

General Counsel Outlook Report 2025



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Leadership perspectives | 4 |
| At a glance | 6 |
| 01 Optimism and ambition | 8 |
| 02 Managing complexity | 12 |
| 03 The tech-empowered GC | 16 |
| 04 The talent imperative | 22 |
| 05 Maximising external expertise | 26 |
| Actions to consider | 30 |
| Methodology | 32 |
| Get in touch | 32 |

Leadership Perspectives

To inform your decision-making around technology, talent, budgets, and more, it's crucial to have an up-to-date overview of trends, opportunities, and challenges across your sector.

In this inaugural KPMG Law General Counsel (GC) Outlook report, we deep dive into the key issues affecting GCs and senior in-house legal advisors, from the rise of AI and the battle for talent to the challenges of managing extraordinary complexity and work that crosses jurisdictions.

Having surveyed in-house counsel across Ireland and discussed the issues in depth with a focus group, we have been able to paint a picture of how GCs see their work as legal professionals. The results are illuminating, encompassing everything from job satisfaction to cybersecurity risks and more.

The traditional legal sector is changing fast as technology and hybrid working make for a more vibrant and dynamic environment. With their responses, our participants show how they believe this changing landscape can best be safeguarded, encouraged, and developed.

Some of the key findings of our research:

- In-house counsel enjoy impressively high job satisfaction and are broadly optimistic about chances for career progression.
- GCs have significant plans to invest in both AI and talent, with the former enabling opportunity for the latter rather than depleting the human workforce.
- Almost all in-house lawyers are regularly asked to advise on non-legal issues, a reflection of their internal standing.
- Investigation or enforcement by a regulator tops the list of perceived risks.
- Hybrid working is here to stay for in-house legal counsel.
- Specialist external legal advisors are valued more than ever.

We hope this report offers you fresh insights to take into the year ahead. As we move through 2025, the landscape looks to be one of positive growth and development, while also bringing potentially significant challenges, given the international geopolitical and macroeconomic context.

Most importantly, we want to thank all the GCs and senior in-house legal advisors who shared their insights with us. Their remarkable ambition for their people, and the businesses they advise and lead, continues to be admirable and encouraging.



Derek Hegarty

Partner
KPMG Law LLP

At a glance

Outlook

Broadly, general counsel in Ireland have a positive outlook and an energised focus on getting the job done.

Demanding role

With ever-increasing complexity and soaring demands for expert input and speedy results, GCs are under more pressure than ever.

Facing the future

GCs are set to invest equally in tech and talent as the legal sector evolves from traditional ways of working.

A team effort

As GCs are responsible for advising across more areas than ever, specialist external advice is seen as invaluable.

Sentiment

Most GCs are positive and coping with the ups and downs of their challenging work.

A rewarding role

Almost all GCs we surveyed find their roles as legal professionals both personally and professionally satisfying. Most would recommend their role to a friend.

Ready to progress

Two thirds of our survey participants have a positive view on career progression. Most feel they can contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the business they work in.

Managing stress

While three in five say their work life balance is good or excellent, others are finding it more challenging.

Complexity

Increased regulations, new technology, and additional responsibilities are set to render the GC's already-complex role even more demanding.

Regulatory challenges

GCs are under pressure to react quickly to changing regulations, though the risk of regulatory intervention calls for a careful, detailed approach.

Technological threats

Changing technology opens new vulnerabilities for cyberattacks, demanding GCs have rapid response plans and experts at the ready.

Extra responsibilities

Leadership often turns to GCs for non-legal guidance. GCs must ensure this important contribution is recognised and be prepared to set boundaries.

Technology

In line with market trends, AI is an increasingly important talking point in the legal community, despite its reputation for resistance to change.

Wide acceptance

Almost all GCs (85%) plan to increase their teams' use of AI over the next three years.

Hurdles ahead

GCs cite cost and security concerns, as well as a skills shortage, as key barriers to adopting AI.

Reducing admin

While the accuracy of AI output remains a concern, this can be balanced against AI's potential to free up professionals' time for higher-value work.

Talent

Talent acquisition and retention are vital to GCs, who rely on strong teams with deep understanding of the business to support risk mitigation and give informed guidance.

More than compensation

While remuneration remains the top consideration for talent, flexible working conditions and career progression are also priorities.

Growing numbers

Nearly all GCs report that they'll be keeping the same size team or increasing it over the next three years.

Hybrid arrangements

Most GCs (over three-quarters) expect their team to work from home two to three days a week.

External advisors

Over 87% of participants use a panel of external legal advisors.

Trust matters

When choosing external advisors, reputation and cost are seen as most pertinent, followed by access to specialist legal advice.

Debate on fees

Opinions on fees remain divided. This research shows the relevance of hourly rate pricing is being eroded.

The rise of AI

With a clear need for speedy results, half of GCs are willing to pay a tech fee to external advisors who achieve more efficiency through investments in AI.

84%
say their role gives them the chance to make significant contribution to growth and development of their organisation over the next three years.

01 | Optimism and ambition

Dynamic, committed, and keen to make progress, the in-house counsel sector in Ireland is a force to be reckoned with.

This is a dedicated and involved cohort – a remarkable 93% say their roles as legal professionals are personally and professionally satisfying. Not only that, about the same proportion of these senior lawyers would recommend their role to a friend. It's rare to find a profession in which those working are this content and engaged.

This is despite or perhaps because of the challenging nature of their work. The role of in-house counsel can involve unravelling knotty issues, managing competing demands and weighing up evidence across an extraordinary breadth of topics. Section 2 of this report (*Navigating complexity*) explores this and its consequences in more detail.

Building a meaningful career

It's evident GCs see they have a clear opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way. Of those who responded, 84% say their role gives them the chance to make a significant contribution to the growth and development of their organisation over the next three years.

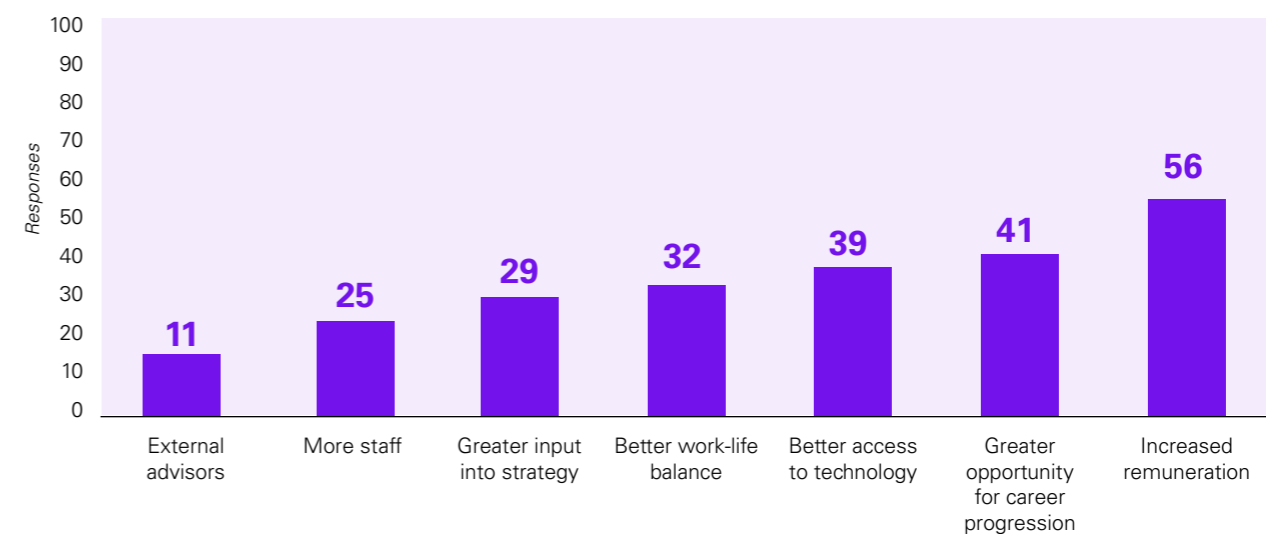
Almost half of senior in-house lawyers in Ireland surveyed had recently taken up their roles, with most of the rest in situ for between five and 10 years. Only one in eight were in their role for more than a decade.

Overall, this balance suggests the in-house counsel sector offers a highly desirable blend of experience and new perspectives, while offering those working in the field the opportunity to seek fresh challenges and build their careers.

Across the board, two-thirds were positive on their prospects for career progression. Not only that, but having greater opportunity for career progression was cited by 43% as a factor that would make their role even more satisfying. It came second only to increased remuneration, which was chosen by most respondents.

For senior leaders, however, it's worth noting that a third of in-house counsel are not optimistic about career progression. That could signpost potential headwinds in the form of dissatisfaction, falling productivity and unwanted staff turnover.

Factors driving job satisfaction



Achieving work-life balance

The nature of working in the legal industry inevitably brings stress at times. No one would raise an eyebrow then to read only one respondent said their role was not stressful. More than two in five (44%) said their work is occasionally stressful, while a third say it's stressful, and almost one in five respondents find their role very stressful.

For most, the stress seems to be manageable, but with a sizeable minority being really stressed at work, leadership needs to ensure GCs have access to support and have opportunities to discuss the challenges they face.

More than half (54%) of respondents said their work life balance is good and about a third (32%) said it's average. A fortunate handful (4%) described it as excellent. For many, these scores are likely to be driven by the accepted prevalence of hybrid working in the post-pandemic world (see Section 4 *The talent imperative* for more on this topic).

That left only one in 10 of our survey respondents who reported having poor or very poor work-life balance – but worth noting for leadership. A factor that could potentially worsen work-life balance for some GCs is the need to straddle time zones and contend with cultural differences in the course of their work – four in five told us their role brings them into contact with counterparts in other jurisdictions.

With hybrid working cemented as the status quo and given the global nature of business, awareness of this issue and building in accommodations such as flexible working hours can go a long way to smoothing out any problems that arise for those having to work earlier or later than typical office hours. Employees across all grades need the opportunity to switch off.

The outlook for in-house counsel

Broadly, GCs and other in-house counsel who responded to our survey came across as engaged, motivated, and upbeat about the future. That said, a significant minority report high levels of stress and poor work-life balance.

It's vital for both those in these roles and senior leadership to recognise the pressures they face as they contend with extraordinarily complex demands.

More than half (54%) of respondents said their work life balance is good.



Specialist in-house roles can feel solitary at times. And it's not unusual for people in these roles to feel a strong sense of responsibility at the same time. It's crucial these lawyers are well supported in identifying and managing stressors."

Conor McCarthy

Partner, Head of People and Change, KPMG in Ireland



Bear in mind the challenges GCs can face working in a global business ecosystem. Having the right safeguards in place around working hours can help ensure burnout and overwhelm don't creep into the role and dampen positivity and enthusiasm for the work."

Aoife Newton

Director, Head of Employment and Immigration, KPMG Law LLP

Questions to consider

Q1

Is the framework for career progression for in-house counsel at your organisation clear and well communicated?

Q2

Is there adequate support in place for in-house counsel, especially around hybrid working and work-life balance?

Q3

Are there clear guidelines around working hours and the right to switch off, especially for those who must work across different time zones?

02 | Managing complexity

If one feature of the role of the GC sets it apart and renders it acutely challenging at times, it is the absence of peers. Unlike senior lawyers in private practice firms, GCs don't usually have the option of consulting other lawyers at their level of seniority on challenges, ideas and approaches.

Much rests on a GC's shoulders – 65% of respondents consider their roles extremely or very complex and 34% say they are somewhat complex.

The range of issues they must cover, such as meeting the demands of multiple stakeholders, and the volume and complexity of requests they get were the main factors driving this complexity. These were cited by well over half of respondents, pointing to the finely detailed tapestry of work in which they engage.

It's critical that GCs can trust their team (see more on this in Section 4 *The talent imperative*) to assume responsibilities. To avoid a siloed approach to legal issues developing in their organisation, they must also build strong cross-functional relationships with other senior colleagues.



Try not to work in isolation. Consult regularly with your team and with your network, including former colleagues, external advisors, and peers in other firms."

Derek Hegarty

Partner, Head of Financial Services and Dispute Resolution, KPMG Law LLP and former in-house counsel

Pressures on the rise

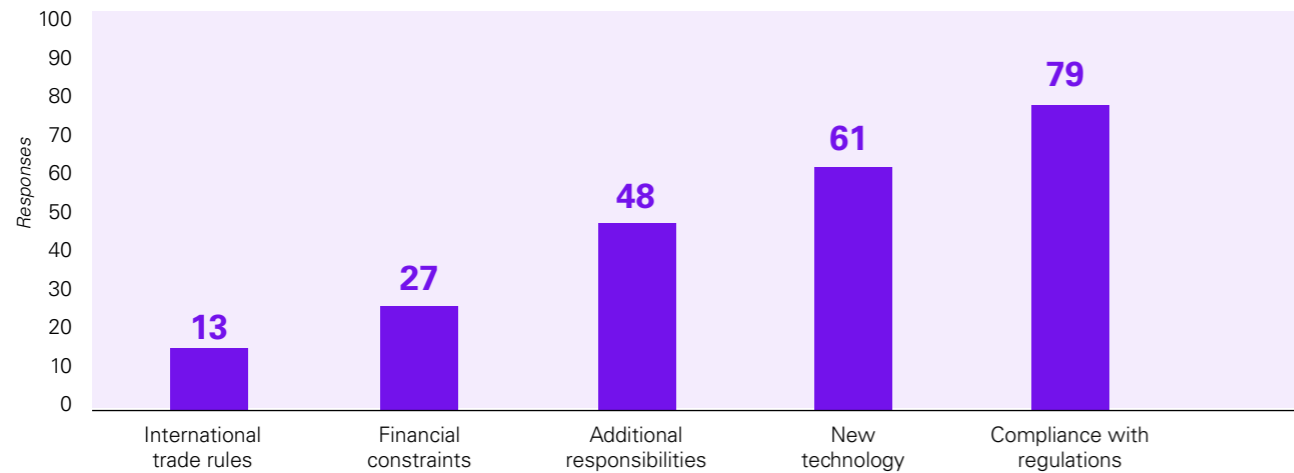
As European lawmakers increase regulations to tackle new and emerging threats to market stability and consumer protection from the ongoing wave of digital innovation, this increases the complexity of in-house legal counsel work.

GCs must navigate the regulatory landscape, decipher if their organisation is in scope of a new regulation, and try to ensure their organisation understands the changes that will result, while ensuring it has capacity to contend with increased obligations.

That's not all. More pressure arises from the demand for rapid reactions. It's cited as a cause for complexity by a third of GCs. By their nature, lawyers are risk-averse and detail-driven, which can be the enemy of speed and immediacy. Senior in-house lawyers must navigate this fine line every day. Leadership can't risk underestimating how it affects their workload and results.

It emerged from our research that these increases in new regulations are the factor adding most complexity to the in-house counsel role, followed closely by advances in technology and additional responsibilities.

What will drive complexity to 2028?



In this high-pressure role, getting informed support and advice on how to make the most of innovative tools and services is vital when it comes to levelling up on speed and efficiency."

Emma Ritchie
Director, Head of Data, Digital and Technology, KPMG Law LLP



Resilience is critical as businesses and in-house counsel adapt to digital transformation and AI advances, which may bring their own set of cybersecurity concerns."

Dani Michaux
Partner, EMA Cyber Leader, KPMG in Ireland

Risk concerns: enforcement and cyber

Topping the list of issues that would present the most complex challenge for in-house lawyers is an investigation or enforcement action by a regulator. GCs we spoke to highlighted this as an 'all hands on deck' situation, which they must often lead, while coordinating a firm-wide response and remaining cool-headed to steer the organisation through.

Coupled with the ever-present risk of a cyberattack (see below), GCs are facing complex challenges and need to ensure they have support architecture in place, such as rapid response committees and relevant crisis management experts.

Given numerous high-profile cybersecurity attacks and data breaches in recent years, it's clear GCs are working to ensure they are well protected. Half of our survey participants feel well prepared to deal with a cyberattack, with a further 7% saying they are very well prepared.

With cyber threats set to stay at the top of the risk agenda for CEOs and boards, it's encouraging to see much of the legal profession considers itself ready for such challenges.

That said, one in five conceded they were underprepared. For those who don't feel adequately defended, cyber threats must remain a top agenda item that needs urgent attention.

A delicate balancing act

Adding to the complexity of GC work is that almost all are asked to advise on non-legal issues, with one in five saying this happens constantly and almost half saying it happens regularly.

That so many are asked to veer from their lane and offer strategic non-legal advice underscores the trust put in this role. That said, GCs must balance this with occupying a specific and delineated legal role.

Senior in-house lawyers told us colleagues can want the comfort of being able to say "this has been through legal". GCs never want to give casual approval, however, and must ensure their legal team considers these requests in full.

Sometimes this is vital, especially for significant challenges, but GCs we interviewed also emphasised the importance of getting clarity on the legal input needed, and insisting on sufficient time to deliver. Doing this while continuing to build positive relationships with non-legal colleagues is not straightforward and often needs strong interpersonal skills, another trait of the modern GC.

Operational priorities

Given the breadth of topics they must cover, it's evident why 28% of GCs we surveyed pointed to gaining competency in new areas as a top operational priority in the coming three years.

AI is also top of mind, with 30% of respondents saying understanding and implementing it across the business is a priority, including upskilling the workforce. On a related point, 25% cited their employee value proposition as a core focus between now and 2028. Learn more in the next two report sections *The tech-empowered GC* and *The talent imperative*.

Questions to consider

- Q1** Are you working to ensure you're well connected to your internal and external networks, so you get the peer support you need?
- Q2** Have you actively considered how to put guard rails around your capabilities and capacity, so you can say 'No' when you need to?
- Q3** Have you considered the cost of a cyber breach? Prevention is usually less costly than fixing a problem.

03 | The tech-empowered GC

As the world contends with extraordinarily rapid technological change and the increased embedding of AI in business processes, so too must the legal profession.

We're seeing an unprecedented shift that will irreversibly redefine not just how lawyers perform their roles, but also the work entrusted to them. Through rapid data analysis and the automation of routine operations, AI can offer increased efficiency and productivity, reduced human error, lower costs, improved regulatory compliance, and better data-based decision-making.

At the same time, data sovereignty and intellectual property rights are valid worries because Gen AI can trawl huge databases, which may include information that is protected by copyright or other domestic and international laws.

Gen AI generates new content from patterns in data without an understanding of all the underlying facts. It can only be as good as the information fed into the LLMs that generates the content. That means there is a risk the output created is biased or incorrect. This presents considerable risks for organisations relying on Gen AI.

We're seeing an unprecedented shift that will irreversibly redefine not just how lawyers perform their roles, but also the work entrusted to them.

The discomfort of change

While no one disputes the scale and inevitability of this sea change, uncertainty abounds around risk, timing, and the most likely practical applications of AI.

One GC interviewed for this report likened this tectonic shift to “witnessing a large wave of change emerging that is going to wash through the profession. It’s hard to tell when exactly the full force will hit, and precisely what the aftermath will look like, but it’s coming. There’s no doubt about that and things are going to be very different afterwards.”

Lawyers are often seen, perhaps unfairly, as conservative and resistant to change. Our research certainly found at least some reluctance to evolve ways of working, but that is understandable.

Accuracy is the cornerstone of a lawyer’s work and every lawyer’s work can be subject to a particularly high level of scrutiny. Many attach an element of personal capital to their work and this may explain why lawyers are not emerging as early adopters of AI.

The cautious shift to AI

In-house lawyers have strong views on the advantage AI and other technologies bring to their profession, balanced with their acute awareness of potential risks from a regulatory and cyber perspective.

With 39% of survey participants already using AI while carrying out their core functions and 86% of participants planning to increase their team’s use of AI over the next three years, it’s clear AI is moving from the periphery to becoming a central strategic pillar for GCs.

In-house counsels are moving with caution, however. Only 15% of those planning to increase AI use forecast it would be a significant rise, while 31% expected it to be material. Close to half (46%) said any planned increase would be marginal.

While AI use is trending upwards, it’s happening in a measured, incremental way. That seems in keeping with the natural rhythm of change in the legal profession.

Barriers to adopting AI

Global KPMG research on AI in the finance sector (including in Ireland) has found data security vulnerabilities are the biggest barrier to adoption of AI. This issue is followed by limited AI skills and knowledge, difficulty gathering consistent data, high implementation costs, and a lack of transparency as the next most significant blockers.

Other barriers included the challenge of ensuring compliance and the potential for bias and misinformation, both naturally likely to be significant concerns for lawyers.

Our research with GCs in Ireland produced similar findings, with key barriers to AI adoption including cost concerns, data security, and a skills shortage when it comes to operating AI in its early stages. In the later stages of use, GCs believe large datasets can become difficult to navigate, and the potential for misinformation and bias increases.

The good news is staff are not as reluctant to upskill as some may imagine. KPMG’s global research on AI has found staff resistance is the lowest of 10 barriers to AI adoption.

While the trend towards AI is upwards, it’s happening in a measured, incremental way. That seems in keeping with the natural rhythm of change in the legal profession.

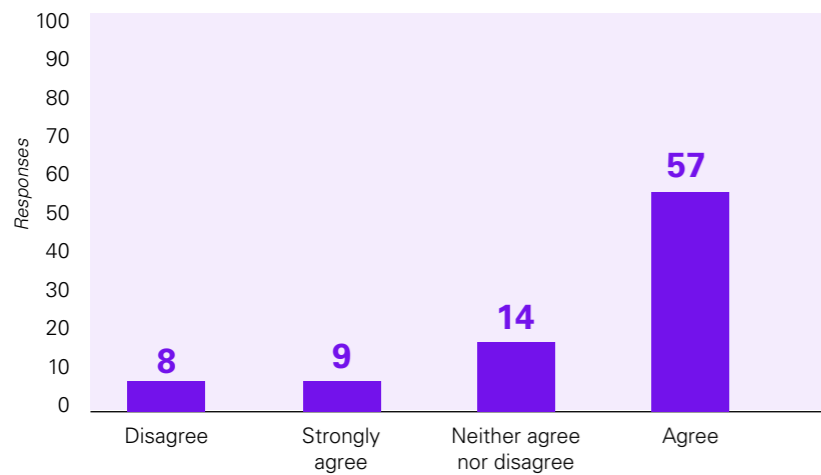
AI: Balancing risk and value

Can AI tools be trusted for legal work? For some tasks the view is clearly yes. For others, the jury is out for now. While two in five of those surveyed agree AI has significantly improved the efficiency of legal research processes, more were neutral on the topic. About one in 12 strongly agreed AI has markedly helped on this front, while about the same proportion disagreed.

It's much clearer, however, that in-house counsel don't yet set store in generative AI tools to produce accurate output for legal work. Almost three-quarters (73%) agreed they were concerned about doing so, while only 15% disagreed, with the remainder of respondents having no strong feelings one way or the other.

That said, respondents see clear value in using AI tools to take care of more mundane and time-consuming administrative tasks. In fact, 65% believe the value AI can offer on this front will allow them and their teams to focus on higher value workloads. Fewer than one in 10 disagreed with this statement.

AI to underpin shift to higher-value work



KPMG has developed many proprietary technology products with AI at their core, which, when brought together with KPMG Law's legal capabilities across 84 different jurisdictions, makes us uniquely well-placed to help GCs."

Stuart Bedford
Global Head of Legal Services
KPMG International

Questions to consider

Q1 Are you compartmentalising AI as a risk and compliance issue or really seeking out opportunities to work faster and more efficiently?

Q2 Do you foster a culture of digital curiosity and continuous learning across your teams?

Q3 Are you personally at risk of getting left behind or are you using new tech to understand its potential?

04 | The talent imperative

Attracting and retaining the brightest legal talent to their team is vital in ensuring a GC can mitigate organisational risk, ensure exceptional compliance levels, and offer informed and valuable advice.

The boards and senior management of large corporate and government organisations both value and need legal expertise as they set and enact strategy, contend with challenges both expected and unexpected, and seek to ensure they capitalise on valuable opportunities.

Almost three quarters of those surveyed (74%) said they interact regularly with the board or board equivalent. It's clear that a critical part of a modern GC's role is to be that trusted advisor to leadership.

This demanding proximity to the C-suite tends to mean the GC must rely on other lawyers on their team to take responsibility for delegated tasks. That in turn informs the talent requirements for high-performing in-house legal teams and means attrition can be felt more acutely than in private practice. Half of those surveyed said losing key staff would be one of their most complex challenges if it happened.

GCs are optimistic they can handle recruitment and attrition, however. Close to half (45%) said they plan to increase the size of their team over the next three years with the same proportion saying they will maintain the current number of staff.

It's clear that a critical part of a modern GC's role is to be that trusted advisor to leadership.

Attracting and retaining people

As ever, remuneration is seen as by far the most important factor in the battle for talent, but flexible working conditions are seen as almost as alluring. Career progression is also critical, as is cultural fit, which shows legal leaders still put culture at the core in the era of hybrid working.

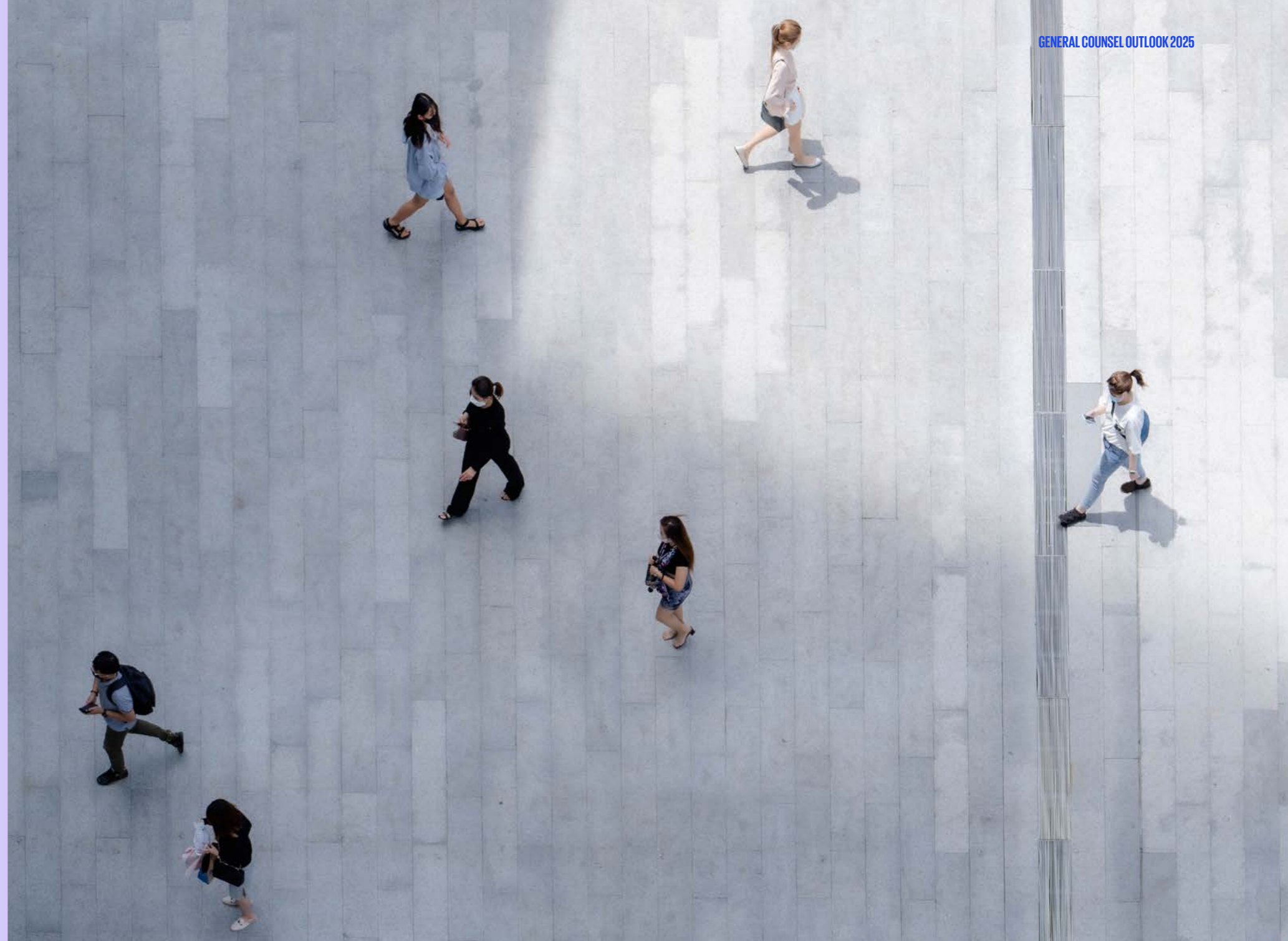
While many in the finance sector are back to the office at least four days a week, hybrid is here to stay for in-house lawyers in Ireland. 76% of survey participants expect their team to work two to three days from home, with 11% believing their team will work from home four to five days. Fewer than one in 10 expect a primarily in-office working pattern.

While progress is being made on the gender pay gap across corporate Ireland, close to three in five (57%) say there is a gender pay gap where they work, with one in four unsure if there is one. We can be optimistic on this front, with 78% of respondents saying their organisation produces a gender pay gap report.

Will AI lead to downsizing?

Letting AI take care of some admin doesn't mean downsizing to smaller teams. In line with market sentiment generally on AI and whether or not it will replace skilled workers, three in five of those surveyed say using AI is unlikely to lead to a reduction in the number of people working on their team in the next three years.

While it's clear technology isn't likely to assume the role of humans any time soon, GCs told us their investment in technology would equal their investment in talent in the next three years. There's no doubt the legal profession needs to keep pace with advances in technology while also attracting the best and brightest to stay relevant and continue to add significant value.



While factors such as CSR and the gender pay gap barely registered in our research as important individual factors for attracting and retaining staff, we believe this is likely because they are fundamentally integral to organisational culture, which is close to the top of the list when it comes to hiring and keeping talent. Hybrid working remains another critically important factor and looks set to stay as a distinctive feature of the in-house lawyer's role."

Aoife Newton
Director, Head of Employment and Immigration, KPMG Law LLP



Leaders will quickly figure out how to combine human and artificial intelligence to deliver better, faster, and more cost-effective services. Those that fall behind with the progress and innovation of this rapidly accelerating intelligence race will find themselves at a distinct disadvantage at best and are likely to quickly become irrelevant."

Owen Lewis
Partner, Head of Artificial Intelligence, KPMG in Ireland

Questions to consider

- Q1** Is the framework for career progression at your organisation clear and well communicated?
- Q2** Is there adequate support in place for your team members, especially around hybrid working and work-life balance?
- Q3** Are you investing adequate time and energy into developing a strong team culture that can thrive even in a hybrid working environment?

05 | Maximising external expertise

In many organisations, the role of GC has changed profoundly in recent years. In the past, they often operated as specialist advisors, isolated from other parts of the business and responsible for dealing with a narrow range of issues.

Now, they're pivotal members of senior management teams, responsible for managing significant risks within the business and leading teams of ambitious professionals.

This evolution has led to a considerable change in many relationships with external law firms. GCs told us the use of multiple external law firms has become commonplace, as has a tendency to carry out more work in-house. In-house counsel and external advisors work in close, though not exclusive, partnership with a risk-sharing approach to costs.

Over 87% of our research participants use a panel of external legal advisors. They place most value on track records from previous engagements when choosing external counsel, followed by cost, the availability of specialist legal advisors, and personal relationships.

As outlined in Section 2 *Managing complexity*, GCs must contend with a growing workload and wide array of responsibilities. That tallies as we see 55% of respondents needing external advisors to cover five to 10 practice areas, and 13% needing more than 10 areas covered. It's clear why access to specialist legal advice is a driver in considering where to buy legal services.



Reputation and international presence are important components of a GC's choice of external advisors in ensuring they can seamlessly and efficiently navigate cross-jurisdictional issues."

John Given
Managing Partner, Head of M&A, KPMG Law LLP

How advisors add value

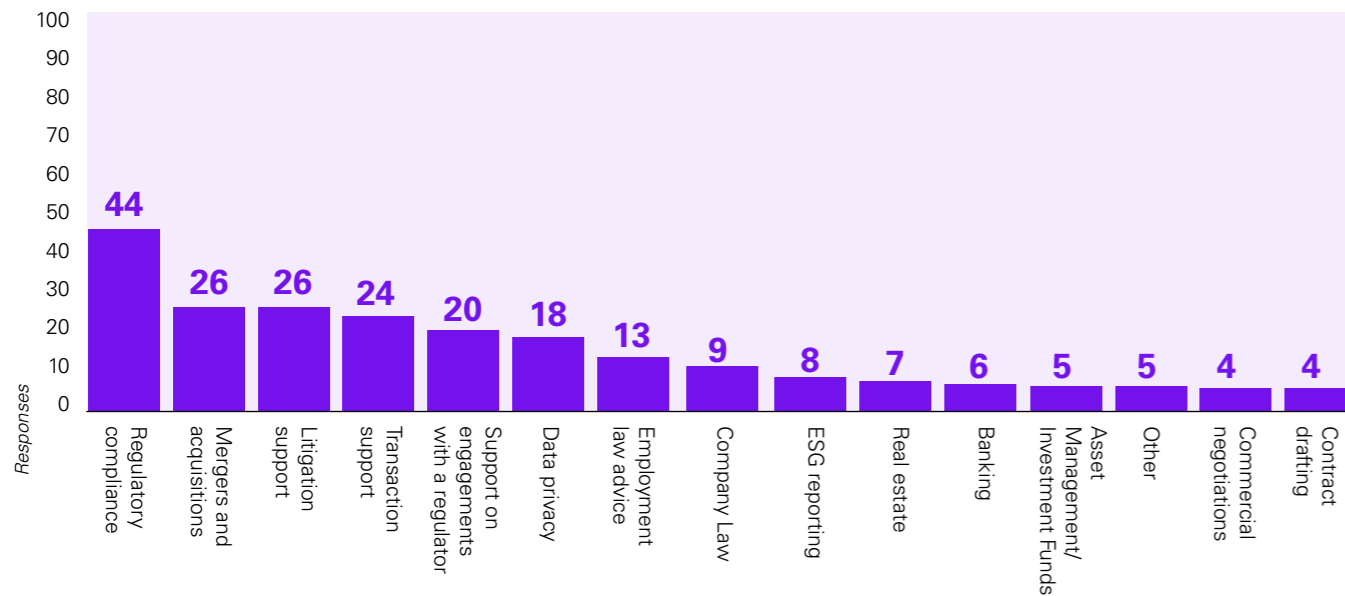
What does in-house counsel value most in external advisors? Specialist expertise is the clear answer. Insights on market practice are the most prized value-add from an external advisor, followed by complementary partner 'pick up the phone' time, CPD, horizon scanning updates, and bespoke workshops.

Four in five respondents said they're happy with the service they've had from external advisors in the past year, citing practical advice, timely work delivery, and strong understanding of their business as leading reasons of satisfaction. Conversely, high fees, impractical advice and poor communication were the leading causes of dissatisfaction with work done by external advisors.

Fees and charging methodologies

Regulatory compliance is the legal service GCs expect to spend most on up to 2028. This is followed by support for litigation or transactions, advice on mergers and acquisitions, and services relating to data privacy. Other more specialist focus areas will also demand budget, as can be seen in the graph below.

Specialist areas needing most budget



Opinions on fee models remain divided. Half of participants disagreed with the statement that while the hourly rate charging system for legal services is flawed, it remains the fairest basis available. Fixed fee charging models for engaging external legal advisors were the most used by those surveyed, with about a quarter saying they use hourly rate models most and one in 10 using other pricing models.



Implementation challenges

Given the complexity of AI implementations, most organisations need to lean on external expertise, especially as GCs told us that quick turnaround times are an increasing concern for them.

When asked about the idea of a 'technology fee' being added to the fee charged by external counsel, survey respondents were almost equally divided. (Such fees would be levied when external counsel achieve greater efficiencies through its investment in AI, in turn leading to cost savings for in-house legal counsel).

With 51% of participants saying they would pay this fee, it will be interesting to monitor industry trends when it comes to the increased use of AI to boost efficiency. By far, faster service delivery is seen as the most likely benefit of AI use by external providers (cited by 57% of participants), well above lower costs (35%), and increased consistency (7%).



Advances in technology can alleviate the pressures felt by GCs and senior in-house counsel, especially when much of the pressure for fast delivery is around understanding the requirements and pitfalls of emerging regulations."

Emma Ritchie
Director, Head of Data, Digital and Technology, KPMG Law LLP

Questions to consider

Q1 Are you ensuring you're drawing on sufficient breadth of specialist advice from external legal services providers?

Q2 Have you worked through the benefits and drawbacks of different fee models for external legal advice?

Q3 Are you pressing external advisors on their use of innovative tools to save time and maximise budgets?



Actions to consider

Talent

Make diverse teams for a diverse world your mantra. Recognise that diversity of thought is one of the hardest attributes to identify, yet in a fast-paced, complex world, it's increasingly important. Moreover, technology still requires leadership. With talent key to future success, focus on culture and make sure your approach to AI keeps people front and centre of your strategy.

External advice

Re-assess your use of external advisors to ensure you're maximising your budget to gain the specialist advice you need across multiple business areas and jurisdictions. Talk to advisors about appropriate fee models and set clear expectations about access to partners and other specialists. External advisor relationships stand or fall on trust and personal connections, so it's worth investing time in them.

Leading well

As a senior leader and trusted 'wise head', it's critical for GCs to put themselves first and strive for not only operational excellence, but also career progression and the right work-life balance. As the adage goes, you have to put your own oxygen mask on first. Make sure you safeguard your time and put effort into building and maintaining peer and other support relationships that can give you perspective and space for discussion.

Complexity

Facing technological and regulatory changes, GCs are also increasingly being asked to advise on issues beyond their traditional scope of work. Maintaining strong internal and external networks ensures you have the support you need, but it's still important to set boundaries. Your expertise and capacity need guardrails to be effective.

Tech

Trust is fundamental to the introduction of AI. As the technology develops faster than related regulation worldwide, you must ensure your AI approach stands up to scrutiny. Meanwhile, as cyber-crime evolves, don't underestimate the importance of people and culture in mitigating risk. Take direct responsibility for understanding the implications of something going wrong.

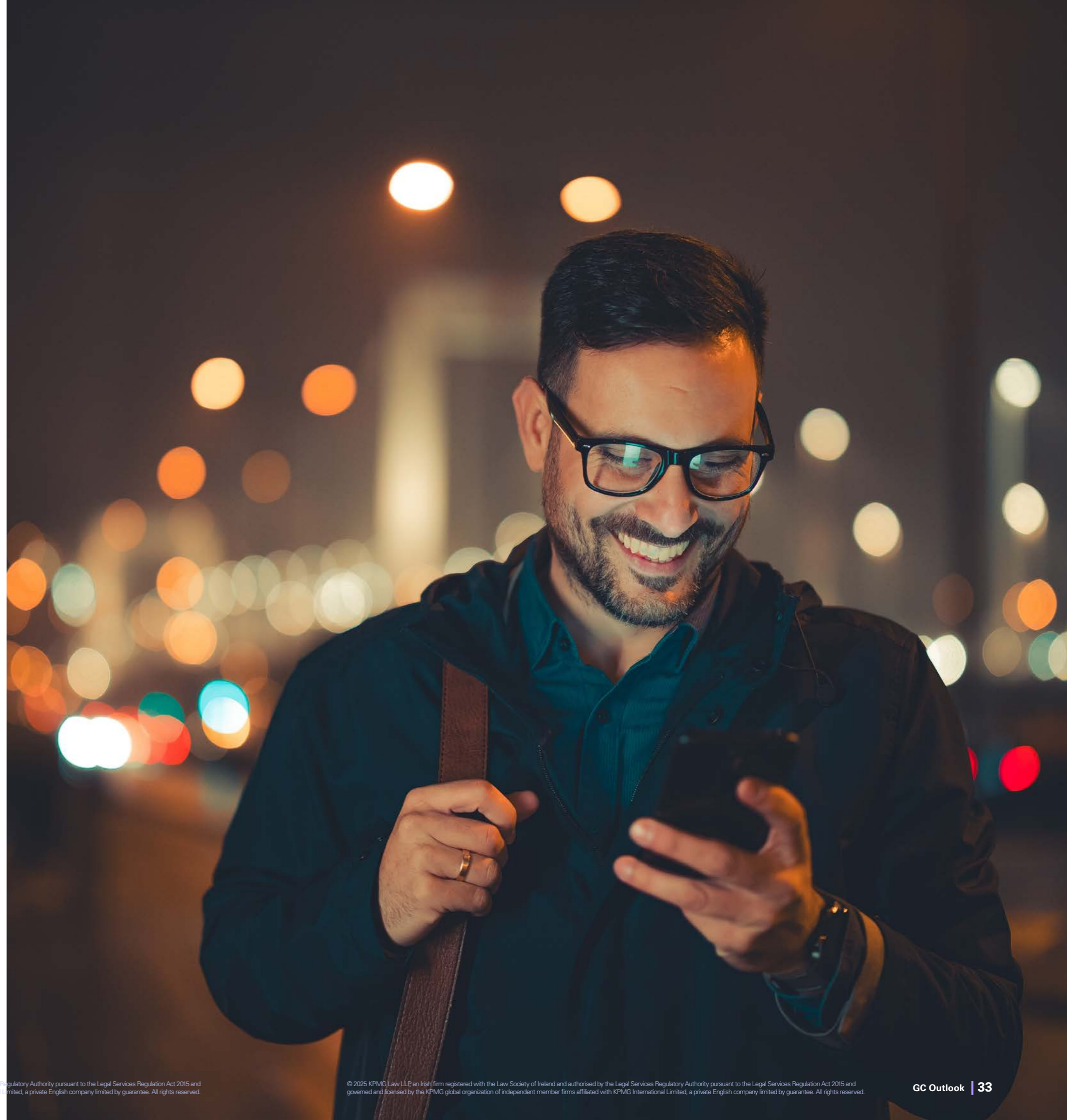
Methodology

To gather data for this research report, we surveyed more than 100 of Ireland's senior in-house lawyers in early 2025. For further qualitative input, we held in-depth discussions with a sub-group of GCs.

Get in touch

At KPMG Law LLP we're committed to working with you to help you achieve your business objectives. To find out more please get in touch with any of our team. We look forward to hearing from you.

To meet our team, scan here



About us

KPMG Law LLP

We are an independent private practice law firm, registered with the Law Society of Ireland and authorised by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority. We are also the Irish member firm of KPMG Law International and part of a global legal powerhouse with nearly 4,000 professionals across more than 80 jurisdictions.

How We Serve Clients

Our unique position as both an independent law firm and a member of the KPMG global organisation allows us to offer unparalleled service to our clients. We operate in two distinct ways: first, on a traditional, standalone, client/law firm basis; and second, as part of a fully integrated, multidisciplinary professional services offering alongside our KPMG colleagues in Ireland and internationally. This dual approach places us at the forefront of a market-changing development in the delivery and pricing of legal services.

Our Team

In the two and a half years since we founded the firm, we have grown to a team of 75 professionals and we're continuing that growth through expansion into several new practice areas. We deliver local market expertise and efficiencies, leveraging KPMG's cutting-edge technologies, process innovations, and global presence.



John Given

Managing Partner,
Head of M&A,
KPMG Law LLP
john.given@kpmglaw.ie



Emma Ritchie

Director,
Head of Data, Digital and
Technology,
KPMG Law LLP
emma.ritchie@kpmglaw.ie



Derek Hegarty

Partner,
Head of Financial Services
and Dispute Resolution,
KPMG Law LLP
derek.hegarty@kpmglaw.ie



Christopher Martin

Partner,
Financial Services
Regulation,
KPMG Law LLP
christopher.martin@kpmglaw.ie



Aoife Newton

Director,
Head of Employment
and Immigration,
KPMG Law LLP
aoife.newton@kpmglaw.ie



Michael Moore

Partner,
Head of Corporate
Structuring,
KPMG Law LLP
michael.moore@kpmglaw.ie



Salvador Nash

Principal,
Head of Company Secretarial,
KPMG Law LLP
salvador.nash@kpmglaw.ie



Aisling Garry

Director,
Head of ESG,
KPMG Law LLP
aisling.garry@kpmglaw.ie



[kpmglaw.ie](https://www.kpmglaw.ie)