The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn

Member Research 2026

Key findings and next steps





Introduction

Earlier this year, **3,255 members took part** in the most comprehensive membership survey Lincoln's Inn has undertaken. The research was designed to help us better understand members' experiences, priorities and expectations, and to ensure that our future plans are informed by the views of our membership.

We heard from members across the breadth of the Inn, including Students, Hall Members and Benchers, with responses received from practising and non-practising members, judges, and members based both in the UK and internationally.

The findings provide a clear picture of what members value most about the Inn, where there are opportunities to improve, and what members would like to see from Lincoln's Inn in the years ahead.

While there are areas where we can do better, the overall message is positive. Members value Lincoln's Inn, are proud to belong to it, and want us to build on the qualities and strengths that make the Inn distinctive.

Respondent breakdown

- 60% Hall Members (1,948 respondents)
- 31% Student Members (1,015 respondents)
- 9% Benchers (292 respondents)
- Among Hall Members and Benchers, 51% were practising members, 29% were not practising, and 3% were judges in England and Wales.
- Responses were received from members based both in the UK and internationally, with 2,411 UK-based respondents and 839 international respondents.

We have a strong foundation

One of the clearest findings from the research is the strength of feeling members have towards the Inn.

Overall, 84% of respondents rated Lincoln's Inn positively as a membership organisation. Three quarters said they feel a sense of belonging at the Inn, and the same proportion clearly recognise the benefits of membership.

Members described Lincoln's Inn as a respected institution that combines tradition with relevance. Many highlighted the importance of being part of an organisation with a strong heritage while also supporting members in a changing and increasingly complex professional environment.

This positive sentiment was reflected across many aspects of the research. Members consistently identified education, training, career development and professional community as some of the most valuable contributions the Inn makes to both the profession and individual careers.

The findings demonstrate that Lincoln's Inn continues to hold a unique place within the profession. For many members, it represents far more than a professional requirement. It is a source of identity, support, learning and connection throughout a career at the Bar.

Key findings

- 84% rate the Inn positively overall.
- 75% feel a sense of belonging at the Inn.
- 75% recognise clear benefits from membership.
- Members consistently associate the Inn with professional support, education and community.

Members have told us what matters most

Members were clear about where they would like the Inn to focus its efforts in the years ahead.

Members consistently told us that the greatest value the Inn provides lies in education, professional development, networking and community. Rather than calling for a different direction, members want us to build on these strengths and ensure they remain relevant and accessible throughout their careers.

Education emerged as the Inn's highest priority. Nearly two thirds of respondents identified education and support for future barristers as one of the Inn's most important roles.

Training and career development opportunities for practising barristers were the second most common priority, followed by opportunities to build professional networks and connections with colleagues across the profession.

Members also placed significant value on mentoring, wellbeing support, networking opportunities and the broader sense of professional community that the Inn provides.

These findings reinforce the importance of our core purpose. Members continue to place the greatest value on activities that help them develop professionally, expand their networks and maintain a meaningful connection with the wider profession.

Key findings

- 63% prioritise education and support for future barristers.
- 51% prioritise training and career development.
- 43% prioritise networking and professional connections.
- Members continue to place significant value on mentoring and community.

We know we need to make membership work better for more people

While the research highlights many strengths, it also identified areas where members feel there is room for improvement.

Not all members experience the value of membership in the same way. Although overall satisfaction remains strong, levels of engagement vary significantly between different groups of members. Only 45% of respondents felt that current activities and services fully reflect their professional priorities and interests, while 43% reported that they had not used an Inn benefit or service during the previous 12 months.

The research identified a number of groups that face greater barriers to participation. Members based outside London and the South East, members with disabilities, members with caring responsibilities and Hall Members consistently reported lower levels of engagement and greater difficulty accessing the opportunities available through the Inn. Members highlighted challenges relating to location, time, professional commitments and caring responsibilities, which can affect their ability to participate in events and activities.

Members with disabilities were also less likely to report positive experiences of belonging and inclusion, with 17% disagreeing that they feel they belong at the Inn and 13% disagreeing that the Inn's culture is inclusive, diverse and welcoming.

The research also highlighted experiences of exclusion among some members. Six per cent of respondents said they had felt excluded because of aspects of their background. Among those members, socio-economic background (46%) and ethnicity (44%) were the most commonly cited factors, followed by educational background (29%), religion or belief (21%) and gender (15%). Qualitative feedback suggests that some members perceive aspects of Inn life and some traditional events as less accessible or reflective of the diversity of the modern profession.

These findings highlight opportunities to strengthen engagement, accessibility and inclusion, helping to ensure that the support, services and professional connections offered by the Inn are experienced more consistently across the membership.

Key findings

- 45% feel current activities reflect their professional priorities.
- 43% have not used an Inn benefit or service within the last year.
- Members outside London report greater barriers to engagement.
- Members with disabilities and caring responsibilities report lower levels of accessibility and participation.
- Hall Members report lower levels of engagement than other member groups.

What members can expect from us

The findings from this research will play an important role in shaping the Inn's future direction. The research highlights the importance of continuing to invest in the areas members value most, while ensuring that opportunities, services and support remain accessible, relevant and beneficial to members throughout their careers.

Over the coming years, our priorities will focus on:

Strengthening education and professional development

Members have made it clear that education and learning remain central to the Inn's purpose. We will continue to develop opportunities that support members throughout every stage of their careers, from qualification through to senior practice. This includes ensuring our education and professional development offer remains relevant to the changing needs of the profession, reflects emerging areas of practice and provides flexible opportunities for members to learn, develop and maintain professional excellence throughout their careers.

Creating more opportunities for professional connection

Members value opportunities to learn from one another, build professional relationships and feel part of a wider professional community. We will continue to explore new ways of supporting these connections, recognising that meaningful professional relationships are built in a variety of settings. Our aim is to provide opportunities for members to connect, collaborate and share experiences throughout their careers, helping to strengthen the sense of community that sits at the heart of the Inn.

Improving accessibility and reach

We want more members to be able to engage with the Inn regardless of where they are based or how they practise. This includes continuing to develop digital, regional and flexible ways to participate, while ensuring that our services, activities and communications are accessible and responsive to the differing needs of our membership. By reducing barriers to engagement, we can help more members benefit from the opportunities, support and professional connections available through the Inn.

Building an inclusive community

We remain committed to ensuring all members feel welcome, valued and represented within the Inn. The research provides important insight into where further progress can be made and highlights the strong link between inclusion, belonging and long-term engagement. We will continue to foster an environment where members from all backgrounds can participate fully in the life of the Inn and where the diversity of the profession is reflected in our activities, culture and decision-making.

Listening to members

Members told us they want greater opportunities to contribute to the future direction of the Inn. We will continue to create opportunities for members to share their views and help shape our future priorities, ensuring that decisions are informed by member feedback and evolving needs. By strengthening how we listen and respond, we can build a more member-centred organisation and ensure that the Inn remains relevant, responsive and connected to the profession we support.

Looking ahead

The research provides a strong foundation for the next phase of Lincoln's Inn's development.

Members continue to express pride in the Inn and confidence in its purpose. They value what the Inn stands for, the support it provides and the role it plays within the profession.

Our task now is to build on those strengths, ensuring that the opportunities, support and sense of community that members value are accessible to as many members as possible.

By listening closely to what members have told us, we can ensure Lincoln's Inn remains a source of education, professional development, opportunity and community throughout every stage of a member's career.

In the new year, we will publish a new four-year strategy "**Sharpening our focus, strengthening our future**", informed by the member survey results, which charts a clear path for the Inn to be a modern, sustainable, future-ready organisation that delivers an exceptional member experience.