



LSRA Publishes Annual *Pathways* Report on Admissions to Legal Professions 2024

Barrister and solicitor numbers grow despite slight annual decrease in new entrants

Almost one in five solicitor trainees undertake part-time training programme

Press Release: Thursday 10 July 2025

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) today publishes its annual report for 2024 on the admission policies of the legal professions.

The report, *Pathways to the Professions 2024: Annual Report on Admission Policies of the Legal Professions*, documents the number of persons admitted to practise as both solicitors and barristers in 2024, based on figures supplied by the professional bodies in the sector.

It is the sixth annual report on admission policies that the LSRA has submitted to the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration under section 33 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015.

For the first time, the report provides information about flexible routes to professional training for solicitors and barristers and the access initiatives of the Law Society of Ireland, the Honorable Society of King's Inns and The Bar of Ireland. This additional reporting arises from recommendations in the LSRA's *Breaking Down Barriers* initiative to widen access and increase diversity in the legal professions.

Solicitor Admissions

- A total of 542 new trainee solicitors enrolled on the Law Society's Professional Practice Course (PPC) in 2024, down 3% from 2023. There were 442 new trainees on the full-time course and 100 trainees on the part-time course, the PPC Hybrid.
- The number of PPC Hybrid solicitor trainees has steadily grown in the six years since its introduction in 2019. In 2024, part-time solicitor trainees accounted for almost one in five (18%) of the total solicitor trainee intake. The popularity of this part-time programme indicates that the more flexible training option has addressed a previously unmet demand within the solicitors' profession.
- The vast majority of new solicitor trainees (91%) were aged 30 or under. Eight in ten (83%) had a law degree, while 16% had a degree in another discipline and 1% had no degree.
- New solicitor trainees must secure a training contract prior to their enrolment on the Law Society's professional training course. They undertake their 24-month in-office training once they have successfully completed the taught element of the programme. As in previous

years, some eight in ten new trainee solicitors in 2024 (83%) secured training contracts with law firms in Dublin, reflecting the dominance of the country's capital in the legal services market.

- Almost two thirds of trainees (63%) in 2024 had training contracts in one of the twenty large law firms in Ireland. In contrast, only 5% of trainees secured a contract in-house with a private company or with a State body.
- Amid a year of strong growth in the Irish economy, the total number of practising solicitors in 2024 was 12,175, the highest number in ten years. Over two thirds of these (8,177) were solicitors working in Dublin. In 2024, first time practising certificates were issued to 378 newly qualified Law Society solicitors, down 9% from 416 in 2023.

Barrister Admissions

- A total of 120 students started the Barrister-at-Law (BL) degree course at the Honorable Society of King's Inns in 2024, down 8% from 131 in 2023. There were 50 full-time students and 70 part-time students. Part-time students have generally outnumbered full-time students in recent years, highlighting the importance of flexible training routes into the barrister profession.
- A total of 136 barristers were “called to the Bar” by the Chief Justice in 2024, allowing them full rights of audience before all courts. This is down 27 (17%) from 163 in 2023. Nine in ten of those called to the Bar in 2024 were newly qualified King's Inns barristers while the remaining 10% qualified in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- A total of 82 barristers began their mandatory 12-month period of unpaid supervised practice, called pupillage, as members of the Law Library, up from 72 in 2023.
- The total number of barristers on the Roll of Practising Barristers maintained by the LSRA stood at 3,071 at the end of 2024. Of these, 2,134, (69%) were members of the Law Library and 937 (31%) were not members of the Law Library. The Roll is a searchable online register of all barristers entitled to provide legal services in the State.
- This report now incorporates additional information arising from the LSRA's ongoing *Breaking Down Barriers* project which seeks to address economic and other barriers facing aspiring and early career solicitors and barristers. The professional bodies have provided details of their flexible routes to professional training and also their access initiatives at second and third level which aim to increase the diversity of the legal professions.

The Authority report concludes that:

“The year under review saw a slight downturn in numbers enrolling in professional training for solicitors and barristers and the numbers of new entrants to both professions. However, overall there was an increase in the total number of solicitors with practising certificates and the number of barristers on the Roll of Practising Barristers at the end of 2024.”



An tÚdarás Rialála
Seirbhíse Dlí
Legal Services
Regulatory Authority

“The part-time PPC Hybrid and modular BL degree course continue to grow in popularity and are facilitating more flexible pathways to the solicitors and barristers professions for people from more diverse backgrounds.

“The concentration of legal practitioners in Dublin remains a feature of the legal services market, and reports of recruitment and retention challenges in the solicitors’ profession in both the public and private sectors continue. Top 20 firms have responded to competitive challenges with staff pay rises and allied increases in their client fees.”

The report also notes that:

“Amid a year of strong growth in the Irish economy, the total number of practising solicitors in 2024 was 12,175 and the total number of practising barristers was 3,071. The combined total of 15,246 legal professionals represents approximately 0.5% of the total 2.8 million people recorded as in employment in Ireland in 2024.

“There were clear signs of a buoyant employment market for solicitors concentrated in Dublin, and reports of regional disparities and shortages around the rest of Ireland. While continued growth in the economy is an opportunity, it can also create recruitment and retention challenges in the legal services sector and lead to increases in legal costs.”

ENDS

Pathways to the Professions 2024: Annual Report on Admission Policies of the Legal Professions is available to download here:

For further information please contact Nuala Haughey, Tel: 087-2867510 Email: nmhaughey@lsra.ie