

A background image showing several hands shaking in a circle, symbolizing agreement or partnership.

# THE LAW & LAW MAKERS

**When we refer to the law, we are describing the rules, legislation, and regulations that govern our society and our everyday lives, ensuring the protection and wellbeing of citizens and the smooth functioning of society.**

The purpose of these rules is to establish and maintain societal standards, maintain civil order, resolve disputes, and protect our liberties and freedoms.

There are thousands of different pieces of legislation, which govern everything from human rights to health and safety at work, and how individuals and companies pay taxes to the rules for driving vehicles on the road.





## KEY FACTS

- There are over **600 Barristers** in Northern Ireland.

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- There are over **2,300 Solicitors** practising in Northern Ireland.

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- There are **90 MLAs in the Legislative Assembly**; five MLAs represent each constituency.



## WHY THE LAW & LAW MAKERS?

There are many individuals involved in both making and upholding the law, including:

- Elected representatives who may be a Member of Parliament (MP), a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), or hold a seat as a Councillor in local Councils.

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- Civil Servants who work for central or local government and play a vital role behind the scenes in researching, developing, and implementing legislation and policy (for more information, see Public Administration and Services).

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- Individuals who have a role in the legal profession, such as Solicitors and Barristers, who work on behalf of individuals and organisations, and represent them in Court, and Judges, who make decisions based on legislation and case law.

This sector is vibrant and internationally-focused. Individuals involved in this sector are often passionate about ethics and equality, want to contribute to the justice system, and can have an impact on individual's lives and wider society.

Many roles in the sector are demanding and challenging but often have many opportunities and rewards.



For further information, click the links highlighted in **blue**



## WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

There are a range of job roles and types of careers in this sector. Many require specific third level qualifications. If you would like to pursue a career in this sector, it's important you check what the entry qualifications are in advance to ensure you choose the relevant GCSE and/or A Level subjects (or equivalent).

Opportunities available in the sector include:

- MLA
  - Minister
  - Judge
  - Barrister
  - Solicitor
  - Chartered Legal Executive
  - Paralegal
  - Barrister's Clerk
  - Mediator
  - Councillor
  - Special Advisor (SpAds)
  - Politician's Assistant
- ...and more!



## SALARY EXPECTATIONS

There is a lot of variation in the salaries within this sector, depending on the responsibilities of your job, the type of organisation you work for, the qualifications you hold, and the amount of experience you have.

Here are some **average salaries** for roles in this sector:

MLA  
Average salary  
**£51,500 per year**

Junior Minister  
Average salary  
**£57,500 per year**

Barrister  
Average salary  
**£37,472 per year**

Solicitor  
Average salary  
**£41,856 per year**

Paralegal  
Average salary  
**£22,597 per year**

County Court Judge  
Average salary  
**£154,527 per year**

Special Advisor  
Average salary is between  
**£60,000 per year**  
and  
**£78,000 per year**

Councillor  
Annual basic allowance approx.  
**£15,757 per year**  
plus allowable expenses



For further information, click the links highlighted in **blue**



## WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO I NEED?

The necessary qualifications needed for this sector will be determined by the career you wish to pursue.

### A Career in Law

To become a Solicitor or a Barrister, you will need a recognised law degree (LLB (Hons)). You could choose to undertake a joint honours degree, such as Law with Politics, or Law with a language. You must complete all of the necessary law modules on your course to graduate with a recognised law degree.

To become a qualified Barrister or Solicitor in Northern Ireland, you must go on to study further after achieving your LLB. This is done by completing a one-year postgraduate course at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, which is part of Queen's University, Belfast.

### A Career in Politics

There are no specific qualifications required for a career in politics. However, qualifications up to a degree in a relevant field of study may be useful. This may include study of subjects such as Politics, History, Law, or English.

Many politicians have a background in law, having studied it at university. A legal background can be helpful in politics as it can give you a greater understanding of the law-making process.

There are a wide range of supporting roles within the sector, which do not always require specialist qualifications. However, almost all roles will require at least a minimum of five GCSEs at Grade C or higher (or equivalent) including English and Maths.



## WHAT SKILLS ARE USEFUL?

Beyond the qualifications needed to pursue a career in this sector, the following employability skills and attributes are particularly useful:

- Communication skills
- Analytical thinking
- Time management
- Ability to work under pressure
- Resilience
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Organisation
- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to use your own initiative
- Attention to detail
- Research skills
- Public speaking





## WHERE CAN I GO TO FIND OUT MORE?

### The Law Society

The Law Society for Northern Ireland is the professional body for solicitors in Northern Ireland. It governs the conduct of solicitors to make sure that the services they provide to the public are up to standard.



For further information, click the link highlighted in **blue**