

Key facts about the solicitors' profession in Wales

The Law Society conducts research on the solicitors' profession in England and Wales. This fact sheet presents key figures on the profession for Wales as at November 2010.

Key statistics as at November 2010

	No	%
Solicitors with practising certificates	3,781	
Male solicitors with practising certificates	2,012	53.2
Female solicitors with practising certificates	1,769	46.8
Solicitors in private practice	2,975	82.0
Solicitors in commerce and industry	93	2.6
Solicitors in central and local government	484	13.3
Solicitors in other sectors	75	2.1
Solicitors in sole practices	309	8.5
Solicitors in practices with 2-4 partners	1,753	48.3
Solicitors in practices with 5-10 partners	896	24.7
Solicitors in practices with 11-25 partners	139	3.8
Solicitors in practices with more than 26 partners	530	14.6
Trainees		
Number of trainees	176	
Number of male trainees	59	33.5
Number of female trainees	117	66.5
Starting salary (median)	£16,690	
Organisations		
Organisations employing solicitors (head office)	815	
Private practices (head office)	490	60.1
Other organisations employing solicitors ¹	325	39.9

¹ Non private practice comprises of organisations employing solicitors by the following type of business: Commerce & Industry; Government (Government Department, Local Government, Court Government funded services, and Crown Prosecution Service); Other (Advice service, Educational establishment, Churches etc.).

WALES HAS THE HIGHEST PROPORTION OF TRAINEES EMPLOYED IN LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Practising certificate holders

Table 1 shows the ethnicity of all practising certificate holders in the region compared with all the regions in England and Wales, and Chart A illustrates their age distribution. Under one-third (29.7%) of solicitors are aged between 26-35 years old which is less than in the profession as a whole where 35.3% fall into this age range. Older solicitors are over-represented in this region. The ethnicity profile shows that there are proportionately fewer BME solicitors in this region than in England and Wales as a whole.

Table 2 provides details of the number of years of post qualification experience of practising certificate holders within Wales compared to the profession as a whole. It shows that there are more solicitors with 20-49 years of experience in Wales than in the profession in general.

The top three main areas of work for practising certificate holders in this region are business affairs (13.7%), wills and probate (8.2%) and litigation (general) (7.5%). In comparison with the profession as a whole, litigation (general) is cited by 5.8% and wills and probate by 7.2% of the profession with business affairs dominating at 21.0%.

Trainees

In 2010 47.7% of trainees are aged 25 and under, with 4.0% of trainees aged over 41 years, compared with 45.8% and 3.2% respectively for the profession.

Table 3 shows trainee registrations by ethnicity for Wales and for the entire profession. It demonstrates that the proportion of White trainees is significantly higher in the region in comparison with the profession as a whole.

The overwhelming majority (88.0%) of trainees work in law practices, with only 3.4% in commerce and industry and 6.3% in local and central government.

More than one-third (38.3%) of trainees are based in small firms of 2 to 4 partners and a further 36.0% are located within firms with 5 to 10 partners. Six percent of registered trainees are based within sole practices which is typical for the profession as a whole (6.0%).

Private practice firms

There are 490 private practice head offices in the region. The distribution of size of firms across the region is shown in table 4. It illustrates that half (50.6%) of firms employing solicitors are those with 2 to 4 partners.

Further reading

Trends in the solicitors' profession, Annual statistical report 2009. Bill Cole, Nina Fletcher, Tara Chittenden and Joanne Cox. Strategic Research Unit. The Law Society. 2009.

Table 1 Ethnicity of practising certificate holders

	Wales		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	4	0.1	798	0.7
Asian	49	1.3	7,438	6.6
Chinese	11	0.3	924	0.8
African	6	0.2	1,417	1.3
Other Ethnicity	33	0.9	2,117	1.9
White	3,408	90.1	90,337	79.7
Unknown	270	7.1	10,341	9.1
Total	3,781	100	113,372	100

Chart A Age distribution of practising certificate holders

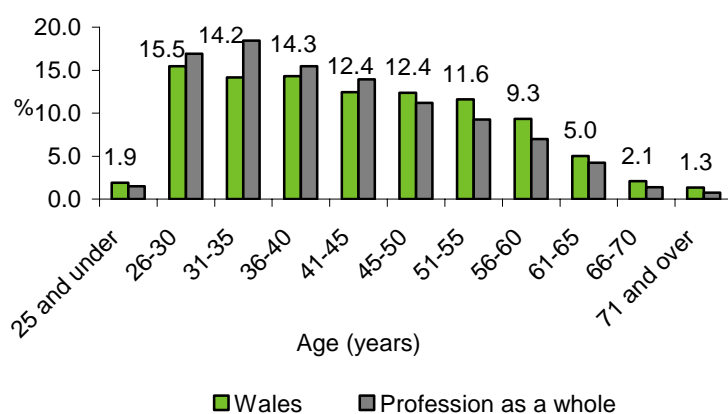


Table 2 Experience of practising certificate holders by years qualified

	Wales		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
0-9	1,378	36.5	49,666	43.8
10-19	987	26.1	29,646	26.1
20-29	682	18.0	16,146	14.0
30-39	469	12.4	10,136	8.9
40-49	95	2.5	1,734	1.5
50+	16	0.4	291	0.3
Unknown	154	4.1	5,753	5.1
Total	3,781	100	113,372	100

Table 3 Ethnicity of trainees

	Wales		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	1	0.6	45	0.7
Asian	1	0.6	787	11.5
Chinese	2	1.1	152	2.2
African	1	0.6	145	2.1
Other Ethnicity	2	1.1	274	4.0
White	156	88.6	4,972	72.4
Unknown	13	7.4	493	7.2
Total	176	100	6,868	100

Table 4 Size of firms (head office)

	Wales		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
Sole practice	177	36.1	4,583	45.1
2-4	248	50.6	4,185	41.1
5-10	56	11.4	898	8.8
11-25	6	1.2	310	3.1
26+	3	0.6	196	1.9
Total	490	100	10,172	100

Source: Law Society REGIS database