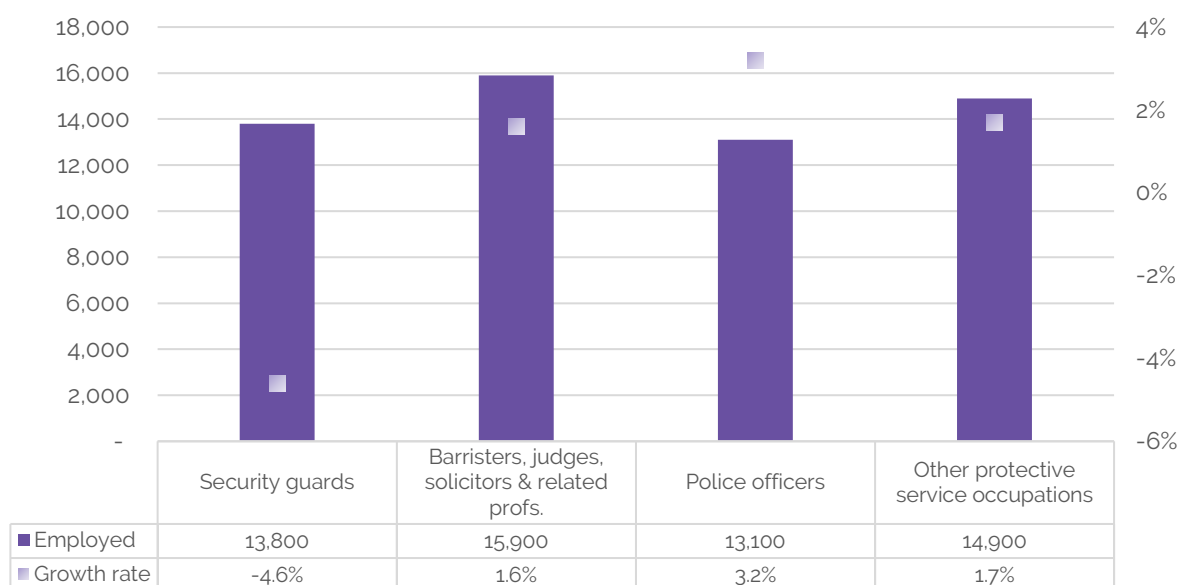


10.7 Legal & Security Occupations

Figure 10.7 Annual Average Employment (2024) & Annual Average Growth Rates (2019-2024)



Overall employment	57,700
Share of total workforce	2.0%
Main sectors of employment	48% - Public administration and defence 24% - Professional activities [13%] - Administrative and support services
Employment growth	700 between 2019 and 2024 +0.2% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce)

2024	% Female Q4	% Full-time Q4	% Aged 55 years & over Q4	% Irish citizens Q4	% Third level graduates Q4	Number of new employment permits	Recruitment Agency Survey
Barristers, judges, solicitors & related profs.	[52%]	91%	...	92%	100%	38	
Police officers	...	100%	...	99%	84%		
Other protective service occupations	...	94%	...	85%	[45%]		
Security guards	...	[82%]	...	74%	...	1	
Overall total	26%	92%	15%	87%	65%	39	

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data, DETE, and SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey (RAS)
Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution; an ellipsis (...) denotes numbers too small to report

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Employment levels in this occupational group saw some fluctuations over the five-year period, with employment since 2023 declining by 5,000 persons, returning to 2019 levels. Almost half of persons employed in these occupations worked in the public administration and defence sector, with males representing three quarters of the workforce. The outlook for employment in these occupations may vary depending on factors such as government funding and levels of public consumption.

Occupation	Economic summary
Barristers, judges, solicitors & related profs.	Employment levels have seen some fluctuation over the five-year period, although there has been little change in the number of persons employed since 2023. Of the approximately 16,000 persons employed in this occupation, there were 3,080 on the Roll of Practising Barristers (as of June 2025) ¹ and 12,175 solicitors held practising certificates at the end of 2024 (an increase of 304 on 2023). ² In addition, there are approximately 200 judges in Ireland with plans in place to increase the number of judges in the coming years. ³ Most in this occupation (83%) were employed in the professional activities sector, with women accounting for a slightly higher share than men. A small number of employment permits were issued for legal counsel, foreign registered lawyers and trainee solicitors.
Police officers (e.g. Gardai)	Employment levels declined by 2,600 since 2023 for this occupation but this is not reflected in the Department of Justice workforce data ⁴ which saw marginal increases in the number of gardai (excluding civilian garda staff and reserves) over this time. A recruitment campaign will be launched in Autumn 2025 to work towards the government target of 5,000 new recruits over the next 5 years with changes to age limits of new recruits and increases in the Garda trainee allowance and the retirement age to address issues with attracting and retaining Gardai. ⁵
Other protective service occupations (e.g. army personnel, fire/prison service officers)	Having declined annually since 2021, employment levels increased by 2,300 between 2023 and 2024 for this occupation. DSP Jobseeker data from December 2024 indicates the presence of a number of job seekers who had previously been employed as protective services officers. The data does not point to any issues in sourcing staff for these roles.
Security guards	Employment numbers fell sharply in this occupation when compared to 2023, with 4,300 fewer persons employed, having been reasonably steady in the years preceding this. There was a high volume of jobseekers in the DSP Jobseeker data from December 2024 who were previously employed in security and related occupations. DSP Jobs Ireland vacancy posts were mainly for airport search unit officers, and security guards/officers for bars, retail and events. Future demand for these roles will likely be particularly dependent on consumer spending in areas including retail and hospitality.

¹ Roll of Practising Barristers – Legal Services Regulatory Authority

² LSRA-Pathways-S33-Annual-Report-2024-FINAL.pdf

³ Minister McEntee secures government approval for 20 additional Judges

⁴<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/66833-garda-workforce/>

⁵Justice Committee Opening Statement