

Northern Ireland Legal Services - Altogether more



Northern Ireland legal services – altogether more....

In a continually changing global legal services landscape and in response to the ongoing ‘more for less’ challenge, Northern Ireland (NI) presents a complete range of innovative, alternative solutions for both firms and clients including:

- Ideal location for **legal and shared services operations, legal process outsourcing** and **legal technology centres**.
- Opportunities to build & expand **in-house** legal capabilities.
- Internationally relevant **legal expertise** and **outsourcing solutions** from the region’s lawyers.
- **Legal tech solutions** developed by a globally renowned IT sector.
- **Cutting edge research** and specialism in cyber security, artificial intelligence and analytics in our world-class universities.
- **Specialists in regulatory compliance** and associated technology solutions.

The Smart Choice for international investors

- Northern Ireland is a **proven location of choice** for mobile foreign direct investment in legal services.
- A compelling **combination of cost competitiveness and legal technical excellence** has attracted investors such as Citi, Herbert Smith Freehills, Allen & Overy, Axiom Law, and Baker & McKenzie. These global giants have established, scaled and expanded successful and substantial legal and business services teams in Northern Ireland, collectively employing over 1,200 people in a wide range of legal roles.
- Their **globally-integrated NI operations** are central to a range of **responsive, innovative, alternative solutions** for exacting international clients seeking **quality-assured, cost-effective legal services**.



Citi's centre in Belfast provides integrated services to the corporation's Markets and Banking Group in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). The centre currently employs around 2,000 staff and undertakes activities in operations, technology, global support functions, legal and compliance. In 2007, Citi established the first Legal & Compliance centre for capital markets in the EMEA region with 40 staff. Legal and Compliance now form two separate divisions with circa 300 staff across both centres in Belfast. Activities including document negotiation, legal control, trading support services, compliance monitoring and reporting for global transaction services, front office origination and markets trading businesses across EMEA.

“The supply of talent in Northern Ireland, particularly at graduate level, is impressive and, coupled with the support from Invest NI, and DEL (department for education), it makes this region highly attractive to a global company like Citi seeking the best location for growth.” James Bardrick, Country Officer UK, Citi.



Herbert Smith Freehills was the first leading international law firm to establish a UK-based near-shore operation in Northern Ireland in April 2011 in response to client demand for top quality legal products & services delivered in the most efficient, technologically-advanced and cost-effective way.

Now with over 250 qualified lawyers and legal assistants, the HSF Belfast team is the hub of the firm's Alternative Legal Services solution set, offering a highly-structured approach to managing document intensive and volume tasks. Products and services delivered from Belfast include document review, retail bank/regulatory claims assessment, due diligence, verification, commercial contracts, funds' repapering/specialist work, client technology services and asset management for real estate clients.

“We are a legal team, we don't operate as a back office. We now effectively have a full-service offering and support our instructing teams around the world.” Lisa McLaughlin, deputy director, HSF, Belfast.

ALLEN & OVERY

Established in 2011, **Allen & Overy's** NI office currently employs over 450, making it the firm's second biggest office after London. The A&O Belfast Shared Services Centre, delivers a range of business support services (finance, IT, business services, human resources and marketing) to the firm's global network. Belfast is now the firm's global IT hub and operates on a 24/7 service model.

The Legal Services Centre (LSC) in Belfast is an important component of A&O's advanced delivery toolkit, enabling the firm to deliver expertise to clients through the right combination of resourcing and technology. The 100-person LSC team is led by an experienced partner. It comprises junior legal

professionals supervised by highly experienced qualified associate solicitors working alongside A&O offices around the world on a wide range of document-based matters, including due diligence, litigation reviews, drafting, negotiating and research tasks. The focus on quality, supported by project management and workflow technology, ensures a highly effective as well as efficient service to clients. At July 2015, the Belfast LSC had advised on almost 1,000 matters for global clients.

“We cover basically everything that the rest of the firm does, but we don’t have our own clients’ – Jane Townsend , Partner, Head of LSC UK, Allen & Overy.



Axiom established its Belfast Centre of Excellence in 2012. With a client list including the general counsel and in-house legal departments of Fortune 500 / FTSE 100 companies, particularly in financial services, life sciences and technology, Axiom Belfast employs a team of over 200 attorneys, paralegals, project managers and technologists focused on acting as primary, client-facing, fee-earning teams. Axiom plans to grow its Belfast team to 300.

Axiom Belfast delivers commercial and derivatives contracting in a long term managed services model and regulatory and commercial projects. The Belfast team leverages Axiom’s proprietary technology IRIS to standardize, track and drive efficiency into these contracting processes. As a result, Axiom has converted historically “artisanal” processes into robust, scalable, controlled contracting processes that are oriented to the needs of clients’ businesses. In addition, Axiom is able to provide transparency to clients through advanced analytics.

“Belfast offers Axiom the perfect home to find, hire and integrate the right mix of the ‘right people.’” Mark Harris, CEO, Axiom.

In August 2014, global law firm **Baker & McKenzie** announced the opening of a global services centre in Belfast. By 2017 the centre will have over 250 staff in Northern Ireland engaged in legal work and business services support.

Baker & McKenzie is the world’s largest law firm by revenues, geographic reach and headcount. The firm pioneered the use of global service centres to drive efficiency and innovation and lower costs for clients when it opened its first centre in Manila. Belfast is now the firm’s second global services centre dedicated to supporting practise groups across its global network. The Belfast centre facilitates round the clock services across time-zones and reduces the firm’s dependency on a single centre. Current headcount is circa 150 with approximately two-thirds of the professionals in business services support and one-third legal staff.

‘We are not seeing the Belfast office simply as a cost reduction exercise. Belfast came at the top of the list primarily because of the quality of the workforce and education system’ Jason Marty, Global Director of Operations , Baker & McKenzie.

A smart choice for sourcing legal expertise

- The same compelling combination of **expert legal talent and competitive costs** underpins **Northern Ireland’s local legal sector.**
- Northern Ireland lawyers present **high quality, cost-competitive LPO** solutions and offer expert legal services to the public sector, financial institutions and leading commercial organizations across the whole spectrum of legal work. They offer **specialisms** in particular areas of law including dispute resolution, corporate/commercial, employment, banking and capital markets, as well as advanced advocacy, specialist opinion, arbitration and mediation. Our lawyers are renowned for their broad based commercial perspective, fearless advocacy and pragmatism.
- As the region’s economy has developed in recent years, so has its **commercial dispute resolution** sector. Both SME and large clients resolving disputes in NI courts remark on the lower costs, speed of resolution and the quality of engagement with NI counsel. Alternative dispute resolution is a major growth area and NI is home to a bank of trained commercial **mediators** and a growing number of qualified CI Arb **arbitrators.**
- Although a distinct legal jurisdiction within the UK, our **common law** framework overlaps considerably with that of England & Wales. Northern Ireland’s lawyers can offer cost-effective expertise on the law in England & Wales and Ireland, as well as NI jurisdictional issues. Many hold dual qualification and rights of appearance in England & Wales and the Republic of Ireland.
- The region is also home to a growing **cluster of legal technology and specialist legal outsourcers** and enjoys a strong international reputation for **regulatory compliance expertise.**

BAKER & MCKENZIE

Why NI is the Smart Choice....

The legal services sector is thriving in Northern Ireland due to its unique combination of exceptional legal talent and highly competitive operating costs in a low risk, pro-business strategic location.

Abundance of High Quality Talent

- Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University are two of the top 15 law schools in UK.
- As a career pathway, the law attracts the brightest students in NI. However with an output of around 700 law graduates per year, and professional places for just 150-200 candidates, **there is strong demand from culturally compatible, highly-educated legal graduates for quality legal roles**, in the region.
- An estimated 80% of NI paralegals have a law degree.
- One leading international law firm has had over 5,500 applications for its Belfast roles to date.
- Historic constraints in legal career opportunities in NI meant that many professionals left the region to develop their careers in London and Dublin. Research indicates there is a strong demand from senior level legal professionals to return to Northern Ireland for appropriate career opportunities combined with an unbeatable quality of life.
- From a standing start in late 2014, Baker and McKenzie ramped up to 150 roles in its Belfast Global Services Centre in just over 1 year.

Cost Competitive

- Typical operating costs for a legal services centre in Northern Ireland are around 50% less than London and around 40% less than New York.
- In April 2018, Northern Ireland will introduce a Corporation Tax rate of 12.5%.
- Highly competitive salary costs - up to 40 per cent lower than New York.

Strategically Located & Digitally Connected

- Offers a unique combination of physical accessibility in terms of geographic location, ease of travel and time zone and cultural proximity to customers in terms of business etiquette and professionalism.
- Part of the UK, ideally situated between mainland Europe and the US.
- Around 30 flights a day to London, flights to 33 airports in Great Britain, 150+ European routes, daily flight to US.
- Under 2 hours by road or rail from Belfast to Dublin, the capital of the Republic of Ireland, modern road and rail network.
- The highest availability of broadband in the UK; 100-gigabyte per second telecoms link between Northern Ireland, Europe and North America.

Support Networks

- Attractive financial incentives from government to support job creation, training and development.
- Practical on the ground support from Invest NI to facilitate the exploration of outsourcing solutions, location assessment, development and successful implementation of investment plans.
- NI is characterized by a high degree of collaboration and partnership between industry, academia and government.
- Tailored course provision by universities, collaborative networks between companies supported and facilitated by NI government.

[InvestNI.com/legal](https://investni.com/legal)



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