



53rd European President's Conference of Bars and Law Societies

Ireland Country Report
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© Law Society of Ireland

Blackhall Place, Dublin 7

t. 01 672 4800

e. policyteam@lawsociety.ie

www.lawsociety.ie

A new Government in Ireland brings a new opportunity to influence Justice and Law Reform priorities

2024 was marked as the Year of Elections, and Ireland also had the opportunity to participate in this great fete. In November 2024, the country took to the polls in a General Election, following an intense three week campaign. In late January 2025, a new coalition government was formed between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, with the support of nine regional independent TDs (members of parliament). The new Government is beginning to take shape with ministerial portfolios allocated to members of Cabinet in the last two weeks. Mr Jim O'Callaghan, Barrister and Senior Counsel, has been appointed Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.



Law Society Policy Priorities: A New Agenda for Justice

In advance of the election, the Law Society met with the policy teams in the political parties and set out key policy priorities to help deliver a just and accessible legal system that works for everyone. The aim was to influence the party manifestos and ultimately the Programme for Government. As part of this engagement, The Law Society published *A New Agenda for Justice*, which set out the high level justice and law reform policy priorities for the next Government.

These policy priorities aim to strengthen the legal system, protect vulnerable groups and improve access to justice for all.

The Law Society's Policy Priorities include:

1. Access to Justice for All

- Resource the ambitious plans reflected in the Family Courts Act 2024 to ensure that families who need to engage with the family justice system can do so in a safe and supportive environment.
- Invest in the criminal legal aid system to ensure its future viability.
- Invest in the civil legal aid scheme by expanding the scope of the scheme to cover additional categories of cases.
- Remove the current barriers to establishing an Enduring Power of Attorney.

2. Delivering a modern and effective courts system

- Prioritise the design and implementation of modern courts infrastructure to ensure that court facilities are equipped to make the system more efficient,

- accessible, and fit for the future.
 - Enhance data collection for the purpose of informing the design and delivery of improved and efficient court system.
 - Provide funding to appoint additional judges and court staff to reduce court delays.
 - Establish a document filing system to encourage a paperless approach to court proceedings.
- 3. Reform property law to speed up housing transactions**
- Reform legislation and remove structural barriers to expediate the implementation of e-Conveyancing.
 - Amend outdated legislation to improve the speed and supply of housing.
- 4. Widen access to legal qualifications and legal careers**
- Ensure that student grant funding is compatible with the Law Society's financial assistance programmes that encourage greater social diversity within the profession.
 - Support the development of a national apprenticeship programme for solicitor training in the legal sector, private industry and the public sector.

Programme for Government

As the new Government takes office, it has recently published and ratified The Programme for Government 2025, *Securing Ireland's Future*.

The Programme for Government (**PfG**) provides a blueprint for social and economic development over the next five years. This document outlines the Government's high-level agenda, setting clear priorities that government departments and state agencies must work toward throughout its term. It serves as a roadmap for shaping policies and implementing reforms that will drive progress across key areas, from justice and healthcare to housing and the economy.

At the heart of the Programme for Government is a strong commitment to justice, and we are encouraged to see many of the Law Society's policy priorities align with the government's ambitions. The Law Society's focus will move to ensuring that these high-level commitments are translated into tangible actions and meaningful outcomes for both the public and the legal profession.

This Programme for Government provides the Law Society with a solid policy platform to engage with the government and senior officials, addressing the many challenges that continue to face the justice system. It is an opportunity for us to work collaboratively with Government and senior officials to improve the system for all who rely on it.

Law Society's Launches a new Statement of Strategy 2024 – 2028



In July 2024, the Law Society officially launched its new Statement of Strategy 2024 – 2028.

This new strategy seeks to prepare the Law Society to shape future legislative, regulatory and societal changes by engaging with key stakeholders. The strategy is based on the long-standing purpose of the Law Society which is to support and shape a just and accessible legal system that works for all, as a foundation for a modern, thriving and progressive society. Delivering on the full potential of the strategy will draw on the excellence, commitment and creativity of all in the Law Society's community.

The strategic priorities for 2024 – 2028 include:

An Influential Voice: The Law Society is the leading and influential voice shaping the legal system and representing the solicitors' profession.

Providing Leadership: The Law Society provides leadership, analysis, research and new thinking on justice, law reform and legal practice as part of our contribution to shaping the legal system as well as building the reputation of the solicitors' profession as experts and strategic thinkers.

Enabling Solicitors to Thrive: The Law Society is a key enabler of professional success and ensures that legal practice in Ireland is at the highest level and is supported in every community in the country.

Education and Learning Excellence: The Law Society leads the development and delivery of legal learning for current and future generations of solicitors and those interested in the law. It is the exemplar of international excellence and innovation in legal education and learning for the solicitors' profession.

Promoting Effective Regulation: The Law Society protects and supports the public interest and the solicitors' profession by ensuring effective regulation. Its role as a

regulator is understood and valued as central to sustaining trust in the solicitors' profession and contributing to the Irish legal system, economy and society.

The new strategy recognises that the law is not abstract; it is a people business. Practitioners bring expertise and experience, empathy and equity, and they act as counsel in uncertain times. Therefore, promoting excellence in the solicitors' profession is core to achieving excellence within our legal system to the benefit to everyone in our society.

The Law Society wants to be as prepared as possible for the future, working inclusively with stakeholders to achieve our vision of a just and accessible legal system that works for all.

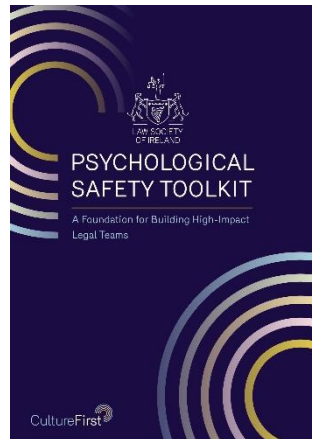
Delivering solutions to improve the housing market with the launch of Speed Up Your Sale



Access to housing is the most pressing issue for the new government to tackle. While government commitments to improve housing supply is welcome, the Law Society stresses that this must be paired with meaningful reforms to property law. These reforms should aim to accelerate property transactions and provide homeowners with the certainty and confidence that their sales and purchases will proceed smoothly.

To increase the confidence and know-how of house sellers, the Law Society, in collaboration with the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland published a new guide can help consumers to avoid delays when selling a property in Ireland. The guide sets out in detail the steps anyone selling a property needs to take, the questions they need to ask, who they need to contact as well as how long it usually takes and costs. The objective is to support house sellers prepare for sale and bring more properties to the market in a swifty manner, avoiding long delays, and unnecessary stress, in the conveyancing process.

Law Society's Psychological Services - Well within the Law: Culture First Initiative



Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of solicitors is a top priority for the Law Society. The Law Society's Psychological Services team is leading the development of a better working culture across the profession. The Well Withing the Law: Culture First programme develops a blueprint for legal organisations to embed psychological wellbeing and development of their people. Its purpose is to enhance and develop the psychological dimensions of legal practice, culture and professionals from within the organisation.

As part of this initiative, the Society launched the Psychological Safety Toolkit in February 2025, to support legal firms in in laying a solid foundation to build high performance teams.

Developed as part of our Well Within the Law: Culture First initiative, the Psychological Safety Toolkit is a practical guide to embedding psychological safety in legal teams. It offers a foundational knowledge, key principles, and actionable strategies to foster a culture of trust, reflection, and continuous learning.

This resource is designed for solicitors and legal professionals at all levels and can be used to:

- gain a clear understanding of psychological safety and why it matters,
- implement actionable steps to create a more open and supportive team environment; and
- encourage reflection and continuous improvement in team dynamics.

With record numbers attending training programmes the Law Society continues to be a leader in legal education



As leaders in legal education, we are committed to supporting the development of solicitors, both those currently practicing and training future generations. We provide high quality professional development and executive education programmes to enhance the expertise of solicitors, as well as business leaders, to navigate the complexities of an evolving legal and regulatory landscape.

Over the past year, the education offering at the Law Society has connected with a record number of learners.

With over 22,000 registered attendances by solicitors at 169 executive education programmes delivered by the Law Society's Skillnet, Professional Training and Diploma teams in 2023.

Over 3500 students, from over 78 countries took part in the 2024 MOOC (massive open online course) which focussed on evolving factors driving Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) in organisations. The course equipped participants with a comprehensive guide to the evolving legal landscape of ESG, a detailed examination of ESG reporting obligations, together with an overview of common sustainability principles and frameworks, and a focused view of the impact on various sectors and industries.

Solicitor professional training remains the core of the Law Society's education role. 2024 saw a record number of trainees solicitors join Blackhall Place to commence the Professional Practice Course. Over 100 trainees joined via the Hybrid Practical Practice Course which aims to widen access to the training and is increasing diversity in terms of location, gender, and age. Of the trainees who registered for the 2024 PPC Hybrid intake, 60% are located outside of Dublin, compared to 8% of the full-time PPC. Over a third of the trainees on the PPC Hybrid are aged 30 or older, and 70% are female. The figures indicate that new pathways to legal education such as the Law Society's Professional Practice Course (PPC) Hybrid are helping to diversify demographics in the profession.

The Profession by Numbers

for year ended 31 December 2023

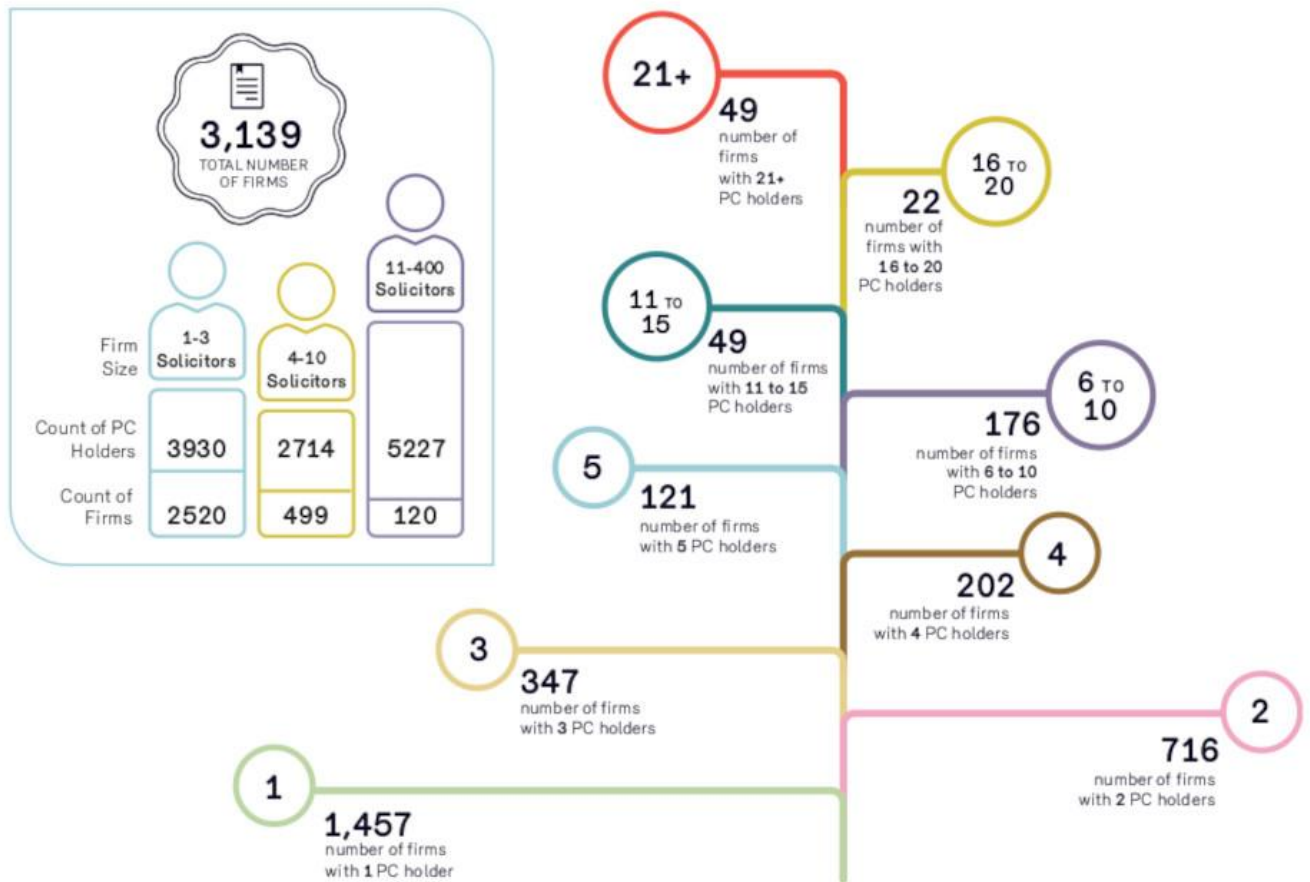


Figure 1: Firms by number of practicing solicitors

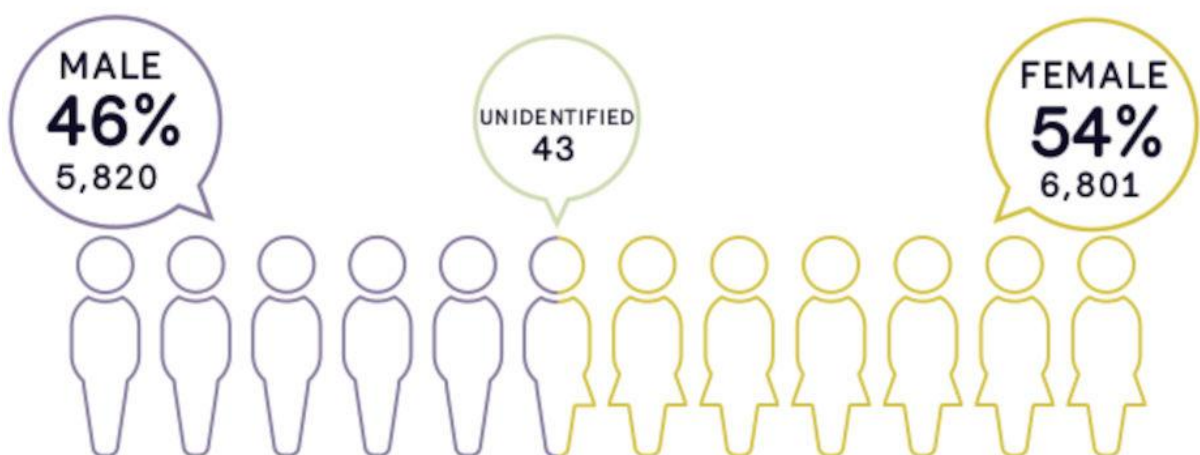


Figure 2: Breakdown of Law Society Members by Gender

Figure 3: Location of Practice – County by County

