



**Informing Progress - Shaping the Future**

## **FOIL Update 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026**



## **Record Exam Activity Signals a Brighter Future for UK Insurance**

The recruitment challenges facing the insurance profession received an encouraging boost recently with figures published by The Chartered Insurance Institute (CII) highlighting exam sittings have reached a level unseen for a decade. The CII recorded 54,990 exam sittings in 2025, representing the greatest number since 2020 and suggesting the sector is growing in appeal to the next generation of professionals. Set against a backdrop of persistent talent pressures and an ageing workforce, this increase is being seen as a meaningful indicator of the direction of travel for the UK insurance sector.

### **The CII Data in Detail**

When examined more closely, the scale of the growth is impressive; the total number of qualifications completed in 2025 increased by 4% to 15,182, with general insurance and personal finance each recording 4% growth. Individuals completing general insurance training rose to 8,548, whilst personal finance qualifications reached 6,634. Of the 54,990 exam sittings recorded, 27,856 were general insurance exams, a 3% year-on-year increase, and 27,134 were finance exams, a 0.6% increase.

The latest data builds upon the positive momentum from the previous year, with CII data from 2024 showing a 15% annual increase in the number of completed insurance qualifications. The most frequently completed qualifications were the Level 3 Certificate in Insurance, the Level 3 Award in London Market Insurance, and the Level 4 Diploma in Insurance, indicating that more people are looking to progress their careers in insurance. In

addition, growth has been seen across both domestic and international learners, reflecting the value placed on CII learning and assessments worldwide.

Nicola Mellor, Director of Qualifications and Assessment at the CII, welcomed the 2025 results and described the growth as "*brilliant to see*" and suggested the CII's ongoing investment in accessible, flexible qualification pathways is bearing fruit and professionals entering the sector are increasingly choosing to validate their knowledge through structured professional development.

### **The Talent Crisis**

The UK insurance industry has been contending with a well-documented talent deficit for several years, which places greater significance on these qualifications in the context of the issues they are beginning to address. Among the major issues is the perception of insurance as a steady sector lacking innovation and a forward-thinking mentality.

According to the CII, 25% of the UK insurance sector is set to retire within the next decade, a challenge affecting both the profession's ability to attract new talent and ensuring knowledge transfer from knowledgeable professionals to inexperienced colleagues. The number of insurance professionals aged over 50 now equals those aged under 30, serving as a stark indicator of the demographic imbalance within UK general insurance and threatening a significant skills gap. This structural problem is intensified by the rapid pace of technological change, as 63% of senior managers acknowledge there is a digital skills gap within their teams, with 30% describing it as a "*very serious issue*."

The recruitment pipeline has also faced headwinds from outside the sector. Roles that require strong technical proficiency, a sound knowledge of regulations, or experience in fast-changing areas such as ESG and cyber insurance are particularly difficult to fill, with graduates increasingly attracted by opportunities in the fintech and technology sectors. Surveys of business students consistently rank insurance well below technology and finance as a desirable career, and 2025 saw an 18% drop in graduate vacancies across the sector. This is despite a 13.5% increase in graduate hires between 2020 and 2022.

Against this backdrop, the CII's positive examination figures represent a counter-narrative and demonstrate that, with the right infrastructure, pathways, and professional recognition, people can and do choose to start and build a career in insurance.

### **Creating Opportunities with Apprenticeships**

The CII's data arrives alongside a broader push to diversify entry routes into insurance, with the CII and Personal Finance Society (PFS) opening entries for their 2026 Apprenticeship Awards to correspond with National Apprenticeship Week 2026. Now in their fourth year, the awards are designed to recognise the achievements and commitment to apprenticeships by professionals, firms and training providers across the insurance and personal finance sectors.

CII President Callum Beaton is clear on the value of this approach, describing apprenticeships as "*an excellent route into the profession, combining hands-on experience with expertise evidenced by professional qualifications.*" The CII has outlined its intention to leverage mentoring and networking as ways to maintain contact with award winners, finalists, judges, and providers to support longer-term career development.

The latest CII exam statistics and its continued emphasis on apprenticeships suggest that formal study is being strengthened by consistent, structured workplace training, and this can support firms in widening entry routes, addressing specialist skills gaps and managing succession planning.

### **The Long-Term Vision**

Underpinning much of this activity is the CII's Professional Map, which was introduced at the beginning of 2024 as a career development tool. The map outlines the behavioural and technical characteristics that define a well-rounded international insurance and personal finance professional, providing insights on how individuals can maximise their performance and enjoy a rewarding career. The CII aims to motivate more insurance professionals to actively seek learning opportunities by embedding the tool into qualification pathways and delivering an experience that develops the skills needed in the sector and meets diverse career goals.

To emphasise the CII's focus on professional behaviours as a prerequisite for career development, the Professional Map features in 'Future Focus', the CII publication detailing the wide selection of qualifications available. In line with the FCA's Consumer Duty, the competency framework sets out the behaviours, enablers and technical expertise required by well-rounded professionals to succeed and foster better customer outcomes. This regulatory alignment allows the industry to demonstrate the professional rigour and consumer-focused competence needed to inspire public trust.

### **Cause for Optimism, but Work to Do**

The CII's record examination numbers are a big positive for insurance and suggest the sector's sustained efforts to improve its professional proposition through clearer career pathways, more accessible qualifications and a growing apprenticeship culture are beginning to yield results.

There is still work to do; the perception problem the industry faces still exists, with only 4% of young people seeing a career in insurance as appealing, and over 70% of UK insurers reporting a talent shortage that is limiting their capacity for growth and effective claims management. Additionally, as AI, climate risk, and cyber threats continue to reshape the fundamentals of insurance, the demand for highly skilled, adaptable professionals is set to intensify.

However, the CII's figures demonstrate the foundations are being laid and that more people are studying, qualifying and demonstrating a commitment to the insurance profession. For

an industry whose long-term strength relies on the quality of its people, this is the right direction of travel and gives genuine reasons to look to the future with confidence.

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