

Submission from the Law Agent, Dublin City Council, Civic Office, Wood Quay, Dublin 8
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1. The **key economic and other barriers to entry** to the professions of solicitor and barrister, and their impact in terms of equity of access and entry into the legal professions and the objective of achieving greater diversity within the professions.

YK Comments

- Cost. Costs should be reduced by facilitating access to hybrid models of learning to greater numbers of students.
- Lack of family friendly policies in courses. The response to the pandemic has shown us that it is possible to deliver education and learning remotely. Providing hybrid options in all learning will likely facilitate students who would traditionally encountered barriers due to their family and living circumstances. The possibility of remote learning opens up new possibilities.
- Flexibility in course structures. Traditionally students would have been bound to faculty time-tables and barriers due to work and family commitments may now be overcome by providing asynchronous learning.
- Insufficiencies in policies for development and training of legal staff in the public sector. The public sector has been very successful in addressing barriers to access to employment generally to the public sector. The public sector could address some of the perceived barriers to entry the legal professions by having specific policies for developing their own internal legal staff. Public sector staff come from all backgrounds and providing policies and supports in this area may provide access to the legal professions for people who would generally have considered there were barriers to their participation.

2. Proposals on how **key economic and other barriers to entry** to the professions of solicitor and barristers may be addressed in order to improve equity of access and entry into the legal professions and achieve greater diversity within the professions, and by whom.

YK Comments

- Civil Service and local authorities to be supported to develop and roll out trainee solicitor programmes to develop and build their own in-house legal teams.

3. The **other costs associated** with joining each profession. No comment.

4. The **quality of apprenticeship selection processes** – including the information available to prospective barristers on available Masters for their pupillage year, and to prospective trainee solicitors on training firms – and any impact this may have on the objective of increased diversity.

YK Comment

- More information needs to be provided on opportunities in the public sector. The public sector is a huge consumer of legal services. Course content needs to better address the public sector – public law, local authority law, statutory bodies. governance and ethics.

5. The **availability and quality of “on-the-job” mandatory apprentice training** for solicitors and the “devilling” programme for barristers. This includes “terms and conditions,” remuneration, arrangements for supervision and oversight, support and evaluation, and any impact the existing availability and quality of this training/experience may have on access and diversity.

YK Comment

- There should be more supervision and review of solicitors supervising trainees to ensure that they are receiving the appropriate ethics and practical guidance all through their traineeship.
- More guidance should be given to supervising solicitors and training offered.

6. The extent to which **existing arrangements for the remuneration of trainee barristers** during the pupillage year poses a barrier in terms of equity of access to and diversity within the barrister profession. No comment

7. The extent to which **existing arrangements for the remuneration of trainee solicitors** during their in-office training poses a barrier in terms of equity of access to and diversity within the solicitor profession.

YK Comment

- Should be paid minimum wage during traineeships
- Loan schemes for payment of fees where applicable

8. The arrangements in place and provision for **maternity/adoptive leave for solicitors and barristers** and the extent to which availing of such leave may have implications for career progression.

YK Comment

- This is well covered in the public sector

9. The **key economic and other challenges for early career** solicitors and barristers (up to seven years post-qualification experience) in **maintaining and building their careers** in the professions, and their impact in terms of the objective of achieving greater diversity within the professions.

YK Comment

- Consider facilitating and having more policies for secondments in the public sector and in the voluntary sector which will provide more transparency and knowledge about the legal professions

10. Proposals on how these **key economic and other challenges for early career** solicitors and barristers may be addressed, and by whom, in order to achieve greater diversity within the professions.

YK Comment

- Promotion of Secondments for both solicitors and barristers in the public sector and local authorities would be invaluable in promoting diversity and well rounded education for those training to be legal professionals. The public sector would benefit from having access to motivated and skilled trainees in both professions looking to further their legal careers while providing a service and learning about the public sector.
- The public sector is one of the main user of legal services. There needs to be connection with training and development of legal professionals. Looking at examining how the public sector can contribute will go a considerable way to addressing traditional barriers as the public sector is excellent on the provisions of education and many in the public sector may have considered that there were barriers to their entry to the legal professions or may not have even considered this a possibility in their careers.
- See also other suggestions above.