

# Northern Ireland Legal Services - Altogether more



Belfast



## Altogether more

As global legal services and the business of law continue to evolve to meet changing market demands, Northern Ireland has become a center for new technology enabled delivery models and innovative client solutions. The region offers an exciting range of cost-effective, quality-assured response solutions to global firms, sector disruptors and tech innovators, including:

- Legal and shared services operations, legal process outsourcing and legal technology centers.
- Building & expanding in-house legal capabilities.
- Legal technology solutions developed by a globally renowned IT sector.
- Cutting edge research and specialisms in cyber security, artificial intelligence, analytics and blockchain.

## A Proven Location

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. Their technology-enabled, 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.

Mergers and acquisitions of NI law firms by national brands such as Shoosmiths, Keystone and Fieldfisher have driven the growth of new teams delivering UK-wide client and firm services.

And Northern Ireland's legal cluster continues to grow as major legal technology innovators leverage the region's reputation as a global tech hub and a growing cadre of home-grown, internationally-focused legal tech vendors service top tier firms with a suite of industry-specific solutions.



Citi's center in Belfast provides integrated services to the corporation's Markets and Banking Group in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). The center currently employs over 2,000 staff and undertakes activities in operations, technology, global support functions, legal and compliance.

In 2007, Citi established the first Legal & Compliance center for capital markets in the EMEA region with 40 staff. Legal and Compliance now form two separate divisions with circa 400 staff across both centers 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.

*"We have more lawyers in Belfast than we do in London. We service the global business and the global foreign exchange (operations) are run out of Belfast. It really is a fundamental business location."*

James Bardrick, Country Officer UK, Citi.



HERBERT  
SMITH  
FREEHILLS

Established in April 2011, Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) Belfast employs over 200 qualified lawyers, legal analysts and technologists who work closely with their Herbert Smith Freehills counterparts across the globe. HSF's Belfast operation 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, Director - UK, US & EMEA, Alternative Legal Services

## ALLEN & OVERY

Established in 2011, Allen & Overy's (A&O) NI office currently employs over 500, making it the firm's biggest office after London. The A&O Belfast Support Services Center, delivers a range of business support services (finance, IT, business services, human resources and marketing) to the firm's global network. The firm's global IT hub is based in Belfast and operates on a 24/7 service model and the firm's innovative online risk management tool, aosphere, is developed and delivered by a specialist derivatives compliance team in Belfast.

The Legal Services Center (LSC) in Belfast is an important component of A&O's advanced delivery toolkit, delivering expertise to clients through the right combination of resourcing and technology. Led by an experienced partner, a team of some 100 junior legal professionals supervised by highly experienced qualified associate solicitors, the LSC 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. The LSC works 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, the LSC handles 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. The LSC 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. The LSC also has 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.

*"The quality of work produced by the Belfast office has impressed the wider Allen & Overy network and contributed significantly to our strategy of making the business more flexible and responsive to the needs of our major clients."*

Jane Townsend, Partner, Head of LSC UK, Allen & Overy



Axiom, a recognized leader in the business of law, provides tech-enabled legal, contracts, and compliance solutions for large enterprises. Axiom's solutions combine legal experience, technology, and data analytics to deliver work in a way that dramatically reduces risk, cost and cycle-time. The firm comprises 2,000 lawyers, professionals, process

engineers and technologists who serve over half the Fortune 100. Belfast is home to Axiom's first delivery hub in Europe, supporting some of the world's leading investment banks, telecom companies and publishing houses across 15 regions.

Comprising over 200 legal professionals, project managers and technologists in primary, client-facing teams (with plans to grow to 300), Axiom's Belfast operation serves as an executional hub for delivery of what Axiom calls an industrialized approach to legal and commercial contracting - a model which leverages standardization, automation, technology and tools to drive efficiency. While that industrialized model may be applied to a wide swath of ongoing and project-based work, including enterprise contracting and M&A support, the avalanche of regulatory reforms occurring this year and projected in the years to come has made Axiom Belfast a nascent hub for regulatory response and compliance engagements. The Belfast center has also seen growth in commercial contracting engagements across the life sciences sector, in the banking sector around derivative documentation, and around diligence in M&A.

*"Our journey to Belfast was strategic, not accidental. Axiom's robust hiring and continued plans to do so are a testament to the quality of legal professionals in Northern Ireland."*

Al Giles, Executive Vice President and Head of Commercial, Axiom

## Baker McKenzie.

With over 13,000 people in 47 countries, Baker McKenzie is the world's largest law firm by revenues, geographic reach and headcount. The firm pioneered the use of global service centers to drive efficiency and innovation and lower costs for clients when it opened its first center in Manila.

Belfast is now the firm's second global services center dedicated to providing high quality legal services to the firm's clients around the world, and business and administrative services to its global network of offices and practice groups. Established in October 2014 and now employing almost 250 people, the Baker McKenzie Belfast Global Service Centre facilitates round the clock services across time-zones and reduces the firm's dependency on a single center. Business services functions in Belfast include finance, e-billing, marketing, communications, business development, talent management, IT, procurement, publishing and business acceptance.

Legal services delivered from Belfast include:

- **Large-scale document review:** confidential, cost-effective and responsive services for large-scale document reviews to support litigation investigations, arbitrations and disputes.

- **M&A due diligence:** extensive investigations of companies in support of mergers and acquisitions, confirming the selling party's financials, contracts, customers, and all other pertinent information.
- **Global surveys and research:** tailored advice across legal disciplines and jurisdictions on topics including new product launches to meet client timeframes and budgets. The quality of its work is reflected in the recognition the team has received from publications such as FT Innovative Lawyers, which commended the Belfast multijurisdictional legal research unit for its approach to strategic resourcing.
- **Global Corporate Maintenance Services:** provision of corporate administration and compliance for global corporations with more than 30 businesses in 10 jurisdictions. This includes monitoring and managing clients' legal entities, and completing annual filings.

*"A high-quality, well-educated workforce was one of the most compelling reasons for choosing the city. We are now well established [in Belfast] and our staff to date have made a huge contribution in shaping the firm's global landscape".* Jason Marty, Global COO, Baker McKenzie



Chicago-headquartered iManage provides work product management products for legal, accounting and financial services businesses combining the power of artificial intelligence with market-leading content and email management. iManage automates routine cognitive tasks, provides powerful insights and streamlines how professionals work, while maintaining the highest level of security and governance over critical client and corporate data. The company supports one million professionals at over 3,000 organizations over 65 countries – including more than 2,000 law firms and 500 corporate legal departments.

In 2016, iManage announced the opening of an R&D and support center in Belfast. Initially focused on the expansion and enhancement of iManage Govern, the center has grown to 25 product architects, senior developers, junior developers and support engineers working across a suite of iManage products. The Belfast team led on the end-to-end development for iManage's latest ground-breaking solutions, Threat Manager and Security Policy Manager and is also a center of expertise for the iManage Work product, recently selected by Allen & Overy for the firm's document and email management.

*"Our aim is to foster this leading edge technology team in Northern Ireland and with support and backing from Invest NI and our globally-respected talent pool, we are well on our way."*

Geoff Hornsby, General Manager, EMEA, iManage



## Northern Ireland offers:

### Exceptional Talent

Northern Ireland has a still **largely untapped pool of culturally-compatible, highly-educated legal talent** seeking quality legal roles in the region.

The region boasts two of the top 20 law schools in the UK (The Guardian 2018).

Our legal talent pool includes an annual surplus of some 500 law graduates as well as an **experienced cadre of professionals** who are keen to return and re-locate to the region.

Added to that, a pipeline of almost **3000 talented STEM graduates**, and programs in place to build the next generation of tech-savvy lawyers mean that progressive firms and legal tech entrepreneurs are attracted to the region as a **hub of legal innovation**. 70% of our IT and telecoms professionals hold a higher education qualification – the highest in the UK. Belfast is Europe's top destination city for new software development mobile investment.

**NI government, industry and academia** have a strong track record of **collaboration** in the region, to ensure the region's skills base meets the needs of employers. A range of **bespoke government-backed initiatives under the region's Assured Skills** guarantee further boosts the talent pool.

### Cost Competitiveness

**Operating costs** are **typically 20-30% lower** than in the rest of the UK and Europe.

Typical operating costs for a legal services center in Northern Ireland are around **50% less than London** and around **40% less than New York**.

Software development labour costs in the region represent a reduction of around 30% compared to London and 25% compared to Dublin and staff attrition rates are consistently low.

**Effective R&D costs** in Northern Ireland are **highly competitive**. The combination of attractive incentives mean that for **every £1 invested in R&D could cost a business as little as 50p**.

Northern Ireland has **some of the lowest prime office rental costs in Europe** – typically 75% less than London and 50% less than Dublin.

### Innovative expertise

Both NI universities have **highly specialized ICT related research centers**, deeply influenced and embedded into real world applications with significant industry and cross-cluster engagement.

According to the Research Excellence Framework (REF), over 70% of NI university research activity is world-leading or internationally excellent.

Ground-breaking research from the region in **analytics, artificial intelligence and cyber security** is commercialized world-wide. Queen's University is home to the UK's largest research Centre for Secure IT (CSIT) and both universities are advancing the field of AI with dedicated research groups.

**Collaboration is actively promoted in the region**. The **Ulster University Legal Innovation Centre** - a legal tech research and educational collaboration between the School of Law and the School of Computing- is supported by Allen & Overy and Baker McKenzie.

Activity in **disruptive technologies** is growing. PWC Belfast has the largest group of blockchain specialists in PWC world-wide. Deloitte Belfast is developing 20 blockchain related prototypes.

### Government Support Networks

The region has a low risk, pro-business environment with a local government committed to growing the legal cluster in Northern Ireland through:

- Practical on the ground support from Invest NI to facilitate location assessment and the development and implementation of investment plans.
- Attractive financial incentives to support job creation, training & development and research.
- Bespoke government-backed skills initiatives for investors under the region's Assured Skills guarantee.

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



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