
Maternity Leave	403.33	2,650
Maternity Leave	1,815	2,605
Termination of Contract	1,613.33	2,605
Maternity leave	806.67	2,650
Maternity Leave	2,016.67	2,650
Maternity leave	1,008.33	2,650

Surrender Reason	Refund Amount €	Amount Received €
Maternity leave	403.33	2,650
Brexit	1,411.67	2,420
Brexit	1,210	2,420
Maternity Leave and cessation of practice	201.67	2,505
2 x Brexit	1,236.67	2,120
Maternity leave	1,236.67	2,175
Maternity Leave	1,943.33	2,175
Maternity leave	1,590	2,280
Maternity Leave	530	2,175
Career Break	176.67	2,235
Maternity Leave	1,413.33	2,175
2 x Termination of Contract	1,766.67	2,120
2 x Brexit	1,060	2,120
Brexit	1,236.67	2,175
Termination of Contract	883.33	2,280
Termination of Contract	1413.33	2280
Brexit	1,060	2,120
Firm would not cover costs of PC 2020	1,766.66	1,943.3
Change of Employer	1,413.33	2,280
2 x Brexit	1,236.67	2,280
2 x Brexit	1,060	2,120
Termination of Contract	883.33	2,175
Career Break	530	2,280
Career Break	1,590	1,943.3
Solicitor never took up position	Full	1,815
Retirement	1,210	2,505
Retirement	1,815	2,505
Retirement	605	2,650
Retirement	1,815	2,650
Termination of partnership	2,218.33	2,650
Resignation	1,411.67	2,650
Retirement	1,815	2,505
Career Break	605	2,535
Judicial Appointment	2,218.33	2,505
Redundancy	1,236.67	2,175
Relocation	1,943.33	2,120
Termination of Contract	1,210	2,505
Retirement	1,210	2,650
Cessation of Practice	1,815	2,505
Termination of Contract	1,815	2,505
Termination of Contract	403.33	2,505
Career Break	1,210	2,650

5. The number of practising certificates suspended in 2020 and the reasons for this action.

02 SOLICITORS WERE SUSPENDED FROM PRACTICE IN 2020 FOR MATTERS RELATING TO DISHONESTY.

6. Statistics on the top twenty large law firms with the highest numbers of solicitors with practising certificates in 2020 and the difference over the same figures for 2019.

Law Firm Practising Solicitor Numbers as of 31/12/2019

2019 Ranking	2018 Ranking	Firm Code	Firm Name	31/12/20	Diff +/- over 2019	31/12/19	Diff +/- over 2018	31/12/18
3	3	F114	MATHESON	327	42	285	0	285
1	2	F40	A&L GOODBODY	320	7	313	21	292
2	1	F62	ARTHUR COX LLP	312	13	299	5	294
4	4	F17	MCCANN FITZGERALD	284	18	266	-12	278
5	5	F79	MASON HAYES & CURRAN LLP	259	20	239	12	227
6	6	F14	WILLIAM FRY	207	0	207	-4	211
8	7	F4382	BYRNE WALLACE	137	5	132	-4	136
9	9	F655	EVER SHEDS SUTHERLAND	112	4	108	4	104
11	8	F568	MAPLES AND CALDER (IRELAND) LLP	108	3	105	-8	113
10	10	F402	RONAN DALY JERMYN	106	-1	107	6	101
13	11	F45	BEAUCHAMPS	95	3	92	7	85
12	13	F2667	FRESHFIELDS BRUCKHAUS DERINGER LLP	88	-13	101	23	78
14	12	F3529	DILLON EUSTACE	86	-2	88	5	83
20	16	F98	HAYES SOLICITORS	64	3	61	6	55
16	14	F32	EUGENE F. COLLINS	63	-1	64	3	61
-	18	F4590	PHILIP LEE	63	-	-	-	49
16	-	F7912	PINSENT MASON LLP	63	-1	64	32	32
18	14	F2393	LK SHIELDS SOLICITORS LLP	63	1	62	1	61
15	17	F7028	WALKERS	63	-2	65	12	53
-	-	F6747	DAC BEACHCROFT DUBLIN	53	-	-	-	-
				2873	-	2658	-	2598

These figures represent the total number of solicitors with a practising certificate, advised to the Law Society, on 31/12/20. The total firm figure represent a firm's primary and sub offices on the Law Society Database.

INSURANCE AND IN-HOUSE

7. The number of solicitors holding valid professional indemnity insurance in 2020.

2,211 FIRMS HAD PII
ACTIVE DURING 2020
AT ANY POINT.

8. The number of solicitors working “in-house” as at 31 December 2020, details of the categories of employer that “in-house” includes and the number of those working in-house holding practising certificates in 2020.

3,224 TOTAL **2,272** CURRENT PC **402** STATE PC

2,736 INDUSTRY FIRM **2,258** CURRENT PC

488 STATE BODY **14** CURRENT PC **402** STATE PC

9. The number of solicitors classified as being in the full time service of the state as at 31 December 2020.

395

IMPACT OF BREXIT ON ROLL AND PCS

10. The number of admissions to the Roll in 2020 by EU qualified solicitors under the European Union (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2017 (S.I. No. 8 of 2017) (“the Professional Qualifications Regulations”) with a breakdown by nationality, and the Law Society’s analysis of recent statistical trends in this area.

480

LAWYERS WERE ADMITTED ON FOOT OF THESE REGULATIONS. THIS CONSISTS OF 442 ENGLISH SOLICITORS, 33 SOLICITORS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND AND FIVE LAWYERS FROM OTHER EU JURISDICTIONS.

11. The number of admissions to the Roll from solicitors based outside Ireland in 2020 under the European Communities (Lawyers’ Establishment) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 732 of 2003) (“the Establishment Regulations”).

02

SOLICITORS WERE ADMITTED ON FOOT OF THE 2003 REGULATIONS – ONE FROM FRANCE AND ONE FURTHER ENGLISH & WELSH SOLICITOR WAS ADMITTED THROUGH THESE REGULATIONS.

12. The number of solicitors admitted to the Roll under the 2017 Regulations who took out practising certificates in 2020.

773

SOLICITORS ADMITTED UNDER THE 2017 REGULATIONS TOOK OUT PCS IN 2020.



13. The number of solicitors on the Roll in 2020 who were employed by what the Law Society has termed the “Top 20 Brexit Transfer firms” including a breakdown by firm name, as produced by the Law Society in tabular format for 2019 and 2018. The number of practising certificate holders in 2020 who worked for these UK firms, including a breakdown by firm name. The number and names of those Top 20 firms with offices in this jurisdiction.

UK Admissions since 1 January 2016 (as of 31 December 2020)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total	2021 Applications being processed
English & Welsh solicitors	806	547	690	1,836	443	4,322	155
Northern Irish solicitors	27	29	43	61	33	193	0
Scots solicitors	0	0	4	4	1	9	0
Total	833	576	737	1,901	477	4,524	4,678

Top 20 Brexit Transfer firms

1.	Linklaters LLP	373
2.	Allen & Overy LLP	299
3.	Eversheds Sutherland LLP (Firm in Ireland)	167
3.	Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP	167
5.	Latham & Watkins LLP	164
6.	Slaughter & May	154
7.	DLA Piper LLP (Firm opened in Ireland September 2018)	95
8.	White & Case LLP	88
9.	Dentons LLP (Firm opened in Ireland July 2020)	82
10.	Herbert Smith Freehills LLP	64
11.	Hogan Lovells LLP (Firm opened in Ireland January 2021)	58
12.	Clifford Chance LLP	57
13.	Pinsent Mason LLP (Firm opened in Ireland September 2018)	47
14.	Baker MacKenzie LLP	46
14.	Norton Rose Fulbright LLP	45
16.	Google UK Ltd	40
17.	Bird & Bird LLP	40
18.	Bristows LLP	38
19.	Skadden Arps Meagher & Flom LLP	34
19.	BNP Paribas	34

TRAINEE SOLICITORS

14. The number of candidates who sat FE-1s in 2020, 2019 and 2018 and the FE-1 pass rate during these years.

MARCH 2018									
No. of Exams Attempted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
No. of Candidates	133	158	278	390	81	7	1	8	1,056
% Pass	13%	15%	26%	37%	8%	1%	0%	1%	100%

Examination	Company	Constitutional	Contract	Criminal	Equity	EU	Property	Tort	Total
No. to Sit	363	393	482	518	456	351	398	391	3,352
No. to Pass	265	319	269	391	228	279	345	276	2,372
% Pass	73%	81%	56%	75%	50%	79%	87%	71%	71%

OCTOBER 2018									
No. of Exams Attempted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
No. of Candidates	131	192	266	447	64	2	2	4	1,108
%	12%	17%	24%	40%	6%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Examination	Company	Constitutional	Contract	Criminal	Equity	EU	Property	Tort	Total
No. to Sit	380	356	563	452	521	329	434	428	3,463
No. to Pass	275	247	313	328	247	273	307	328	2,318
% Pass	72%	69%	56%	73%	47%	83%	71%	77%	67%

MARCH 2019									
No. of Exams Attempted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
No. of Candidates	166	166	302	467	59	4	2	9	1,175
%	14%	14%	26%	40%	5%	0%	0%	1%	100%

Examination	Company	Constitutional	Contract	Criminal	Equity	EU	Property	Tort	Total
No. to Sit	388	380	507	499	556	380	493	458	3,661
No. to Pass	228	290	328	366	339	324	369	339	2,583
% Pass	59%	76%	65%	73%	61%	85%	75%	74%	71%

OCTOBER 2019									
No. of Exams Attempted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
No. of Candidates	148	194	270	566	58	3	0	5	1,244
%	12%	16%	22%	45%	5%	0.2%	0%	0.4%	100%

Examination	Company	Constitutional	Contract	Criminal	Equity	EU	Property	Tort	Total
No. to Sit	468	407	543	533	519	406	584	491	3,951
No. to Pass	349	303	305	383	308	302	402	372	2,724
% Pass	75%	74%	56%	72%	59%	74%	69%	76%	69%

MARCH 2020*								
No. of Exams Attempted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
No. of Candidates	277	380	399	197	16	2	2	1,273
%	22%	30%	31%	15%	1%	0%	0%	100%

*7 of 8 examinations were held. The final examination (Tort) was cancelled due to public health crisis. Candidates sitting the penultimate subject (EU Law) were offered the option of sitting the examination or transferring to the August sitting.

Examination	Company	Constitutional	Contract	Criminal	Equity	EU	Property	Total
No. to Sit	416	430	499	519	482	292	482	3,120
No. to Pass	314	283	280	373	233	260	436	2,179
% Pass	75%	66%	56%	72%	48%	89%	90%	70%

AUGUST 2020			
No. of Exams Attempted	1	2	Total
No. of Candidates	567	354	921
%	62%	38%	100%

Examination	EU	Tort	Total
No. to Sit	494	779	1,273
No. to Pass	404	616	1,020
% Pass	82%	79%	80%

NOVEMBER 2020*									
No. of Exams Attempted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
No. of Candidates	286	506	381	308	22	4	1	1	1,509
%	19%	34%	25%	20%	1.46%	0.27%	0.07%	0.07%	100%

* Recheck results will issue in February.

Exam	Company	Constitutional	Contract	Criminal	Equity	EU	Property	Tort	Total
No. to Sit	451	348	617	503	660	306	553	384	3,822
No. to Pass	277	227	411	361	419	245	381	315	2,636
% Pass	61%	65%	67%	72%	63%	80%	69%	82%	69%

The March 2020 sitting of the FE-1 was scheduled to take place between 5 and 16 March, with EU Law taking place on Friday 13 March and Law of Torts on Monday 16 March. On the morning of Thursday 12 March 2020, the Government issued advice that indoor mass gatherings of more than 100 should be cancelled. The Society contacted all candidates sitting the final two FE-1 examinations (EU Law and the Law of Torts) within two hours of the announcement and offered them the option of withdrawing from their examinations and obtaining a full refund. Candidates were also advised that an additional sitting of the examinations in European Union Law and the Law of Torts would be held as soon as the current health crisis permitted.

Having considered the public health advice available at the time and the Government's roadmap for reopening society and business, the Society decided that the earliest possible dates on which an additional sitting of the FE-1 Law of Torts and EU Law papers could be held was 11 and 13 August 2020.

RISK ASSESSMENT

In planning for the August 2020 sitting of the FE1, specialist health and safety consultants to undertake a risk assessment and the Society liaised with the HSE and HSA. We worked closely with the various exam venues (22 exam venues across Dublin and Cork) to implement the expert recommendations and the sittings fully complied with public health rules and guidelines.

As well as requiring each candidate to fill out a

detailed questionnaire regarding exposure to Covid-19 and risk, some of the key safeguards that the Society put in place included: Two-metre spacing between desks; A maximum of 50 people in each examination hall, per Government guidelines for indoor gatherings at the time. Each hall had a designated, trained Covid Compliance Officer present; All candidates and invigilators were required to wear face masks; Systems were put in place to prevent congregating before and after exams; Appropriate cleaning measures were developed and implemented for each venue.

We also provided a separate venue for high-risk candidates and candidates with disabilities.

LEVEL 3 LIVING WITH COVID PLAN

The Society was confident that the above arrangements would allow us to hold the usual October 2020 sitting of the FE-1. Following the Government's decision of 19 September 2020 to move Dublin to Level 3 of its *Living with Covid Plan*, the Society postponed the FE-1 to 3 to 16 November and we immediately secured a number of examination venues in Limerick, Galway, Tralee, Sligo and Kilkenny in addition to our usual multiple venues in Dublin and Cork. It was hoped that by avoiding all candidates having to travel to Dublin and Cork it would be possible to hold the examinations safely in November. As a result of the Government decision of 5 October holding physical examinations in November was not then possible. On 6 October we communicated with all FE-1 students and established a dedicated helpline for all FE-1 candidates:

Since March 2020 we have been working to provide an online examination solution that is fair to all candidates and preserves the integrity of the examination but there have been a number of issues we have had to address.

THE CHALLENGE IN HOLDING THE FE-1 ONLINE

Online examinations on the scale of the FE-1 (with 2,000 candidates) present serious difficulties for some candidates. Candidates from socio-economically deprived backgrounds without access to adequate broadband, laptops or a suitable venue in which to sit an examination are at a considerable disadvantage. Candidates living in rural areas without reliable broadband are also disadvantaged. Many candidates are anxious about sitting an examination in a different format and are concerned that they will be disadvantaged if they have poor typing skills or find IT intimidating.

The challenge in holding the FE-1 online was complicated by the fact that it is a closed book examination which is designed to test academic knowledge. This knowledge is not examined again during the professional training courses. It is therefore of paramount importance that all solicitors qualifying have a minimum level of knowledge in the areas of law examined by the FE-1. This is vital to ensure that the public approaching a solicitor for advice can be confident that each solicitor qualifying has a minimum core knowledge in the examinations comprising the FE-1.

Despite the challenges to candidates presented by online examinations, when the Government moved the country to Level 3 and then Level 5 in October 2020, we had no alternative but to proceed with an online examination in order to allow candidates to progress with their training. We engaged intensively with several international providers (Pearson Vue, Cirrus, Proctor U) following the announcement by the Government on 5 October. Our aim was to preserve the original amended dates announced of 3 to 13 November. We also consulted a number of professional bodies (Kings Inns, Royal College of Physicians and the Institute of Chartered Accountants) about their experience of online exams.

Detailed due diligence followed. This involved contacting customer references and intensive discussions with a large South

African provider that had used the Better Examinations system we had selected and ranked it first place out of 21 applicants in its tendering process. Having considered the options available, it was decided to proceed with the Better Examinations option.

DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

We immediately undertook a detailed Data Protection Impact Assessment with the assistance of Mazars. Several protocols were developed along with guidance notes to enable the examination to proceed online between 3 and 13 November. Three mock examinations were provided to students. Moreover, we provided a number of smaller mock exams for candidates who could not attend the three main sessions. A helpline staffed by four members of staff was available from 8.15am to 5pm on each day of the mock examinations and on each examination day. All candidates who didn't participate in the mock examinations were contacted by email and/or telephone to offer any help that might be needed to log on to Better Examinations.

The Society convened a meeting of the FE-1 Board of Examiners (which includes leading academics in the eight subject areas) and outlined the proposals for the online FE-1 Examination, including the safeguards we had built into the system. There was unequivocal support for the proposal. The FE-1 Examinations commenced on 3 November and concluded on 13 November. 1,509 candidates sat the November examination and 3,830 examinations were attempted.

The FE-1 examinations normally occur in early March. That said, we understand and are very sympathetic to the difficulties many candidates are experiencing while adapting to the very challenging circumstances caused by the pandemic. We received representations from a number of candidates that a longer period of preparation would assist with the challenges caused by the pandemic. Having taken the concerns expressed by candidates into consideration, we issued a notice on Friday 15 January 2021 stating that the next sitting of the FE-1 would be held online in late March. Students also received an email with this information. We have sought at all stages to keep students updated on developments by email and through postings on our website.

15. The number of undergraduate students who sat FE-1 examinations in 2020 under the “accelerated access” scheme introduced in 2020, the number of exams undertaken per student and a statistical breakdown of the universities and programmes of examinees.

The below table lists the legal undergraduate students who have sat various papers in the FE-1 in 2020. A further 20 undergraduate students from a range of non-legal courses also sat the examination in 2020. We have not tracked the number of papers taken by these students.

INSTITUTE	COURSE	CANDIDATES
DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL	LLB	1
DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY	BCL	15
DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY	BA (Law & Economics)	3
DUBLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	BSC	1
DUBLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	LLB	2
GRIFFITH COLLEGE DUBLIN	LLB	2
INST OF TECH, BLANCHARDSTOWN	LLB	1
INSTITUTE OF TECH, CARLOW	LLB	4
LETTERKENNY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	LLB	2
LIMERICK INSTITUTE OF TECH.	BBS (Law & Taxation)	1
MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY	LLB	20
MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY	BCL	14
MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY	BBL	1
MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY	BA (Law)	3
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND	BA	1
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND	LLB	2
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND GALWAY	BCorpLaw	3
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND GALWAY	BCL	14
NIOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY	LLB	1
QUEENS UNIVERSITY BELFAST	LLB	1
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN	LLB	14
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK	BCL	21
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN	BCL	36
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN	BBLS	38
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK	BA (Law & Economics)	2
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK	LLB	20
WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	LLB	2
WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	BA (LEG & BUS)	2

16. The number of new trainees who commenced the Professional Practice Courses in 2020, with a breakdown in terms of all demographic and diversity data held by the Law Society on the trainees (e.g. gender, age, location, academic background etc), with separate stats for the full-time and hybrid PPC courses.

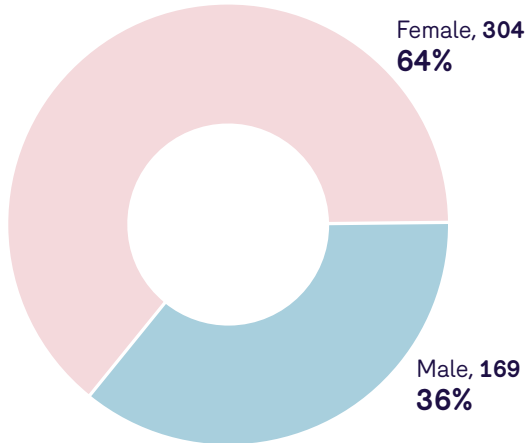
Admissions to PPC I from 2016 to 2020

PPC I Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Trainees	403	412	448	455	473

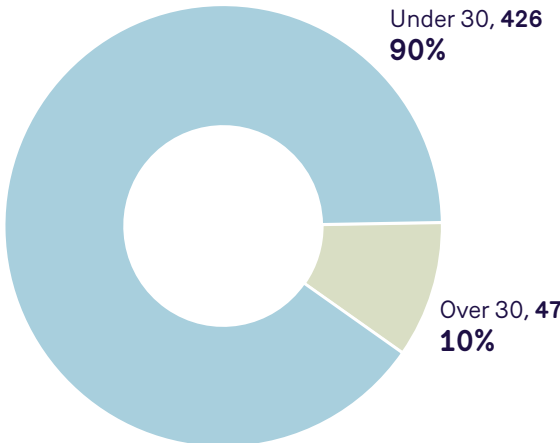
There are currently 473 trainees attending the two 2020 Professional Practice Courses I.

TOTAL DEMOGRAPHIC PPC I 2020									
Male	Female	Under 30	Over 30	Law degree	Other degree	No degree	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Total
169	304	426	47	385	79	8	218	255	473

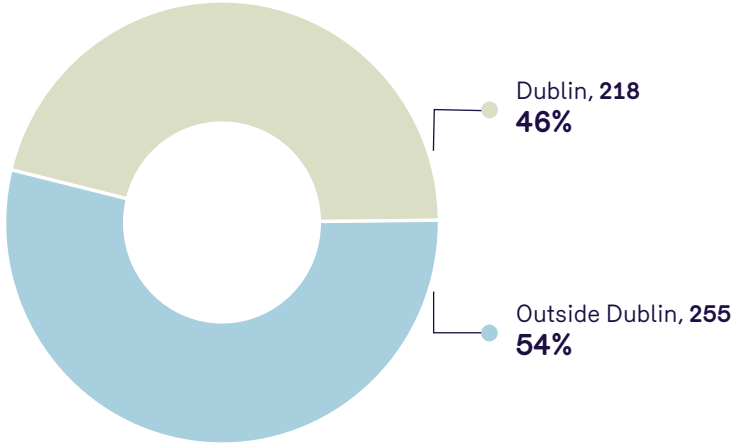
APPLICANTS PPC 2020



AGE PROFILE PPC TRAINEES



HOME LOCATIONS PPC TRAINEES

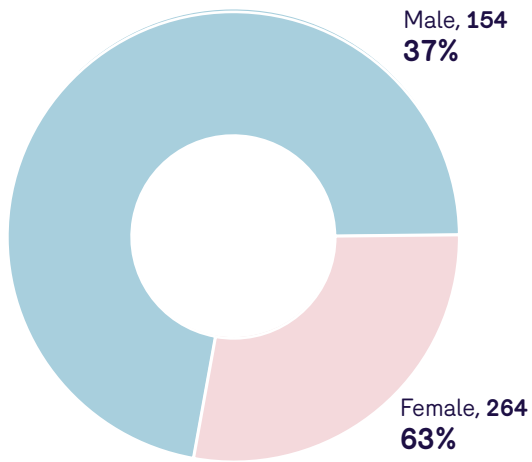


SEPTEMBER 2020 PPC

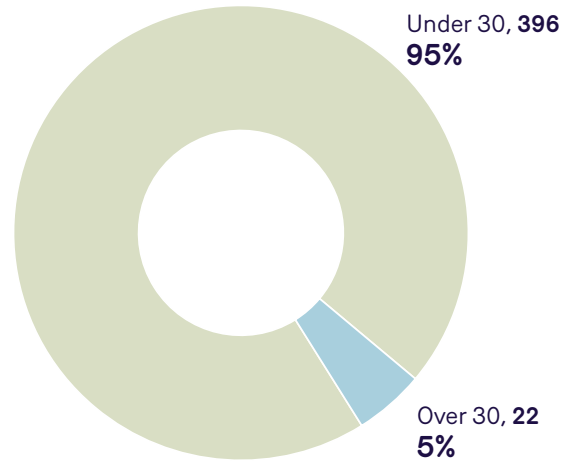
There are currently 418 trainees attending the full-time 2020 PPC I which commenced on 8 September 2020. 63% of the trainees are female: 5% are above the age of thirty.

BREAKDOWN DEMOGRAPHIC PPC I FULL-TIME 2020									
Male	Female	Under 30	Over 30	Law degree	Other degree	No degree	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Total
154	264	396	22	346	67	5	200	218	418

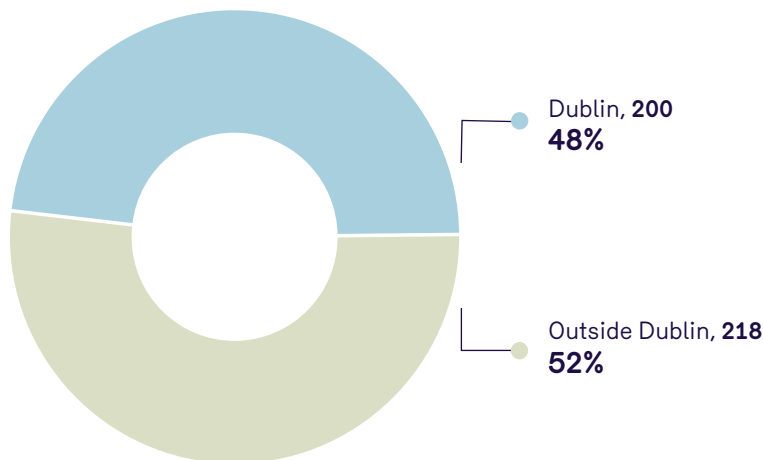
APPLICANTS PPC I FULL-TIME 2020



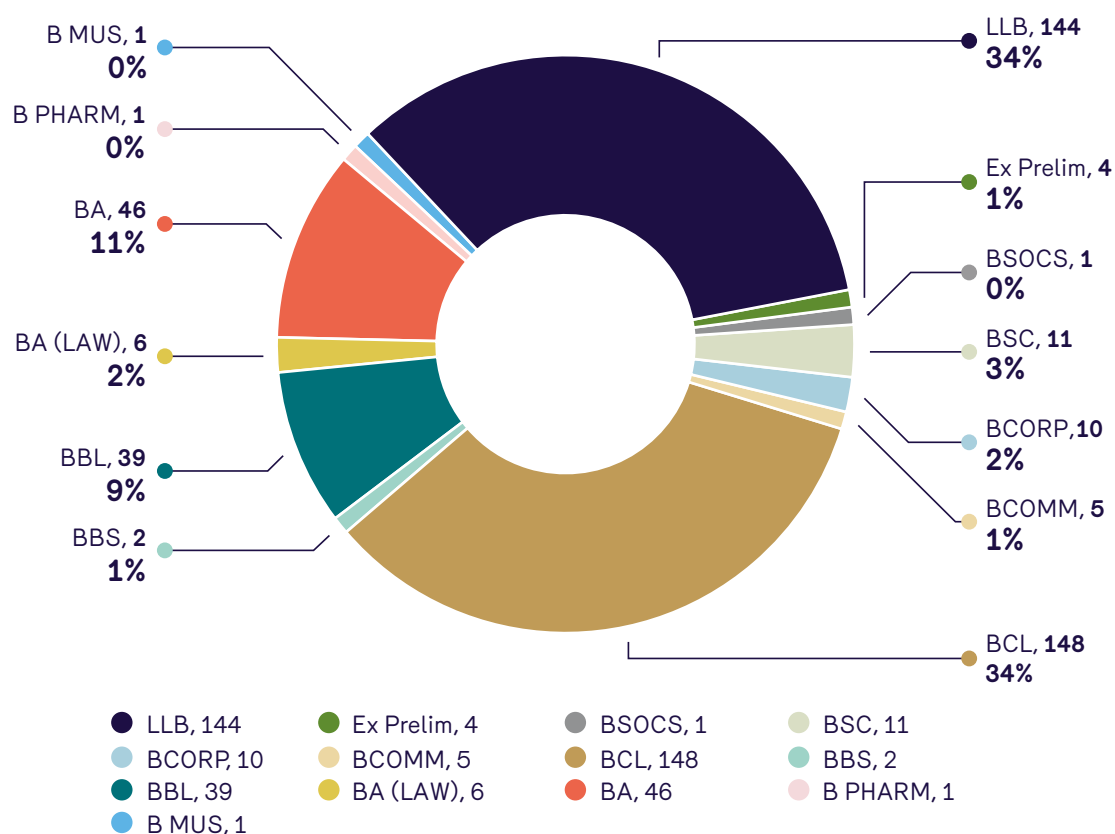
AGE PROFILE PPC I FULL-TIME TRAINEES



HOME LOCATION PPC I FULL-TIME TRAINEES



ACADEMIC BACKGROUND PPC APPLICANTS (FULL-TIME COURSE)

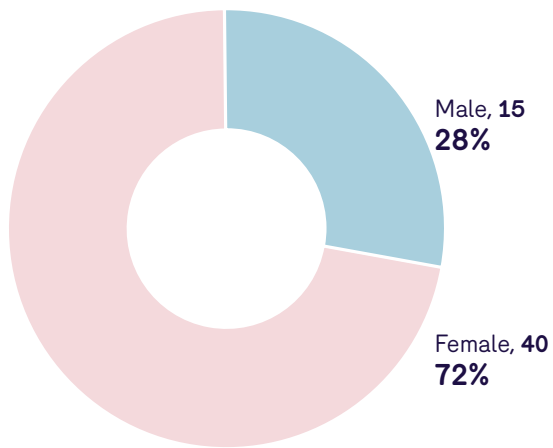


DECEMBER 2020 PPC I (HYBRID)

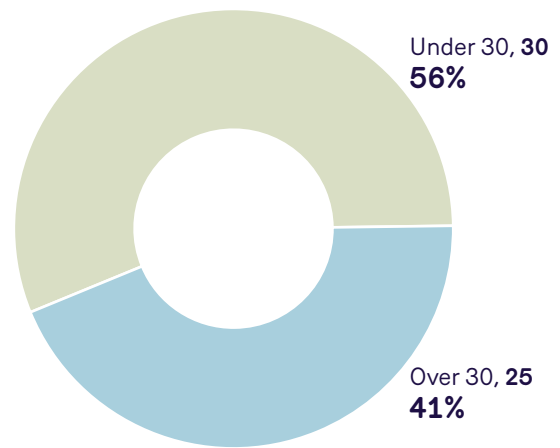
BREAKDOWN OF DEMOGRAPHIC PPC I HYBRID 2020									
Male	Female	Under 30	Over 30	Law degree	Other degree	No degree	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Total
15	40	30	25	40	12	3	18	37	55

The *Hybrid PPC I 2020* commenced in December 2020, with 55 trainees registered for the course. 72% of the trainees are female; 44% are above the age of thirty; only 11% of trainees attained their undergraduate degree in UCD or Trinity. 33% of *Hybrid PPC I 2020* traineeships are located outside of Dublin. Some 15% of trainees have their traineeships in what can be described as ‘in-house’ settings or Public Service Bodies for example The Central Bank of Ireland; Rabobank; KPMG; IHREC; Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Property Registration Authority. There are very few in-house trainees attending the full time PPC I.

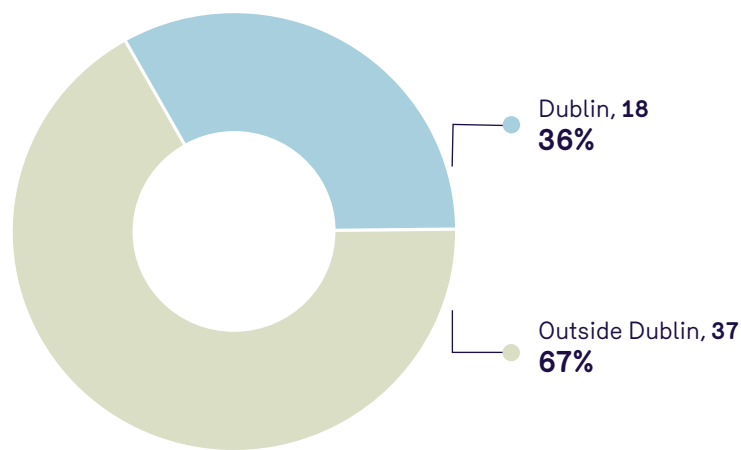
APPLICANTS PPC HYBRID 2020



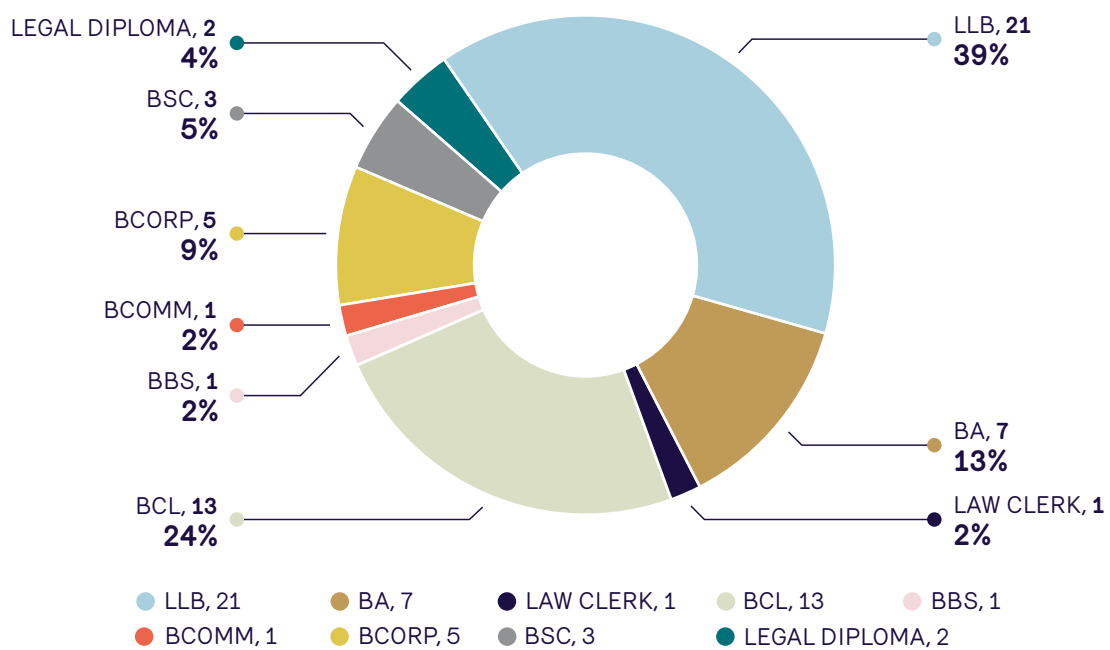
AGE PROFILE HYBRID TRAINEES



HOME LOCATION HYBRID TRAINEES



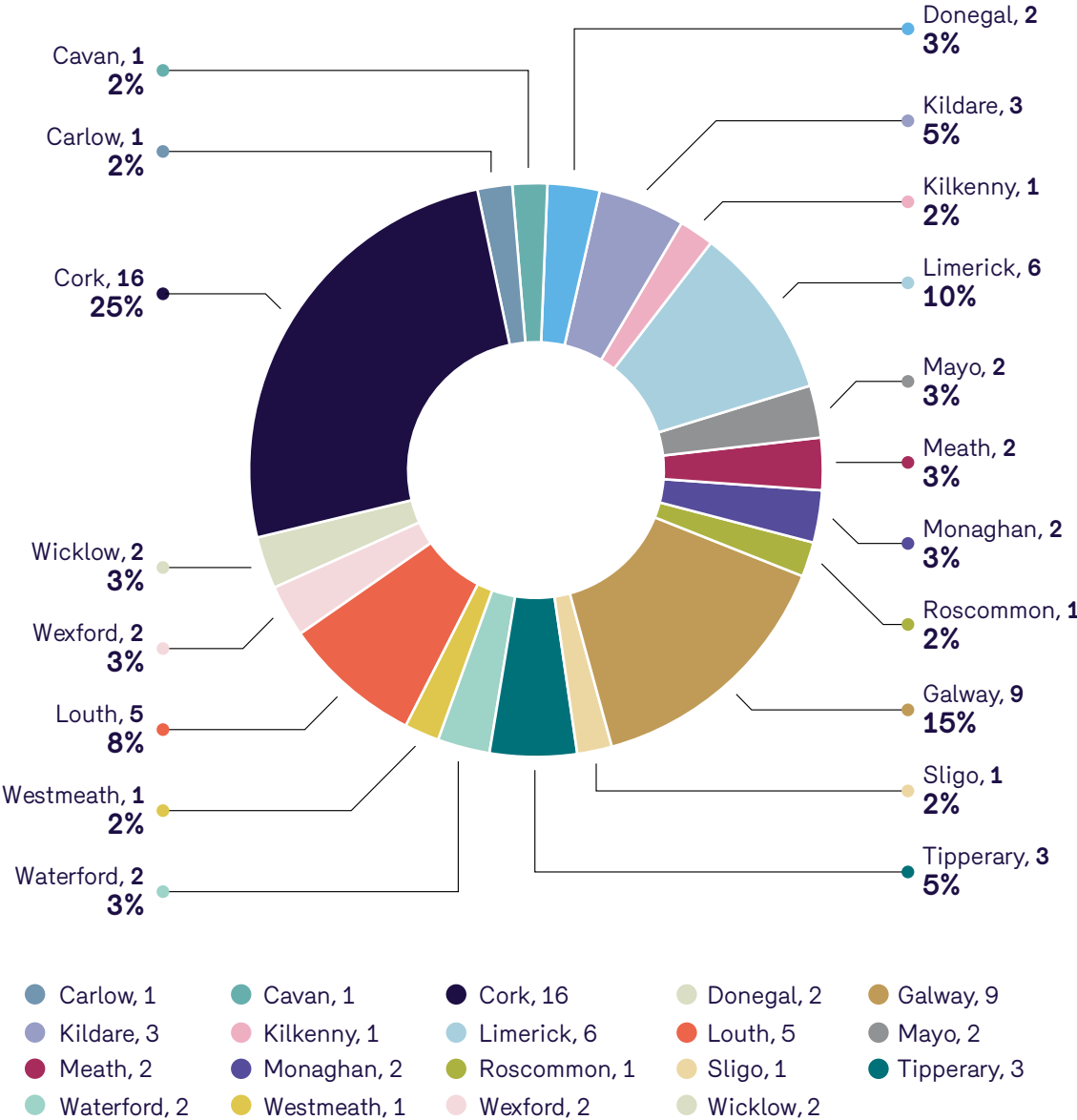
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND HYBRID APPLICANTS



17. A county (and Dublin city) breakdown of the geographical location of training firms for 2020 PPC course trainees, with separate stats for the full-time and hybrid PPC courses.

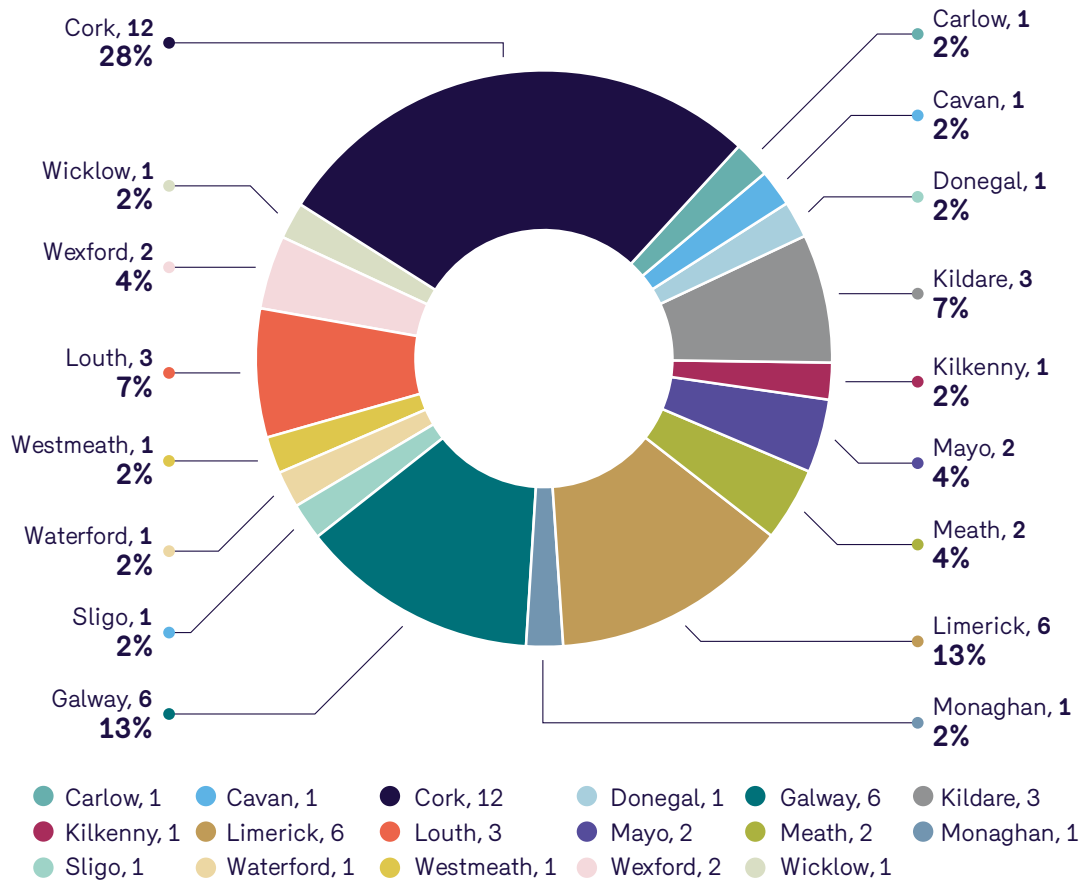
For the 2020 PPC there are currently 409 traineeships in Dublin with 63 traineeships in the rest of the country. Below is a breakdown of those counties.

COUNTY OF TRAINEESHIP PPC 2020

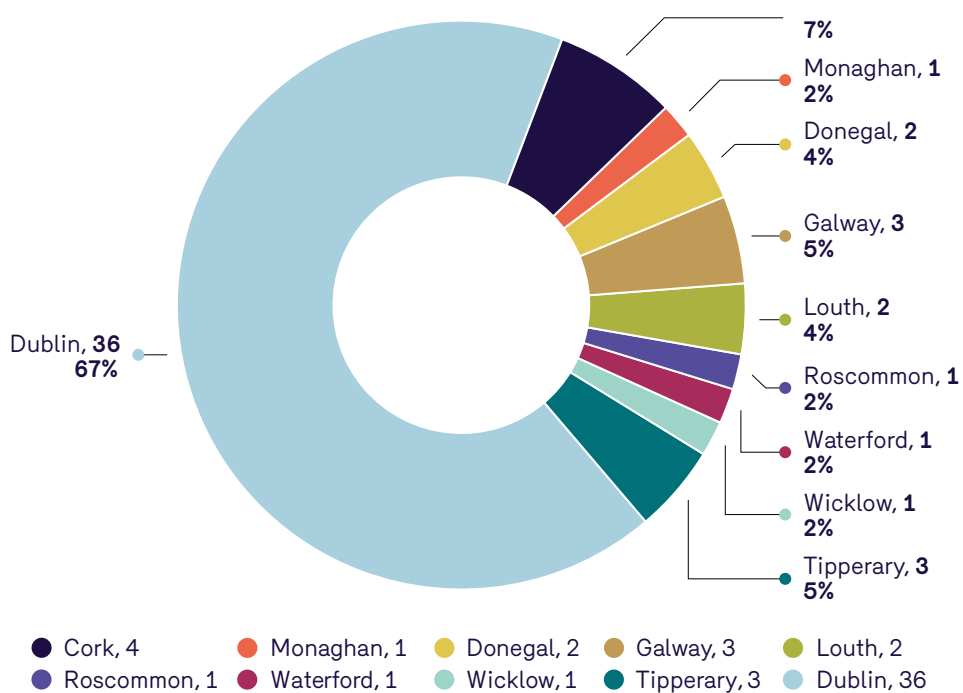


PPC I (Full-time) has 373 Traineeships in Dublin with 45 traineeships in the rest of the country. The PPC Hybrid has 36 traineeships in Dublin with 18 traineeships in the rest of the country. Below is a breakdown of those counties.

COUNTY OF TRAINEESHIP PPC I FULL-TIME



COUNTY OF TRAINEESHIP HYBRID 2020



18. The number of solicitor trainees on the PPC courses in 2020 who were in receipt of the Susi grant.

SUSI GRANT RECEIVED BY TRAINEE SOLICITORS		
	Course term	Receipt of Susi grant
2019 PPC I	3 September 2019 – 12 March 2020	19 trainees
2020 PPC I	8 September 2020 - 12 March 2021	12 trainees
2020 PPC II	6 April 2020 – 29 June 2020	17 trainees

Students attending the hybrid course are ineligible for SUSI grant funding. SUSI is not adding any new courses to the list that qualify for grant funding. Many of our hybrid students would qualify if they were eligible.

19. The number of solicitor trainees on the PPC courses in 2020 who received funding under the Law Society’s Access Scholarship Programme and Bursary Scheme.

The Law Society currently offers three scholarship programmes. The first programme is Access which provides financial support in respect of the cost of the FE-1 examination, indenture registration fee, PPC I, PPC II course fees and enrolment fee. This programme pays fees and maintenance for students from a background of socio-economic disadvantage. The funding contribution from the Law Society enabled the Access programme to assist a greater number of applicants this year, at both FE-1 and PPC levels. 58 students received the Law Society Access Scholarship Funding.

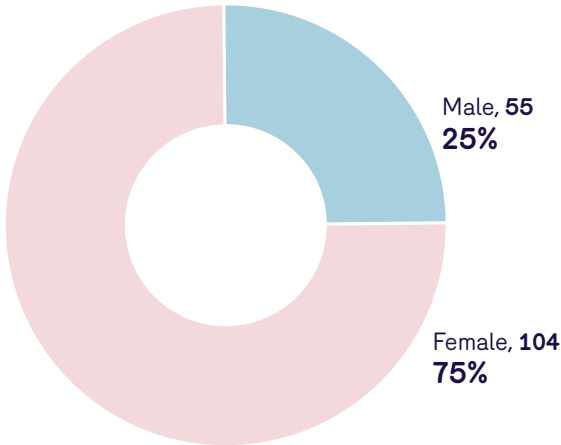
The second scholarship programme is the “Scott Scholarship” which provides full funding in respect of the FE-1 examination, indenture registration fee, PPC I, PPC II course fees and enrolment fee.

The third scholarship programme is the Small Practice Traineeship Grant scheme which provides a trainee solicitor with €7,000 towards the PPC I course fee and also provides their training firm with a grant subsidy of €18,000 over the trainee solicitor’s 24 months training contract towards the cost of employing the trainee solicitor. This scheme is open to applicant firms comprising five or fewer solicitors and based outside of County Dublin and the cities of Limerick, Cork and Galway.

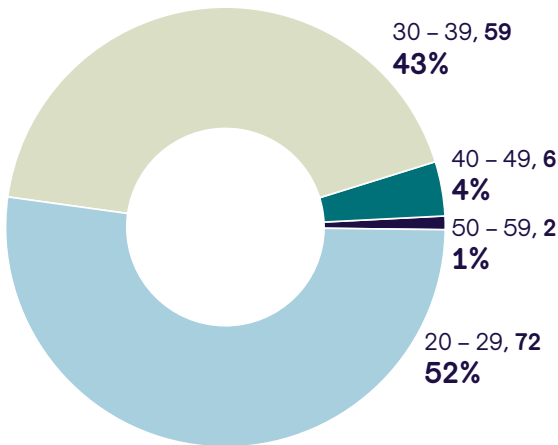
BREAKDOWN OF 2020 SCHOLARSHIP AND SUPPORT		
	Course term	Receipt of Scholarship
2019 PPC I (fulltime)	Sep 2019 – Mar 2020	16 Access Students
2019 PPC I Hybrid	Dec 2019 – Oct 2020	5 Access Students
2020 PPC I (fulltime)	Sep 2020 – Mar 2021	12 Access Students 2 Small Practice Traineeship Students 1 Scott Scholarship Student
2020 PPC II (fulltime)	Apr 2020 – Jul 2020	18 Access Students
2020 PPC I Hybrid	Dec 2020 – Oct 2021	9 Access Students 1 Scott Scholarship Students 3 Small Practice Traineeship Students

To date 139 qualified solicitors participated in the Society’s Access Scholarship programme, 75% are female with 48% above the age of 30. The breakdown of country of birth is as follows; Ireland 114; USA 1; UK 9; Serbia 1; Nigeria 4; Jamaica 1; Northern Ireland 1; Pakistan 1; Poland 2; Romania 2; Russia 1; South Africa 1 and Ukraine 1.

QUALIFIED SOLICITORS WHO RECEIVED THE ACCESS SCHOLARSHIP

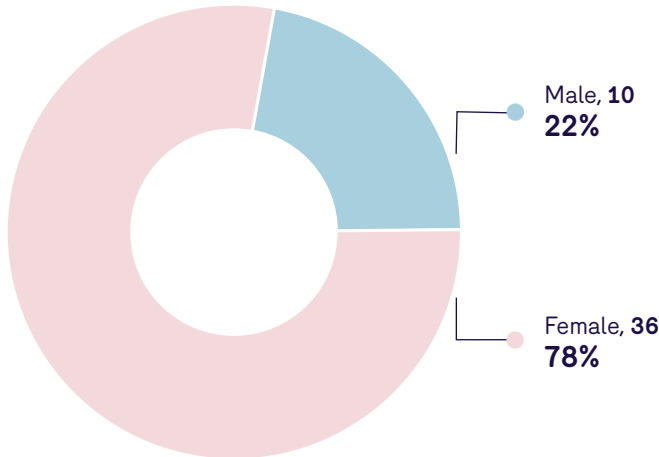


AGE ON QUALIFYING



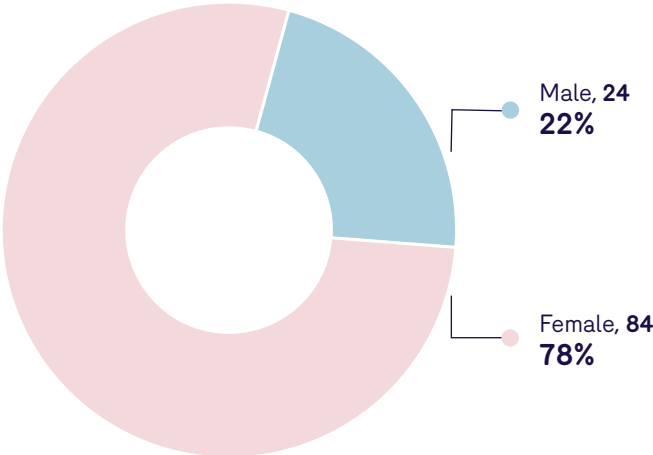
There are currently 46 post FE-1 Access Students (i.e. on PPC Courses or currently completing their training contract), 78% are female. The breakdown of country of birth is as follows; Ireland 33; UK 6; New Zealand 1; Nigeria 2; Poland 2; Venezuela 1 and USA 1.

(POST FE-1) CURRENT TRAINEES WHO RECEIVED THE ACCESS SCHOLARSHIP



108 FE-1 candidates are receiving the Society’s Access Scholarship, 78% are female. The breakdown of country of birth is as follows; Ireland 76; USA 1; Angola 1; Brazil 1; Bulgaria 1; Cameroon 1; Democratic Republic of Congo 1; UK 3; Latvia 2; Lithuania 2; Moldova 1; Nigeria 7; Northern Ireland 3; Philippines 1; Poland 3; Romania 2; Sierra Leone 1 and Ukraine 1.

CURRENT FE-1 CANDIDATES WHO RECEIVED THE ACCESS SCHOLARSHIP



The Law Society’s bursary programme aims to provide financial assistance to those who own resources or those of their family are inadequate to fund their studies. The programme is helping to create a broader spectrum of solicitors; vital in building a legal profession reflecting the diversity of the society it serves. The bursary fund for 2020 is €175,000 and is split between PPC I €122,000, PPC II €35,000 and PPC Hybrid €17,500. Applications are decided by the Bursary Committee (a sub-committee of the Education Committee) based on comparative hardship.

2019 - 2020 Bursary Applications

Course	No. of Applications	No. of Awards	Highest	Lowest	Average	Fund
PPC I	20	20	€6,000	€3,083	€4,875	€98,000
PPC II	21	14	€2,500	€1,500	€1,786	€25,000
PPC Hybrid	8	7	€3,000	€500	€2,500	€17,500
Total	49	41	€6,000	€500	€3,054	€140,500

2020 Bursary Applications

Course	No. of Applications	No. of Awards	Highest	Lowest	Average	Fund
PPC II	20	18	€2,900	€900	€1,944	€35,000

2020 – 2021 Bursary Applications

Course	Bursary Application Status
PPC Hybrid	Closing date for applications is 12 February 2021
PPC I	6 applications under consideration

20. Arrangements in place by the Law Society in 2020 to assist trainee solicitors to secure training placements.

The two years of in-office training are a vital and essential component of the overall training to become a solicitor. Training solicitors are required to provide trainees with reasonable and appropriate instruction and experience in three distinct areas of legal practice. Trainees obtain experience in a variety of areas of law and in practice skills. The Law Society provides many resources to assist trainees in finding a Training Contract. These include:

- Finding your Training Contract Seminars (assisting FE-1 candidates in securing a training contract).
- CV and Cover Letter Workshops.
- CV Register (where FE-1 candidates may upload their CV for prospective training solicitors to view).
- Q&A Sessions with past trainee solicitors.
- Guides on securing a training contract in the current market.
- Digital alerts when training contract roles are advertised online.
- The Society also maintains a register of firms who are in the habit of employing trainee solicitors. Inclusion on that register is based on the voluntary registration of the individual firms.

In addition to the foregoing, both the Traineeship Executive and the Outreach Executive participate in regular legal career events at both secondary and third level educational institutes.

In June 2020 the Society awarded five grants of €25,000 to assist smaller firms and practices with the cost of employing a trainee solicitor. This new financial grant scheme aims to boost smaller solicitor practices that are located outside the central training hub of Dublin. Supporting small rural practices with the financial cost of employing a trainee solicitor plays an important role in providing greater access to the profession for trainees from rural and diverse backgrounds. With sole practitioners and smaller practices in almost every small town in every corner of Ireland, the Small Practice Traineeship Grant can offer a trainee solicitor the opportunity to stay in their local community, without having to relocate to Dublin.

21. Details of remuneration arrangements for trainee solicitors during their placement with training firms.

In accordance with the National Minimum Wage Act 2000, trainee solicitors must be paid a minimum of the minimum wage which is currently €10.20 per hour based on a standard 36-hour work week. The Law Society Education Committee has issued a nonbinding recommendation that training solicitors consider paying their trainee solicitors a minimum of the living wage which is currently €12.30 per hour.

QUALIFICATION COSTS

22. A breakdown of all fixed costs for qualification/admission in 2020, including: the Preliminary Examination fee, the fee per FE-1 exams; FE-1 resit fees; the PPC I; the PPC II (including hybrid) the Register of Apprentices, the Roll of Solicitors; the practising certificate mandatory fee.

Preliminary Examination fee	€400
FE-1 Exam fee (and resit fee)	€105 per paper (8 papers in total)
Application fee to Enter into Indentures full-time PPC I	€840
Registration Course Fee for full-time PPC I	€8300
Application fee to Enter into Indentures PPC I Hybrid	€840
Registration Course fee for PPC I Hybrid	€8300
Registration Course fee for full-time PPC II	€4500
Registration Course PPC II Hybrid	€4500
Application to Education Committee	€75
Roll of Solicitors fee	€300
Practising certificate mandatory fee for a solicitor under 3 years qualified	€2,120
Practising certificate mandatory fee for a solicitor over 3 years qualified	€2,420

In addition to the above statistics, the LSRA is interested in the Law Society's observations and data on the impact of both Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic on admissions to the solicitors' profession in 2020, including impacts on the FE-1 examinations and the PPC courses and trends in relation to admissions to the Roll and practising certificates.



SCOPE OF GENERAL CONSULTATION

In addition to the specific questions for the Law Society as set out above, the Authority seeks submissions in respect of the admissions policies of the legal professions to include the following issues:

1. The level of demand for the services of practising barristers and solicitors in 2020.

As just about everyone on the planet is aware, in or around March 2020 the world was struck by a once-in-a-century event in the Covid-19 pandemic.

From the second week of March 2020 onwards, the level of demand for the services of practising solicitors, and the capacity of practising solicitors to meet that demand, were both massively disrupted. The level of disruption ebbed and flowed somewhat as the months passed in 2020 before encountering further, and in some respects deeper, disruption in the early months of 2021.

While legal services were designated as ‘essential’ by the Government when the initial nationwide lockdown occurred in the second week of March 2020 – a lockdown that has persisted to varying extents ever since – legal practice became extremely difficult. It had to either migrate online or cease completely. The profession adjusted speedily and well in that regard.

The offices of larger firms have remained (in physical terms) more or less completely closed – other than for rare and essential access – since March 2020, with all staff working from home. In smaller firms staff have also worked from home, although it has been possible and legally permissible to access the offices of smaller firms where work has gone on in most cases behind closed doors.

As always, while the impact of the disruption has been massive, it has not been uniform across all areas of the profession or of practice.

The Society, in early 2021, has employed experts to conduct an objective survey of the economic impact of the pandemic on the solicitors’ profession. That professionally-conducted survey is underway at present and the results are awaited.

However, the Society has accumulated a great deal of information from the profession through constant direct feedback from practitioners throughout 2020 and the early part of 2021. Accordingly it is in a good position to estimate the impact of the pandemic, albeit the information has not been scientifically gathered but is largely anecdotal.

General estimates of the reduction in the profession’s fee income since the onset of the pandemic most frequently range between 15% and 30%. Many small firms were supported to an extent by State financial supports such as the Temporary Wage Subside Scheme (TWSS) and Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP). However the largest source of income for law firm owners and their staff in 2020 and into 2021 has been money coming from their pipeline of previous work (the firm’s debtors and work in progress). This is likely to lead to negative working capital consequences for solicitors’ firms in the near future.

Particular types of legal work have been impacted in different ways such as the following:-

Conveyancing; residential conveyancing: was quiet during mid-2020 but picked up in the Autumn and has continued to be relatively busy. Commercial conveyancing: was in the doldrums during 2020 and remains so.

Commercial: There was limited activity during 2020 with mergers and acquisitions considerably down, in volume and value, on previous years.

Aircraft leasing: has been severely hit, other than for restructuring work.

Insolvency: work may be a growth area in the near future although it has not taken off as yet.

Probate: work remains steady in 2020 and is expected to continue. As with conveyancing, many tasks were more difficult to progress and took longer to complete because State agencies either closed initially, or not operating at full capacity.

Family law: this area has been busy and demand is expected to increase during 2021.

Employment: became suddenly very busy in March 2020 and remains so.

Litigation: Supreme Court and Court of Appeal quickly migrated online and virtual hearings have characterised the work of these courts since. High Court cases based on legal argument, without a reliance on oral evidence, has continued but 'evidence-based' cases, such as personal injuries, has been severely disrupted and remains so with almost no cases currently being heard. Insurers have been co-operating to an extent to settle cases but a great deal of work is stuck in the system with backlogs growing by the day.

Criminal: serious backlogs are growing as very few jury trials have been capable of proceeding during most of the lockdown period.

In summary broadly speaking the level of demand for the services of practising solicitors has reduced since the onset of the pandemic and in any case the capacity to deliver these services, as a result of the reduction in State systems such as the capacity to have cases listed and disposed of by the courts, has been seriously reduced in many areas of practice. The pandemic has proven fundamentally persistent and the future remains uncertain.

2. **The costs of legal services in 2020 and whether these were available at a reasonable cost to consumers.**
3. **The standard of education and training for persons admitted to practise.**

Training solicitors to meet any and all challenges they will face in their careers is some of the most important work the Law Society carries out. The Law Society's education model is deeply rooted in the public interest and focussed on the future. Today's client is more knowledgeable and tech-savvy than ever before. The Law Society's vision is to train 21st century solicitors who will meet and exceed the exacting requirements of their clients and their firms.

From the time a trainee solicitor begins the professional practice course (PPC) they are usually qualified and admitted to the Roll of Solicitors within about 2.5 years. This incorporates in-office training and seminar-based training here at Blackhall Place. Our training programme is unique in that classes are almost all delivered by practising solicitors who are experts in their own areas of practice. Our associate faculty includes solicitors from large commercial firms, solicitors working for the State, general practitioners and in-house lawyers. We currently have in the region of 1,200 solicitors teaching for us; that means that more than 10% of all practising solicitors are involved in education the next generation of the profession. Over 60% of all education is provided in small tutorial or skills groups of between 4 and 15 trainees working on legal or skills problems together. This interactive model of education requires students to prepare in advance and direct their own learning.

Responding to Covid-19, the Society, like other educational bodies, has adapted to deliver 100% of its educational offering online, through pre-recorded eLectures, workshops and skills sessions supported by Zoom.

Almost 450 trainee solicitors made history as the first group undertaking the inaugural online Professional Practice Course II (PPC II) in April 2020. 418 trainee solicitors commenced the PPC I in September 2020.

The Professional Practice Courses (PPC I, PPC II and Hybrid) have been adapted for online delivery with an emphasis on usability, mobile friendliness and peer-to-peer engagement. The programme empowers trainees, and provides access to lectures and course materials remotely to be consumed at their own pace. The new structure provides all the benefits of our traditional face-to-face tuition and a sense of connected learning within the virtual classroom. There was a particular focus on how to minimise the risks identified in taking an online course which include – isolation, unfamiliarity with technology and disengagement due to ineffective e-resources and instruction.

Throughout PPC, the Society offers Free Time Concentrated Therapy sessions, which support trainees in achieving positive mental wellbeing. The dedicated Psychological Services team provided counselling through confidential Zoom sessions in compliance with the highest of clinical, safety and GDPR standards.

There is much ongoing work to reshape the educational model of the Law Society. The PPC I and II courses will be consolidated into one course with a range of electives as part of the course that can be taken with the Law Society of third parties. This change is due to take place in September 2022. It had been planned to move to the new model in 2021 but the impact of COVID on the provision of education meant that those involved in planning the new course were focused on current provision. An initial syllabus consultation has taken place and further work will be undertaken to solicit a wide range of views across the profession and beyond on the content of the new course.

The Law Society is also engaged in putting in place a competency framework for solicitors. An external expert consultancy team, has been engaged to achieve the following outcomes:

- Research and draft a comprehensive literature review of professional competency frameworks internationally to inform a decision regarding a Law Society competency framework;

- Draft a new professional competency framework for solicitors if the literature review did not identify a relevant framework;
- Conduct legal services sector and consumer stakeholder consultation surveys and focus group sessions to inform decisions in relation to the proposed competency framework.

The literature review has been completed and a new draft competency framework will be discussed shortly. The methodology for stakeholder engagement will also be discussed.

- 4. The extent to which the admissions policies of the legal professions are consistent with the public interest in ensuring the availability of legal services at a reasonable cost, taking into account the demand for services and the need to ensure adequate education and training standards for persons admitted to practise.**
- 5. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 on the above matters. The above list of issues is not closed. Respondents may wish to comment on any other issues which have a bearing on the admissions policies of the legal professions and the assessment to be conducted under section 33(1)(c). Respondents may also wish to comment on any other issues in relation to the operation of the Act including the objectives of the Authority under section 13(4) of the Act, which are:**
 - a) protecting and promoting the public interest,
 - b) supporting the proper and effective administration of justice,
 - c) protecting and promoting the interests of consumers relating to the provision of legal services,
 - d) promoting competition in the provision of legal services in the State,
 - e) encouraging an independent, strong and effective legal profession, and
 - f) promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles of independence and integrity, acting in the client's best interests, compliance with duties owed to the court and confidentiality.

The solicitor employment market has been subdued since March 2020 with almost half the number of job vacancies advertised compared to one year earlier. However, employment held up during 2020 and into early 2021 and almost all solicitors were retained in their jobs by their employers. As a result, there are very few solicitors currently unemployed/out of work. A big increase in new job opportunities is expected to arise as the COVID-19 lockdowns end. This should result in a robust job market.

Blackhall Place
Dublin 7

t +353 1 672 4800
f +353 1 672 4801

w www.lawsociety.ie

