

**Northern  
Ireland**

# Northern Ireland

## A location of choice for legal services and legal innovation

**Northern Ireland has become a leading global location for financial and professional services investment due to its world-class talent, competitive operating costs, resilient infrastructure and research excellence.**

Part of the UK, Northern Ireland has a robust and mature legal system and operates within the UK's globally respected and robust regulatory framework. Northern Ireland's legal sector is vibrant, internationally focused and has grown significantly over the last ten years, now employing over 6,500 people. The region is home to various types of legal services operations, including legal and shared services centres, legal processing outsourcing centres and general counsel. These operations deliver a wide range of functions, such as traditional legal services, legal technology and regulation and compliance.

Building on its strong heritage of legal excellence, in recent years the region has welcomed globally recognised law firms to the region including **Allen & Overy**, **Baker McKenzie**, **Factor** and **Herbert Smith Freehills**.

Several of these hubs are supporting their firm's global business using technology enabled solutions developed by the Northern Ireland teams. Other major investors have recognised the legal talent on offer in Northern Ireland and have taken advantage of this with **BT**, **Citi**, **FinTrU** and **PwC** all establishing legal teams in the region.

As global legal services and the business of law continue to evolve and innovate at a rapid pace, technology is playing an ever increasing role in creating new delivery models and new methods to serve clients. With its technology and innovation capabilities, Northern Ireland is increasingly recognised as a leading centre for legal services innovation and offers an exciting range of high quality, tech-enabled solutions for pioneering global firms, sector disruptors and technology innovators like **iManage** and **Qualitest**. The region has deep expertise in regulatory and compliance solutions, data analytics and cyber security and is pioneering R&D in technologies like RPA and AI.

## Did you know?

### Expertise



Northern Ireland boasts exceptional legal talent including over 450 local law firms, 3,000 solicitors and 600 barristers and KCs.

### Graduates



In 2020/2021, there were 19,800 university enrolments and over 7,000 graduates in Northern Ireland in a discipline of relevance to legal, professional and knowledge services.

### Multi-Jurisdictional



The legal talent pool includes an annual surplus of some 600 law graduates as well as an experienced cadre of professionals, many of whom are registered to practice law in other jurisdictions including England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

### Lower Operating Costs



Many of the UK's top law firms have located offices in Northern Ireland, to service both the Northern Ireland market and those further afield. Many have cited access to exceptional talent and lower operating costs as key to their decisions to set up in the region. The group includes **BLM, DWF, Eversheds Sutherland, Fieldfisher, Gateley, Kennedys, Keystone Law, Oracle Solicitors, Pinsent Masons, Shoosmiths & TLT.**

### Cyber Security



Northern Ireland is the number one international location for US cyber security development projects (FT fDi Markets, 2021) and home to CSIT – the UK's Innovation & Knowledge Centre (IKC) for cyber security – at Queen's University Belfast. The university has recently been named as one of the UK's first Academic Centres of Excellence in cyber security education.

### Top 10 in Tech



Northern Ireland is Europe's leading destination for new software development projects (FT fDi Markets, 2021) and has been ranked one of the top 15 European Tech Cities of the Future by the Financial Times, fDi Intelligence. Belfast has been identified as one of the top 10 emerging legaltech scenes globally, alongside London, Toronto and Tel Aviv (The Law Society of England and Wales, 2021).

## Education and skills pipeline

### Northern Ireland has a wealth of highly educated and talented people

- In 2020/2021, there were over 2,000 university enrolments and 800 graduates in law and legal studies.
- In addition there were over 6,200 enrolments for technology degrees and over 1,800 graduates.

Partnership and collaboration are actively encouraged in Northern Ireland and our prestigious universities work closely with legal industry partners to ensure graduates can meet the current and future needs of the legal sector.

As well as offering highly respected traditional law degrees, both universities have recently introduced legaltech degrees to offer new routes into legal careers and to build the workforce of the future and the next generation of tech-savvy lawyers.

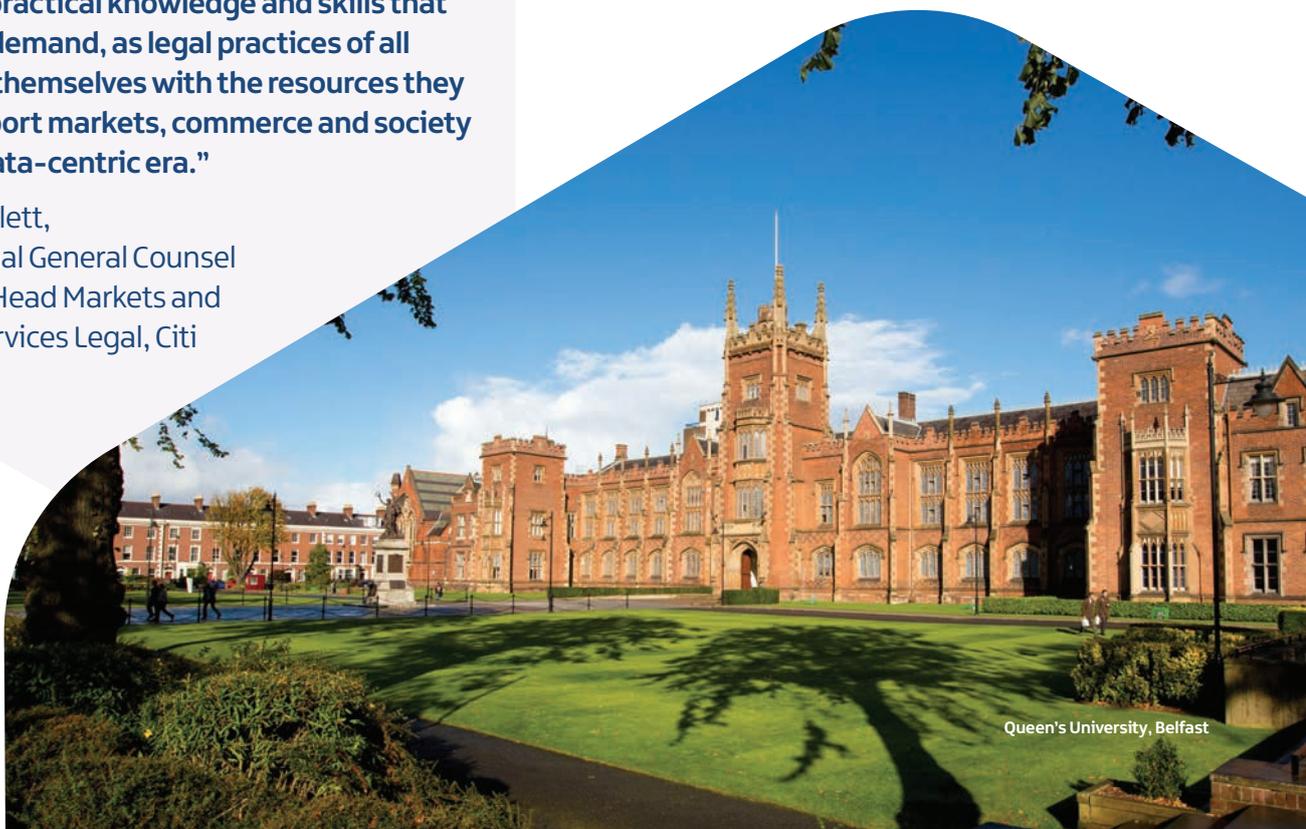
In September 2020, **Queen's University** launched its **Law and Technology LLM** in response to the increasing focus on technological innovation in legal work and practice. Building on the School of Law's substantial experience in technology, e-governance and innovation, this Masters programme will increase skills and awareness of legal matters in technology, as well as the law's role in regulating technology and technology's role in transforming governance and legal practice.

**“Ulster University’s new ‘Corporate Law and Computing’ course is an exciting opportunity to acquire the practical knowledge and skills that are much in demand, as legal practices of all types equip themselves with the resources they need to support markets, commerce and society in the new data-centric era.”**

Stephen Bartlett,  
EMEA Regional General Counsel  
& Global Co-Head Markets and  
Securities Services Legal, Citi

The programme is employment focused and was developed in close consultation with legal and legaltech employers; all students study computational skills, and complete both an individual dissertation and a group project, where real-world problems are addressed using creative and interdisciplinary approaches.

Developed by the **Legal Innovation Centre**, the new **LLM/ MSc Corporate Law, Computing & Innovation Programme** at **Ulster University** was launched in September 2020. Working alongside industry partners, Ulster University has developed a comprehensive programme that covers data science, business intelligence and professional software development; corporate, financial, intellectual property, technology and internet law; as well as the most common areas of legaltech overlap, including cyber security and legal process automation. This programme will produce graduates with a highly sought after skillset and outlook, that will enable them to work within project teams across multiple disciplines essential to contemporary business. As part of the course, students have the opportunity to undertake innovative legaltech focused work placements within international investors based in Northern Ireland.



Queen's University, Belfast

## Global pioneers

### Allen & Overy

Allen & Overy's Belfast office opened in 2011. It is the second largest office in the company's network, employing approximately 600 people. It includes a Support Services centre which delivers business services –document & design, finance, human resources, IT, library & information and marketing & business development - to the firm's global network. The global hub for IT support is based in Belfast, operating a 24/7 service model.

Allen & Overy Belfast is also at the forefront of delivering legal services to clients in new and flexible ways, with proportionate lower-cost, tech enabled resourcing and end-to-end managed legal services. As the legal services landscape continues to change, the team of high quality associates and legal professionals use legaltech to help clients manage everything from large scale document reviews and complex repapering exercises, to contract review and negotiation support.

The legal team in Belfast works 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. They also work closely with the firm's international litigation and arbitration lawyers on financial and commercial disputes as well as financial regulatory investigations.

On the non-contentious side of the practice, they handle a wide range of corporate and finance transaction-related work, including contract and loan due diligence, document drafting and research tasks as well as negotiation of commercial contracts.

Furthermore, the legal team in Belfast assists in the preparation and coordination of multi-jurisdiction advisory and compliance questionnaires and guidance, working with specialist groups including A&O's Employment, Antitrust and Regulatory practices. There is also a dedicated IP group, including specialists with science backgrounds, equipped to work as an integral part of the firm's international IP practice, assisting on the most complex patent matters in the market.

[www.allenoverly.com/en-gb/global](http://www.allenoverly.com/en-gb/global)

**“Our Belfast office, and its expertise in streamlining elements of complex projects, is critical to our ambition to deliver excellent client service through an innovative mix of resourcing models and technology.”**

Wim Dejonghe, Allen & Overy, Senior Partner

### Allstate

With over 2,400 employees across 3 offices in Northern Ireland, Allstate NI is a subsidiary of leading US insurance company, the Allstate Corporation. Allstate is one of the largest property and liability insurance companies in the US and a Forbes 100 company.

Established in 1998, Allstate NI provides a range of innovative, critical business support services including technology, data, cyber security, risk and compliance, legal and finance. Allstate

Northern Ireland's legal services department is an integral part of the global Allstate law and regulation function. The NI-based teams of paralegals and legal administrators work into the Allstate litigation services department, collaborating closely with attorneys in the US and teams globally and to provide high quality legal services within Allstate's staff counsel offices across the US..

[www.allstate.com/northernireland](http://www.allstate.com/northernireland)



## Baker McKenzie

With around 13,000 people in 47 countries, Baker McKenzie is one of the world's largest law firms by revenue, geographic reach and headcount. The firm pioneered the use of global service centres to drive efficiency and innovation for clients when it opened its first centre in Manila. Belfast was the firm's second global services centre, and has been joined by centres in Tampa and Buenos Aires.

Since opening in late 2014, the Belfast centre has grown rapidly as an integral part of the firm's operations. In Belfast, the team of around 400 employees provides legal and business services to the firm's other offices, supporting clients on their most complex and high value mandates. This includes the provision of finance services, risk mitigation and management, business development, marketing and communication, IT, knowledge and operations. In addition, Belfast houses a large team forming part of Baker McKenzie's professional services offering worldwide, including alternative legal services and legal project management functions.

The alternative legal services team in Belfast comprises approximately 100 fee earners, ranging in experience from junior paralegals to senior lawyers. The team assists the firm's practising lawyers around the world to deliver client mandates, using technology, skilled resource and defined processes to provide high quality legal support at a competitive price point. The Belfast team supports lawyers across the firm's contentious, advisory and transactional practice pillars.

[www.bakermckenzie.com/en/](http://www.bakermckenzie.com/en/)

**“The quality of the people in Northern Ireland and the teams we have been able to recruit is great. When you look at the size of the population, the wealth of the educational establishments, including two really strong universities, is a real strength. That educational infrastructure underpins why we are here in the first place - the really high quality, talented and committed individuals we are proud to have as colleagues in Belfast.”**

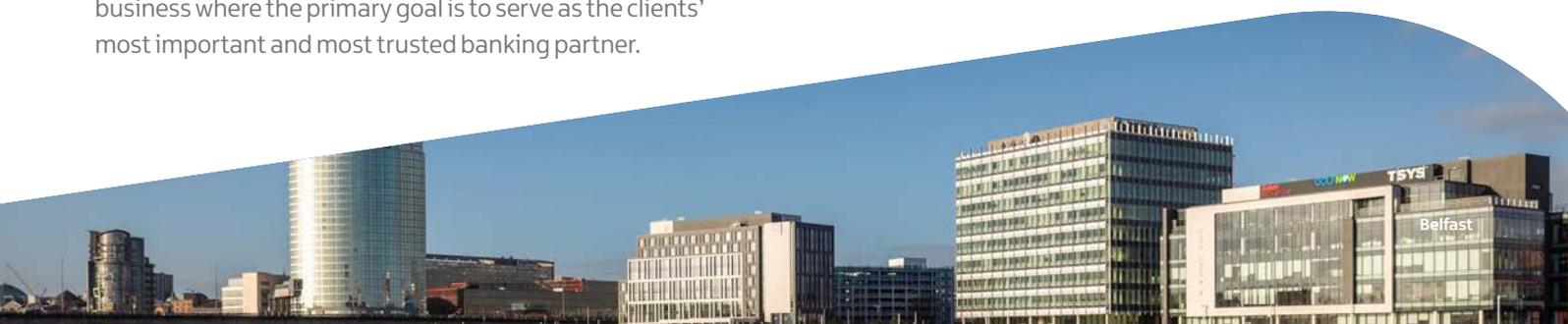
James Richards, Baker McKenzie,  
Executive Director of the Belfast Centre

## Citi

Leading global bank, Citi established a technology centre in Belfast in 2005. It has grown to employ over 3,300 people across its four Belfast locations which provide professional services to over 100 countries across the globe in 21 distinct functions. The legal office in Citi Belfast was established in 2007 initially with client facing roles and pioneered a new legal career for graduates in Northern Ireland. The department now employs over 170 legal professionals, from graduates to director levels made up of separate legal teams focused on supporting a range of Citi's core businesses across the EMEA region. These businesses include Citi's Institutional Clients Group (ICG) (markets and securities services, treasury and trade solutions, corporate and investment banking, capital markets origination, private banking) and the consumer business where the primary goal is to serve as the clients' most important and most trusted banking partner.

The Belfast legal department is fully integrated into the global organisation and is involved in global and regional projects, working with our legal and business colleagues around the globe. It has supported Citi in navigating the financial crisis of 2008 and the collapse of Lehman Brothers, Brexit repapering, 2020's global pandemic and the conflict in Europe. The Citi legal team has developed a strong partnership with Ulster University's Legal Innovation Centre to explore new technologies and skills that will be needed for the future legal roles. Embracing its strong technology credentials the Citi Belfast team is already applying innovative technologies, including AI, automation and NLP to its legal work.

[www.citigroup.com/citi/](http://www.citigroup.com/citi/)



## Factor

Factor is the leader in next-generation solutions for complex legal work at scale. Factor combines expert lawyers, market know-how and experience of traditional law with the process efficiency, smart legal technology and insightful project management of New Law to bridge a huge gap in the market to deliver better and faster outcomes for its clients. Factor's Belfast Centre of Excellence has had a presence in the city for more than a decade, currently employing a team of more than 250 lawyers, legal specialists, technologists, project managers

and process consultants, servicing a range of global clients including the world's leading banks and Fortune/FTSE 100 companies. The Belfast centre (which is Factor's largest global Centre of Excellence) has become a hub for regulatory response, compliance engagements and high-performance commercial contracting, proudly servicing household-name clients across the life sciences, banking, telecom and technology sectors.

[www.factor.law/](http://www.factor.law/)

## FinTrU

Founded in 2013, FinTrU is a multi-award winning technologically-enabled regulatory solutions company working on the global stage with the largest Tier 1 global investment banks. Employing over 1,000 people across offices in Belfast, Derry~Londonderry, London, Dublin, Maastricht and New York, FinTrU works with its clients' legal, risk, compliance, KYC, and operations departments to help them meet their regulatory needs and provides efficient

and optimised solutions which are enabled by technology and its TrUDelivery methodology. Using a blend of local talent, technology and its TrUDelivery methodology, FinTrU's market leading legal services business supports its clients' "BAU" and regulatory remediation documentation needs as the industry continues to undergo enhanced regulatory challenges.

[www.fintru.com/](http://www.fintru.com/)

## Herbert Smith Freehills

Herbert Smith Freehills is one of the world's leading professional services businesses, with 27 offices across 19 jurisdictions. As an international leader in multiple fields, the firm advises some of the world's most influential organisations, undertakes pioneering work on the biggest cases and deals, and develops innovative approaches on international pro bono, citizenship and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Herbert Smith Freehills opened its Belfast office in 2011 – the first UK-based, near-shore operation to be launched by an international law firm. The office now employs over 200 legal analysts, lawyers and technologists and operates as part of the firm's global Alternative Legal Services (ALT) business.

In collaboration with colleagues across ALT's global network, the multi-disciplinary team in Belfast offers a range of legal and technology solutions for data-intensive, defined-process work across a number of practice areas – including disputes, corporate, employment, finance and real estate..

As a fully-integrated part of Herbert Smith Freehills, the Belfast team is able to deliver end-to-end and risk-wrapped services to clients across a variety of industry sectors. It has particular expertise and experience in the banking

and financial services, energy, technology, media and telecommunications (TMT), real estate, wealth and asset management, and consumer sectors.

The Belfast team is the most mature part of the ALT business (which now comprises over 350 people spanning 10 global hubs), and leads the way in developing new and innovative products and services designed to deliver outstanding results for clients.

[www.herbertsmithfreehills.com/where-we-work/belfast-alt](http://www.herbertsmithfreehills.com/where-we-work/belfast-alt)

**“The legal market in Northern Ireland is unrecognisable over 10 years on from the launch of our business in Belfast – we are delighted to have led the way in recognising the city as a centre of excellence for legal services. Our teams in Belfast continue to be at the forefront of our efforts to develop innovative and technology enabled legal services for our clients across our global network.”**

Lisa McLaughlin, Herbert Smith Freehills,  
Partner – UK, US & EMEA, Alternative Legal Services

## Ogletree Deakins

Ogletree Deakins, one of the largest labour, employment and immigration law firms in the US, announced plans in 2021 to establish a 78 person legal support centre in Northern Ireland. The firm has 53 offices located throughout the US, and in Europe, Canada, and Mexico. It represents a diverse range of clients across many industries, including many of the Fortune 50 corporations in the US.

The legal processing centre in Belfast provides administrative and paralegal support to meet the growing demand for the firm's global mobility services. Ogletree Deakins global mobility practice has more than 100 full-time immigration attorneys, 200 paralegals, and more than 100 additional support professionals.

[ogletree.com/](http://ogletree.com/)

**“Northern Ireland’s strong pipeline of quality graduates accessible through Queen’s University Belfast and Ulster University, and strong staff retention rates were key to our decision to locate here. It gives us the confidence that we will have access to outstanding staff members to allow us to continue to expand, scale and be successful long-term.”**

Matthew Keen, Managing Shareholder,  
Ogletree Deakins

## PwC Operate Legal Operations

With offices in 155 countries and more than 327,000 people employed worldwide, PwC is among the leading professional services networks in the world. PwC helps organisations and individuals create the value they are looking for, by delivering quality in assurance, tax and advisory services, including legal. PwC has had a presence in Northern Ireland for over 25 years and PwC Belfast is the fastest-growing UK region and its largest regional office outside London which is now based in a state-of-the-art office in Merchant Square.

PwC Belfast is home to 3,600 employees with over 250 of these belonging to the PwC Operate legal operations team. As the alternative legal service provider sector looks set to

grow exponentially over the next five years, the PwC Operate legal operations team in Belfast is well placed to support clients and colleagues in other legal teams and across the PwC lines of service. The legal operations team offers a wide range of services across the following areas: legal managed services, data, systems and programme support, contract review and remediation, general commercial, entity governance and compliance (EGC) and litigation support directly supporting a wide range of UK and international clients, particularly in the financial services sector.

[www.pwc.co.uk/services/legal.html](http://www.pwc.co.uk/services/legal.html)



# Technology solutions for the legal industry

## Innovation and Collaboration

The Legal Innovation Centre at Ulster University was established in 2016 with the support of key industry stakeholders including Allen & Overy and Baker McKenzie. The centre is a pioneering collaboration between the School of Law and the School of Computing, Engineering and Intelligent Systems at Ulster University. It brings together research into the application and impact of new legal technology, and opportunities for the education and training of current and future lawyers in essential legaltech skills. The centre engages in collaborative applied research and development through partnership with industry stakeholders to capitalise on the benefits of innovative approaches to legal practice.

Herbert Smith Freehills has developed close relationships with Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University. The firm has partnered with Queen's University Law School on a tailored student engagement programme and collaborated with the Ulster University Legal Innovation Centre on a number of initiatives.

The Belfast office employs placement students, offers campus ambassador roles and runs a summer internship programme to enable students to gain valuable work experience and to broaden their understanding of 'New Law' career paths.

Northern Ireland's law firms are forward thinking, keen to embrace the latest technologies and work in collaboration with industry groups and stakeholders.

- Carson McDowell has developed a strategic partnership with the Northern Ireland Cyber Security Cluster (NI Cyber), championing the work of the cluster and sharing expertise in the legal questions facing the cyber security sector.
- Leading Irish law firm A&L Goodbody, who expanded into Northern Ireland in 2007, has developed a partnership with the Northern Ireland Fintech Cluster (Fintech NI) and provides legal advice and guidance to the group.



## Asset Nexus

Belfast based start-up, Asset Nexus is a B2B legal technology software company whose aim is to modernise and digitise legacy and estate administration worldwide.

For the legal firm, Asset Nexus promotes a life-time of digital client engagement and expedites the administration process to maximum efficiency. For the client, Asset Nexus serves as a legacy planning tool, allowing users to self-manage their estate throughout their lifetime.

[www.assetnexus.io/](http://www.assetnexus.io/)

## Qualitest

Qualitest is the world's largest independent managed services provider of quality assurance and AI-powered testing solutions. Qualitest helps companies in their digital transformation journey by leveraging AI, DevOps and Automation to enable faster time-to-market in the new normal. Building on its experience of highly regulated industries and with over 12 years of QA and software testing experience in the legal industry, Qualitest's technologists are experts in the legal domain.

Having expanded into Northern Ireland in 2012, the Qualitest Belfast team works as part of the Qualitest global network to provide advanced technology solutions and remote client support to over 100 of the world's top law firms and corporate legal departments based across the US and Europe. Merging excellence in testing, quality assurance and engineering solutions with deep expertise in the legal industry, Qualitest is providing innovative solutions to mitigate risk, reduce costs, enhance data security and increase quality across legal teams.

[www.qualitestgroup.com/industry/legal/](http://www.qualitestgroup.com/industry/legal/)

## The Robot Exchange

With a research and development hub based in Lisburn, The Robot Exchange has developed its own Robotic Process Application (RPA) software that can achieve ROI within 12 months, drive more efficiency and accuracy as well as introduce AI and machine learning into its client's solutions.

In addition, The Robot Exchange can integrate its solution into portals and legacy applications to the same effect. The Robot Exchange has worked with clients in the legal and financial services markets to replace manual solutions with automations that are easy to deploy and make digital workers part of their clients digital transformations.

[www.therobotexchange.com/](http://www.therobotexchange.com/)

## Repstor

Headquartered in Belfast, Repstor, which is now part of Intapp, specializes in purpose-built cloud solutions that enhance Microsoft Teams, Microsoft SharePoint, and Microsoft Outlook. Repstor solutions help professional and financial services firms get the most out of their Microsoft 365 investments. Law firms and legal teams across the globe rely on Custodian for Legal™, Repstor's Office 365-based document, email and matter lifecycle management system.

Its collaboration and document management capabilities, optimised for legal users, harness the familiar interface of Microsoft Outlook and other popular Office 365 applications including SharePoint and Teams, reflecting the way people instinctively communicate and share content with clients and colleagues.

[www.intapp.com/industries/legal/](http://www.intapp.com/industries/legal/)

## Salt Communications

Salt Communications is a multi-award-winning cyber security company based in Belfast, that builds secure enterprise mobile communications solutions.

With military-grade voice and messaging encryption, Salt Communicationstechnology prevents the monitoring of sensitive communications across public networks. Used by some of the world's largest law firms, SaltLegal provides law firms with the ideal way to communicate securely with clients to handle chosen legal matters.

[www.saltcommunications.com](http://www.saltcommunications.com)

**Belfast based Salt Communications won the Supplier Innovation, Data Management and Security Award at the 2020 Legal Innovation Awards**

**Northern  
Ireland**

[InvestNI.com/legal-services](http://InvestNI.com/legal-services)

December 2022