

ANNUAL REPORT ON ADMISSION POLICIES
OF LEGAL PROFESSIONS | 2025



Law Society
of Ireland





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| INTRODUCTION

2025 statistics on the profession provide valuable insights into the future trajectory of legal services, the potential for long-term sustainability, and the sector's ability to adapt to society's needs. As the Irish legal landscape continued to evolve in 2025, certain key issues remain prominent – the demand for legal services, the cost of those services, and the accessibility of the profession itself.

In 2025, the number of solicitors on the Roll has continued to grow, with over 12,000 practising solicitors registered with the Law Society. Trainee solicitor admissions remain high at year-end 2025 with an intake of 581 trainees. Solicitors play an integral role in shaping the future of the legal system. Their responsibilities extend beyond providing legal advice and representation– they are also key advocates for reforms that enhance public access to justice

The admission policies for the profession in Ireland are designed to maintain high standards of education and training, at a reasonable cost, while ensuring that legal services remain accessible. Ensuring the availability of legal services at a reasonable cost also requires a robust framework for education and training standards. In order to better meet public demand and ensure the representativeness of the general public in the profession, the Law Society consistently supports a variety of learning models, offering part-time and remote routes into law.

The Professional Practice Course (PPC) has streamlined the training process, integrating all taught elements into a single academic year, thus providing significant logistical and practical advantages to trainees and firms.

The core curriculum on the full-time PPC course runs from September to April each year and includes a continued focus on such skills as negotiation, research, drafting, advocacy, interviewing and advising, and presentation skills, together with an enhanced focus on more general skills such as leadership, project management, office and legal technology, and financial skills. Professional responsibility – including enhanced coverage of legal ethics, solicitors' accounts and rules of professional conduct, and law-firm life – also forms an integral part of the core. More recently, as part of the first biennial review of the 'fused' PPC, additional changes have been incorporated into the core-syllabus. These changes include the introduction of a new 'Introduction to Specialist Areas of Practice' course, to cover introductory content on family law, taxation law, and criminal litigation, and greater coverage of the use of AI in the legal content. This means that criminal litigation has been reintroduced as a core-component of the PPC, with trainees also having the opportunity to undertake the topic in greater depth as part of our advanced elective offering.

We are currently examining a solicitor apprenticeship model as a new route to qualification for school leavers. This should help address the shortage of solicitors in regional areas. By offering apprenticeship opportunities, we hope to continue lowering entry barriers, particularly for students who might not have access to the traditional academic pathways into law.

We have been innovative in providing alternative routes into the profession. The introduction of the PPC Hybrid model – a flexible, part-time professional practice course – has been one of the most notable Initiatives in this regard. This route allows trainees to work while completing their studies, reducing financial burdens and increasing access for those with family or other commitments.

This innovative approach is particularly relevant for mature students or those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, helping to diversify the profession and ensure that a wider range of perspectives are represented in the legal system. In addition, work has also commenced on the restructuring of the PPC (Hybrid) on a modular basis so as to provide even greater flexibility for learners,

| INTRODUCTION

allowing trainees, should they choose, to complete their training over a longer timeframe that best suits their own individual circumstances.

A longstanding initiative since 2001, is the Law Society Access programme, which provides financial and practical assistance to financially and socio-economically disadvantaged students from the FE-1 exam stage all the way through to qualification as a solicitor. There are currently 212 individuals participating on the Access Scholarship Scheme. In 2025, as part of a wider evaluation of funding sustainability and access supports, the Law Society introduced a member contribution at the Practising Certificate renewal stage. This initiative generated an additional €170,000 for grant-funded access programmes. As a direct result, the Law Society expanded the Access Programme in 2025 by funding five additional PPC places and 20 additional FE-1 examination places, representing a targeted expansion of capacity based on demonstrated demand and positive participant outcomes.

32 Small Practice Traineeship Grants have been awarded since the introduction of the Scheme with six grants awarded in 2025. This Grant is a €25,000 award from the Law Society designed to help small, regional solicitor firms (five or fewer solicitors) outside major urban hubs (Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway) hire trainees. The scheme provides funding of €18,000 to the training firm over the course of the two-year training contract. It will also provide funding of €7,000 to the trainee solicitor by way of a discount on the Professional Practice Course fee. 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 town in 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.

In 2025, a new grant scheme received approval for funding. The Independent Law Centre Traineeship Grant is worth €25,000 with one award to be made each year commencing in 2026. The grant is designed to support solicitor training contracts with independent law centres.

In tandem with its commitment to fostering inclusivity, the Law Society spearheads an array of outreach initiatives aimed at demystifying legal careers and empowering aspiring solicitors.

These include the Street Law programme, which harnesses the expertise of trainee solicitors to deliver legal literacy workshops in local schools and community settings, providing them with an understanding of legal principles.

Separately, over 20,000 transition-year students have taken part in the TY programmes including the 'Solicitors of the Future' programmes. These provide students with the opportunity to explore a future career as a solicitor and learn how the law is relevant to their daily lives.

This multifaceted approach by the Law Society helps to demystify legal careers and foster a more inclusive legal landscape, helping to lay the foundations for a more equitable and resilient profession in the near



Mark Garrett
Director General,
Law Society of Ireland

| NEW PPC TRAINEES AND TRAINING CONTRACTS



| NEW PPC TRAINEES AND TRAINING CONTRACTS

1. The number of candidates who sat the FE-1 in 2025 and the number who sat FE-1s under the accelerated access scheme.

Examination Sittng	No of Candidates
March 2025	1,997
October 2025	2,460

MARCH 2025

EXAM	Company Law	Constitution Law	Law of Contract	Criminal Law	Law of the EU	Equity	Property Law	Law of Torts
Attended	541	437	579	569	487	583	627	508
Passed	324	357	321	384	395	398	342	365
% Passed	60%	82%	55%	67%	81%	68%	55%	72%

OCTOBER 2025

EXAM	Company Law	Constitution Law	Law of Contract	Criminal Law	Law of the EU	Equity	Property Law	Law of Torts
Attended	725	530	788	730	738	697	776	586
Passed	474	363	408	513	599	462	437	444
% Passed	65%	68%	52%	70%	81%	66%	58%	76%

Undergraduates sitting the FE-1 in 2025

566 the total number of undergraduate students who sat the FE-1 in 2025 under the “accelerated access” scheme introduced in 2020. Please note that the undergraduate data relates only to candidates who currently have the status of undergraduate and does not include those who started sitting the FE-1 as undergraduates but subsequently provided the Law Society with evidence of graduation.

| NEW PPC TRAINEES AND TRAINING CONTRACTS

2. The number of candidates who sat the Preliminary Examination in 2025:

Examination Sittng	No of Candidates
Attended	12
Passed	5
% Passed	42%

3. The number of trainees who commenced the Professional Practice Course (PPC) in 2025 with separate statistics for full-time and hybrid PPC trainees.

581 Trainees commenced the Professional Practice Course (PPC) in 2025.

476 Trainees attending the 2025 full-time PPC which commenced in September 2025.

105 Trainees attending the Hybrid PPC which commenced in December 2025.

TOTAL NUMBER ON COURSE OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS

YEAR	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
TOTAL	405	412	448	501	473	538	560	561	542	581

OVERVIEW BY GENDER										
Female	236	243	268	297	307	329	365	319	358	376
	58%	58%	59%	59%	64%	61%	65%	69%	66%	64%
Male	169	169	180	205	166	209	195	242	184	205
	42%	42%	41%	41%	36%	39%	35%	31%	34%	36%

OVERVIEW BY AGE										
30 or under	87%	90%	89%	88%	90%	88%	95%	91%	90%	90%
Over 30	13%	10%	11%	12%	10%	12%	5%	9%	10%	10%

OVERVIEW BY EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND										
Law Degree	315	346	357	398	386	447	467	498	451	493
Non Law Degree	86	58	84	100	79	88	85	60	85	79
No Degree	7	8	7	3	8	4	6	3	6	9

| NEW PPC TRAINEES AND TRAINING CONTRACTS

4. The top 20 law firms by highest PPC trainee intake in 2025, please indicate separately the total number of hybrid trainees that secured a training contract with any of these top 20 law firms.

TRAINING FIRMS FILTERED BY HIGHEST INTAKE FOR PPC FULL-TIME

	FIRM NAME	2024 TRAINEE INTAKE	2025 TRAINEE INTAKE
1	Arthur Cox LLP	45	63
2	Matheson LLP	47	56
3	McCann Fitzgerald LLP	46	47
4	A&L Goodbody LLP	41	40
5	William Fry LLP	24	35
6	Eversheds Sutherland Ireland LLP	19	19
7	Mason Hayes & Curran LLP	20	16
8	RDJ LLP	13	14
9	ByrneWallace Shields LLP	16	12
10	Maples & Calder LLP	9	12
11	Dillon Eustace LLP	7	8
12	Philip Lee LLP	3	8
13	Addleshaw Goddard (Ireland) LLP	7	7
14	DLA Piper LLP	9	7
15	Fieldfisher LLP	5	6
16	Kennedys Solicitors LLP	5	6
17	Beauchamps LLP	6	5
18	Comyn Kelleher Tobin LLP	1	5
19	Chief State Solicitors Office	5	5
20	Hayes Solicitors LLP	9	5

The two largest firms taking on PPC Hybrid trainees are Ennis & Associates, Dublin, with 3 trainees and O'Flynn Exhams, Cork, with 3 trainees.

| NEW PPC TRAINEES AND TRAINING CONTRACTS

5. A breakdown of the 2025 PPC intake, with separate statistics for the full-time and hybrid PPC trainees, based on the following: (i) gender; (ii) age (30 and under, 31 and over); (ii) degree status (law degree, non-law degree or no degree).

FEMALE	MALE	
299	177	PPC FULL-TIME
77	28	PPC HYBRID

18-25 YRS	26-30 YRS	31-39 YRS	40+ YRS	
310	148	18	0	PPC FULL-TIME
30	40	26	9	PPC HYBRID

LAW DEGREE	NON LAW DEGREE	NO DEGREE	
416	59	1	PPC FULL-TIME
77	20	8	PPC HYBRID

6. A breakdown of the number of training contracts for the 2025 PPC intake for full-time trainees based on type of organisation: (i) law firm; (ii) "in-house" with public or state bodies; (iii) "in-house" with private bodies.

LAW FIRM	IN-HOUSE	STATE BODY	TOTAL
463	7	6	476
PPC FULL-TIME			

| NEW PPC TRAINEES AND TRAINING CONTRACTS

7. A breakdown of the number of training contracts for the 2025 PPC intake for hybrid trainees based on type of organisation: (i) law firm; (ii) “in-house” with public or state bodies; (iii) “in-house” with private bodies.

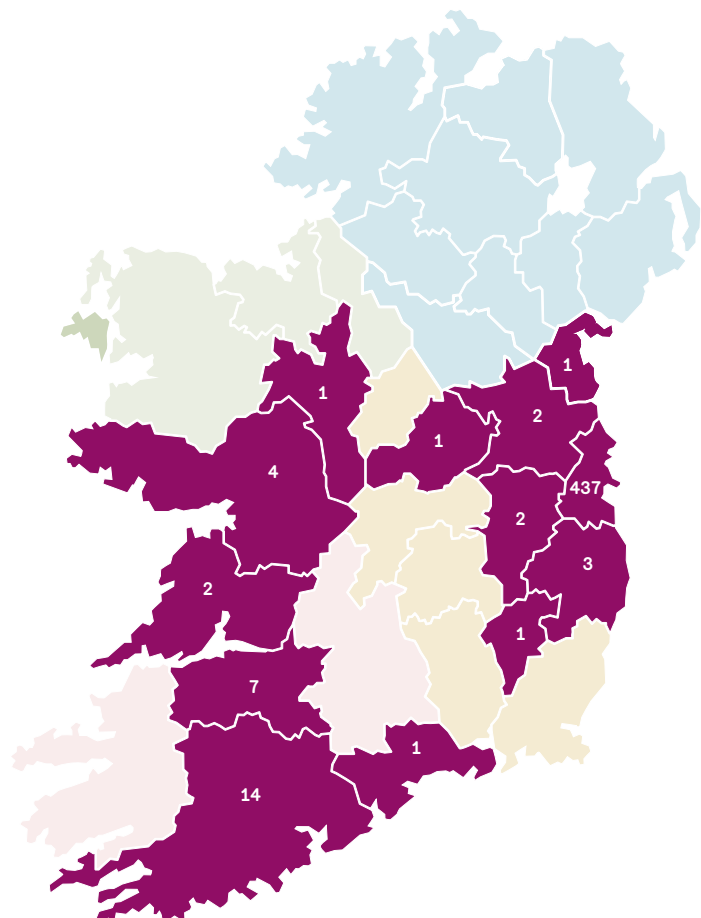
LAW FIRM	IN-HOUSE	STATE BODY	TOTAL
94	5	6	105

PPC HYBRID

8. A breakdown of the number of training contracts for the 2025 PPC intake with separate statistics for full-time and hybrid trainees based on the county location of the training firm/ organisation

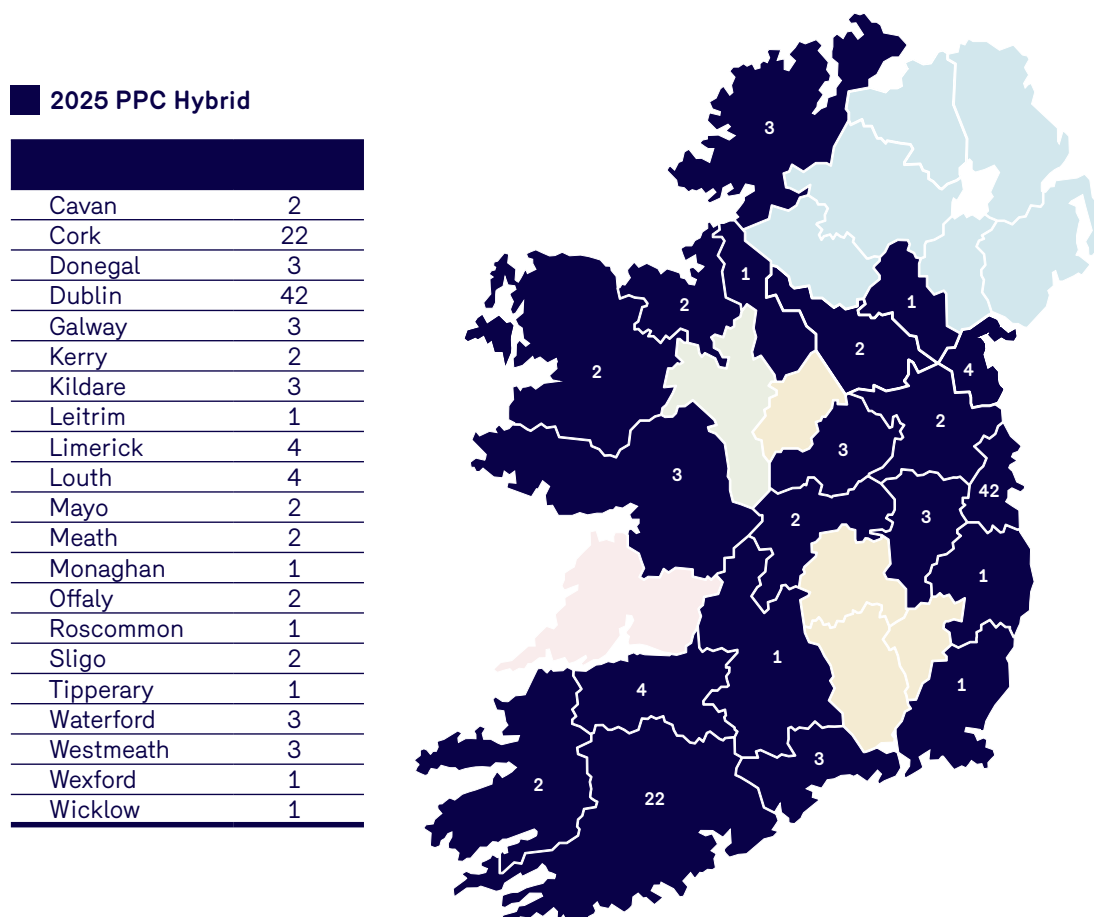
2025 PPC Full-time

Carlow	1
Clare	2
Cork	14
Dublin	437
Galway	4
Kildare	2
Limerick	7
Louth	1
Meath	2
Roscommon	1
Waterford	1
Westmeath	1
Wicklow	3



| NEW PPC TRAINEES AND TRAINING CONTRACTS

8. A breakdown of the number of training contracts for the 2025 PPC intake with separate statistics for full-time and hybrid trainees based on the county location of the training firm/organisation



COUNTY BY COUNTY BREAKDOWN 2025

COUNTY	TOTAL	COUNTY	TOTAL
Dublin	479	Kerry	2
Cork	36	Mayo	2
Limerick	11	Offaly	2
Galway	7	Roscommon	2
Kildare	5	Sligo	2
Louth	5	Cavan	2
Meath	4	Carlow	1
Waterford	4	Leitrim	1
Westmeath	4	Monaghan	4
Wicklow	4	Tipperary	1
Donegal	3	Wexford	1
Clare	2		

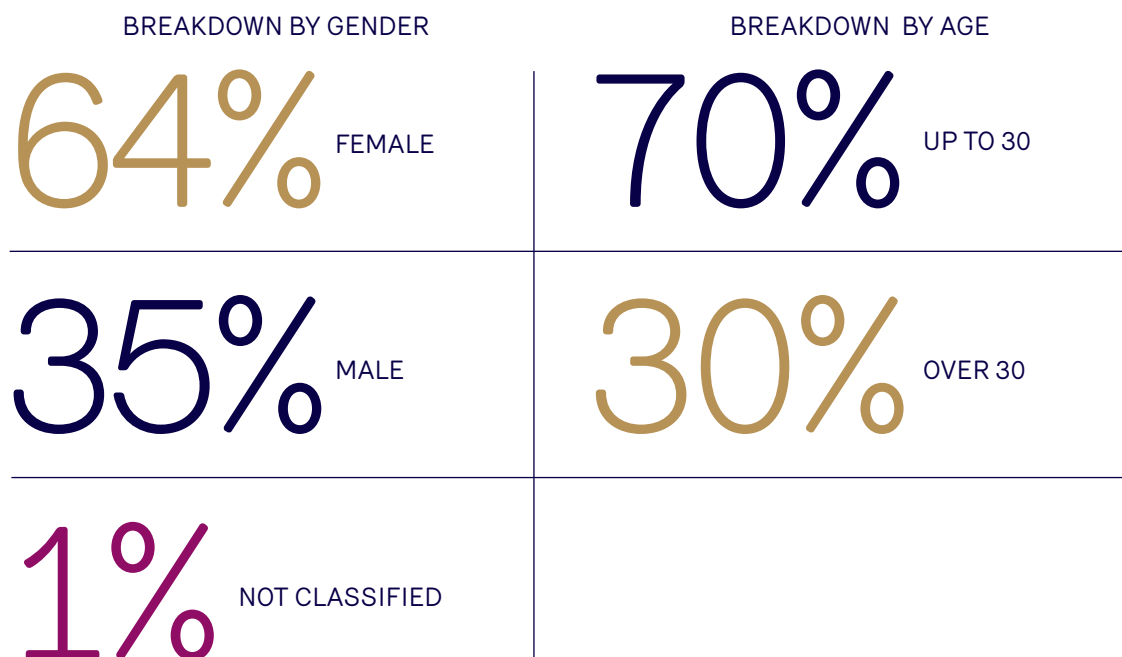
| PRACTISING CERTIFICATES
FOR NEWLY QUALIFIED SOLICITORS



9. Number of solicitors newly qualified in 2025 and came into practice in 2025.

583 Count of newly qualified solicitors.

10. A demographic breakdown of newly qualified solicitors in 2025



11. A breakdown of the number of newly qualified solicitors working in the following: (i) law firm; (ii) "in-house" with public or state bodies; (iii) "in-house" with private bodies;



| ROLL OF SOLICITORS



12. The number of solicitors admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in 2025 with a breakdown based on the route of admission (qualifying trainee, England and Wales qualified, NI qualified, s 52, barristers, EU lawyers etc.).

781

Number of Solicitors admitted to the Roll

ROUTE OF ADMISSION	2025
Qualifying Trainees	558
English Solicitors	159
Northern Irish Solicitors	29
Barristers	13
All others (EEA, USA, Australia & New Zealand)	22
Total	781

13. 131 Number of Solicitors marked as not enrolled during 2025

14. 25,364 Number of Solicitors on the Roll 31 December 2025

15. 13,077 Number of Practising certs (incl State) issued throughout 2025

16. 116 Count of Practising Certificates suspended, or surrendered

17. 12,961 Count of Practising Certificates (incl state) at year end

| ROLL OF SOLICITORS

18. Breakdown by the number of solicitors by top 20 employers

	FIRM NAME	NO OF SOLICITORS
1	A&L Goodbody LLP	399
2	Matheson LLP	370
3	Arthur Cox LLP	344
4	Mason Hayes & Curran LLP	328
5	McCann Fitzgerald LLP	289
6	William Fry LLP	220
7	Chief State Solicitors Office	208
8	ByrneWallace Shields LLP	205
9	Legal Aid Board	144
10	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	128
11	Central Bank Of Ireland	117
12	RDJ LLP	115
13	Beauchamps LLP	105
14	Philip Lee LLP	102
15	Maples and Calder (Ireland) LLP	97
16	Allied Irish Banks plc	95
17	Addleshaw Goddard (Ireland) LLP	86
18	Dillon Eustace LLP	84
19	DLA Piper Ireland LLP	79
20	Fieldfisher Ireland LLP	79

19. **8,827** Number of practising certificates held by solicitors in Dublin

20. **4,134** Number of practising certificates held by solicitors outside Dublin

IN HOUSE / PRIVATE - PRACTISING CERTIFICATES

21. **2,911** The number of solicitors with practising certificates recorded as working "in-house" in the private sector on 31 December 2025.

22|23. **531** The number of solicitors listed above recorded as working "in-house" with State or public bodies on 31 December 2025.

| ADMISSIONS DEVELOPMENTS
& BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS
INFORMATION



24. Please provide details of Law Society initiatives to further increase flexible routes for solicitor training and their impact in 2025.

1. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE COURSE (PPC) HYBRID – A FLEXIBLE CORE ROUTE

The Law Society has been innovative in providing alternative routes into the profession. The introduction of the PPC Hybrid model – a flexible, part-time professional practice course – has been one of the most notable initiatives in this regard. The most recent iteration of PPC Hybrid course launched in December 2025 with 105 trainees. This route allows trainees to work while completing their studies, reducing financial burdens and increasing access for those with family or other commitments. This innovative approach is particularly relevant for mature students or those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, helping to diversify the profession and ensure that a wider range of perspective clients are represented in the legal system. The Hybrid model;

- combines online lectures with in-person sessions (at weekends) so trainees don't need to relocate to Dublin for months at a time.
- allows trainees to continue working (or remain in their communities) while completing the academic component.

Impact in 2025

- In 2025 about 22% of new solicitor trainees opted for the part-time PPC Hybrid route – indicating real uptake from those who need flexibility.
- Risk of relocation or loss of income for trainees is reduced since the course is built around remote delivery. 105 trainees started in December 2025 with 60% training outside Dublin.
- Growing interest from mature trainees and those with family or work commitments suggests this route is broadening access. Hybrid trainees are older; over a third are 30+ years old.
- Starting in 2027, a new form PPC (Hybrid) will be offered on a modular basis such that, if they wish, students can access the course over a longer timeframe that best meets their own individual needs.

The PPC Hybrid is now a recognised mainstream route for a noteworthy minority of trainees, with strong indications that this will continue to grow.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
TOTAL	107	91	94	100	105
FEMALE	63	63	70	73	77
%	59%	69%	75%	73%	75%
MALE	44	28	24	27	28
%	41%	31%	25%	27%	25%
30 OR UNDER	83	52	63	69	70
%	78%	57%	67%	69%	66%
31 OR OVER	24	39	31	31	35
%	22%	43%	33%	31%	34%
DUBLIN	53 (50%)	49 (54%)	38 (40%)	45 (45%)	42 (40%)
OTHER COUNTRIES	54 (50%)	42 (46%)	56 (60%)	55 (55%)	63 (60%)

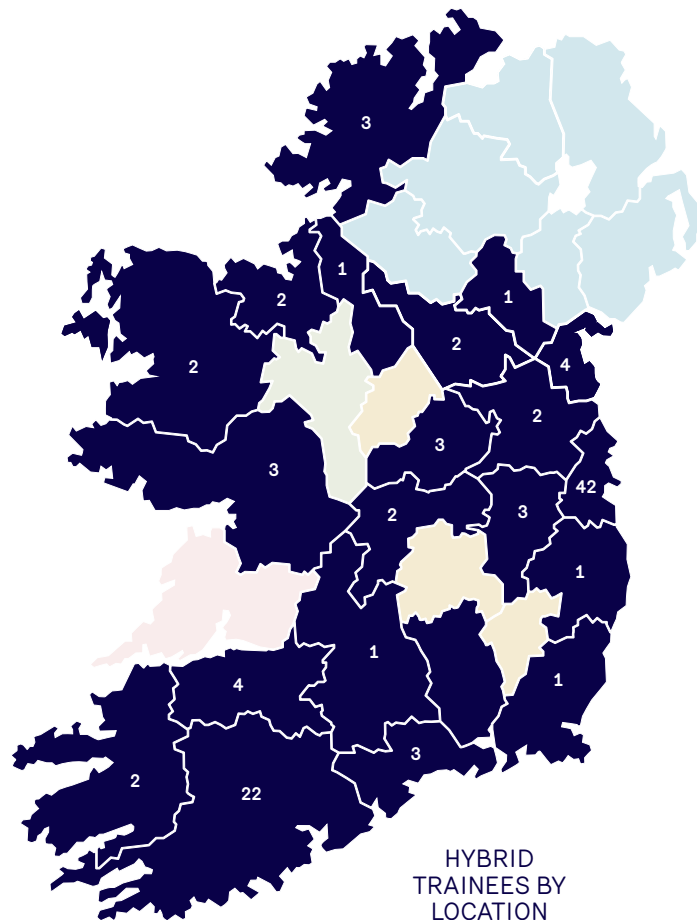
| ADMISSIONS DEVELOPMENTS & BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS INFORMATION

FEMALE	18-25 YRS	31-41 YRS
77	29	26
MALE	26-30 YRS	40+ YRS
28	40	9

LAW DEGREE	NON LAW DEGREE	NO DEGREE
77	20	8

2025 PPC Hybrid

Cavan	2
Cork	22
Donegal	3
Dublin	42
Galway	3
Kerry	2
Kildare	3
Leitrim	1
Limerick	4
Louth	4
Mayo	2
Meath	2
Monaghan	1
Offaly	2
Roscommon	1
Sligo	2
Tipperary	1
Waterford	3
Westmeath	3
Wexford	1
Wicklow	1



2. PROFESSIONAL SOLICITOR APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY – PLANNING THE NEXT STEP

The Law Society is currently examining a solicitor apprenticeship model as a new route to qualification for school leavers. This should help address the shortage of solicitors in regional areas. Offering apprenticeship opportunities, will continue lowering entry barriers, particularly for students who might not have access to the traditional academic pathways into law. The Law Society's Education Committee has approved in principle the introduction of a new Professional Solicitor Apprenticeship programme under the Solicitors Acts 1954 to 2015, as a new route to qualification for school leavers and law clerks/legal executives. This new route to qualification will be distinct from the current traineeship model, which is primarily a graduate led programme. Professional Solicitor Apprenticeships, while underpinned by the Solicitors Acts, will also require new Professional Solicitor Apprenticeship Regulations, with drafting of those Regulations having commenced. Once approved internally by the Education Committee and Council, the Regulations will ultimately require the approval of the Minister for Justice

Anticipated impact

- Apprenticeships will open the profession to people who don't follow the traditional university route, and/or face financial barriers that make full-time study untenable.
- Broader uptake of apprenticeships could help regional legal services supply by enabling trainees to remain in their communities during training.

3. BROADER ACCESS INITIATIVES TIED TO FLEXIBLE ROUTES

The Law Society supports a number of programmes to expand the pipeline by encouraging students from diverse backgrounds to consider legal careers earlier. Engagement with our schools especially DEIS Schools (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) plays an important role in encouraging participation in higher education for traditionally underrepresented groups and the positive promotion of the solicitor profession as a career opportunity.

Outreach & Early Engagement – thousands of students have participated in our annual programmes including

- Becoming a Solicitor Symposium (online events targeted at third level students) aims to demystify the range of training options, including flexible paths into the profession.
- Street Law places trainee solicitors studying at the Law Society in local schools, prisons and community settings to teach about law.
- Transition Year programmes such as Solicitors of the Future help younger students understand the solicitor role, potentially encouraging entry from a wider talent pool.

The Law Society continues to focus on providing a greater choice for learners

- Trainees can choose a more flexible study schedule via PPC Hybrid.
- New routes (like apprenticeships) are actively being pursued, with policy support building.
- Flexible pathways enable those with jobs, caregiving responsibilities, or financial constraints to progress without taking large breaks from life or income and are helping diversify the solicitor pipeline – not radically yet, but in a meaningful and measurable way.
- Regional impact, an increase in those training outside Dublin: trainees can stay local, which may help address regional practitioner shortages over time.

Together, these efforts are starting to reshape solicitor training – in a direction that's more flexible and more inclusive than traditional models alone.

25. Please provide details of Law Society access initiatives at second and third level and the effectiveness and impact of these initiatives in 2025, and of new potential initiatives being considered.

In tandem with its commitment to fostering inclusivity, the Law Society spearheads an array of outreach initiatives aimed at demystifying legal careers and empowering aspiring solicitors. These include the Street Law programme, which harnesses the expertise of trainee solicitors to deliver legal literacy workshops in local schools and community settings, providing them with an understanding of legal principles. Separately, over 20,000 transition-year students have taken part in TY and ‘Solicitors of the Future’ programmes. These provide students with the opportunity to explore a future career as a solicitor and learn how the law is relevant to their daily lives. This multifaceted approach by the Law Society helps to demystify legal careers and foster a more inclusive legal landscape, helping to lay the foundations for a more equitable and resilient legal profession in the near future

SUMMARY

Initiative	Target Group	Key Impacts in 2025
Solicitors of the Future	School pupils (incl. DEIS)	Increased legal system literacy; career aspiration.
Street Law	Schools/communities	Enhanced access to legal learning; engagement from trainee solicitors.
TY Law Module	Transition Year students	Wide participation; increased awareness of law careers.
Becoming a Solicitor Symposium	Third-level students	Improved understanding of career routes & supports.
Access Scholarship Programme	Socio-economic disadvantaged students	Measurable support through FE-1 and PPC stages.

1. SECOND-LEVEL ACCESS AND OUTREACH INITIATIVES

Solicitors of the Future Programme

This in-person week-long experience gives TY students practical insights into the legal sector. In early 2025, 40 TY students participated, and overall, around 360 students have taken part since 2017. Around 20% of participants in recent years came from DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) schools, demonstrating outreach into disadvantaged contexts.

Impact:

- Promotes early awareness of legal processes, civic rights, and careers in law.
- Helps schools that might otherwise lack resources to give pupils exposure to the legal profession.

Street Law Programme

Street Law places trainee solicitors into schools and community settings to teach law in practical, learner-centred ways — enhancing legal literacy and aspiration among younger learners. Over 3,000 TY students have taken part since 2013.

| ADMISSIONS DEVELOPMENTS & BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS INFORMATION

Impact:

- Builds legal awareness and confidence early, especially in DEIS school settings.
Transition Year (TY) Law Module

The Law Society runs a free online Transition Year law module for second-level schools across Ireland. This programme introduces pupils to legal topics such as criminal law, climate justice, human rights and juvenile justice through weekly video lessons and interactive content delivered on a flexible timetable.

Effectiveness & Impact in 2025:

- Over 2,000 students took part in 2024/early 2025, signalling strong interest and engagement at second level.
- Student feedback indicates that the content is engaging and accessible and has influenced many students to consider careers in law.

2. THIRD-LEVEL AND PRE-TRAINEE INITIATIVES

Becoming a Solicitor Symposium

This annual online event for third-level students offers presentations, panels and Q&A sessions on career pathways, flexible training options, and funding supports. Students are provided direct interaction with Law Society staff, trainees and practicing solicitors.

Impact:

- Helps demystify the route to qualification.
- Encourages third-level students – including those outside traditional law faculties – to consider solicitor training. Raises awareness of flexible routes and financial assistance available.

3. FINANCIAL ACCESS SUPPORT

Law Society Access Scholarship Programme

A longstanding core initiative (since 2001), this programme provides financial and practical assistance to financially and socio-economically disadvantaged students from FE-1 exam stage all the way through to qualification as a solicitor. Supports include:

- Funding for FE-1 exam costs (travel, accommodation, childcare, study resources).
- Mentoring and career guidance on securing training contracts.
- Funding for PPC costs
- Supplementary funding for tuition and maintenance during the PPC where SUSI grants don't fully cover costs.

Impact in 2025:

- Many Access Programme participants have transitioned into successful careers across legal practice, in-house roles and sole practice.
- This sustained long-term support remains one of the most important levers in reducing financial barriers to legal qualification.
- There are currently 212 individuals participating on the Access Scholarship Scheme. 126 individuals are currently pursuing FE-1 exams and receiving financial support in respect of same. 86 individuals are at post FE-1 level and receiving financial support in respect of the fulltime and Hybrid Professional Practice courses. Of the individuals at post FE-1 level, 26 joined the PPC fused courses in 2025. In

| ADMISSIONS DEVELOPMENTS & BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS INFORMATION

addition, 267 individuals have qualified as solicitors with financial support from the Access Scholarship programme.

- Five Scott Scholarships have been awarded with one further Scott Scholarship to be awarded in 2026. The Scott Scholarship provides full fees sponsorship to the successful candidate wishing to attend the PPC.
- Annual funding of €175,000 is provided by the Law Society for the Law Society Bursary (the Bursary) which offers maintenance grants to trainees attending the full-time and part-time PPC. The Bursary provides financial assistance where the trainee's own resources or those of their family are inadequate to fund their studies. The Bursary Committee (a sub-committee of the Education Committee) decides applications twice yearly and its decisions are based on the comparative needs of the applicants. The Bursary supports access to training as a solicitor for a broader spectrum of individuals which is vital in building a legal profession reflecting the diversity of the society it serves. In 2025, 25 trainees received bursaries (11 trainees on the Hybrid PPC 2024 and 14 Trainees on the PPC 2025).
- 32 Small Practice Traineeship Grants have been awarded since the introduction of the Scheme with six grants awarded in 2025. This includes the addition of a new grant placement for 2025 which will also be offered in 2026. The scheme provides funding of €18,000 to the training firm over the course of the two-year training contract. It will also provide funding of €7,000 to the trainee solicitor by way of a discount on the Professional Practice Course fee. 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 town in 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
- In 2025, a new grant scheme received approval for funding. The Independent Law Centre Traineeship Grant is worth €25,000 with one award to be made each year commencing in 2026. The grant is designed to support solicitor training contracts with independent law centres.

26. Please provide details of any evaluation undertaken in 2025 into the effectiveness of the Law Society's funded access programmes and any proposals for their expansion

The effectiveness of the Law Society's funded Access Programme is reviewed on an ongoing basis, with formal evaluation taking place following the issuance of results after each sitting of the Final Examination – Part One (FE-1). These reviews consider participant progression and outcomes as key indicators of programme impact.

The success of the programme is demonstrated by the following outcomes to date:

- 267 Access Programme participants have qualified as solicitors with financial support provided through the programme.
- A further 86 Access participants have successfully passed the FE-1 examinations with Access funding and are currently progressing through the Professional Practice Course (PPC) or the in-office training period.

In 2025, as part of a wider evaluation of funding sustainability and access supports, the Law Society introduced a member contribution at the Practising Certificate renewal stage. This initiative generated an additional €170,000 for grant-funded access programmes.

As a direct result, the Law Society expanded the Access Programme in 2025 by funding five additional PPC places and twenty additional FE-1 examination places, representing a targeted expansion of capacity based on demonstrated demand and positive participant outcomes.

1. CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF ADMISSION POLICY CHANGES

The admission policies for the legal profession in Ireland are designed to maintain high standards of education and training, at a reasonable cost, while ensuring that legal services remain accessible. Ensuring the availability of legal services at a reasonable cost also requires a robust framework for education and training standards. In order to better meet public demand and ensure the representativeness of the general public in the profession, the Law Society consistently supports a variety of learning models, offering part-time and remote routes into law. We are currently examining a solicitor apprenticeship model as a new route to qualification for school leavers. This should help address the shortage of solicitors in regional areas. By offering apprenticeship opportunities, we hope to continue lowering entry barriers, particularly for students who might not have access to the traditional academic pathways into law.

Flexible Routes and PPC Hybrid Growth

- The Law Society continued to maintain and operate the part-time/flexible Professional Practice Course (PPC) Hybrid alongside the traditional full-time PPC. This flexible course remains a key part of admission policy, allowing trainees to work while completing their professional training — an important access and flexibility measure.
- The PPC Hybrid has steadily grown in popularity, forming a larger share of overall trainee intake, and the Society continues to support this route as a core part of its admission framework.

2. SOLICITOR APPRENTICESHIP MODEL

- The Law Society is developing a solicitor apprenticeship model as a new route into qualification, particularly aimed at school leavers. The purpose is to provide an alternative to the traditional university FE-1 PPC pathway.
- This model's development and policy assessment represent a substantive admission policy shift under review and a significant potential future reform.

3. ACCESS AND DIVERSITY FUNDING EMBEDDED IN ADMISSION POLICY FRAMEWORK

- The Professional Access Programme was factored into the Practising Certificate (PC) fee structure for 2025 through a €15 contribution from each solicitor's PC fee. The programme is intended to support initiatives that reduce barriers to entry, return, or progression within the profession, thereby continuing to influence the broader admission ecosystem.
- As a direct result, the Law Society expanded the Access Programme in 2025 by funding five additional PPC places and twenty additional FE-1 examination places, representing a targeted expansion of capacity based on demonstrated demand and positive participant outcomes.
- The approach has enabled forward planning and expansion of funded places under the Professional Access Programme, including additional FE-1 and PPC supports, based on anticipated annual income from PC renewals.
- The purpose of the Professional Access Programme is to develop and implement initiatives which aim to further reduce barriers for those seeking to enter, return to, or progress within the solicitors' profession. Indeed, following LSRA's 'Breaking Down Barriers' report, the Law Society remains committed to promoting diversity and enabling access so that the profession best reflects the society it serves.

| GENERAL SCOPE



1. The level of demand for the services of practising barristers and solicitors in 2025.

Market indicators suggest demand has been sustained into 2025, with particular strength in financial services, manufacturing, technology, and life sciences, where legal work on regulatory compliance, commercial contracts, mergers and acquisitions, and dispute resolution continue to drive engagement. Independent analysis, jointly commissioned by the Law Society of Ireland and The Bar of Ireland, highlights the legal sector's contribution of €6.7 billion to Ireland's economy. The sector supports over 52,000 jobs, indicating a broad and persistent reliance on legal expertise.¹ Law Society survey data from 2025 reveals similar findings – that 50% of private-sector in-house solicitors report working on commercial matters, up from 41% in 2023, illustrating a sustained and diversified demand in areas related to corporate and regulatory complexity.²

Optimism within the profession supports these demand trends, with 65% of private-sector and 53% of public-sector respondents to the same Law Society survey reporting a positive outlook for the future of the profession. While the proportion expecting growth in their own field over the next five years has softened slightly compared with 2023, a majority still anticipate expanded work opportunities.

While the number of practicing solicitors reached a 10-year high in 2024 (12,175), and the number of barristers stood at 3,071,³ the LSRA reports a downturn in the flow of new entrants to both professions since then. Enrolments in the Law Society's professional practice course fell by 3% in 2024, first-time practicing certificates dropped by 9%, and new entrants to the barrister-at-law degree declined by 8%.⁴ These trends suggest that, despite headline growth in practitioner numbers, the future supply pipeline may be tightening at a time when demand for legal services remains strong.

Demand pressures are not uniform across practice areas and geography, with legal services concentrated in the major urban centres, like Dublin, and smaller firms, particularly those outside major urban areas, continuing to face greater recruitment and retention challenges than their larger counterparts.⁵

While accurate metrics for total national demand for legal services are limited by data constraints, multiple indicators such as economic contributions, and sectoral engagement, indicates that demand for barristers' and solicitors' services in 2025 is not only sustained but is increasingly exerting upward pressures on the likes of labour costs and capacity.

2. The costs of legal services in 2025 and whether these were available at a reasonable cost to consumers.

Assessing the costs of legal services in Ireland shows a nuanced and evolving landscape. In many market segments, legal fees continue to reflect professional input costs and the complexity of client needs, especially in specialised areas. While national pricing data is limited, survey evidence suggests market confidence amongst solicitors is relatively strong, implying firms are able to sustain fee levels appropriate to service quality and demand.⁶

1. Irish Legal News - Article "Legal sector contributes over €6 billion per year to Irish economy", 22 October 2025

2. Law Society Gazette – "Inside Insights", 8 December 2025

3. Annual Pathways Report on Admission to Legal Professions 2024, LSRA

4. Irish Legal News - Article "Now over 15,000 practicing solicitors and barristers", 10 July 2025

5. Annual Pathways Report on Admission to Legal Professions 2024, LSRA

6. Law Society Gazette – "Inside Insights", 8 December 2025

The diversified nature of legal practice, with greater engagement in areas such as data protection, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and cybersecurity, along with an increasingly complex and evolving regulatory framework, results in rising demand for specialised expertise that often commands higher professional fees. Such specialised services reflect increased training and investment by practitioners, with 86% of private-sector and 92% of public-sector in-house solicitors seeking more training.

The Services Producer Price Index (SPPI)⁷ published by the CSO measures changes in the average level of prices charged by producers of a wide range of services, including legal and related professional services. In the 12 months to Quarter 3, 2025, the overall SPPI rose by 1.9%, reflecting modest upward pressure on service-sector prices in the economy. Within this broad measure, the Legal, Accounting, Public Relations & Business Management Consultancy category, recorded an annual increase of 9.4% - aligning with the observed shift towards specialised demand areas that typically involve higher input costs and more intensive professional time.

From a consumer perspective, access barriers and regional disparities persist for those seeking legal services requiring legal aid support which affect both cost and timely access for users. The Law Society continues to advocate for reform of civil and criminal legal aid funding and services. It should be noted that only a small proportion of complaints to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) related solely to excessive costs (1.1% of all complaints), indicating that most consumers accept legal fees as reflecting professional value.⁸

Legal services in Ireland continue to be shaped by a complex interplay of rising demand in specialised fields, investment in training and technology, and evolving consumer expectations. While many services were delivered at prices considered by clients to be reasonable, ongoing policy attention to pricing transparency, access to legal aid,⁹ and regional service availability remains important to ensure equitable access across society.¹⁰

3. **The standard of education and training for persons admitted to practise.**

The standard of education and training for legal practitioners admitted in 2025 reflected a profession actively adapting to changing legal market demands. Law Society survey findings¹¹ highlight a strong emphasis within the profession on ongoing upskilling, particularly in areas related to technology, AI, and regulation. This underscores a profession that recognises the rapid pace of legal and technological change and is committed to equipping newly qualified practitioners accordingly. That 86% of private-sector and 92% of public-sector in-house solicitors reported a desire for further training on emerging technologies emphasises the professions attention to future-proofing skills.

Responding to evolving professional needs, the Law Society launched a range of 20 specialised micro-credentials¹² in mid-2025 explicitly designed to provide targeted upskilling in areas such as AI, data protection, environmental law, alternative dispute resolution, and commercial practice.

7. *Services Producer Price Index Quarter 3 2025, CSO*

8. *Independent Complaints Handling - Complaints about solicitors and barristers, Report 2 - 2025, LSRA*

9. *Pre-Budget Submission 2026, Law Society of Ireland*

10. *Irish Legal News - Article "Law Society of Ireland urges investment in 'underfunded and overstretched' justice system", 5 September 2025*

11. *Law Society Gazette - "Inside Insights", 8 December 2025*

12. *Law Society Gazette - "Law Society launches micro-credential upskilling", 4 July 2025*

In response to broader regulatory objectives, the LSRA has supported initiatives such as the Breaking Down Barriers¹³ project which diversifies entry routes and address non-academic barriers to practice, while ensuring that core competencies and ethical standards remain central to qualification requirements. The introduction, in 2024, of legal partnerships between solicitors and barristers, also signals a modernisation of practice frameworks that may influence future training needs and multidisciplinary skill sets.¹⁴

The responsiveness to factors such as digitalisation, regulatory complexity, and client service expectations, through flexible training pathways, mandatory continuing professional development, and continued monitoring, ensures an overall standard of education and practical readiness of newly admitted practitioners.

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.

Admissions policies in Ireland’s legal profession in 2025 demonstrates a deliberate balance between safeguarding professional quality and responding to market realities that affect access to legal services. The Law Society’s evolving education framework, underpinned by formal qualification requirements and continuous professional development (CPD), supports the public interest by ensuring that newly admitted solicitors meet rigorous academic, ethical and practical standards.

Admissions policies are also increasingly addressing barriers to entry, with government-commissioned initiatives under the “Breaking Down Barriers” agenda targeting financial, geographic, and demographic obstacles.¹⁵ By reducing systemic impediments, these policies aim to align professional entry with public expectations that the legal workforce should be diverse, representative, and sufficiently resourced to meet demand across regions.

The admissions policies of the Law Society 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 emphasis on specialisation and advanced skills inherent in many of the profession’s growth areas may contribute to higher costs for certain services. The public interest benefits from policies that balance the maintenance of high standards with efforts to enhance transparency around costs and also supporting the expansion of legal aid that ensures access for vulnerable groups. The geographic concentration of solicitors, particularly in Dublin, highlights persistent challenges in ensuring equitable service availability across regions.

On balance, current admissions policies demonstrate a public-interest orientation by safeguarding educational rigor while progressively lowering barriers to practise. However, continued policy attention is needed to ensure that these policies translate into improved availability and reasonable costs of legal services, particularly in underserved communities and for economically vulnerable populations.

13. *Breaking Down Barriers - Final Report for the Minister for Justice, 2024, LSRA*

14. *LSRA Survey on Attitudes Towards Legal Partnerships, 2024, LSRA*

15. *Breaking Down Barriers - Final Report for the Minister for Justice, 2024, LSRA*

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