



LAW SOCIETY
OF IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

ON ADMISSION POLICIES
OF LEGAL PROFESSIONS
2021

ADMISSIONS TO THE ROLL OF SOLICITORS

1. The number of solicitors on the Roll of Solicitors as at 31 December 2021.

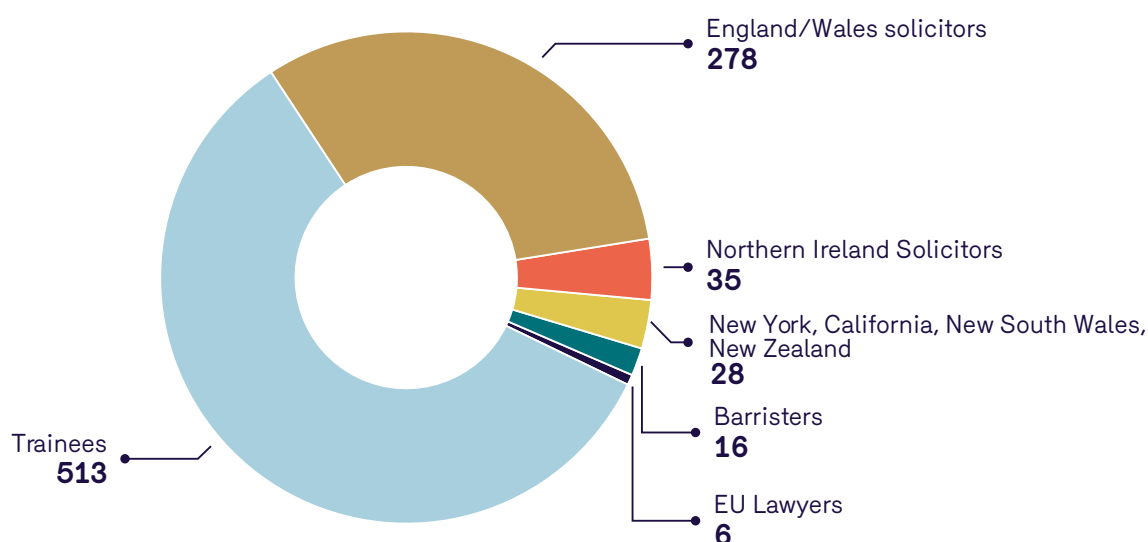
22,945

SOLICITORS WERE ON THE ROLL OF SOLICITORS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021.

2. The number of solicitors who were admitted to the Roll in 2021, with a breakdown by category of admissions (qualifying trainee, England & Wales qualified, NI qualified, s52, barristers, EU lawyers etc.,).

876

SOLICITORS WERE ADMITTED TO THE ROLL IN 2021.
See breakdown below.



ADMISSIONS BY CATEGORY										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Qualifying Trainees	453	468	475	233	525	423	445	419	390	513
English Solicitors	41	33	36	70	806	547	688	1,837	443	278
Northern Irish Solicitors	7	24	15	30	27	29	43	61	33	35
Barristers	3	10	15	15	34	34	30	28	20	16
All other foreign lawyers - (EEA, USA, Australia & New Zealand)	21	18	16	11	14	17	23	37	20	34
Total	525	553	557	359	1,406	1,050	1,229	2,381	906	876
% Change	-27%	5%	+1%	-38%	+292%	-25%	17%	94%	-75%	-3%

GENDER										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Female	325 (62%)	346 (63%)	319 (57%)	205 (57%)	711 (51%)	514 (49%)	603 (49%)	1076 (45%)	475 (52%)	469 (54%)
Male	200 (38%)	207 (37%)	238 (43%)	154 (43%)	695 (49%)	534 (51%)	626 (51%)	1305 (55%)	431 (48%)	407 (46%)

3. The number of solicitors who applied to be removed from the Roll in 2021 and the reasons for this.

06 solicitors applied to be removed from the Roll of Solicitors in 2021. Most of these applicants were seeking to be called to the Bar but others simply were not intending to provide legal services any longer in this jurisdiction.

4. The number of solicitors who were struck off the Roll in 2021 and the reasons for this.

01 solicitor was struck off the roll of solicitors by order of the High Court in 2021, for serious breaches of the Solicitors Accounts Regulations resulting in findings of misconduct before the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.

5. A breakdown by firm name of the number of admissions to the Roll in 2021 of solicitors from what the Law Society has termed the “Top 20 Brexit Transfer firms” (Law Society Gazette December 2019). A further breakdown by firm name of the number of practising certificates held by these firms as of 31 December 2021.

Firm	Admissions to the Roll in 2021
*Ashurst	73
Allen & Overy LLP	2
Linklaters LLP	20
Eversheds Sutherland LLP	1
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP	1
Slaughter & May	5
White & Case LLP	2
DLA Piper LLP	1
Clifford Chance LLP	1
Hogan Lovells LLP	2
Norton Rose Fulbright LLP	3
Pinsent Mason LLP	2
Google UK Ltd	1
BNP Paribas	2

At the end of 2020 the Society conducted an in-depth review of the regulatory framework for issuing practising certificates to lawyers based outside of the jurisdiction. The Society has adopted the following policies:

- Only solicitors who are practising (or intending to practise) in Ireland from an establishment in Ireland will be provided with practising certificates. They must have appropriate PII in place in accordance with the PII Regulations and an establishment for the practice. Practising certificates will no longer be issued to solicitors who are practising other than from an establishment in Ireland.
- Irish qualified solicitors who wish to practise as an REL in another Member State will not be issued with practising certificates. They will be issued with alternative certification attesting to their registration/enrolment as a solicitor.
- Irish qualified solicitors who wish to register with a foreign bar as a lawyer will not be issued with practising certificates. They will be issued with alternative certification attesting to their registration/enrolment as a solicitor.

Firm	Certificate of Attestation in 2021
Pinsent Masons LLP	22
Clifford Chance LLP	9
White & Case LLP	8
Eversheds Sutherland	6
Latham & Watkins LLP	5
Herbert Smith Freehills LLP	4
Slaughter and May	4
Allen & Overy LLP	3
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP	3
Linklaters LLP	3
Hogan Lovells International LLP	2
DLA Piper UK LLP	1

Some of the “Top 20 Brexit Transfer firms” have general offices in Dublin. Below is a breakdown of the number of practising certificates held by these firms as of 31 December 2021.

Firm	Practising Certificates in 2021
Eversheds Sutherland LLP Dublin	127
DLA Piper LLP Dublin	47
Pinsent Masons LLP	42
Dentons LLP Dublin	22
Hogan Lovells International LLP Dublin	14
BNP Paribas (Dublin)	10
Google UK Ltd (Google Ireland Ltd)	9
Linklaters LLP Dublin	8

PRACTISING CERTIFICATES

6. The number of practising certificates issued by the Law Society in 2021 and the number of practising certificates held as at 31 December 2021 if that figure is different.

11,483

PRACTISING CERTIFICATES WERE ISSUED BY THE LAW SOCIETY IN 2021. A further **290** certificates of attestation were submitted during the year. There were a total of **70** surrenders during the year

- **11,773** Practising Certificates and Certificates of Attestation
- **11,703** Practising Certificates and Certificates of Attestation less surrenders
- **11,483** Practising Certificates
- **11,413** Practising Certificates less surrenders

7. The number of practising certificates suspended in 2021 and the reasons for this action.

03

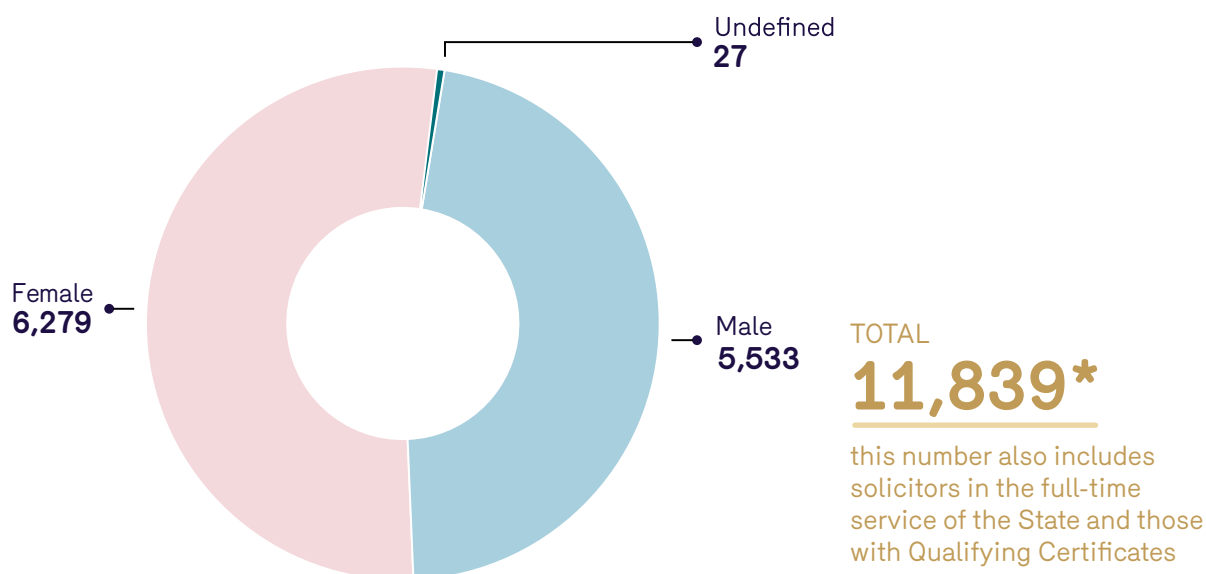
solicitors were suspended from practice by order of the High Court in 2021, all for non-compliance with legal obligations under the Solicitors Accounts Regulations. Each of the suspensions remains in place.

8. The number of practising certificates surrendered in 2021.

70

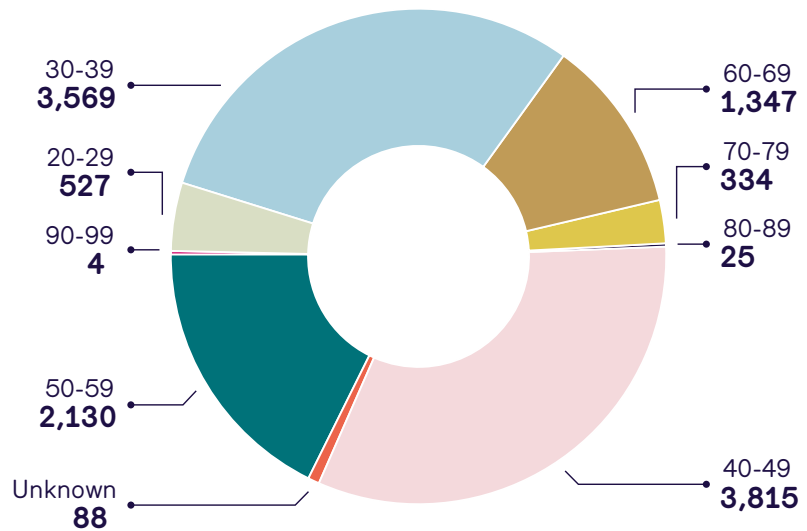
practising certificates were surrendered in 2021.

9. A breakdown of 2021 practising certificate holders based on all demographic and diversity data held by the Law Society (e.g. firm size, firm location, gender, age).



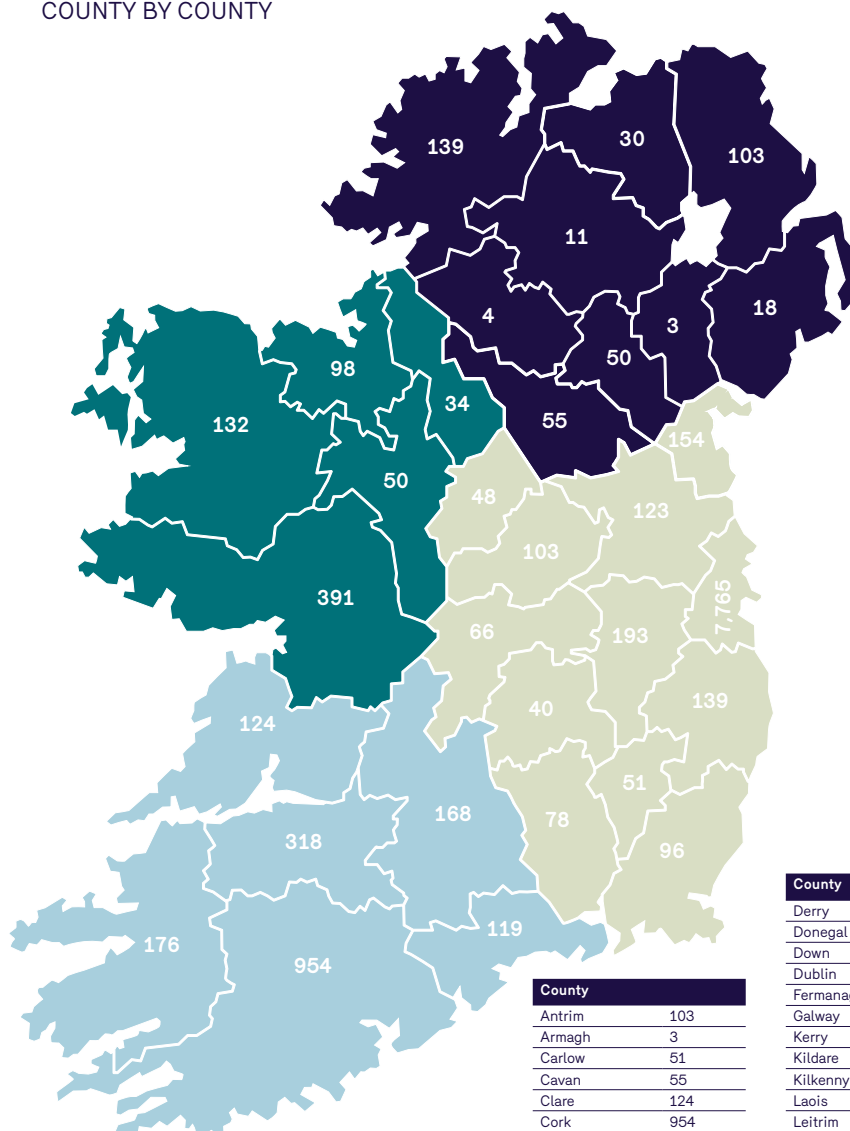
AGE PROFILE | MEMBERS

Age	Amount
20-29	527
30-39	3569
40-49	3815
50-59	2130
60-69	1347
70-79	334
80-89	25
90-99	4
Unknown	88
Total	11839*



* this number also includes solicitors in the full-time service of the State and those with Qualifying Certificates

WHERE OUR SOLICITORS ARE IN PRACTICE? COUNTY BY COUNTY



County	
Limerick	318
Longford	48
Louth	154
Mayo	132
Meath	123
Monaghan	50
Offaly	66
Roscommon	50
Sligo	98
Tipperary	168
Tyrone	11
Waterford	119
Westmeath	103
Wexford	96
Wicklow	139
Unknown	6
Total	11839 *

* this number also includes solicitors in the full-time service of the State and those with Qualifying Certificates

10. A breakdown of the number of practising certificates held by each of the top twenty large law firms, as at 31 December 2021.

Firm Name		Practising Certificates
1	Matheson	308
2	Arthur Cox LLP	304
3	A&L Goodbody LLP	299
4	Mason Hayes & Curran LLP	278
5	McCann FitzGerald LLP	273
6	William Fry LLP	188
7	Chief State Solicitor's Office	165
8	ByrneWallace LLP	150
9	Maples and Calder (Ireland) LLP	112
10	Eversheds Sutherland	111
11	Legal Aid Board	106
12	Ronan Daly Jermyn	104
13	Allied Irish Banks plc	103
14	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	90
15	Dillon Eustace LLP	89
16	Beauchamps LLP	86
17	Central Bank Of Ireland	80
18	Philip Lee	72
19	Hayes Solicitors LLP	66
20	LK Shields Solicitors LLP	63
21	Fieldfisher LLP	63
22	Eugene F. Collins LLP	60
23	Walkers Ireland LLP	58
24	DAC Beachcroft Dublin	49
25	DLA Piper Ireland LLP	46

IN-HOUSE

11. The number of solicitors on the Roll recorded by the Law Society as working “in-house” at 31 December 2021, and the number of these in-house solicitors who also held practising certificates as at 31 December 2021.

2,942 SOLICITORS ON THE ROLL RECORDED BY THE LAW SOCIETY AS WORKING “IN-HOUSE” AT 31 DECEMBER 2021.

2,431 OF THESE IN-HOUSE SOLICITORS WHO ALSO HELD PRACTISING CERTIFICATES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021.

12. The number of solicitors on the Roll and classified as being in the full time service of the State in 2021.

406 SOLICITORS ON THE ROLL ARE CLASSIFIED AS BEING IN THE FULL TIME SERVICE OF THE STATE IN 2021.

13. The number of solicitors admitted to the Roll under the EU Recognition of Professional Qualifications Regulations 2017 (S.I. No 8 of 2017) who held practising certificates as at 31 December 2021.

2,267 SOLICITORS ADMITTED TO THE ROLL UNDER THE EU RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS REGULATIONS 2017 (S.I. NO 8 OF 2017) WHO HELD PRACTISING CERTIFICATES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021.



TRAINEE SOLICITORS

14. The total number of candidates who sat FE-1s in 2021 and the overall pass rate.

FE-1 2021	Registered	Sat
Spring Candidates	1,830	1,679
Autumn Candidates	1,829	1,525

With **3204** candidates in the FE-I system in 2021, there is clearly significant access and entry to the profession.

By virtue of the way candidates sit the examinations in multiple sequences there is no meaningful overall pass rate. Below is a breakdown of the pass rate per subject examination.

March 2021

	Company	Constitutional	Contract	Criminal	Equity	EU	Property	Tort
Attended	534	558	589	574	539	374	473	376
Passed	348	461	399	423	326	291	312	293
% Passed	66%	82%	67%	73%	60%	77%	65%	77%

October 2021

	Company	Constitutional	Contract	Criminal	Equity	EU	Property	Tort
Attended	514	404	425	374	597	413	554	411
Passed	257	274	236	269	345	300	453	312
% Passed	50%	68%	56%	72%	58%	73%	82%	76%

15. The total number of candidates who sat the Preliminary Examination in 2021 and the overall pass rate.

2021 Preliminary Examination

Candidates	Pass	% Pass
7	5	71%

16. The total number of undergraduate students who sat FE-1 in 2021 under the “accelerated access” scheme introduced in 2020, and a statistical breakdown of the universities and programmes of examinees.

On 1 January 2020 new regulations came into operation that mean Ireland’s future solicitors can now take the Final Examination First Part (FE-1) earlier in their studies; can sit and pass less exams in their first attempt; and have a longer timeframe to pass all eight core subjects. The changes outlined in the Solicitors Acts 1954 to 2011 (Apprenticeship and Education) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 provide a more flexible approach to becoming a solicitor.

These new regulations are reducing barriers and providing greater access to the profession for trainees across diverse educational, professional and socio-economic backgrounds. These changes adapt to the modern needs of trainees and help accommodate candidates who may not have been able to study for and sit three exams or more at a time, because of time restraints to study, travelling to sit them or other commitments.

College students no longer have to wait until they receive their degree to sit the FE-1 exams. Students who have completed the first year of a course leading to a qualification at level 7 or higher on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications, or a degree awarded by a university in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, are now eligible to sit the FE-1 exams. These students can achieve provisional pass results which will be recognised once they have obtained their final degree.

This accelerated access scheme is having a positive impact on the diversity of trainee solicitors attending the Professional Practice Courses (PPC). Opening up the examinations at an earlier stage seems to be resulting in candidates from smaller universities securing training contracts and shortening the time the graduates spend between university and the start of the PPC.

473 TOTAL NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WHO SAT FE-1S IN 2021
See details below.

DEGREE	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES
BCL (UCD)	51
BCL (Cork)	40
BCL (Galway)	38
LLB (Maynooth)	37
BBL (UCD)	35
LLB (Limerick)	33
BCL (DCU)	31
BCL(Maynooth)	28
LLB (TCD)	28
BCorp (Galway)	24
BA (DCU)	20

BA (Maynooth)	12
BA (UCD)	12
LLB (Griffith)	11
BA (TCD)	10
BA (Limerick)	9
LLB (DIT/TU)	6
LLB (Dublin Business School)	5
LLB (Galway)	5
BSc (DCU)	4
BSc (DIT/TU)	4
LLB (Waterford IT)	4
BA (Galway)	3
BA (DIT/TU)	3
BA (Waterford IT)	3
LLB (Cork)	3
BBL (Maynooth)	2
BBS (UCD)	2
BSc (UCC)	2
LLB (Queens)	2
BA (Griffith)	1
BA (Limerick)	1
BA(Letterkenny IT)	1
BComm (UCC)	1
BSocSc (TCD)	1
LLB (Carlow IT)	1

17. The number of new trainees who commenced the Professional Practice Course I in 2021, with a breakdown in terms of all demographic and diversity data held by the Law Society on the trainees (e.g. gender, age, home location, third level institute attended, degree or other qualification for admission eligibility, etc.), with separate stats for the full-time and hybrid PPC courses.

2021 PPC

The 2021 Professional Practice Courses have the highest intake of trainees in ten years providing evidence of a healthy training market. There has been an increase in the numbers attending both courses with the PPC Hybrid having a significant increase of almost 50% from 55 trainees attending in 2020 to 109 in 2021.

TOTAL NUMBER ON COURSE										
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
413	392	353	388	384	405	412	448	501	473	538
-	-5%	-10%	+10%	-1%	+6%	+2%	9%	12%	-6%	14%

GENDER											
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Female	249 (60%)	243 (62%)	208 (59%)	248 (64%)	224 (58%)	236 (58%)	243 (59%)	268 (60%)	297 (59%)	307 (65%)	329 (61%)
Male	164 (40%)	149 (38%)	145 (41%)	140 (36%)	160 (42%)	169 (42%)	169 (41%)	180 (40%)	205 (41%)	166 (35%)	209 (39%)

AGE											
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
30 or under	91%	87%	89%	87%	86%	87%	90%	89%	88%	90%	88%
Over 30	9%	13%	11%	13%	14%	13%	10%	11%	12%	10%	12%

LOCATION OF TRAINING FIRM											
County	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Dublin	286 (69%)	282 (72%)	267 (76%)	319 (82%)	323 (84%)	335 (83%)	341 (83%)	387 (86%)	416 (83%)	410 (87%)	436 (81%)
Cork	31 (8%)	27 (7%)	21 (6%)	16	17	20 (5%)	21 (5%)	22 (5%)	24 (5%)	17	27 (5%)
Galway	11	15	9	6	8	5	13	7	8	8	11
Limerick	15	9	5	7	10	7	8	5	8	6	9
Tipperary	7	10	1	2	1	3	4	3	4	3	6
Kerry	9	4	4	5	0	1	1	7	3	0	2

Kildare	3	2	6	1	2	4	1	2	4	4	5
Sligo	4	3	2	3	0	6	1	1	6	1	6
Louth	3	2	4	2	4	1	2	1	2	5	5
Donegal	4	1	1	4	0	4	3	1	0	4	8
Meath	5	6	6	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	2
Wicklow	5	6	3	1	3	3	2	1	2	1	2
Mayo	4	2	5	3	3	0	1	0	1	2	4
Westmeath	4	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	4	1	1
Waterford	4	1	2	4	2	1	0	1	2	2	4
Clare	2	3	1	4	2	1	2	3	3	0	2
Cavan	4	5	1	1	1	0	2	1	2	1	0
Kilkenny	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	3
Roscommon	2	2	4	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Monaghan	0	2	1	2	0	3	0	1	1	2	1
Carlow	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	0	2	1	0
Leitrim	1	3	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Offaly	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Longford	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
Wexford	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Laois	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0

DEGREE BACKGROUND											
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Law Graduates	289 (70%)	278 (71%)	268 (76%)	299 (77%)	307 (80%)	315 (78%)	346 (84%)	357 (79%)	398 (79%)	386 (82%)	447 (83%)
Other Graduates	121 (29%)	110 (28%)	82 (23%)	86 (22%)	76 (22%)	86 (21%)	58 (14%)	84 (19%)	100 (20%)	79 (17%)	88 (16%)
Non Graduates	3 (1%)	4 (1%)	3 (1%)	2 (1%)	1	7 (1%)	8 (2%)	7 (2%)	3 (1%)	8 (1%)	4 (1%)

LAW DEGREES												
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
LLB (TCD)	33	22	25	35	57	51	52	65	77	83	80	75
BCL (UCD)	38	43	33	69	40	50	41	66	68	59	69	67
BCL (Cork)	38	46	44	31	42	46	52	43	49	47	48	50
BBLS (UCD)	48	43	44	33	30	31	28	35	41	35	36	52
LLB (Limerick)	12	28	17	13	20	18	21	24	22	32	26	22
LLB (Galway)	31	29	26	19	28	23	19	23	15	16	14	11
BCL (Galway)	17	15	18	16	15	13	21	19	12	18	19	28
LLB (Griffith)	13	15	19	12	23	10	13	16	13	12	4	11
BCorplaw (Galway)	14	11	12	7	14	12	20	4	5	13	17	8
BCL (DCU)	-	1	0	0	1	9	5	14	18	24	21	27
LLB (DBS/Pb)	4	7	12	5	4	10	4	0	4	6	4	4
BCL (Maynooth)	-	-	-	-	3	1	7	8	8	3	9	15
LLB (Maynooth)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	4	10	25
BA (Law/Acc) Limerick	6	7	6	6	1	6	4	1	2	1	1	1
BA, Law, Politics & Economics (DCU)	-	-	1	1	0	7	0	3	1	9	7	4
BA (Law & Business) (Waterford IT)	-	-	1	5	8	8	1	0	0	2	1	1
BA (Law) (DIT/TUD)	1	5	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	4
LLB (Queens)	1	2	3	1	2	0	1	1	1	5	3	3
BA (Law) (Letterkenny IT)	2	3	2	3	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	3
BSc (Mgt Law) (DIT/ TUD)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	6
LLB (DIT/TUD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	0	5	3	5
LLB (Independent)	0	0	0	2	0	3	3	1	2	0	0	2
BA (Law & Business) (Griffith)	4	0	4	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
LLB (Carlow IT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	2	3
LLB (Waterford IT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	3	4
LLB (Letterkenny IT)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
LLB (DCU)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
LLB (Durham)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

LAW DEGREES	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
BBL (Athlone)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
LLB (Amity)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
LLB (Nigeria)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
LLB (Nottingham)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
LLB (Delhi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
LLB (Edinburgh)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
LLB (Free University Berlin)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
LLB (Durham)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

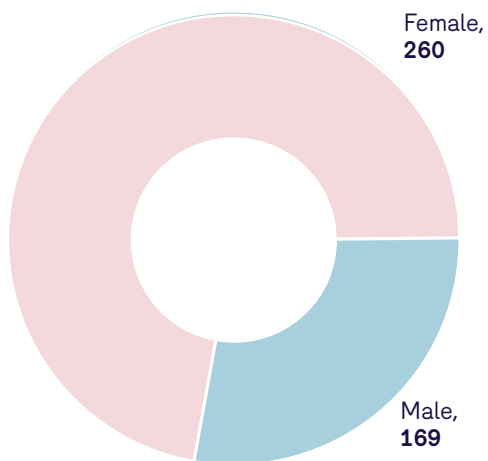


2021 PPC I

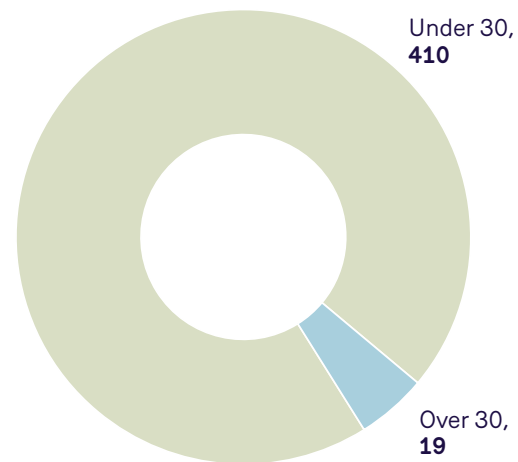
There are currently 429 trainees attending the full-time 2021 PPCI which commenced on 7 September 2021. Please see a breakdown of demographic data in the table below:

BREAKDOWN DEMOGRAPHIC PPC I FULL-TIME 2021								
Male	Female	18 – 25	26 – 30	31 – 40	40 +	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Total
169	260	285	125	16	3	380	49	429

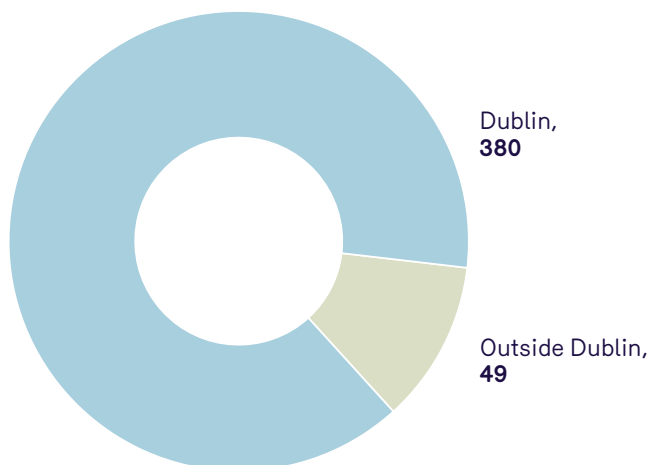
APPLICANTS PPC I FULL-TIME 2021



AGE PROFILE PPC I FULL-TIME TRAINEES



HOME LOCATION PPC I FULL-TIME TRAINEES

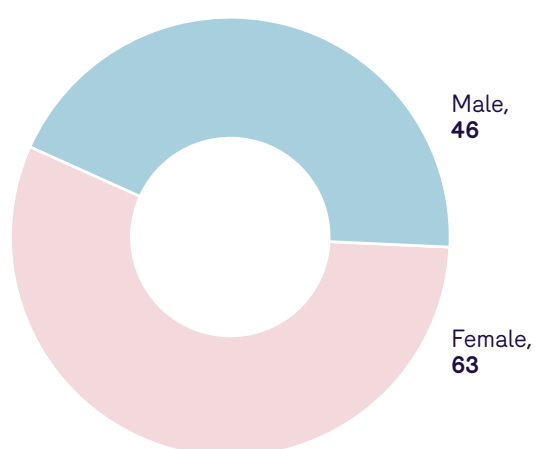


2021 PPC Hybrid

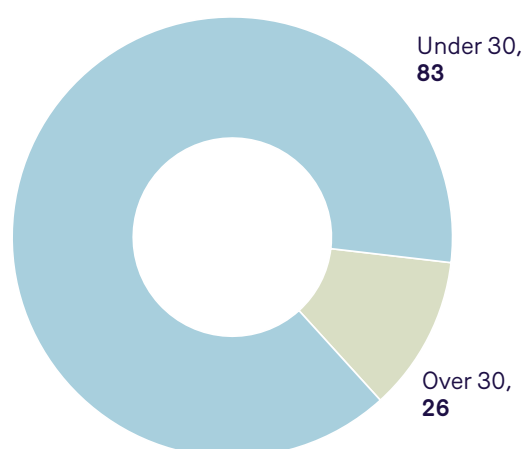
There are **109** trainees currently attending the 2021 PPC Hybrid which commenced on 15 December 2021. Please see a breakdown of demographic data in the table below:

BREAKDOWN DEMOGRAPHIC PPC HYBRID 2021								
Male	Female	18 – 25	26 – 30	31 – 40	40 +	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Total
46	63	34	49	19	7	54	55	109

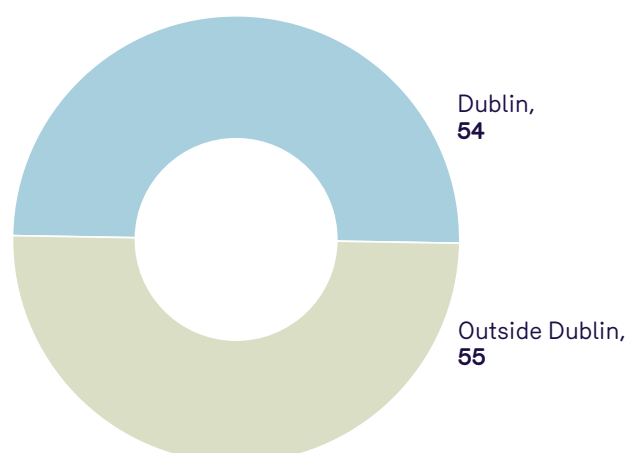
APPLICANTS PPC HYBRID 2020



AGE PROFILE HYBRID TRAINEES



HOME LOCATION HYBRID TRAINEES



Degrees for 2021 PPC I

DEGREE	NO TRAINEES
LLB (TCD)	75
BCL (UCD)	67
BCL (Cork)	50
BBLS (UCD)	52
LLB (Limerick)	22
LLB (Galway)	11
BCL (Galway)	28
LLB (Griffith)	11
BCorPLaw (Galway)	8
BCL (DCU)	27
LLB (DBS/Pb)	4
BCL (Maynooth)	15
LLB (Maynooth)	25
BA (Law/Acc) Limerick	1
BA, Law, Politics & Economics (DCU)	4
BA (Law & Business) (Waterford IT)	1
BA (Law) (DIT/TUD)	4
LLB (Queens)	3
BA (Law) (Letterkenny IT)	3
BSc (Mgt Law) (DIT/TUD)	6
LLB (DIT/TUD)	5
LLB (Independent)	2
BA (Law & Business) (Griffith)	1
LLB (Carlow IT)	3
LLB (Waterford IT)	4
LLB (Letterkenny IT)	2
LLB (DCU)	3
LLB (Durham)	2
BBL (Athlone)	1
LLB (Amity)	1
LLB (Nigeria)	1
LLB (Nottingham)	1
LLB (Delhi)	1
LLB (Edinburgh)	1
LLB (Free University Berlin)	1
LLB (Durham)	1

Degrees for the PPC Hybrid 2021

DEGREE	NO TRAINEES
BCL (Cork)	8
LLB (Maynooth)	8
BCL (DCU)	6
LLB (Limerick)	6
BA (Galway)	6
BCL (UCD)	5
LLB Griffith)	5
BA(LAW) DIT(TUD)	5
BCL (Galway)	5
BA(LAW) (Letterkenny IT)	4
LLB (DBS)	4
LLB (TCD))	4
BA (Law & Business) (Waterford IT)	4
BA (UCD)	4
LLB (Carlow IT)	3
LLB (Waterford IT)	3
BA Law, Politics & Economics (DCU)	2
BCL (Maynooth)	2
BCorPLaw (Galway)	2
LLB Galway	2
LLB (Letterkenny IT)	2
LLB (Independent)	2
BSc (Cork IT)	2
BA (Limerick)	2
BSc (Galway)	1
BA (Cork)	1
BA (Syracuse)	1
BA (Law & Business) (Griffith)	1
BBL (UCD)	1
BBL (Athlone)	1
BComm (UCD)	1
LLB (Queens)	1
LLB (DIT(TUD))	1
Diploma in Legal Studies (Griffith)(EX PRELIM)	1
BA (EU Montreux)	1
BA (Law) (University Toulouse)	1

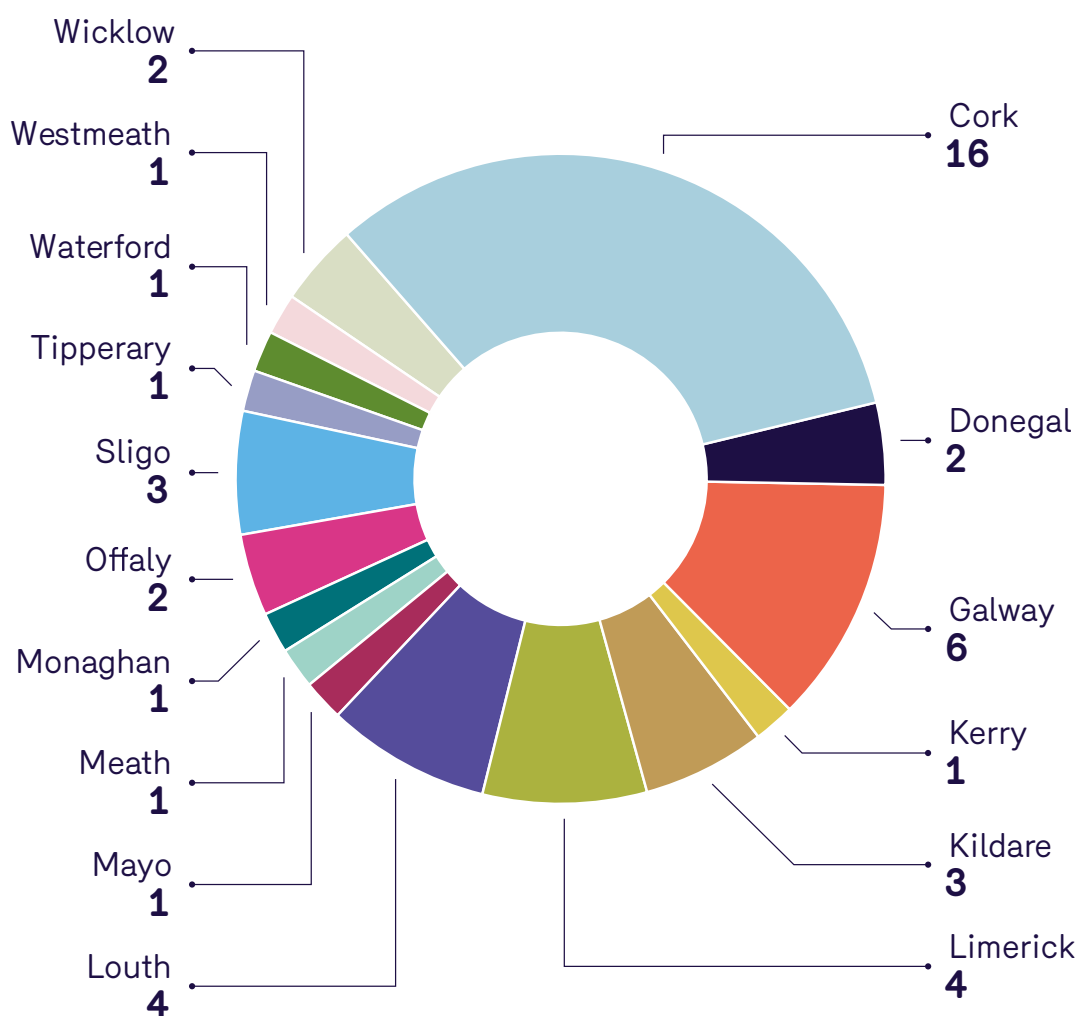
18. A county by county breakdown of the location of training firms and private or public bodies 2021 PPC I course trainees, with separate statistics for the full-time and hybrid PPC.

2021 PPCI

380 DUBLIN

49 OUTSIDE OF DUBLIN

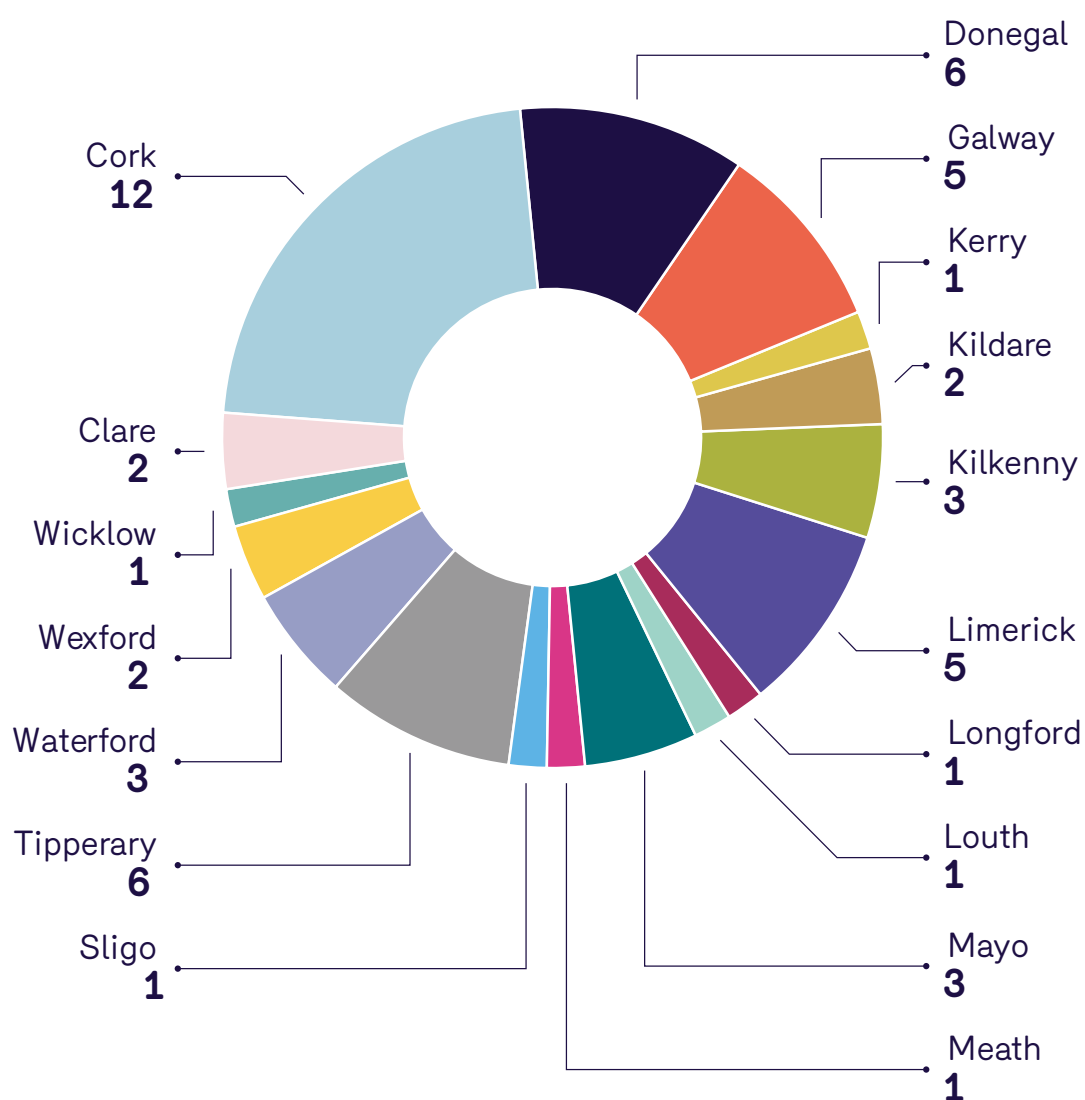
COUNTY BREAKDOWN OUTSIDE OF DUBLIN



54 DUBLIN

55 OUTSIDE OF DUBLIN

COUNTY BREAKDOWN OUTSIDE OF DUBLIN



19. A breakdown by size of the training firms sponsoring trainee solicitors for the 2021 PPC I course, with separate statistics for full-time and hybrid PPC trainees.

The data requested regarding firm size is not readily available from the Law School's database system.

We set out below firms sponsoring 10 or more trainee solicitors for the 2021 PPC

	Firm Name	Number of trainees
1	Matheson	45
2	A & L Goodbody	45
3	Arthur Cox	42
4	William Fry	30
5	McCann FitzGerald	28
6	Eversheds Sutherland	15
7	Mason Hayes & Curran	14
8	Maples & Calder	11
9	Byrne Wallace	10
10	Dillon Eustace	8

2021 Full-time course (429 trainees)

Top 5 training firms sponsoring 10 or more trainee solicitors for the 2021 PPC Full-time course.

	Firm Name	Number of trainees
1	Matheson	45
2	A & L Goodbody LLP	44
3	Arthur Cox LLP	42
4	William Fry	30
5	McCann FitzGerald	28

2021 Hybrid course (109 trainees)

Top 5 training firms sponsoring 2 or more trainee solicitors for the 2021 PPC Hybrid

Firm Name		Number of trainees
1	Wallace Corporate Counsel	3
2	Zeidler	3
3	Kennedys	2
4	Poe Kiely Hogan Lanigan	2
5	Simmons & Simmons	2

The structure of the PPC Hybrid has also provided new opportunities for traineeships. [Approx. 20%] of trainees on the Hybrid PPC I 2021 have their traineeships in ‘in-house’ settings or Public Service Bodies. As such, it would seem that the PPC Hybrid has provided a structure whereby the legal departments in a diverse range of commercial enterprises are now offering traineeships (e.g. for the Hybrid PPC I 2021 there are traineeships located in the following: Aergo Capital Ltd.; An Garda Síochána; Central Bank of Ireland; CNP Santander Insurance Services; Eli Lilly Cork Limited; Etsy Ireland; European Refreshments; Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland; Icon Plc; Jazz Pharmaceuticals; Munich Re Automation Solutions; New Ireland Assurance Company; Office of DPP; Swiss Capital Holdings Ltd.; Wayflyer Limited; Ziedler). This can be seen as fulfilling the aims of Proposal 13 of the Peart Commission relating to the Society encouraging in-house training contracts. This welcome development may also have been facilitated in part by Proposal 11 of the Peart Commission which has provided for more flexibility with regard to the required experience during the in-office training period.

20. The number of solicitor trainees on the full time PPC I and II courses who were in receipt of a SUSI grant in 2021.

As the Law Society has increased its financial support for trainee solicitors the corresponding supports from SUSI have dropped. The 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 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.

The SUSI eligibility criteria are extremely restrictive. If a trainee solicitor receives any of the above supports from the Law Society they do not qualify for a SUSI grant, even if they are from a background of socio-economic disadvantage. SUSI have also deemed trainees attending the hybrid course as ineligible for SUSI grant funding because the course is delivered through blended learning (on-site and online) with trainees attending the campus in a part-time capacity due to the online learning facilities.

The Law Society has appealed to SUSI on behalf of the trainee solicitors but there has been no change to the restrictions.

TRAINEES IN RECEIPT OF SUSI GRANT IN 2021		
PPC Course	Course term	Number in receipt of funding
2020 PPCI	8 September 2020 - 12 March 2021	12
2021 PPCII	12 April 2021 – 29 June 2021	14
2021 PPCI	7 September 2021 – 18 March 2022	10

21. The number of solicitor trainees who received funding under the Law Society's Access Scholarship, Scott Scholarship and Small Practice Traineeship Grant in 2021.

ACCESS SCHOLARSHIP 2021

There are currently 184 individuals participating on the Access Scholarship Scheme. 115 individuals are currently pursuing FE-1 exams and receiving financial support in respect of same. 69 individuals are at post FE-1 level and receiving financial support in respect of the fulltime and Hybrid Professional Practice Courses. In addition, 149 individuals have qualified as solicitors with financial support from the Access Scholarship programme.

SCOTT SCHOLARSHIP 2021

2020 Scott Scholarship	2020 PPC I Fulltime	1 Trainee, currently on post PPC I in-office training period
2020 Scott Scholarship	2020 PPC I Hybrid	1 Trainee, currently on post PPC I in-office training period
2021 Scott Scholarship	2021 PPC I Hybrid	1 Trainee, currently on PPC Course

SMALL PRACTICE TRAINEESHIP GRANT (SPTG) 2021

There are currently 10 trainees who have received funding under the Small Practice Traineeship Grant. The breakdown is as follows:

2020 SPTG Grant	2020 PPC I Fulltime	2 Trainees, current on post PPC I in-office training period
2020 SPTG Grant	2020 PPC I Hybrid	3 Trainees, currently on post PPC I in-office training period
2021 SPTG Grant	2021 PPC I Fulltime	2 Trainees currently on PPC Course
2021 SPTG Grant	2021 PPC I Hybrid	3 Trainees currently on PPC Course

SCOPE OF GENERAL CONSULTATION

S 33 Annual Report on Admission Policies 2021

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

1 The level of demand for the services of practising solicitors in 2021.

Following a turbulent 2020 for many sectors, 2021 started with greater optimism in light of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout. However, the arrival of a more virulent strain of the virus left the economy again in a state of paralysis and uncertainty for much of the year. Data collected during the year shows that the legal services sector was no less exposed to these challenges compared to other sectors in Ireland.

Legal activities were designated an ‘essential’ service during the most restrictive periods of the pandemic lockdown. This meant that the sector could continue operations throughout Level 5 restrictions which were in place for a significant period of early 2021 – from 31 December 2020 to 12 April 2021. Further, less prohibitive, restrictions remained in place until early Autumn 2021 making it very challenging for all sectors to operate ‘normally’. Legal services, like many other sectors in Ireland, continued to operate using a hybrid model on online and face-to-face. This, of course, has had implications for the effective provision of services.

Quantifying the impact on demand for the services of practising solicitors in 2021 is challenging as there is no one source which explicitly captures this data. The level of demand for legal services can however be inferred from the performance of legal firms during the year.

Compared with pre-Covid levels, over two-thirds of firms surveyed by Smith and Williamson¹ reported either a significant or moderate² negative impact on turnover levels in 2021. Unsurprisingly, the situation with regard to profitability has been equally challenging for businesses in the legal sector, with 58% of those surveyed reporting either a moderate or significant negative impact on their profit levels in 2021. Solicitors outside of Dublin were more likely to report a negative impact on turnover and profits demonstrating the extent to which firms outside the main urban areas had to adjust to the uncertainty and challenges brought on by the pandemic.

¹ Annual Survey of Law Firms in Ireland, 2021/2022, Smith and Williamson

² A ‘significantly negative impact’ equates to a reduction in turnover/profit of > 20%. A ‘moderately negative impact’ equates to a reduction in turnover/profit of 5-20%.

The 2021 Business Recovery Survey³ found that just over half (51%) of respondents reported a moderate impact on their practice – including a reduction in work and an ability to meet with clients – as a result of the pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic, a significant number of jobs were supported by Government intervention and over 1.5 million people were still availing of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) and the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) in January 2022. While the number of legal professionals availing of the various pandemic related schemes is not available, data collected by Smith and Williamson indicates that the schemes played a very important role in allowing businesses to remain operational throughout the pandemic.

Some 67% of legal firms availed of either the TWSS or PUP in 2021. Interestingly the survey captures that 28% of respondents outside of Dublin availed of ‘restart supports’ during 2021. Typically, these grants were available only to small businesses (i.e., fewer than 10 employees) that needed to close due to the pandemic. And so, this further demonstrates the extent to which small businesses, particularly those outside of Dublin were negatively impacted by the pandemic and the knock-on effect on factors such as demand, costs, and profitability.

2. The costs of legal services in 2021 and whether these were available at a reasonable cost to consumers.

By its very nature as a professional service, there is limited publicly available data, at a national level, to categorically determine whether legal services are available to consumers at a reasonable cost. Various reports over the past 20 years have demonstrated that the evidential basis for claims that Ireland is a high legal cost jurisdiction is very limited. One evidential assessment has been undertaken in this time and is based on data collected between 1984 and 2004.⁴ Other reports, such as from the National Competitiveness Council⁵ (NCC), have relied on findings from the World Bank Doing Business reports which have subsequently been discontinued due to data irregularities in relation to their 2018 and 2020 reports. A 2013 IGEES⁶ report suggests that legal costs in Ireland may have, in fact, reduced over the past 10 years stating, “*many Agencies and Offices have already taken steps to deliver better value for money and reduce spending on legal services.*”

The Department of Justice⁷ is currently undertaking an economic analysis of models and approaches for reducing litigation costs in Ireland. This comes on foot of the 2020 Review

³ The Business Recovery Survey Report (2021), Crowe, commissioned by the Law Society of Ireland

⁴ Haran, P. (November 2005), Report of the Legal Costs Working Group

⁵ Ireland’s Competitiveness Challenges 2021, National Competitiveness & Productivity Council

⁶ IGEES (2013), Public Expenditure on Legal Services - Avoid, Minimise, Recover

⁷ An Economic Analysis of Models or Approaches to Controlling and Reducing Litigation Costs in Ireland, Request for Tender for Research Services, Department of Justice

of the Administration of Civil Justice⁸ which concluded that Ireland is a ‘high-cost litigation jurisdiction’.⁹ The 2020 Review concluded that a table of non-binding guidelines to restrict costs (the majority view), or the setting of maximum ceilings on cost levels (the minority view), could help to make the civil justice system more accessible for consumers.

While the Law Society is unequivocal in its support of efforts to improve access to justice, any mechanisms to control costs should be introduced on a sound evidential basis. For example, consideration should be given to

- i. How ‘scales of costs’ impede access to justice: In the District Court, for example, the scale of costs is primarily determined on the amount of damages that are awarded or agreed, regardless of the amount of work that may be required by a solicitor to achieve the desired outcome for their client. Any disparity between cost awarded and cost incurred must then be covered by the client. This raises issues of inequality for less well-resourced litigants and may constitute an impediment to access justice.
- ii. Legal Costs Adjudication System: This system has been in place since 2019 and was impacted by the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. A table of non-binding guidelines, as proposed in the 2020 Kelly Report, would not require the establishment of a new body as it would fall under the remit of the Legal Costs Adjudicators, or the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA). The implementation of maximum ceilings on costs would, on the other hand, be considered to be much more costly and cumbersome.

While a table of binding maximum costs may provide some advantages (e.g., transparency and certainty) the Law Society is concerned that such a scheme would suppress competition by encouraging an upward push in prices, to the ceiling set by the tables. Without regular revisions of maximum costs, there is also a risk that values will be understated in the prevailing economic environment.

In the context of the issues that determine legal costs in Ireland¹⁰, the introduction of non-binding measures to restrict legal costs could improve the certainty and transparency of the adjudication process, with minimal legislative intervention. The successful introduction of any such measure would need to (i) allow for flexibility to reflect the individual and exceptional circumstances which may arise at different stages of a particular case and (ii) be independently reviewed on a regular basis to avoid inequality in the provision of, and access to, legal services.

8 Review of the Administration of Civil Justice Report, Department of Justice, October 2020

9 Note: The conclusions in this report were, in part, informed by the World Bank Doing Business Report that has since been discontinued due to data irregularities.

10 Matrix of issues – (i) Resourcing of the judicial system; (ii) Nature of the litigation process (common v civil); (iii) Level of legal fees incurred and any recoverable legal fees from losing party; (iv) Administrative costs imposed by the courts; and (v) Liability of the payment of expert witnesses/reports.

In conjunction with the Council of The Bar of Ireland, the Law Society has identified a combination of four measures to positively impact litigation costs in the short- to medium-term in Ireland,¹¹

- i. Increased investment in the justice system, in particular the number of judges and support staff, better case management, and adoption of technology – It is considered essential that the State facilitates greater expenditure on the justice system if they wish to reduce litigation costs.
- ii. Investment in effective civil legal aid to ensure access to justice for all, regardless of means – A cost benefit analysis in an Irish context would be of considerable assistance to the Government in understanding the additional value that can be gained from increased investment in legal aid.
- iii. The introduction of non-binding guidelines in respect of legal costs – As opposed to a table of maximum costs, which the Law Society strongly opposes, a table of non-binding guidelines could operate as a starting point for the assessment of costs.
- iv. A reduction in State-imposed revenue on a Bill of Costs –The cost of legal services could be lowered by reducing court duties and/or VAT which currently make up one-third of the Bill of Costs.

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 educating 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

¹¹ Submission to Indecon Economic Consultants' Economic Evaluation of Options to Control Litigation Costs, The Council of The Bar of Ireland and The Law Society of Ireland, February 2022. (web link not available at time of drafting)

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 its educational offering both on-site and online, through pre-recorded eLectures, supported by Zoom with on-site workshops and skills sessions.

The Professional Practice Course Hybrid has been designed 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 on-going work to reshape the educational model of the Law Society. The PPC I and II courses will be consolidated into one course. This new PPC will launch in September 2022. Syllabus consultation and focus groups have taken place 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 is underway with the methodology for stakeholder engagement being considered.

4. **The extent to which the admission 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.**

The Law Society of Ireland has a long-proven reputation for training solicitors to the high standard required to meet any and all challenges they will face throughout their career. As noted in a recent LSRA report¹²

“The quality and relevance of education and training impacts upon the quality and skills of legal professionals who undergo it. It is in the public interest that legal services provided to consumers, included the State itself, are of a consistently high quality in terms of skills, service and ethical standards.”

The provision of highly trained solicitors must be balanced with demand, and the Law Society is acutely aware of this. The appetite for firms to take on trainees appears to have rebounded from 2020 levels. This is mainly driven by the Top 20 firms in the country, with over half reporting an increase in the trainee staff in 2021. Growing confidence in the economy overall is likely to see close to six-in-ten businesses increase staff numbers in the coming 12 months.¹³

Taking account of the growing demand for talent, aligned with the upward trend in new trainee solicitors added to the Roll of Solicitors on an annual basis, it is the Law Society’s view that the market is currently adequately served and thus admission policies of the legal professions are consistent with the public interest.

The LSRA research examining the barriers to entering the legal profession and increasing diversity is very welcome and should prove an important component in informing the economic and other barriers faced by young barristers and solicitors in today’s market. However, any future changes in admission policies in Ireland for solicitors should be made in the context of the necessarily high standards required to meet and exceed the exacting requirements of consumers.

12 Setting Standards - Legal Practitioner Education and Training, Legal Services Regulatory Authority, September 2020

13 Annual Survey of Law Firms in Ireland, 2021/2022, Smith and Williamson

Visas for trainee solicitors from Non-EEA countries

There are currently difficulties being faced by third level graduates from non-EEA countries who have qualified from Irish universities and colleges in securing visas in order to progress and train in Ireland as solicitors.

The Society wrote to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) in 2018 requesting that a standalone visa scheme for trainee solicitors from non-EEA countries be published in a similar manner to the Stamp 1A visa scheme currently in operation for trainee accountants from non-EEA countries.

The letter was acknowledged by INIS confirming receipt of the request and stating that same was under consideration. Despite numerous communications being sent by the Society, no further progress has been made in respect of this request for a standalone Stamp 1A visa scheme for trainee solicitors to be published.

The Society is aware from contact received from such graduates that they are facing serious difficulties in securing visas due to (a) the lack of a policy within INIS regarding visas for trainee solicitors and (b) the lack of a standalone visa scheme. There are instances where three different types of visas have been granted to three individual law graduates despite the fact that each of the three were pursuing the same course of professional training to include vocational on the job training with their individual training firms.

At the end of 2021 a trainee solicitor candidate who had secured a training contract with a legal firm in Ireland was refused a visa by an official from INIS on the basis that no internal policy regarding trainee solicitors had been published.

The Society understands that the Migration Policy function of the Department of Justice are examining this issue but the current visa system and the lack of a published visa scheme for such graduates are detrimental to the Society's goal of facilitating diversity in the legal profession.

5. The on-going impact of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic on the above matters.

Moves by the Government in early January 2021 to ease pandemic-related restrictions, and a roadmap to see almost all restrictions lifted by early Spring, have added to a greater sense of optimism from the general public and businesses alike. A survey commissioned by the Law Society captured views within the legal sector of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.¹⁴ The survey found that the Top 3 concerns included the impact on turnover/income (25%); concerns for the future of the business (18%); and the prospect of a recession (16%).

An earlier than expected return to relatively normal operations for businesses may go some way to addressing these worries, however, it is very likely that concerns around turnover and future viability are ones that will take some time to dissipate. For smaller businesses in particular, with fewer than ten employees, or sole practitioners, addressing issues of turnover and/or business viability may prove particularly challenging once Government supports are no longer available.

The uncertainty created by both Brexit and Covid-19 has led to a hardening of the market in respect to insurance premiums. Until such time as these, and other global issues, outside of Ireland's control, dissipate, it is likely that the upward trend in premiums recorded in 2020 and 2021 will continue.

While the pandemic has undoubtedly negatively impacted almost all sectors of the economy, some positive aspects, especially around work practices have emerged. Close to two-thirds of solicitors regarded changes to work practices i.e., remote working, increased flexibility, and use of technology, over the past 12-24 months as a positive step change for the sector. In particular, these changes will benefit smaller businesses based outside the main urban areas as it will improve their ability to attract talent and overall competitiveness in the market.

With the strict restrictions on international travel for much of the year, it is difficult to ascertain the impact that Brexit had on the legal sector in 2021. Following a surge in the number of solicitors with practising certificates in 2019, likely as a direct result of Brexit, numbers have stabilised with 11,483 practising certificates issued by the Law Society in 2021. While 513 (59%) of the 876 solicitors admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in 2021 were trainees qualified as new solicitors, a further 278 (32%) were England/Wales solicitors, well below the 1,838 recorded in 2019.

Over the past two years the Law Society has introduced important changes in relation to Brexit. Following the move in November 2020 to no longer issue solicitors qualified in England and Wales with practising certificates unless they could demonstrate that they practice, or intend to practice, in Ireland from a physical establishment in the jurisdiction, new regulations in January 2021 enabled the Law Society to reinstate direct admission of qualified solicitors from England and Wales to the Irish Roll of Solicitors, subject to reciprocity.

¹⁴ The Business Recovery Survey Report (2021), Crowe, commissioned by the Law Society of Ireland

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