

# Survey of the Planning Profession in Ireland, 2023

July 2023



**IRISH PLANNING  
INSTITUTE**  
Institiúid Pleanála Na hÉireann

Proudly coordinated by:



**Future Analytics**

# IPI President's Foreword

I am delighted to welcome you to the Irish Planning Institute's "Survey of the Planning Profession in Ireland, 2023", a report documenting the findings of our recent surveys among our Membership and the wider professional planning community on an all-island basis. In addition to the research findings, the report is also further supplemented with a series of interviews, topical insights and panel discussions recorded specifically for this project.

Our ambition for this project, delivered with the voluntary support of the Future Analytics planning and development team within KPMG Ireland, was to contribute to the debate concerning the resourcing of our profession, recognising that an efficient and effective planning process is reliant on a well-resourced and informed profession.

I am confident that this report will give you a perspective on the planning profession, the scope of work that we undertake and the opportunities available to our members.

Most people become interested in planning because they are concerned about the environment, the place they live in and want to influence the future physical world for the better of society. Climate change and the environmental risk associated with this is the most important issue facing our society and we need to reduce our carbon footprint, to plan our towns and cities better, to adapt to rising sea levels, and make choices that enable us to

use public transport, cycle and walk as we go about our business. We want a green environment that will support clean water, clean air and biodiversity. This will create a healthier environment where people can live longer, with better quality of life. It's better for our planet, too.

As a planner, you can leave a lasting impression on the built environment, ensuring that it is not only functional, but beautiful and resilient and which supports social space and social equity.

One of the many things that I love about planning, is that you are always learning. When you join the Irish Planning Institute, you have access to a wide range of Continuing Professional Development. We provide a structured learning programme, to make sure our members stay up to speed on planning matters.

If you have questions on legislation or legal cases, we run regular law seminars, led by barristers and solicitors. We support the sharing of information amongst members and have a series of networks where people can socialise and learn in an informal situation. The Young Planners Network specifically focuses on the learning needs of professionals new to the work.

We contribute to government policy on planning, articulating professional planning opinion and ensure that the voice of the professional planner is heard and can influence the outcome of policy.

The Irish Planning Institute is connected internationally, with the European Council of Town Planners, the Global Planners Network as well as with individual countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, where we recognise each other's qualifications, allowing the free movement of planners between these countries. Join the Irish Planning Institute and you can see a lot of the world. We have also run projects in developing countries, to contribute to building capacity.





As a planner you work as a team, with many other people with different skillsets feeding in. Our job is to weigh up proposals and make decisions on development that considers the environmental impact, social cohesion and economic ramifications, in the interest of the common good. It is an exciting, ever-changing job and the Irish Planning Institute will give you the professional tools to navigate your place in it.

As always, the Irish Planning Institute is keen to hear from the professional planning community, and to support you with your professional requirements.

## Watch and Listen



**Mary MacMahon**

President, Irish Planning Institute

# WATCH & LISTEN



I am delighted to have had the opportunity to support the Irish Planning Institute in the delivery of this project. Having co-authored the Institute's 2014/2015 survey during a term on Council, I was keen to explore how sentiment presently sits across our profession.

We have witnessed (and continue to witness) profound change in the planning system. With a heightened, and necessary, focus on the environment, on the quality of development-delivery and on decision making processes, it is important that we collectively consider the future of our profession. The surveys are intended to provide the Irish Planning Institute with a snapshot of feedback and experiences from across the professional planning community on an all-island basis. They will help to guide and inform strategic direction, CPD priorities and continue to enable the Institute to be a proactive voice for professional planners.

It is incumbent on all professional planners to continue to work to the highest standards, recognising the significant impact that plans, projects, initiatives and interventions can have on society, the environment and on economic development.

I'd like to extend a massive thanks to all those that took the time to respond to the surveys for this project, and to those that kindly gave their time to participate in the recorded interviews, to-camera insights pieces and the panel discussions. A special shout out to **Lorna McMullan**, **Andrew Crowley** and our KPMG Marketing colleagues for their support and logistics for this overall process!

The project would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of **Emma Flanagan** (Council Member, Irish Planning Institute) and **Dr. Sean O'Leary** (Senior Planner, Irish Planning Institute), and the other members of Council, including IPI President **Mary MacMahon** - thanks so much for your collaboration.

A lot of efforts go into voluntary projects of this nature, and a number of colleagues across the Future Analytics team here in KPMG Ireland have given their time and effort. Specific acknowledgement is certainly due in recognition of the contribution by **Anjali Swaminathan** (Planning Consultant) and **Dean McLoughlin** (Creative Lead). We also benefitted greatly from key supporting contributions from **Maria Rochford** (Associate Director, Planning) and **Dr. Blain Murphy** (Research Manager), and numerous colleagues that kindly conducted the video interviews.

Thank you, all!

**Stephen M. Purcell**

Director and Co-Head, KPMG Future Analytics







There's a way to do it better... find it

- Thomas A. Edison

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# Introduction





# action

The Irish Planning Institute (IPI) is the all-island professional body representing planners engaged in physical and environmental planning in Ireland. Since it was formed in 1975, it has undertaken regular audits of the planning profession, providing timely insights, reflections and seeking to identify recommendations, interventions and initiatives to address challenges and harness opportunities for the betterment of the profession, and thus for society.



**‘Quality and Equality’, published in 1996**, provided a snapshot of the then planning system and the number of public planners in the country. The publication introduced the concept of differently resourced tiers of planning authorities: an “upper”, “intermediate” and “lower” tier. It proved to be an important publication to highlight, as the name suggests, the need for equality in the planning system between different geographical areas.



The IPI’s **Survey of the Planning Profession 2014/2015** was greatly influenced by a backdrop of a major economic downturn and the loss of a huge proportion of professional planners being forced to emigrate or pursue alternative careers. Much like this 2023 publication, it was also released during a period of significant evolution in the planning policy landscape. A new Planning Policy Statement, the Local Government Reform Act, 2014 and the Government’s ‘Putting People First Action Programme for Effective Local Government’ were all introduced, while in Northern Ireland 2015 marked a historic date for planning wherein the Department of the Environment transferred planning powers to 11 new councils including responsibility for local development plans, majority of planning decisions, and shaping the growth and development of communities they serve.







Another 'landmark publication' was published a decade later with the delivery of the 'Census of the **Planning Profession in Ireland**' in 2007. This captured all that had been achieved in the period between 1996–2006, including clear improvements within planning authorities where most had achieved a proper planning staff structure to enable parity within the practice of planning around the State. That said, challenges remained in terms of the insufficiency in the resourcing of forward planning and enforcement sections. With a major expansion of the private sector also evident, the role and 'voice' that professional bodies such as the IPI served continued to grow in importance.





Fast forward to 2023 - including the unprecedented experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic - the planning profession has undergone and continues to undergo near profound evolution in the intervening period, with **legislative, regulatory, societal, environmental** and **economic** (among other) themes converging and placing a further burden of responsibility on the role and importance of professional planners throughout Ireland.

The IPI has been mindful of the pressing need to proactively engage in exploring apparent resourcing challenges within the planning profession and its capacity to confront the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the profession, recognising the critical role that the profession plays across the public, semi-state, private and education sectors.





Whether addressing the **housing crisis**, **climate adaptation** and **ESG**, marine spatial planning and renewable energy, public transport, community participation, town and village renewal or a near-endless list of other priority areas, it is crucial that the experiences, reflections and insights among the profession are gathered, analysed and used to contribute to problem-solving and solution-building within the profession - and to ensure we administer a planning system that is fit for purpose for our shared future.

**“...it is crucial that the experiences, reflections and insights among the profession are gathered, analysed and used to contribute to problem-solving and solution-building within the profession...”**



# The Irish Planning Institute



**“We represent the voice of professional planners in both high-level planning reform discussions as well as on the day-to-day developments which impact the profession.”**



**Representing over 1,000 planners on the island of Ireland across the public and private sectors**, members of the Irish Planning Institute (IPI) work in Local Authorities, An Bord Pleanála, Central Government, Regional Assemblies, academia, in private practice as consultants, for developers and for semi-state and other organisations.

Our members have first-hand knowledge, across a range of backgrounds and sectors, of the planning process and current legislation North and South and know its faults as well as its successes. We represent the voice of professional planners in both high-level planning reform discussions as well as on the day-to-day developments which impact the profession.

If the planning system is to work effectively and efficiently in the interests of all of our citizens, it has to be properly resourced, which it manifestly is not at present and this survey will assist us to both advocate for more resources and necessary change, as well as informing how we support the profession in the coming year and build the capacity of members in light of the challenges and opportunities they identify.





# Purpose of the Survey of the Planning Profession in Ireland, 2023



Image: Cairn Homes. Marianella Park in Rathgar



The key purpose of this report is to document the findings of the IPI Survey of the Planning Profession in Ireland, undertaken in the first half of 2023. The Project involved the distribution of surveys which were designed to examine the current context of planning in Ireland, as perceived by those directly employed in the profession. The surveys are intended to highlight challenges most pertinent to the sector and to identify opportunities for the promotion of planning and for continuous improvement of the profession and the delivery of its key functions. The surveys sought to further inform the role of the IPI in advancing planning in the interest of common good, by serving, improving, and promoting the planning profession. Identifying the key areas for improvement is essential for a well-functioning planning system.



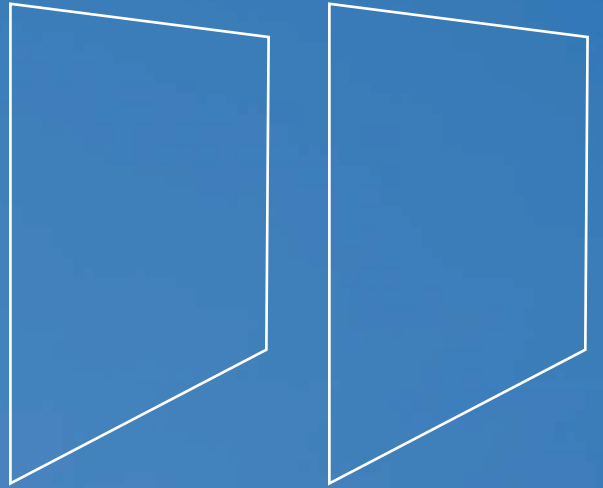
The surveys are intended to highlight challenges pertinent to the sector and to identify opportunities for promotion of planning and for continuous improvement of the profession and the delivery of its key



# Purposes



allenges most  
opportunities for the  
s improvement of  
functions.



See



In excess of 400 professionals and organisations (public, local authorities, private, semi-state agencies) responded to the three surveys published for this project, the scope of which is outlined below.

While the vast majority of the respondents are professional planners, there are also some that held additional qualification(s) or are involved in work corresponding to planning.

Nearly 75% of the respondents are members of the IPI, and so the overall response pool represents roughly a quarter of the IPI's membership. While no formal census of planning professionals across the island of Ireland exists, estimates by the IPI and others (informed by successive audits and research into the profession) place the total number of professional planners on an all-island basis at in excess of 2,000 persons.



Image: Cairn Homes, Mariavilla, Maynooth

# The Surveys

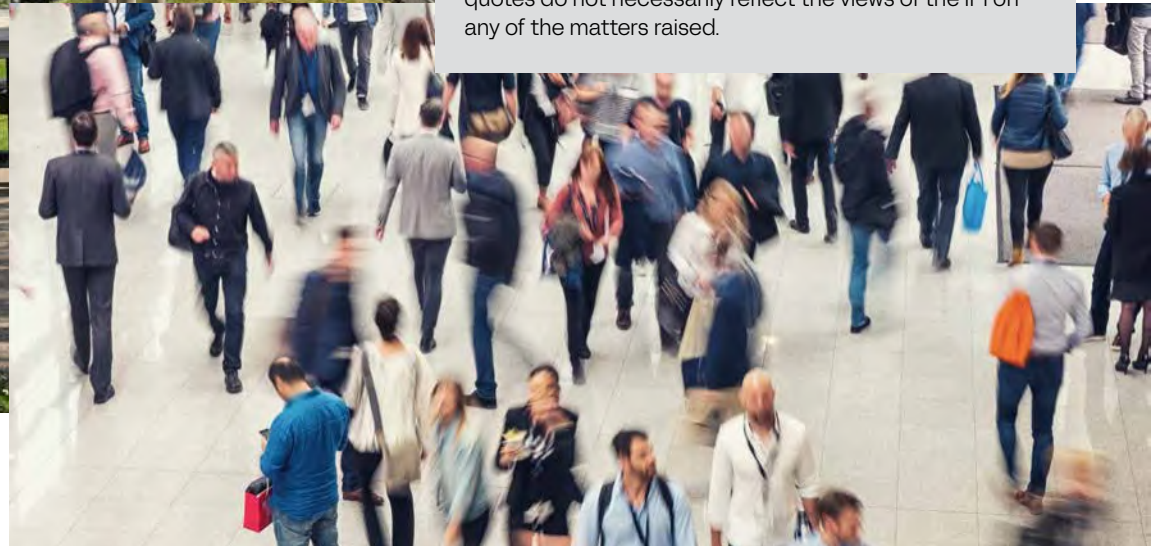
As part of this Project, three surveys were developed by the IPI and implemented concurrently – namely a cross industry survey, a local government and public sector survey, and a private sector and semi-state survey. Each survey was communicated widely through social media, IPI mailing lists and related fora (including at the IPI's National Conference in April 2023 in Clonmel, Tipperary). Efforts were made by IPI members coordinating the project to encourage participation by contacting organisation representatives by telephone and email while the surveys were live.





It is noted that this survey covered a number of qualitative questions which received a wide range of responses on specific planning matters that respondents felt strongly related to the progress and future of the profession. Where appropriate, direct quotes from some of the responses have been used throughout this report.

However, it is only appropriate to acknowledge that these quotes do not necessarily reflect the views of the IPI on any of the matters raised.



## Survey 1

Survey 1 was developed to seek the opinions and to explore the planning sector on an individual basis, with respondents answering on their own behalf and provide a response from their own point of view. This was a cross-industry economy survey, which incorporated planners from the early stage of their career to the most senior planners in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.



## Survey 2&3

Survey 2 and 3 were designed to gain insight at a more organisational level, exploring the demographics and workforce of the Public and the Private sector/Semi-state bodies. For the purpose of this survey – ‘Public Organisations’ would include: local authorities, state bodies and Universities; those in the ‘Private Sector’ would include all consultancies and non-consultancies, both private practices and partnerships as well as limited companies; and the ‘Semi-State Agencies’ would include state owned enterprises, that are commercially run but are beneficially owned by the Government. The organisational surveys were conducted to provide a wider insight from the main employers and organisations involved in planning on the island.



# Key Insights from the Surveys



Approximately 60% of the Professional Planners that responded to the survey are under 45 years of age and about 31% are women under 45 years.



**Only 18% of the Respondents have a 'planning only' qualification** with nearly 82% having an additional and wide-ranging background in corresponding areas to planning - bringing diversity to the profession.



Resourcing in Planning is one of the key challenges recurring throughout the survey.



Both Public Organisations/ Local Authorities as well as Private/Semi-State Organisations are facing significant challenges in retaining staff and in recruiting new staff.





There is currently a general lack of entry level planners in public authorities and hence, a need for suitable measures to ensure barriers preventing entry are reduced and subsequently removed.



Almost 50% of the Public Organisations and Local Authorities that responded to the survey indicated that they have a shortfall of staff, with vacancies pending and to be filled.



In excess of 60% of the respondents in both Private and Public Organisations confirmed that they are currently facing some challenges in recruitment and retention.



As a result, 'Workload Management' has been raised as one of the top issues for Planners across sectors.



Respondents also raised the need for IPI to enhance supports for Mental Health and Wellbeing initiatives for its membership base.



Work-Life Balance was one of the key aspects that respondents picked as their 'top priority', when asked to pick what would determine their longevity in the profession/current role.

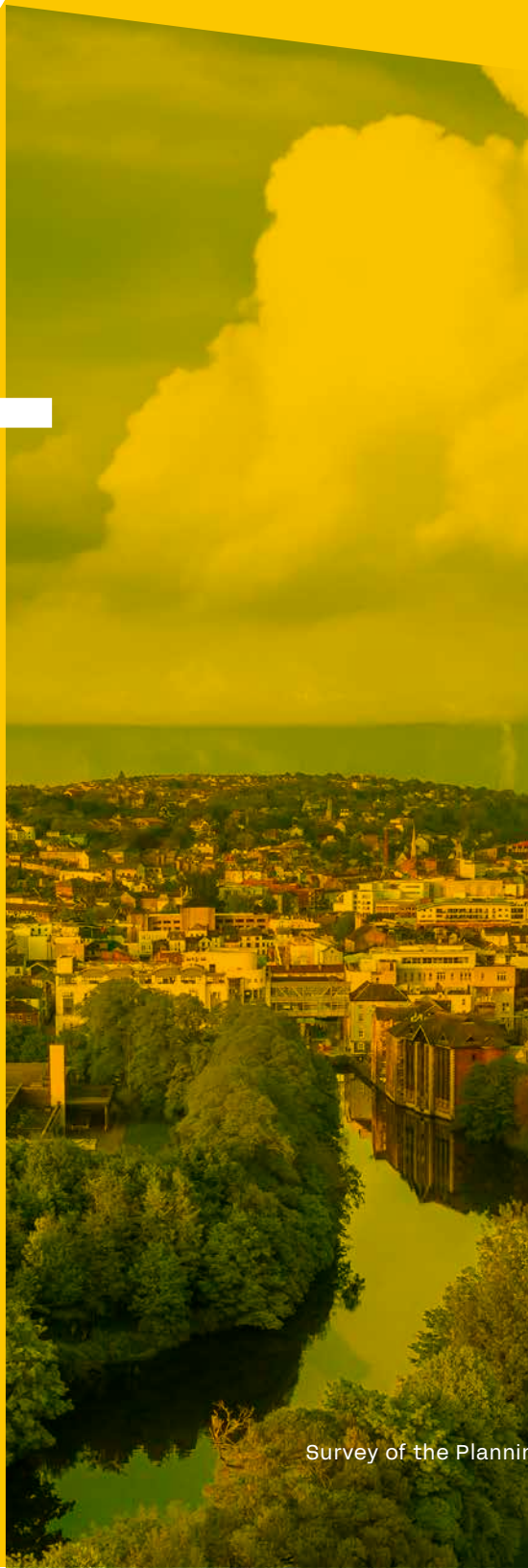


**Requirement for appropriate measures to equip and encourage planners – especially incoming early career planners**, but also the existing, and future professionals, is instrumental to reducing the increasing resource gap as well as support members in pursuing planning and progress in the profession.



**Clear desire expressed by Respondents for the IPI to assume a prominent role in defending the profession** by helping build understanding, appreciation of the profession, and promote the skill sets and expertise of planners.

# 2







# Profile of the Profession

This section focuses on the overall profile of planning professionals in the Irish context, highlighting key insights on their age profile, educational qualifications, levels of experience, together with information concerning additional expertise and complementary qualifications. Where appropriate, a comparison of the survey results with the findings from the IPI's 'Survey of the Planning Profession 2014/2015', is presented.

# Demographics

## Planning Professionals in different Age Group

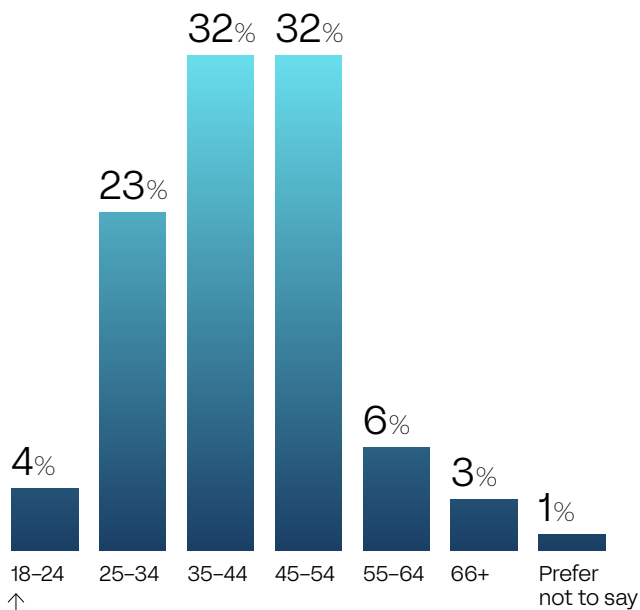


Figure 2.1 Age group of Planning Professionals that responded to the survey

The surveys conducted between March and May 2023 found that around 60% of the planning professionals that responded were under the age of 45 years. 31% of these are women under the age of 45 years. Figure 2.1 provides the breakdown of the general age range of the planning professionals that responded to the surveys.

## Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents

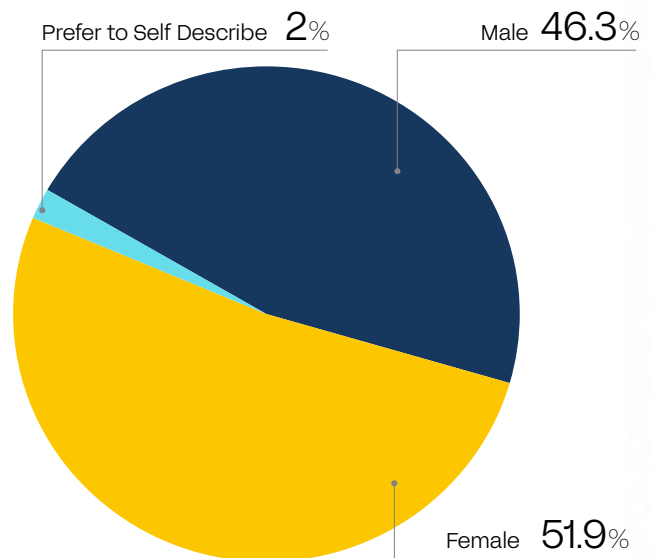


Figure 2.2 Gender Distribution of the Total Respondents to the Survey

Nearly 52% of the respondents were female and 46% male, with 2% of the respondents choosing to self-describe their identity.





# WATCH & LISTEN

Interview with Niall Cussen, Chief Executive  
and Planning Regulator at the Office of the  
Planning Regulator (OPR)

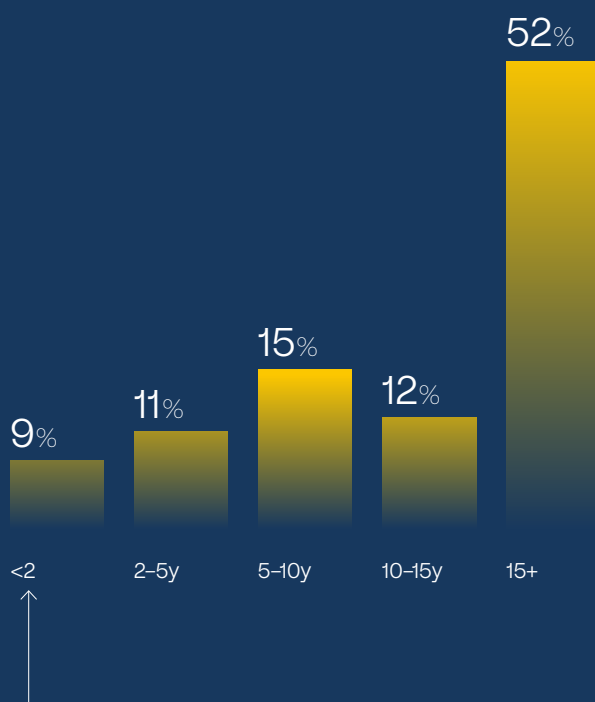


**Niall Cussen**

Chief Executive and Planning Regulator,  
Office of the Planning Regulator

# Experience of Professionals

## Planning Professionals - Years of Experience



## Experience of Planning Professional - Private / Semi State Agencies

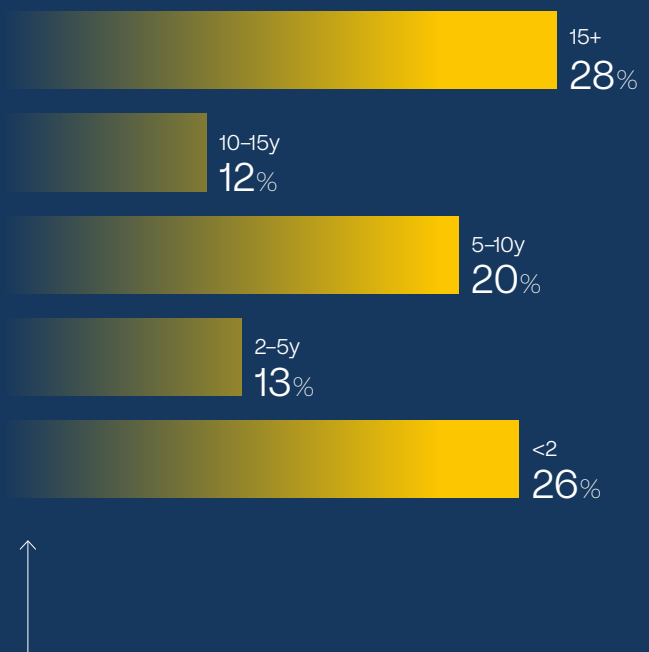


Figure 2.3 Years of Experience in the Planning field of those that responded to the survey

Most Planners that responded to the survey have more than **15 years of professional experience**, as reflected in Figure 2.3. However, the Private/Semi-State Organisations that responded to the survey seem to have an almost equal proportion of planners with less than 2 years of experience as they have planners with 15+ years of experience. This could be an indication that there is growing population of younger planners and may demonstrate that the public sector is harder to gain entry to for graduate planners. There are fewer graduate planner opportunities in the public sector.

The 2014 survey noted that some 69% of Planning staff had in excess of 7 years of professional experience and around 31% of the respondents had 6 or 'less than 6' years of experience. Of those with more than 7 years of experience, 48% recorded having 11+ years of experience.

While the surveys do not determine conclusively or offer evidence of a succession challenge or risk of loss to institutional knowledge – for example through retirement of older members of the planning workforce



# 28%



**Private/Semi-State Organisations have a similar portion of Planners with 15+ years of experience at 28%...**

# 26%

**...and those with less than 2 years at 26%**

– the high proportion of respondents with extensive experience (15+ years) may suggest that the profession should have regard to succession planning considerations across organisations/departments. This extends to more than simply replacement of personnel through promotion or recruitment, but a process of identifying and nurturing high potential individuals as they progress in their careers over a longer period of time. Any such system or approach is most effective when it is structured internally to be most compatible with organisational culture, structure, and operations. Similar to effective succession planning, organisations/departments may be minded safeguarding against institutional knowledge being lost through retirement or the departure of long-serving personnel, by implementing clear and comprehensive knowledge management and documented procedures for all personnel to consistently engage with.



# Educational Background

More than 40% of the respondents to the surveys obtained their professionally accredited planning degrees from University College Dublin (UCD). Of course, there are also respondents that obtained their professional degree from other IPI accredited planning schools including University College Cork (UCC) and Technology University Dublin (TUD); and Queens University Belfast (QUB). The breakdown of the proportion of planning professionals by Awarding/Qualifying body for planning qualifications is shown in Figure 2.4.

## WATCH & LISTEN

Dr. Paula Russell shares insights on Planning Education



**Dr. Paula Russell**

Lecturer/Assistant Professor, School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy, University College Dublin

### Awarding Body for Planning Qualification - ROI, NI and UK

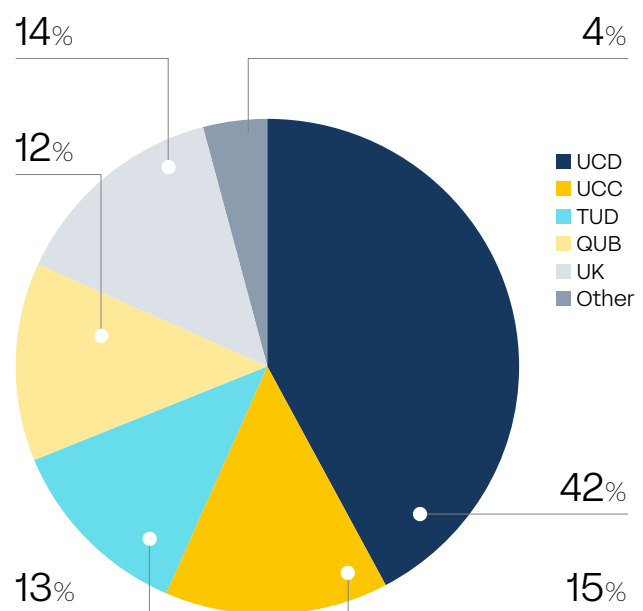


Figure 2.4 Awarding Body where Planning Professionals (Survey Respondents) obtained their Planning Degree

Among those who responded to the survey, there were also a small number of planners that pursued their professionally accredited degree in the UK. These included a range of universities, the most popular being 'University of West England', comprising 13% of the respondents that went to a university in the UK, while others were 'Heriot Watt University' (11%) and 'University of Liverpool' (9%).



## Awarding Body for Planning Qualification - UK

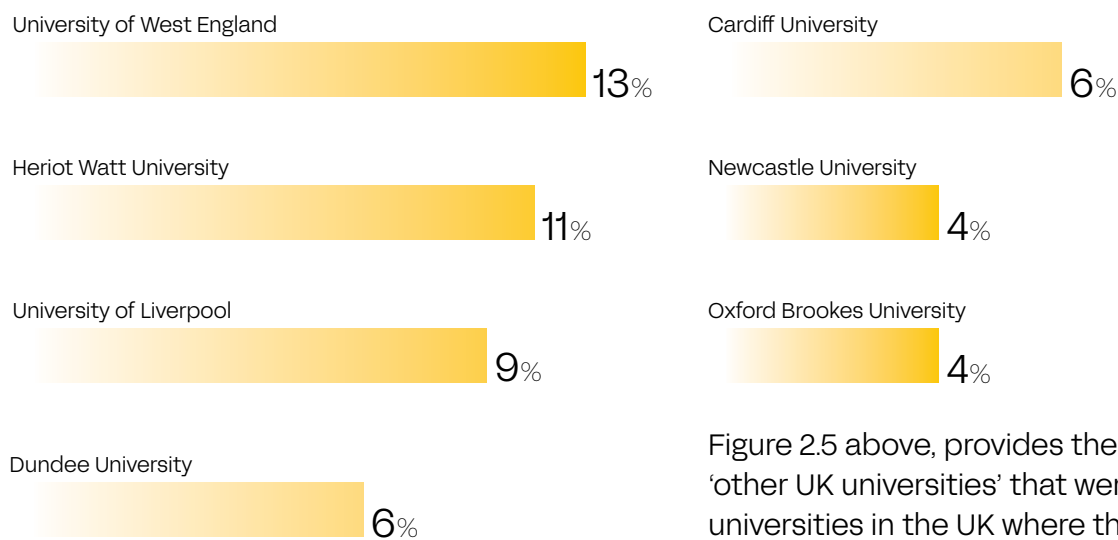


Figure 2.5 Universities within the UK where Planning Professionals (Survey Respondents) obtained their Planning Degree

Figure 2.5 above, provides the proportion of 'other UK universities' that were among the universities in the UK where the respondents obtained their planning degrees.

Just 3% of the respondents have also obtained their planning degrees from outside of the UK and Ireland, including USA, Canada, Cape Town, Slovakia, Romania, and Germany.





## Additional Qualification

In addition to Planning, the survey respondents were asked to provide details of any additional qualifications that they hold, and the **responses received noted a wide-ranging mix of additional professional qualification**, which is further detailed in Figure 2.5.

Although the level of qualification/expertise was not captured in the surveys, it was observed that of the different areas of expertise, knowledge in the field of **Ecology/Environment** appears to be the most common (14%), outside of the core planning qualification.

There are also a high number of Planners with **complementary qualifications in GIS, Project Management, Law, and Urban Design**.

Only 18% of the professionals that responded to the survey have a 'Planning only' qualification reinforcing the diverse nature of the profession.



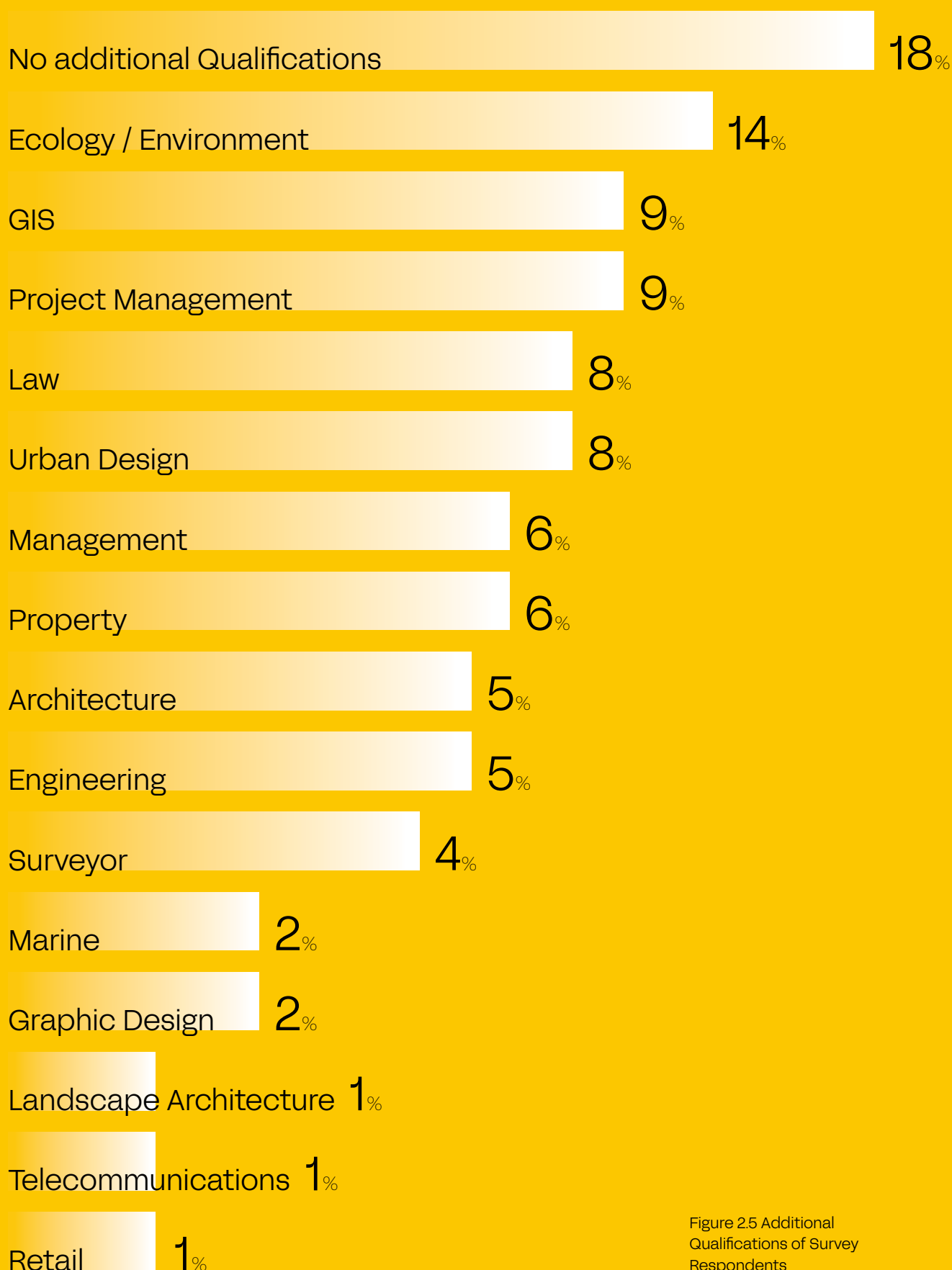


Figure 2.5 Additional  
Qualifications of Survey  
Respondents

Revisiting the IPI's 'Survey of the Planning Profession in Ireland 2014/2015', that research found that over **45% of the qualified planning professionals** held an additional qualification, with the top five being: **Transport/GIS, Environment/Ecology, Property/Real Estate, Architecture and Urban Design.**

As per the results of both the 2014/2015 and this latest 2023 survey, **GIS, Environment/Ecology and Urban Design** seem to be gaining a continuous interest across this period, suggesting the growing importance of these specific fields of knowledge and their subsequent application in contemporary planning pursuits.

In addition, it is observed that a number of Private and Semi-State Organisations provide or possess professional expertise in the areas of **Construction (14%), GIS (14%), Ecological/ Environmental services (14%), Engineering (11%) and Urban Design (11%)**. Some organisations also provide services that focus on Energy, Architecture, Law, and Marine-related areas.





## Additional Expertise Provided by Private/Semi-State Organisations



- 1. Marine
- 2. Other
- 3. Property
- 4. Legal Services
- 5. Architecture
- 6. Energy
- 7. Urban Design
- 8. Engineering
- 9. Environment/Ecology
- 10. Construction
- 11. GIS

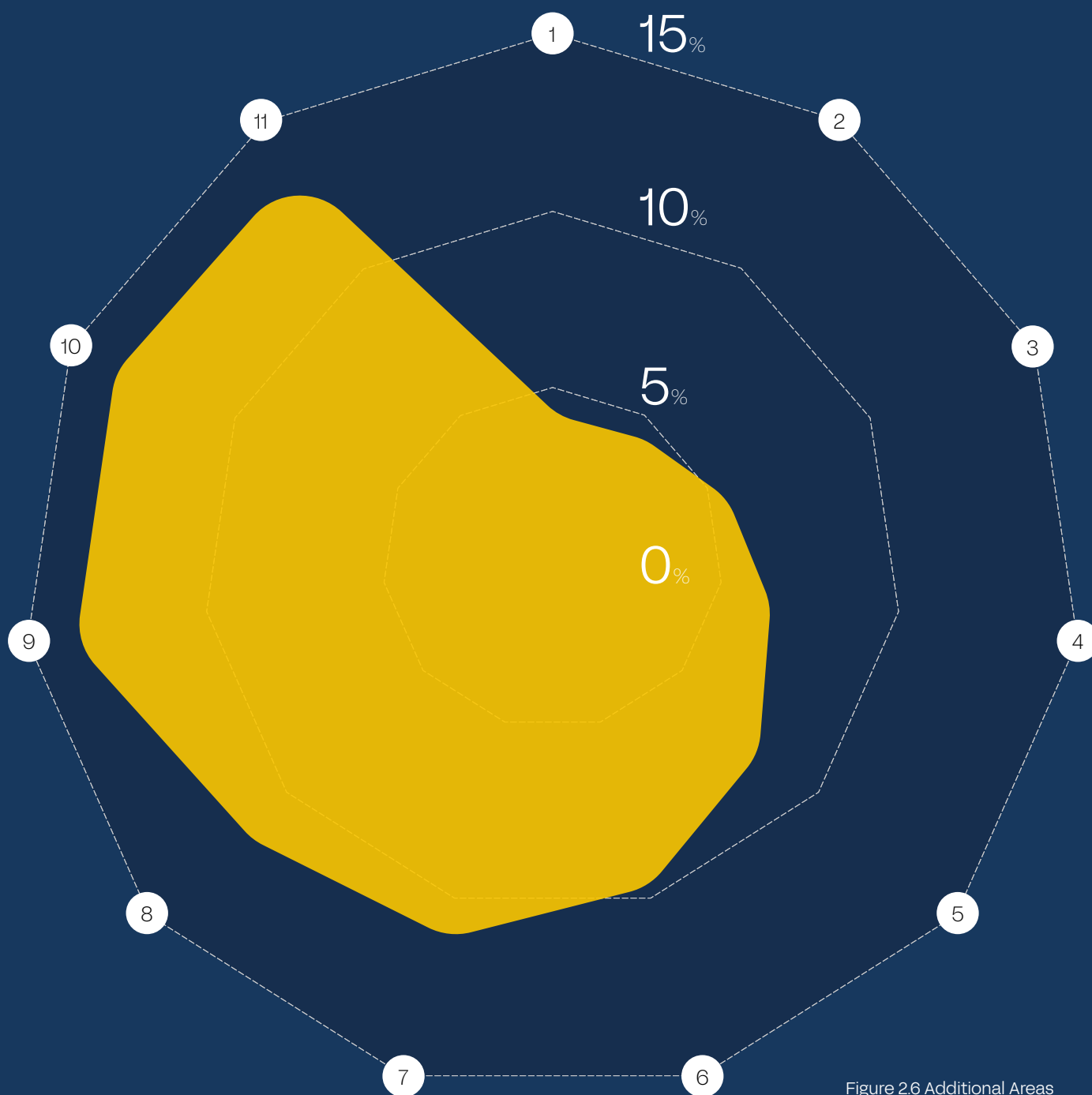


Figure 2.6 Additional Areas of Expertise provided by the different Private/Semi-State Organisations

Additional Areas of  
Expertise provided by  
different Consultancies

**11%**

Urban Design

**10%**

Management  
/ Advisory

**11%**

Environment  
/ Ecology

The findings of the 2014/15 survey results differed slightly to that of the 2023 results. The 2014/15 survey captured around 16% of the consultancies in the private sector providing additional expertise in Retail, around 12% in Project Management, 11% in Environment/Ecology and Urban Design and about 10% in Management Advisory. Urban design, however, still seems to be commanding a similar proportion during both survey periods.





13%

Project Management

16%

Retail

# Services Provided as 'Core Functions' in Consultancies

1. Architecture

3. Renewable Energy

5. Property

7. Project Management
2. Environmental / Ecology

4. Engineering

6. Legal

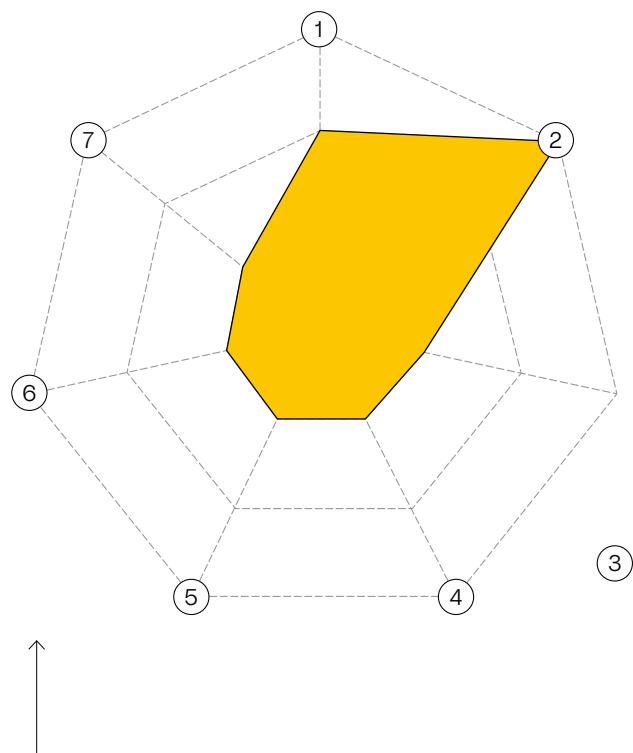


Figure 2.7 Services Provided as 'Core Functions' in Consultancies that were surveyed in 2014-2015

The 2014/2015 survey also captured a number of consultancies (c. 14% of the respondents) that did not provide 'Planning' as their 'core function', many of which included Environment/ Ecology (30%) and Architecture (20%) and Engineering, Renewable Energy, Project Management, Property/Real Estate and Legal services. Figure 2.7 provides the complete breakdown of the proportion of these functions.





**“...GIS, Environment/Ecology and Urban Design seem to be gaining a continuous interest across this period, suggesting the growing importance of these specific fields of knowledge and their subsequent application in contemporary planning pursuits.”**



# IPI Membership

The Irish Planning Institute offers a number of different Membership categories to suit different stages in the career of a Planner. The types range from Student membership to Corporate (Full) and Fellow Membership. Nearly 75% of the respondents are members of the IPI. When asked if they hold a membership with the IPI, close to 55% of the respondents said that they are Corporate Members of the Institute and about 13% are Graduate members. Around 26% of the respondents are non-members and around 5% of the respondents are Affiliate, Retired, Fellow or Honorary members of the IPI. The student members form a minor 1% of the total respondents of the survey.

## Planning Professionals holding an IPI Membership

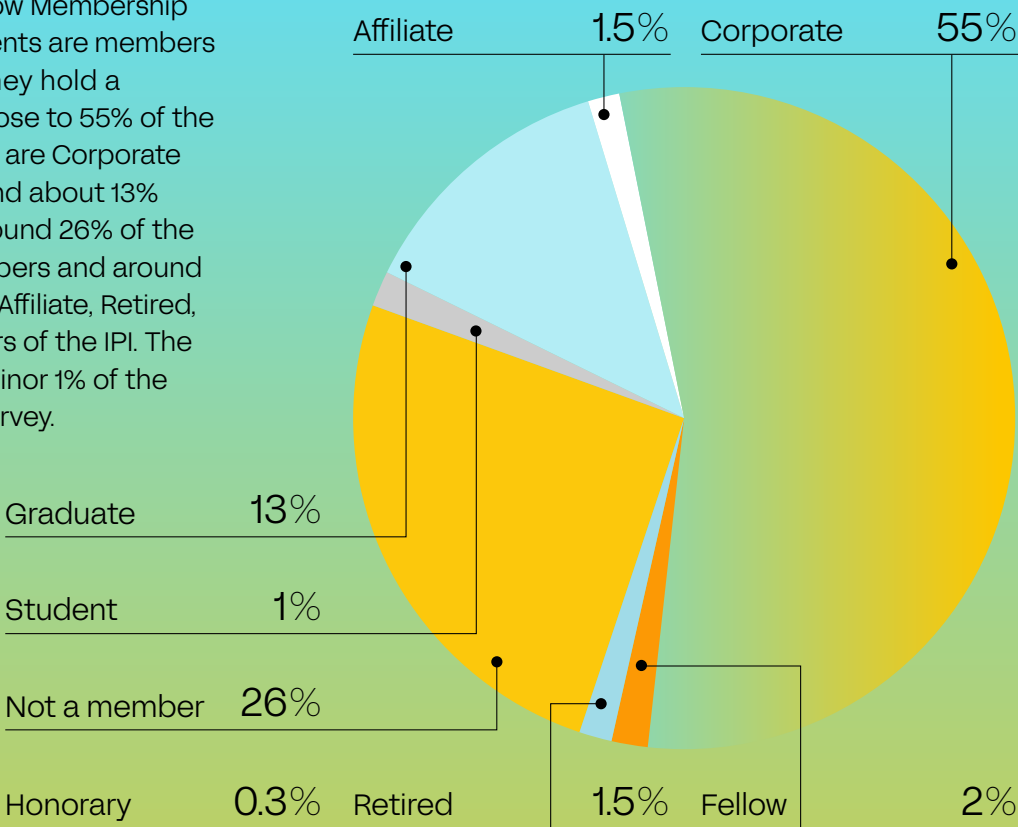


Figure 2.8 Type of IPI Membership held by Planning Professionals

55%

When asked if they hold a membership with the IPI, close to 55% of the respondents said that they are Corporate Members of the IPI...

13%

...and about 13% are Graduate members





Image: The Land Development Agency. St. Teresa's Gardens Dublin 8

26%<sup>⊗</sup>

Around 26% of the respondents are non-members...

5%<sup>⊙⊙⊙</sup>

...and 5% of the respondents are Affiliate, Retired, Fellow or Honorary members of the IPI

# Current Context

This section focuses on the current context of the Planning Profession, highlighting specific organisational attributes and challenges facing aspects of the planning professionals/organisations. Where appropriate, a comparison of the survey results to the previous survey on 'The Survey of Professional Planners in Ireland' carried out in 2014, has been presented.





# Year of Establishment

A majority (36%) of the Private/Semi-State Organisations surveyed were established in the pre-2000 period, with a notable increase in the 2011–2014 period possibly attributable to the changes taking place in the profession at that time because of the recession and early recovery period. Around 70% of the organisations that responded to this survey comprised of Consultancies, while 12% consisted of Semi-State Organisations and a further 12% were ‘Private Companies (non-consultancies)’.

Year of Establishment of Private/Semi-State Organisations

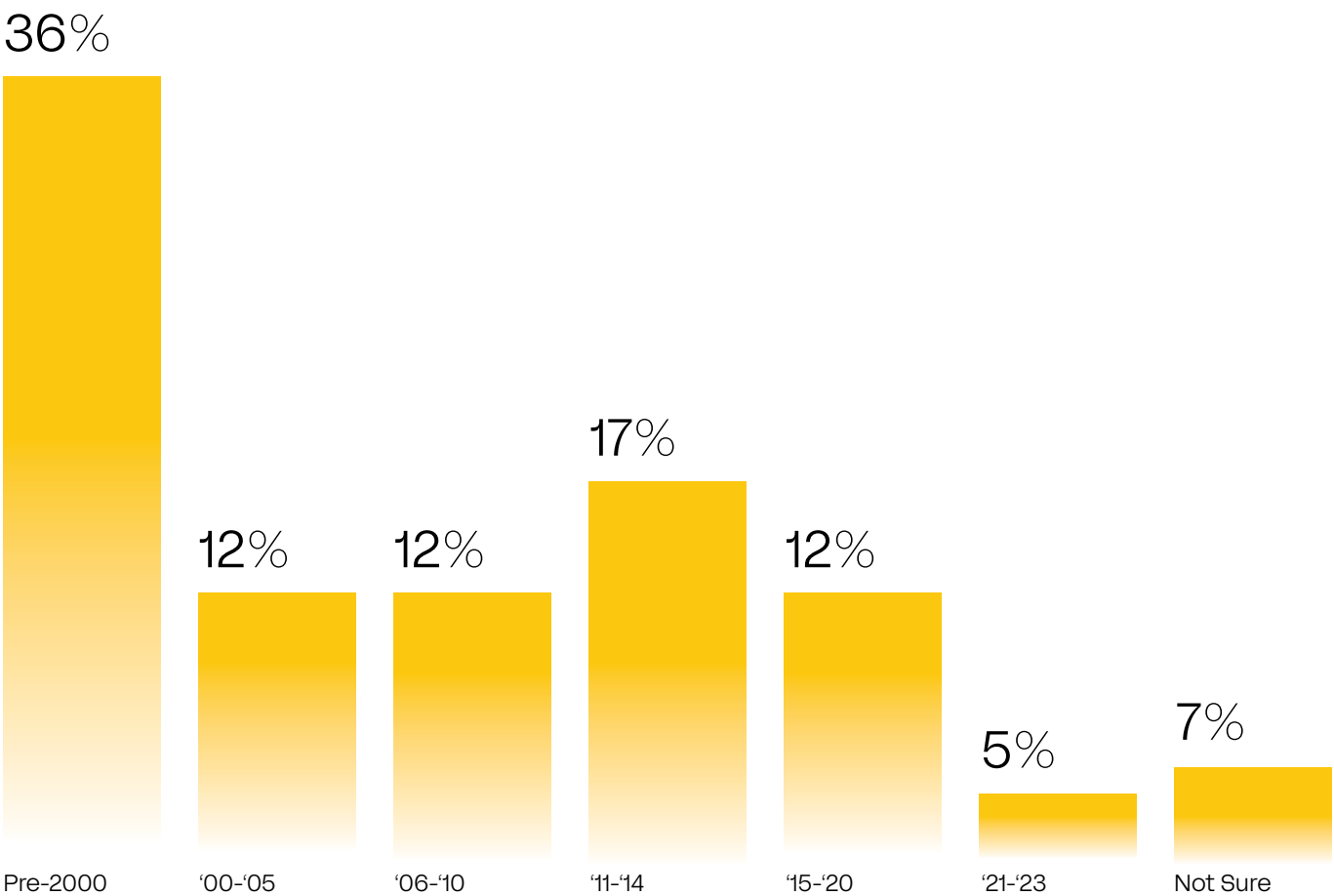


Figure 3.1 Year of Establishment of Private Consultancies and Sem-State Agencies





# Personnel

The survey collected details of the total number of staff employed across Private/Semi-State Organisations, Local Governments and Public Organisations. This information includes both planning and non-planning professionals in these organisations.

As per the responses received, 69% of the Private/Semi-State bodies employ 10 or less people.

## Staff size in Private/Semi-State Organisations

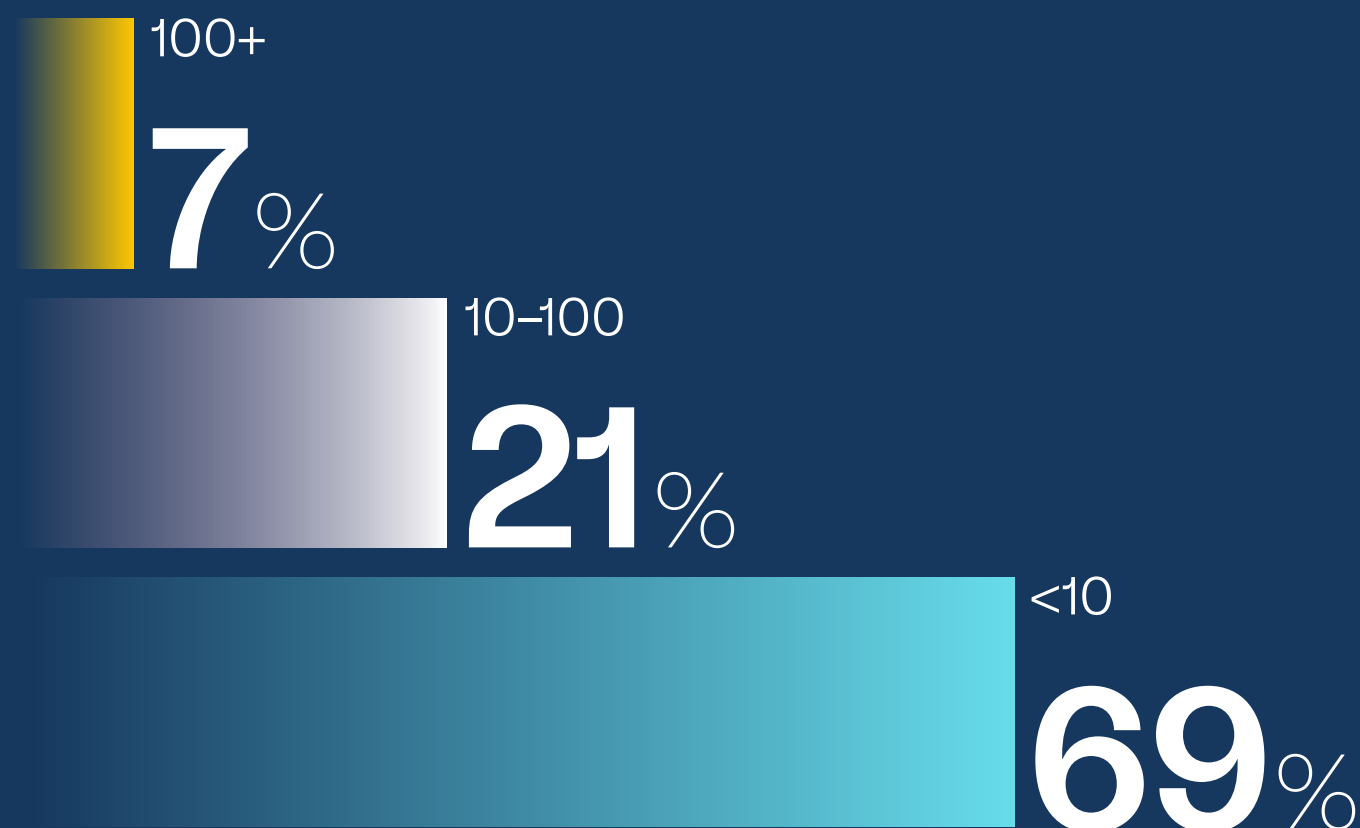


Figure 3.2 Total Staff Size in Private and Semi-State Organisations





Organisations were also asked to provide further details on the total number of professional planners employed, as well as the total non-planning staff that were working in planning roles.

Around 64% of the Private/Semi-State Organisations that responded to the survey employ between 1 to 5 professional planners, 21% of the organisations have between 6 and 10 professional planners and only 7% of the total Private/Semi-State Organisations employ more than 10 professional planners.

### Professional Planners in Private/Semi-State Organisations

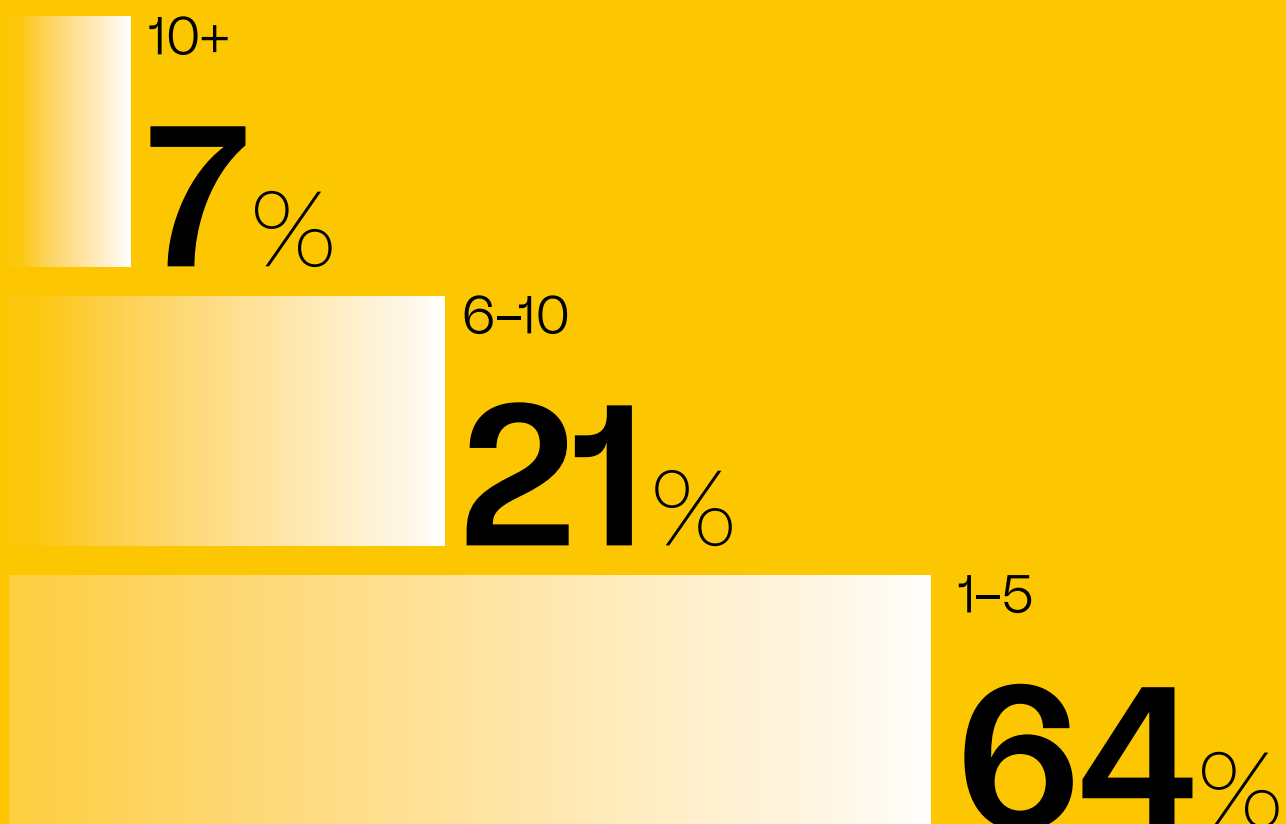


Figure 3.3 Proportion of Professional Planners in Private and Semi-State organisations

These results are a somewhat different from the 2014 survey, which observed around 84% of the consultancies that responded to the survey to have employed less than 5 qualified planners, 12% employed between 5 and 9 qualified planners and just about 4% of the consultancies that responded to the survey in 2014, had more than 10 qualified planners. There is a comparatively higher proportion of Private/Semi-State Organisations that employ between 5 and 10 planning professionals at present than in 2014, based on the survey findings. This could be the result of the growing demand for housing/residential property market; a number of infrastructure projects which require private sector support; and the growing emphasis on 'Renewables' as the importance of addressing impacts of climate change deepens.

Alternatively, 23% of the Private/Semi-State Organisations confirmed that they have 'non-planning staff' working in planning roles. This is similar to the proportion of non-qualified 'Planners' working in planning roles, in the 2014 survey which also captured c. 22% non-planners working in planning roles. Therefore, this aspect has remained consistent between the two periods.

The constant trend in the number of non-planning professionals working in planning roles presents an opportunity to further strengthen resourcing within Planning through structured training for those non-planners working in planning roles. Placing appropriate measure to equip and encourage existing and future professionals is as instrumental to reducing the increasing resource gap as it is to support members pursuing planning as a profession to progress in their careers.



**“These results are a somewhat different from the 2014 survey, which observed around 84% of the consultancies that responded to the survey to have employed less than 5 qualified planners, 12% employed between 5 and 9 qualified planners and just about 4% of the consultancies that responded to the survey in 2014, had more than 10 qualified planners.”**





Public Organisations and Local Authorities, as expected, are comparatively larger than Private and Semi-State Organisations, with 46% employing more than 500 employees and about 25% of them falling in the below 50 employees' range.

Staff Size in Public Organisations and Local Authorities

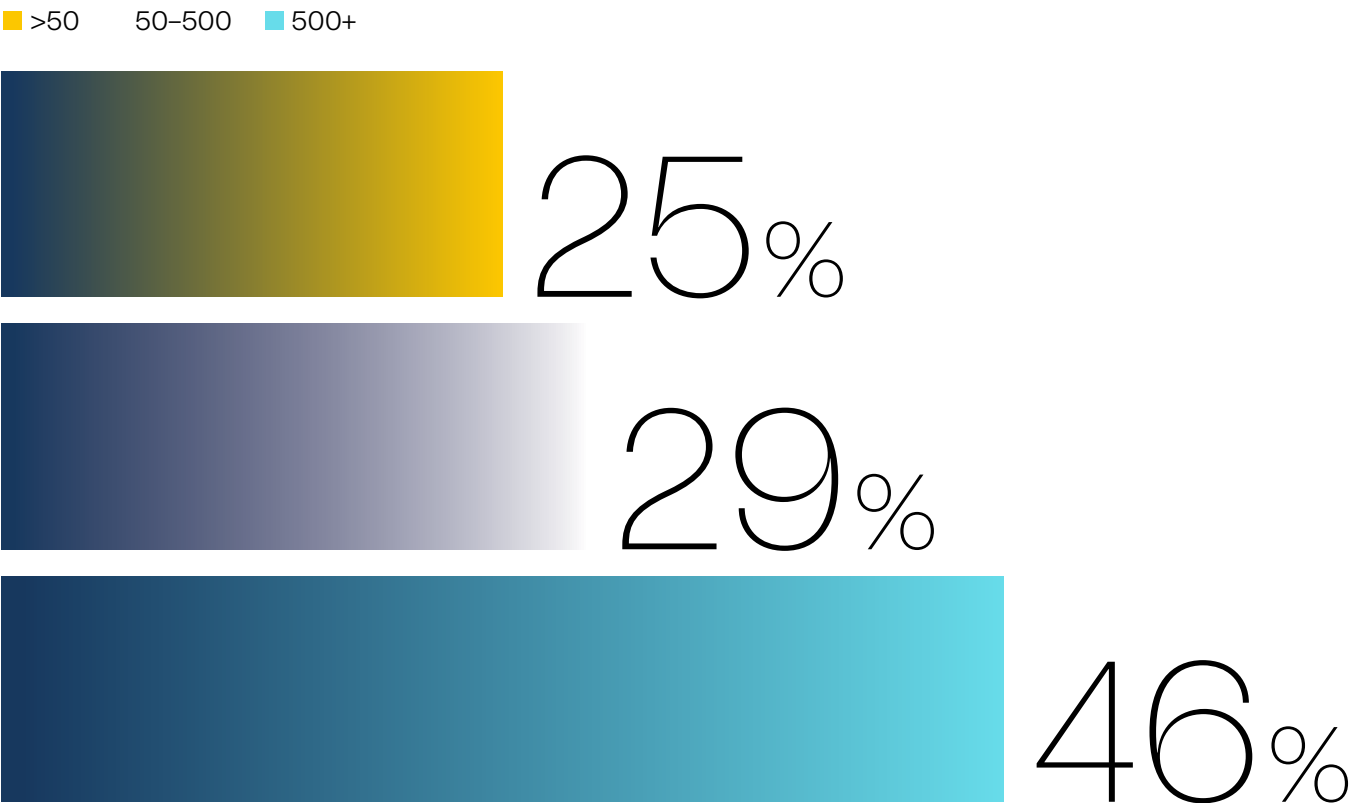


Figure 3.4 Total Staff Size in Public Organisations and Local Authorities



Given there is somewhat more consistency in how Local Authorities define the various grade levels, they were asked to further elaborate on the total number of planners working across the different grades. It is observed, as detailed in Figure 3.5, that 40% of planners in the 2023 survey working in Local Authorities are employed at the 'Executive Planner', i.e., professionals with around 5–7 years of experience. This is followed by 22% 'Assistant Planners', consisting of professionals with 2–4 years of experience and 20% are 'Senior Executive Planner' with minimum 7 years of professional experience.

Both entry level roles, as well as Senior/Directorial roles, appear to constitute less than 10% of the total planning staff within Local Authorities that participated in the survey. This contrasts with Private/Semi-State organisations – that had higher number of Entry Level Planners (less than 2 years' experience) as well as those with 15+ years of experience.

## Planning Professionals across different Grades in Local Authorities

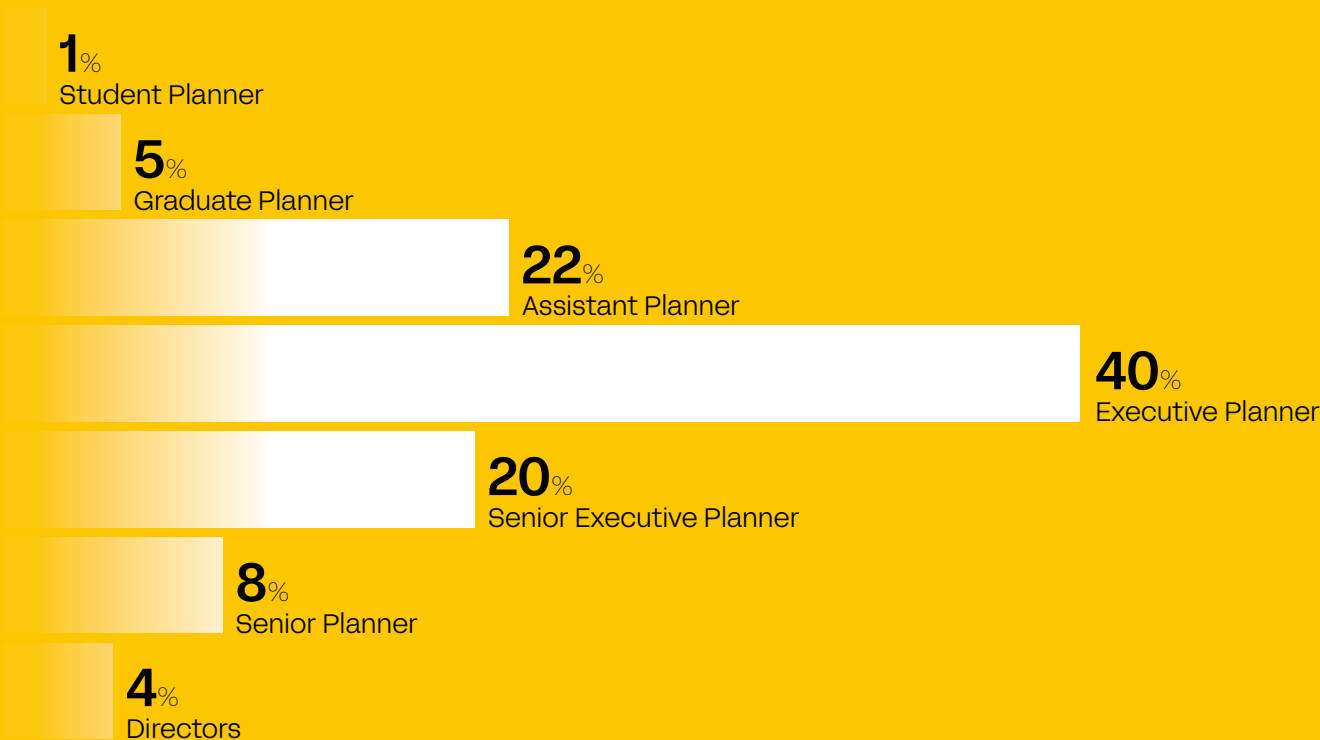


Figure 3.5 Proportion of Planning Professionals in Public Organisations across Different Grades.



# Planners by Grade

The 2014 survey captured very similar results to the current survey:

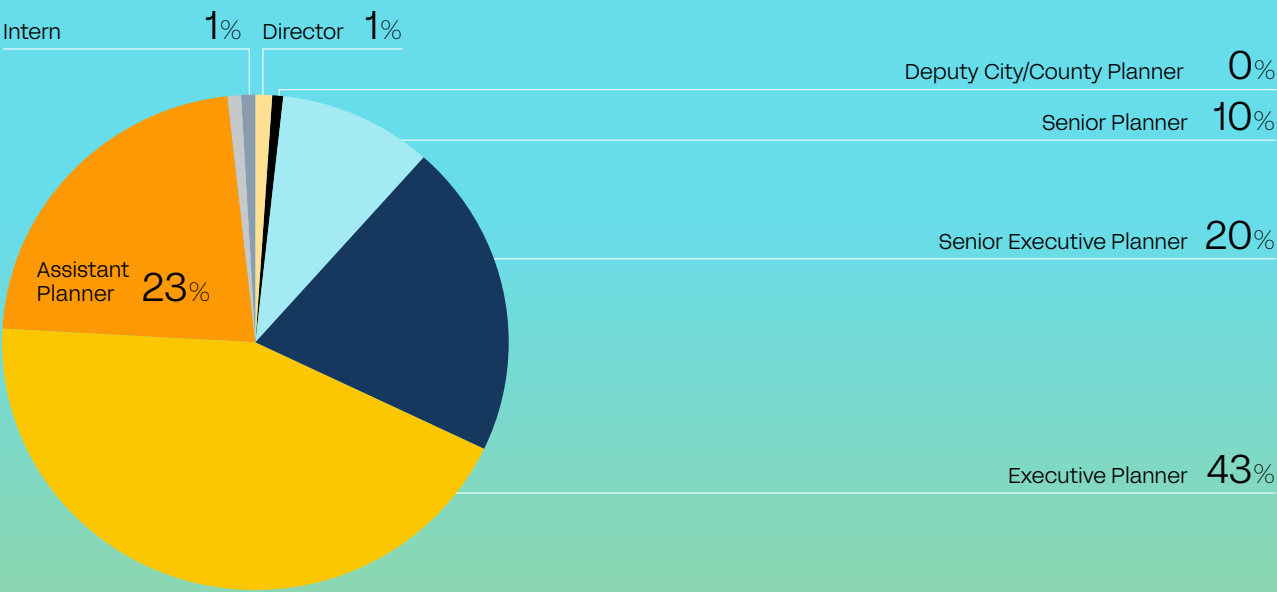


Figure 3.6 Planners by Grade across the different Local Authorities captured during the 2014 Survey of the Planning Profession

Of those that responded, a majority of the planning professionals in Local Authorities work across the four grades: Assistant Planner (22.8%), Executive Planner (43.37%), Senior Executive Planner (20.20%) and Senior Planner (10.10%). A negligible number record Graduate Planner or Intern Planner posts, while at the other end of the ladder, a small number of local authorities record planners holding Director (of Services) roles.

The 2023 survey responses suggest limited change in the proportion of planners across grades in (broad) comparison with the 2014/2015 survey findings. While the roles, responsibilities and overall demand for the skills and expertise that professional planners bring to a project or initiative has invariably grown in the years between the surveys, it would not appear that there has been a comparable deployment of additional resources to support a balanced approach to workloads across all grades.

## Area of Work Planning Professionals in Local Authorities Are Involved (2023)

The 2023 survey asked Local Authorities to provide details in relation to the different areas of work their professional planners are involved in, and it was found that over 40% of the planners are engaged full-time in 'Development Management', i.e., assessing planning applications. This is closely followed by around 27% of the planners within local authorities involved in 'Forward Planning', dealing with formulation and review of local, city and county development plans. Some other notable areas include, Infrastructure/Transport (6%), Enforcement (6%) and Policy/Education/Research (4%). There were around 7% that fall under 'other' areas which also included 'Parks', 'Community' and 'Marine'. It is also noted that 2% of the planners were involved in each of the areas dealing with 'Enterprise and Employment/LEO' and 'Environment, Biodiversity, Climate Action'.

43%  
Development  
Management

7%  
Others

2%  
Housing

6%  
Infrastructure/  
Transport

2%  
Urban  
Regeneration

27%  
Forward  
Planning

2%  
Economic

6%  
Enforcement

2%  
Biodiversity /  
Climate Action

4%  
Policy /  
Education

Figure 3.7 Planners involved across different areas of work within Local Authorities as per 2023 Survey



## Planners across different areas of work within Local Authorities (2014)

The results are somewhat similar to the 2014/15 survey, with some decline in the number of planners in Forward Planning, Enforcement, and Economic and Enterprise/LEO, between the two period. The 2014/15 survey also recorded over 40% of the planners engaged in Development Management, c. 35% in Forward Planning, around 9% in Enforcement, and some 4% in Enterprise and Employment/LEO. Environment, SEA/AA/Biodiversity had some 4% of the planners working in these roles.

Overall, between the two periods, there is some decline in the composition of planners in some of the roles within local authorities. The implications could be associated to both, the growing issues of resourcing, where there is a lack of professionals available to assume these roles, as well as some reluctance from the local authorities in providing personnel details when responding to the survey.

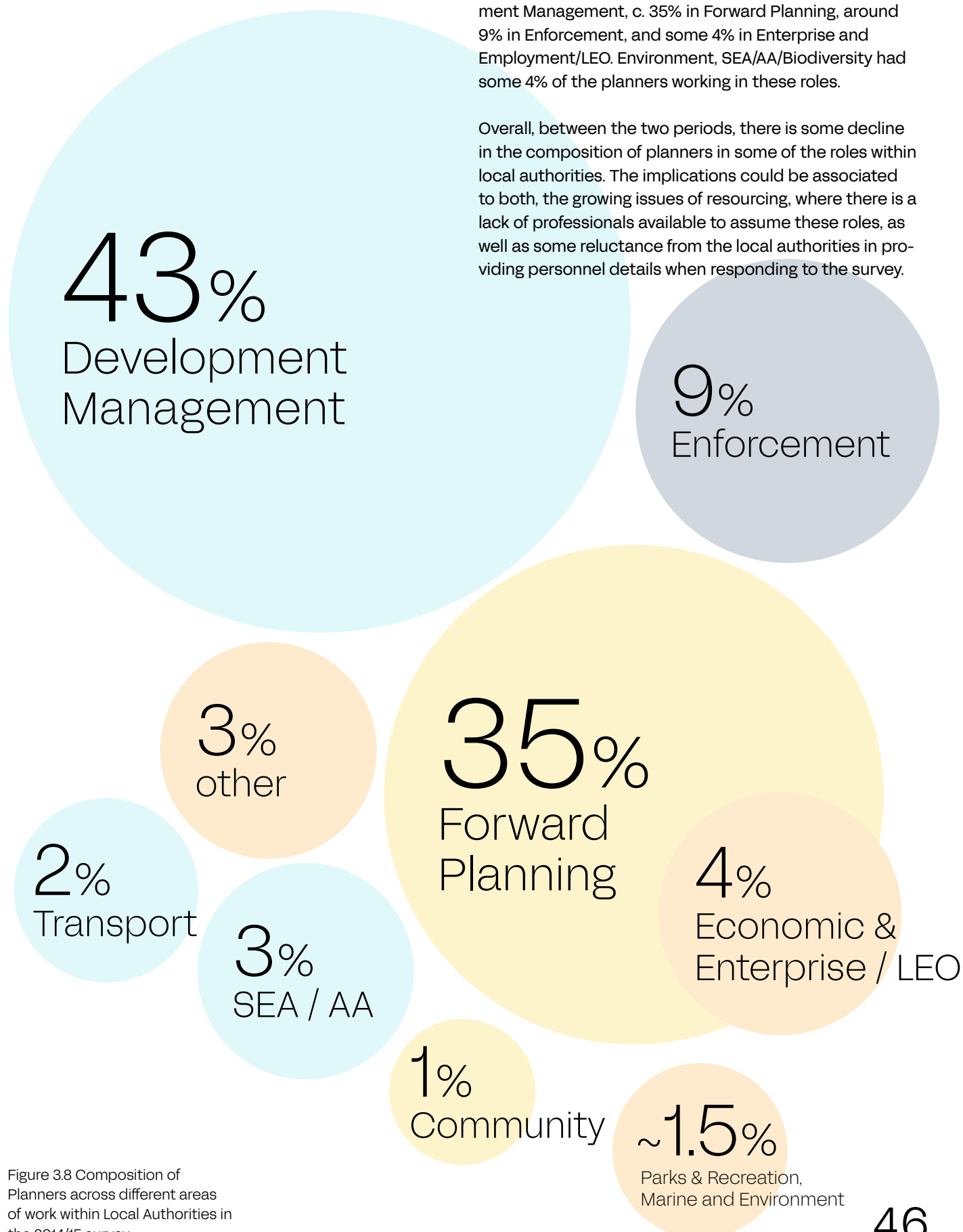
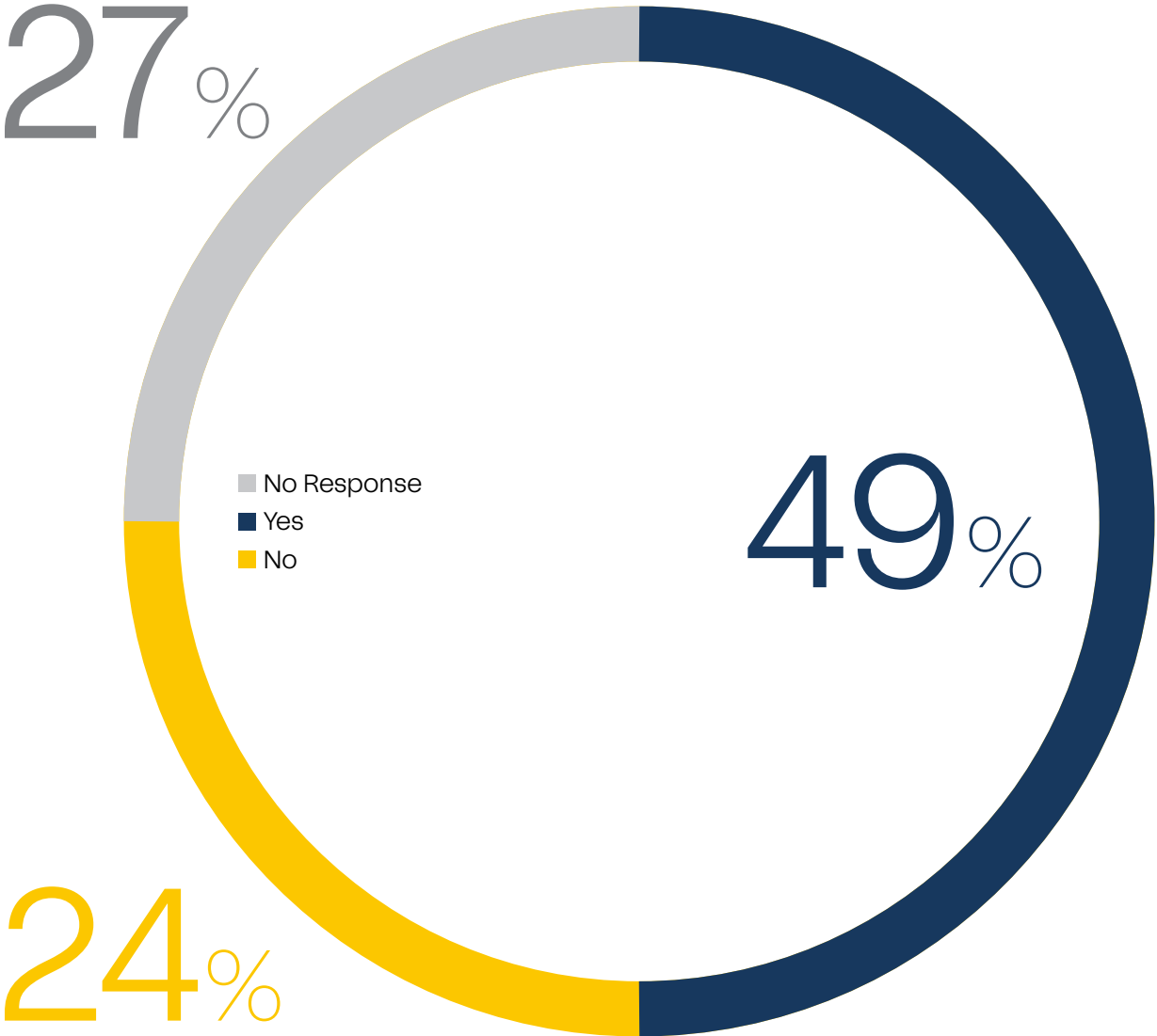


Figure 3.8 Composition of Planners across different areas of work within Local Authorities in the 2014/15 survey

# Staff Vacancies

Almost 50% of the Public Organisations and Local Authorities that responded to the survey indicated that they have a shortfall of staff, with vacancies pending and/or to be filled. The organisations that indicated they are facing a shortfall, have confirmed that they have in excess of 70 planning positions currently vacant across different grades/levels. Around 90% of the vacant positions are in Local Authorities, with c. 5% each in the State Bodies and Universities.

It is understood that the County and City Management Association (CCMA), Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) undertook a survey and analysis of those working in the Local Government planning services (which includes both planners and non-planners) in 2022. The survey confirmed that there was a vacancy rate of approximately 10%, out of a suggested total of 1,550 posts that were identified. The study further acknowledged the need for additional local government planning system resources to meet all recent and emerging policy and practice requirements in order to ensure a good level of service.



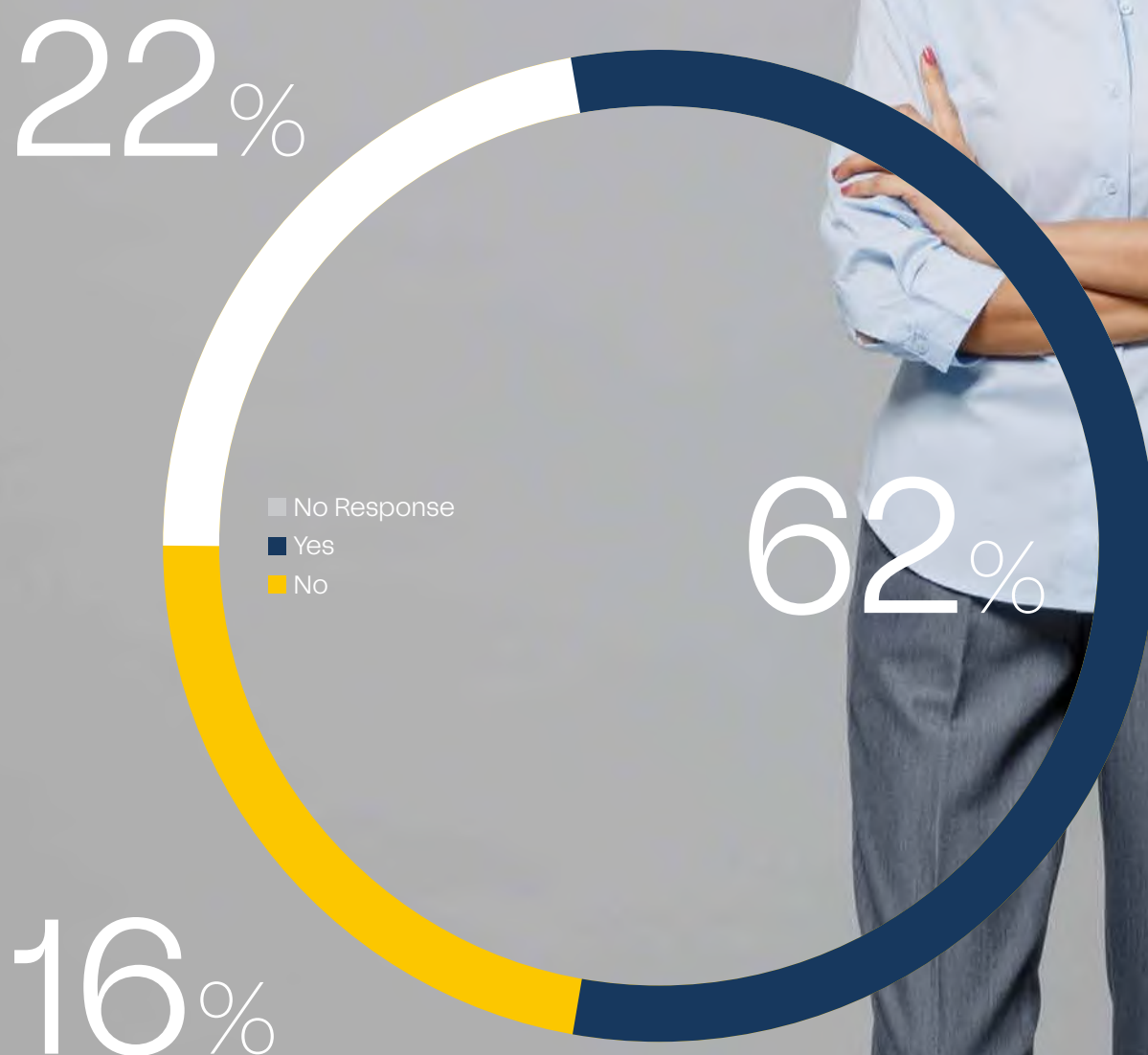
**Shortfall of Planning Staff  
in Public / Local Authorities**

Figure 3.9 Are Public Organisations and Local Authorities facing a shortfall in their Planning Staff



On that basis, there is a reported vacancy rate of c. 155 within the Local Government planning services which would account for both planners and non-planners working in planning positions, and as such it is likely that the 70 planning positions identified in this survey as currently vacant would be a reasonable estimate.

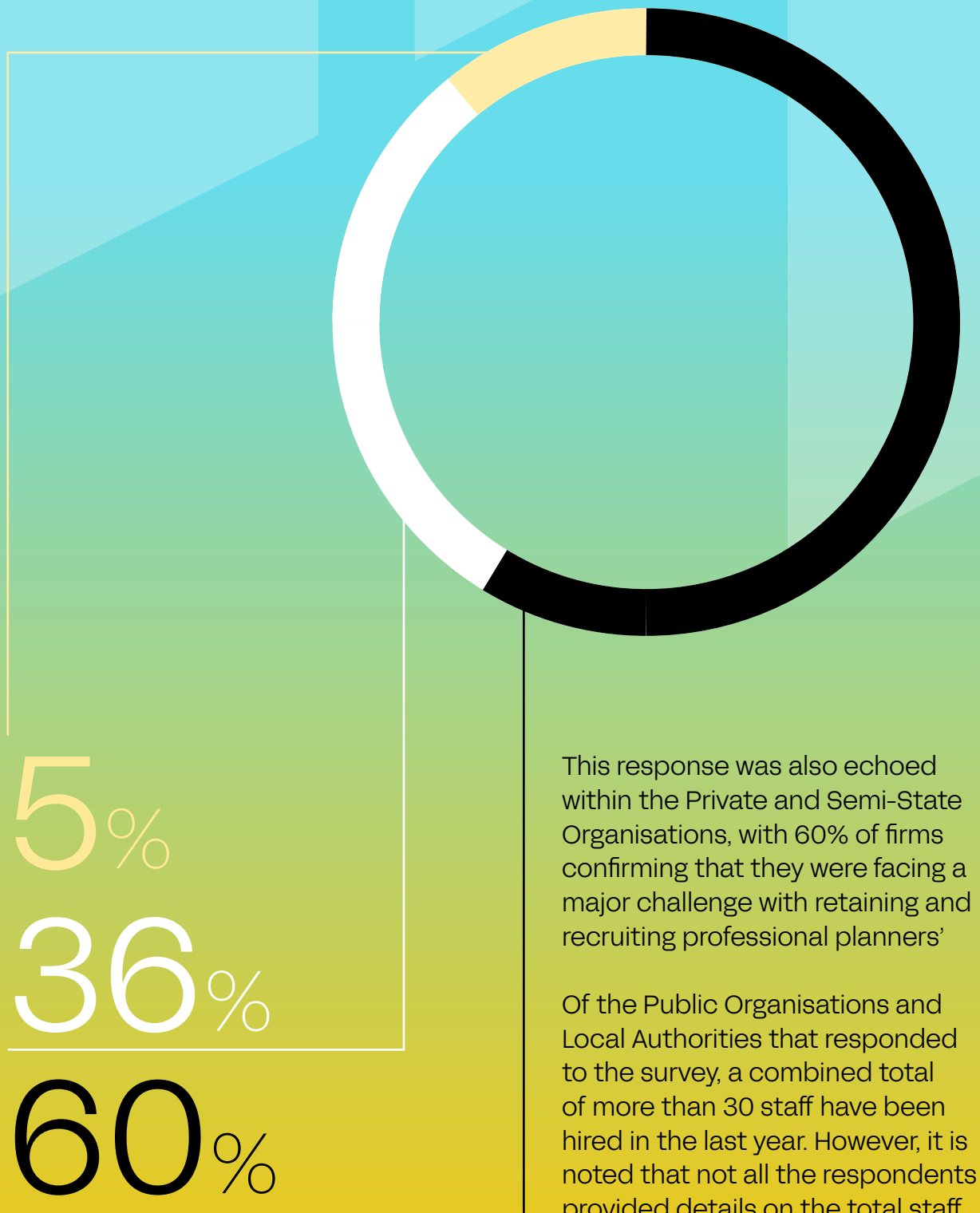
In addition, both Public Organisation/Local Authorities as well as Private/Semi-State Organisations are facing significant challenges with retaining and recruiting new staff. In the Public Sector, 62% of organisations confirmed that they were experiencing staff retention challenges as well as recruiting of new planners.



### Is Professional Planner Staff Retention or Recruitment a Challenge - Public Organisation and Local Authorities

Figure 3.10 Challenge in Public Organisations and Local Authorities in relation to Retention and Recruitment of Professional Planning Staff

## Is Professional Planner Staff Retention or Recruitment a Challenge - Private/ Semi State Organisations



This response was also echoed within the Private and Semi-State Organisations, with 60% of firms confirming that they were facing a major challenge with retaining and recruiting professional planners'

Of the Public Organisations and Local Authorities that responded to the survey, a combined total of more than 30 staff have been hired in the last year. However, it is noted that not all the respondents provided details on the total staff hired and hence, there is likely to have been more than the stated number of staff hired.

Figure 3.11 Challenges in Private/ Semi-State Organisations in relation to Retention and Recruitment of Professional Planning Staff





In Private/Semi-State Organisations, where approximately 70% of the organisations employ less than 10 professional planners, close to 50 staff have been hired in the last year, with some recruited to fill positions resulting from employee turnovers.

## **Watch and Listen**

Interview with Pauline Byrne,  
Brady Shipman Martin



### **Pauline Byrne**

Partner, Head of Planning,  
Brady Shipman Martin

# WATCH & LISTEN

# Resourcing the Planning Profession

**Resourcing the sector is clearly a growing challenge that needs to be addressed, with appropriate measures needed to encourage newcomers and enable existing professionals to successfully advance in the profession. The availability of staff across all grades and positions and across the public and private sector was continually raised as the top concern for Planners. The ability to attract new entrants to the profession including the subsequent retention of new and existing staff came across strongly as a chief concern on resourcing**

## **Difficulties in recruitment of new planners to join the profession**

In terms of recruitment, many respondents highlighted the perceived difficulties in attracting new talent to the workforce and the next generation of planners, and the relatively poor understanding that public appears to have of the profession as a career choice. There was a concern that the profession is not being actively promoted enough amongst school and college students. It was suggested that more could be done to enthusiastically promote the profession, to highlight the diverse range of jobs that a career in planning can offer and to strengthen the appeal of the profession by showcasing the many exciting opportunities available to really shape the places we live in for the benefit of current and future generations.

“At the source, resources for educational institutions to boost graduate numbers for firms and local authorities, is critical to tackling the issues.”

## **Workload management**

Workload management was consistently raised as an issue for Planners across sectors, with those in the Local Authorities reporting serious difficulties in dealing with workloads as a direct result of under-resourcing across planning departments. This may be contributing to issues around staff retention with people experiencing “burn-out”.

## **Greater knowledge of specialist topics**

Specific topics, such as marine spatial planning and environmental planning, were highlighted as examples where there is an acute resourcing pressure, with a limited pool of professional planners who are specialised in these areas. As national guidance and planning policy evolve in these areas, it will be incumbent on the planning profession to ensure it has the ability and subject matter expertise to meaningfully lead and navigate projects and plans. This may inform continuous professional development programmes by the Irish Planning Institute and other professional bodies working in the built and natural environment domains, but may also directly inform academic programmes, academic and sectoral research and a plethora of key skills, training, and development initiatives to ensure and enhance a diverse knowledge base is secured within the profession.





## Lack of mentorship

Graduate or trainee Planners appear to be experiencing limitations in their opportunity to learn and grow organically as they are not receiving the level of mentorship that might have been provided in the past, with senior teams often battling against a backlog of working and impending deadlines. A recent challenge amplifying this issue could be the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, which required people to adapt to changes in their work environment - especially to working remotely or in a hybrid format. The pandemic has materially altered how we interact with our urban and rural environments, influenced a heightened focus concerning quality of life and work-life balance considerations, our workplace culture, and in some instances has influenced how we navigate a growing affordability and cost of living challenge. However, from a professional development perspective, some may have been more impacted by pandemic 'lockdown' restrictions, with reduced interaction or a less accessible and collaborative work environment considered essential for newcomers/early career professionals who would benefit from having direct access to their team members and line managers/mentors.

“Graduate or trainee Planners appear to be experiencing limitations in their opportunity to learn and grow organically as they are not receiving the level of mentorship that might have been provided in the past, with senior teams often battling against a backlog of working and impending deadlines.”

## Watch and Listen



Panel Interview with Graduate  
/ Early-Stage Career Planners

# WATCH & LISTEN

## Staff Retention

Resourcing issues are being exacerbated by planners leaving their positions or the profession, either due to a lack of a work/life balance, for professional purpose (for other roles or abroad) or for retirement. Overly long application processes for local authority posts were mentioned as a barrier to new entrants to the public sector. For Planners in the middle of their careers (with several years of experience

but not those occupying the most senior positions), the lack of mentorship and provision of time afforded to skills development is viewed actively harming their career prospects. Additionally, with a high volume of movement across organisations and out of the profession in the mid-range experience level, there is also a fear of how to replace the growing cohort of senior Planners who are due to retire over the next 5

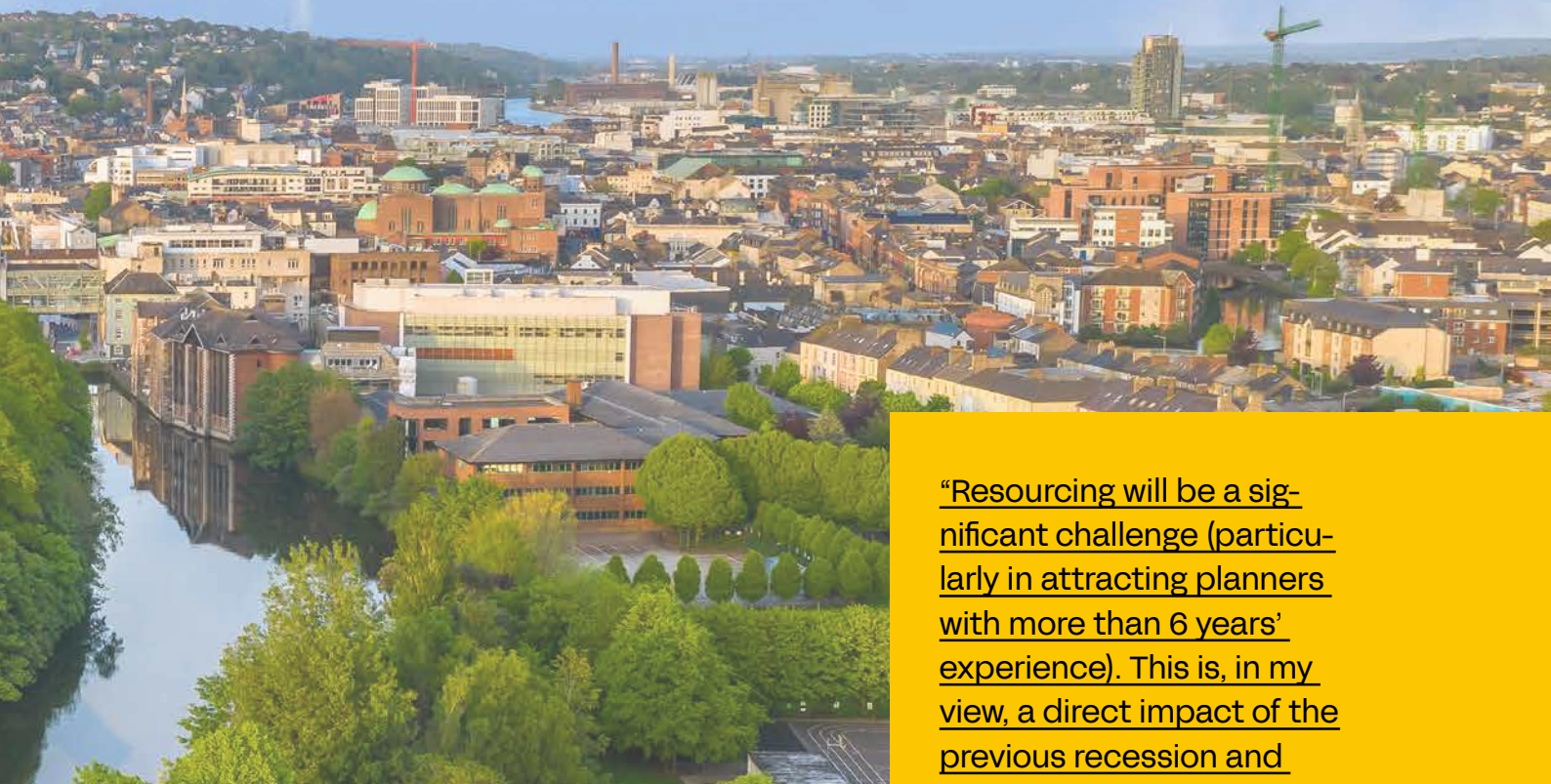






years. Alongside this and coupled with the concerns on the apparent limited opportunities for coaching and mentorship, there are concerns that the experience of the country's most senior planners will be lost in the coming years, much to the detriment of the profession.

Additionally, the difficulties in attaining experience in planning outside of the Dublin region was highlighted; and for those in Dublin, the high costs of living in the city for jobs with relatively low remuneration was highlighted for junior planners; alternatively, the challenges that organisations are faced with hiring more senior level staff has been emphasised as an effect of a highly competitive employers' market.



“Resourcing will be a significant challenge (particularly in attracting planners with more than 6 years’ experience). This is, in my view, a direct impact of the previous recession and drop off in planning graduates remaining within the planning profession.”

**The resourcing challenge facing the planning profession is not unique across those professions working to deliver sustainable development. While the planning profession strives to confront the challenges of resourcing and recruitment, emphasis on the need to assess its subsequent impacts on other sectors is also key to optimising the opportunities that lie ahead for the profession.**

The following are some of the recent reports/research from both ROI and the UK perspectives – highlighting the challenges facing Planning and some of its corresponding professions:

#### **Engineers Ireland (EI):**

The annual ‘Engineering Barometer’ is an annual report from Engineers Ireland that tracks development in engineering education, employment, and perspectives. The analysis of the 2023 report focuses on changes to the engineers’ employment over the past year and on engineers’ perspective on the profession.

The report found that a shortage of experienced engineers and the housing crisis are some of the many barriers experienced by engineering employers undertaking recruitment for 2023. They found that 72% of member-respondents are very concerned about the shortage of engineers with the correct skills. In construction and consultancy alone, almost 8,000 new jobs have been anticipated in these sectors in 2023, by the representative body.

#### **Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)**

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), in their ‘Interim State of the Profession 2023’ analysis, focused on some of the key challenges facing the profession, including recruitment and retention.

The interim analysis found that the profession is facing ‘unprecedented challenges’ to its public image, which is being described by many in the political arena as a ‘barrier to the solution of the unfolding housing crisis’. This has subsequently resulted in a call for planning reforms at the national level and reportedly ‘widespread abuse and mistreatment of planners at the local level at the detriment of their mental health and working conditions.’

Moreover, responding to a survey by the RTPI, 82% of local authority planners stated that their employer had difficulties hiring planners in the last 12





months and 68% saw competitive salaries as a key difficulty for local authorities. The interim analysis also confirmed that a quarter of planners have left the public sector between 2013 and 2020, while the private sector experienced an increase of 80% in the number of employed planners. A key challenge local authorities' having been facing appears to have been the continuous budget reductions, which has led to unmanageable workloads and overstretched workers in Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) – amplifying the issue around recruitment and retention.

This was further confirmed in a research paper published by the RTPI in November 2022 which highlighted a crisis in planning enforcement resourcing – which is facing unmanageable workloads due to insufficient staff, hence resulting in an inability to meet public demand. The research paper identified

the primary cause of this – a 43% decrease in net expenditure from local authorities on planning as a whole from 2009/10 to 2020/21. Consequently, Local authorities have been facing major challenges in resourcing, skills, and performance.

The research paper which is based on the results of an RTPI survey of 103 local authorities, showed that almost 90% of the councils were experiencing an enforcement backlog. 73% of the respondents also confirmed that their local authorities had struggled to recruit in the last year. The report highlights a system that is falling apart with 80% of survey respondents reporting that there simply aren't enough officers to carry out the workload and how the last decade of cuts has had a tangible and damaging impacts on planning enforcement.



### **Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI)**

Earlier in 2023, the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI) reported through their 'Employment, Remuneration and Workplace Report' that, in a 4% per annum growth scenario, 2,910 new surveyor positions would be created from 2023 to 2026. However, the Irish Times highlighted in this regard that the number of Irish graduates forecast to enter the workforce is just 1,829, a shortfall of 1,081 or 59%. If the economy grows by 3%, the shortfall would still be significant at 18%.

### **The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)**

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) in their 'Construction Monitor Q1 2023' reported that the 'headline workload metric' in the UK's construction sector have started gaining steam in the first three month of 2023, following a marginal drop into the negative metric in the Q4 of 2022.

One of the main challenges highlighted, was the ongoing shortages of labour and materials, alongside increasing difficulties in securing planning and financial constraints. A key problem area noted by respondents was the recruitment of quantity surveyors alongside hiring trades which has also continued to prove difficult.





While a net balance of +35% respondents reported to have recruited employees over the past 3 months, the proportion of contributors foreseeing growing investment in workforce training and development rose to a net balance of +23% from +17%, despite the ongoing squeeze on profitability facing many businesses in the sector.

In excess of 60% of the respondents have also reported financial constraints as being a challenge for the fifth consecutive quarter. The report notes that this is unlikely to dissipate in the near future, given there is a possibility of hikes in the base rates in the face of the resilience of the headline inflation rate. One other area of concern also highlighted is the hurdle of securing planning permissions which has been noted to have featured heavily in remarks from contributors.

The shortage of professionals and tradespeople across the sector is bound to have consequent knock-on effects on house building and other critical infrastructure requirements, alongside the looming skills issue which will continue to exist as some experienced professionals start to retire.

# Remote Working

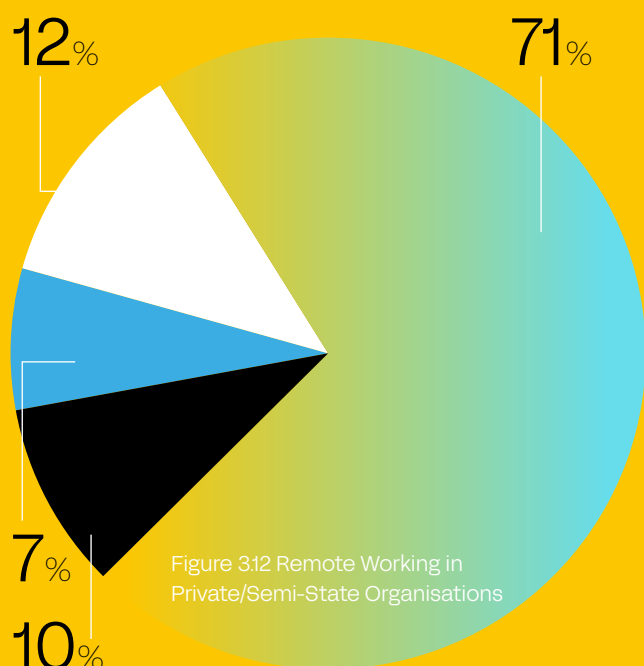


Figure 3.12 Remote Working in Private/Semi-State Organisations

Hybrid working has become a common practice in most workplaces, in the post Covid19 period. The option to work from home is being offered by most, if not all organisations as an incentive for employees.

About 71% of the Private/Semi-State Organisations that responded to survey stated they have a 'Hybrid/Remote' working model in their workplace, with 7% respondents stating that they have 'Somewhat' a hybrid/remote working model.

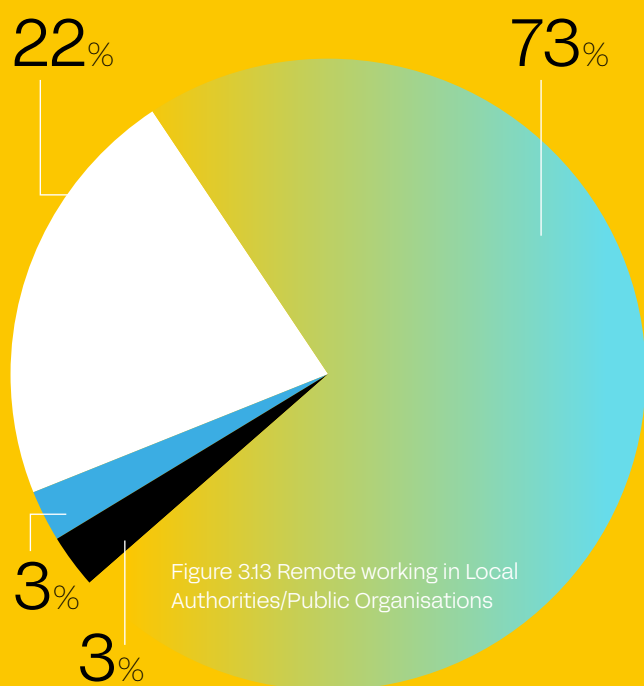


Figure 3.13 Remote working in Local Authorities/Public Organisations

73% of public sector organisations reported that they follow hybrid/remote working model, with 3% responding they 'Somewhat' follow hybrid working. Nearly 22% did not provide any response to this question.

Yes No Somewhat No response





# “...hybrid / remote...”

“In excess of 70% of the Private/  
Semi-State Organisations and Local  
Authorities/Public Organisations  
reported that they follow hybrid/  
remote working model”





# Job Satisfaction



Encouragingly, more than 80% of the respondents stated that they were happy with their current roles.

Are you currently satisfied with your job?

Yes No No Response

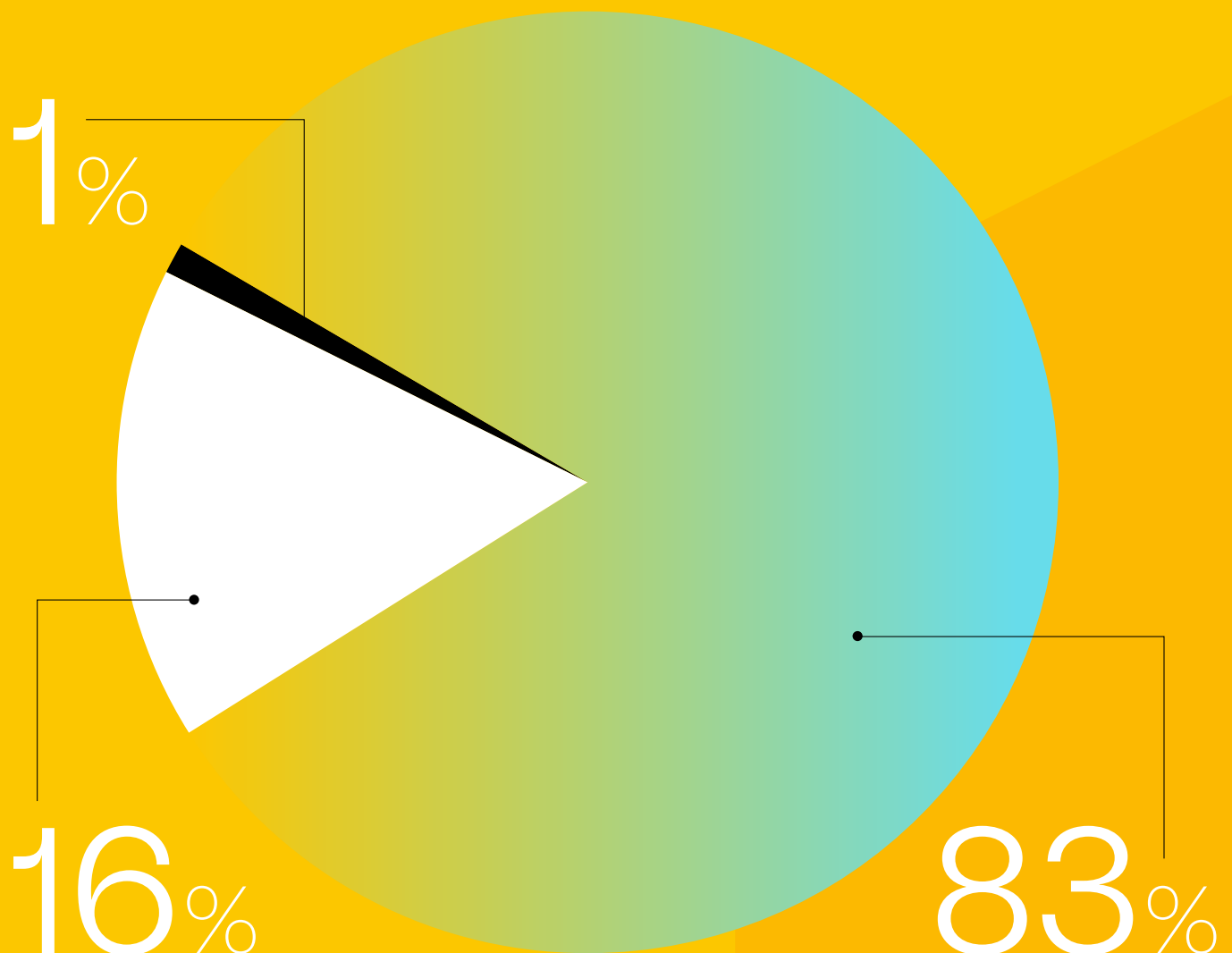


Figure 3.14 Respondents on whether they are currently satisfied with their Roles

While a majority of the respondents agreed that they were satisfied with their 'current role', some may still identify perceived issue(s) or shortcoming(s) with their overall compensation, workplace culture or other grievances, thus making a distinction between their "role" or job specification and the terms of their employment. The anecdotal and regularly verbalised challenge of recruiting / resourcing within the planning profession has a knock-on consequence with regard to employee performance (diminished or under-resourced teams with too many projects to deliver, giving rise to increase workplace pressures or burnout, etc.), work-life imbalance and other such challenges.

Work-Life Balance was one of the key aspects that respondents picked as their 'top priority', when asked what motivates them to remain in their current roles.

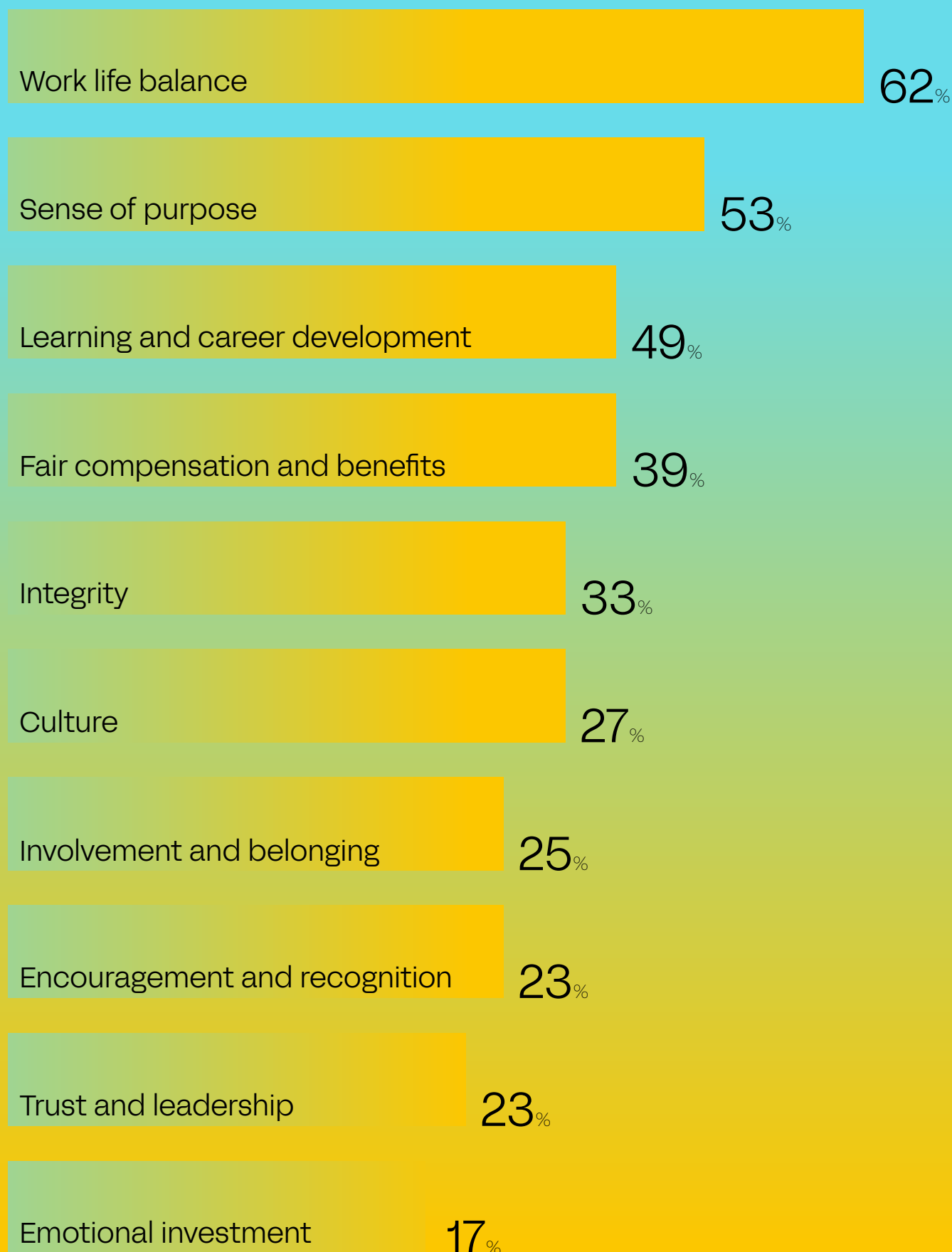
Survey responses highlighted an often overwhelming workload which can lead to burnout and mental wellness concerns, from a psychosocial perspective.

Other key factors influencing the longevity of professionals included 'Sense of Purpose', 'Learning and Career Development' and finally 'Fair Compensation and Benefit'. A number of respondents also chose 'Integrity' and 'Culture' as one of the determining factors, this was almost at par with other factors such as 'Involvement and Belonging', 'Encouragement and Recognition' and 'Trust in Leadership'. 'Emotional Investment', albeit the least influencing factor, was still chosen by 17% of respondents as one of the factors that would motivate them to remain in their current role. These results highlight factors which employers may need to focus on given the tight employment market.



"Burnout of existing staff in both private and public sector as demands increase with no increase in resources due to shortage of planners."

## Factors Influencing the Longevity of Planning Professionals





# 4



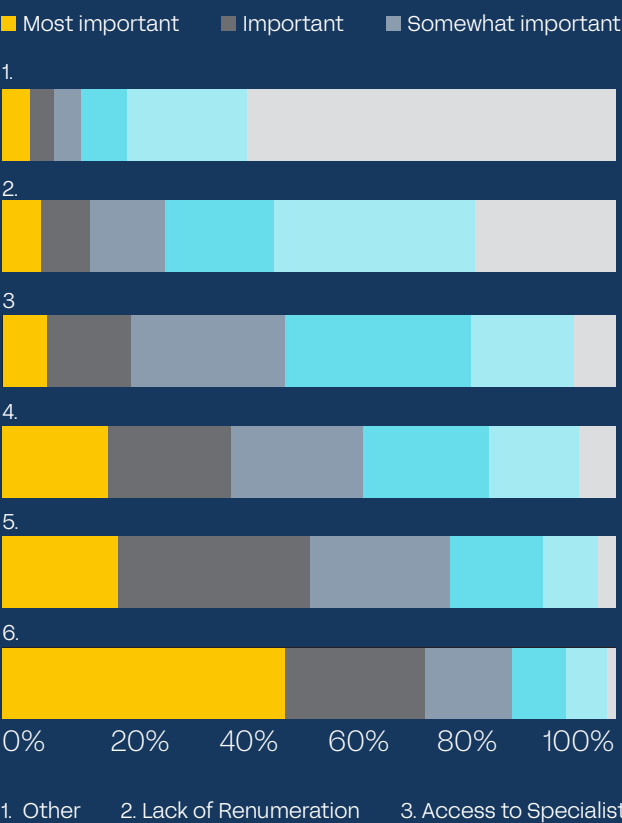


# Emerging Challenges: An Opportunity?

There was clear commonality in the challenges identified by Planners in Ireland. Common themes emerged across all 3 surveys – all respondents regardless of sector share similar views on the pertinent issues facing the sector. The themes, presented below, span a range of issues from resourcing of the sector through to the professions response to and handling of wider societal issues such as the housing crisis and climate change.

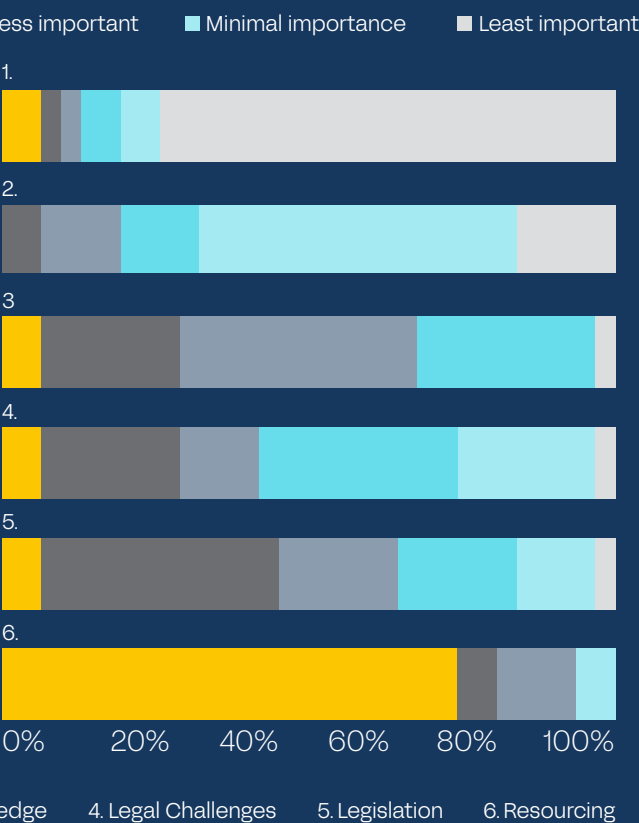
# We asked Planners to rank a list of challenges in order of importance.

## Ranking of challenges - Cross Industry Professionals



Resourcing clearly emerged as the single biggest challenge facing the sector with 46% of cross industry planners surveyed ranking this as most important. Legislative change was the second most challenging issue facing the profession with 18.7% of Planners choosing this as their main challenge. This was followed by legal challenges (17.2%) and lack of specialist knowledge (7.4%), which were also considered a challenge facing the profession.

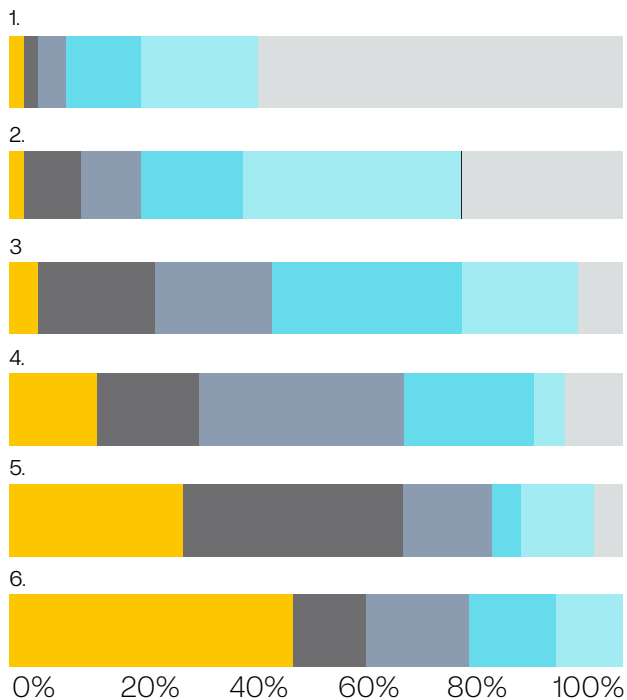
## Ranking of challenges - Public Organisations and Local Authorities



Breaking it down across the sectors, over 70% of the public sector planners that responded to the survey have also cited staffing issues as the most pressing challenge for the profession. In comparison, just under 50% of the private and semi-state organisations, seem to consider resourcing as their most critical challenge. Nevertheless, it is still the top choice for 'challenge facing the profession' across the board.



## Ranking of challenges - Private / Semi State Organisations



Access to specialist knowledge, legal challenges and keeping up with legislative change are the other key concerns for public sector planners – all of which received a broadly similar weighting in terms of importance. The Private/Semi-State sector on the other hand consider ‘legislative change’ and ‘legal challenges’ as comparatively more concerning – the responsibility of demonstrating compliance against multiple, complex legal commitments can present a heavy burden on planners in these organisations, while the consequences of judicial reviews and other legal challenges to projects can have major implications often with ‘precedent’ judgements that further compound an already complex set of parameters.



# Additional Thematic Challenges

Planning is at the forefront of a dynamic world where it plays a critical role in addressing the increasing challenges of sustainable development in the midst of continuously changing demographics which raises the need to accommodate and appropriately equip the current and future generations. Therefore the need to promote compact settlements, climate action, while also ensuring adequate adaptation measures are considered in the sustainable development of housing alongside supporting infrastructure is key to the process.

When Planners were asked to highlight additional challenges that they think the profession is likely to face over the coming years, the recurring themes included issues of climate change, the housing crisis, the role of legislation, and appropriate measures required to equip professionals to deal with the changing environment.

## **Watch and Listen**

Dr. Sean O'Leary speaks on Climate Adaptation



### **Dr. Sean O'Leary**

Senior Planner,  
Irish Planning Institute

WATCH  
& LISTEN





# Climate Change

The profession is acutely aware of the critical role it must play in responding to climate change challenges. Among the topics highlighted were:

→  
The ongoing need to reduce car dependency across the country

→  
The need to move away from out-of-town developments and to promote the 15-minute cities / towns concept - both a challenge and an opportunity for planners.

→  
The increasing promotion of active travel and the opportunity this presents.

→  
The requirement to meet ambitious targets and agreements on climate action with commitments viewed as very ambitious and a huge challenge to achieve.



“The necessary shift away from car-based planning - especially in the transport planning sector - and towards more sustainable planning ideals centred around sustainable modes and Active Travel is and will remain a considerable undertaking for individual planners, and the industry as a whole.”

“In Ireland, as elsewhere, the lack of urgency regarding direction in planning with a planetary climate impact will be like a double feedback loop that gets worse and worse over time.”



# Housing Crisis

The Planning Profession has a strong role and responsibility in helping to solve the housing crisis. A snapshot of the views of planners surveyed across all sectors are set out below.

## Housing — Crisis

### **Greater collaboration across sectors**

Further collaboration between public and private sector planners was highlighted as a key requirement over the coming years so that developments can be planned better from the outset – reducing, where possible, the likelihood of objections and judicial reviews which lead to lengthy delays, and which are contributing to delays in the system and its ability to deliver housing. There was a suggestion that there should be more access for informal consultation with the public sector – this will bring positive changes in the quality of development proposals presented to Competent Authorities which will, in turn, mean more approvals and an acceleration in the delivery of housing.

### **Clearing the backlog**

The backlog of planning applications currently pending determination by An Bord Pleanála is viewed as a major issue which is exacerbating the housing crisis and demand for development more widely, thereby undermining the function, role, and public perception of the profession. Resourcing was again recognised as the biggest challenge here – alongside a lack of foresight on the potential implications of, for example, the Strategic Housing Development consenting process – with a number of new processes, procedures and requirements either introduced or mooted for near term implementation. The experiences being felt in Northern Ireland appear to be similar, with a prevailing hangover from the transfer of planning powers being a backlog in decision making, and inadequate professional planning staff being available to resource live applications, etc.

“Access to informal consultation with the local authorities will likely improve the quality of development proposals in turn increasing the number of approvals and subsequent acceleration in the delivery of housing.”



Image: Cairn Homes, Archers Wood, Wicklow



**Aidan McLernon**

Interview with Aidan McLernon,  
Head of Planning, Cairn Homes Plc

WATCH  
& LISTEN





Image: The Land Development Agency, Cherry Orchard Point, Dublin 10

## Development Management and Environmental Issues

A greater emphasis on demonstrating the effective balance between development ambitions and environmental concerns was highlighted as a practical issue on the consenting side. This correlates to widely held concerns that there is a lack of specialist technical knowledge in corresponding focussed areas of planning – such as marine spatial planning and environmental planning, as highlighted under the resourcing challenge within the profession – greater understanding and learning on the complexity of environmental issues is required. Specifically from a Northern Ireland perspective, for

example, greater requirements are being placed on Northern Ireland councils to consider ecology, with biodiversity checklists now commonplace in most rural applications. Therefore causing a greater onus on council planners to assess these and ensure ecological considerations are completed, further compounding the stretched role being serviced by the profession. The need to protect, conserve and contribute to the green sector and assets, the promotion of higher densities in cities and towns, and the sustainable development of housing alongside supporting infrastructure were also highlighted.





## Responding to legislative changes and meeting the requirements of Planning Guidelines

Additionally, an ever-changing legislative landscape and the range of guidelines applicable to housing were highlighted as adding to the complexity of getting schemes across the line. The move from SHD to LRD and the changing legislative requirements around the process was also cited – while this change was viewed as positive, it does bring new challenges for Planners to contend with.

This matter of Judicial Reviews (JRs) on large housing applications was continually highlighted. There is a perception held by some respondents that the level of JRs has had an inappropriate influence on policy formulation with some considering this as 'knee jerk' reaction rather than a well-considered position.

The involvement of other invested parties in development of legislation was a concern for many respondents. There is some concern that the planning system, in both the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland, is overly politicised and that this trend can undermine sustainable and appropriate development.

## A reactive system?

A limitation in resources to allow effective forward planning at Local Authority level was also highlighted. Some held concerns that this leads to a reactionary mindset rather than a clear focus on planning for the future.

In the case of Northern Ireland, the transfer of power to local authorities has not settled down fully to date, while there have been challenges with the efficient implementation of the new planning portal. Furthermore, a lack of staff resourcing in planning technical roles and in business support is causing issue in many of the local authorities in Northern Ireland.

## Watch and Listen



### Claragh Mulhern

Interview with Claragh Mulhern, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage



## Regional imbalances?

Some planners highlighted concerns that the system was too heavily weighted in promoting Dublin and this was adversely impacting planning for the regions. There was suggestion that greater attention is required on meeting local needs – and a bespoke, localised approach to planning needs to remain a core consideration of plans across the country.



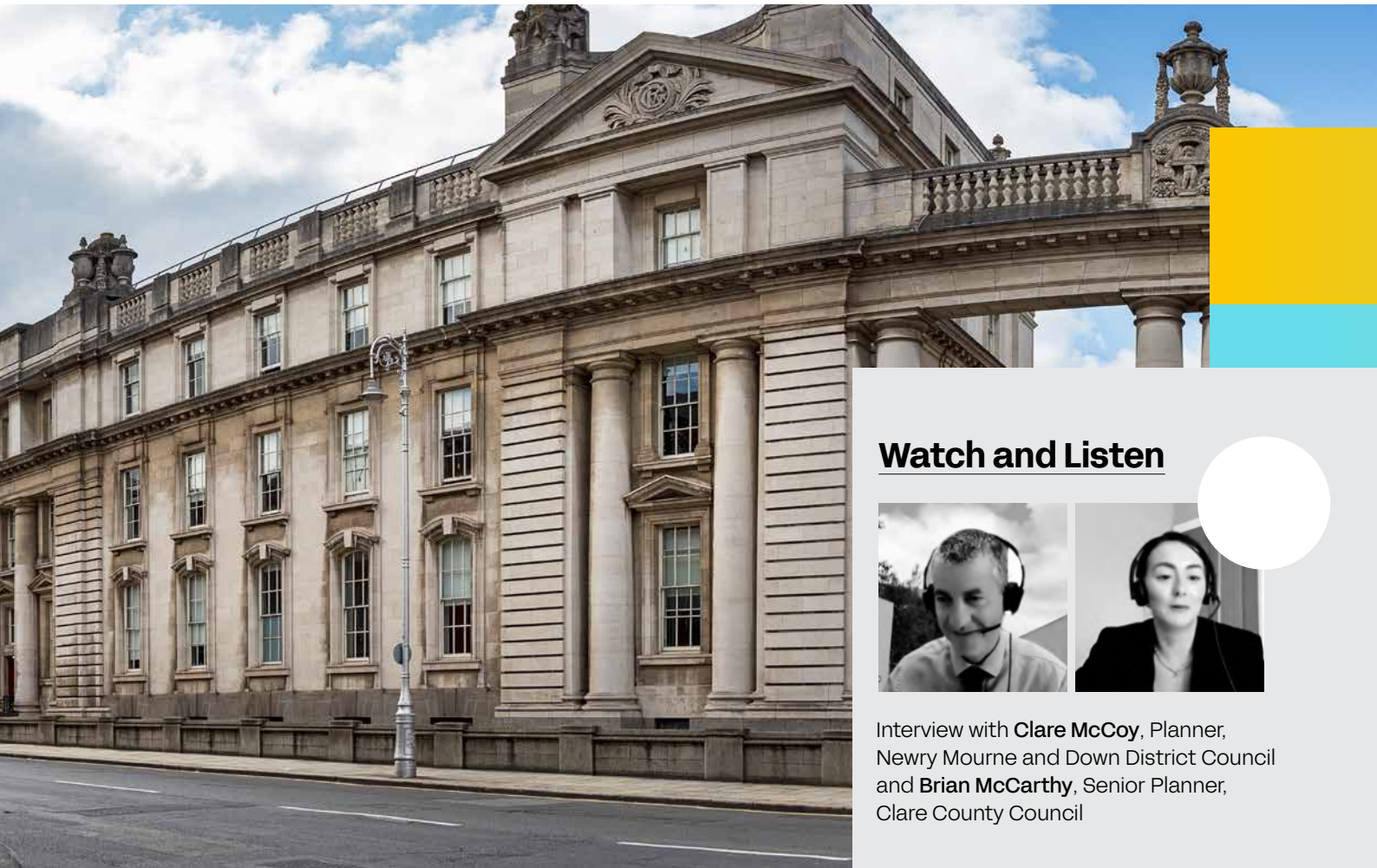


“Planning has become even more of a political football. Changes to the planning system are driven by political rather than planning needs. At a local authority level political rather than planning considerations can dominate decisions.”

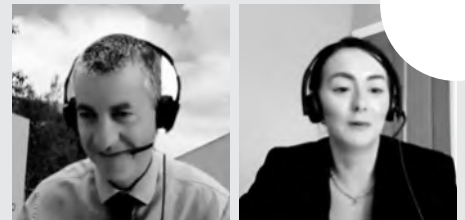




# Role of Legislation




## Watch and Listen



Interview with **Clare McCoy**, Planner, Newry Mourne and Down District Council and **Brian McCarthy**, Senior Planner, Clare County Council

The heavy involvement of the legal system being seen as the final arbiter in planning decisions was highlighted as a serious challenge for the profession currently (invariably linked to the housing delivery challenge), with the role of An Bord Pleanála, third party objections, Judicial Reviews and regular changes to the legislative framework highlighted as among the top topics presenting concerns for practising planners.



“We have gone from very light touch regulation to over-regulation.”

“Government Policy has a huge impact on planning. Over standardisation erodes the system- a bespoke spatial approach is required for different areas.”

“Planning has overcomplicated itself. As mentioned recently, we have a zoning system, a planning system and a legal system. Most jurisdictions only have one. If we compare applications from the early 2000s and now, even with the same legislation, we can see how much longer it takes us to make the same decisions. This uses up planner resources.”

Many responses highlighted the increase in regulation over the past 20 years – and the implication this is having on getting much needed development across the line. There is a view that there is too much red tape, and that the system is unnecessarily bureaucratic. Coupled with the resourcing challenges highlighted – this need to constantly stay on top of legislation and avoid the many pitfalls that can lead to Judicial Reviews is perceived by many to be greatly undermining the function and effectiveness of the system.

Some legislation was seen as regularly changing often without a clear evidential base or with effective consultation - has increased the complexity of the role and added workload to an already time -squeezed sector.

An interesting point on this was that despite the increased complexity and growth in applications, the 8-week statutory limit to determine applications has remained since 1964. There is no real provision or contingency in place to deal with practical issues such as bad weather preventing inspections, weekends and bank holidays not being included in the day count (outside the 9-day Christmas exception), or for times when the backlog of applications is placing unsustainable challenges on Local Authority Planners.

Additionally, the long time periods involved in appeals to An Bord Pleanála and the ease by which Judicial Reviews can be taken on often quite inconsequential procedural issues, were raised as concerning.





# Perception of the Planning Profession

Many respondents feel that the planning profession is poorly understood by the public and that the system, and by association the profession, is portrayed negatively in the press.





“Horrendously poor profile on, and communication of perspectives/ knowledge on planning matters in Ireland to the general population / other stakeholders.”

“There is a general misunderstanding by the wider public of our profession and skill set. Our professional judgement and management of development is not trusted and is being hijacked by legal and political discourse. I can’t think of another profession whose expert work is subject to such scepticism and mistrust.”

Recent investigations and coverage affecting the profession have greatly undermined public trust and confidence, and this is very concerning for planners.

There was a clear desire for the IPI to take a more prominent role in defending the profession, in highlighting the positive work of people in the

profession, and in helping to build understanding and appreciation for the work of planners. The skillsets and expertise of planners are viewed as not being promoted enough and there is a feeling that this is reflecting badly on the profession, both in terms of public perceptions and in the ability to recruit new entrants to the profession.

# Supports

## We asked Planners:

**‘Are there other areas you would like to see the IPI providing support to Members with?’**

Most responses received can be classified as relating to career development or more general supports / benefits that the IPI can provide to its members.

### Career Development Opportunities

Survey respondents called for an enhancement of the opportunities available to young planners particularly in terms of mentorship and with respect to training. Training, continually learning and upskilling of all planners emerged continually across all elements of the survey as a central requirement and essential for a well performing and sustainable sector.

**Some suggestions as to how the IPI can support this including:**



Overcoming the often-negative perception of planning, and specifically reaching out to secondary and third level education students to encourage greater interest and appreciation of the profession



Increased support for the Young Planners Network (YPN).



A more proactive approach to promoting careers in the profession and highlighting the pathways for progression within and across the profession – and delivering tailored training that will support this.



Higher levels of engagement with universities and educational institutes and exploring accreditation further planning courses



Encouraging the development of apprenticeship-style programme for those considering a career in planning.



The support currently available to the Town Regeneration Officers from the National Town Centre First Office was highlighted as a positive example of tailored coaching that could be replicated for different roles and functions across the profession.



Supports to formalise and offer tailored mentorship for new planners – there is a recognised need for experienced planners to share learnings and to coach younger cohorts of the profession more actively. Exchange of ideas can work both ways – recognising that new planners can bring new approaches and ideas is so important and this needs to be actively encouraged by the IPI.



More opportunities for networking, particularly outside of the Dublin region. Alongside this, there were calls for an enhanced level of activity by regional branches of the IPI – this will improve the sharing of knowledge on localised issues and will also enhance the building of relationships and connections across the industry and between those working in the public and private sector.



“Local meetings in each province. Debates, presentation, networking events”

“It sometimes feels that as a new member of the IPI that I know no one, whereas long time members of the IPI all know each other, are networking and can secure senior roles as a result. It can be intimidating and difficult to gain access to this cohort.”

“The continuing progression of young planners and ensuring they have as many social gatherings are possible available to them throughout the year is something that needs to be continually supported and ensures that there is a continuing generational turnover that is not being left to falter in years to come.” (Graduate Planner)

“Mentoring and knowledge sharing similar to support rolled out to newly appointed Town Regeneration Officers”



## **Watch and Listen**

Graduate Planner Aditi Dey shares insights on international experience and the planning profession



### **Aditi Dey**

Analyst (City Planning & Strategy),  
KPMG Future Analytics

# Membership Benefits

## **Broadening the Membership Base**

Several responses noted that the IPI should consider opening membership to wider professions. This would help to develop cross collaboration opportunities and build linkages with relevant, similar professions and professional bodies, such as Engineers Ireland and build specialist knowledge in the planning profession. Whilst full membership of the profession may not be suitable, alternative memberships and sharing of resources may enrich the experience. Suggestions for how this could be achieved included offering dual membership options

The quantitative survey data showed a high proportion of respondents were members of other organisations. The most common of these was the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) but around 10% also held Memberships with Professional Bodies outside of the planning sector including the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI) and Engineers Ireland (EI).

## **Celebrating Planners**

Celebrating the positive contributions of the profession to society, the environment and the economy should be a key focus area for the IPI – according to some of the members surveyed. Highlighting good news stories about planning through media releases would go a long way to improving the image of the sector. Similarly, defending the profession by providing clear, easy to understand reasons and explanations, would enhance public understanding of the complexity of decision making and help to build public support.

Some respondents felt the IPI should have a greater role in advocating for and highlight the critical role played by planners in the system.

The IPI should also seek a more proactive role in interacting with the Department of Housing, Local government and Heritage and other planning bodies to ensure that its member base has a voice at the table and a stronger input in proposed legislative changes.

“Spread good news stories about planning and difference it makes, explain role of planning better to the public, planning is always the bad guy in the media on a regular basis and it is just accepted as profession. A reasoned and measured response would help on some occasions”.

In my opinion, the IPI should take on a larger role in its protection of the reputation of Planners as a vital profession. I am of the opinion that the IPI and planners in generally should feel more open with discussing responses to the housing crises, differing opinions (e.g., height/density/ rural housing/ sprawl/ car dependency), and climate change.



### **Membership Fees**

With the cost-of-living increases, many planners – especially those whose Membership fees are not supported by their employer, view fees as a barrier to entry. This was highlighted most pointedly by those working in Local Authorities. The experience on membership fees was contrasted to the UK position, where the norm is for local government / authorities to cover the fees for membership of professional bodies.

### **Extension of Supports**

An enhancement of the IPI's role in caring for its membership base through the provision of supports for mental health and wellness initiatives, was suggested by some members surveyed. Issues in relation to general resourcing, as highlighted earlier, are linked to an increasing level of stress amongst Planners in Ireland. The heavy workload apparent across the sector lends further support / justification for this type of service.

There were also calls for the IPI to have a more carefully considered approach to inclusivity, diversity and ethical issues. One respondent highlighted a need for more inclusive language in the IPI Code of Conduct with specific reference to he/she pronouns currently used.

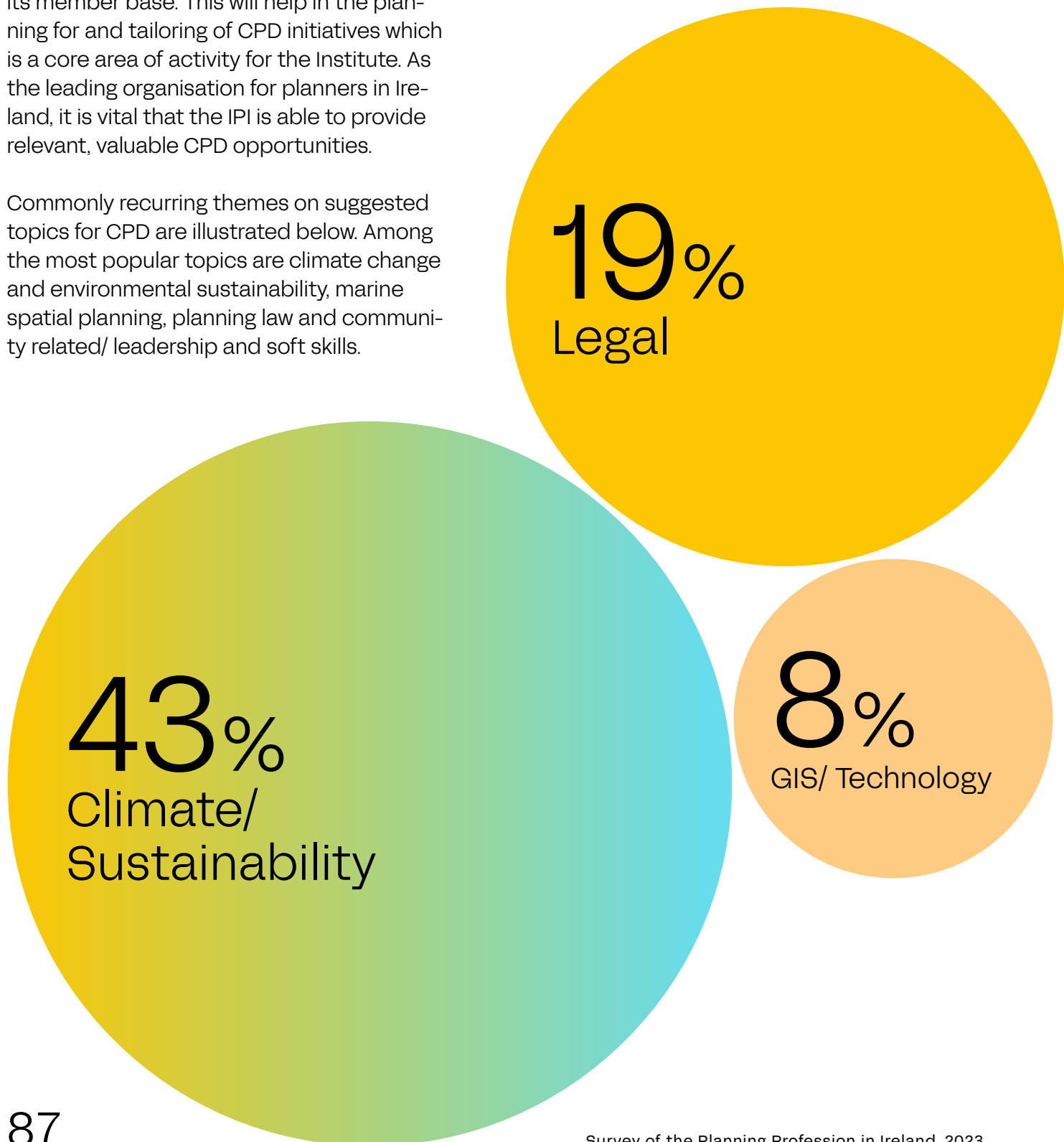
“I think that every organisation/society would benefit greatly from some form of mental wellness programme incorporated into its framework for members to avail of.”

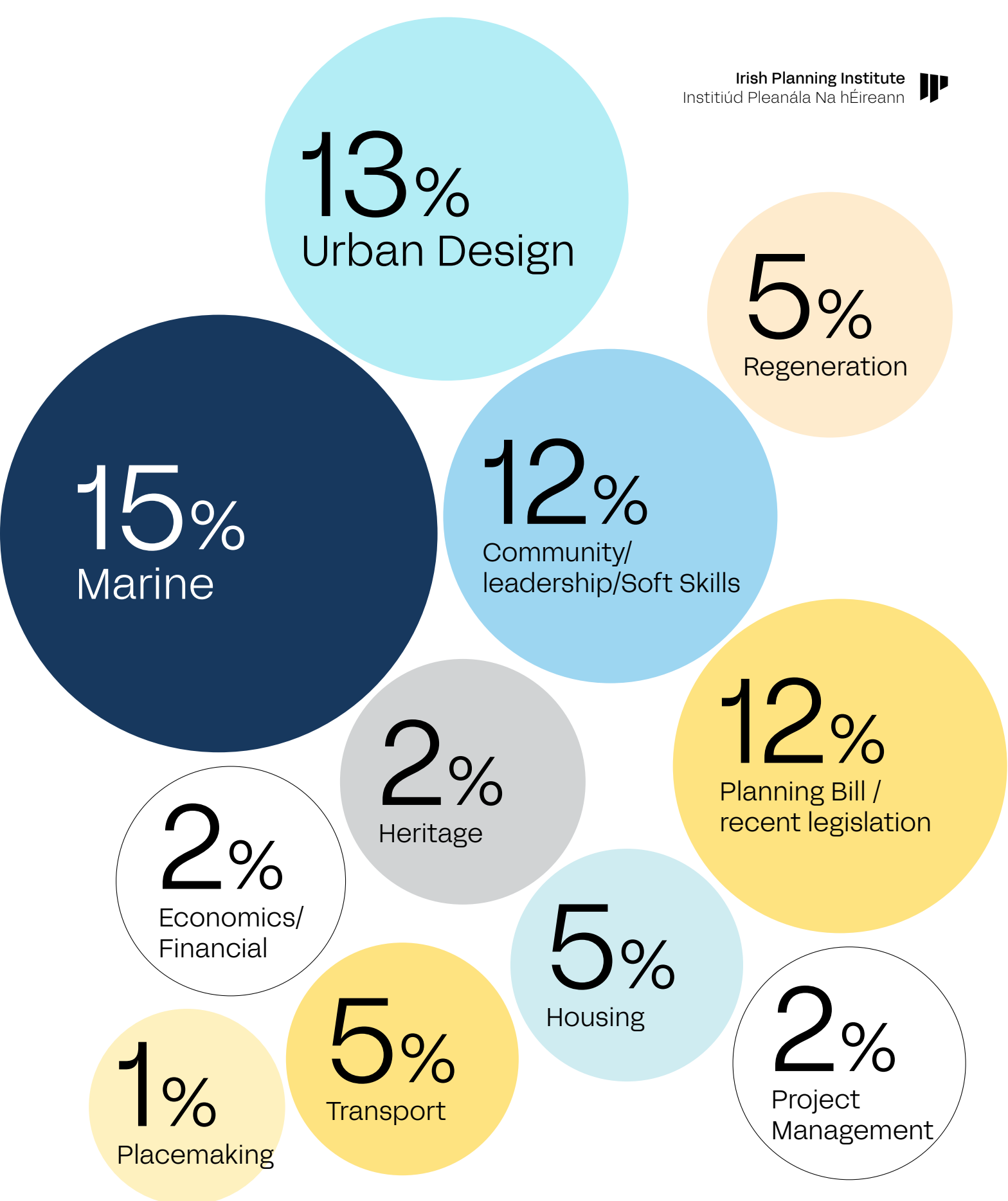


# Training (CPD)

In developing the survey, the IPI was particularly interested in identifying the Continued Professional Development (CPD) needs of its member base. This will help in the planning for and tailoring of CPD initiatives which is a core area of activity for the Institute. As the leading organisation for planners in Ireland, it is vital that the IPI is able to provide relevant, valuable CPD opportunities.

Commonly recurring themes on suggested topics for CPD are illustrated below. Among the most popular topics are climate change and environmental sustainability, marine spatial planning, planning law and community related/ leadership and soft skills.









### **Climate change and environmental sustainability**

CPD that will enable planners to better respond to climate challenges and suitability issues is a clear requirement going forward. As this is such a wide-ranging topic, a program of CPD may be more appropriate than a single module or session. Elements could include biodiversity planning, Climate Action Plans, Renewable Energy, Low Carbon Technologies, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs), environmentally sensitive sites / environmental designations.

### **Marine planning**

Another popular choice for CPD topics was marine spatial planning. Greater practical understanding of the requirements and implications of new legislation and guidelines in this area, including the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 and the National Marine Planning Framework, is needed. This is particularly pertinent given climate change responses and key growth sectors in renewables, such as offshore wind.

## Watch and Listen

Sybil Berne, MacCabe Durney Barnes,  
lends insight to Marine Spatial Planning



### Sybil Berne

Senior Planning Consultant,  
MacCabe Durney Barnes

# WATCH & LISTEN

The Water Framework Directive Assessment has critical implications for development management and further guidance / understanding of its implications is needed. Crossover modules that cover marine spatial planning and biodiversity (on marine environment), would be welcomed. Many planners likely have minimal prior experience of dealing with the complexity of marine environments, and this is further reflected in the survey

which confirms that only around 2% of the respondents seem to have 'Marine Spatial Planning' as an additional qualification – this therefore, emphasises a key requirement for structure training through CPD/Micro credential courses over the coming years.





Image: van Dijk Architect. Rathbane, Limerick City and County Council



Image: The Land Development Agency. Pear Tree Crossing, Dublin 8



## Urban design and placemaking

The topic of Urban Design and Placemaking were identified by many respondents as an area of interest where structured CPD training would be beneficial. Suggestions associated with this topic include practical advice on how to promote and achieve a 15-minute city, encourage active travel through public realm initiatives, safeguard-built heritage and strengthen footfall and activity in an area through design measures. CPD delivered by industry experts and specialists in urban design would be welcomed by Members. Again, case study examples that would help to support an evidence base on the effectiveness of such measures would be welcomed and a facility to share these was suggested as something that the IPI could potentially accommodate.

## New legislation

Some respondents called on the IPI to offer regular briefing and learning sessions on new legislation, as it comes into force. The preparation of practical guidance notes on how to apply new legislation was called for. Others called for the provision of advice on how best to navigate what is often very dense and complicated legal text so that it can be more readily and comprehensively understood. Planning law briefings are very welcomed and should continue to be facilitated by the IPI – the focus can often be on case law which is useful. But there is a need for dedicated sessions on the key elements of new legislation and refresher sessions on established legal frameworks.

## Housing

CPD initiatives specifically focused on the residential sector were also suggested. Delivery of plans for large new housing schemes and zones is a central element of the day-to-day work of planners in Ireland. More should be done to share international case studies, best practices and to hear from international experts on housing planning and delivery. Additionally, as larger applications become more widespread – there is a fear that the practical knowledge gained from working on smaller applications e.g., single dwellings, will be lost.

## Transport Solutions

CPD on all aspects of transport sector and solutions are also required, based on the responses received. Active travel is a rapidly growing area and there is a clear need for planners to upskill so that they can be best placed to deliver projects and offer solutions in this space.

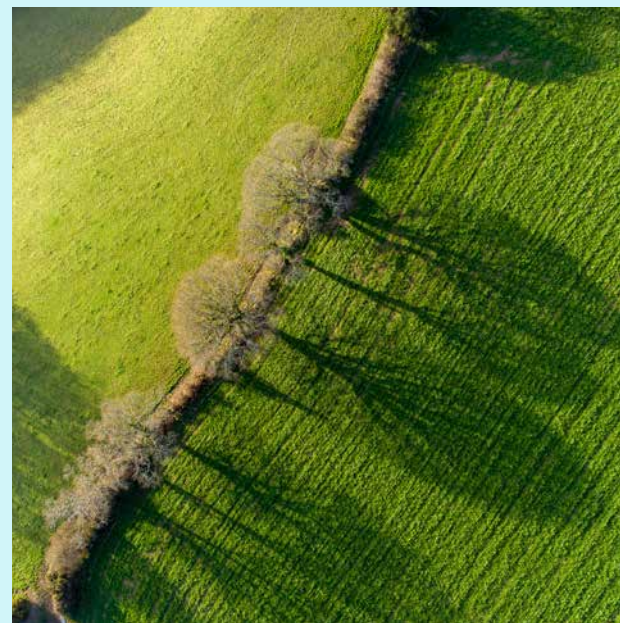
Specific case studies on successfully planned, designed and delivered greenway projects was suggested as a practical measure that could support knowledge sharing across the sector.

**“Active travel is a rapidly growing area and there is a clear need for planners to upskill so that they can be best placed to deliver projects and offer solutions in this space.”**

## Technological training

CPD on technical tools and software such as GIS was another area suggested under this topic. Additionally, CPD on data-driven decision making, digital twinning for housing stock and other technological advances relevant to the profession including the digitisation of the planning system, should be promoted.

**“GIS - support. Most planners who have graduated more than 10 years ago have little practical GIS experience, in comparison to newly graduated planners.”**





## Soft skills

More generalised training on the softer skills of the profession were also suggested as useful CPD topics. In particular, the potential of training in leadership skills, community engagement strategies, communication skills, report writing, and media training were some of the main topics that were seen as key in developing more collaborative and participatory planning. Additionally, general training on project management (and even financial management) were suggested.

**“Specialist micro credentials in association with planning schools as a means of upskilling so that practicing planners can keep up to date with the ever-increasing amount of specialist knowledge, we are expected to have in order to efficiently and effectively carry out our responsibilities.”**



Image: Cairn Homes, Hawkins Wood, Greystones County Wicklow



“Maybe a monthly webinar where topical issues can be discussed, some q and a, and learnings from other councils etc. It’s sometimes hard to see the bigger picture when churning out files every day!”





# Conclusion / Next Steps...

Fundamentally, it is up to all of us working in planning, and the wider construction and development sector, to make it an attractive career choice for students and graduates. The Institute is committed to working with the planning schools and other stakeholders to promote planning as a career to second level students and undergraduates. The Institute is committed to ensuring climate action and sustainability remains at the heart of what we do and ensuring potential students, and the general public, understand that achieving sustainable futures for different places is the core of planning and that studying planning uniquely places students at the centre of delivering climate action and sustainable development.

## **Other actions to address the current resourcing challenges may include:**

Revisiting the salary scales for lower planning grades in the public sector and the requirement for new entrants to begin at the first point on the salary scale which may be discouraging those with experience in the private sector or overseas from applying.

Bursaries for students, particularly postgraduates, studying planning helping encourage students from a wide range of backgrounds study planning and supports to ensure studying planning is as cost effective as possible.

Ensuring accredited planning schools not only have the capacity and resources to teach but also for research and engagement.



Image: The Land Development Agency, Cherry Orchard Point, Dublin 10

Enhancing professional development and promoting planning and planners have been identified as two of our key priorities to 2027. The Institute will now take forward the results of this survey as it advances these.

Exploring mechanism for funding PhD level research in planning at accredited planning schools.

Joined up thinking and alignment of high education and research funding mechanisms so that the urgent needs of the planning sector are addressed.

Recognising that there are also skills shortages in other planning related areas across both technical and administrative roles, including GIS specialists and ecologists.



The Irish Planning Institute acknowledges that this report focuses on the key results of the 'Survey of the Planning Profession 2023' and only includes the high-level insights on the present and potential future for the planning profession. The report briefly touches upon the challenges of resourcing in the profession and the immediate need to 'up-skill' and 'upscale' both the profession as well as the existing pool of specialists in the areas parallel to planning. However, the scope to further assess the existing resources and identifying the extent of the resource gap that needs to be filled is ample and will need to be explored in the light of the constantly evolving social, economic, and environmental (among many other) conditions. Hence, we recognise the need to 'go further' and appreciate that there is merit to explore a more granular study of the profession, perhaps towards a future register of planners, engaging with Central Government and key stakeholders across the sectors to best maintain evidence concerning resourcing of the profession and planning system.







# Appendices



## IPI CENSUS OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION 2023: CROSS INDUSTRY / ECONOMY SURVEY

Thank you for participating in our survey.

The Irish Planning Institute (IPI) is conducting this survey to gather data and insight on the planning profession. The survey will inform the IPI's role in advancing planning in the interest of the common good, by serving, improving and promoting the planning profession.

This survey is open to all individuals with a planning qualification responding in a personnel capacity. You do not need to be a member of the Irish Planning Institute to complete this survey. Separate surveys are being issued to organisations in the public and private sectors for organisational responses.

This survey will take approximately 10 mins to complete. Any queries in relation to this survey can be made to the IPI via [census@ipi.ie](mailto:census@ipi.ie).

You do not have to answer any question you do not want to (with the exception of Question 1). Everything is anonymous and once we have analysed the overall results the individual surveys will be deleted. IP addresses are not retained by the IPI.

The IPI's Data Protection Notice and Policy is available at: <https://ipi.ie/privacy-policy/>  
This research is being conducted with the support of KPMG Future Analytics on behalf of the IPI.

Thank you again for helping us by completing this survey.



**\* 1. Are you a qualified Planner?**

Yes

No

**2. Are you a member of the Irish Planning Institute?**

Student member

Graduate member

Affiliate member

Corporate member

Fellow member

Retired member

Honorary member

Retired member

Not Applicable

If not, why?

**3. Were you previously a member of the Irish Planning Institute, and no longer are?**

Yes

No

If yes, why did you leave the Institute?

**4. Do you hold membership of any other professional accrediting body?**

No

Royal Town Planning Institute

Engineers Ireland

Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

**5. Which age range are you currently in?**

18–24
25–34
35–44
45–54
55–65
66 and over
Prefer not to say

**6. Gender: How do you identify?**

Man
Non-binary
Woman
Prefer to self-describe:

**7. Years’ of experience since gaining your professional Planning qualification?**

2 years
>2 years, <5 years
>=5 years, <10 years
>=10 years, <15 years
>=15 years





**8. Where did you complete your professional Planning qualification?**

University College Dublin

University College Cork

TU-Dublin (formerly known as Dublin Institute of Technology)

Queens University Belfast

Elsewhere in United Kingdom

Outside of Ireland or the United Kingdom

Please specify where in United Kingdom and/or Outside of Ireland or the United Kingdom

**9. What other qualifications do you hold? Please pick all that apply.**

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Urban Design

Engineering

Retail

Property/Real Estate

Telecommunications

Graphic Design

Marine Planning

Project Management

Surveying

Environmental/Ecology

Management/Advisory

GIS

No other qualification

Other (e.g. Construction; Data)

**10. Overall, are you satisfied in your current role?**

Yes

No

**11. What is / are the main reason(s) you would remain in your current role?**

Learning and career development
Work-Life balance
Integrity
Sense of purpose
Culture
Emotional investment
Trust in leadership
Encouragement and recognition
Involvement and belonging
Fair compensation and benefits
Other (please specify)

**12. Please Rank what you feel is/are the biggest challenge(s) facing the planning profession in the coming years? Please rank with 1 as the Most Important and 6 as the Least Important. Please use the arrows to line them in the correct order of your preference.**

Resourcing
Legislative change
Legal challenges
Access to specialist knowledge
Limited remuneration
Other constraints

**13. If there is an issue with ranking the question above, please write them out in order of preference here. Please ignore this question if there was no issue with the rankings.**



14. We welcome further feedback - what other constraints or challenges do you think the planning profession may face over the coming years?

15. What topics would you like to see the subject of CPD delivery from the IPI?

16. Are there other areas you would like to see the IPI providing support to Members with?



# IPI Census Of The Planning Profession 2023 - Local Government and Public Sector Survey

## 1. What type of organisation do you work for:

---

Local Authority

---

Regional Authority

---

State Body (An Bord Pleanála, Office of Planning Regulator, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Department of Infrastructure, etc.)

---

University

---

Other (please specify):

---

## 2. Which organisation do you represent/work for? (The survey is considered at organisational level only).

## 3. Of your professional Planner staff, how many fall within each of the following grades (please use closest equivalent if your organisation uses other grades, options cover Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland grade structures, where necessary please pick the closest relevant grade' ):

---

Director of Service/Executive Manager (ROI)/ Director of Planning (NI):

---

Senior Planner:

---

Senior Executive Planner:

---

Executive Planner:

---

Assistant Planner:

---

Graduate Planner:

---

Student Planner:

---

Other (please specify) / Comment:

---



**4. How many technical and professional staff (excluding clerical / administrative personnel), who are not professionally qualified planners, work:**

within the Planning Department:

in planning-related work but elsewhere within the organisation:

Comment(s): optional

**5. How many professional Planners does your organisation employ outside of your Planning Department (or equivalent):**

**6. Breakdown of the number of professional Planners in:**

Forward Planning:

Policy/ Education/ Research:

Housing:

Urban Regeneration:

Infrastructure, Transport:

Development Management:

Enforcement:

Economic and Enterprise/LEO:

Community:

Marine:

Parks:

Environment/ Biodiversity/ Climate Action:

Other sections:

**7. Please include any other services provided:**

**8. What number, if any, of the qualified planning staff also have a dual qualification in:**

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Urban Design:

Engineering:

Retail:

Property/Real Estate:

Telecommunication:

Graphic Design:

Marine Planning:

Legal:

Project Management:

Surveying:

Environmental/ Ecology:

Management/Advisory:

Other (e.g. Construction; Data); please specify:

**9. Total no. of staff in your organisation? (Approximate)**

**10. Total professional Planners on secondment / career break / maternity leave / long-term leave / similar:**

**11. Does your organisation operate a remote working /hybrid working policy?**

Yes:

No:

Somewhat:

Please add any detail:

**12. Have you hired additional Planners in the last 12 months?**

Yes:

No:

**13. If you have hired extra planners, how many?**

**14. How many planners are provided for in your organisation's workforce plan?**

**15. At present (March 2023), is there a shortfall in reaching this allocation?**

No, there is no shortfall

Yes, there is a shortfall

If yes, please specify numeric value:

**16. Does your organisation face challenges with professional Planner staff retention or recruitment difficulties?**

Yes:

No:



**17. If you have faced challenges, can you please describe these?**

**12. What do you feel is/are the biggest challenge(s) facing the Planning profession in the coming years? Please rank with 1 as the Most Important and 6 as the Least Important. Please use the arrows to line them in the correct order of your preference.**

---

Resourcing

---

Legislative change

---

Legal challenges

---

Access to specialist knowledge

---

Limited remuneration

---

Other constraints

---

**13. If there is an issue with ranking the question above, please write them out in order of preference here. Please ignore this question if there was no issue with the rankings.**

**20. We value your feedback - what other constraints or challenges do you think the planning profession may face over the coming years?**

**21. What topics would you like to see the subject of CPD delivery from the IPI?**

**22. Are there other areas you would like to see the IPI providing support to Members with?**

## IPI CENSUS OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION 2023: PRIVATE SECTOR and SEMI-STATE SURVEY

### 1. What type of organisation do you work for:

Consultancy

Semi-State

Private Company (non-consultancy)

Other (please specify)

### 2. In what year did your organisation begin operating in Ireland/ Northern Ireland (which applies / first)?

Pre-2000

2000–2005

2006–2010

2011–2014

2015–2020

2021–2023

I do not know

Prefer not to say

### 3. In what County/City is your Primary/Head Office located?

**4. Do you actively service projects in (select all that apply):**

Leinster

Munster

Connaught

Ulster

Overseas

None of the above

**5. How many staff does your organisation employ in your planning function?**

Please specify number of staff employed:

Of these, how many are professional Planners?

Of these, how many are non-Planner technical / professional roles?

Of these, how many are administrative / business / support roles?

How many non-Planner staff are working in planning-related / Planner roles?

**6. Of your professional Planner staff, how many fall within the following bands of post-qualification experience:**

2 years

>2 years, <5 years

>=5 years, <10 years

>=10 years, <15 years

>=15 years



**7. Of your professional Planner staff, how many are on secondment / career break/ maternity leave / long-term leave / similar:**

0-5
5-10
10-25
25-50
Other (please specify)

**8. Please indicate any/all additional areas of expertise your organisation provides in addition to Planning. Please click all the apply.**

Project Management
Economics
Architecture
Urban Design
Environmental/Ecology
Property/Real Estate
Engineering
Marine
Energy
Legal Services
Construction
GIS
Other (please specify):

**9. What number, if any, of the qualified planning staff also have a dual qualification in:**

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Urban Design:

Engineering:

Retail:

Property/Real Estate:

Telecommunication:

Graphic Design:

Marine Planning:

Legal:

Project Management:

Surveying:

Environmental/ Ecology:

Management/Advisory:

GIS

Other (e.g. Construction; Data); please specify:

**10. Have you hired additional Planners in the last 12 months?**

Yes:

No:

**11. If Yes, how many additional Planners have you hired in the last 12 months?**

**12. Does your organisation operate a remote working /hybrid working policy?**

Yes:

No:

Somewhat

Please comment on this

**13. Does your organisation face challenges with professional Planner staff retention or recruitment difficulties?**

Yes:

No:

Please comment on this

**14. What do you feel is/are the biggest challenge(s) facing the planning profession in the coming years? Please rank with 1 as the Most Important and 6 as the Least Important. Please use the arrows to line them in the correct order of your preference.**

Resourcing

Legislative change

Legal challenges

Access to specialist knowledge

Limited remuneration

Other constraints

**15. If there is an issue with ranking the question above, please write them out in order of preference here. Please ignore this question if there was no issue with the rankings.**

**16. We welcome further feedback - what other constraints or challenges do you think the planning profession may face over the coming years?**



17. What topics would you like to see the subject of CPD delivery from the IPI?

18. Are there other areas you would like to see the IPI providing support to Members with?





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# Survey of the Planning Profession in Ireland, **2023**



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