



Trends in the solicitors' profession Annual Statistics Report 2020

March 2022

The professional body for solicitors

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Key statistics

Key statistics on the profession for 2019 and 2020

	31 July 2019	31 July 2020	Annual % change
Solicitors on the Roll *	195,821	202,374	+3.3%
Solicitors with Practising Certificates (PCs)	146,953	149,891	+2.0%
Private practice firms registered in E&W	9,339	9,109	-2.5%
Women solicitors with PCs	75,764	78,256	+3.3%
Women Partners	8,708	8,791	+1.0%
Solicitors from minority ethnic groups with PCs **	20,675	20,505	-0.8%
Solicitors working in private practice ***	95,028	95,954	+1.0%
Solicitors employed outside private practice	29,483	31,187	+5.8%
New solicitors admitted to the Roll (in year to 31 July)	6,972	6,722	-3.6%
Trainee solicitor registrations (in year to 31 July)	6,344	5,626	-11.3%

* The number of solicitors on the Roll from 2015 is not directly comparable with total Roll numbers from previous years, following the absence of a keeping of the Roll exercise undertaken by SRA since July 2014.

** Following a change to online provision of ethnicity information by solicitors in 2014 there is a greater incidence of non-reporting than before that date.

*** Private practitioners in English and Welsh law firms.

Executive summary

- The number of solicitors with practising certificates (PC holders) reached 149,891 – an increase of 2% in the twelve months to 31 July 2020. There were 202,374 solicitors on the Roll in total.
- Women with practising certificates outnumbered men by over 6,600 – making up over 52% of all PC holders.
- PC holders from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds made up 17.6% (from those with known ethnicity).
- The proportion of those working in-house grew by 1% (to 24% of all PC holders) from the year before (a likely underestimate as some PC holders are not officially recorded as working in-house).

Chart 1: Solicitors on the Roll in England and Wales

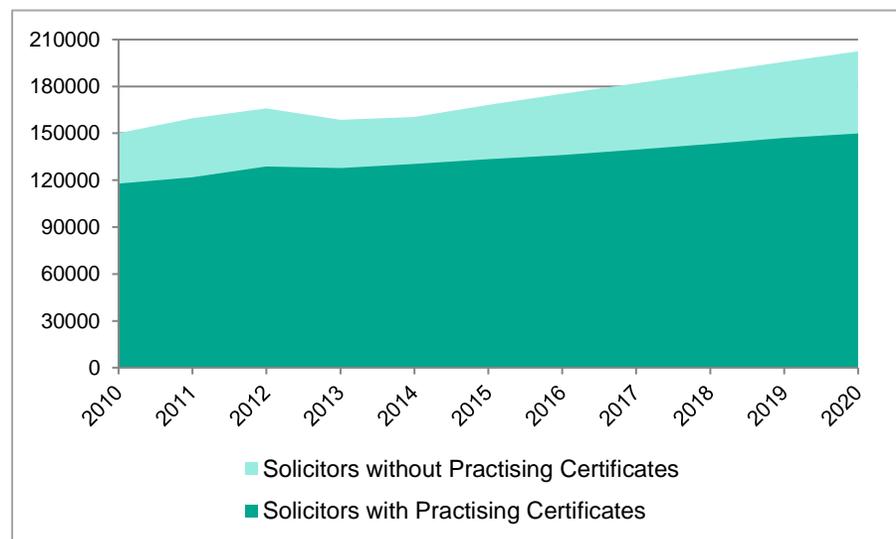
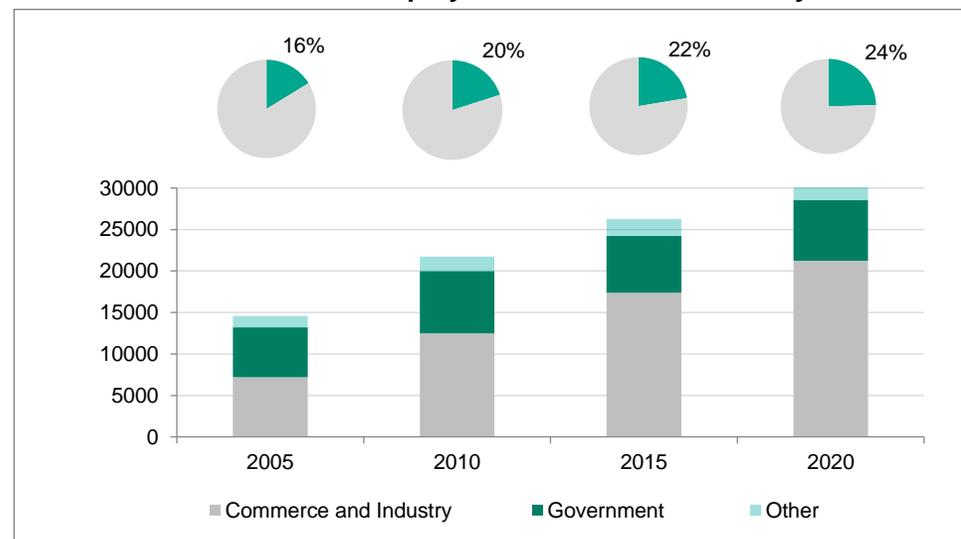


Chart 2: In-house share of employed solicitors and levels by sector



Executive summary

- Students graduating with degrees in Law from universities in England and Wales continued to rise, reaching over 17,000 in 2020. 80% of students graduated with a First or Upper Second classification.
- Trainee registrations dropped by over 11%. Coronavirus and the national lockdowns had an impact as the trainee registrations from April to July 2020 were, on average, 39% less than the previous year.
- The rate of growth amongst number of Roll admissions slowed after five years to a 4% decline from the year before.

Chart 3: Number of students accepted onto and graduating from first law degrees in E&W

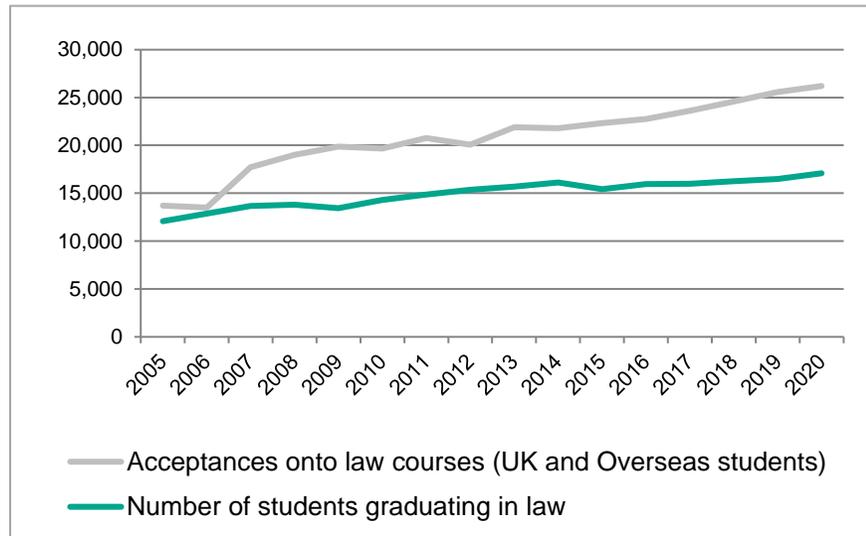
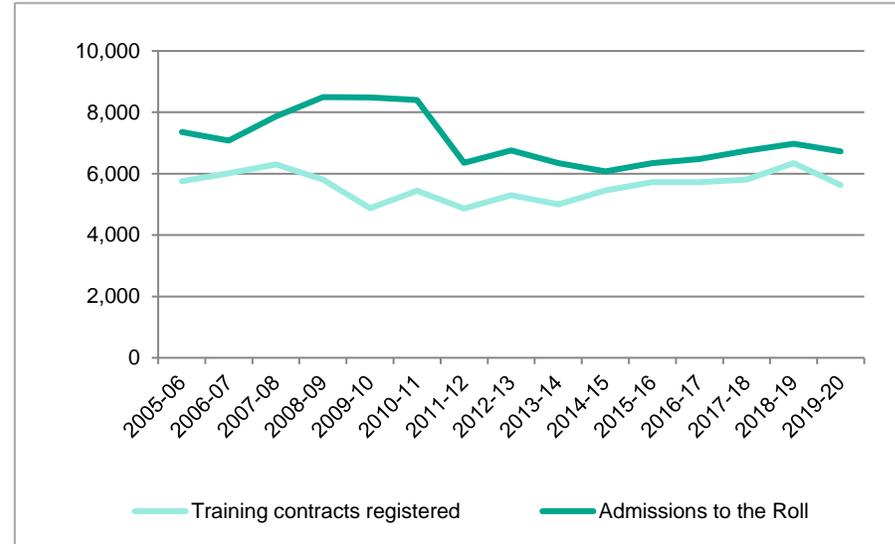


Chart 4: Number of training contracts registered and admissions to the Roll over time



Introduction

The Law Society's Annual Statistics Report (ASR) has been compiled for over thirty years and provides a comprehensive picture of how the solicitors' profession has evolved over the long-run in terms of size and structure. The Report provides an authoritative record of the numbers of solicitors and the types of organisations in which they work.

The emphasis of the ASR has tended to be on private practice, which continues to employ the majority of practising solicitors. However, the numbers employed in-house by organisations ranging from FTSE and private companies to local authorities now make up almost one-quarter of the profession. This year's report expands on visually representing the distribution of PC holders by gender, ethnicity, region, and sector.

Part 1 of the Report looks at qualified solicitors, the sectors and the entities in which they work, and provides analysis of the diversity within the profession. Part 2 covers the development and entry of new solicitors including numbers pursuing law degrees, training contracts and being admitted to the profession through various routes. Throughout, sections start with a summary of the key facts and developments, referring to detailed tables and charts that follow.

Information on the solicitors' profession contained in the ASR is unique in terms of the depth of analysis of individuals and firms. Consistent timing of data capture during the year permits reliable time-series analysis (see Appendix A for details on the timing of data collection and how the Law Society Futures & Insight team works with the SRA to develop the data).

The ASR is part of a suite of research and economic analyses from the Law Society's Futures & Insight department. For any queries or comments, please contact: **EnquiriesF&I@lawsociety.org.uk**

Part 1: Qualified solicitors and firms



1. Solicitors on the Roll
2. Practising certificate holders: profile
3. Organisations employing PC holders
4. PC holders in private practice
5. Undergraduates and graduates in law
6. Traineeships
7. Admission to the Roll

The professional body for solicitors

Reporting of ethnic origin decreases amongst solicitors

- A total of 149,891 solicitors held a practising certificate (PC) as of 31 July 2020. There has been steady growth of PC holders and those on the Roll of solicitors (202,374 as of 31 July 2020) each passing year in the last decade.
- Solicitors on the Roll without a PC include solicitors that have not applied for their name to be removed, working in jobs for which a PC is not required, retired solicitors, and those on maternity or childcare leave. Those without a PC made up 52,483 solicitors (26% of those on the Roll).
- Since women with PCs first outnumbered men in 2017, there has been a steady growth in this gap by approximately 2,200 per year. As of 31 July 2020, there were 6,621 more women with PCs than men and this is continuing to grow. Whilst the rate of growth amongst men is slow and steady, the growth rate of women is clearly more significant (see Chart 5).
- Reporting of ethnicity amongst solicitors on the Roll and those holding a PC decreased with unknown origins peaking at 42,240 and 33,561, respectively.
- Amongst PC holders with known ethnic origins, the proportion of those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds increased by 0.1% (to 17.6%) – this slow growth rate has been consistent over the last twenty years (see Table 1.2).

Numbers of solicitors on the Roll

Table 1.1: Solicitors on the Roll* with and without practising certificates, by gender

		Number	%
With practising certificates	Male	71,635	47.8
	Female	78,256	52.2
	Sub-total	149,891	100.0
Without practising certificates	Male	24,883	47.4
	Female	27,600	52.6
	Sub-total	52,483	100.0
Total solicitors on the Roll	Male	96,518	47.7
	Female	105,856	52.3
	Total	202,374	100.0

** Solicitors on the Roll referred to in this report do not include Registered European Lawyers, Registered Foreign Lawyers and Exempt European Lawyers.*

Growth of women with practising certificates

Chart 5: Growth in proportion of women with practising certificates in the last ten years in comparison to men

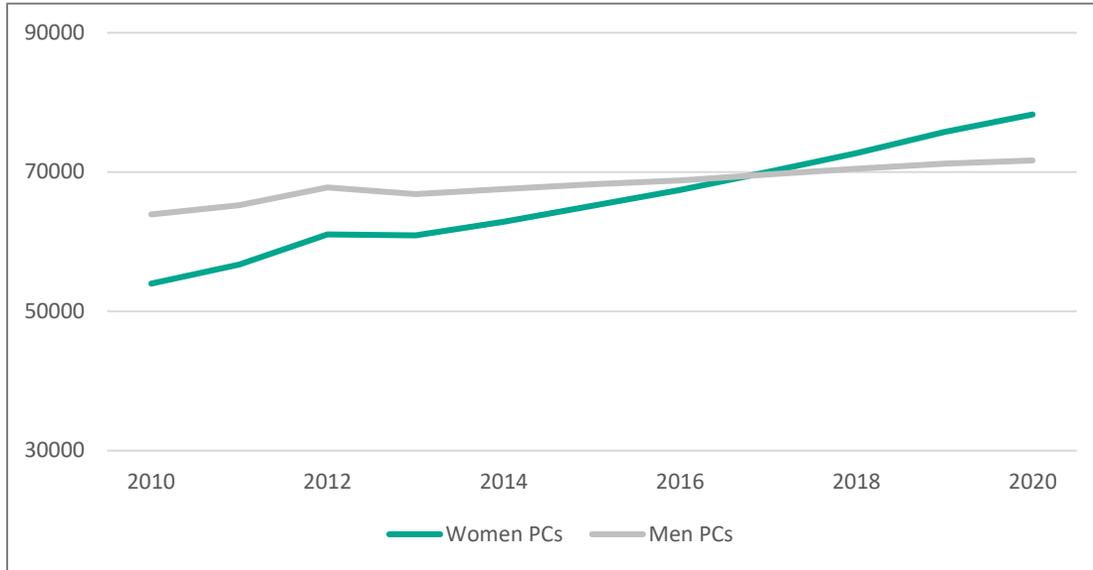
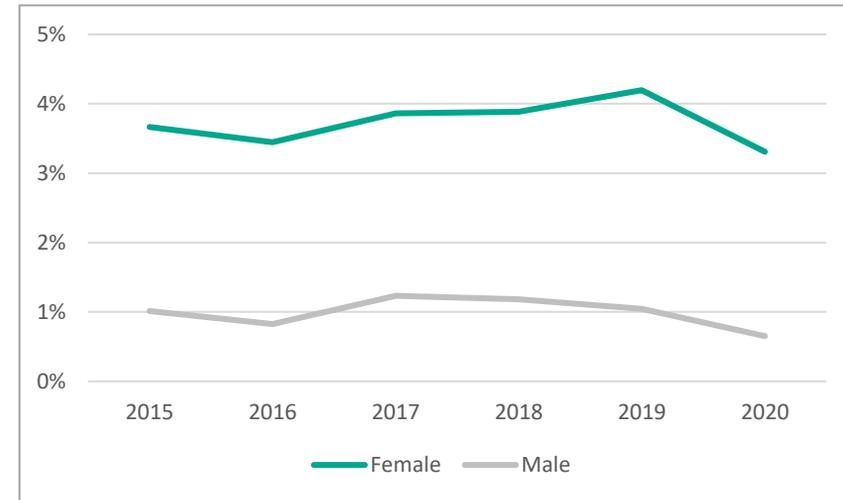


Chart 6: Rate of change* between men and women with practising certificates since 2015



* Percentage rate change based on previous year.

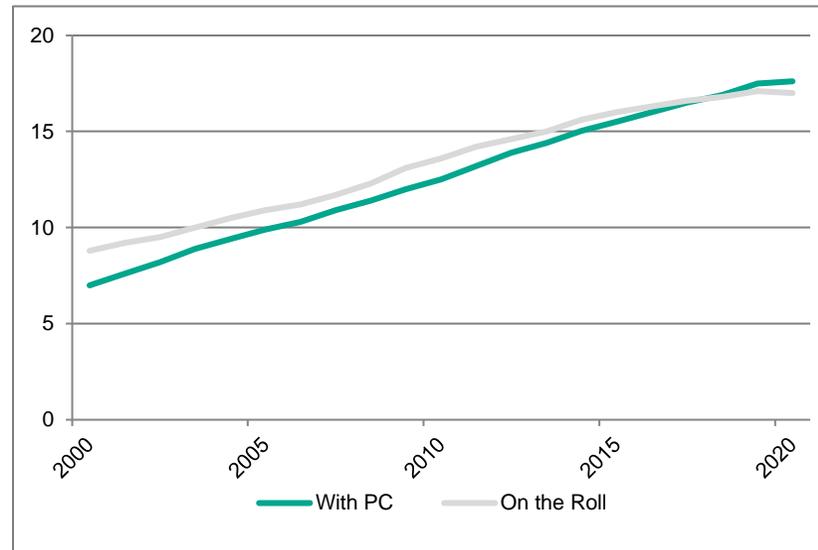
Ethnicity of solicitors on the Roll

Table 1.2: Ethnicity* of solicitors on the Roll and with practising certificates

	On the Roll	With PC	% of Roll that hold a PC
Asian or Asian British	18,235	13,613	74.7
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	4,218	3,196	75.8
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2,504	1,979	79.0
Other ethnic group	2,306	1,717	74.5
Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups	27,263	20,505	75.2
White	132,871	95,825	72.1
Unknown	42,240	33,561	79.5
Total	202,374	149,891	74.1
Solicitors from minority ethnic groups as a % of all solicitors	13.5	13.7	
Solicitors from minority ethnic groups as % of solicitors with known ethnicity	17.0	17.6	

* For more detail on the contents of ethnicity categories used in Table 1.2 and throughout the report please see Appendix B, page 54. We are reviewing the classification for future reports.

Chart 7: Solicitors from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds as % of solicitors with known ethnicity over time



Part 1: Qualified solicitors and firms

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The professional body for solicitors

PC holders working in-house continue to see slow growth

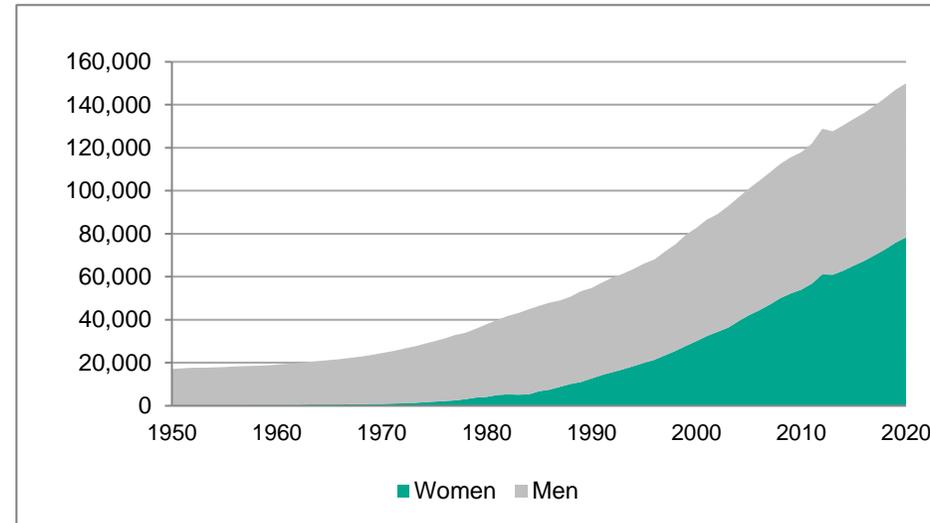
- Since 1990, the number of PC holders has nearly tripled. Each passing decade since 1990 has seen a slowing growth of PC holders (see Table 2.1).
- Women PC holders have seen a much faster growth rate than men and continue to be on this trajectory (see Chart 8).
- 50% of PC holders work in Greater London and the South East regions of England. Outside of these regions, the North West has the largest proportion of PC holders at 9.7% (see Table 2.2).
- 73% of working PC holders are employed in private practice firms. The share working in-house continues to grow with a 0.8% increase from the year before (see Chart 10). This is likely an underestimate where some solicitors are not officially recorded as working in-house.
- Amongst men with PCs, those aged 36-45 made up most individuals whilst for women the biggest share of individuals were aged 31-40. For men and women with PCs, the median ages were 45 and 39, respectively (see Table 2.4 and Chart 11).
- The proportion of PC holders for whom ethnic origin is known has been declining. In the last two years there has been a 2.6% decline on average per year, from 82.8% to 77.6%. Though more women with PCs, by number, shared their ethnicity, the proportion of men with PCs sharing their ethnicity tended to be greater.
- West Midlands, Greater London, and East Midlands had the highest proportions of PC holders from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds – in that order (see Table 2.6 and Charts 12 & 13).

Practising solicitors over time

Table 2.1: Solicitors holding practising certificates 1990 to 2020

	Practising solicitors	% change on 10 years earlier
1990	54,734	
2000	82,769	51.2
2010	117,862	42.4
2020	149,891	27.2

Chart 8: Growth in the number of solicitors with practising certificates 1950-2020



Practising solicitors by England and Wales regions over time

Table 2.2: Regional distribution and growth of PC holders with % of PC holders over solicitors*

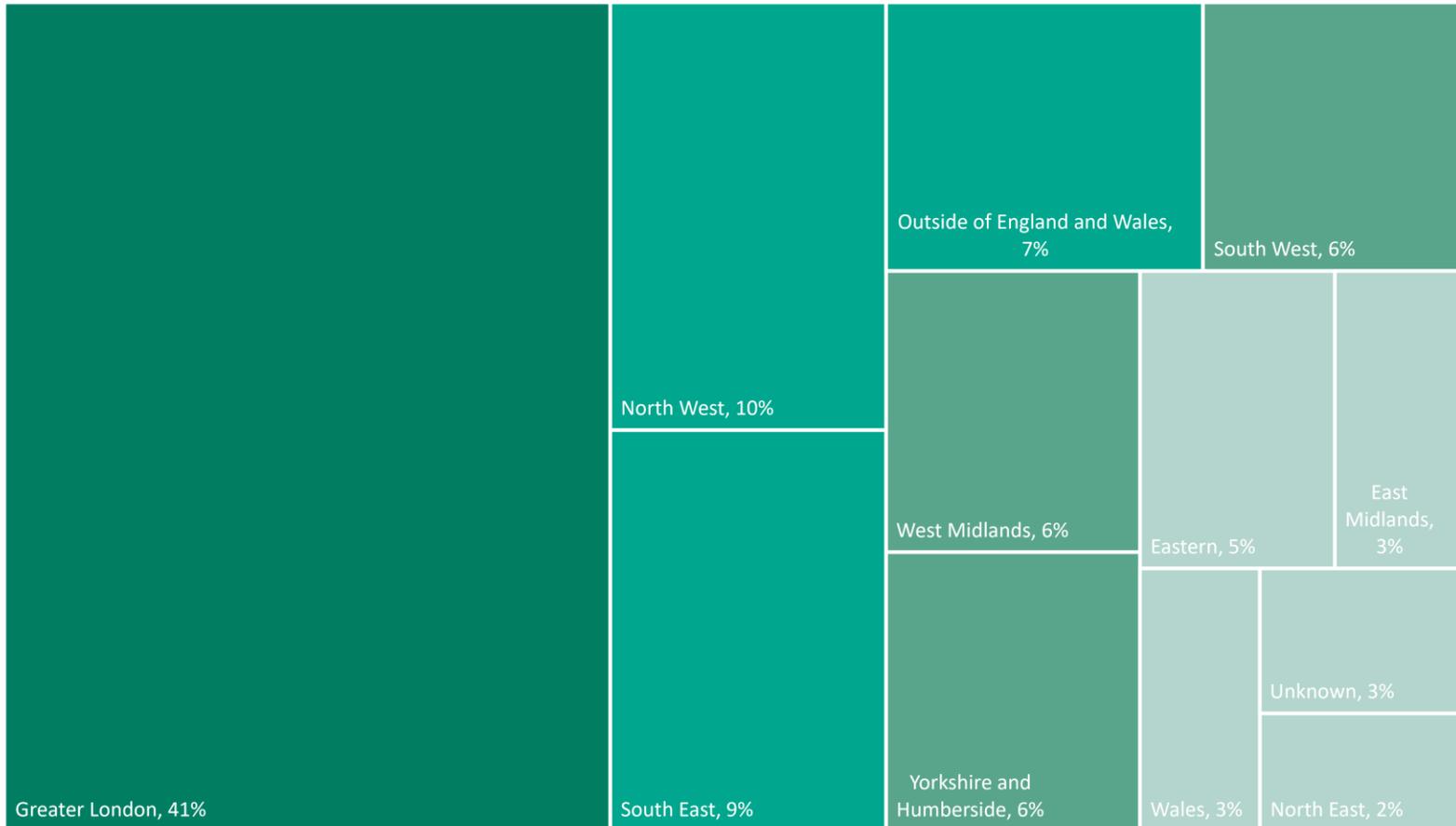
	Total no. of PC holders 2010	Total no. of PC holders 2020	10-year % change	% of PC holders in 2010	% of PC holders in 2020
Greater London	43,788	61,973	+29%	37.2%	41.3%
City of London	20,245	31,858	+36%	17.2%	21.3%
Rest of London	23,543	30,115	+22%	20.0%	20.1%
South East	12,112	13,659	+11%	10.3%	9.1%
Eastern	7,330	7,156	-2%	6.2%	4.8%
South West	5,660	8,841	+36%	4.8%	5.9%
West Midlands	7,847	8,814	+11%	6.7%	5.9%
East Midlands	4,466	4,957	+10%	3.8%	3.3%
Yorkshire and Humberside	7,652	8,744	+12%	6.5%	5.8%
North West	12,293	14,546	+15%	10.4%	9.7%
North East	3,087	3,062	-1%	2.6%	2.0%
Wales	3,683	3,890	+5%	3.1%	2.6%
Outside of England and Wales	6,602	10,495	+37%	5.6%	7.0%
Unknown	3,344	3,754	+11%	2.8%	2.5%
Total	117,864	149,891	+21%	100.0%	100.0%

* The City of London is defined as postcodes EC1-EC4 and a handful of firms undertaking financial, commercial and corporate practice who previously undertook such practice inside the City.

Solicitors have been allocated on the basis of the postcode of the office in which they work or, in the case of unattached PC holders, their primary personal contact address.

Practising solicitors distribution in England and Wales regions

Chart 9: Regional distribution of PC holders*



* Greater London is comprised of figures from The City of London and Rest of London.

Practising solicitors by sector and age profile

Table 2.3: Distribution of practising certificate holders by category of employment (excluding PC holders not attached to an organisation) (%)

	2020		
	Total	Men	Women
Private practice (E&W firms)	73.1	75.8	70.6
Other private practice	3.2	4.2	2.2
Other PC holders (in-house)	23.7	19.9	27.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Chart 10: Composition of PC holders by category of employment, excluding those working in foreign firms or as locums*

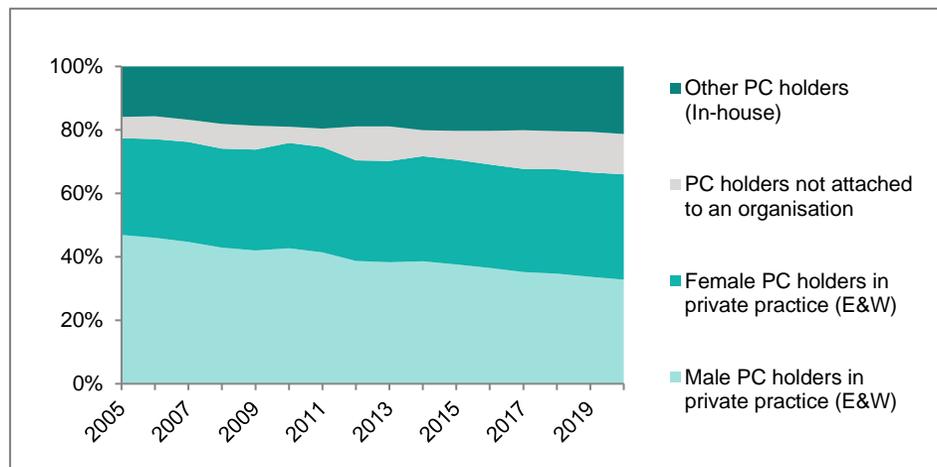


Table 2.4: Age distribution of solicitors and participation rates**

Age	No. of men with PCs	Participation rate (% on Roll holding PCs)	No. of women with PCs	Participation rate (% on Roll holding PCs)
25 and under	268	83.0	643	87.3
26-30	5,978	94.1	10,552	94.0
31-35	9,509	88.7	15,580	86.6
36-40	10,276	83.4	15,681	77.2
41-45	10,123	82.2	12,245	72.6
46-50	9,736	80.7	8,886	70.2
51-55	8,794	79.1	7,016	66.1
56-60	6,835	74.5	4,422	59.6
61-65	5,107	64.1	2,261	48.6
66-70	2,915	44.5	699	31.2
71 and older	2,092	27.3	268	22.1
All known	71,633	74.2	78,253	73.9
Total	71,635	74.2	78,256	73.9
Mean age		46.3		41.0
Median age		45.0		39.0

* Percentages of in-house and private practice solicitors for 2020 are slightly lower than Table 2.4 due to inclusion in the chart of PC holders not attached to an organisation (these do not feature in Table 2.4).

** Participation rates are not directly comparable with those prior to 2015. Until 2015 the keeping of the Roll was a regular exercise, but since then individuals must remove themselves from the Roll if so desired, or may wait until the next Roll keeping exercise.

Age distribution and ethnic origin by gender

Chart 11: Age distribution of solicitors with practising certificates

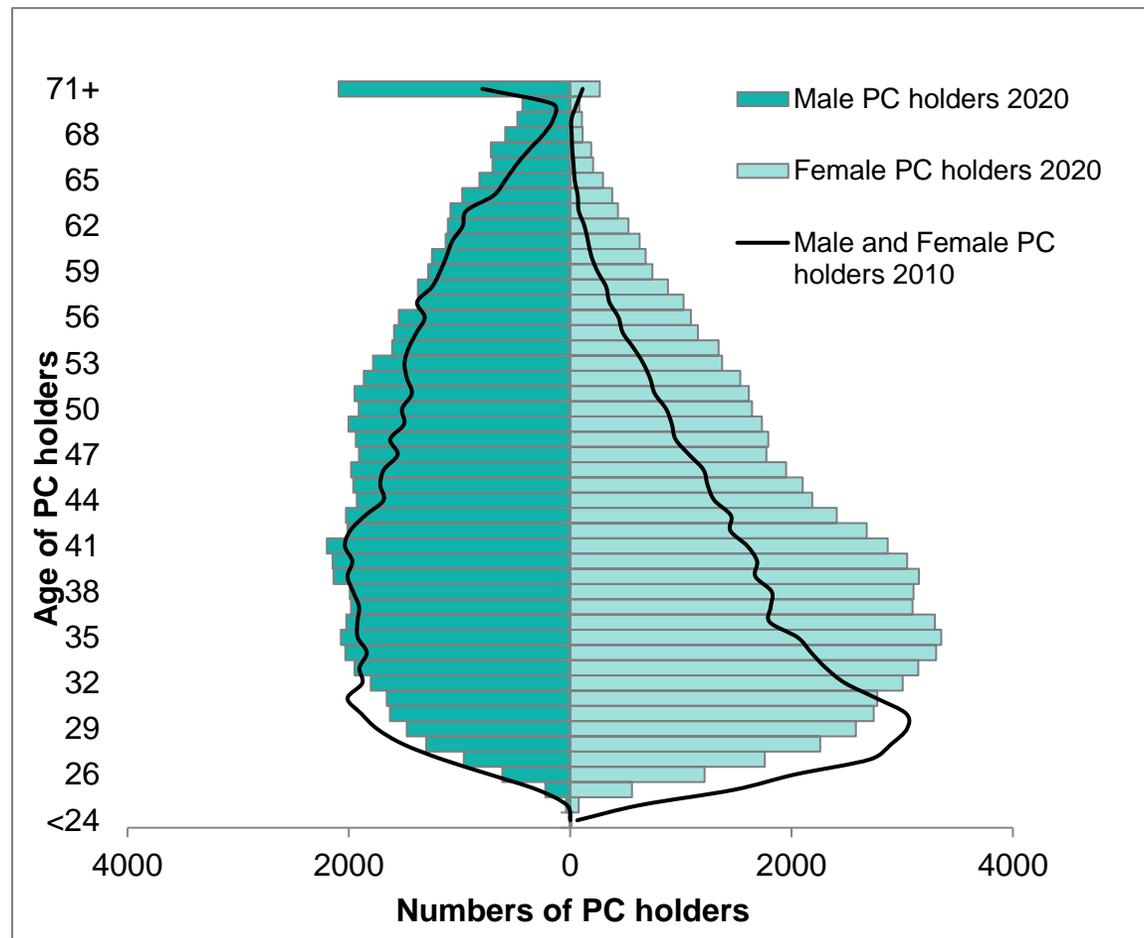


Table 2.5: Ethnic origin, by gender, of practising certificate holders

	Men	Women	Total	% of all PC holders
Asian or Asian British	6,035	7,578	13,613	9.1
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	1,210	1,986	3,196	2.1
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	784	1,195	1,979	1.3
Other ethnic group	732	985	1,717	1.1
White	48,216	47,609	95,825	63.9
All solicitors for whom ethnic origin is known	56,977	59,353	116,330	77.6
<i>% of all solicitors with PCs for whom ethnic origin is known</i>	<i>79.5</i>	<i>75.8</i>	<i>77.6</i>	
Ethnicity unknown	14,658	18,903	33,561	22.4
All practising certificate holders	71,635	78,256	149,891	100.0
All practising certificate holders from minority ethnic groups	8,761	11,744	20,505	
<i>% of all solicitors with PCs</i>	<i>12.2</i>	<i>15.0</i>	<i>13.7</i>	

Ethnic origin by England and Wales regions

Table 2.6: Proportions of solicitors from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds with practising certificates in Government Office Regions and abroad*

	Total number of PC holders	Asian or Asian British	Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	Other ethnic group	All minority ethnic groups	White	Unknown
Greater London	61,973	10.0	3.4	1.6	1.6	16.6	56.9	26.4
City of London	31,698	6.1	1.2	1.4	1.2	9.9	59.3	31.3
Rest of London**	30,275	14.1	5.8	1.8	2.0	23.6	54.5	21.3
South East	13,659	7.2	1.7	1.3	1.0	11.3	72.5	16.2
Eastern	7,156	8.4	2.5	1.3	1.0	13.1	68.0	18.9
South West	8,841	2.1	0.7	0.9	0.4	4.2	78.5	17.3
West Midlands	8,814	16.0	1.7	0.9	0.7	19.4	64.1	16.6
East Midlands	4,957	12.2	1.3	1.0	0.4	15.0	68.3	16.6
Yorkshire & Humberside	8,744	8.6	0.8	0.8	0.4	10.6	72.4	17.0
North West	14,546	8.5	0.8	0.9	0.5	10.8	71.5	17.7
North East	3,062	2.6	0.3	0.5	0.2	3.7	81.3	15.1
Wales	3,890	2.0	0.3	0.7	0.2	3.1	80.6	16.3
Outside of England and Wales	10,495	11.7	1.2	1.8	2.4	17.0	55.9	27.1
Unknown	3,754	6.3	1.7	1.1	0.9	9.9	42.2	47.9
Total	149,891	9.1	2.1	1.3	1.1	13.7	63.9	22.4

* Solicitors have been allocated to one of the Government Office Regions on the basis of the postcode of the office in which they work or, in the case of unattached PC holders, their primary personal contact address.

** Rest of London includes all areas of Greater London outside of the City of London area defined previously (in Table 2.2).

PC holders from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds compared to population in England and Wales regions

Chart 12: Proportion of PC holders from known minority ethnic backgrounds in comparison to representation in the working population*

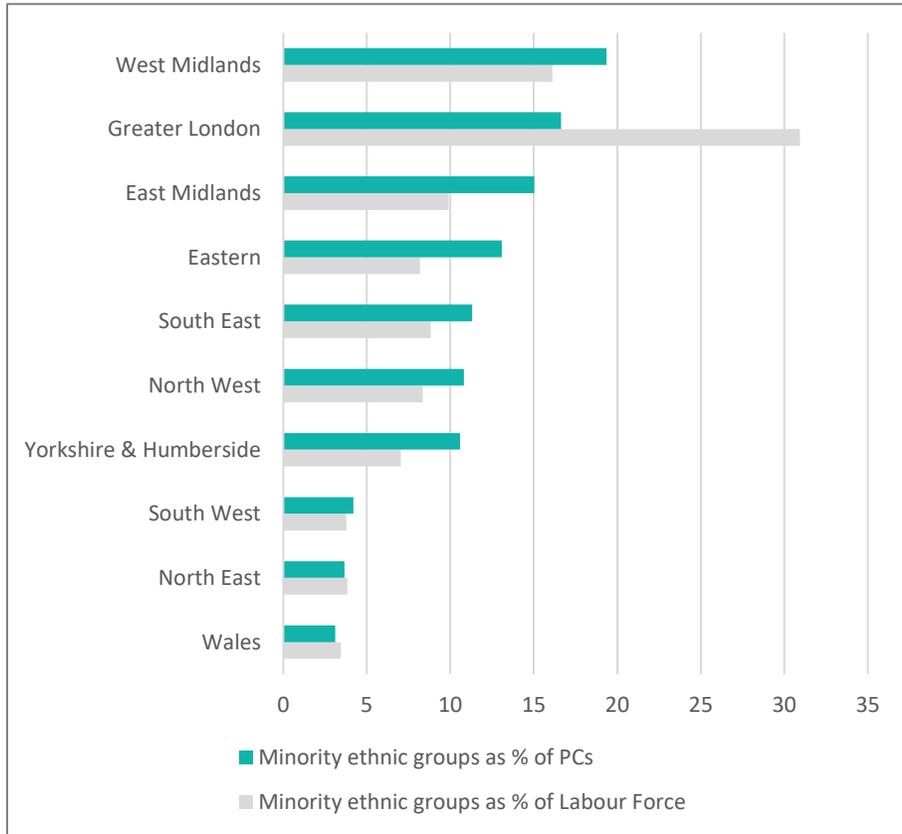
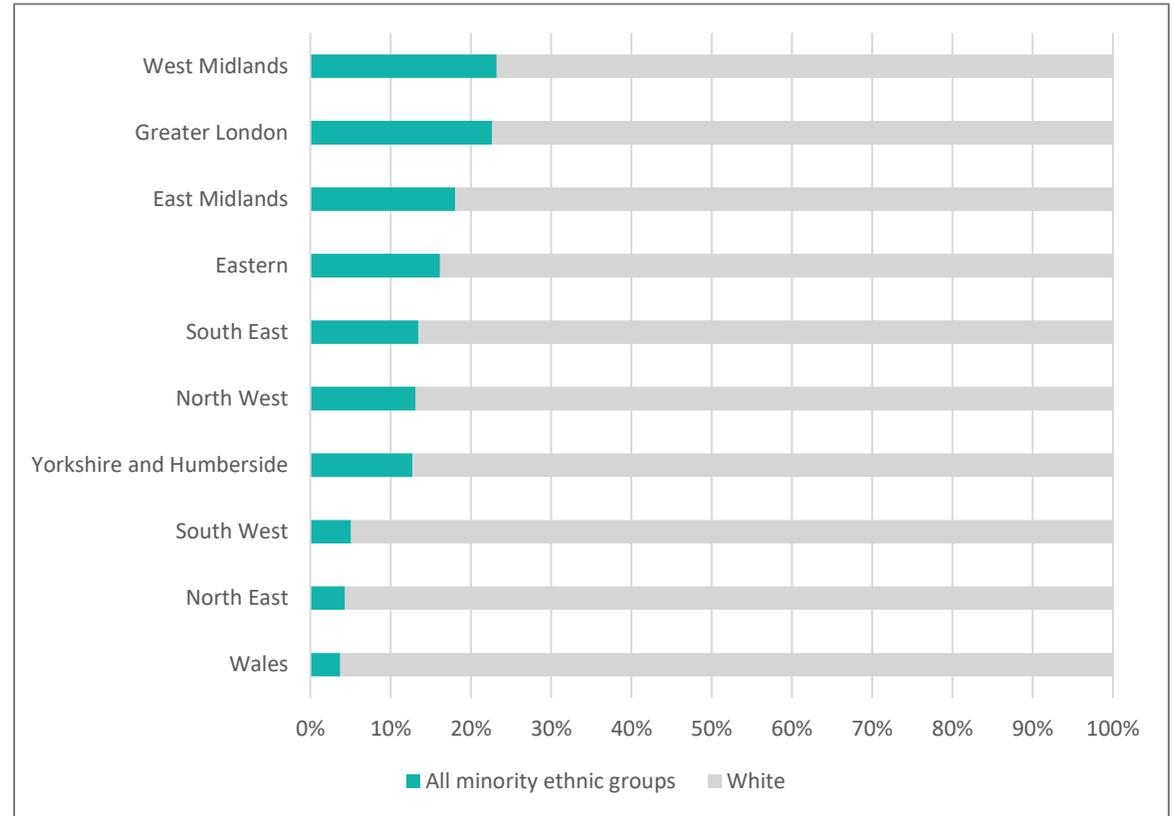


Chart 13: Proportion of PC holders from known minority ethnic backgrounds compared to those from White backgrounds, by region



* Working population information from Labour Force data to June 2020.

Sources: Office for National Statistics & NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics

Experience by number of years since admission

Table 2.7: Experience of solicitors with practising certificates, by number of years since of admission*

Solicitors in private practice in England and Wales

Years since admission	All	%	Male	%	Female	%
0-9	37,875	39.5	14,887	31.2	22,988	47.7
10-19	28,062	29.2	12,912	27.0	15,150	31.5
20-29	17,337	18.1	10,214	21.4	7,123	14.8
30-39	8,795	9.2	6,338	13.3	2,457	5.1
40-49	3,372	3.5	2,946	6.2	426	0.9
50 plus	513	0.5	494	1.0	19	0.0
Total	95,954	100.0	47,791	100.0	48,163	100.0

* Years since admission is not equivalent to years of Post Qualification Experience (PQE) where solicitors have spent years away from the profession (for example to raise a family).

** Other sectors include PC holders working in foreign firms not registered in England and Wales. PC holders not attached to organisations include those taking time out of work or between jobs.

Solicitors in employed and other sectors, or not attached to organisations**

Years since admission	All	%	Male	%	Female	%
0-9	18,896	35.0	7,195	30.2	11,701	38.9
10-19	20,385	37.8	8,652	36.3	11,733	39.0
20-29	9,921	18.4	4,927	20.7	4,994	16.6
30-39	3,566	6.6	2,075	8.7	1,491	5.0
40-49	1,031	1.9	861	3.6	170	0.6
50 plus	138	0.3	134	0.6	4	0.0
Total	53,937	100.0	23,844	100.0	30,093	100.0

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Sole Practitioners make up over 43% of all firms

- Whilst majority of PC holders work in private practice, those working in non-private practice grows slowly each year. Amongst non-private practice, the largest category is of those in commerce and industry making up 14.2% (see Table 3.1).
- The number of firms has been declining and the twelve months to 31 July 2020 continues the trend. From 9,339 last year, firms have dropped to 9,109.
- Since 2017, the number of offices have also dropped. As of 31 July 2020, there were 12,042 offices, dropping from 12,399 in 2017 (see Table 3.4).
- For the purposes of this report the terms Sole Practitioner and Sole Owner are used interchangeably and are defined as those holding a practicing certificate, working in private practice, their primary post is a Partner, and their firm reported having only one Partner. They make up 43.4% of all firms, decreasing by 3.6% from the year before. Any clear impact of the national lockdowns on Sole Practitioner firms will be observable in the upcoming ASR 2021 report where the full calendar year will be considered and compared to previous years.
- Firms with 2-4 Partners make up the largest Partnered group with 43.5% of all firms (see Table 3.5).
- Greater London (not including City of London) holds the most number of firms (1,844 firms) throughout England & Wales including 1,018 sole owners (the highest proportion of sole owners compared to other regions, see Table 3.5).
- Greater London holds a third of all firms in England & Wales with the North West and South East following behind with 14% and 12% respectively (see Chart 14).

Category of employment

Table 3.1: Practising certificate holders by category of employment

Category of employment	All	% of PC holders	Men	Women	Women as % of total
Private practice (E&W firms)	95,954	64.0	47,790	48,164	50.2
Private practice (in foreign practices or as locums)	4,241	2.8	2,675	1,566	36.9
Commerce and industry	21,244	14.2	9,354	11,890	56.0
Accountancy practice	128	0.1	52	76	59.4
Government department*	311	0.2	145	166	53.4
Local government	4,616	3.1	1,309	3,307	71.6
Court	28	0.0	9	19	67.9
Government funded services	275	0.2	89	186	67.6
Crown Prosecution Service	2,081	1.4	772	1,309	62.9
Advice service	370	0.2	98	272	73.5
Educational establishment	643	0.4	193	450	70.0
Health services	96	0.1	28	68	70.8
Others**	1,395	0.9	562	833	59.7
Not attached to an organisation***	18,509	12.3	8,558	9,951	53.8
All non-private practice	49,696	33.2	21,169	28,527	57.4
Total practising certificate holders	149,891	100.0	71,634	78,257	52.2

* Not included are solicitors working in central government departments that do not hold practising certificates, as are exempt from having to do so under Section 88 of the Solicitors Act. More than 2,000 lawyers provide services to central government according to the Government Legal Service.

** All other categories including practising certificate holders in the Armed Forces, Churches and other religious bodies and institutes.

*** The unattached figure includes individuals not currently working as well as those who may not yet have been removed from the register.

Non-private practice employers

Table 3.2: Non-private practice organisations employing PC holders, by type of business*

	Head offices		Branch offices		Total offices	
	E&W	Elsewhere	E&W	Elsewhere	E&W	Elsewhere
Commerce and industry	5,170	928	264	91	5,434	1,019
Accountancy practice	17	2	2	0	19	2
	Head offices		Branch offices		Total offices	
Government**						
Government Department	42		12		54	
Local Government	374		24		398	
Court	11		12		23	
Government funded services	13		7		20	
Crown Prosecution Services	44		16		60	
Others						
Advice service	88		17		105	
Educational establishment	197		21		218	
Miscellaneous***	323		23		346	

* Numbers of non-private practice head offices and branch offices reported here are the main practising locations reported by individual PC holders not in private practice. For some larger organisations more than one head office may be reported.

**Government organisations are only counted if they employ solicitors holding a PC (Government Legal Service solicitors are not obliged to hold a PC).

***The miscellaneous group includes: advocacy services; churches; nationalised industries; trade unions; health services; non-SRA registered firms and charities.

Private practice firms and trends over time

Table 3.3: Private practice organisations employing PC holders, by type of business

	Head offices		Branch offices		Total offices	
	E&W	Elsewhere	E&W	Elsewhere	E&W	Elsewhere
Private practice (domestic firms)*						
Limited Company	4,196	1	1,136	0	5,332	1
Limited Liability Partnership	1,440	5	1,224	217	2,664	222
Partnership	3,462	3	573	15	4,035	18
Unlimited Company	11	1	0	0	11	1
Total	9,109	10	2,933	232	12,042	242
	Head offices		Branch offices		Total offices	
Private practice (other)**						
Foreign law practices	953		274		1,227	
Locum services	101		0		101	

* Head offices and branches are counted within firms open on 31 July 2020 and where an office location is the main practising address of at least one PC holder. This definition is different from that used by SRA in counting a firm in published statistics as any open entity subject to regulation.

** Of the 953 foreign law practices, only a very small number had head offices registered in England & Wales. Head offices of locum services are all located within England & Wales.

Table 3.4: Trends in the number of private practice firms and offices registered in England and Wales (excluding overseas offices and locum services)

	Firms	Offices	Ratio
2015	9,403	12,263	1.30
2016	9,430	12,283	1.30
2017	9,488	12,399	1.31
2018	9,452	12,372	1.31
2019	9,339	12,277	1.31
2020	9,109	12,042	1.32
% change since 2015	-3.1	-1.8	1.4

Private practice firms by size and England and Wales regions

Table 3.5: Number of firms in England and Wales employing solicitors, analysed by size and regional location of head office*

	Sole owner**	2-4 Partners	5-10 Partners	11-25 Partners	26-80 Partners	81+ Partners	All firms
City of London	188	240	72	61	46	46	653
Rest of Central London***	221	232	67	27	15	2	564
Rest of Greater London	1,018	734	57	20	12	3	1,844
South East	500	481	85	32	8	2	1,108
Eastern	290	259	62	21	5	0	637
South West	234	250	80	22	13	2	601
West Midlands	324	334	51	10	5	1	725
East Midlands	219	176	52	8	3	2	460
Yorkshire and Humberside	260	303	63	12	7	1	646
North West	503	617	95	10	11	4	1,240
North East	79	125	31	7	1	1	244
Wales	121	211	46	8	1	0	387
Total	3,957	3,962	761	238	127	64	9,109
% of all firms	43.4%	43.5%	8.4%	2.6%	1.4%	0.7%	100.0%
% change in numbers of firms on 2019	-3.6%	-1.2%	-5.0%	+2.6%	-1.6%	+1.6%	-2.5%

* A number of firms for which either size or location data were missing were allocated to a known group on a pro rata basis to enable comparison with the overall total. The data in this table are not entirely consistent with those in previous reports prior to 2014 due to changes in the way information is categorised.

** The definition employed since 2011 to count sole owners means that figures (for sole practices and other firm sizes) are not directly comparable with those from prior years.

*** 'Rest of Central London' encompasses all areas of Westminster and Camden not included in the City of London area within post codes EC1 to EC4. This definition represents a change from those used in reports prior to 2014 (when 'Rest of Central London' encompassed Holborn and City of Westminster).

Private practice firms by England and Wales regions

Chart 14: Distribution of firms by region in England & Wales*



* A number of firms for which either size or location data were missing were allocated to a known group on a pro rata basis to enable comparison with the overall total. The data in this table are not entirely consistent with those in previous reports prior to 2014 due to changes in the way information is categorised.

Part 1: Qualified solicitors and firms

1. Solicitors on the Roll
2. Practising certificate holders: profile
3. Organisations employing PC holders
4. PC holders in private practice
5. Undergraduates and graduates in law
6. Traineeships
7. Admission to the Roll

The professional body for solicitors

PC holders working in private practice reach 95,954

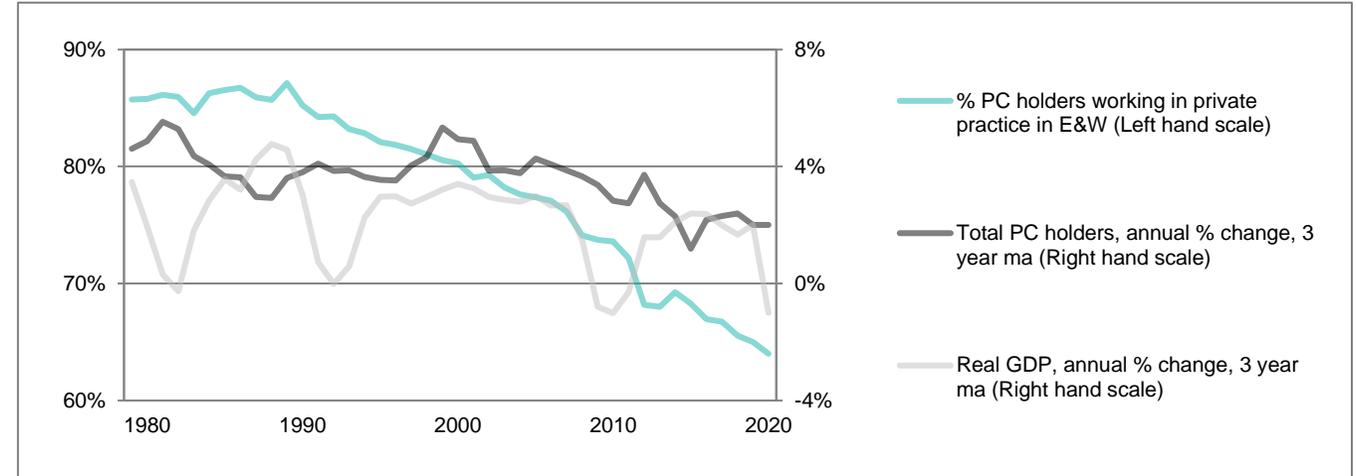
- In the thirty years to 2020, PC holders working in private practice have grown from 46,652 to 95,954 in 2020.
- The proportion of those working in non-private practice (including those not attached to an organisation) has grown from 15% in 1990 to 33% in 2020 (see Table 4.1).
- The number of admitted staff within private practices increased by 926 in total in the year to 31 July 2020 (see Table 4.2).
- Sole practitioners make up 4% of positions held by PC holders in private practice (3,957 in total). This is broken down by 64% held by men and 36% by women (see Table 4.3).
- In the ten years to 2020, number of admitted staff per Principal (Partners or Sole Practitioners) has increased in all firm sizes. Firms with 5-25 partners saw the largest growth (see Table 4.4).
- A third of all Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors were in 2-4 partner sized firms (see Table 4.6).
- Representation amongst PC holders from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds working in private practice dropped by 1% from the year before.

Private practice solicitors over time

Table 4.1: Solicitors holding practising certificates and private practitioners 1990 to 2020

	Practising solicitors	10-year % change	Solicitors in private practice	10-year % change
1990	54,734		46,652	
2000	82,769	51.2	66,445	42.4
2010	117,862	42.4	86,748	30.6
2020	149,891	27.2	95,954	10.6

Chart 15: Share of PC holders in private practice (amongst all PC holders) versus change in PC holders and economic growth (with 3 year ma calculations*)



* '3 year ma' refers to a 3-year moving average calculation. The average of the previous three years are taken to arrive at the figure for each year. For example, the 3-year moving average for 2020 will be the average of the years 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Private practice solicitors over time, by position and firm size

Table 4.2: Admitted staff in private practice firms in 2020 by firm size (number of partners)*

	Sole owners	2-4 partners	5-10 partners	11-25 partners	26-80 partners	81+ partners	All firms
Partners	-	8,444	3,975	2,988	4,343	7,907	27,657
Sole practitioners	3,957	-	-	-	-	-	3,957
Associate solicitors	706	2,583	2,573	2,405	4,544	13,525	26,336
Assistant solicitors	950	4,069	3,365	1,817	2,655	2,998	15,854
Consultants	935	2,391	1,438	453	495	713	6,425
Other private practice	969	3,743	3,212	1,551	1,923	4,327	15,725
All positions	7,517	21,230	14,563	9,214	13,960	29,470	95,954
% of PP solicitors	7.8%	22.1%	15.2%	9.6%	14.5%	30.7%	100.0%

* In this table and the rest of section 4 the terms 'Sole practitioner' and 'Sole owner' are used interchangeably to indicate a practising solicitor that is the only principal at their firm. This could mean an individual personally providing services to a small number of clients with little or no support, or a solicitor that operates a more sizeable practice supervising fee-earners and other staff.

Chart 16: Admitted staff in all private practice firms, by position*



The professional body for solicitors



Number of private practice staff by position and gender, and per principal

Table 4.3: Position of PC holders working in private practice in England and Wales, by gender

	Men		Women		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Partners*	18,866	39.5	8,791	18.3	27,657	28.8
Sole practitioners**	2,529	5.3	1,428	3.0	3,957	4.1
Associate solicitors	10,709	22.4	15,628	32.4	26,337	27.4
Assistant solicitors	5,086	10.6	10,767	22.4	15,853	16.5
Consultant solicitors	4,089	8.6	2,336	4.9	6,425	6.7
Other private practice	6,512	13.6	9,213	19.1	15,725	16.4
All positions	47,791	100.0	48,163	100.0	95,954	100.0

* Partner or partner equivalents (members, directors, shareholders), including salaried partners

** Partner equivalent where the total number of partners in an entity is 1. Prior to 2011 the sole practitioner figure counted only businesses with a sole partner (rather than partner equivalents)

Table 4.4: Number of admitted staff per principal in private practice firms in 2020 by size of firm*

	Sole owner	2-4 partners	5-10 partners	11-25 partners	26-80 partners	81+ partners	All firms
Principals	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Associate solicitors	0.178	0.306	0.647	0.805	1.046	1.711	0.833
Assistant solicitors	0.240	0.482	0.847	0.608	0.611	0.379	0.501
Consultants	0.236	0.283	0.362	0.152	0.114	0.090	0.203
Other private practice	0.245	0.443	0.808	0.519	0.443	0.547	0.497
All per principal (2020)	1.900	2.514	3.664	3.084	3.214	3.727	3.035
All per principal (2010)	1.682	1.960	2.362	2.423	2.958	3.434	2.446

* Principals are either partners, or registered sole practitioners in sole owned firms.

Fractions below 1 indicate where principals outnumber other staff in the respective positions (for example there are almost twice as many partners compared with Assistant solicitors in 2-4 partner firms). Conversely fractions above 1 signify where there are more staff than principals (for example Associates exceed partners in 81+ partner firms).

Ethnicity of private practice staff by position and firm size

Table 4.5: Proportion of ethnic groups, by position

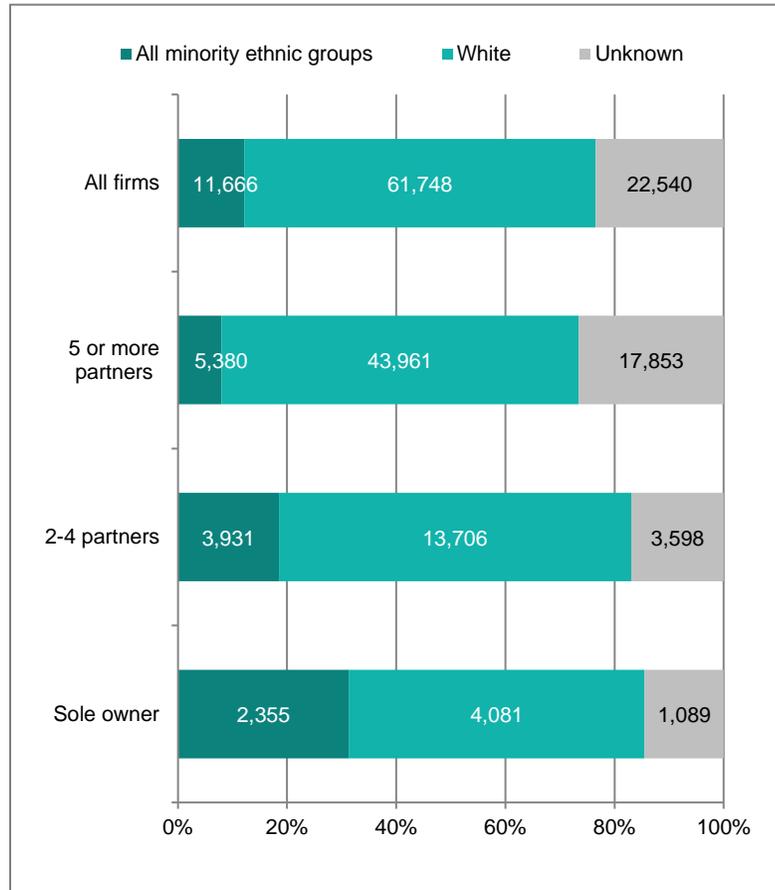
	All in pp	Partners (%)	SPs (%)	Associates (%)	Assistants (%)	Other pp (%)	Total (%)
Asian or Asian British	8,086	26.0	11.5	20.8	17.9	23.8	100.0
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	1,607	21.3	17.4	17.9	16.4	27.1	100.0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1,075	20.1	5.4	35.9	17.4	21.2	100.0
Other ethnic group	898	31.1	8.1	25.7	11.6	23.5	100.0
All minority ethnic groups	11,666	25.2	11.5	22.2	17.2	24.0	100.0
White	61,748	35.8	3.7	23.5	14.2	22.7	100.0
Unknown	22,540	11.6	1.5	40.8	22.5	23.7	100.0
Total	95,954	28.8	4.1	27.4	16.5	23.1	100.0

Table 4.6: Proportion of ethnic groups, by firm size

	All Solicitors in pp	Sole owner (%)	2-4 partners (%)	5-10 partners (%)	11-25 partners (%)	26-80 partners (%)	81+ partners (%)	Total (%)
Asian or Asian British	8,086	20.2	36.0	12.1	6.0	8.8	17.0	100.0
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	1,607	30.3	35.4	9.8	4.7	7.8	12.1	100.0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1,075	9.2	19.1	13.1	10.5	16.2	31.8	100.0
Other ethnic group	898	15.3	27.6	12.7	7.1	12.6	24.7	100.0
All minority ethnic groups	11,666	20.2	33.7	11.9	6.3	9.6	18.3	100.0
White	61,748	6.6	22.2	16.8	10.3	14.9	29.1	100.0
Unknown	22,540	4.8	16.0	12.2	9.4	16.1	41.5	100.0
Total	95,954	7.8	22.1	15.2	9.6	14.6	30.7	100.0

Ethnicity of private practice staff by position and firm size

Chart 17: Private practice solicitors' ethnicity by firm size (number of partners)



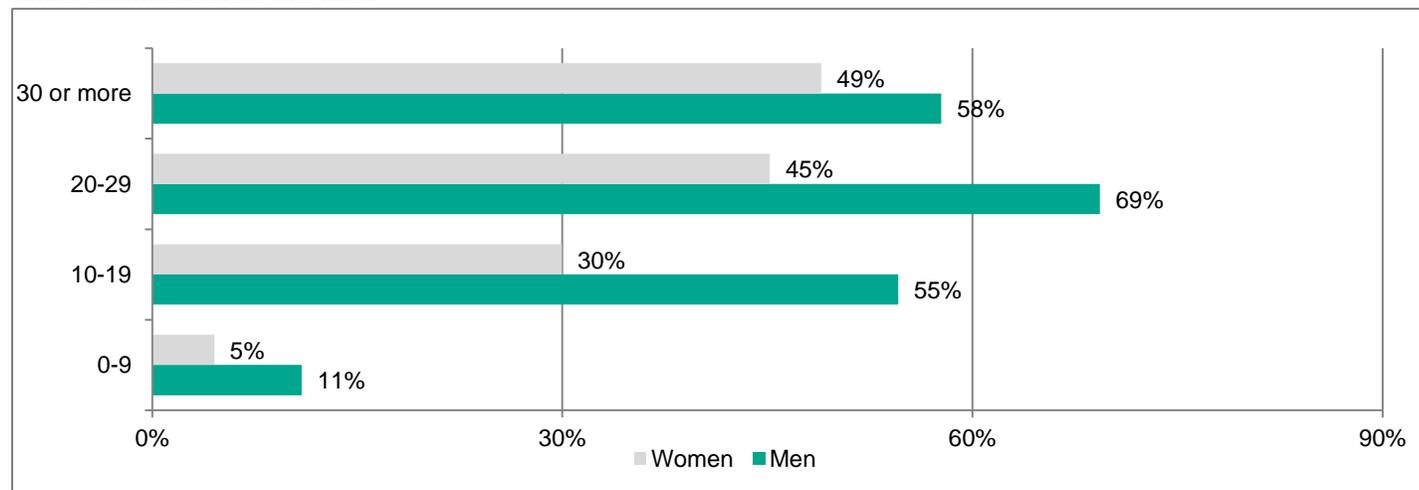
The professional body for solicitors

Age distribution share of sole owners and partners in private practice

Table 4.7: The age distribution of sole owners and partners

	All private practice			Partners			Sole practitioners		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Total 2020	47,785	48,169	95,954	18,866	8,791	27,657	2,529	1,428	3,957
Average age 2020	46.5	40.2	43.4	50.8	47.4	49.7	54.7	51.0	53.3
Total 2015	48,522	42,540	91,062	20,594	8,100	28,694	2,786	1,371	4,157
Average age 2015	46.2	39.5	43.1	50.3	46.6	49.2	54.1	49.3	52.5

Chart 18: Share of men and women in private practice in E&W who were partners or sole owners, by years since admission to the Roll



Part 2: Development and entry of new solicitors

1. Solicitors on the Roll
2. Practising certificate holders: profile
3. Organisations employing PC holders
4. PC holders in private practice
5. Undergraduates and graduates in law
6. Traineeships
7. Admission to the Roll

Two-thirds of those who graduated are women

- Graduates from first degree law course in England and Wales represent a key stem of potential solicitors in the future. Although only a minority of law graduates go on to become solicitors, this pipeline has made up around half of those admitted to the profession in recent years.
- There was an increase of 1.2% in the number of applicants compared to 2019. Amongst women, there was a 2.6% increase whilst men saw a 1.8% decrease (see Table 5.1).
- Amongst those accepted into first degree law courses, there was an increase of 2.4%. Men saw a 0.2% increase whilst women saw a bigger increase of 3.4% (see Table 5.1). 69% of acceptances were for women compared to the 31% of men accepted into the courses.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic background representation amongst those accepted was at 42% for men and 40% for women. White representation continue to hold the larger proportion of those accepted (making up 56-59%). Just over half of all those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic background acceptances came from Black African, Indian, and Pakistani ethnic groups, in that order (see Table 5.2).
- Amongst all ethnic backgrounds, acceptances amongst women were clearly the majority – holding close to two-thirds of those accepted (see Charts 20 & 21).
- With the steady increase of women graduating up to 2020, there are now two women graduating in first degree law for every one man (see Table 5.3).
- 80% of law graduates were given a First or Upper Second class award. Amongst women, this figure was 81.7% - slightly higher than amongst men at 76.7% (see Table 5.4).

Applications to university first degree law courses in England and Wales

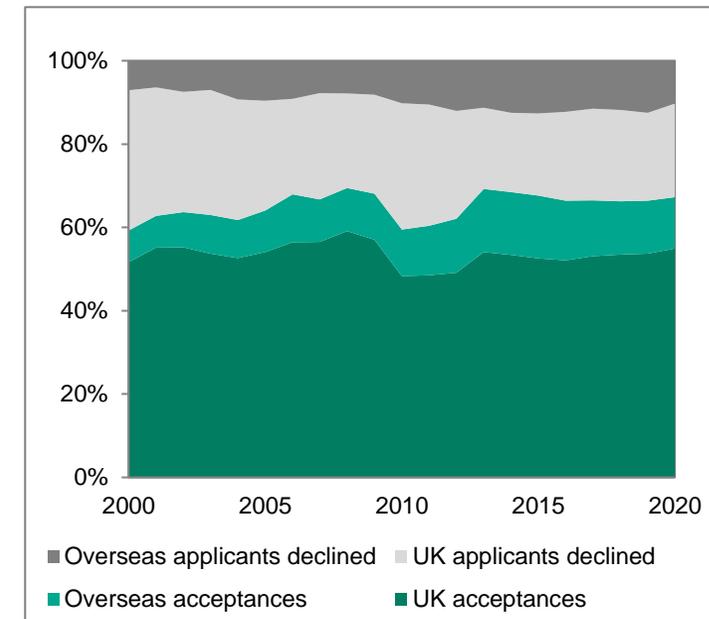
Table 5.1: Home (UK students) and overseas applicants and acceptances for university first degree law courses in England and Wales for the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21

University applicants									
For entry in:	UK			Overseas			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2019	8,890	20,675	29,565	3,120	5,805	8,925	12,010	26,480	38,490
2020	8,785	21,375	30,160	3,005	5,805	8,810	11,790	27,180	38,970
% change	-1.2	3.4	2.0	-3.7	0.0	-1.3	-1.8	2.6	1.2

University acceptances									
For entry in:	UK			Overseas			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2019	6,380	14,525	20,905	1,695	2,975	4,670	8,075	17,500	25,575
2020	6,420	14,965	21,385	1,675	3,125	4,800	8,095	18,090	26,185
% change	0.6	3.0	2.3	-1.2	5.0	2.8	0.2	3.4	2.4

Source: UCAS

Chart 19: Outcomes of applications, as % of total applications, over time



Ethnicity of students accepted onto first degree law courses

Table 5.2: Ethnicity of students in UK accepted onto first degree law courses at universities in 2020 (for academic year 2020/21)

Ethnic group	Male	Female	Total	%
White	3,600	8,755	12,355	57.8
Black				
Black African	570	1,205	1,775	8.3
Black Caribbean	90	310	400	1.9
Black Other	40	95	135	0.6
Asian				
Indian	305	725	1,030	4.8
Pakistani	675	1,240	1,915	9.0
Bangladeshi	210	470	680	3.2
Chinese	25	70	95	0.4
Other Asian	185	410	595	2.8
Mixed				
White and Black Caribbean	80	260	340	1.6
White and Black African	65	145	210	1.0
White and Asian	130	235	365	1.7
Other mixed background	105	295	400	1.9
Other	210	570	780	3.6
Unknown	120	175	295	1.4
Black, Asian and minority ethnic	2,690	6,030	8,720	
All acceptances	6,410	14,960	21,370	
% from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds	42.0	40.3	40.8	

Source: UCAS

Chart 20: Ethnicity of students in UK accepted onto first degree law courses at universities in 2020 (for academic year 2020/21)

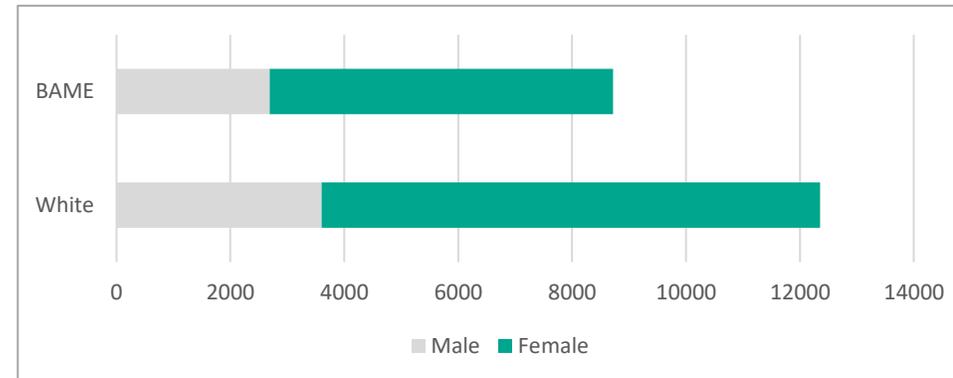
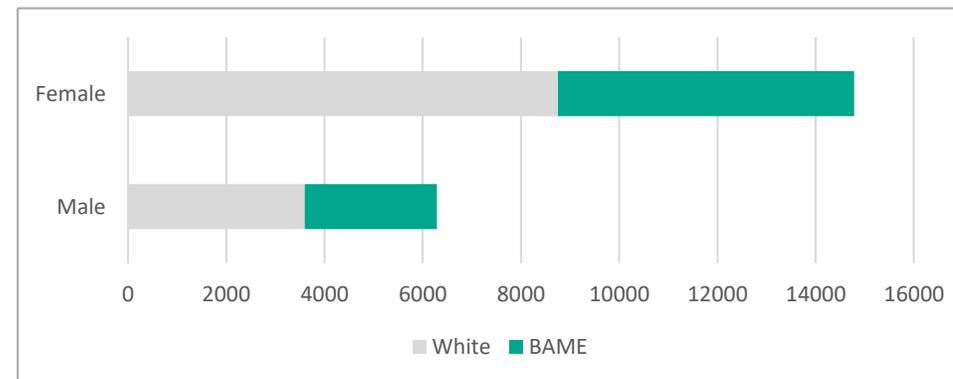


Chart 21: Gender of students in UK accepted onto first degree law courses at universities in 2020 (for academic year 2020/21)



Students graduating in first degree law courses

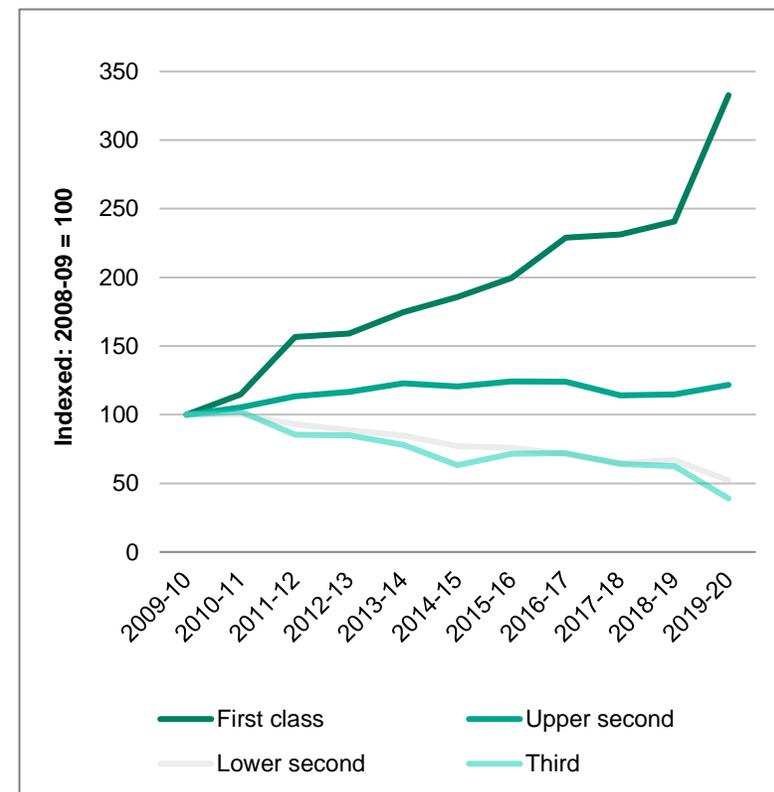
Table 5.3: Number of students graduating in first degree law from universities in England and Wales for 2010, 2015, 2020

Year of graduation	Men	Women	Total
2010	5,303	9,008	14,311
2015	5,682	9,749	15,431
2020	5,845	11,231	17,076
% change 2020 on 2010	10.2	24.7	19.3
% change 2020 on 2015	2.9	15.2	10.7

Table 5.4: Class of degrees in law awarded in England and Wales in Summer 2020

Class of degree	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First	1,194	20.4	2,665	23.7	3,859	22.6
Upper second	3,290	56.3	6,508	57.9	9,798	57.4
Lower second	1,111	19.0	1,760	15.7	2,871	16.8
Third/Pass	198	3.4	226	2.0	424	2.5
Unclassified	52	0.9	72	0.6	124	0.7
<i>First and upper second</i>	<i>4,484</i>	<i>76.7</i>	<i>9,173</i>	<i>81.7</i>	<i>13,657</i>	<i>80.0</i>
Total	5,845	100.0	11,231	100.0	17,076	100.0

Chart 22: Changes in class of undergraduate degrees in law awarded from all UK universities



Source: HESA

Part 2: Development and entry of new solicitors

1. Solicitors on the Roll
2. Practising certificate holders: profile
3. Organisations employing PC holders
4. PC holders in private practice
5. Undergraduates and graduates in law
6. **Traineeships**
7. Admission to the Roll

39% decrease in trainee admissions between April-July 2020

- Registering as a trainee with a private practice firm or other organisation marks the beginning of what is typically a two-year training contract, completion of which is required before admission to the profession. Though it does not affect the data in this report, the Solicitors Qualifying Exam (SQE) is a new two-part assessment that was introduced in September 2021 to assure consistent, high standards for all qualifying solicitors.
- There were 5,626 trainee registrations in 2019-20 with an 11.3% decrease from the year before (see Table 6.1). Looking at the date of registrations, it is clear the national lockdown in March 2020 had an impact. The number of registrations in April-July dropped by 39% on average – as compared to the figures from the year before.
- City of London was home to a third of all trainees altogether. With Outer London accounted for, London was the workplace for over half of all traineeships (50.2%, 2,823 registrations).
- Outside of London, the North West region holds the most trainees registered in England & Wales (see Chart 23).
- Nearly 90% of trainees are in private practice with the rest working in-house or other categories of employment (see Table 6.3).
- The largest firms take on more trainees than smaller ones overall, and the very largest (with 81+ Partners) are responsible for more than one-third of all traineeships at 37.6 of registrations in private practice (see Table 6.4 and Chart 24).

Number and regional location of traineeships

Table 6.1: Number of traineeships registered in 2018-19 and 2019-20

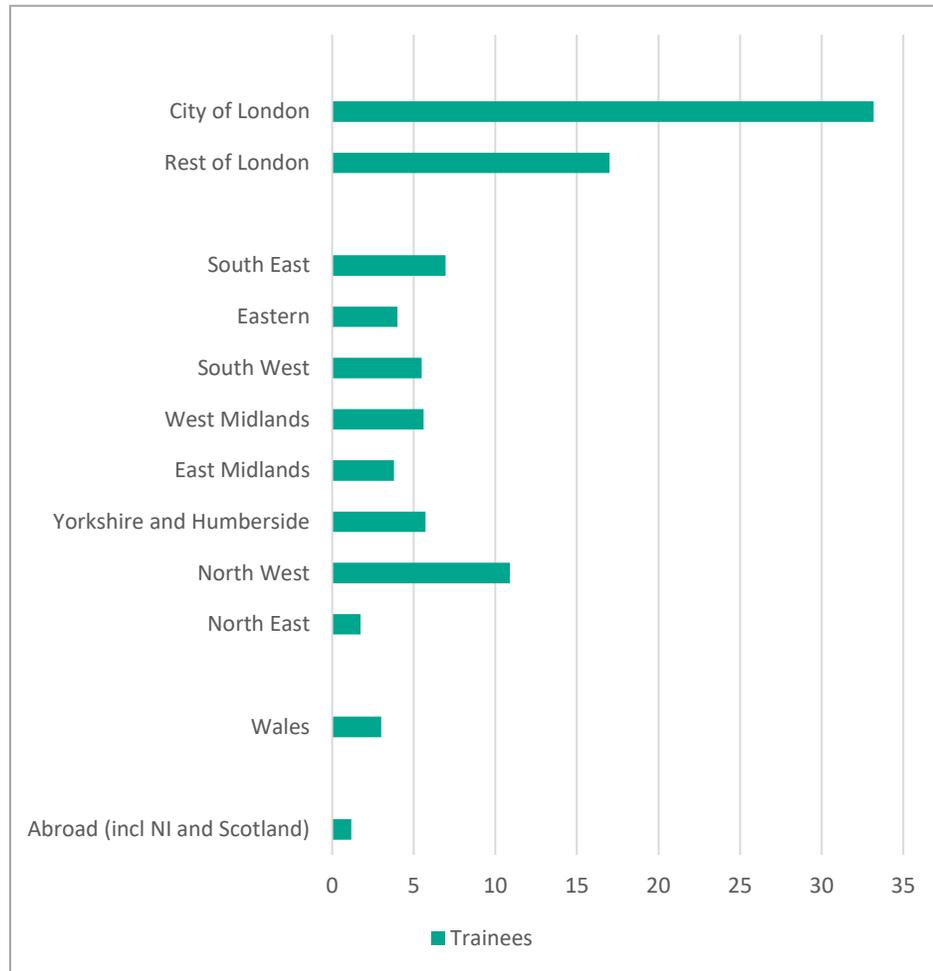
Year	Total
2018-2019	6,344
2019-2020	5,626
% change from previous year	-11.3

Table 6.2: Trainee placements in 2019-20 analysed by Government Office Region

	Trainees	
	No.	% by region
City of London	1,867	33.2
Rest of London	956	17.0
South East	391	6.9
Eastern	225	4.0
South West	308	5.5
West Midlands	315	5.6
East Midlands	213	3.8
Yorkshire and Humberside	321	5.7
North West	613	10.9
North East	97	1.7
Wales	169	3.0
Abroad (incl NI and Scotland)	65	1.2
Not known	86	1.5
Total	5,626	100.0

Regional location of traineeships

Chart 23: Distribution of trainees in 2019-20, by region



The professional body for solicitors

Trainee placements by employment category and private practice firm size

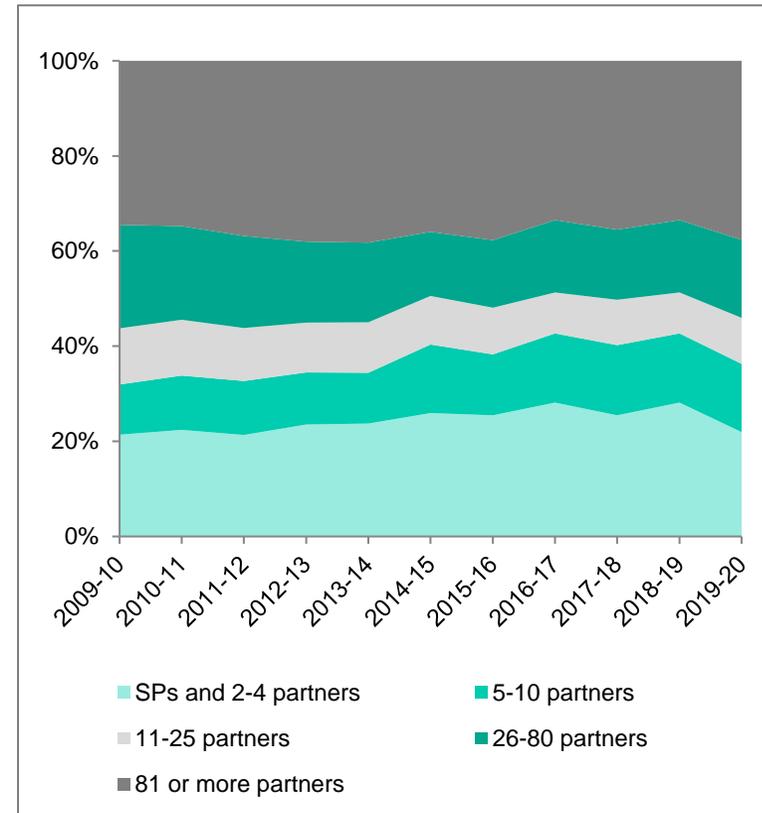
Table 6.3: Trainee placements in 2019-20 by category of employment

	Trainees	
	No.	%
Private practice	5,026	89.3
Commerce and industry	251	4.5
Government department	107	1.9
Local Government	93	1.7
Advice service	15	0.3
Other	134	2.4
Total	5,626	100.0

Table 6.4: Trainee placements in 2019-20, by size of private practice firm in which the trainee is registered

Size of firm	Total	
	No.	%
Sole	257	5.1
2-4 partners	840	16.8
5-10 partners	717	14.3
11-25 partners	484	9.7
26-80 partners	821	16.4
81+ partners	1,881	37.6
Total	5,000	100.0

Chart 24: Composition of trainee placements by firm size (number of partners) over time



Part 2: Development and entry of new solicitors

1. Solicitors on the Roll
2. Practising certificate holders: profile
3. Organisations employing PC holders
4. PC holders in private practice
5. Undergraduates and graduates in law
6. Traineeships
7. Admission to the Roll

Admission through the Legal Practice Course remains the dominant route

- Admissions to the Roll dropped by 3.5% from last year to 6,722. This was just above the average figure from the last five years.
- In line with other areas, women outnumbered men by 64% to 36% (see Table 7.1).
- The age group 25-29 made up more than half of new Roll admissions (see breakdown in Table 7.2). This is amongst both men and women. Those above the age of 35 made up less than 15% of all admissions.
- In all age groups, women outnumbered men. This was more significant in age groups younger than 35 (see Chart 26).
- Legal Practice Course (LPC) was by far the most popular route to entry with 82% of entries (5,501). Some routes were not known and made up 4% of all admissions (283).
- Average ages were somewhat similar between men and women (see Table 7.4). The average age of LPC admissions was 29 and the oldest average age was amongst those who were transferred via a Registered European Lawyer (REL) route.

Numbers, gender and age profile of solicitors admitted to the Roll

Table 7.1: Men and women admitted to the Roll 2009-10 to 2019-20

Year	Male	%	Female	%	Total
2009-2010	3,472	40.9	5,008	59.1	8,480
2019-2020	2,409	35.8	4,313	64.2	6,722
% change 2019-20 over 2009-10	-30.6		-13.9		-20.7

Chart 25: Change in solicitors' admissions to the Roll 1950-2020

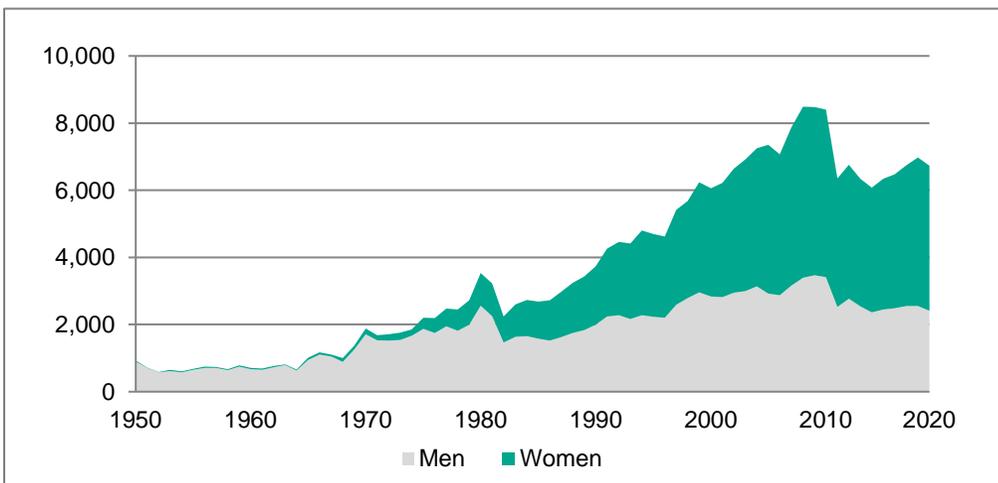
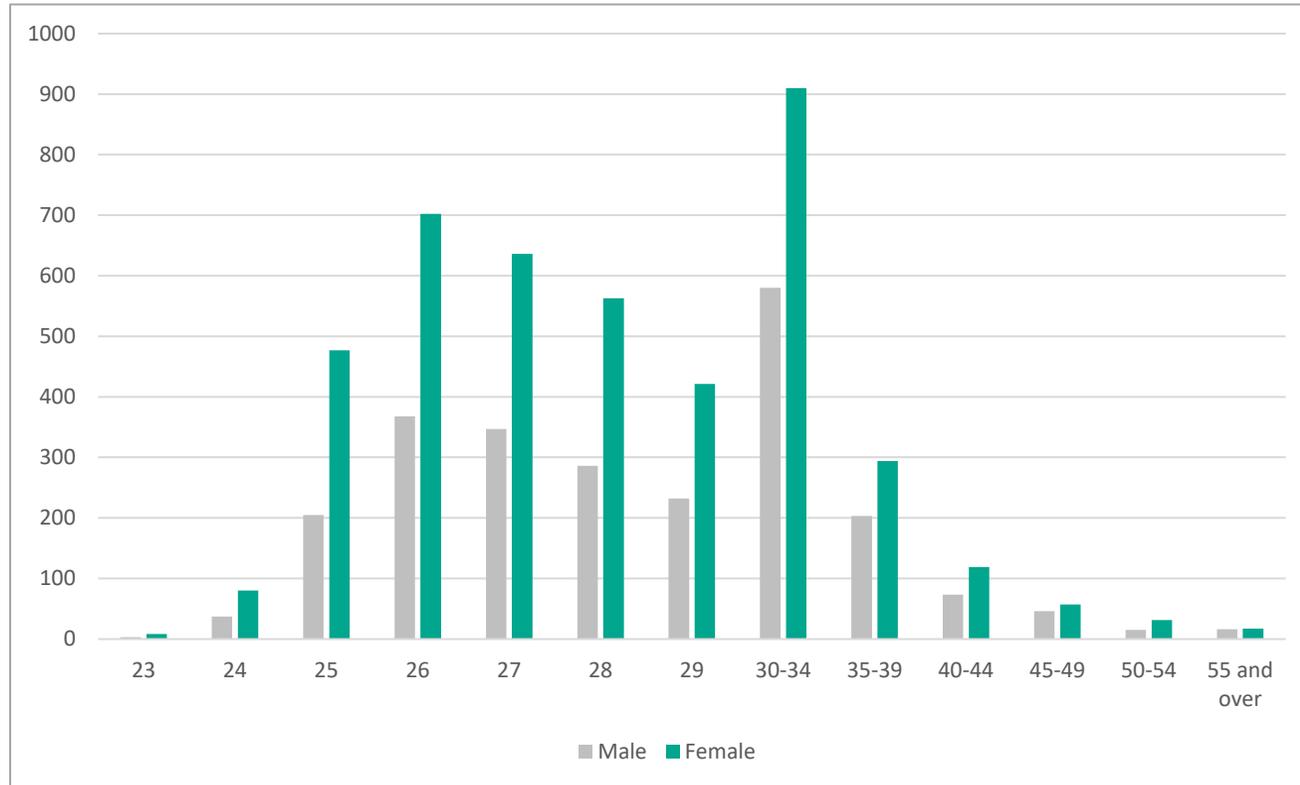


Table 7.2: Age distribution of solicitors admitted to the Roll 2019-20

Age	Male		Female		All admissions		Cumul. %
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
23	3	0.1	8	0.2	11	0.2	0.2
24	37	1.5	80	1.9	117	1.7	1.9
25	205	8.5	477	11.1	682	10.1	12.0
26	368	15.3	702	16.3	1,070	15.9	28.0
27	346	14.4	636	14.7	982	14.6	42.6
28	286	11.9	563	13.1	849	12.6	55.2
29	232	9.6	421	9.8	653	9.7	64.9
30-34	580	24.1	910	21.1	1,490	22.2	87.1
35-39	203	8.4	294	6.8	497	7.4	94.5
40-44	73	3.0	119	2.8	192	2.9	97.3
45-49	46	1.9	57	1.3	103	1.5	98.9
50-54	15	0.6	31	0.7	46	0.7	99.6
55 and over	15	0.6	15	0.3	30	0.4	100.0
Total known	2,409	100.0	4,313	100.0	6,722	100.0	
Unknown	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
Grand total	2,409	100.0	4,313	100.0	6,722	100.0	100.0
Average age	30.0		29.4		29.6		

Age distribution of solicitors admitted to the Roll

Chart 26: Age distribution of solicitors admitted to the Roll 2019-20



Routes to admission including gender and average age

Table 7.3: Routes to admission to the Roll in 2019-20*

	Male		Female		All admissions	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Direct entry:						
Non-law degree	31	1.3	57	1.3	88	1.3
LPC (law / non-law degree not specified)	1,925	79.9	3,576	82.9	5,501	81.8
Total direct entry	1,956	81.2	3,633	84.2	5,589	83.1
Entry by transfer:						
Overseas lawyer	338	14.0	401	9.3	739	11.0
REL route	25	1.0	32	0.7	57	0.8
CILEX route	83	3.4	227	5.3	310	4.6
Total transfers	446	18.5	660	15.3	1,106	16.5
Route unknown	7	0.3	20	0.5	27	0.4
All admissions	2,409	100.0	4,313	100.0	6,722	100.0
%	35.8		64.2		100.0	

* Those taking non-law degrees undertake a one-year conversion course prior to enrolling on the Legal Practice Course, before registering as trainees. Overseas lawyers and Barristers undertake the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme in order to be admitted to the Roll in England and Wales.

Table 7.4: Average age on admission to the Roll, by route to admission and gender, in 2019-20

	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	Average age	No.	Average age	No.	Average age
Direct entry:						
Non-law degree	31	33.2	57	33.7	88	33.5
LPC (law / non-law degree not specified)	1,925	29.1	3,576	28.7	5,501	28.8
Total direct entry	1,956	29.2	3,633	28.8	5,589	28.9
Entry by transfer:						
Overseas lawyer	338	33.6	401	32.7	739	33.1
REL route	25	38.4	32	37.7	57	38.0
CILEX route	83	32.6	227	33.2	310	33.1
Total transfers	446	30.0	660	29.4	1,106	29.6
Route unknown	7	31.0	20	28.7	27	29.3
All admissions	2,409	30.0	4,313	29.4	6,722	29.6
%	35.8		64.2		100.0	



Appendices

- Appendix A: Data sources and representativeness
- Appendix B: Glossary of key terms
- The Law Society Futures & Insight team and acknowledgements

Appendix A: Data sources and representativeness

The main source used for this report was the Law Society's Management Information databases maintained by the Solicitors Regulation Authority at its offices in Birmingham. Historically these databases have contained records of all solicitors at all stages in their careers, from initial enrolment as a student through to admission to the Roll on qualification and thereafter.

Changes to systems for recording and managing data have necessitated collaboration between the Law Society Futures & Insight team and SRA Business Intelligence (BI) team in order to ensure that information is reported appropriately. Historically, production of ASR figures from source databases was undertaken by a third party, whereas from 2014 the report uses data sourced with the help of the SRA BI team with tables generated directly by the Law Society's Futures & Insight team. Systematic checks have been undertaken to ensure consistency in the data presented between the latest reports, and previous reports that contained figures produced from databases by a third party.

The ASR reports provide snapshots of the profession as at 31 July each year for post entry details provided through the annual renewal and registration processes, or for the twelve months up to 31 July for pre-entry information (historically processed on an ongoing basis and with some lags). Pre-entry data on student enrolments prior to individuals taking the Legal Practice Course have been presented in previous reports but are absent from 2014 since these data are no longer collected by the SRA.

This report also draws on the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) used by universities to provide information on applications and acceptances to law degrees; and data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for information on the number of law graduates and their achieved grades. References to all of the non-Law Society data sources are given throughout the report.

Appendix B: Glossary of key terms

Admitted staff Staff who are solicitors on the Roll but may or may not currently hold a practising certificate.

Alternative Business Structure An Alternative Business Structure (ABS) is a Licensed body, a firm where a non-lawyer is a manager of the firm, or has an ownership-type interest in the firm (a non-lawyer is a person who is not authorised under the Legal Services Act 2007 to carry out reserved legal activities). A firm may also be an ABS where another body is a manager of the firm, or has an ownership-type interest in the firm and at least 10 per cent of that body is controlled by non-lawyers. For further information on ABSs refer to www.lawsociety.org.uk/advice/practice-notes/alternative-business-structures/

Associate See 'Position in firm'.

Barrister A barrister is a member of the Bar: the branch of the legal profession which has rights of audience before all Courts. Barristers are trained for, and specialise in, courtroom advocacy. Since 1994 solicitors have been allowed to apply for rights of audience (see below). For information on Barristers refer to www.barcouncil.org.uk

Ethnicity Where used in the Annual Statistics Report this refers to cultural groups of various kinds. The classification used in the ASR is determined by the nature of the data available on the Law Society databases, which, in turn, reflects changing approaches to collecting this data over time.

The classifications do not refer to the international or national citizenship status of individuals. For further information on anti-racist language refer to the British Sociological Association online guidelines at www.britsoc.co.uk.

The classification used in this report broadly reflects UK Census categories although there are some differences and we are reviewing the way Black, Asian and minority ethnic, and other groups are specified within the report moving forwards.

Appendix B: Glossary of key terms

In the current classification are the following categories:

Asian or Asian British including Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, or any other Asian background;

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African including Caribbean, African, or any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background;

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups including White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, or any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background;

Other ethnic group including Arab or any other ethnic group;

White including English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma, or any other White background;

Ethnicity is marked **Unknown** where individuals have not provided any information or responded 'Prefer Not to Say'.

Equity partner See 'Position in firm'.

Fee-earner A member of staff who earns fees (e.g. a solicitor, legal executive, paralegal, licensed conveyancer). 'Non-fee earning' refers to a member of staff who does not earn fees (e.g. secretaries, administrative staff and other support staff etc).

Appendix B: Glossary of key terms

Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives (FILEX) is a title given to those members of the Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) who have fulfilled the requirement of 5 years' qualifying employment, with the final 2 years gained after achieving ILEX or Legal Practice Course/Bar Professional Training Course (LPC/BPTC) qualification. Fellows can be employed in law firms or in-house as legal executives.

Incorporated practice See 'Practice type'.

Justices' clerk See 'Professional legal roles'.

Lawyer A lawyer is often used loosely as a term for a member of the legal profession who will have obtained legal qualifications relating to one or more jurisdiction. A person describing themselves as a lawyer may or may not also be a solicitor and likewise may or may not be a registered European lawyer (see Registered European lawyers below). (Also see the term 'Non-registered European Lawyer' below).

The 'SRA Handbook' (2014) includes the following in its **definition of 'lawyer'**:

Overseas Lawyer: This term refers to a lawyer who works overseas from the jurisdiction to which their legal qualifications relate. For instance, the term refers to a lawyer who has qualified overseas from England and Wales and may or may not have the requirements to become registered as a 'Registered Foreign Lawyer' (RFL) or 'Registered European Lawyer' (REL). The term 'Non-registered European Lawyer' in some cases may describe an overseas lawyer.

Registered European lawyers (RELS): An EU lawyer who is an EU national and is not a solicitor, barrister or advocate of any part of the UK, and who wishes to practise on a permanent basis in the UK, must register with one of the UK Bars or SRA. This is required by the Establishment of Lawyers Directive 98/5/EC. A REL is an EU lawyer who is registered with the SRA under the Directive. Once registered, the REL becomes subject to the same rules as solicitors.

Appendix B: Glossary of key terms

Registered foreign lawyers (RFLs): A RFL is a foreign lawyer registered with the SRA under section 89 of the Courts and Legal Solicitors Act 1990 in order to be permitted to enter into partnership (or an incorporated practice) with solicitors or RELs.

Non-registered European lawyer: A lawyer of a legal profession covered by the Establishment Directive who is based in the EU but outside England and Wales, and is not: a solicitor, a REL or an RFL, or an advocate or barrister of the UK or the Irish Republic.

Legal executive is a fellow of ILEX who is a fee-earner in a law firm or in-house but not a solicitor, who has the option of becoming one and is usually exempt from the training contract element if they chose to qualify as a solicitor.

Licensed body Licensable bodies defined by section 72 of the Legal Services Act 2007.

Limited liability partnership (LLP) See 'Practice type'.

Locum services These are businesses that act as agencies supplying admitted staff or paralegals on a contract or temporary basis.

Magistrate See 'Professional legal roles'.

Paralegal A paralegal is not a lawyer and is a legal assistant who: is qualified through education in legal studies, training and/or work experience in a law environment; is employed or retained by a solicitor in private practice, law office, corporate or in-house solicitor, government agency or other entity; works under the ultimate direction and supervision of a solicitor; and performs substantive legal work (this is work requiring sufficient legal knowledge that, without the assistance of a paralegal, it would be performed by a solicitor).

Participation rate The participation rate is the percentage of solicitors on the Roll holding practising certificates.

Partner See 'Position in firm'.

Permitted partnerships See 'Practice type'.

Appendix B: Glossary of key terms

Position in firm:

Principal: A Principal may either be a partner, sole practitioner or a partner equivalent (such as a director or shareholder of limited company or a limited liability partnership).

Sole practitioner: A sole practitioner is the owner or sole principal of an entity with one owner.

Partner: A partner is a member in a partnership recognised in law. Partnership is controlled by the Partnership Act 1890, an essential condition of which is that a partnership is assumed to exist whenever the members of a business share profit whether or not the sharing of profit is on an equal basis. A partnership is regulated by an agreement which sets out the duties and responsibilities of the partners during the subsistence of the partnership and also upon its dissolution.

Equity partner: An equity partner receives their contractually agreed share of the profits but also has a residual claim on profits from the firm's interests such as property (in this report members of LLPs, directors and shareholders of limited companies are referred to as 'partner equivalents').

Salaried partner: A salaried partner receives a salary and through a contractual agreement a share of profits.

Associate: A term used in some firms to denote solicitors who are not at partnership level but are more senior than an assistant solicitor. However, the distinction between associates and assistants is not always straightforward, and use of the 'Associate' and 'Assistant' titles can depend on the types of firms that solicitors with similar levels of experience work at (use of Associate is generally more common at larger, City, firms for example).

Appendix B: Glossary of key terms

Practice type:

Private practice: This term distinguishes the private sector law practice organisations from other sectors which employ in-house solicitors. There are various categories of the private practice business type and these are separate legal entities; for instance partnerships, limited companies, limited liability partnerships, foreign law practices.

Other types of business categories for organisations employing in-house solicitors include: commerce and industry; government (government department, local government, court, government-funded services and crown prosecution service); and other (advice service, educational establishment and advocacy services, churches trade unions, health service, charities and non SRA-regulated firms). For further information on companies visit www.companieshouse.gov.uk

Permitted partnerships: In an ordinary partnership there is no separation between the business and the partners. Partners are jointly and severally liable for any debts of a partnership. As there is no separation between the business and the partners, creditors can claim a partner's personal assets to pay off any debts – even those debts caused by other partners. Therefore, when a partnership fails, partners have no protection from creditors.

Incorporated practice: A practice or part of a practice incorporated as a company (generally a limited company). By law and under professional rules, a company can only provide the service of solicitors to the public if it is a 'recognised body' under the Administration of Justice Act 1985 (AJA). Under professional rules, a company can only provide the services of registered European lawyers (REs) to the public if it is a 'recognised body'. Solicitors and REs can also practise through a limited liability partnership (LLP), which is another type of body corporate, and which must also be a 'recognised body'. The 'SRA Handbook' (2014) contains the requirements for recognition, and the application procedure.

Limited Liability Partnership: Despite the name 'limited liability partnership' an LLP is not a partnership. An LLP has members, not partners; partnership law does not apply to an LLP because it is a corporate body. It is incorporated by registration with the Registrar of Companies in England and Wales under the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2000. Although it is a body corporate, an LLP is not a company.

Appendix B: Glossary of key terms

Practising certificate holders In order to act as a solicitor, the Solicitors Act 1974 requires that the solicitor's name appears on the Roll and that a current practising certificate is held. For further information on requirements to have a practising certificate consult with the 'SRA Handbook' (2014).

Principal See 'Position in firm'.

Private practice See 'Practice type'.

Professional legal roles:

Justices' clerk: A qualified principal legal adviser to a magistrate. For more information visit <http://www.jc-society.co.uk/>

Magistrate: There are two forms of recognised magistrates: Justices of the Peace (JPs) and District Judges (Stipendiary magistrates). Stipendiary magistrates are legally qualified and salaried. A JP is a lay magistrate — person appointed to administer judicial business in a Magistrates Court. A JP may also sit in the Crown Court with a judge or recorder to hear appeals and committals for sentence.

Qualified Lawyer Transfer Scheme (QLTS) Refer to chapter 6 for admissions to the Roll by transfer. Overseas lawyers are required to pass the QLTS to be admitted to the Roll.

Recognised body A body corporate recognised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority under section 9 of the Administration of Justice Act 1985 as suitable to undertake the provision of professional services such as are provided by individuals practising as solicitors or lawyers of other jurisdictions.

Recognised Sole Practice A solicitor or REL authorised by the SRA.

Salaried partner See 'Position in firm'.

Sole practitioner See 'Position in firm'.

Appendix B: Glossary of key terms

Solicitors on the Roll To become a solicitor one must have obtained the required legal qualifications to be admitted to the Roll. There are two distinct routes to admission to the Roll: a direct route, followed by completing the required educational and vocational training, and the transfer route, which includes transfers from other legal professions (see Chapter 8).

Under the Solicitors Act 1974, the SRA is required to maintain records of all qualified solicitors on the Roll.

There are several reasons why figures for solicitors on the Roll are higher than the numbers of solicitors with practising certificates. Non PC holders on the Roll include: solicitors who are 'non-practising' and who choose not to renew their practising certificate; retired solicitors who have chosen not to remove their name from the Roll; and solicitors who are employed by organisations where they are not practising as a solicitor do not require a PC to perform their legal or other functions (e.g. in an academic context such as a lecturer), or where solicitors are exempt from the PC requirement such as in government.

Traineeship In addition to obtaining pre-vocational qualifications, those embarking on a career as a solicitor also must undergo a period of training, in most cases two years before gaining admission to the Roll. The trainee is assigned to a training establishment, a firm or organisation registered with the SRA as fulfilling the requirements to provide recognised training and a training contract is drawn up.

The Law Society Futures & Insight Team and Acknowledgements

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The Futures & Insight team designs, conducts and commissions research and analysis in order to provide information about the legal services market to solicitors and evidence to underpin the Law Society's strategy and policy development. The team is part of a wider department that helps the Council of the Law Society to assess the changing nature of the profession, and respond to those changes in an informed way.

The Futures & Insight team has published reports on the shape, nature and size of the profession, as well as particular issues within legal service provision, public perceptions of solicitors, the work and organisation of the solicitors' profession, entry to the profession, how solicitors manage their practices, and comparisons with legal professions based in other jurisdictions.

For more insights and reports covering topical issues affecting solicitors and trends in the legal market and profession, please visit our Insight section at The Law Society website: <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/research/>

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