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# Life Sciences and Healthcare M&A 2025: A year in review

## KEY POINTS:



- Despite geopolitical uncertainty contributing to a subdued first half of the year for Irish M&A activity generally in 2025, a significant rebound in the second half saw the year end on a strong note, with overall deal volume recording a moderate increase relative to 2024 levels.
- In the life sciences and healthcare sector specifically, 2025 was a strong year for inbound M&A activity, with Ireland recording a significant increase in cross-border transactions. A combination of strategic acquisitions by industry participants and continued investment by PE sponsors underscored the sustained appetite for Irish life sciences and healthcare assets, reinforcing Ireland's position as a key destination for foreign investment in the sector.
- Deal volume in the sector was down year-on-year compared to 2024 levels, but a number of high-value landmark transactions accounted for a surge in total deal value, resulting in life sciences and healthcare recording the highest reported deal value of any target sector in 2025.
- The outlook for 2026 is optimistic. With growing momentum in private equity activity, a stable interest rate environment, and sustained appetite for foreign investment in Ireland, deal activity is expected to remain strong. Geopolitical uncertainty, however, is likely to persist as a factor influencing M&A activity throughout 2026, albeit against a backdrop of improving market fundamentals.

## 1. M&A MARKET 2025: YEAR IN REVIEW

Dealmaking in Ireland in 2025 largely mirrored global M&A trends – the outlook coming into the year was hopeful, yet measured, with confidence stemming from the accelerated growth of the life sciences, technology and energy sectors and, in particular, the prospect of activity in the AI capabilities and technology space.

The impact of geopolitical events curtailed that expectation early on, with subdued levels of M&A activity in the first half of the year. Ultimately, however, the cautious optimism was not misplaced and activity rebounded in the latter half of 2025, resulting in a moderate increase in deal volume on a year-on-year basis.

Private equity activity grew by c. 20% in 2025. Strategic acquirers, however, continued to drive much of the activity, as companies focused on portfolio realignment - whether defensive or transformative - and scope-expanding deals.

In 2025, private equity activity  
grew by approximately

20%

## 2. 2025 LIFE SCIENCES AND HEALTHCARE M&A

Trends in the life sciences and healthcare sector largely mirrored those in the broader Irish M&A market. Although disruptions stemming from US trade policy tempered activity in the sector during the first six months, by year-end much of the uncertainty had receded, with potentially disruptive policies impacting the sector (including tariffs and most-favoured-nation drug pricing) proving less impactful than US and multinational industry players had initially anticipated.

Notwithstanding a year-on-year reduction in deal volume, deal value for the life sciences and healthcare sector remained high, driven by a number of landmark transactions. Life sciences and healthcare recorded the highest reported deal value of any target sector in 2025, with notable market-leading transactions including Mallinckrodt plc's (now Keenova Therapeutics) combination with Endo, Inc., Avadel Pharmaceuticals plc's acquisition by Alkermes plc, and InvestIndustrial's acquisition of DCC Healthcare. These transactions, and the wider trends driving them, are explored in our **Key Trends – Deal Focus** section on the next page.

In terms of buyer profile, while strategic transactions dominated the market by deal value, private equity remained a significant driver of life sciences and healthcare M&A, with 37% of deals in the sector involving private equity or venture capital sponsors. Private equity-backed roll-ups were also prominent in areas including healthcare services, nursing homes, and medical distribution.

See our **Key Trends – Deal Focus** section on the next page for more.

Irish life sciences M&A saw continued strength across a number of areas, largely mirroring 2024 trends:

Healthcare and medical devices sectors represented

57%



of deals in the sector, an 8% increase from the previous year.

Pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical deals accounted for

20%



of deals in the sector, on par with 2024 activity levels.

Medtech represented

12%



of deals in the sector, a 2% increase from 2024 levels.

Animal health comprised of

7%













of deals in the sector, in line with 2024 activity levels.



37%

of deals in the life sciences sector involved private equity or venture capital sponsors.

## 3. KEY TRENDS - DEAL FOCUS

KEY TREND	RELEVANT DEALS
 <p>Irish life sciences and healthcare M&amp;A remains dominated by high value strategic transactions.</p> 	<p>We advised <b>Mallinckrodt plc (now Keenova Therapeutics)</b>, an Irish-American manufacturer and global leader in speciality pharmaceuticals, on its USD 6.7 billion combination with Endo, Inc.</p> <p>We also advised Mallinckrodt plc on the post-combination spin-off of Par Health, its generic pharmaceuticals and sterile injectables business.</p> <p>We advised <b>Avadel Pharmaceuticals plc</b>, the Irish-headquartered developer of a uniquely formulated, FDA-approved narcolepsy drug, on its acquisition by Alkermes plc, a global biopharmaceutical company and developer of neuroscience medicines, in a transaction which valued Avadel at up to USD 2.37 billion.</p>
    <p>Private equity and venture capital drove a significant portion of Irish life sciences M&amp;A activity in 2025, highlighting the attractive opportunities and potential for further growth that exists in the sector in Ireland.</p>	<p>We advised <b>InvestIndustrial</b> on its acquisition of DCC Healthcare, an independently operated division of DCC plc, in a transaction which valued DCC Healthcare at GBP 1.05 billion on a cash free, debt-free basis.</p> <p>We advised <b>Advent International</b>, an international private equity firm, on its acquisition of a significant minority stake in Felix Pharmaceuticals, a leading global developer and manufacturer of generic animal pharmaceuticals with a significant portfolio of products.</p> <p>We advised <b>Foundry Innovation &amp; Research 1 Ltd.</b> on its funding round, in which it successfully raised USD 120 million. The financing will enable FIRE1 to advance clinical trials for its innovative remote monitoring solution for heart failure patients.</p> <p>We advised <b>TA Associates Management LP</b>, a leading global private equity firm, on its acquisition of Clanwilliam Group, an Irish-founded provider of electronic healthcare record technology serving more than 1.5 million clinical users worldwide.</p>
    <p>Ireland's strong life sciences and healthcare infrastructure continues to attract overseas acquirers, with international pharma, MedTech and veterinary-health companies expanding their European footprint through targeted Irish acquisitions.</p>	<p>We advised <b>Quasar Medical</b>, the Hong Kong-based manufacturer and seller of minimally invasive medical devices on its acquisition of Nordson Corporation's design and development contract manufacturing businesses in Galway, Ireland, and Tecate, Mexico. Nordson Corporation is a United States headquartered manufacturer of dispensing and packaging equipment for consumer and industrial adhesives, sealants and coatings, as well as testing equipment of electronic components.</p> <p>We advised <b>IMA Group</b> on its acquisition of ProSys Sampling Systems Limited, a Cork-based provider of isolator and sampling equipment to the global bio-pharmaceutical market. IMA Group is a company involved in the design, development and production of automatic machines for the processing and packaging of pharmaceutical products, medical devices, and consumer goods.</p> <p><b>Merck &amp; Co Inc</b> (via MSD Ireland) acquired the WuXi Vaccines manufacturing facility in Dundalk from WuXi Biologics (Cayman) Inc, for a consideration of EUR 500 million in Q1 2025, reflecting an emerging trend of acquisitions of manufacturing plants and facilities by strategic acquirers. This is explored further in our <b>What's Next?</b> section below.</p> <p>On the MedTech front, <b>Nucleus Genomics Inc</b>, the United States-based provider of genome tests to analyse DNA, has acquired Cambrean, the Ireland-based developer of health data tracking mobile applications. Cambrean's technology combines real-time tracking from health-tech wearables (smart watches, smart rings) with baseline genetic assessments to provide users with data which would help them mitigate risks for chronic diseases.</p>

## 4. WHAT'S NEXT?

## IRELAND'S INVESTMENT PROPOSITION



The Irish life sciences and healthcare sector continues to present attractive M&A opportunities, underpinned by ongoing **innovation, strategic investment, and robust growth fundamentals**. Ireland's established base of life sciences businesses, supported by a skilled workforce and well-developed research and funding infrastructure, positions the country as an attractive destination for corporate acquirers seeking to strengthen their market position.

## STRATEGIC CONSOLIDATION AND INNOVATION-LED M&amp;A



Looking ahead to 2026, **industry consolidation** is expected to be a key driver of M&A activity in the life sciences sector, in tandem with the continued growth of private equity activity. Established pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies are anticipated to prioritise acquisitions that deliver access to breakthrough technologies and expand their reach. Among the developments observed in 2025 Irish life sciences M&A, the emergence of a cluster of manufacturing plant and production facility acquisitions is reflective of the wider themes of industry consolidation and strategic investment in physical infrastructure that have recently characterised the sector. The most significant of these was **Merck & Co Inc's** EUR 500 million acquisition of the **WuXi Vaccines** manufacturing facility in Dundalk, which underscored the continued appetite of global pharmaceutical companies for established Irish production assets. This was accompanied by other facility-level transactions across the sector, including **Quasar Medical's** acquisition of **Nordson Corporation's** contract manufacturing operations in Galway and **Gaelic Laboratories Ltd's** acquisition of **Athlone Laboratories Ltd**, a manufacturer and supplier of lactam antibiotics. We expect continued investment in physical infrastructure to remain a feature of the Irish life sciences sector in 2026.

## NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY: GEOPOLITICAL AND TRADE POLICY RISKS



**International political volatility** will continue to pose challenges to M&A activity in 2026. Although US pharmaceutical tariff policy had a more limited impact on the Irish market than initially expected in 2025, developments in US and global trade policies remain a relevant factor for transaction activity, and overall outlook, in the period ahead.

POLICY IN FOCUS:  
A NATIONAL STRATEGY

Ireland's 2025 Programme for Government committed to developing a **National Life Sciences Strategy** aimed at maintaining the sector's competitiveness and establishing a coherent, ambitious framework for future growth. Whilst the strategy should provide a longer-term policy roadmap for pharma, biopharma and medtech, its effect on, or indeed its benefits for, M&A activity in 2026 remain to be seen. Potential touchpoints include investment screening settings, innovation and reimbursement incentives, and alignment with evolving EU initiatives, but the practical impact on transactions will only become clear once the strategy is finalised and implemented.

POLICY IN FOCUS:  
FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

It has now been more than a year since the new **Irish FDI screening regime** entered into force, introducing mandatory notification requirements for qualifying acquisitions of Irish assets or undertakings that may raise national security or public order concerns. While its overall impact on M&A activity remains difficult to assess at this early stage, the limited transparency around the basis on which "no screening required" letters are issued continues to create uncertainty for deal advisers and transaction planning. A statutory report on the operation of the regime is due to be presented to the legislature by 6 April 2026, and it is hoped that this will offer meaningful insights into how the regime is being applied in practice, including the types of transactions that are more likely to be screened. Such guidance would provide much-needed clarity for users of the regime and their advisers as they navigate filing requirements in future transactions.

## 2026 OUTLOOK



The outlook for life sciences M&A in 2026 therefore remains positive. Ireland continues to present an attractive proposition for both strategic investors and private equity houses seeking to capitalise on continued development and innovation in the Irish life sciences sector.

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