

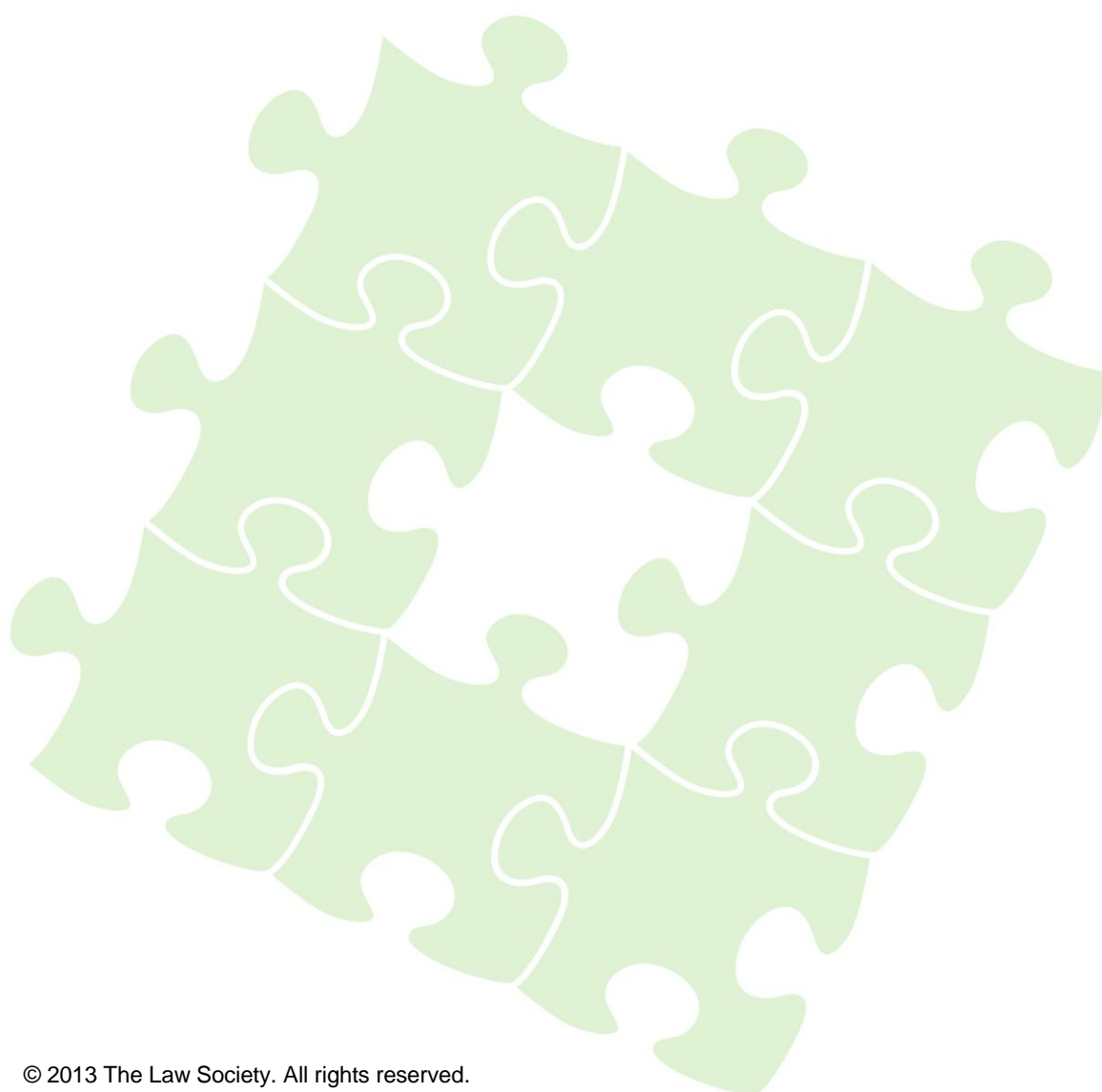


The Law Society

Diversity profile of the profession

A short synopsis

May 2013



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1. Introduction

This short report has been produced by the Law Society's Corporate Responsibility, Equality and Diversity (CRED) team. It highlights the most up-to-date data available on the diversity profile of solicitors holding practising certificates (PCs) in England and Wales.

2. Sources of data

The report draws data from two sources:

- The main source used for this report was the Annual Statistical Report 2012 of the Law Society's Research Unit based on the data extracted on 31 July 2012 from the Law Society's REGIS database which contains records of all solicitors at all stages in their career.
- Data was also extracted from the Annual PC Holder Survey (2012) - a survey of a 1,507 randomly selected individuals from private practice, commerce and industry and government conducted in June and July 2012 conducted over the telephone.

3. Diversity profile: factsheet

The following table provides the key figures on six diversity strands of the profession - gender, disability, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and belief. The table also provides key figures on socio economic background. The data on gender, age and ethnicity of practicing certificate (PC) holders were obtained from the Annual Statistical Report 2012 of the Law Society's Research Unit, and the data on disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief were gathered from the Annual PC Holder Survey 2012.

Diversity Strand		per cent of PC holders ¹
Gender	Male	52.6
	Female	47.4
Disability	Disabled	3.2
	Not disabled	96.8
Ethnicity	White/European	78.1
	African Caribbean	0.7
	African	1.4
	Asian	7.1
	Chinese	1.3
	Other ethnic group	2.1
	Unknown	9.3
Age	Under 25	0.6
	26-30	14.7
	31-35	19.8
	36-40	15.9
	41-45	14.4
	46-50	11.4
	51-55	9.0
	56-60	7.0
	61-65	4.5
	66-70	1.8
	71+	0.8
Sexual orientation	Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	2.7
	Heterosexual/straight	90.8
Religion or belief	Buddhist	0.4
	Christian	55
	Hindu	1.7
	Jewish	2.6
	Muslim	2.3
	No Religion	31.3
	Other	0.3
	Sikhism	0.8
Socio-economic background	First generation in family to attend university	53.2
	UK Independent/fee-paying school	30.8

¹ Figures in each diversity strand might not add up to 100 due to the exclusion from the table of such categories as 'do not know' or 'refuse to say'.

4. The size of the profession

- As at 31 July 2012, 128,778 solicitors held practising certificates (77.6 per cent of those on the roll), an increase of 5.6 per cent on the previous year.
- Since 1982, the total number of solicitors holding practice certificates has grown by 208.5 per cent at an average rate of 4.0 per cent.
- These solicitors were employed in 17,716 separate organisations of which, 15,583 were based in England and Wales.
- The number of solicitors working in private practice firms registered in England and Wales declined between 2011 and 2012 for the first time since records began in 1971.
- 87,768 (68.2 per cent of solicitors holding practising certificates) worked in private practice in England and Wales; the remainder worked mainly in commerce and industry and the public sector.
- Since 2002 the proportion of practising certificate holders not employed in private practice in England and Wales has increased from 20.7 per cent to 28.7.4 per cent in 2012.

5. A descriptive profile

- In 2012, excluding those whose ethnicity was unknown, solicitors from Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) groups represent 12.6 per cent of all solicitors with practising certificates, and 11.4 per cent of all solicitors in private practice.
- Women now account for 47.4 per cent of solicitors with practising certificates. Whereas since 2002 the total number of solicitors holding practising certificates has grown by 44.6 per cent, the number of women holding practising certificates has nearly doubled, having increased by 77.5 per cent.
- 78.6 per cent of men holding practising certificates work within private practice, compared to 73.2 per cent of women.
- In 2012 the average age of a male practising certificate holder was 44.9 years compared to only 38.7 years for female practising certificate holders.
- In 2012, the average age of a female solicitor in private practice was 38.0 years compared with 45.1 years for men. The average age of a sole practitioner was 51.6 years compared with 49.6 years for partners and 41.9 years for all solicitors in private practice.
- Two-fifths of practising certificate holders in 2012 (37.2 per cent) were employed by organisations based in London. These organisations were responsible for the employment of just under one half (48.8 per cent) of all BME practising certificate holders.

6. Trends in post-graduate education

- In 2011 there were 34,401 applicants to study first degree courses in law in England and Wales, of whom 19,882 (68.1 per cent) were accepted.
- Of the 14,859 graduates in the summer of 2011, over half (58 per cent) achieved firsts or upper second classifications. More women graduated with firsts and upper seconds than men, 60.0 per cent as opposed to 56.0 per cent.
- In the year ending 31 July 2012, 8,095 students enrolled with the Solicitors Regulation Authority. Of these students 60.7 per cent were women and 39.3 per cent were drawn from BME groups.
- There were 4,869 new traineeships registered in the year 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012. This is a decrease of 10.5 per cent on the level recorded the previous year.
- Of the new trainees registered, 60.3 per cent were women, and 22.7 per cent of trainees with known ethnicity were drawn from BME groups.
- In the year to 31 July 2012, admissions to the Roll (i.e. newly qualified solicitors and transfers from other legal professions) were 6,350, a decrease of 24.4 per cent on admissions the year before.
- Of new admissions, 60.3 per cent were women and 39.7 per cent were men. Male admissions in 2012 were at their lowest levels since 1996. Admissions from BME groups represented 26.9 per cent of all admissions where the ethnicity was known.

7. Age

The table below shows the age distribution of solicitors in five year groups. Almost two-thirds (64.9 per cent) of PC holders were between 26 and 45 years of age, 7.1 per cent were of state pension age and just 0.6 per cent were 25 or younger.

Age	PC holders	per cent
<=25	781	0.6
26-30	18,959	14.7
31-35	25,529	19.8
36-40	20,486	15.9
41-45	18,564	14.4
46-50	14,680	11.4
51-55	11,601	9.0
56-60	9,015	7.0
61-65	5,831	4.5
66-70	2,301	1.8
>=71	991	0.8
Unknown	40	0.0
Total	128,778	100.0

8. Gender

Since 2002, the total number of solicitors with practising certificates has grown by 44.6 per cent. However, over this period the number of women solicitors with practising certificates has increased by 77.5 per cent whilst the number of men increased by only 23.9 per cent. The proportion of female solicitors holding practising certificates was 47.3 per cent at 31 July 2012 compared with 38.6 per cent in 2002. For the past twenty years, women have accounted for over one-half of new entrants to the profession, so this proportion is set to increase for the foreseeable future.

Gender	Number of PC holders	per cent
Male	67,760	52.6
Female	61,018	47.3
Total	128,788	100.0

9. Age and gender

The table below shows that for those aged 35 and under there were over 1.6 female PC holders for every male PC holder; however in the older age groups male PC holders represented the majority reaching 6.2 male PC holders for every female PC holder in the group of those aged over 61. Overall, the calculation of the median age for females and males indicates that one-half of women solicitors with PCs were aged 37 or younger, whereas one-half of men with PCs were aged 44 or younger.

Age	Number of men with PC	per cent	Number of women with PC	per cent
25 and under	265	0.4	516	0.8
26-30	6,863	10.1	12,101	19.8
31-35	10,348	15.3	15,188	24.9
36-40	10,018	14.8	10,474	17.2
41-45	10,100	14.9	8,470	13.9
46-50	8,309	12.3	6,375	10.4
51-55	7,383	10.9	4,222	6.9
56-60	6,618	9.8	2,400	3.9
61-65	4,856	7.2	977	1.6
66-70	2,084	3.1	218	0.4
71 and over	915	1.4	76	0.1
Total	67,760	100.0	61,018	100

10. Ethnicity

The table below records the number of solicitors with practising certificates who were known to belong to a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group. The provision of information on ethnicity by individuals is entirely optional, and, at July 2012, was known for 90.7 per cent of practising certificate holders.

BME solicitors were estimated to account for 12.6 per cent of solicitors with practising certificates in 2012, a small increase on the 10.0 per cent recorded in 2009. Within this total, 15.2 per cent of women solicitors were members of a BME group compared with only 10.2 per cent of men.

The proportion of PC holders belonging to a BME group was slightly less than that found in the general population of England and Wales. Census data for England and Wales in 2011 found that of those in the population providing ethnicity, 14% described themselves as belonging to a BME group². This compares to 13% of PC holders for whom ethnicity is known.

Ethnic origin	Men	Women	Total	per cent
White European	53,600	47,012	100,612	78.1
African-Caribbean	245	629	874	0.7
Asian	4,172	4,993	9,165	7.1
Chinese	642	1,082	1,724	1.3
African	748	1,002	1,750	1.4
Other ethnic origin	1,136	1,552	2,688	2.1
All solicitors for whom ethnic origin is known	60,543	56,270	116,813	90.7
All practising certificate holders from minority ethnic groups known	6,943	9,258	16,201	
% of all solicitors pc's	10.2	15.2	12.6	
Unanswered	2	0	2	0.0
Refused	7,215	4,748	11,963	9.3
All practising certificate holders	67,760	61,018	128,778	100.0
% of all solicitors with Pc's for whom ethnic origin is known	89.3	92.2	90.7	

² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/sty-ethnicity-in-england-and-wales.html> (last accessed 19.04.13)

11. Religion or belief

The Law Society's PC holders survey 2012 indicated that 54.8 per cent of PC holders were Christian, 31.4 per cent had no religion, 1.7 per cent were Hindu, 2.3 per cent - Muslim, 2.6 per cent - Jewish, 0.8 per cent - Sikh followed by 0.4 per cent of those practicing Buddhism.

The most accurate data on religion in the population in general are available from the Census in England and Wales 2011³. As seen from the table, PC holders with no religion were significantly over-represented compared with the population in general whereas those of Christian and Muslim religions seem to have been under-represented.

	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation	per cent	Per cent of general population
No religion	34,065	31.4%	25.1%
Buddhist	477	0.4%	0.4%
Christian (all denominations)	59,469	54.8%	59.3%
Hindu	1,895	1.7%	1.5%
Jewish	2,835	2.6%	0.5%
Muslim	2,491	2.3%	4.8%
Sikh	816	0.8%	0.8%
Other	339	0.3%	0.4%
Prefer not to say	6,042	5.6%	7.2%
Total	108,429	100.0%	100.0%

2012 PC holder Survey

12. Sexual orientation

According to the PC Holder Survey 2012, nine in ten (90.7 per cent) PC holders were heterosexual/straight, 1.8 per cent were gay men, 0.5 per cent - gay women, 0.3 per cent were bisexual and 6.6 per cent of private certificate holders preferred not to reveal this information.

These findings are broadly representative of the population of England and Wales as a whole where around 1.4 per cent people were gay/lesbian/bisexual in 2009-10⁴.

	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation	per cent
Bisexual	325	0.3%
Gay man	2,006	1.8%
Gay woman / lesbian	528	0.5%
Heterosexual / straight	98,295	90.7%
Other	97	0.1%
Prefer not to say	7,178	6.6%
Total	108,429	100.0%

2012 PC holder Survey

³ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/sty-religion.html> (last accessed 19.04.13)

⁴ Measuring Sexual Identity: an Evaluation Report, September 2010, Office for National Statistics, P10

13. Disability

In 2012 around 11.9 per cent of the working age population (16-64 years) in England and Wales⁵, or 14% of those in employment in the UK were disabled⁶. This estimate of the proportion of people with disability covers both DDA disabled (someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities⁷) and those work-limiting disabled.

Three per cent of PC holders in the 2012 PC holder survey reported to have had a long-term illness, health problem or disability. Of these, 63 per cent reported that they were 'limited a little' and 16 per cent said they were 'limited a lot'.

Since some solicitors render this information sensitive⁸, this figure should be treated as a lower limit of the proportion of solicitors with long-term illness or disability. Nonetheless, the data at hand suggests that disabled people are under represented in the solicitors profession compared with the working age population of England and Wales in general.

Long-term illness, health problem or disability	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation	per cent
Yes	3,437	3.2%
No	103,558	95.5%
Don't know / refused	1,434	1.3%
Total	108,429	100.0%

2012 PC holder Survey

Extent to which day-to-day activities are limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation	% of those with a long term illness, health problem or disability
Yes - limited a lot	558	16.2%
Yes - limited a little	2,151	62.6%
No	462	13.5%
Prefer not to say	265	7.7%
Total	3,437	100.0%

2012 PC holder Survey

⁵ Annual Population Survey, April 2011 to March 2012 (worksheet 2-Social Indicators) accessed through ONS website (July-September 2012)

⁶ A08: Labour market status of disabled people (July-September 2012) (last updated Nov 12) Office for National Statistics Website

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=Labour+force+survey+%2B+disability>

⁷ Definition cited in the Equality Act 2010, which substituted the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

⁸ Career Experiences of Solicitors with Disabilities, The Law Society, 2003, see for example P. 15-19

14. Socio-economic background

The socio-economic background of PC holders was measured in the 2012 PC holder survey using the indicators recommended by the Legal Services Board⁹.

Type of secondary school attended

While the proportion of solicitors having attended independent or public schools (31 per cent) suggested that solicitors were overrepresented compared to society in general (seven per cent), the actual figure fell well below estimates for the professions generally and previous estimates in relation to solicitors (55 per cent)¹⁰.

Type of school attended between the ages of 11-18	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation	per cent
UK State School	64,766	59.7%
UK Independent/ Fee paying school or a school outside of the UK	33,246	30.7%
Prefer not to say	8,811	8.1%
Total	1,607	1.5%
	108,429	100.0%

2012 PC holder Survey

First generation in family to attend university

Over half (53 per cent) of solicitors in the PC holders survey were in the first generation of their family to go to university.

Whether first generation in family to attend university	Estimated number of PC holders attached to an organisation	per cent
Yes	57,798	53.3%
No	46,754	43.1%
Did not attend university	2,341	2.2%
Prefer not to say	1,403	1.3%
Don't know	133	0.1%
Total	108,429	100.0%

2012 PC holder Survey

⁹ Increasing diversity and social mobility in the legal workforce: transparency and evidence: LSB response document & accompanying statutory guidance issued under Section 162 of the Legal Services Act 2007, Legal Services Board, July 2011, p53
http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/what_we_do/consultations/closed/pdf/decision_document_diversity_and_social_mobility_final.pdf (last accessed 19.04.13)

¹⁰ Sutton Trust Submission to the Milburn Commission, The Educational Backgrounds of Leading Lawyers, Journalists, Vice Chancellors, Politicians, Medics and Chief Executives, March 2009, p3

15. Caring responsibilities

Almost one-third of PC holders (29.7%) were the primary carers for a child or children under the age of eighteen, and seventeen percent of PC holders gave help and support to other adults (family members, friends, neighbours or others).

Whether primary carer for a child or children under the age of eighteen	Estimated number of PC holders with caring responsibilities (children)	per cent
Yes	32,153	29.7%
No	74,672	68.9%
Prefer not to say	1,604	1.5%
Total	108,429	100.0%

Whether provided support to other adults (family members, friends, neighbours or others)	Estimated number of PC holders with caring responsibilities (other adults)	per cent
No	87,945	81.1%
Yes, 1-19 hours a week	17,528	16.2%
Yes 20-49 hours a week	621	0.6%
Yes, 50 or more hours a week	360	0.3%
Prefer not to say	1,975	1.8%
Total	108,429	100.0%