



THE BAR  
OF IRELAND

*The Law Library*  
BARRA NA hÉIREANN  
*An Leabharlann Dlí*

# Annual Report 2024/25

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# **OUR KEY OBJECTIVES**

**OPTIMISED PRACTICE**  
**CONNECTED COMMUNITY**  
**EXPERT KNOWLEDGE**

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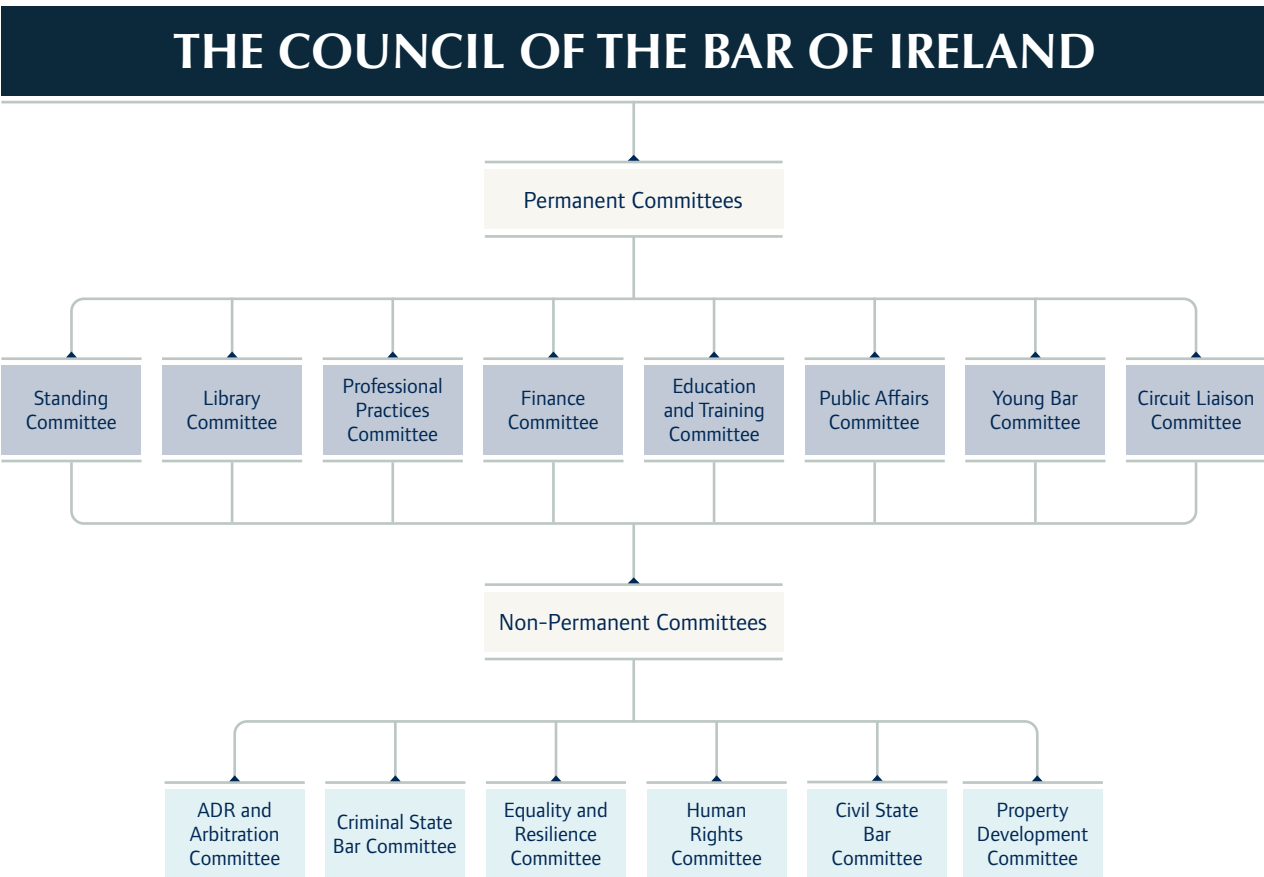
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# Council & Members

## The Council of The Bar of Ireland

The Council is comprised of 24 members, elected and co-opted from the membership and the Attorney General. The members of Council, along with Committee members, give their time and expertise voluntarily, contributing to the direction and policy of the Bar.





## Inner Bar Panel



Chair:  
Seán  
Guerin SC



Vice Chair:  
Darren  
Lehane SC



Treasurer:  
Séamus  
Clarke SC



Cathy  
Smith SC



Michael  
F Collins SC



Attorney General  
Rossa  
Fanning SC



Colm  
O'Dwyer SC



Seamus  
Roche SC



Imogen  
McGrath SC



Sara  
Antoniotti SC



Bairbre  
O'Neill SC<sup>1</sup>

## Outer Bar Panel



Deirdre  
Browne BL



Aoife  
O'Leary BL



Tim  
O'Connor BL



Sean  
O'Sullivan BL



Tanya  
Smith BL



Tracy Ennis  
Faherty BL



James  
Cross BL



Femi  
Daniyan BL



Tabitha  
Wood SC



Michael  
D Hourigan SC

## Co-optees



Cliona  
M Cleary BL



Cian  
P Kelly BL



Finn  
Keyes BL



Joy-Tendai  
Kangere BL

1. Replaced Sara Phelan SC on 20 November 2024 following Sara Phelan's appointment as a High Court Judge.

# Permanent Committees —

## Standing Committee

This committee comprises of the chairs of the permanent committees, Chairman and Vice-chair, and Treasurer. The business of the Standing Committee shall be to consider, and if necessary determine, all such matters within the competence of the Council as may be of an extremely urgent nature and require such determination between meetings of the Council.

### Chair

**Seán Guerin SC**

Darren Lehane SC  
Sean O'Sullivan BL  
Tim O'Connor BL  
Michael F Collins SC  
Séamus Clarke SC  
Michael D Hourigan SC  
Imogen McGrath SC  
Tanya Smith BL

### Co-optees

Aoife O'Leary BL  
Deirdre Browne BL

## Library Committee

The Library Committee deals with all matters relating to admission to the Law Library, and membership thereof, including matters relating to the acquisition and maintenance of the materials, whether in book or electronic form, necessary within the Library for the profession.

### Chair

**Michael F Collins SC**

Darren Lehane SC  
Tanya Smith BL  
Femi Daniyan BL  
Tim O'Connor BL  
Tabitha Wood SC  
James Cross BL  
Colm O'Dwyer SC  
Aoife O'Leary BL  
Tracy Ennis Faherty BL  
Cian Kelly BL

### Co-optees

William Abrahamson SC  
Fergal Foley BL  
Conall McCarthy BL  
Wafa Memon BL  
Jessica Bartak-Healy BL

## Professional Practices Committee

This Committee monitors all matters concerning the proper professional practice of members of the Law Library and may investigate and, if thought fit, prefer and present a complaint against any member without the necessity of having the matter referred to it by any third party.

### Chair

**Michael D Hourigan SC**

Darren Lehane SC  
Tracy Ennis Faherty BL  
Colm O'Dwyer SC  
Deirdre Browne BL  
Tim O'Connor BL  
Seamus Roche SC  
Sean O'Sullivan BL  
Femi Daniyan BL  
Cliona Cleary BL  
Finn Keyes BL

### Co-optees

Paul O'Higgins SC  
Ronan Murphy SC  
Carol Doherty BL  
Tomás Keys BL  
Lorcan Staines SC  
Niall Nolan BL  
Ronan Lupton SC (until July 2025)  
Hazel Bergin BL  
Elaine Power BL  
Conor Maguire SC  
Paul McCarthy SC  
Caren Geoghegan SC  
Bernard Condon SC  
Gráinne Duggan SC  
Elizabeth Gormley BL  
Vincent Heneghan SC  
Brendan Savage BL  
Seamus Breen BL  
Ann-Marie Lawlor SC (until Nov 2024)  
David McParland BL  
John Freeman BL

## Finance Committee

This Committee deals with all matters relating to the finances of the Council and its associate companies for the maintenance and development of the Law Library, Council properties, and IT infrastructure.

### Chair

**Séamus Clarke SC**

Darren Lehane SC  
Tabitha Wood SC  
Tanya Smith BL  
Sean O'Sullivan BL  
Cliona Cleary BL  
Sara Antonioti SC  
Colm O'Dwyer SC  
Tracy Ennis Faherty BL  
Imogen McGrath SC  
Declan Harmon BL

### Co-optees

Dermot P Kelly SC  
Joseph O'Sullivan BL  
Catherine Needham BL  
Conor Rock BL  
James P O'Brien BL

## Education & Training Committee

The Education & Training Committee oversees training for new entrants (including master/devil relationships) and CPD for the membership at large, including ensuring that the profession's CPD requirements are met, and supports to barristers in practice are in place in light of the longer-term implications of regulation under the LSRA.

## Public Affairs Committee

The Public Affairs Committee assists in the promotion of members establishes and maintains appropriate links with all regional and Specialist Bar Associations, the Voluntary Assistance Scheme (VAS), and Irish Rule of Law International (IRLI), and fosters relations and communications between the Council and outside bodies.

## Young Bar Committee

The Young Bar Committee provides a forum for Young Bar members, and co-ordinates initiatives directed at the needs of practitioners who practise in Years 1-7, as well as contributing to wider Bar priorities.

## Circuit Liaison Committee

This Committee monitors all matters concerning the proper professional practice of members of the Law Library and may investigate and, if thought fit, prefer and present a complaint against any member without the necessity of having the matter referred to it by any third party.

### Chair

**Sean O'Sullivan BL**

Darren Lehane SC  
Deirdre Browne BL  
Seamus Clarke SC  
Aoife O'Leary BL  
Joy-Tendai Kangere BL  
James Cross BL

### Co-optees

Tim Harley SC  
Jane Hyland SC  
Brendan Kirwan SC  
Lorna Lynch SC  
Fionnuala O'Sullivan SC  
Aoife Carroll SC  
Sharon Dillon-Lyons BL  
Chloe Geraghty BL  
Comfort Odesola BL  
Killian Flood BL  
Cathy Maguire SC  
Niall Buckley SC  
Eoin Martin BL

### Chair

**Imogen McGrath SC**

Darren Lehane SC  
Seamus Clarke SC  
Seamus Roche SC  
Michael D Hourigan SC  
Aoife O'Leary BL  
Tim O'Connor BL  
Joy-Tendai Kangere BL

### Co-optees

Hayley O'Donnell BL  
Cian Henry BL  
Gemma McLoughlin Burke BL  
Gerard Downey BL  
Shelley Horan BL

### Chair

**Tanya Smith BL**

Aran McAuley BL – Year 1  
Molly Scott BL – Year 1  
Stephen Wilson BL – Year 2  
Sinead Murphy BL – Year 2  
Aislinn Finnegan BL – Year 3  
Conor Rubalcava BL – Year 3  
Ali Bracken Ziad BL – Year 4  
Neasa O'Callaghan BL – Year 4  
Rebecca Tierney BL – Year 5  
Michael Lindsay BL – Year 6  
Jack Sreenan BL – Year 7

### Council Co-optees

Darren Lehane SC  
Imogen McGrath SC  
Sara Antoniotti SC  
Sean O'Sullivan BL  
Deirdre Browne BL  
Tracy Ennis Faherty BL  
Joy-Tendai Kangere BL

### Chair

**Tim O'Connor BL**

James Cross BL  
Michael F Collins SC  
Deirdre Browne BL  
Darren Lehane SC  
Cliona Cleary BL  
Cian Kelly BL

### Co-optees

Aisling Wall BL  
Timothy Morrow BL  
Karina Kinsella BL  
Laura Byrne BL  
Aisling Murphy BL  
Denise Mulcahy BL



# Non-Permanent Committees —

## ADR & Arbitration Committee

This Committee raises awareness of ADR practices among practitioners and the wider public through partnerships with relevant stakeholders, a programme of education, and its inclusion in wider Bar debates.

## Criminal State Bar Committee

This Committee monitors trends and developments within the criminal Bar, liaising with key justice stakeholders on issues of concern, including the Department of Justice and Equality, the Office of the DPP, and others.

## Civil State Bar Committee

This Committee engages with State agencies on whose behalf members are routinely briefed including the Attorney General, Chief State Solicitor's Office, the Legal Aid Board, and the State Claims Agency.

### Chair

**Cathy Smith SC**

Arran Dowling-Hussey BL  
Joy-Tendai Kangere BL  
Tim O'Connor BL  
Tracy Ennis Faherty BL  
Cian Kelly BL

### Co-optees

Louise Beirne BL  
Stephen Hanaphy BL  
Katie Nagle BL  
Liam Vanmechelen BL  
Aoife Farrelly BL  
Susan Ahern SC  
Lydia Bunni BL  
Meg Burke BL  
Denise Waldron BL  
Mariana Verdes BL  
Sinead Drinan BL  
Sara Moorhead SC  
Paul C McCarthy SC  
Turlough O'Donnell SC

### Chair

**Aoife O'Leary BL**

Séamus Clarke SC  
Sean O'Sullivan BL  
Michael D Hourigan SC

### Co-optees

Kate Egan BL  
Amy Nix BL  
Amy Heffron BL  
Ronan O'Carroll BL  
Sinead Gleeson BL  
Dara Foynes SC  
Carl Hanahoe SC  
Diarmuid Collins BL  
Tony McGillicuddy SC  
Simon Donagh BL  
Jane McGowan BL  
Lily Buckley BL

### Chair

**Deirdre Browne BL**

Joy-Tendai Kangere BL  
Séamus Clarke SC  
Tim O'Connor BL  
Sara Antoniotti SC  
Cathy Smith SC  
Cliona Cleary BL

### Co-optees

Niall Quinn BL  
Aisling Mulligan BL  
Declan Harmon BL  
David Conlan Smyth SC  
Sharon Dillon-Lyons BL  
Grainne Lee BL

## Equality & Resilience Committee

This Committee oversees the development and implementation of initiatives that promote equality and diversity at the Bar, ensuring where possible that a member's ability to achieve their potential is not limited by prejudice or discrimination.

### Chair

**Femi Daniyan BL**

Seamus Clarke SC  
Imogen McGrath SC  
James Cross BL  
Aoife O'Leary BL  
Tracy Ennis Faherty BL  
Joy-Tendai Kangere BL

### Co-optees

Sharon Dillon-Lyons BL  
Aoife Farrelly BL  
Shannon Coy BL  
Columb Fortune BL  
Andrew Robinson BL  
Alison Walker BL  
Niall O'Neill BL  
Deirdre Ní Fhloinn BL  
Brian Niland BL  
Ferga McGloughlin BL  
Sarah Reid BL  
Caoimhe Ruigrok BL

## Human Rights Committee

This Committee works to promote justice and respect for human rights through the rule of law. It monitors human rights issues, in particular those involving lawyers who are endangered, and engages with various human rights groups.

### Chair

**Colm O'Dwyer SC**

Femi Daniyan BL

### Co-optees

Joseph O'Sullivan BL  
Diane Duggan BL  
Sharon Dillon Lyons BL  
Seán Beatty BL  
Emma Slattery BL  
Gavin Rothwell BL  
Gemma McLoughlin Burke BL  
Niamh Harnett BL  
James O'Reilly SC  
Sunniva McDonagh SC  
Nuala Egan SC  
Michael Lynn SC  
Patricia Brazil SC  
Colin Smith BL

## Property Development Committee

This Committee is responsible for the strategic planning of the Bar's property concerns, and how it delivers for the membership and its future needs.

### Chair

**Sara Antoniotti SC**

Seamus Clarke SC  
Tabitha Wood SC  
Tanya Smith BL  
Colm O'Dwyer SC  
Finn Keyes BL  
Joy-Tendai Kangere BL  
Tracy Ennis Faherty BL  
Bairbre O'Neill SC

### Co-optees

Hugh Mohan SC  
Oonah McCrann SC  
Stephen Devine BL  
Alan O'Dwyer BL

# The Chair's Report —

**I am delighted to have this opportunity, as Chair, to report to our members on the legal year 2024/2025.**

**This year has been a busy one of continued advocacy and innovation as The Bar of Ireland continues its mission to support a thriving independent referral bar.**

## **Advocating for the Profession**

Budget 2025 saw further partial restoration of the fees of criminal barristers from 1 January 2025. 18% of the 28.5% cuts that had been applied to the fees of criminal barristers during the period 2008-2011 has now been restored over a two year period. These are welcome developments, as is the commitment in the new Programme for Government to complete the full restoration. The stated intention of the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs & Migration to have full restoration complete in this year's budget cycle has instilled cautious optimism that our profession can avoid further withdrawals of service, similar to those that occurred in October 2023 and again in July 2024, in order to have the matter resolved.

The efforts of the Council have turned to advancing the case for improvement in professional fees paid under the civil legal aid scheme, and I look forward to engaging with the consultation that will get underway on foot of the publication of the Report on the Review of the Civil Legal Aid Scheme that was chaired by former Chief Justice, Frank Clarke SC.

Our experience in advocating for improvement of the legal aid budget to protect access to justice and high-quality representation is that the general public understand the importance of the work of the Bar of Ireland and both understand and appreciate the quality, the expertise and the value of the advocacy and advisory services our members provide, as an essential safeguard of the rights of the citizen.

## **Generative AI Developments**

Recent developments in AI tools are significantly reshaping how barristers work, particularly in areas such as legal research, drafting, and document analysis. Members who participated in the recent trials of Harvey and Legora have been impressed by the performance of these AI tools, which leverage the skills of human lawyers in tasks involving document analysis and information retrieval, marking a turning point in AI-assisted legal work. Mindful of the recently published PPC Ethical Toolkit for the ethical use of artificial intelligence in legal practice, it is incumbent on all members to familiarise themselves with this guidance and engage with the new and emerging AI products to ensure that our profession can remain at the cutting edge of legal practice and advocacy. The recent and continuing product trials provide an opportunity to engage with this new technology and to realise how generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools can support our daily practice at the Bar.



***“...new and emerging AI products to ensure that our profession can remain at the cutting edge of legal practice and advocacy...”***

### **Encouraging Collegiality**

In serving the Bar of Ireland as a collegiate community of professionals, the Council provides a wide range of CPD, events and social clubs that facilitate members meeting with new colleagues, sharing experiences and enabling the exchange of information across all membership cohorts. Unfortunately, the absence of the Barrister’s Tea Rooms in the Four Courts this year has greatly impacted how we gather and interact with each other, on a professional and social basis. It is not necessary for me to repeat in this report the reasons for the essential health and safety works that had to be undertaken or the reasons for the delays that have occurred over the last year. Suffice it to say that the entire Council and membership look forward to the re-opening of this essential facility in the new legal year.

### **Word of Thanks**

I wish to thank my colleagues on the Council and the many members who willingly give their time to participate on the 14 Committees of the Council. A number of Council members will complete their term of office this year – Micheal F Collins SC, Imogen McGrath SC, Cathy Smith SC, Tracy Ennis-Faherty BL, Cian Kelly BL, Finn Keyes BL, Sean O’Sullivan BL, and Joy Tendai Kangere BL. I wish to thank them for their contribution, professionalism, and collegiality in their role as a member of the Council.

Finally, sincere thanks to the members of the executive staff team, who diligently work to ensure that members are supported in their day-to-day practice. This year, we are unfortunately losing three members of the senior management team – John Kane, Director of IT, Cormac Ó Culáin, Director of Communications & Member Services and Ciara Murphy, Chief Executive. Each has made an enormous contribution to The Bar of Ireland during their period of employment and I wish to formally thank them on behalf of all members for their hard work and commitment to our profession. I particularly wish to express the gratitude of all members for the long, dedicated and much-valued service of Ciara Murphy, whose leadership of the executive team through all the challenges of the last decade has been an immense service to The Bar of Ireland as a whole. I wish them every success in all their future endeavors.



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Seán Guerin".

**Seán Guerin SC**

**Chair of The Council of the Bar of Ireland**

# The Chief Executive's Report —

**This annual report sets out a detailed summary of what the Council of The Bar of Ireland and its committees, together with the support of the executive staff, have done on behalf of members of the Law Library over the last year.**

## **FutureBar 2024 - 2027**

The legal landscape is ever evolving, and with it, the challenges and opportunities that shape our profession. Our new Strategic Plan for 2024-2027, FutureBar, published in October 2024 represents our strategic objectives and priorities for the coming three years – a period where we will continue to lead with purpose, adapt with agility, and continue to uphold the highest standards of our profession, thus securing the foundation for a future thriving Bar.

The strategic plan sets out an ambitious roadmap that not only reaffirms our commitment to the core principles of integrity, independence and excellence, but also embraces the necessity of innovation, diversity and collaboration in a rapidly changing environment.

Read [FutureBar](#) here:



## **Membership Overview**

In June 2025, membership of the Law Library was 2,098 and the numbers in membership remain static.

In the year to date, 61 have ceased membership, a decline on the 75 who ceased membership in the previous year. 8 re-entered membership during the year and there were 87 new entrants to membership of the Law Library in October 2024, including 4 new members from other jurisdictions. We are forecasting a similar level of new entrants in October 2025.

## **Representing The Interests Of The Profession**

Arising from the unprecedented withdrawals of service by barristers practising criminal law in October 2023 and again in July 2024, an 18% restoration of fees was achieved over the last two Budget cycles. The Council welcomed the commitment in the Programme for Government published in early 2025 that provides for a reform of the operation of the criminal legal aid system and a commitment to fully restore criminal legal aid fees. Engagement with the new Minister for Justice, Home Affairs & Migration, Jim O'Callaghan SC TD and his officials has continued throughout the year to advocate for the completion of restoration in Budget 2026 and reinstatement of the link to national wage agreements that had previously been in place up to 2008.

Separately, under the leadership of Deirdre Browne BL, Chair of the Civil State Bar Committee, the concerns in relation to the inadequate fee levels paid to barristers under the Legal Aid Board 2012 Terms and Conditions were raised with the Minister. A survey of members was undertaken this year that brought four key concerns to the fore including outdated fees and fee rate structures, expanding complexity of work and court procedures, an increasing demand for legal aid and an exodus of expertise arising from all of the foregoing pressures. A member information meeting to discuss the findings and next steps will take place in mid-July 2025.

**Advancement of The Property Development Plan**

As reported in previous Annual Reports, in 2022/2023, a team of property and construction professionals were engaged by the Council to undertake a feasibility study for the Jameson Building and Distillery Building that reported to the Council in July 2023. In October 2024, the Council decided it necessary to establish an additional non-permanent committee of the Council to review the options put forward in July 2023 and to assess whether the key requirements of that property development proposal prepared for Council had changed, whether the proposal remained the preferred strategy or if an updated strategy is now required.

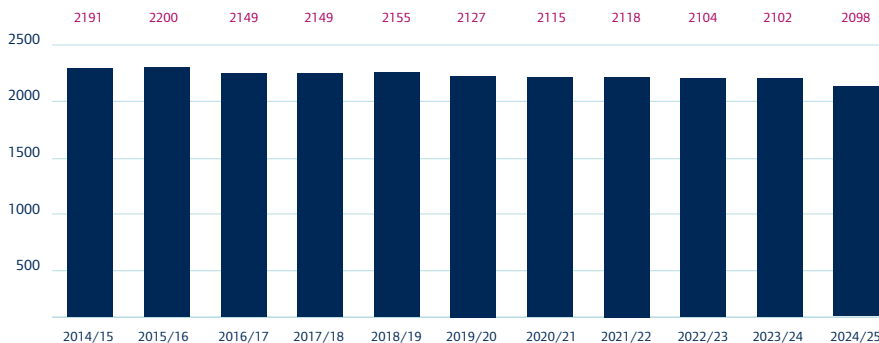
A detailed report from the Property Development Committee, that was brought to fruition under the leadership of Sara Antoniotti SC, Chair of the Property Development Committee, was submitted to the Council in June 2025. A series of recommendations have been made that are under active consideration by the Council. Detailed discussion is underway at Council to assess next steps and formulate a roadmap.

**Promotion of The Profession to New Entrants**

In conjunction with our ongoing programmes to promote the profession to new entrants, including the TY Programme – ‘Look into Law’ - and our University Outreach Programme – ‘Your Call’, a new internship programme was introduced in 2025. In its pilot year, four students were offered the opportunity to take part in a two-week immersive experience consisting of shadowing opportunities, research related tasks, talks and workshops. Universities and institutions across Ireland nominated two students each who were invited to complete an application, from which four interns were selected from four universities.

The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive and it is hoped that this new programme will continue as one of the suite of programmes that are designed to promote the independent referral bar to new entrants.

Membership Trends 2014/2015 to 2024/2025



**MEMBERSHIP**

As of June 2025,  
membership of  
The Law Library is

2,098

There were

87

new entrants in  
October 2024,

4

of who were from other  
jurisdictions.

In the year to date

61

have ceased  
membership with

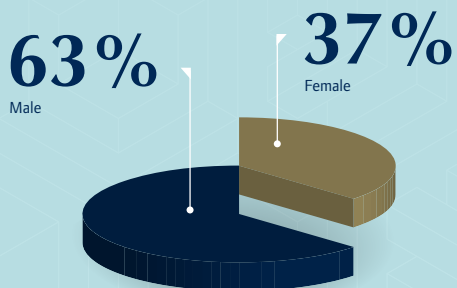
8

re-entering membership

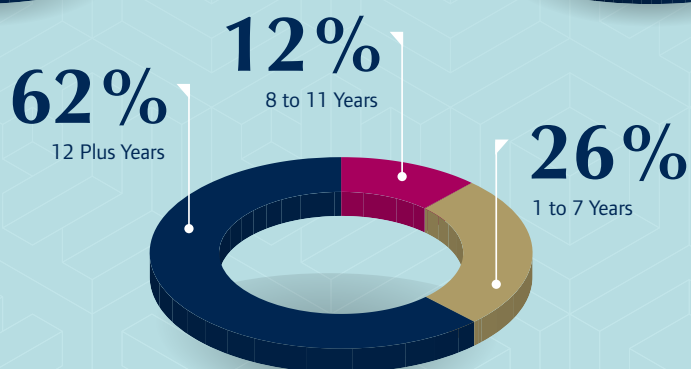
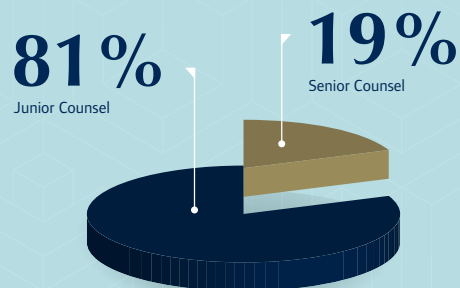


# Law Library Membership Statistics - June 2025

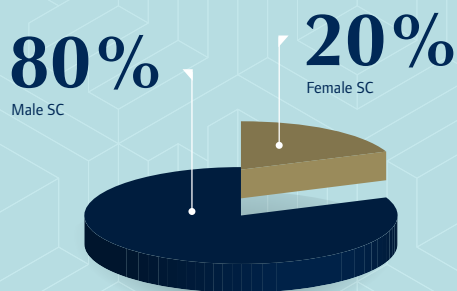
Law Library Membership  
At June 2025



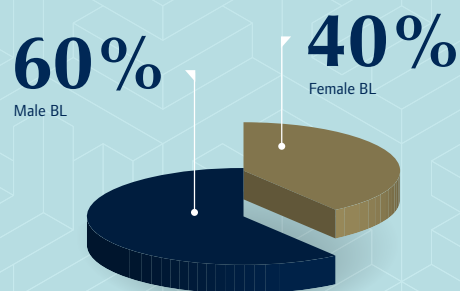
Total of 2098 members



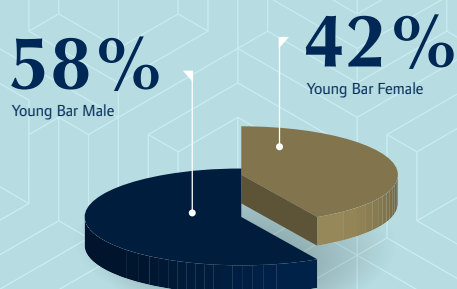
Senior Counsel - 378  
At June 2025



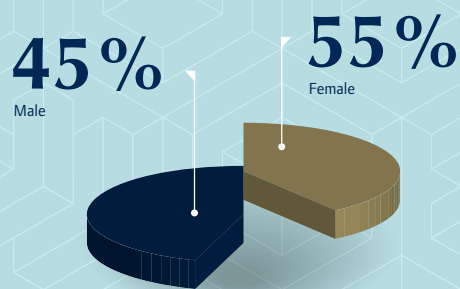
Junior Counsel - 1720  
At June 2025



Young Bar Years 1 To 7 - 540  
At June 2025



New Entrants - 87  
At June 2025



## And Finally...

Arising from my decision to step down from my position as Chief Executive at the end of 2025, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the members and staff, past and present, with whom I have worked over the last 10 years.

At its core, the library and information services remain as one of the most important offerings available for members. With the advent of Generative AI, it is a certainty that the manner in which members access legal information and resources, and manage their professional practice, will undergo enormous change in the months and years ahead. Under the leadership of the new Director of Library & Information Services, Gary LaCumber, along with his expert staff team, members can be confident that the service is well capable of adapting to, and embracing the changes and challenges that lie ahead.

Upon commencement in my role as Chief Executive 10 years ago, the services and supports now available in terms of communications, events, Specialist Bar Associations, policy, education & training, fee recovery and regulation did not exist in their current guise. Members regularly express their appreciation for the professional services that are now available to them in support of their professional practice. The credit for the development and delivery of those services rests with each of the Directors of service and their staff teams, who work tirelessly to meet the needs of members and willingly embrace new initiatives. The finance, HR, ICT, estates, DDRC and member relations teams all do an outstanding job in providing the necessary internal operational capabilities to support and enable all that we do at The Bar of Ireland.

I am very proud of everything that has been achieved over the last 10 years and none of it would have been possible without the incredible senior management team that has supported me in my role during that time – Colin Potts, Paula Corrigan, John Kane, Stephen Swanton, Brian O'Driscoll, Cormac O'Culain and Gary LaCumber. I am deeply appreciative to each of them and hope that they continue to succeed in all that they do in the years ahead. A special word of appreciation to Rose Fisher, who inducted me into the 'wonderous ways' of the Bar in my early years and who has excelled in running the DDRC operation in recent years.

I also wish to record my sincere thanks to the numerous members of the Council and Committees with whom I have worked over the last 10 years and in particular each of the Chairs of the Council – President David Barniville, Paul McGarry SC, Judge Micheál P O'Higgins, Maura McNally SC, Judge Sara Phelan and last, but not least, Seán Guerin SC. The Bar is fortunate to have had such eminent Chairs at the helm, and I have been privileged to support each of them in their role. I have great admiration for those who put themselves forward for election to the Council each year and who do so with the intention of bettering the profession on behalf of all members. One can never fully appreciate all that the volunteer members do on behalf of the wider membership until they get involved and observe the work that is done for the benefit of all.

Finally, thank you to the members of the Law Library, who warmly welcomed me into your colourful community, allowing me the opportunity to be part of The Bar of Ireland for the last 10 years. I hope that I have managed to make a positive contribution to The Bar of Ireland and it has been my privilege to serve your distinguished and honourable profession.



*Ciara Murphy*

**Ciara Murphy**  
Chief Executive, The Bar of Ireland





# OPTIMISED PRACTICE:

The Bar of Ireland aims to provide a range of services and supports for our members to ensure that an independent referral bar can thrive.



Marketing & Development



Practice operations & management



Regulation & Ethics



Collegiality & Care

# Expanding the opportunities: Marketing & development —

**Our objective is to deliver marketing and business development opportunities for our members in a way that preserves the trust and integrity of the profession, while also supporting sustainable practice development.**

## Marketing in Line with Strategic Priorities

■ **Marketing & Promotional Campaigns:** The launch of the 'Natural Justice' artwork, attendance at the Ploughing Championship, the launch of our inaugural ADR Research as well as key premier events were delivered over 2024/2025 with a view to engaging our membership, stakeholders and the public on the work of the Bar.



■ **Targeting a Youth Audience:** Establishing a presence on Instagram has enabled the Bar reach a younger audience to increase the awareness of the independent referral bar as an attractive career option through direct engagement with students, university law societies and other stakeholders. As such, the original and reformatted output differs significantly with an emphasis on showcasing collegiality, career paths, student events and engagement with wider societal issues.



■ **Member Online Presence:** The communications team have continued to deliver one-to-one sessions to members on promotion of their practice and cultivating a professional online presence. A communications helpdesk was held in Cork Bar Library in May 2025 which allowed members to receive individual guidance on promoting their practice, as well as access a range of practical resources including business card design, professional profile photographs, branded stationery and ethical guidelines on advertising and the use of Artificial Intelligence.



■ **Thought Leadership:** We continue to invite members to leverage their CPD contributions and Bar Review contributions in short form format (Viewpoints) and in audio; showcasing the expertise at the Bar to a wider audience.

■ **Positioning Specialist Bar Associations to the Market:** The Communications Team continues to support the market-facing promotion of Specialist Bar Associations (SBAs), through promotion of annual conferences and open events as well as maintaining bespoke contact lists for each association.

Articles and podcasts featuring SBA members are also promoted to these audiences through a range of digital communications and hosted on each association's website, 16 of which are managed by the Communications Team.



### Designing a priority campaign on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

An ADR Marketing Plan and corresponding working group was developed to help promote Alternative Dispute Resolution practices at the Bar.

A survey was launched to assess the 'State of ADR' in 2025; the results of which were published in an inaugural report in May 2025, that coincided with The Bar of Ireland's Mediation Conference, a fully-attended event focusing on the practice and commercial benefits of mediation.

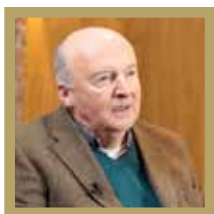
Key findings of the 'State of ADR' report included a near-unanimous sentiment amongst practitioners that ADR demand is on the increase. Practitioners also identified court-directed ADR as a major trend in the area.

The working group also focused on increasing thought leadership output (articles, podcasts, etc.) on ADR-related topics to highlight the profession's expertise in this area.

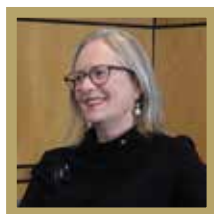


### Legacy Interview Series

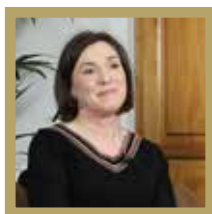
The Legacy Series – an interview series of late-career or former members who have had an extraordinary impact – continued this year, with a number of new episodes made available on the Members' Section of the Law Library website.



Turlough O'Donnell SC



The Hon. Ms Justice Marie Baker



The Hon. Ms Justice Emily Farrell

A full listing of The Legacy Series can be viewed on our members section of [members.lawlibrary.ie](https://members.lawlibrary.ie) or click below

WATCH HERE





### Thought Leadership – Highlighting Barrister Expertise

The Bar of Ireland continued to promote the expertise of practitioners at the Bar through a range of channels, including the Viewpoints blog and The Bar of Ireland Podcasts. These are promoted to an audience of 18,500 LinkedIn followers and 4,600 email subscribers. The output of podcasts has increased significantly, with 22 episodes published in the last 12 months – contributing to our now 100th podcast milestone!

### Most-read Viewpoints:

1. Understanding Consent in Medical Treatment
2. The Long Ball Game – Why UEFA Chose Dublin for Sporting Disputes
3. The Fruit of the Poisonous Tree: The Exclusionary Rule in Regulatory Proceedings
4. Meta's Data Practices Under Scrutiny – ECJ Rules Against Irish Data Protection Commission
5. Family Reunification Decisions | Developments in the Court of Appeal

READ MORE



### Most-listened podcast episodes:

1. Tax Litigation in Ireland | Frank Mitchell SC and Lorna Gallagher BL
2. The Hon. Ms. Justice Marie Baker with Declan Harmon BL
3. The Covidien Case in Review | Gráinne Duggan SC and James Burke BL
4. Katie Nagle BL and Liam Vanmechelen BL on the ICDR Internship Programme
5. Discipline in Gaelic Football | Sports Law Bar Association



The Bar of Ireland Podcasts are available on all major podcast platforms. Listen back to past episodes by visiting [lawlibrary.ie/podcasts](http://lawlibrary.ie/podcasts) or click the button below.

LISTEN NOW





9.2K

X/Twitter followers (- 82)



15.5K

Linkedin Followers (+ 3,875)



1.3K

Instagram Follower

4.6k

Legal Edge Email  
Newsletter Subscribers  
(+1,100)

38

Event Email Campaigns  
(Avg. 53% open rate, 15% click-through rate)

5

Paid Social  
Media Campaigns

25

Ads in Publications  
(21 in Irish Legal News, 2 Law Society Gazette,  
1 in Siocháin Magazine, 1 in Business & Finance)





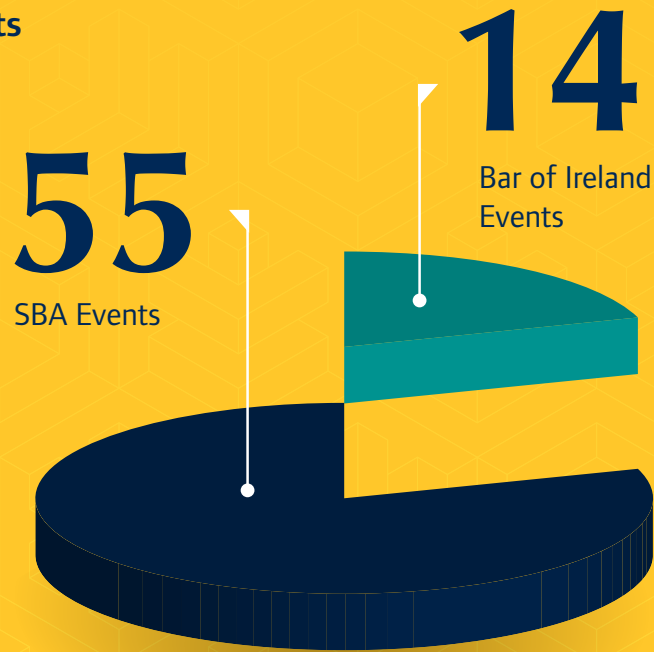
# Specialist Bar Associations Highlights: 2024/25 Legal Year —

The Bar of Ireland supports 17 Specialist Bar Associations (SBAs) to enhance their profile and create awareness of their expertise amongst the wider legal community and industry sectors.



# Specialist Bar Association Statistics - 2024/25

69 Events



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314

Speakers at Events

15

SBA Annual Conferences

215

SBA Committee Members

8,457

Attendees Registered







### **Comhshaol, Climate Bar Association** Chair: **Cliona Kimber SC**

The Climate Bar Association began their 24/25 Legal Year with a photo highlighting Ireland's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. They continued the theme of Natural Justice with an event in Galway which showcased a play by Gerard Humpries called Mountain River. The event focused on legal discussions surrounding the environmental protection of rivers and lakes.

Following on from a joint event in Belfast earlier in the year the Climate Bar Association jointly hosted a handbook launch in the James Joyce Centre. The handbook assists practitioners who are looking to take legal action in climate related matters both north and south of the border.

The Climate Bar Association hosted an event at the end of May focusing on "Climate Conscious Lawyering" and what that means for the profession.

[www.climatebar.ie](http://www.climatebar.ie)



### **Construction Bar Association (CBA)** Chair: **Lydia Bunni BL**

The CBA continue to keep their membership up to date with regular Tech Talks throughout the year.

The CBA Annual Conference took place on Friday 30th June in The Honorable Society of King's Inns. Titled "Constructing Clarity", the conference comprised of three panels which were expertly moderated by The Hon. Mr. Justice Mark Sanfey, The Hon. Madam Justice Denise McBride and The Hon. Mr. Justice Maurice Collins.

The CBA recorded a podcast with James Burke BL and Jonathan Fitzgerald BL discussing Construction Adjudication.

Viewpoint: Resolving Construction Disputes: The Growing Power of Statutory Adjudication in Ireland by Jonathan Fitzgerald BL. Read it [here](#).

[www.cbareland.ie](http://www.cbareland.ie)



### Corporate & Insolvency (CIBA)

Chair: **Kelley Smith SC**

CIBA held their Annual Conference on April 4th this year. The conference was completely sold out with standing room only! Speakers discussed topics surrounding the duties of directors, personal insolvency and the evolution of cross-border insolvency and restructuring. The conference ended with a fireside chat between The Hon. Mr. Justice Michael Quinn in conversation with The Hon. Mr. Justice Peter Kelly (retd).

In February, CIBA held a special event to celebrate awarding an honorary patronage to Mr Justice Michael Quinn.

CIBA ran a number informative Breakfast Briefings throughout the year for Law Library members only.

[www.corporateandinsolvency.ie](http://www.corporateandinsolvency.ie)



### Cumann Barra Na Gaeilge

Chair: **Cormac Ó Dúlacháin AS**

Cumann Barra na Gaeilge held their Annual Conference last year in Gaoth Dóhair. This was a popular event and well attended.

Cumann Barra returned to Rathcairn this year for another insightful seminar.

Méabh Smyth BL and John Freeman BL produced a podcast earlier in the year which detailed the work of Cumann Barra na Gaeilge and their upcoming conference in Paris.

In June 2025, the theme of "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité - Deireadh ré?" was debated in Paris as apart of a hugely popular gathering, with attendees from across the legal community.

[www.cumannbarra.ie](http://www.cumannbarra.ie)



**Employment Bar (EBA)**  
Chair: **Brendan Kirwan SC**

The EBA were busy again this Legal Year with two conferences and four CPD's.

The Annual Conference was held on 15th November with panels moderated by The Hon. Ms Justice Nuala Butler and Alex White SC.

The EBA Cork Conference is now in its third year. Held in the River Lee Hotel and was chaired by Judge Helen Boyle of the Circuit Court, it was an excellent opportunity for networking on the Cork Circuit.

The EBA held an equality spotlight event in the Gaffney Room that discussed Neurodiversity in the Workplace. This was extremely well attended and engaging with expert speakers Claire Bruton BL, Sharon Dillion-Lyons BL and Petr Polak.

[www.employmentbar.ie](http://www.employmentbar.ie)



**EU Bar Association (EUBA)**  
Chair: **Catherine Donnelly SC**

The EUBA held their Annual Conference in Brussels this year on the 5th November. This featured a large delegation from Ireland along with Brussels based lawyers.

The EUBA collaborated with CIBA and Ireland for Law at an event in London on 20th March. This was held in the Irish Embassy in London and featured a distinguished panel of speakers.

The EUBA also held 4 CPDs throughout the year.

[www.euba.ie](http://www.euba.ie)





### Family Lawyers Association (FLA)

Chair: **Paul McCarthy SC**

The FLA continues to organise CPDs both remotely and in person covering a wide range of topics germane to Family Law.

The recent annual Circuit Conference held in Mullingar was attended by over 160 practitioners and featured addresses from, among others, Ferga McGloughlin BL, Eimear Dooley BL, Columb Fortune BL and Mary O'Toole SC.

The FLA continues to engage with policy issues arising from the practice of Family Law across the State.

[www.familylawyers.ie](http://www.familylawyers.ie)



### Financial Services Bar Association (FSBA)

Chair: **John Breslin SC**

The Annual Conference of the FSBA was held on June 25th, in the Gaffney Room and delved into the topics of Advocacy in Regulatory Processes, Strategy: Directors under Investigation and the Amendment to Order 11. The panels were chaired by John Breslin SC, Úna Tighe SC and Patrick O'Reilly SC.

The FSBA also held a CPD discussing how to Enforce the Individual Accountability Framework in November.

[www.fsba.ie](http://www.fsba.ie)





**Immigration, Asylum & Citizenship  
Bar Association (IACBA)**  
Chair: Aoife McMahon BL

IACBA held their Annual Conference on 1st November in the Atrium in the Distillery Building.

The held a joint event with the Irish Immigration Lawyers Association in the Presidents Hall of the Law Society which gave insights into Immigration and Asylum Law.

IACBA and EUBA held a joint event in the University of Galway on May 16th which dealt with the EU Migration Pact.

[www.iacba.ie](http://www.iacba.ie)



**Media, Internet & Data Protection  
Bar Association (MIDBA)**  
Chair: Michael O'Doherty BL

MIDBA held joint events with other SBAs this year. MIDBA and EBA held an event discussing social media posts as grounds for dismissal.

The joint event with TIBA was on social media evidence in personal injuries proceedings.

The event with ICBA called *Hook, Line and Victim* discussed catfishing and other online scams and what can be done to combat them.

[www.midba.ie](http://www.midba.ie)



### **Irish Criminal Bar Association (ICBA)**

Chair: **Simon Donagh BL**

ICBA held their Annual Conference in the Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel.

A joint event with MIDBA on the topic of catfishing and other online scams. This event was very successful with a large in-person and online audience.

[www.icba.ie](http://www.icba.ie)



### **Planning, Environmental & Local Government Bar Association (PELGBA)**

Chair: **Tom Flynn SC**

PELGBA held four CPDs throughout the year covering topics such as Nature Restoration Law, Climate Change, Site Specific Conservation Objectives and a Case Law Update.

Their Annual Conference was held in the Dublin Disputes Resolution Centre on July 4th.

[www.pelgba.ie](http://www.pelgba.ie)



The Probate  
Bar Association  
of Ireland

### **Probate Bar Association (PBA)**

Chair: **John E Donnelly SC**

The PBA held their Annual Conference titled “Estates, Home and Abroad” on 29th November. This was well attended with expert speakers and interesting topics.

The Probate Bar held an in-person masterclass for members. This event advised attendees on the most popular application types in the probate list and common pitfalls.

[www.probatebar.ie](http://www.probatebar.ie)



### **Professional, Regulatory, Disciplinary Bar Association (PRDBA)**

Chair: **Patricia Dillon SC**

The Annual Conference celebrating 10 years of the PRDBA was held on the 8th November. The conference began with a networking lunch and followed up with a packed Gaffney Room. The conference heard from several experts on a wide array of topics.

PRDBA held 5 CPDs throughout the year, they strengthened bonds with solicitor firms by hosting a seminar with Fieldfisher, Addleshaw Goddard and Mason Hayes and Curran while continuing to showcase their expertise to the Law Library members at member only CPDs.

[www.prdba.ie](http://www.prdba.ie)





### **Sports Law Bar Association (SLBA)**

Chair: **Mark Curran BL**

(replaced Aoife Farrelly BL in June)

The SLBA held their Annual Conference on December 5th. This was a well attended event which focused on topics relevant to the recent Olympic Games. The conference was opened by Thomas Byrne TD, Minister for Sport and Physical Education.

The SLBA extended their membership to allow for associate members to join the association during the year. The SLBA held 4 CPDs over the course of the last year. Speakers included Jim Gavin, Chair of GAA Football Review Committee and Cian O'Sullivan, former Dublin player and BDO Tax Partner.

The SBLA recorded 3 podcasts during the year which were well received.

[www.slba.ie](http://www.slba.ie)



Tax Bar  
Association

### **Tax Bar Association (TBA)**

Chair: **Frank Mitchell SC**

The Tax Bar held their Annual Conference on 3rd December 2024 and was generously attended. Speakers included Niall Cody, Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, Daniele Cuniffie, PwC, David Fennell, EY and Tom Maguire from Deloitte among others.

The Tax Bar held a number of joint CPDs with other SBAs throughout the year.

In addition, the Tax Bar produced a three part podcast focusing on tax litigation throughout the year. Presented by Frank Mitchell SC and Lorna Gallagher BL, the podcasts represented a valuable resource to practitioners both at and outside the Bar.

[www.taxbar.ie](http://www.taxbar.ie)



## Tort & Insurance Bar Association (TIBA)

Chair: **Jeremy Maher SC**

The TIBA Annual Conference was held in the Gaffney Room on June 25th.

A joint event with the Media, Internet & Data Protection Bar Association dealt with social media evidence in Personal Injuries proceedings and the joint event with Sports Law Bar Association discussed Personal Injury and Social Utility.

[www.tiba.ie](http://www.tiba.ie)

## Specialist Bar Associations

The Bar of Ireland is home to a number of Specialist Bar Associations, each a vibrant hub of activity that facilitates the exchange and advance of specialist knowledge and expertise through conferences, seminars, papers and periodicals; promoting The Bar of Ireland as a specialist provider of advocacy and legal advice services across a range of practice areas.

**MORE INFO**



# Better & smarter: Practice operations & management —

Our goal in respect of practice operations and management is to deliver lean, responsive and effective practice supports for our members in support of their individual practices.



**THE BAR  
OF IRELAND**  
*Practice Support & Fee Recovery*

## Fee Recovery

The Bar of Ireland Fee Recovery unit provides an in-house service assisting members experiencing difficulties with the recovery of fees. The service was established in July 2020 and has grown from strength to strength over this period. We are pleased to note that we have collected €2.4M on behalf of 285 members (an increase of 23% year-on-year), who were facing challenges on fee collection in particular cases.

In 2024/25 we introduced Fee Recovery clinics in the CCJ and Cork – significantly increasing our visibility.

Our terms of service are that members can avail of the service for up to three overdue fee notes at a time, provided they meet the following criteria:

**1** Reasonable attempts have been made

**2** Overdue by six months or more

**3** Additional fee notes may be accepted if they are with the same solicitor, at management's discretion.

## Practice Management Essentials Course

In response to members' evolving needs, the Practice Management Essentials course was launched in October 2024 to equip barristers with core business and marketing competencies. Modules covering practice finance, IT, risk management, practitioner self-care are available through the My CPD and the first delivery of a new two-part series in-person series on Growing your practice was also delivered in October 2024. An on-demand version of the growing your practice programme is currently in development and this will launch in Michaelmas 2025.

<b>MODULE 1</b>	<b>YOUR PRACTICE AS A BUSINESS</b>	Practice Systems, Administration and Time management	Growing your Practice (Part 2) Marketing Essentials	Beyond the Bar, Preparing for your future
<b>MODULE 2</b>	<b>PRACTICE FINANCE</b>	Accounting & Fee Recovery Essentials Seminar	Cash Flow Management	Costs & Cost Adjudication
<b>MODULE 3</b>	<b>TAX COMPLIANCE</b>			
<b>MODULE 4</b>	<b>IT IN PRACTICE</b>	Office 365 Essentials	Digital Productivity Tools ( 2 Part)	Protecting your Digital Practice - GDPR and Cyber Security
<b>MODULE 5</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	Managing Risk in your Practice	Anti Money Laundering Obligations for Barristers	
<b>MODULE 6</b>	<b>REGULATORY COMPLIANCE</b>	Statutory Obligations under the LSRA	Obligations as a Member of The Bar of Ireland	
<b>MODULE 7</b>	<b>PRACTITIONER SELF CARE</b>	Stress Management and Sleep Hygiene	Nutrition & Physical Activity	



## Practice Support & Fee Recovery Service Statistics —



▨ FEE NOTES

**€2.4M**

We have recovered 500 fee notes with a value of **€2.4M** to date (€1.9 last year)

■ PURSUING

**244**

Actively pursuing 244 fee notes with a value of **€3.1M**

■ LRSA

**44**

44 Active complaints reported to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority

■ LPDT

**10**

10 complaints awaiting inquiry with the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal

**14%**

of the membership now signed up to our Fee Recovery Unit

# Regulatory oversight and ethics: Our quality assurance —

Client and community confidence in our services is vital to the credibility of not only the membership of the Law Library, but the rule of law.

## Ethical guidances

Over the course of 2024/2025 two Ethical Guidances were published

- The Use of Generative AI
- Direct Professional Access

Direct Access arises now pursuant to Section 101 of the Legal Services Regulation Act.

This guidance applies only to circumstances where a member of The Bar of Ireland is accepting instructions directly from a client in a matter other than a contentious matter. It does not apply to contentious matters, where a member of The Bar of Ireland may not take instructions directly from a client. Members are directed to Rules 3.4 and 4.1 of the Code of Conduct of The Bar of Ireland in that regard.



DOWNLOAD



# 175

PPC Enquiries  
from Members

# 18

Meetings of  
Professional Practices  
Committee

# 17

Urgent Rulings  
Between Meetings



### Ethics CPD: AI and the Ethical Implications for Barristers



Chair & Speaker: Michael D Hourigan SC



Speaker: Niall Nolan BL

### Direct Professional Access CPD



Speaker: Michael D Hourigan SC

Resources: Ethical Toolkit

[READ MORE](#)



### The use of expert evidence in the Post Office / Horizon prosecutions



Chair: Michael D Hourigan SC



Speaker: Mark Tottenham BL

### Easter/Trinity PPC Ethics CPD - AI Hallucinations

Chair: Ronan M Murphy SC

Speakers:



Brendan Kirwan SC



Tomás Keys BL



# Collegiality and care: Our human touch —

Collegiality at the Bar is the openness and willingness to share knowledge and continue the social contract that has been a defining feature of independent referral Bars throughout the world.

## Well-being and mental health

A fulfilling and rewarding career at the Bar relies hugely on members' intellectual resources. How these are protected, balanced, and nourished is a priority of the Council.



### Sound of mind

2024/2025 saw the first full year of our The 'Mind Your Mind' initiative; a new systemic psychotherapy direct support for members in association with Clanwilliam Institute.

Our offering includes subsidised 1:1 psychotherapy sessions with highly trained and confidential professionals either online or face to face.

We will continue to promote and integrate awareness of the facility; as the issue of good mental health is a vital aspect of practice management.



### Sound of body

In high demand, and very well received: over the course of three distinct **Better at the Bar** interventions at Distillery Buildings, in partnership with expert and professional clinical providers which included:

- Skin screening
- Prostate Screenings
- Heart Screening

We look forward to delivering additional screenings, due to the member demand.

### Supporting our member's resilience and participation

**Building Resilience whilst Building a Practice** – a fascinating discussion Chaired by Ms. Justice Emily Farrell, on tips and approaches from sports and performance psychologist Paul Aherne, with Andrew Robinson BL and Femi Daniyan BL, Chair of the Equality and Resilience Committee.

[MORE INFO](#)



### Demystifying the Patents of Precedence Process

Chair, Seán Guerin SC was joined by Ms. Justice Sara Phelan, Attorney General Rossa Fanning and Tabitha Wood SC on navigating the decision and the application process in taking silk.

[MORE INFO](#)



### The Practice of Mindfulness

Sinead O'Callaghan and Caroline Kelly explore mindfulness.

[MORE INFO](#)



### Neurodiversity Awareness at the Bar: Delivered by Mark Scully of Braver Consulting

Our Better at the Bar section of the member site contains all our resources and signposting in respect of member mental health and wellbeing supports.

[MORE INFO](#)







**Mark of Legal Excellence | 27 Members Called to the Inner Bar**  
The grant of Patents of Precedence marks an exceptional milestone in the professional journeys of twenty-seven members of The Bar, in October 2024. Taking silk is not only the recognition of their individual legal practice and expertise but of their contributions to the profession.







### Clubs and Societies at the Bar

The Bar of Ireland supports a vibrant community beyond legal practice through a wide range of clubs and societies that encourage professional development, wellbeing, and social engagement. These groups provide members with opportunities to explore personal interests, foster camaraderie, and participate in enriching extracurricular activities.

#### Sports & Wellbeing Clubs

- The Bar Flies Running Club
- The Bar Rugby Club
- The Bar Tennis Club
- Ladies' Hockey Club
- The Bar Tag Rugby Club
- Gaelic Football Club
- The Bar's Cycling Club
- The Bar's Soccer Club
- The Bar Golfing Society
- The Bar of Ireland Cricket Club

#### Arts & Culture Societies

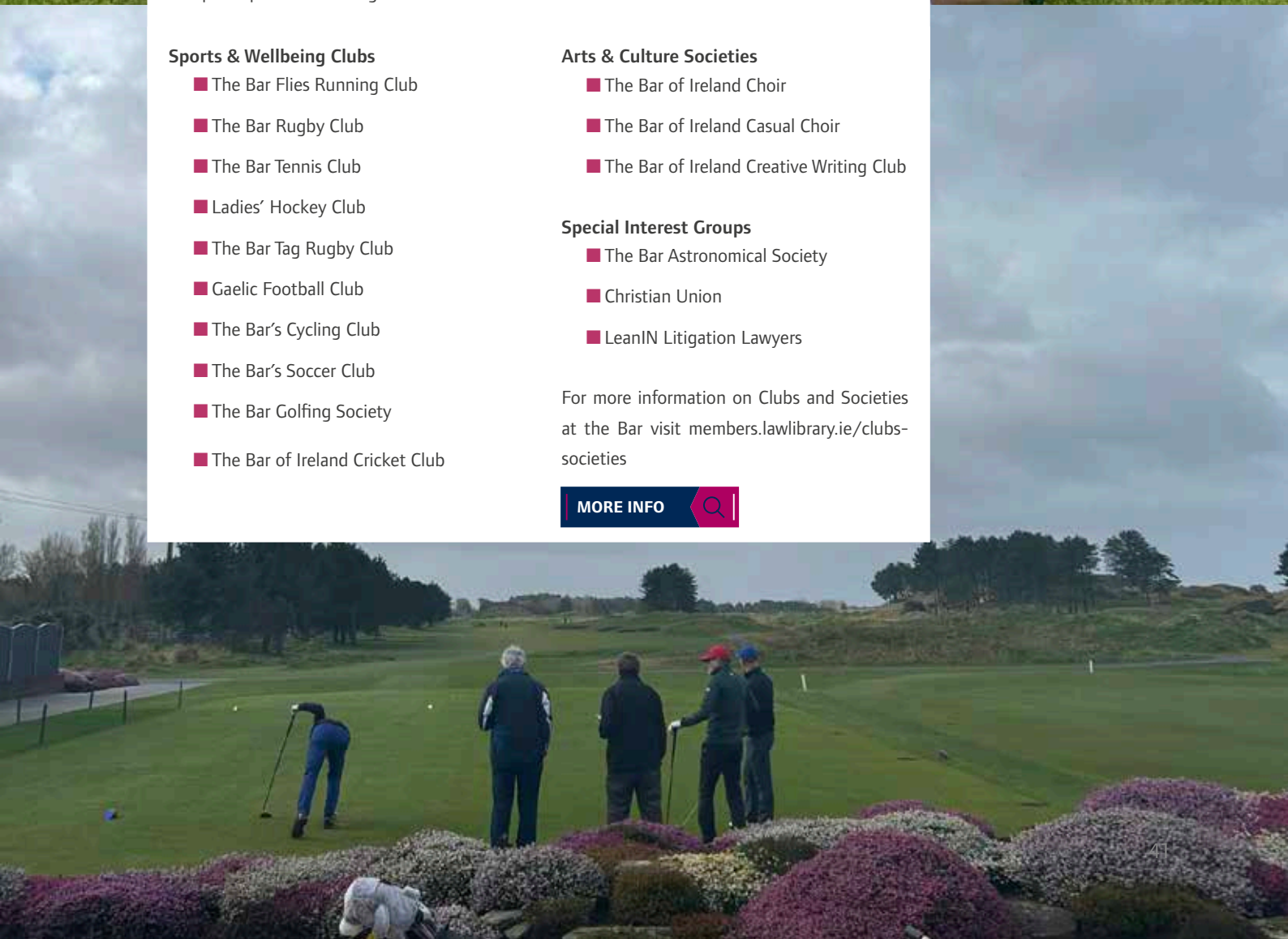
- The Bar of Ireland Choir
- The Bar of Ireland Casual Choir
- The Bar of Ireland Creative Writing Club

#### Special Interest Groups

- The Bar Astronomical Society
- Christian Union
- LeanIN Litigation Lawyers

For more information on Clubs and Societies at the Bar visit [members.lawlibrary.ie/clubs-societies](https://members.lawlibrary.ie/clubs-societies)

MORE INFO



## Fostering our future Bar: Young Bar

**Our membership in years one to seven represents the future of the Bar. A priority exists at the Council to nurture, support and promote leadership from this valuable member constituency.**

### The Young Bar Committee

Over the past year, the Young Bar Committee actively supported and hosted a diverse range of events, CPDs, and social activities aimed at fostering professional development and community among junior members of the Bar. Highlights to note included the annual Christmas Party, Summer BBQ, and multiple CPDs. In March 2025, the Committee also supported the organisation of the Keeping Commons Conference, which brought together members for a full day of learning and networking. Additionally, the Committee proudly hosted the return of the Annual Adrian Hardiman Moot Competition.



### CPD – Keeping Commons Conference

Held on 14 March 2025 and supported by the Young Bar Committee, The Keeping Commons Conference brought to the fore the expertise of early career researchers and young practitioners, while also building on the knowledge and proficiency of more senior scholars and practitioners. Members gathered for a day filled with various speakers leading conversations on criminal law and evidence, family, childcare and employment law before concluding the afternoon with a roundtable discussion between academia and practice.

### CPD: Practising Criminal Law in the District Court

With the support of the Young Bar Committee, the Irish Criminal Bar Association hosted a CPD titled “Practising Criminal Law in the District Court” on 23 January 2025. The event was tailored for new members and those who had recently commenced practice in criminal law in the District Court. The session was well-

attended and provided a valuable opportunity for practitioners to deepen their understanding and stay up to date in legislative insights in key areas including laws pertaining to road traffic, domestic violence and drink and drug driving.

### CPD: Taxation of Costs in the Circuit Court and Adjudication of Costs in the High Court

On 26 June 2025, the Young Bar Committee hosted a CPD event titled “Taxation of Costs in the Circuit Court and Adjudication of Costs in the High Court.” The session featured James Seymour, County Registrar, who provided junior practitioners with practical insights into the often complex and technical area of legal costs, a topic of increasing relevance across all areas of practice. The CPD was in support of the Young Bar Committee’s commitment to equip early-career barristers with the tools needed to navigate the demands of early legal practice.





### Adrian Hardiman Moot Competition Returns

In Spring 2025, the Adrian Hardiman Moot Competition made a much-anticipated return. Open to members of the Bar of Ireland in Years 1 to 5 of practice, the competition spans four rounds and continues to be a highlight in the calendar for junior counsel at The Bar.

The competition is kindly supported by the family of the late Mr. Justice Adrian Hardiman, whose legacy continues to inspire excellence in legal debate and advocacy skills among young barristers.

This year, 13 teams took part in the competition, showcasing exceptional advocacy throughout the preliminary rounds. The final round, featuring the top two teams, took place on 4 July in the Supreme Court and was a closely contested final.

Congratulations to this year's winners Gemma McLoughlin-Burke BL and Seán Beatty BL who claimed a narrow victory over the team of Laurenz Boss BL and Thea Kennedy BL and took home the Adrian Hardiman Memorial Trophy. In addition to claiming the title of top mooters, the winning team will receive full coverage of their Law Library subscription fees for the upcoming year.

### 'Networking Nexus' with the Law Society

Stalking, harassment and unwanted conduct In April 2025, members of the Young Bar attended the Law Society's "Networking Nexus" breakfast event, hosted by the Younger Members Committee. The session featured contributions from Keith Walsh SC and Erin Brogan (FLAC) on the legal and professional challenges surrounding stalking, harassment, and unwanted conduct. The event offered an opportunity for networking between the barristers and solicitors and discussion on issues impacting both professions.



### The Liberator Scholarship

As a fitting celebration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Daniel O'Connell, the Bar of Ireland supported the volunteering sponsorship and investment by senior members of the Bar who practice mediation in a fully funded opportunity for a member of the Bar to attend the Harvard Programme on Negotiation.

Chosen by a panel of adjudicators that included former President Mary McAleese, Martin McAleese and The Hon. Mr. Justice John MacMenamin will be conferred with this year's Liberator Scholarship Prize.



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE  
FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION®

### ICDR Fellowships – New York Bound

The ADR Committee continues to foster a valuable relationship with the International Center for Dispute Resolution in New York, in providing a valuable 'visiting lawyer' experience to two members of the Young Bar, and to support their careers in international arbitration.

This summer Méabh Smyth BL and Alicia O'Connor BL will spend 4 weeks in New York shadowing, observing and assisting in the work of the ICDR.



Méabh Smyth BL



Alicia O'Connor BL



## A Bar for all: Supporting diversity, equality, and inclusion

The profession has effectively doubled since the turn of the century, and so too has the richness of our members' identities, backgrounds and experiences. We are committed to acting as a driving force in fostering diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) across the legal profession by building a truly equitable profession, one of true inclusion, respecting our members' individuality.



### OUTlaw Pride Celebration

The Bar continues its important support of the OUTLaw Network. OUTLaw represents LGBTQ+ lawyers and allies and drives inclusion across the Irish legal community.

In June, the Chair of the Council, Seán Guerin SC joined with our representative on OUTLaw Amy Walsh BL, and colleagues, at a pre-Pride breakfast at Wigwam in Dublin City.



### Denham Fellowship

The Denham Fellowship, in partnership with The Honorable Society of King's Inns, endeavours to encourage more diversity in the legal profession. Denham Fellows are provided with financial, educational and professional support from point of entry to the Barrister-at-Law degree programme at the King's Inns all the way through their first four years of practice at the Law Library culminating in a five year programme and ultimately in what is going to be a successful and rewarding career at the Bar.

Following a competitive process, two additional fellows were selected in May to attend the King's Inns. Three fellows will commence their practice at the Bar this October.





### International Women's Day

Leading voices in advocacy Sinéad Burke, Dr Maeve O'Rourke, and Mellissa English SC discussed the importance of 'Accelerating Action' during a panel chaired by Ms Justice Marguerite Bolger during The Bar of Ireland's annual International Women's Day celebration on March 6, at the Honorable Society of the King's Inns. The panel highlighted the need for continued momentum in advancing equality and resilience within the legal profession and society. Following the discussion, Ms Justice Marie Baker (retd.) delivered the keynote address, emphasising the evolving role of women in the legal profession and the broader societal imperative to accelerate gender equality.





## A human endeavour: Invigorating the in-person experience

The practice of law is a human activity; its true value and experience is optimised when we ensure that members come together to share, observe and create.

### International Arbitration Day

The Bar was delighted to host Dublin International Arbitration Day 2024, which featured an outstanding line up of local and international expert speakers on matters of topical interest. Themes included: The Intersection Between Arbitration and Criminal Law, 1994-2024: The Demise of the Energy Charter Treaty?, Privilege in International Arbitration, The Interaction Between Human Rights and International Arbitration and the quickfire round.







### **Mediation | Making Commercial Sense**

In May, the ADR Committee, hosted a sell out in-person only conference - Mediation | Making Commercial Sense - which focussed on the growth of mediation. Bringing together judicial perspectives, from both home and abroad, as well as contributions from the Attorney General, practitioners and end users of the process; the conference proved to be a valuable networking opportunity, as well as strengthening relationships in this growth area.





## BEYOND THE BAR

### Back to the Bar: The value of our network

In April, the Beyond the Bar Alumni Network welcomed current and former members to a fantastic networking and social event, encompassing a fireside chat with a number of former colleagues about their work, the value of their time at The Bar of Ireland and how the work of the profession can continue to shape their careers.

Speakers included:

- The Hon. Mr. Justice David Barniville, President of the High Court
- Sarah Freeman BL – Managing Editor, Business and Finance Media Group (Chair)
- Marion Berry BL – Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions
- Michael Dillon BL – Director of Legal, Corporate Enforcement Authority
- Harriet Meagher – Meagher Solicitors
- Alison Hardiman BL – Consultant, Environment and Planning Group, Philip Lee LLP







#### **The 2025 Daniel O'Connell Memorial Lecture**

The Council were delighted to re-introduce the Daniel O'Connell Memorial Lecture back to our annual programme of public and member engagements.

Marking the 250th anniversary of the birth of The Liberator, we were honoured to welcome Philippe Sands KC to the sumptuous surroundings of the Round Hall in the Four Courts. In delivering his lecture, Philippe spoke about an entwined double tale, of Augusto Pinochet, the Chilean dictator, and Walther Rauff, a WWII Nazi war criminal who escaped to Patagonia, and the relevance of the impunity they enjoyed, a story told in more detail in his new book *38 Londres Street*.







### Meet the Mediator: Legacy and Practice

Over the course of the year, we launched our Meet the Mediator series, providing a unique opportunity to hear from distinct voices in Irish political life on the role of a mediation approach to conflict.

In April, Professor Monica McWilliams was interviewed by Ingrid Miley BL to a packed room. Monica was Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission 2005 - 2011, a co-founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, a leading contributor to the Anglo-Irish Peace Process leading to the Good Friday Agreement 1998 amongst many other distinctions.

Meet the Mediator | Professor Monica McWilliams



In May, we welcomed former Ambassador David Donoghue, who boasts a long and varied career in Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs.

He was involved for many years in the Northern Ireland peace process. He was one of the Irish Government's negotiators for the ground-breaking Good Friday Agreement (1998), which has provided a political framework for lasting peace and stability in Northern Ireland. These recordings are a valuable resource to the membership as well as our collective understanding of the nation's past.

Meet the Mediator | David Donoghue









# CONNECTED COMMUNITY:

Our Community Strategic Pillar represents the journey of members on their pathway to practice at the Bar, our impact in our locality and environment, and the enduring connection with those members who move beyond the Bar.



Good Citizenship



Policy and Law Reform



Valuing The Profession

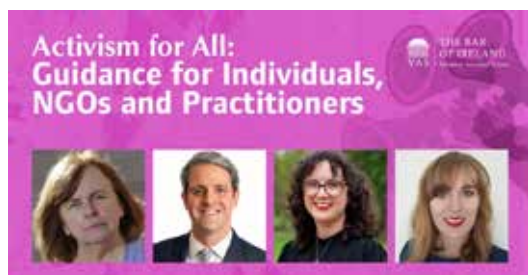
# Good citizenship: environmental, social & governance leadership —

The Bar of Ireland's legacy to the community is defined by profession's contributions to social and law reforming aspects of our members' work. Our pro-bono record, commitment to human rights and the rule of law are three aspects of our leadership role.



## Strength to Strength

Gemma McLoughlin Burke BL, Coordinator of the Voluntary Assistance Scheme (VAS) and the VAS Committee have overseen a busy year, which further solidifies the leadership of the Bar in respect of important pro-bono work.



The Activism for All Seminar in April welcomed Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, alongside Sean O'Sullivan BL and Emily Williams of ICCL, for discussion on the type of work involved in grassroots organisations and the impact this work can have.

The VAS centerpiece conference - Human Rights and Pro Bono Practice provided attendees an opportunity to engage with three separate topics including the influence of funders on charitable advocacy, working with vulnerable clients and utilising litigation as a tool to protect and vindicate rights.

# 41

Requests for assistance since Jan 2025

# 145

Barristers on the VAS Panel

In addition, VAS produced three podcasts, as part of a continuing series:



An look at the pro bono work required to assist the victims of historic injustice. Diarmuid Brecknell from Phoenix Law Solicitors and Andrew McKeown BL talk to us about Inquests, Inquiries and Campaigns and the intense yet rewarding work required to assist victims.

[LISTEN NOW](#)



James Rooney BL and Cillian Bracken BL joined Gemma McLoughlin-Burke BL and Dearbhla Shirt to speak to about their voluntary work and more specifically their role in running the LGBTQI+ legal clinic with FLAC. James and Cillian cover legal issues regularly faced by the LGBTQI+ community - including parenthood of children and gender-affirming healthcare and legal documentation - and the other pro bono legal work they participate in.

[LISTEN NOW](#)

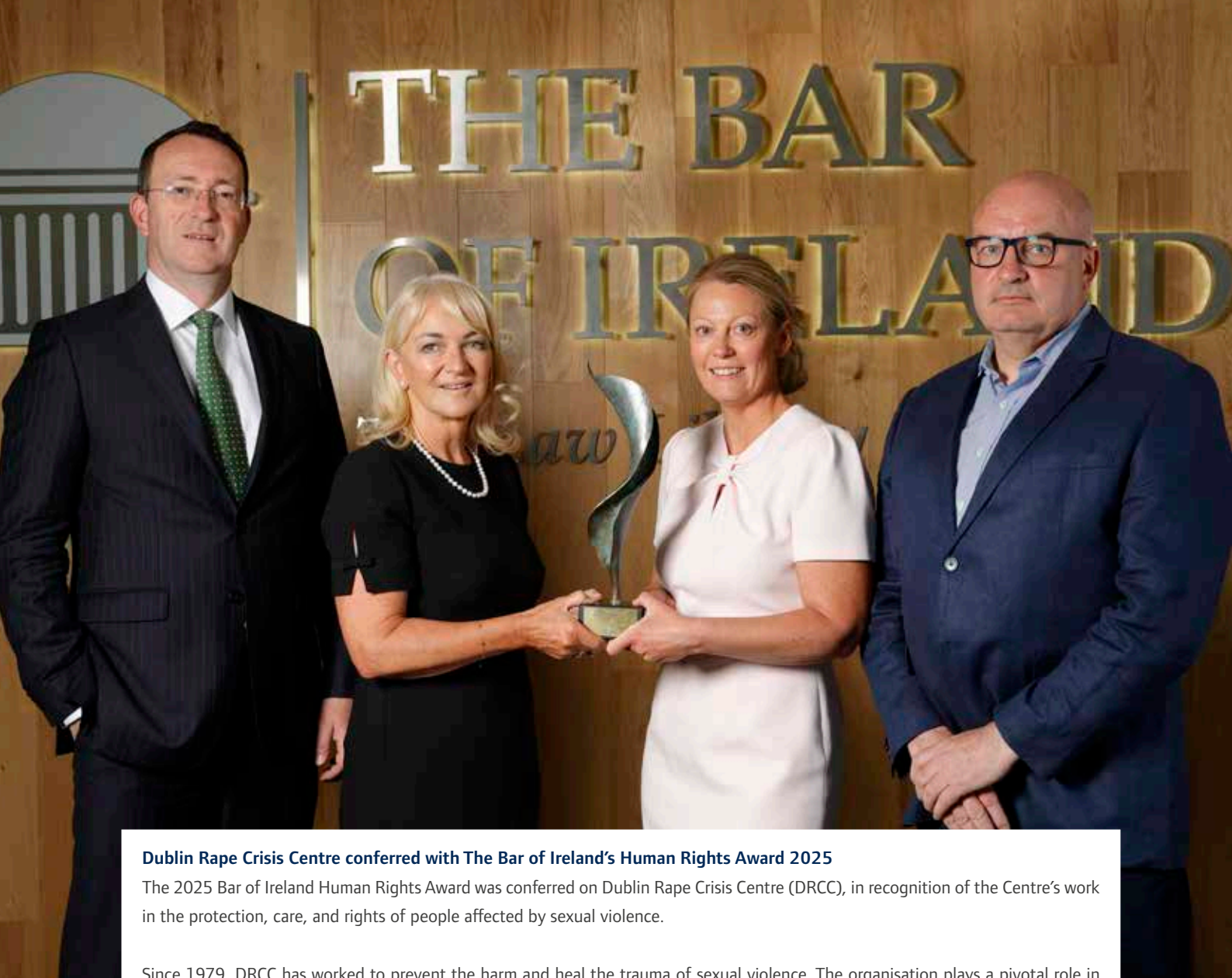


Lewis Mooney BL and Seán Beatty BL joined Gemma McLoughlin Burke BL and Dearbhla Shirt to discuss the various Bar Fellowships & Volunteering Opportunities available to barristers. From pro bono work to structured fellowship programs, they explore how members of the Bar can contribute their skills to support access to justice and make a real impact.

[LISTEN NOW](#)







#### **Dublin Rape Crisis Centre conferred with The Bar of Ireland's Human Rights Award 2025**

The 2025 Bar of Ireland Human Rights Award was conferred on Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC), in recognition of the Centre's work in the protection, care, and rights of people affected by sexual violence.

Since 1979, DRCC has worked to prevent the harm and heal the trauma of sexual violence. The organisation plays a pivotal role in advancing support systems and legal protections for survivors of sexual violence, contributing to vital societal change and legislative reform in Ireland.



**Oisín Vince Coulter BL**

#### **Innocence Fellowship**

The Public Affairs Committee were delighted to send Oisín Vince Coulter BL to participate in the Innocence Project at the University of Wisconsin in August/September 2025. The Bar's partnership with innocence programs in the US offers a rare and valuable insight into the US criminal justice system, and an opportunity to work alongside leading legal professionals and advocates. It also provides a platform to build a network of contacts across the US and beyond.

#### **Endangered Lawyers**

In February, we welcomed UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mary Lawlor; Sayed Hussain Anosh – Executive Chair, Afghanistan Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+) and Michael Lynn SC (CCBE Human Rights Committee) to a wide ranging discussion on the plight of endangered lawyers, and what Bar Associations can do to support this growing and worrying trend.

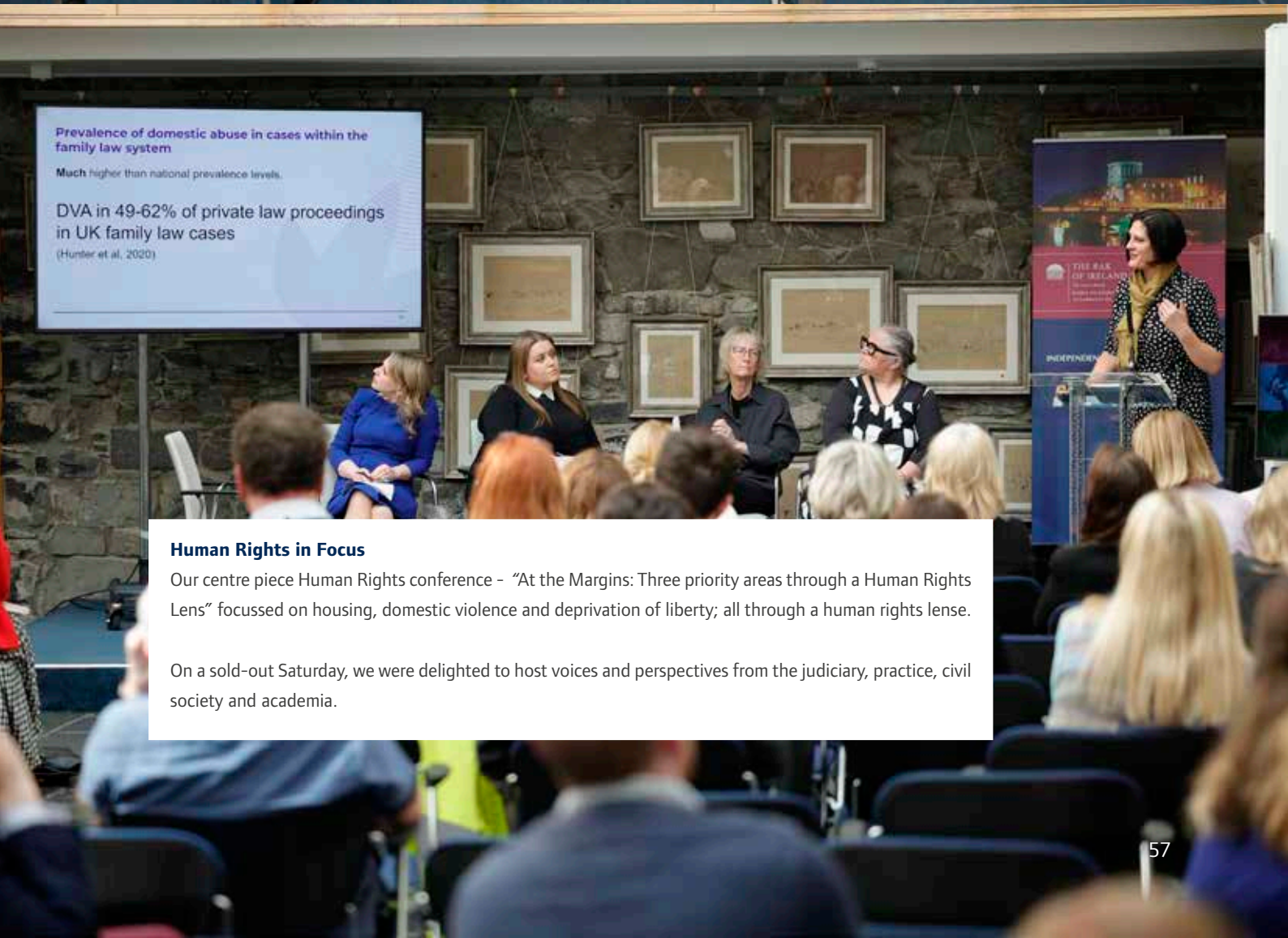




***“It’s bad enough **not having equality,** but **not being allowed to point it out** is another thing.”***

- Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, civil rights leader and former MP for Mid Ulster | 'Activism for All' - 8 April 2025





### Human Rights in Focus

Our centre piece Human Rights conference – “At the Margins: Three priority areas through a Human Rights Lens” focussed on housing, domestic violence and deprivation of liberty; all through a human rights lense.

On a sold-out Saturday, we were delighted to host voices and perspectives from the judiciary, practice, civil society and academia.



# Policy and law reform: **Advocating with expertise** —

Our policy and law reform work is driven by public interest and the need to protect members' independence. Council plays a key role in shaping and communicating our positions, with credibility rooted in our professional values, which guide our reform agenda.



## A Manifesto for Fairness

In the lead up to the General Election in late 2024, The Bar of Ireland hosted a Justice Hustings at the Law Library which included a discussion with six general election candidates moderated by Seán Guerin SC, Chair, Council of The Bar of Ireland.

Candidates from across the political spectrum were invited to share their views and priorities on the Justice portfolio, and also to respond to the Bar's priorities set out in its manifesto for Government, which was launched at the event.

As part of our manifesto, the Bar called for a fair system for all, regardless of means, pointing in particular to the areas of civil

legal aid, family law, and criminal justice as in need of significant investment, due to increasing demand.

The candidates who attended included Jim O'Callaghan TD of Fianna Fáil, Senator Barry Ward SC of Fine Gael, Ruairí Ó Murchú TD of Sinn Féin, Labour Party leader Ivana Bacik TD, Patrick Costello TD of the Green Party, and Sinéad Gibney of the Social Democrats

Read our manifesto here:

[READ MORE](#)





### Civil Fees: Family & Child Services on a Knife Edge

Over the course of 2025, the Civil State Bar Committee surveyed the membership on the sustainability of practice based on under the Civil Legal Aid Scheme, paid on the basis of the Legal Aid Board's 2012 Terms and Conditions.

The outcome of that survey, along with research brought to the fore key concerns relating to:

- **Outdated Fees & Fee Rate Structure:** Current fees reflect a reduced fee rate and static structure imposed on practitioners in 2012, the rates are 32% below today's equivalent of those agreed in 1998, some 27 years ago.
- **Expanding complexity of work and court procedures:** Counsel face increasingly complex issues in family law in response to changes in legislation and the introduction of constitutional obligations to children which now necessitate additional reports and interlocutory applications to progress matters to a hearing.
- **Demand for legal aid is increasing:** Growing demand in areas such as divorce, cohabitation, childcare law, access and maintenance require expertise and experience of counsel to resolve.
- **An Exodus of Expertise:** Legal aid work is at risk of being abandoned by experienced and expert practitioners in favour of work offering more sustainable fees which support a viable practice.

This issue will be a key political and justice-wide priority in 2025/2026.

### Criminal Fees Campaign – Work remains

While Government took the first step in Budget 2024 to restore the cuts that barristers have endured since 2008, the commitment to restore a further 8% as announced in Budget 2025 still leaves the professional fees paid to barristers 10.5% below what they should be if the profession is to be treated fairly and similar to all other groups of workers where the State is the paymaster.

The latest 8% restoration came into effect from January 2025.

However, this partial reversal of fee cuts announced as part of Budget 2025 continues to fall short of what criminal practitioners had been expecting.

The Council welcomed the commitment in the Programme for Government to reform the operation of the criminal legal aid system and fully restore criminal legal aid fees.

Over the course of 2024/2025, the Council has continued to review the position with the Criminal Bar; and continues to engage with the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs & Migration in advance of Budget 2026, to restore the 8% cut that was applied in March 2009 and the non-payment of the 2.5% increase that was due to be applied in September 2008 along with a restoration of the link with national wage agreements.



### Engagement with the LSRA on the Breaking Down Barriers Report

The Bar of Ireland has actively engaged with the implementation of the Legal Services Regulatory Authority's (LSRA) Breaking Down Barriers report since its publication in September 2024. The report identified key perceived structural, financial, and informational obstacles four of which pertain to the barrister profession directly, i.e.

1. Barriers to Entry – Qualification
2. Barriers to Entry – Information
3. Early Career Challenges – Barristers
4. Barriers to Entry – Diversity and Connections

### Collaboration through the Implementation Working Group

As a key stakeholder in working towards addressing barriers and career challenges faced by practitioners and those considering a career at the Bar, The Bar of Ireland was invited to participate on the LSRA's Breaking Down Barriers Implementation Working Group, which aims to advance the recommendations contained in the report within a 15-month timeframe. Three meetings of the implementation group have been held to date.

### Enhancing Access through Existing and New Diversity Programmes

In response to **Recommendation 3** of the report, which focuses on funding to enhance diversity initiatives, the Council submitted a detailed position paper advocating for state-funded models to support enhanced diversity initiatives that tackle access to the profession. This submission is being considered by the LSRA.

### Preserving Standards in Professional Formation

In response to **Recommendation 4**, which explores the potential removal of mandatory pupillage following qualification, The Bar of Ireland submitted a detailed response affirming the continued necessity of pupillage as a foundation of professional training at the independent referral bar.

The submission highlighted that pupillage provides critical real-world experience, structured mentorship, and exposure to live legal work – elements which are not replicable within an academic programme.



## Breaking Down Barriers

*Final Report to the Minister for Justice*



January 2024

### Future and Current Diversity Initiatives

In response to **Recommendation 13** of the report the Bar shared information on its flagship diversity initiatives:

- **The Denham Fellowship** – which offers full fee waivers, a €7,000 annual stipend, LSRA levy, and extensive mentorship to two aspiring barristers from disadvantaged backgrounds each year.
- **Look Into Law TY Programme** – which provides over 100 students annually with a unique insight into a career as a barrister. A minimum of 20% of places reserved on the programme are reserved for DEIS schools.
- **Your Call – University Outreach Campaign** – which engages the barrister profession directly within university student communities and offers a paid internship to enhance interested students understanding of the profession.

These programmes are central to our proactive strategy to broaden access and enhance diversity within the Bar.

### Advancing Key Regulatory Reform

The Bar has also contributed to a range of additional recommendations under active LSRA review, including:

- **Recommendation 20** – Following the commencement of s101 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015, The Bar of Ireland, via it's Professional Practices Committee, issued guidance for members on non-contentious direct professional access.
- **Recommendation 25** – The Bar of Ireland made a submission to the LSRA in relation to barristers' ability to sue for their fees.

### Fees

The Bar of Ireland also provided input and support for the following recommendations related to barrister's fees.

- **Recommendation 24** – The Bar of Ireland is actively collaborating with the Law Society to develop a joint protocol aimed at promoting the timely payment of fees to barristers. This work recognises the financial pressures faced by practitioners, especially in the early years of practice, and the importance of reliable fee payment in sustaining a career at the Bar. This constructive engagement aims to reduce disputes related to fees and improve financial certainty across the profession.
- **Recommendation 26 & Recommendation 27** – The Bar of Ireland made a formal submission supporting the LSRA's advocacy on restoring legal aid fees to pre-FEMPI levels, underscoring the urgency of fair remuneration for publicly funded legal work and promoted the advancement of a cross-agency roundtable on public procurement and equitable briefing, designed to improve transparency in state-funded legal work.



# THE BAR REVIEW

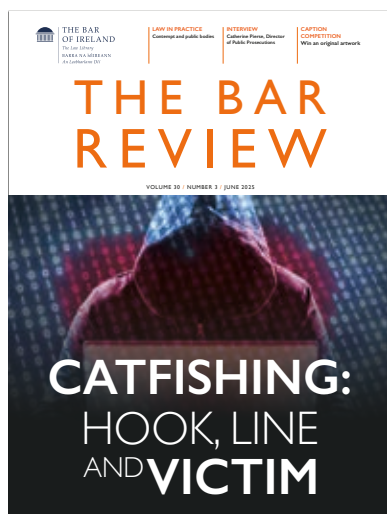
## The Bar Review - Legal Expertise: Law Examined

Under the leadership of Helen Murray BL, editor of the Bar Review, 2024/2025 saw yet another successful year in providing a source of thought leadership and key practice supports to our membership.

The journal through its 'Law in Practice' Section addressed important and timely issues across a range of subject matter including the Defamation (Amendment) Bill 2024's weight of emphasis on alternative dispute resolution, an exploration into sentencing approaches considering mental illness, and an overview of the Hight Court decision in *Coolglass Wind Farm Limited v An Bord Pleanála* to name just a number.

Over the past year, we have had the honour of interviewing some of the leading voices in the justice, political and regulatory field -

- Dame Siobhan Keegan, Lady Chief Justice of Northern Ireland discussed her plans for modernisation of the courts and the valuable skills learned in family law,
- Ian Drennan, CEO of the Corporate Enforcement Agency (CEA), spoke to the Authority's work and the role of legal professionals within the CEA.
- Fianna Fáil MEP Cynthia Ní Mhurchú and Independent MEP Michael McNamara explored the issue of sentencing companies for criminal offences, and
- Catherine Pierce, Director of Public Prosecutions spoke about the challenges facing modern prosecution service, plans for the future and the celebration of the 50 Year Anniversary of the Office of the DPP.
- Aonghus Kelly, Head of the International Crimes Legal Unit at the EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine, spoke to his career, and his work advising war crimes investigators.



For the latest and past editions of the Bar Review

[CLICK HERE](#)







## Submissions

Engaging and advocating from a position of legal knowledge and practice is a key activity of the Council and its Committees.

Over the course of 2024/2025, the following formal submissions have been made:

### September 2024

- The Bar of Ireland Pre-Budget Submission 2025

### November 2024

- Submission to the Advisory Council against Economic Crime and Corruption
- Justice | A Manifesto for Fairness: The Bar of Ireland's manifesto for Government

### December 2024

- Consultation on Jury Reform

### January 2025

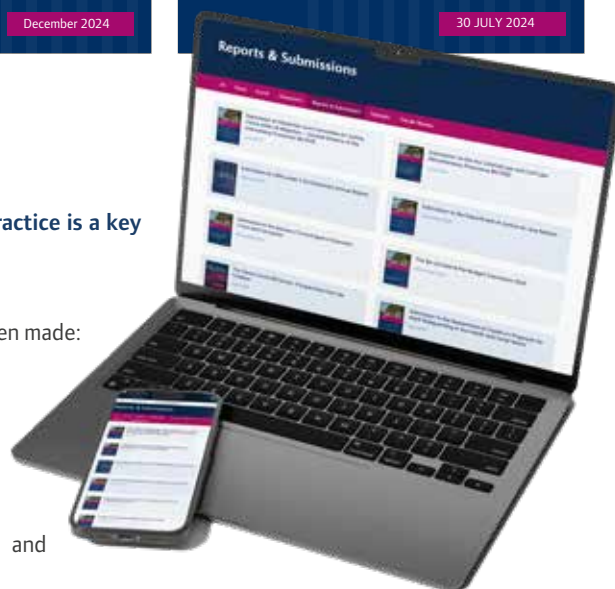
- Submission by the Council of The Bar of Ireland to the European Commission 2025 Rule of Law Report Targeted Stakeholder Consultation
- Establishing the Mediation Council – Structure & Membership: Submission on behalf of the Council of The Bar of Ireland

### February 2025

- Submission to LSRA under S 33 Admissions Annual Report
- Submission to the Law Reform Commission on the Review of the Venice Commission's Rule of Law Checklist

### June 2025

- Submission to the Joint Committee on Justice on the General Scheme of the Criminal Law and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2025
- Submission to the Joint Committee on Justice on the General Scheme of the International Protection Bill 2025



For more information on The Bar of Ireland's Reports and Submissions:

**MORE INFO**



# Valuing the profession: **Fostering the Bar membership lifecycle** —

We engage with three key groups beyond the Bar: young adults through the TY Programme, aspiring professionals via King's Inns and universities, and past members through our alumni and legacy initiatives. These connections reflect the growing value we see in engaging with communities outside the Bar.



## **Transition Year Programme**

The 2025 TY Look into Law work experience programme was held on 3 – 6 March 2025 with 100 students offered places on the programme. Twenty-six of the students participating were from DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools) schools. Delivered over four days in a hybrid format, students completed two days online and two days onsite and learned about topics such as the early years as a barrister, civil and criminal practices, life as a senior counsel, the history of the courts, life as a judge, life as a judicial assistant, the role of Specialist Bar Associations (SBAs) and ethics. Participants also had the opportunity to shadow barristers in the courts and participate in a mock trial.

In addition to the work experience programme The Big Legal Q&A event was expanded this year to include a second opportunity for students to participate. Over 1,300 students from 57 schools took part across the two sessions which provided students the opportunity to learn about the law, justice system and ask members of the profession and the judiciary questions about the practice of law in Ireland.

Thank you to the more than 30 member volunteers who provided their support for the programme.









## University Outreach

The Bar's programme of University Outreach activity expanded its reach through nine law and career fairs and introduced a new "Your Call" campaign, which engaged over 300 law students via an interactive quiz. Instagram engagement rose significantly to 1.3k followers. In addition to law fairs, the Bar supported a range of university events including advocacy workshops, career talks, and webinars. These efforts strengthened ties with student societies and broadened awareness of the barrister profession.



## The Bar of Ireland Launches Legal Internship Programme for Aspiring Barristers

In June and July 2025, The Bar of Ireland hosted its pilot Internship Programme for law students, offering four participants a unique, immersive experience into life at the Bar.

Universities and institutions across Ireland offering law degrees on the approved list for the King's Inns nominated two students each who were invited to complete an application form. From those applications, four interns were selected from four universities across Ireland.

Over the course of two weeks, interns engaged in a schedule that included job-shadowing barristers

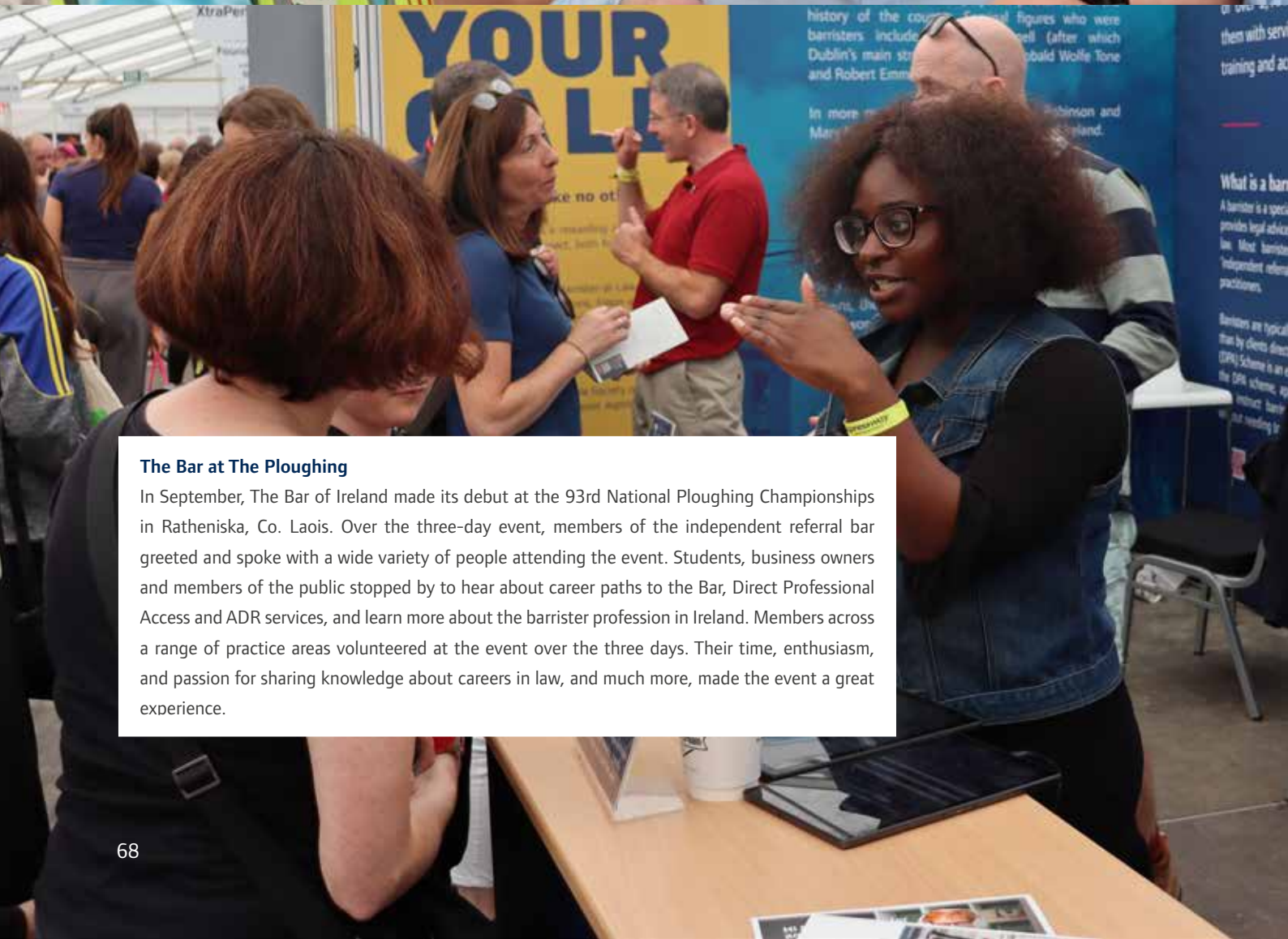
in both civil and criminal courts, participated in workshops on advocacy, legal research, and IT skills, and attended talks from junior and senior counsel and a member of the judiciary. The programme also featured networking events and tours.

Those unsuccessful nominees were invited to attend an Open Day in July instead. Designed to provide an insight into a career at the Bar, the internship not only fostered unique networking opportunities but also highlighted the values of collegiality, resilience, and public service that define the Bar.

[MORE INFO](#)







### The Bar at The Ploughing

In September, The Bar of Ireland made its debut at the 93rd National Ploughing Championships in Ratheniska, Co. Laois. Over the three-day event, members of the independent referral bar greeted and spoke with a wide variety of people attending the event. Students, business owners and members of the public stopped by to hear about career paths to the Bar, Direct Professional Access and ADR services, and learn more about the barrister profession in Ireland. Members across a range of practice areas volunteered at the event over the three days. Their time, enthusiasm, and passion for sharing knowledge about careers in law, and much more, made the event a great experience.







# EXPERT KNOWLEDGE:

Our members' success is largely driven by top-tier advocacy, prompt access to legal information, a clear grasp of emerging legal developments, and the ability to effectively use technology to support the delivery of their professional services.



Knowledge is power



Practice operations and management



Advancing professional growth



# Knowledge is power: Library and research —

**As the primary dedicated legal library in the State, the library, research, and knowledge role of The Bar of Ireland is one of our core member services.**

With a collection of over 100,000 print materials and access to 30+ specialised electronic resources, the Library continues to expand its support for the ever-evolving landscape of legal research. Alongside established programmes such as skills-based training sessions and current awareness services, the Library now aims to enhance its offerings by incorporating cutting-edge AI tools. This approach ensures that users benefit from both traditional and innovative ways of accessing and interpreting legal information, reinforcing the Library's commitment to comprehensive support.

## **Piloting Member Use of Legal AI**

The growth and speed of legal specific AI solutions means that the Bar takes on a new role in exploring and validating what might be a best 'fit' for our members work, as well as the structure of licensing.

Automation of workflows, document management, drafting, legal research and natural language querying are increasingly a baseline for all-in-one solutions being offered, with new features constantly being added.

The conclusion of a member-pilot with Harvey AI and Legora in June and July 2025 represents a first step to wider legaltech engagement by the Library.

Dialogue with other providers, understanding functionality and limitations has commenced and will remain an urgent and key priority for the Library in partnership with our members.

## **Judgment Headnotes by Generative AI**

In October 2024, a project was launched to automatically generate headnotes from court judgments for legal publications. Traditionally, creating these summaries was time-consuming and lacked satisfactory commercial solutions. A new application was developed with the IT Department to process daily court


judgment PDFs and produce high-quality headnotes. After rigorous testing against established law reports, the system began publishing AI-generated headnotes in January 2025. Each headnote is manually reviewed for accuracy, and its AI origin is clearly disclosed. The Bar of Ireland owns the AI prompt, allowing for future improvements and reuse.

## **Trial of Lexis+ AI & Vincent AI**

Alongside the Judgement Summaries tool, the Library piloted two AI tools — Lexis+ AI and Vincent AI by vLex — to assist staff with complex legal database searches. Of the roughly 9,000 annual research queries, 5–10% require nuanced, contextual research, making them ideal for generative AI support.

During testing, both tools performed well with specific, context-rich queries like case interpretation or comparative analysis, but were less effective for broader information retrieval. A staff survey showed strong support: 14 out of 16 respondents favoured continued use due to improved efficiency and confidence.

As a result, the Library plans to subscribe to both tools and may offer member access via designated terminals to encourage broader adoption of AI-assisted legal research.



# ETHICAL TOOLKIT: ETHICAL USE AND USE CASES FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEGAL PRACTICE

## Technology at pace: Generative AI

In early May, the Bar hosted a number of AI Insights initiatives at the Bar, including a 3 day opportunity for members to 'get up and close' to the Microsoft Co-pilot application, that now forms part of our offering to all members.

Generative AI is emerging as a key tool in the practice management and research aspects of the profession, and Co-pilot can provide a valuable and secure support to members in documentation review, initial drafting of correspondences and other administrative tasks.

As part of the Insights initiative, members had an opportunity to understand in greater detail the new PPC Ethical Guidance on the use of Gen AI, which was published in April 2025.

Ethical Toolkit:

DOWNLOAD



## AI in Your Legal Practice

Chaired by Ms Justice Niamh Hyland, an engaging and fully subscribed CPD welcomed representatives from Harvey AI, Trialview and practitioners, as part of a wide-ranging discussion on the practical advantages and challenges on the use of AI now in practice

The above efforts also supplement the initiatives of the Library and Information Services, in respect of the trialling of various solutions in supporting our members' work.

WATCH HERE



## New Practice Area-Specific Bulletins

We continue to add to the practice bulletin resource, with two new resources added in 2024/25

- The Criminal Law Bulletin
- The Tort Law Bulletin

This brings the total number of titles in this series to six, with other titles focusing on Employment, Land & Property, Family Law and Asylum & Immigration.

The Library publishes bulletins tailored to specific practice areas, featuring relevant cases, legislation, articles, books, and commentary. Depending on content availability, these are issued weekly, fortnightly, or monthly. The project is continuously evolving to better serve members, and feedback is encouraged. The Library is also exploring additional practice areas for future bulletin development.

## Supporting growth and development of ADR & Arbitration Practice

Following a request from the ADR & Arbitration Committee, the Library secured access to Global Arbitration Review (GAR) for all Law Library members. GAR is a leading international arbitration resource, offering global news, analysis, and insights across commercial, sports, and state-to-state arbitration.

GAR complements other specialist resources available through the Library, including Kluwer Arbitration, Jus Mundi, and Lexis+ Dispute Resolution.






# Library & Information Services Statistics —

# 10,000



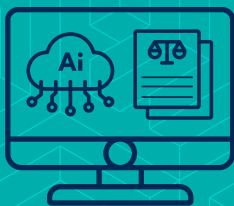
## Instant Chat Access to a Librarian hits its 10,000th User

The Library Chat function on Barrister's Desktop received its 10,000th query in May of 2025. Launched in 2021, the Library Chat has almost 1,300 members using it, and that number is continuing to grow. It allows for very fast one-to-one interactions with an experienced member of the Library team and instant document exchange.


**25K**   
25,151 Items Borrowed

**DLÍ  
Nua** **20**  
Issued

 **114**  
Bulletins



**492**  
JUDGMENTS  
SUMMARISED BY AI

**35.4K**  
 **QUERIES TO  
HELP DESK**



**+1,581**  
NEW RESOURCES



**354.6K**  
354,645 Barrister's Desktop Visits

# Advancing professional growth: Professional development and education —

**In preserving and building the reputation of Irish legal services, both at home and abroad, the quality of knowledge and expertise of our members is core.**



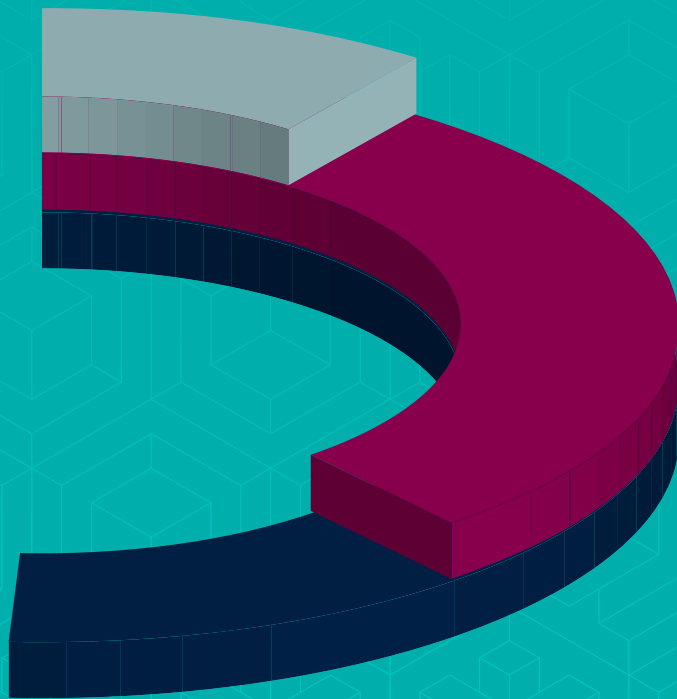
## **Peer Support Programme**

Launched as a pilot in 2024, the Peer Support programme was designed to offer structured, collegial support to practitioners in their second to seventh year of practice. The initiative pairs these early-career practitioners with more experienced colleagues who, like mentors, act assist the junior colleague in navigating a particular practice issue. While similar in structure to mentoring, the emphasis is firmly placed on goal-setting, reflective practice, and professional growth within a supportive peer-to-peer framework.

Over the course of the year, the pairings engage in ongoing conversations about career development, professional aspirations, and practical challenges. These discussions are intended to foster clarity, confidence, and momentum in working towards individually chosen goals.

The 2025 programme saw twelve members take part, building on the strong foundations of the previous year. Feedback from the 2024 cohort was overwhelmingly positive, with 87% of participants reporting they had made significant progress towards—or had fully achieved—the specific development goal they had identified at the outset. This encouraging result underscores the programme's value in supporting meaningful professional learning and career progression.

# Continuing Professional Development Statistics



## Event Delivery

ONLINE

10%

IN PERSON

39%

HYBRID

51%

63

CPD Events

3,151

participants online & in-person,  
53 participants on average per event

93.5

hours of formal structured  
CPD activities

73

hours of new on  
demand content

5.6%

increase in engagement  
with Bar of Ireland CPD



## KYLE-DEVERELL MENTORING PROGRAMME

Supporting women at the Bar

### 10 Years of Mentoring

Now in its 10th year, the Law and Women Mentoring programme was retitled the Kyle-Deverell Mentoring Programme in recognition of the contributions of Frances Kyle and Averil Deverell as the first female practitioners to be called to The Bar of Ireland.

The programme aims to promote equality and improve diversity in the legal profession by providing greater levels of support to female members. The programme prioritises applicants who have limited support structures at the Bar or in the legal profession generally. It continues to have strong participation with 21 members participating in 2024/25 and a total of 191 mentoring relationships formed over the course to date.

### Legal Education Groups/Practice Support Groups

In response to the motion adopted at the AGM in 2024 a working group of the Education and Training Committee was tasked with exploring how collaborative learning groups might be facilitated at the Bar. A proposal for a pilot group will be discussed by the Council in July 2025. It is envisaged that this pilot will further build opportunities for collegiality at the Bar and mitigate some of the ongoing impact of COVID on the profession.

### Explore ways to make learning flexible, collaborative, and more accessible

Ongoing improvements to the My CPD platform in 2024/25 included enhanced search functionality and the addition of human reviewed captioning for Bar of Ireland CPD seminars.

AI generates closed captions for all uploaded seminars. While the AI generated captions greatly streamline the process, they often do not accurately capture Irish words phrases, legal terminology and case names. Human review improves the accuracy and usefulness of the transcripts for members who require captioning to access content.

Further updates will be made to the My CPD platform from October 2025 that will enable additional collaboration via the platform and on MS Teams.





### **Pupillage Subcommittee**

With the publication of the LSRA's Breaking Down Barriers report in September 2024 the Bar has actively engaged with the LSRA on the issues identified within the report concerning barriers and access to the profession. Several of the recommendations relate to pupillage and a subcommittee of the Education and Training Committee was established in October 2024 to consider the issues related to pupillage arising from the report and the recommendations from the Bar's Pupillage Research Project completed in June 2024. The subcommittee agreed a four phase workplan. Phase one of the programme focused on the Aims of Pupillage and on defining Learning Outcomes for the pupillage year. A consultation was held in July 2025 on these aspects with recommendations expected to be delivered to the Education and Training Committee in Michaelmas 2025.

### **New Practitioner Programme**

This year, 82 members participated in the Bar's New Practitioners' Programme, designed for barristers in their first year as an accompaniment to pupillage. The 24/25 programme consisted of 15 live seminars and workshops as well as 9 pre-recorded videos. Participants heard contributions from over 30 presenters.

An addition to this year's programme was a half day conference style seminar combining sessions on early practice development, including practice management, relationship-building with solicitors, legal aid, and volunteer opportunities and provided members with an increased opportunity to network and build relationships with other pupils.

### **Advanced Advocacy**

The Advanced Advocacy Committee organised two courses in the 2024/25 legal year. These featured expert-led lectures by members of the judiciary and Senior Counsel, and offered participants practical opportunities to deepen their advocacy skills.

In addition the committee organised two successful seminars on Advocacy in Judicial Review and Advocacy in Injunctions

### **Advanced Drafting**

The Advanced Drafting Skills Course launched in May 2025. The course was tailored towards barristers in their 2nd to 7th year of practice and focused specifically on the preparation of well-organised and well-presented affidavits.

Delivered over two evening sessions, the course combined lectures, group discussions and peer reviews. Participants also completed an affidavit drafting assignment outside of course time, based on provided instructions and materials. Each participant received personalised feedback through one-on-one remote sessions with a course trainer. Thank you to Eoin Martin BL for the work involved in developing this programme for colleagues.





THE BAR  
OF IRELAND  
BARRA NA hÉIREANN



# INTERNAL OPERATIONS

In order to implement our key objectives, our internal operations and resources are essential to ensure successful execution of this strategic plan.



Human Resources and Talent Management



Information Technology & Systems



Estates & Facilities



Finance & Operations

## Human Resources

This year our people strategy focused on the delivery of actions designed to respond to the evolving needs of our team, retain talent and to advance our culture of inclusion and excellence in member service.

A major accomplishment has been the development of an Executive Staff Competency Model known as TEAM. It provides a clear framework for the skills and behaviours expected of our expert team. It will support our high-performance mindset; bringing transparency to our skill base and providing engaging learning opportunities for colleagues to develop and grow professionally.

With the support of the Senior Management Team, HR delivered a Zero Tolerance Campaign against breaches of dignity at work. This initiative has reinforced our commitment to preserving a respectful and inclusive workplace, where every employee feels valued and safe. Through training sessions, visual campaigns, the development of a member protocol and awareness programs, we have shone a spotlight on the importance of respect in all interactions. While this was a successful campaign with positive feedback, targeted work in this key area will continue.

Our commitment to enhancing the employee experience and retaining our talented staff has driven the implementation of various initiatives. These include social events, health screenings, CPD opportunities, the Insight Exchange, and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) awareness programs. These actions foster a sense of community and belonging, contributing to a positive and supportive work environment.

Looking ahead to 2026, we plan to build on these successes by developing a Learning Framework, enhancing our HR systems and continuing to promote a culture of inclusion and well-being.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Report 30th June 2025	
Department	FTE
CEO	1
Communications & Member Services	9
Education & Professional Development	4.8
Estate Services	5.8
Finance, Member Relations & Fee Recovery	9.4
Human Resources	1.3
IT Department	8
Library & Information Services	24
Reception	4.2
Regulation	2
Sheds Club	2.1
DDRC	2
Current FTE	73.6

### Gender Break Down

(3% undefined)



Female: 56% Male: 41%

### Gender Break Down in Management Position

[Employee holds a manager or director role]



Female: 48% Male: 52%

**& Part Time  
Full Time Employees:**  
**26% v 74%**

Average Length of Service/Tenure

**10.4**  
YEARS

## Information Technology & Systems

### Managing IT Risk

Cybersecurity remains a top priority for our organisation. Over the past year, we have implemented several measures to strengthen our cyber defences. This includes regular training and awareness events and a phishing simulation exercise.

In tandem with our partners our proactive approach has significantly reduced the risk of data breaches and ensured the integrity of our sensitive information.

Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is crucial for our organisation, given the sensitive nature of members' data. Our data protection policies and the technical and organisational measures required under the Regulation are regularly reviewed. Our commitment to GDPR compliance not only safeguards members' privacy but also builds trust in our services.

Maintaining high systems availability is essential for the seamless provision of our Law Library family of services. Our IT team works diligently on a daily basis to monitor system performance and address any issues promptly. As a result, we have achieved an impressive uptime rate, ensuring that our members can access critical applications and data without interruption.

Effective risk management is vital to protect our organisation from potential threats and uncertainties. We regularly review our risk register, mitigation strategies, and contingency planning. By identifying and addressing risks pro-actively, we have enhanced our resilience and ensured business continuity. Our risk management activity has been instrumental in safeguarding our assets and maintaining operational stability.



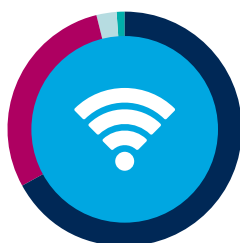
### Member-wide access to MS Co-Pilot

In early 2025, Co-pilot Chat was made available to all members as part of our IT offering. As a member organisation the benefit from the Enterprise Data Protection functionality so that uploaded files remain within the members workspaces and are not used for any other purpose.

Aligned with the roll-out, the IT Department delivered a series of direct workshops for members, and it is hoped to maintain that awareness into 2025/2026.

### WiFi network utilisation

Our upgraded WiFi networks continue to perform very well and over two thirds of all wifi data traffic is via the Bar of Ireland network. This ensures that the majority of users are correctly secured.



**67.09%**  
The Bar of Ireland

**29.29%**  
The Bar of Ireland - Guest

**2.56%**  
The Bar of Ireland - Arbitration

**1.06%**  
Other





## Estates & Facilities

### Managing Property & Estates

The Bar of Ireland Estates Service Team oversee the management of the property management of the organisation's six locations, covering all owned and leased premises. Over the last 12 months, the Estates Service Team supported members in an extremely busy year and made significant progress in several key areas across the property portfolio. Some of the key points to note over the year include;

- Dealing with over 3,000 issues logged through the Estates Helpdesk.
- Supporting the delivery and accommodation of 253 events.
- Commenced a project to upgrade older lighting to more energy efficient LED lights which supports Environmental Sustainability targets while also reducing costs.
- Introduced water and energy systems to better manage and measure utility usage which will also improve our ES targets and reduced costs.
- Have recently achieved a 100% office occupancy rate in Church Street and Distillery buildings.

A key part of the Estates Service Teams work is to manage building upgrade projects and in this regard, great progress was made over the year in several areas, especially in addressing Fire Safety works arising from a recent survey. The following is a sample of some of the capital projects managed by Estates;

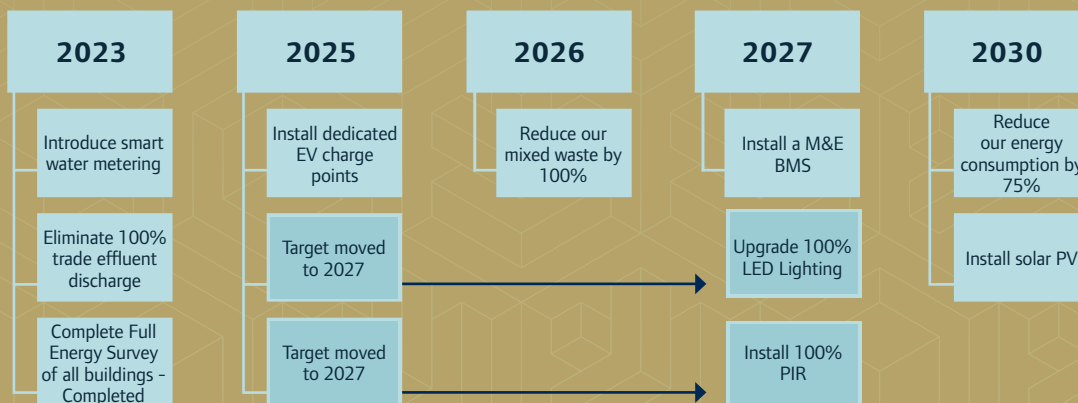
- Completed upgrade works on fire doors in Church Street and Jameson Buildings, which included, where necessary, installation of new doors. Distillery works commence in August 2025.
- Largely completed the other fire prevention works outlined by the surveyor in Church Street and Jameson Building.
- Recently completed the installation of EV charge points in Church Street and Jameson car parks, which will shortly be made available to tenants.

The team were also heavily involved in dealing with the OPW on the Barristers' Tearooms upgrade, over the course of the year, doing their best to support this project. The key objective being to deliver the facility back to members in the fastest way possible. Further information on this project is provided later in the annual report.

# The Bar of Ireland Environmental Sustainability Roadmap

2023 saw the introduction of the Environmental and Sustainability where goals, objectives and targets were set. In 2024 the Environmental and Sustainability sub-committee was formed Chaired by Leesha O Driscoll SC.

We have met our 2023 targets and are making good inroads to meeting some of our 2025 targets. However the Fire safety upgrade works ongoing for another two years has impacted on the available Capex spend to invest in our lighting and PIR targets, pushing them back to 2026/27.



## KPI Improvements



Electricity (LLPS) procured from 100% renewable energy



Energy consumption (LLPL)  
2021 - 4.7M kWh  
2024 - 2.81M kWh  
Consumption down 40%



1,905Kg electrical waste equipment recycled



98 Kg of fluorescent light tubes recycled



353 Kg of Ink cartridges recycled



3610Kg of glass recycled from The Sheds



152,000 Kg tonnes of paper waste shredded



39,200 Kg of recyclable waste



5,490 Kg of compostable food waste



44,030 Kg of municipal waste



67 Kg of batteries recycled

### 2023/24 Targets all complete

- ✓ Full energy survey completed
- ✓ 100% of Trade Effluent discharge eliminated
- ✓ Smart water meters installed

### 2025 Targets in development

- EV Chargers: a total of 4 charge points to installed

### Other initiatives taken

- Introduction of new bottle return bins – proceeds to Dublin Simon Community
- Gas and Electricity SMART meters installed
- Biodiversity – working in collaboration with OPW & Courts Services will see the rewilding of lawn area at the back of the Four Courts.
- Introduction of compost bins in all canteens & coffee stations
- Roll out of sustainability training for staff

For more information on The Bar of Ireland's Environmental Policy

[READ MORE](#)



For more information on The Bar of Ireland & Climate Law

[READ MORE](#)



## Report of the Finance Committee – 2024/25

The role of the Finance Committee is to deal with all matters relating to the finances of the Bar Council and its associate companies. The Finance Committee also deals with the maintenance and development of the Law Library and other properties of the Council and the development of information technology in the Law Library.

### Update on key items and financial performance.

#### 1. Financial Performance – Half Year to 31st March 2025

In the half year October 2024 to March 2025, The Bar of Ireland Group reported a **consolidated income and expenditure surplus of €839k**, which is 2% ahead of budget for the period and 45% ahead of prior year.

Generally, each entity within the group is performing in line with budget. The following are key points on TBOI group half year financial performance.

- Subscription Income in TBOI at €6.1M is 1% lower than budget. Although membership numbers are stable, there were other negative income movements which reduced the income in the period such as higher number of members on leave of absence, more member seating unoccupied in the period due to the fall in demand for seating in recent years, and more seating occupied by junior members in years 1 to 7 who pay lower rates for seating.
- Rental & Service Charge income in Law Library Properties Ltd. (LLPL) at €2.6M, is 2% higher than budget and 3% up on prior year. With the exception of 1 large “E” Room in the Distillery Building, Law Library Properties Ltd. is at full occupancy and there is a waiting list for offices. The main reason why income is higher than budget is that the Jameson tenant, who was due to vacate the building in September 2024, remained in occupancy until the end of December 2024.
- Expenditure in LLPL, at €1.87M, is 3% higher than budget. Higher than expected expenditure was incurred in Repairs & Maintenance, with several issues arising in each building. In addition, LLPL is carrying the costs of the Jameson Building from 1st January 2025. On the positive side, the ECB have begun cutting the main rate and interest costs on the AIB property loan have started to reduce, and have fallen 11% from the previous year.
- The Dublin Dispute Resolution Centre (DDRC), had a stronger start to the year than more recent years with Room Hire income in the half year to March 25 exceeding the prior year by 38%. Bookings in the 1st quarter were strong, with the DDRC benefitting from bookings relating to the aircraft leasing case. Because of this stronger start to the year, operating profit at €58K, was 14% higher than budget.

TBOI Consolidated Income & Expenditure					
Period ended 31st Mar 2025	Current Year Actual €'000	Prior Year Actual €'000	% Diff	Budget €'000	% Diff
Income	9,493	8,935	6%	9,504	0%
Expenditure	(8,654)	(8,356)	4%	(8,684)	0%
Net Surplus	839	579	45%	820	2%
% Net Surplus	9%	6%		9%	2%



In summary, the financial performance of the organisation has been stable, the TBOI Group reporting a net surplus of €829K, which, as noted is 2% ahead of target for the period.

Net Surplus By Entity				
Period ended 31st Mar 2025		Actual 2024/25 €'000	Budget 2024/25 €'000	Diff %
The Bar of Ireland	Entity 1	100	90	10%
Law Library Services	Entity 2	89	10	-20%
Church Street Club	Entity 5	1	8	
Total Member Service Entities		109	108	0%
Law Library Properties	Entity 3	585	586	0%
Law Library Finance	Entity 4	87	75	13%
DDRC	Entity 6	58	51	12%
Total Commercial Companies		730	712	1%
<b>Total Group Summary</b>		<b>839</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>1%</b>

## 2. Law Library Finance Ltd. – Investment Return

TBOI holds a certain amount of reserves in bank deposits and when interest rates were negative, the organisation considered options to address the challenge of negative interest rates while protecting the reserves in secure holdings. The organisation manages deposits through the subsidiary entity Law Library Finance Ltd. (LLFL).

In February 2019, the finance committee approved a proposal to invest €1M in a capital secure bond with Bank of Ireland Private Banking. While there was no income guaranteed, the capital was 100% protected.

**This investment matured in May 2025, and it returned a dividend of €263,117.** This will increase the profits in LLFL in the 2024/25 financial year.

## 3. LSRA Levy Collections

On 21st May 2025, the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) issued the Levy Assessment Notice in relation to the 2024 levy year. The total levy payable by The Bar of Ireland on behalf of members is €773,918.69 based on a figure of 2,167 barristers who were members of the Law Library in 2024, at a rate per barrister of €357.14. This was a reduction of €16.69 from the 2023 levy.

## 4. Tearooms

As members will be aware, in August 2024, the Office of Public Works (OPW) commenced essential refurbishment works in the Barristers Tearooms to address serious fire and other risks discovered following an unannounced inspection by an Environmental Health Officer from the HSE.

At the outset, the OPW informed TBOI that works were anticipated to take approximately five months to complete and there would be a cost to TBOI estimated to be in the region of €200K to cover the costs associated with providing the new kitchen, equipment, servery and general refurbishment, such as lighting, painting and decorating.

Unfortunately, the completion date of the project has been delayed well beyond the originally estimated time for several reasons, none of which relate TBOIs involvement in the project.

While preliminary works commenced late August 2024, the main works did not commence for several months, as the OPW were under public scrutiny on expenditure for unrelated projects and because of this, there was a reduction in thresholds for OPW approvals on expenditure. This meant that the project could not proceed until it was approved an OPW Project Oversight Group, which included the provision of a 'business case' that was provided promptly by both the OPW and The Bar of Ireland. This approval was forthcoming in November 2024, and following this, the OPW appointed PJ Hegarty as the main contractor, and they commence later that November.

Over the year, the Chair has kept members informed of the progress and various issues which have led to disappointing delays in the completion of this project. Most recently, the contractor discovered a major issue relating to the water supply system into the restaurant which required a full system replacement, not specified or anticipated when the project commenced. The OPW have pointed out that such issues can arise when carrying out works on very old buildings. In any event, the rectification of this issue pushed the expected completion date out to mid-August.

In summary, we are advised that the completed facility will be handed over to TBOI mid-August 2025 and we have already engaged with Jorge to plan the reopening of the new facility in the Michaelmas term.

## 5. Property Development Committee

In October 2024, the Bar Council established a Property Development Committee (PDC) as a Non-Permanent Committee of the Council. Terms of Reference detail the functions of the PDC as focused on reviewing the property portfolio owned by Law Library Property Limited (LLPL) and considering whether the key requirements of the Property Development Proposal prepared for Council in 2023 had changed or whether the proposal remained the preferred strategy or if an updated strategy was required.

The PDC, chaired by Sara Antoniotti SC, met on six occasions between November 2024 and May 2025. Over the course of these meetings, the committee explored in detail a range of issues coming within its Terms of Reference, including consideration of several presentations and reports, including:-

- The ageing condition of our buildings and requirement for investment in the upkeep of our buildings;
- The lack of suitable on-site event space with issues raised regarding suitability of central atrium as an event space and growing demand from an increasing number of Specialist Bar Associations
- Need for professional workspaces for members;
- Membership demand for offices and desks with consideration of waiting lists for workspace accommodation;
- Increasing importance of alternative dispute resolution ("ADR") as an adjunct to practice of members;
- Changed working practices impacting on the type of workspace required (desks v offices, hours of work, hybrid working)
- Need to encourage members to come into the buildings;
- Need for good facilities for members and importance of shared social spaces for members;
- The provision of childcare facilities;
- Affordability and cost.

In June 2025, the PDC submitted a detailed report and list of recommendations to the Council for consideration.





# Treasurer's Report —

**This annual report sets out a detailed summary of what the Council of The Bar of Ireland and its committees, together with the support of the executive staff, have done on behalf of members of the Law Library over the last year.**



## **Review of Financial Performance for The Bar of Ireland & Related Entities for year ended 30th September 2024.**

The audited financial statements for the Bar of Ireland are set out in the following pages of this annual report. In the following section I provide an overview of the financial performance of The Bar of Ireland. I have also included a consolidated income and expenditure report for The Bar of Ireland and the other entities which form part of the organisation's group financial structure, with commentary on the key year on year variances between the period under review and the prior year. The financial statements for all entities in The Bar of Ireland Group will be made available at the Annual General Meeting in July.

Azets, TBOI External Auditors, carried out their independent external audit between November and December 2024 and provided a detailed report to the Finance Committee on 17th December 2024. The lead partner of Azets, Keith Doyle, attended the meeting of the committee and presented the audit report, noting that they were reporting a clean audit with no issues to note. The financial statements of The Bar of Ireland were approved by the Finance Committee on the same date and subsequently approved by the Bar Council at its meeting on 29th January 2025.

## **The Bar of Ireland Financial Accounts**

The Council of the Bar of Ireland reported a net income and expenditure surplus of €178K (2023 €591K) for the legal year ended 30th September 2024.

Similar to 2023, the surplus arises mainly due to gains arising from the prior year decision to include the FRS102 accounting treatment for the employee defined benefit pension scheme, which was closed to new entrants and future accruals in December 2010. More information on this element is provided later in this report.

Adjusting for the surplus relating to the defined benefit scheme, the organisation incurred an operational deficit of €259K (Adjusted surplus 2023 – €216K). This operational deficit was incurred due to a combination of lower income and higher expenditure than originally budgeted, and the key variances are explained in more detail below.

## Review of Income & Expenditure

**Income at €11.3M** is 3.6% higher than the previous year. Subscription rates were set at a level to achieve a break-even budget and subscription income for the year assumed higher number of members joining and a similar number leaving. In both cases the variances were negative, with less members joining and more leaving over the year, so overall, income was approx. €200K less than originally budgeted.

**Expenditure at €11.5M** is 6% higher than prior year arising partly due to a continued higher inflation environment but also due to some investment in member services with additional budgets put in place for the Public Affairs Committee in Marketing & Events, notably more invested in the promotion of members, the Denham Fellowship, and supporting 17 Specialist Bar Associations. There was also a higher level of activity in Education & Training services as the committee invested in Practice Management, Advanced Negotiation and Advanced Drafting courses.

- Library Services expenditure increased from €1.37M in 2022/23 to €1.46M in 2023/24, an increase of 6.5%, which was largely due to inflationary increase on books and legal databases and the inclusion of some additional e-books.
- IT Services expenditure increased from €1.28M to €1.42M in 2023/24. The new 'Connect' member management system went live during the year and the depreciation on IT system assets includes a full year depreciation on this new system. The older system was fully depreciated several years prior to this. A reversal of an accrual for an expected cost that did not materialise explains the variance in Bandwidth and the increase in Web Services relates to a one off cost to improve the Barrister's Desktop online access. Office 365 software licenses to members remains the single largest cost in IT, representing 53% of total IT service costs.
- General Member Services expenditure increased by 2% to €1.49M. The main variance between 2022/23 and 2023/24 was under the cost centre Equality, Diversity & Inclusion where the organisation covered the costs of providing Irish Sign Language services totalling €56K, for a new member in their 1st year of pupillage.
- Estates Services expenditure increased by 5% to €1.56M, mainly due to the reintroduction of a rental charge for the space used by TBOI in the Distillery Building for seating, the legal research centre and the executive staff. Historically, TBOI paid for this space, but the rent was temporarily removed while interest rates on the property were low. It was necessary to reintroduce this following the major increase in interest rates over the year and having regard to the necessity to refinance the property debt in Law Library Properties Ltd with AIB in October 2023.
- Under the heading Administrative Expenses, there are two points to note. Audit Fees increased from €7.6K to €13.3K. The external audit was tendered the previous year and Azets were appointed. The new audit fee quoted was similar to prior year fee from the previous auditor. However, it was necessary to carry out additional work on the review of the accounting treatment for the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme. This was a one-off additional cost. Secondly, the provision for bad debts refers to a standard provision applied on subscriptions unpaid at year end based on certain criteria, including the age of the debt and whether it relates to current or former members. In 2024, there was a requirement to increase the provision by €34K, where in 2023, the provision was reduced by €20K.

- Staff Costs increased by 9.7% to €4.5M. This increase was for a combination of reasons including inflationary increases, an increase in costs of recruiting vacant positions in a full employment market (€98K compared to €37K in the prior year), and the additional resources approved by the Council in the areas of finance and operations, support for Specialist Bar Associations, the EDI role and a temporary resource to support the World Bar Conference.
- The income and expenditure report includes actuarial gains on the defined benefit pension scheme. As noted in detail in last years annual report, the Council of the Bar of Ireland provides two pension schemes for employees:

DEFINED BENEFIT SCHEME (DB)	DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEME (DC)
This scheme was closed to new entrants and future accruals in December 2010 and replaced with DC Scheme.	This scheme was established on 1st January 2011 replacing the closed DB Scheme.

Up until 2022, TBOI accounted for the DB scheme on a full liability basis, linked to the triennial review processes noted above and up to 2022, the scheme had been in a liability position since 2010. Last year, the new auditors, Azets, recommended applying the FRS102 accounting standard for Defined Benefit Pension accounting and this treatment was applied for the first time in the financial statements for year ended 30th September 2023.

Last year, the scheme reported a surplus net asset position of €2.3M. Following a review by the scheme actuary at the end of September 2024, an increased surplus of €2.7M was reported.

FRS102 requires the organisation to treat this as an asset in the balance sheet and as such, the net asset position of The Bar of Ireland has increased to reflect this increase and a positive adjustment of €437K has been included in the Income and Expenditure account for the year. It is important to note that the standard requires us to include this asset, and while it is positive that the financial position of this pension obligation has improved from a previous liability position, the organisation does not have access to this asset as it can only be used to fund future pension obligations.

## Summary

For year ended 30th September 2024, The Bar of Ireland reported an income and expenditure surplus of €178,047, (2023 surplus €591,728). However, adjusted for the actuarial gains on the pension scheme, which are not available to fund expenditure other than future pension scheme obligations, a deficit of €258,943 was incurred. (2023 adjusted surplus of €216,392).

Reserves for The Bar of Ireland at 30th September 2024 are €10,846,427. (2023, €10,668,380)



## The Bar of Ireland Group Consolidated Income & Expenditure

Table 1 below summarises the consolidated income and expenditure position of the Bar of Ireland Group the year ended 30th September 2024.

TBOI Group Consolidated Income & Expenditure		
Year ended 30th September	2024 €'000 Actual	2023 €'000 Actual
Turnover	17,208	16,595
Administrative Expenses	(14,986)	(14,195)
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>2,400</b>
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	(1,034)	(864)
<b>Surplus on Ordinary Activities Before Taxation</b>	<b>1,188</b>	<b>1,536</b>
Tax on Surplus on Ordinary Activities	(281)	(279)
<b>Surplus on Ordinary Activities After Taxation</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>1,256</b>
<b>Exceptional Items</b>		
Loss on Investment Property	0	(2,076)
Actuarial gains on defined benedit pension scheme	437	375
<b>Retained Surplus / (Deficit) for Year</b>	<b>1,344</b>	<b>(445)</b>
<b>Reserve Movement</b>		
Opening Reserves	41,563	42,008
Retained Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	1,344	(445)
<b>Closing Reserves</b>	<b>42,907</b>	<b>41,563</b>

The Bar of Ireland and Subsidiary Entities recorded a consolidated operating surplus before taxation of €1.25M for year ended 30th September 2024 (2023 €1.53M), which is a fall of 18% on prior year partly due to increase in ECB interest rates over the year. The retained surplus of €1.34M, (2023 deficit of €455K), included the aforementioned actuarial gain of €437K in the DB pension scheme.

### Review of Income:

**Consolidated income at €17.2M** is 4% higher than prior year mainly due to the increase in subscriptions required to pay for member services, and the increase in service charges in Law Library Properties Ltd. required to cover the increase in costs such as security and cleaning costs, energy costs and building maintenance and repairs. Income in Law Library Finance Ltd. increased by €150K to €421K as LLFL benefitted from placing cash reserves on higher interest earning deposits over the year.

TBOI Group Turnover		
Entity	€'000	% of Total
- TBOI	11,311	65%
- LLPL	4,758	28%
- LLSL	293	2%
- LLFL	421	2%
- CS Club	149	1%
- DDRC	352	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,284</b>	

### Review of Expenditure:

**Consolidated administrative expenses at €14.9M** are 5% higher than the previous year. Most of this increase relates to The Bar of Ireland, and the main variances are already explained earlier in this report. In Law Library Properties Ltd. (LLPL), combined property management expenses were €2.4M, which is 7% higher than the previous year. The main increase in these costs were the impact of the 13% increase in the minimum wage, directly impacts the costs of Cleaning and Security services, higher energy costs and a major increase building maintenance and repair costs with a lot of issues addressed in the year, beyond what was budgeted. In addition, LLPL incurred €63K in exceptional professional fees associated with the refinancing of the property debt with AIB in October 2023.

**Interest payable** on property debt increased to €1.03M from €0.86M in 2022/23, and from €0.42M in 2021/22 prior to the record run of interest rate increases between July 2022 and September 2023 which saw the base rate go from -0.5% to 4%. In June and September 2024, the ECB started to unwind this with two 0.25% decreases and LLPL will benefit from reduced interest costs in 2024/25. Table 3 summarises the cost of interest in LLPL over the last number of years.

**LLPL - Loan Interest €000**



### Property Financing.

In October 2023, Law Library Properties Ltd. entered into a new 7-year loan agreement with AIB. This followed a tender process undertaken in late 2022 prior to the expiry of the previous agreement. This is the 2nd agreement with AIB and we managed to agree this new arrangement on improved terms, including a reduction in the interest rate margin from 2.15% to 2%.

As part of this process, a building survey was undertaken to review the condition of the three buildings owned by the company. AIB engaged 'The Building Consultancy' to survey LLPL's three buildings. In the case of all three buildings, they reported that the building was "in sound condition with no major issues, however we note some areas of concern". LLPL engaged structural and fire specialists to review the findings and a schedule of rectification works was agreed. The total estimate of these works is €1.1M. The required works are largely complete in Church Street and Jameson buildings, and well progressed in the Distillery Building.

The key terms agreed between LLPL / AIB to refinance the debt.

- €18M & €1M to part fund building rectification works.
- 2.0% margin
- Annual Capital Repayments Y1, €450K, Y2 €500K, Y3-Y7 €550k.
- 5 years plus two one-year extension options.
- 50% of loan to be fixed.

The Finance Committee were pleased to complete this new property finance facility with AIB on 26th October 2023. Over the last number of years, the company have reduced debt from a high of €39M in 2006 to €16.9M in September 2024 and reducing debt remains a key priority of LLPL.

#### LLPL Debt & Interest

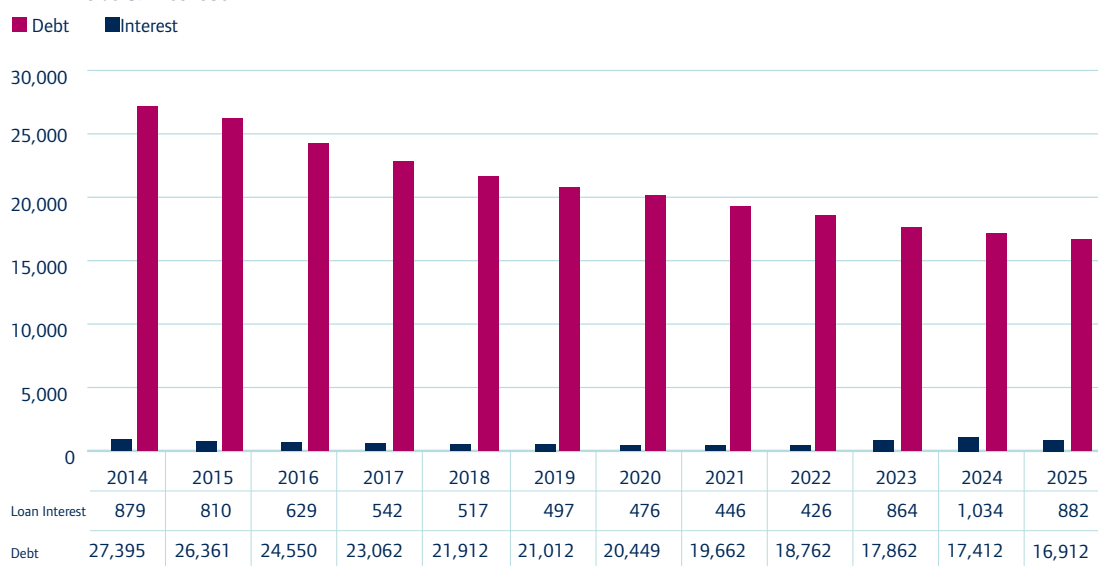


Table 4 – LLPL Debt & Interest from 2014 to 2025(f).

#### Summary

For year ended 30th September 2024, The Bar of Ireland reported a retained consolidated income and expenditure surplus of €1.34M and in general, the organisation's financial position remains stable.



*Séamus Clarke*

**Séamus Clarke SC**

**Treasurer, Chair of the Finance Committee**



# Financial Accounts —

## Reports and Non-Statutory Financial Statements for the financial year ended 30 September 2024

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#### Trustees

Conor J Maguire SC  
Denis McCullough SC  
Turlough O'Donnell SC

#### Bankers

Bank Of Ireland  
Law Library Financial Services  
Four Courts  
Dublin 7

#### Auditors

Azets Audit Services Ireland Limited  
3rd Floor  
40 Mespil Road  
Dublin 4  
D04 C2N4

#### Solicitors

McKenna Durkan Solicitors  
66 Lower Leeson Street  
Dublin 2

Fieldfisher Ireland  
The Capel Building  
Mary's Abbey  
Dublin 7

### Statement Of Committee's Responsibilities For Year Ended 30 September 2024

The constitution of the entity requires the members of the committee to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the financial position of the entity and of its income and expenditure for that period.

In preparing the financial statements the members of the committee are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the entity will continue in business.

The members of the committee are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the entity and to help them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the entity's constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the entity and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**Approved by the Committee on 17/12/2024  
and by The Council of the Bar of Ireland on 29/01/2025.**

## Report on the audit of the non-statutory financial statements

Opinion on the non-statutory financial statements (the 'financial statements') of The Council of the Bar of Ireland.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the entity as at 30 September 2024 and of the net movement in funds for the financial year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the relevant financial reporting standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

The financial statements we have audited comprise:

Income and Expenditure Account;

- the Balance Sheet; and
- the related notes 1 to 11 including a summary of significant accounting policies as set out in note 1.

The relevant financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' issued by the Financial Reporting Council ("the relevant financial reporting framework").

## Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are described below in the "Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements" section of our report.

We are independent of the organisation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the members' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the members with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this reports.

## **Report on the audit of the non-statutory financial statements (continued)**

### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the Council of Members Report and Audited Financial Statements, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Council of Members are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Responsibilities of the Council of Members for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Council of Members Responsibilities Statement, the Council of Members are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Council of Members determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Council of Members are responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Council of Members either intend to liquidate the organisation or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: <https://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/Auditing-standards>. This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

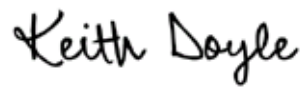




## Report on the audit of the non-statutory financial statements (continued)

### Use of our report

This report, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the Council of Members as a body, for management purposes in accordance with our engagement letter and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come, including without limitation under any contractual obligations of the organisation, save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.



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Keith Doyle  
For and on behalf of Azets Audit Services Ireland Limited  
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm  
3rd Floor, 40 Mespil Road, Dublin 4, D04 C2N4

Date: 18th June 2025

## Income And Expenditure Account For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

	Note	2024 €	2023 €
<b>INCOME</b>			
Entrance & Application Fees		112,590	141,030
Junior Subscriptions		8,180,488	7,913,700
Senior Subscriptions		2,846,256	2,724,236
Parental/Personal Leave Subscriptions		41,546	31,247
Other Income		98,125	93,066
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,279,005</b>	<b>10,903,279</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Library Services	AP 1	1,458,497	1,368,073
IT Services	AP 2	1,423,769	1,280,245
Member Services	AP 3	1,490,877	1,459,982
Placement/Representation		19,000	16,000
CSR Schemes		59,347	57,832
Communications & Policy		254,812	221,221
Marketing & Events		116,367	79,659
Participation International Forums		69,660	55,042
Bar Council & Committee meetings / expenses		48,016	45,076
Membership of Professional Associations		11,984	11,382
Education & Training		117,109	105,922
Regulation		2,199	(17,098)
Properties & Facilities	AP 4	1,653,471	1,566,133
Administration Expenses	AP 5	272,688	301,948
Staff Costs	AP 6	4,540,162	4,135,470
		<b>11,537,958</b>	<b>10,686,887</b>
<b>OTHER ITEMS</b>			
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pensions schemes	8	437,000	464,000
Aenean vulputate	AP 7	-	(88,664)
		<b>437,000</b>	<b>375,336</b>
<b>Net Surplus to Reserves</b>		<b>178,047</b>	<b>591,728</b>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

## Balance Sheet As At 30 September 2024

	Note	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Tangible Fixed Assets	2	2,761,841	2,821,208
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	3	8,037,930	7,990,022
Cash at bank and in hand	4	218,685	194,876
		8,256,615	8,184,898
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	5	(2,926,029)	(2,674,726)
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b>5,330,586</b>	<b>5,510,172</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>8,092,427</b>	<b>8,331,380</b>
Pension asset	8	2,754,000	2,337,000
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>10,846,427</b>	<b>10,668,380</b>
<b>Financed By:</b>			
Reserves	6	10,846,427	10,668,380
		<b>10,846,427</b>	<b>10,668,380</b>

  
Sean Guerin  
Date: 29/01/2025

  
Seamus Clarke  
Date: 29/01/2025



## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The significant accounting policies and measurement bases adopted are summarised below. They have all been applied consistently throughout the financial year and to the preceding year.

#### General Information and Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (which has been recognised as best practice for financial reporting by charities in Ireland) and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

The Council has availed of the exemption in FRS 102 7.1B from including a cash flow statement in the financial statements on the grounds that the Council is small.

The Council's functional and presentational currency is Euros.

#### Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a basis other than going concern.

#### Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Fixed assets are recorded at cost.

Depreciation is provided so as to write off the cost of the assets to their residual value of nil, over their estimated useful lives. The rates of depreciation are as follows:

Long leasehold	10% straight line
Fixtures and fittings and Equipment	12.5% straight line
Equipment	20% & 33.3% straight line
IT Systems and Infrastructure	20% straight line

The costs of assets specifically acquired for a project and funded by that project are charged to income and expenditure in the financial year in which they are acquired.

#### Defined contribution pension plan

The Council operates a defined contribution plan for its employees. A defined contribution plan is a pension plan under which the Council pays fixed contributions into a separate entity. Once the contributions have been paid the Council has no further payment obligations.

The contributions are recognised as an expense in profit or loss when they fall due. Amounts not paid are shown in accruals as a liability in the Statement of Financial Position. The assets of the plan are held separately from the Council in independently administered funds.

## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

The Council operates a defined benefit plan for certain employees. A defined benefit plan defines the pension benefit that the employee will receive on retirement, usually dependent upon several factors including but not limited to age, length of service and remuneration. A defined benefit plan is a pension plan that is not a defined contribution plan.

The liability recognised in the Statement of Financial Position in respect of the defined benefit plan is the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the end of the reporting date less the fair value of plan assets at the reporting date (if any) out of which the obligations are to be settled.

The defined benefit obligation is calculated using the projected unit credit method. Annually the company engages independent actuaries to calculate the obligation. The present value is determined by discounting the estimated future payments using market yields on high quality corporate bonds that are denominated in Euros and that have terms approximating to the estimated period of the future payments ('discount rate').

The fair value of plan assets is measured in accordance with the FRS 102 fair value hierarchy and in accordance with the Council's policy for similarly held assets. This includes the use of appropriate valuation techniques.

Actuarial gains and losses arising from experience adjustments and changes in actuarial assumptions are charged or credited to other comprehensive income. These amounts together with the return on plan assets, less amounts included in net interest, are disclosed as 'Remeasurement of net defined benefit liability'.

The cost of the defined benefit plan, recognised in profit or loss as employee costs, except where included in the cost of an asset, comprises:

- a) the increase in net pension benefit liability arising from employee service during the period; and
- b) the cost of plan introductions, benefit changes, curtailments and settlements.

The net interest cost is calculated by applying the discount rate to the net balance of the defined benefit obligation and the fair value of plan assets. This cost is recognised in profit or loss as a 'finance expense'.

### Trade and Other Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised initially at transaction price (including transaction costs) unless a financing arrangement exists in which case, they are measured at the present value of future receipts discounted at a market rate. Subsequently these are measured at amortised cost less any provision for impairment. A provision for impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the Council will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of receivables. The amount of the provision is the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows, discounted at the effective interest rate. All movements in the level of the provision required are recognised in the profit and loss.

## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Council has a present legal or constructive obligation arising as a result of a past event, it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate can be made. Provisions are measured at the present value of the expenditures expected to be required to settle the obligation using a pre-tax rate that reflects current market assessments of the same value of money and the risks specific to the obligation. The increase in the provision due to passage of time is recognised as interest expense.

#### Creditors

Trade and other creditors are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade payables are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents in the balance sheet comprise cash at bank and in hand and short-term current asset investments.

Current asset investments comprise cash deposits and are measured initially at the cash amount on deposit and subsequently at the cash amount expected to be received.

#### Income

Income is recognised to the extent that the Council obtains the right to consideration in exchange for its performance. Income comprises the fair value of consideration received and receivable exclusive of value added tax and after discounts and rebates.

Income from the provision of services is recognised in the accounting period in which the services are provided.

Income from Donations and other sponsorships is recognised when it is receivable.

#### Stock of books

It is the policy of the Council of the Bar of Ireland to write off the cost of books against income in the year in which they are purchased thereby leaving a nil value for the stock of books held on the balance sheet.

#### Exceptional Item

Exceptional items are those that the management's view are required to be separately disclosed by virtue of their size or incidence to enable a full understanding of the entity's financial performance.

#### Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Benefits received and receivable as an incentive to sign an operating lease are recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease term unless another systematic basis is representative of the time pattern of the lessee's benefit from the use of the leased asset.



## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

#### **Impairments of assets, other than financial instruments**

Where there is objective evidence that recoverable amounts of an asset is less than its carrying value the carrying amount of the asset is reduced to its recoverable amount resulting in an impairment loss. Impairment losses are recognised immediately in the profit and loss account, with the exception of losses on previously revalued tangible fixed assets, which are recognised in other comprehensive income to the extent of any previously recognised revaluation increase accumulated in equity, in respect of that asset.

Where the circumstances causing an impairment of an asset no longer apply, then the impairment is reversed through the profit and loss account, except for impairments on previously revalued tangible assets, which are treated as revaluation increases to the extent that the revaluation was recognised in equity.

The recoverable amount of tangible fixed assets, goodwill and other intangible fixed assets is the higher of the fair value less cost to sell of the asset and its value in use. The value in use of these assets is the present value of the cash flows expected to be derived from those assets. This is determined by reference to the present value of the future cash flows of the Company which is considered by the members to be a single cash generating unit.

#### **Critical Accounting Judgements and Estimates**

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses.

Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experiences and other factors, including expectation of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The Council makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

The management consider the accounting estimates and assumptions below to be its critical accounting judgements and estimates:

#### **(1) Establishing useful economic lives for depreciation purposes of property, plant and equipment**

Long-lived assets, consisting primarily of plant and machinery, fixtures, fittings and equipment, comprise a significant portion of the total assets. The annual depreciation charge depends primarily on the estimated useful economic lives of each type of asset estimates of residual values. The management regularly review the assets useful economic lives and change them as necessary to reflect current thinking on remaining lives in light of prospective economic utilisation and physical condition of the assets concerned. Changes in asset useful lives can have a significant impact on the depreciation and amortisation charges for the period. Detail of the useful economic live is included in the accounting policies.

## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### (2) Providing for doubtful debts

The Council makes an estimate of the recoverable value of the trade and other debtors. The Council uses estimates based on historical experience in determining the level of debts, which the Council believes, will not be collected. These estimates include such factors as the current credit rating of the debtor, the ageing profile of debtors and historical experience. Any significant reduction in the level of customers that default on payments or other significant improvements that resulted in a reduction in the level of the bad debt provision would have a positive impact on the operating results. The level of provision required is reviewed by management on an on-going basis.

#### (3) Provisions and accruals

Provisions are recognised when the Council has present obligation (legal or constructive) as a result of a past event, it is probable that the Council will be required to settle the probable outflow of resources, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

#### (4) Prepayments

Prepayments have been estimated based on payments made in one period, for services which the Council expects to receive the benefit in a future period. The basis of estimation used by the Council has been formed by a calculation of the number of days to which the expense relates, and therefore the deferral of this expense.

## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

### 2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Leasehold Premises €	Fixtures & Fittings €	Equipment €	IT Systems & Infrastructure €	Total €
<b>Cost</b>					
At 1 October 2023	3,611,154	444,936	210,705	1,654,095	5,920,890
Additions	-	30,798	17,798	380,216	428,812
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 30 September 2024	<u>3,611,154</u>	<u>475,733</u>	<u>228,503</u>	<u>2,034,311</u>	<u>6,349,702</u>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>					
At 1 October 2023	1,850,334	421,530	179,598	648,220	3,099,682
Charge for the year	107,546	15,300	20,310	345,023	488,179
On disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 30 September 2024	<u>1,957,880</u>	<u>436,830</u>	<u>199,908</u>	<u>993,242</u>	<u>3,587,861</u>
<b>Net Book Value:</b>					
<b>At 30 September 2024</b>	<u><b>1,653,274</b></u>	<u><b>38,903</b></u>	<u><b>28,595</b></u>	<u><b>1,041,068</b></u>	<u><b>2,761,841</b></u>
At 30 September 2023	<u>1,760,820</u>	<u>23,406</u>	<u>31,107</u>	<u>1,005,875</u>	<u>2,821,208</u>



## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued)

### For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

#### 3. DEBTORS

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Due after more than one year</b>		
Amount due from Related Entities	1,018,000	900,000
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Subscriptions in Arrears	109,521	102,247
<b>Prepayments and Sundry Debtors</b>	1,538,404	1,267,090
Amounts due from Related Entities	5,372,005	5,720,685
	<u>8,037,930</u>	<u>7,990,022</u>

All balances due from connect parties are unsecured, non-interest bearing and repayable on demand.

#### 4. CASH AT BANK

	2024 €	2023 €
Cash on Hand	558	1,048
B.O.I. Account	218,118	193,819
B.O.I. Sterling Account	9	9
	<u>218,685</u>	<u>194,876</u>

#### 5. CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one-year

	2024 €	2023 €
Subscriptions paid in advance	487,764	421,344
Creditors & Accruals	2,317,579	2,130,674
Taxation Creditors	120,686	122,708
	<u>2,926,029</u>	<u>2,674,726</u>

## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

### 6. RESERVES

	2024 €	2023 €
Opening Balance	10,668,380	7,553,348
Prior year adjustments	-	2,523,304
Add Net (Deficit)/Surplus	178,047	591,728
	<u>10,846,427</u>	<u>10,668,380</u>

### 7. RETIREMENT BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS

The company operates a defined contribution scheme for some of its employees. The pension entitlements of employees are secured by contributions of the company to a separately administered pensions fund. The defined contribution pension charge for the financial year was €380,887 (2023: €369,301). The amount outstanding at the financial year end was €38,178 (2023; €35,100).

### 8. PENSION COMMITMENTS

The Council of The Bar of Ireland provides the following pension schemes for employees:

- A Defined Benefit scheme was closed to new entrants and future accruals in December 2010 and
- A Defined Contribution scheme, which was established on 1st January 2011 replacing the DB Scheme.

The Defined Benefit scheme was closed in 2010 due to the increased substantial costs of maintaining such schemes. Although the scheme was closed in 2010, accrued benefits remain and the Council for the Bar of Ireland are required to fund scheme deficits arising from triennial Actuarial Valuations, which are required by the Pensions Authority.

In 2016, the Defined Benefit Scheme failed to meet the Minimum Funding Standard as defined by the Pensions Authority. This arose due to a major increase in scheme liabilities not being matched with a corresponding increase in scheme assets. This was due to prevailing economic conditions. In particular, falling interest rates which had a compounding effect on the Scheme due to pension increases provisions in the Scheme rules.

In order to address this, an amendment to some of the terms and conditions was made. This followed a consultation process between the Employer and SIPTU / Staff representatives, which ultimately led to a Labour Court hearing on 15th March 2018. On 27th March 2018, the Labour Court issued a recommendation permitting the Employer to limit guaranteed increases to be payable for a period of 5 years post-retirement only. This amendment to Scheme rules was agreed between the Employer, the Trustees and the Pensions Authority.

## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued)

### For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

#### 8. PENSION COMMITMENTS (continued)

Following the subsequent actuarial valuation on 1 April 2018, the Employer was required to pay deficit-reduction contributions to the value of €98,785 per annum for a period of 10 years.

At the April 2021 valuation, the funding position had improved. Following this, the Actuary recommended that the contribution rates could be reduced from 1st April 2021 to €82,000 per annum for a period of 7 years, while remaining on track to close the deficit by the target date. The next Actuarial Valuation is due in April 2027.

At the April 2024 valuation, the actuarial report identifies a surplus in the scheme and recommends that no contributions are required to be made to the scheme based on the results of the valuation.

The FRS 102 valuations were carried out for the schemes by independent firms of actuary and pension advisors and were based on the benefit structures in place at 30 September 2024.

Defined contribution pension (DC scheme) arrangements are in place for employees joining service after 1 December 2010. Contributions to the DC scheme are charged to the profit and loss as they are incurred.

The amounts recognised in profit or loss are as follows:

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Reconciliation of present value of plan liabilities</b>		
At the beginning of the year	2,337,000	1,810,000
Current service cost	62,000	63,000
Actuarial gains/losses	437,000	464,000
Contributions	-	82,000
Reversal of accrued contributions	(82,000)	(82,000)
	<u>2,754,000</u>	<u>2,337,000</u>

The amounts recognised in profit or loss are as follows:

	2024 €	2023 €
Current service cost	(62,000)	(63,000)
	<u>(62,000)</u>	<u>(63,000)</u>

The amount recognised in the statement of comprehensive income is an actuarial gain of €437,000 (2023 gain of €464,000).



## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

### 8. PENSION COMMITMENTS (continued)

The amounts recognised in profit or loss are as follows

	2024 €	2023 €
Opening defined benefit obligation	4,928,000	5,267,000
Interest cost	205,000	193,000
Actuarial (gains)/losses on liabilities – Financial assumptions	506,000	(380,000)
Actuarial (gains)/losses on liabilities – Experience	163,000	(58,000)
Net benefits paid out	(77,000)	(94,000)
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>5,725,000</b>	<b>4,928,000</b>

The amounts recognised in profit or loss are as follows:

	2024 €	2023 €
Opening fair value of scheme assets	7,183,000	6,913,000
Expected return on assets (Interest income)	300,000	256,000
Actuarial gains/(losses) on assets	1,106,000	26,000
Employer contributions	-	82,000
Administration expenses	(33,000)	-
Net benefits paid out	(77,000)	(94,000)
<b>Closing fair value of assets</b>	<b>8,479,000</b>	<b>7,183,000</b>

## Notes To The Non-Statutory Financial Statements (Continued) For The Financial Year Ended 30 September 2024

### 8. PENSION COMMITMENTS (continued)

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Statement of Financial Position date (expressed as weighted averages):

	2024 %	2023 %
Discount rate	3.50	4.20
Price Inflation	2.30	2.70
Future Salary increases	2.30	2.70
Future Pension increases	3.00 - 5.00	3.00 - 5.00
Mortality Rates		
For a male aged 65 now	22.8	22.7
For a female ages 65 now	25.2	25.1

Amounts for the current and previous periods are as follows:

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Defined benefit pension schemes</b>		
Defined benefit obligation	(5,725,000)	(4,928,000)
Scheme	8,479,000	7,183,000
Accrued contributions	-	82,000
	<u>2,754,000</u>	<u>2,337,000</u>

<b>Surplus</b>		
Experience adjustments on scheme liabilities	(669,000)	438,000
Experience adjustments on scheme assets	1,106,000	26,000
	<u>437,000</u>	<u>464,000</u>

### 9. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Company has availed of the exemption provided in FRS 102, Section 33, "Related Party Disclosures", not to disclose transactions entered into with fellow group companies that are wholly owned within the group of companies of which the company is a wholly owned member.

### 10. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

There have been no significant events since the balance sheet date.

## APPENDIX FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>1. Library Services</b>		
Books	339,600	310,390
Book Binding / Storage	20,249	23,144
Legal Databases	942,924	880,284
Law Reports	150,000	150,000
Library System Maintenance	41,680	39,876
Library Printing & Stationery	4,643	6,339
Other Library Costs	3,966	4,273
Commission on JILL Database	(44,565)	(46,233)
	<u>1,458,497</u>	<u>1,368,073</u>
<b>2. IT Services</b>		
Software Licensing	744,727	698,750
Managed Services	62,500	61,329
Bandwidth	53,844	20,608
Software Maintenance	69,991	52,279
Web Services	14,278	7,740
Cyber Security	133,406	146,476
Member System Developments		105,534
Depreciation	345,023	187,529
	<u>1,423,769</u>	<u>1,280,245</u>
<b>3. Member Services</b>		
Document Exchange Service	614,163	603,629
Bar Group Life Assurance	500,000	500,000
Subvention to Kings Inns	92,675	91,029
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	87,554	35,023
Pocket Diary	21,015	19,582
Practice Support & Fee Recovery	121,920	154,935
Young Bar Association	13,425	14,529
Specialist Bar Association	4,165	9,455
Member Clubs & Societies	35,960	31,800
	<u>1,490,877</u>	<u>1,459,982</u>

## APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

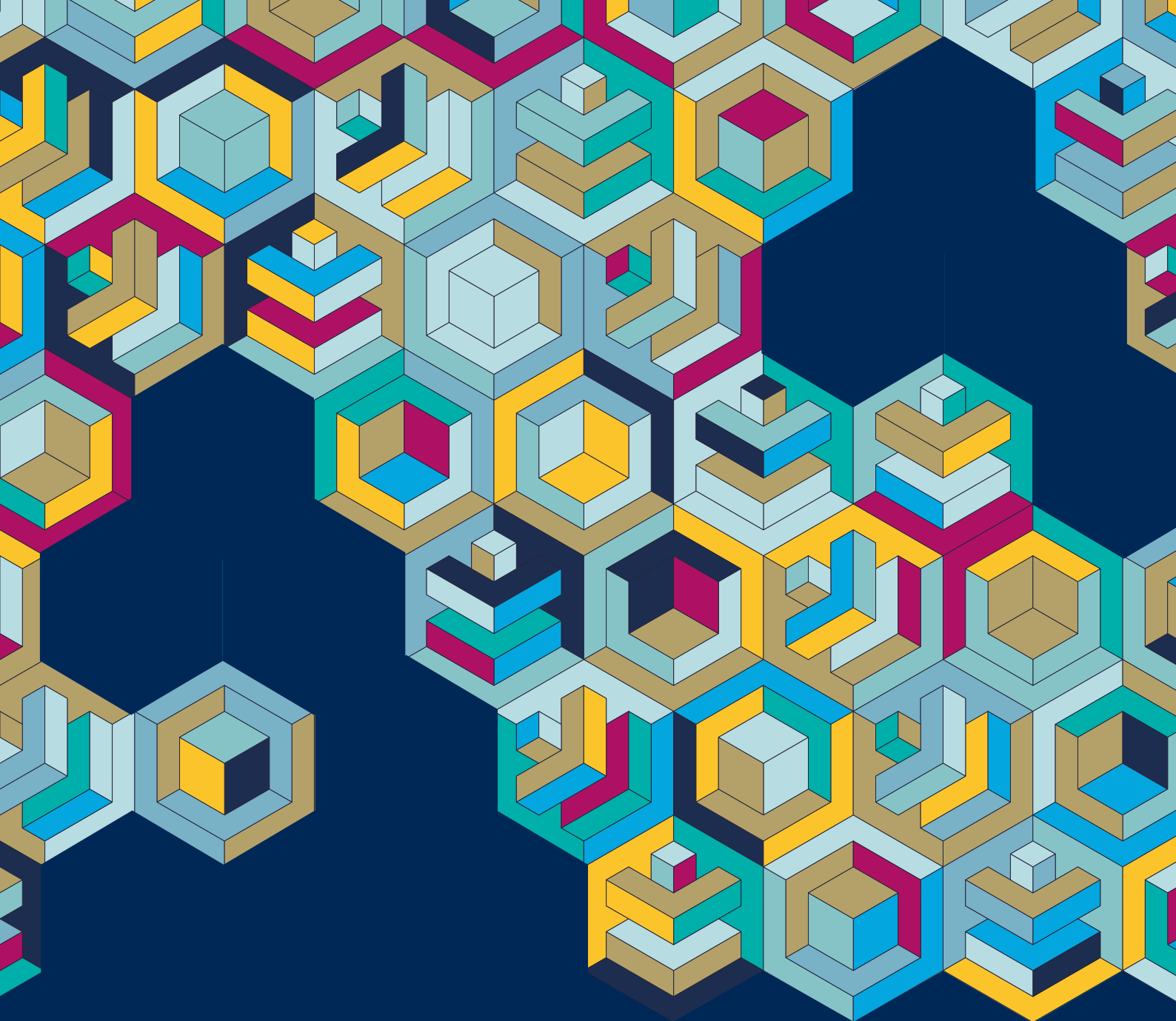
### FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

	2024	2023
	€	€
<b>4. Estate Services</b>		
CCJ Rent	486,792	482,665
Distillery Building Rent & Service Charge	386,052	268,800
Cork Rent	61,890	56,569
Rates	204,113	223,018
Light & Heat	27,925	57,486
Security	167,834	167,834
Repairs & Maintenance	61,445	53,389
Cleaning & Laundry	72,477	72,742
Removals, Storage & Shredding	36,788	30,565
Property Insurance	4,999	5,002
Depreciation	143,156	148,063
	<u>1,653,471</u>	<u>1,566,133</u>
<b>5. Administration Expenses</b>		
Telephone, Printing, Stationery, etc	64,220	70,682
Travel & Meeting Expenses	5,882	4,698
Professional Subscriptions	6,666	2,792
Audit Fees	13,259	7,626
Legal & Other Consultancy	3,050	78,242
General Insurances	88,655	84,119
Bank Charges	48,786	41,860
Provision for Bad Debts	34,215	(19,692)
Miscellaneous	7,955	31,622
	<u>272,688</u>	<u>301,948</u>



**APPENDIX (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

	2024	2023
	€	€
<b>6. Staff Costs</b>		
Salaries incl. Employer's PRSI	3,951,149	3,624,551
Employer's contribution to pension scheme	380,887	369,301
Staff Recruitment	97,812	37,645
Staff Training	37,912	43,607
Other Staff Costs	72,402	60,366
	<u>4,540,162</u>	<u>4,135,470</u>
<b>7. Exceptional Expenses</b>		
Define benefit pension adjustment	-	88,664
	<u>-</u>	<u>88,664</u>



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