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LSRA Annual Report on Admissions 2023

Number of newly qualified solicitors and barristers continues to grow

One in six new trainee solicitors on flexible professional course

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) today publishes its annual report for 2023 on the admission policies of the legal professions. The report, *Pathways to the Professions 2023: Annual Report on Admission Policies of the Legal Professions*, documents the number of persons admitted to practise as both solicitors and barristers in 2023, based on figures supplied by the professional bodies in the sector.

It is the fifth annual report on admissions that the Authority has submitted to the Minister for Justice under section 33 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. The key findings of the report include:

Solicitor Admissions

- A total of 561 new trainee solicitors enrolled on the Law Society's Professional Practice Course (PPC) in 2023, continuing a generally upward trend in trainee numbers in recent years. There were 467 trainees (83%) undertaking the full-time PPC and 94 (17%) on the flexible part-time PPC Hybrid introduced in 2020. The majority of new trainees (90%) were aged 30 or under and nine in ten (89%) had a law degree, while 10% had another degree and 1% had no degree.
- As in previous years, some eight in ten new trainee solicitors in 2023 (83%) secured training contracts with law firms in Dublin for their mandatory two year in-office training, reflecting the dominance of the country's capital in the legal services market. A total of 8% of new trainees did their in-office training in Cork. Six in ten (62%) of new trainees had training contracts with a total of twenty large law firms.
- A total of 772 solicitors were admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in 2023. Of the total, 548 (71%) were solicitors newly qualified in Ireland, the highest number since 2011. Admission to the Roll of Solicitors is effectively the first stage of applying to the Law Society for an annual Irish practising certificate.
- In 2023, there were 416 practising certificates issued to first-time practising certificate holders. A total of 11,871 solicitors held practising certificates in the year, up 219 (2%) from 2022.
- Approximately one in five practising solicitors in 2023 (22%) worked in the corporate or public "in-house" sector. This reflects the fact that both commercial and public sector organisations have internal legal functions supporting their business needs.

Barrister Admissions

- A total of 131 students started the Honorable Society of King's Inns Barrister-at-Law (BL) degree course in 2023, a marginal increase from 130 in 2022. There were 56 full-time students and 75 part-time or modular students.



- A total of 163 persons were admitted to practise and “called to the Bar” and by the Chief Justice of Ireland in 2023, allowing them to exercise a full right of audience before all courts. This is up 16 (11%) from 147 in 2022. King’s Inns BL degree holders accounted for 135 (83%) of the 163 persons called to the Bar during the year.
- A total of 72 barristers began their 12-month mandatory pupillage (also known as devilling) as members of the Law Library at the start of the legal year in October 2023, down from 90 in 2022.
- The total number of barristers on the Roll of Practising Barristers maintained by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority stood at 3,051 at the end of 2023, up 94 (3%) from 2022. Of the total, 2,139 (70%) were barristers practising as members of the Law Library and 912 (30%) were not members of the Law Library.

New business structure for legal services providers

- Looking ahead, the report anticipates developments in the legal services market in 2024 with the planned introduction of new legal partnerships. This new business model will, for the first time, enable barristers, or barristers and solicitors, to form partnerships together to provide legal services. A legal practitioner will be able to provide legal services as a partner in, or an employee of, a legal partnership. In time, the introduction of legal partnerships may have an impact on the numbers admitted to the professions and the demand for and costs of the services of practising solicitors and barristers.

The Authority report concludes that: *“The year under review saw a continuation of the generally upward trend in the numbers enrolling on professional training for solicitors and barristers. There were also more notable increases in the numbers of new entrants to both professions, but a decrease in the number of barristers starting pupillage in the Law Library. The concentration of legal practitioners in Dublin remains a feature of the legal services market, and there was once more some evidence of recruitment and retention challenges in the solicitors’ profession and concerns about the supply of senior barristers in criminal cases.”*

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Pathways to the Professions 2023: Annual Report on Admission Policies of the Legal Professions is available to download [here](#).