

Trends in the solicitors' profession

Annual statistical report 2004

Prepared by Bill Cole, Strategic Research Unit



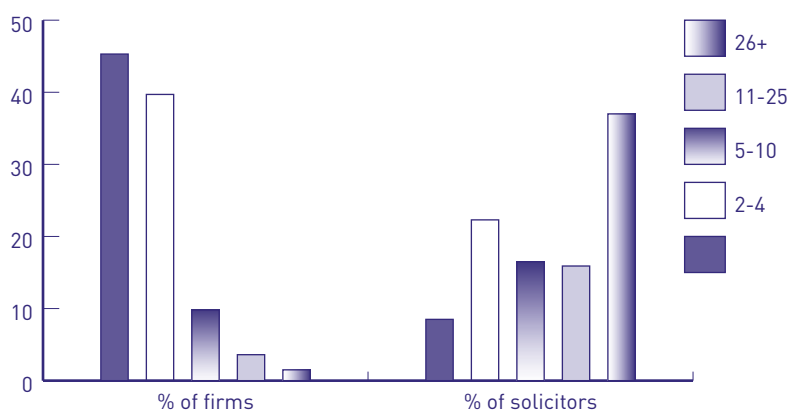
The Law Society

Key statistics

Solicitors' profession as at 31 July 2004

Solicitors on the Roll	121,165
Solicitors with practising certificates (pcs)	96,757
Private practice firms	9,211
Women solicitors with pcs	39,199
Women partners	6,165
Solicitors from minority ethnic groups with pcs	8,031
Solicitors working in private practice	75,079
Solicitors employed outside private practice	21,678
New solicitors admitted to the Roll 2003-2004	7,247
Trainee solicitors commencing contracts 2003-2004	5,708

Distribution of firms and solicitors 2003-04



Partners	% of firms	% of solicitors
1	45.3	8.5
2-4	39.7	22.3
5-10	9.8	16.5
11-25	3.6	15.9
26 or more	1.5	37.0

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The Law Society

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Introduction

This is the twenty-first Annual Statistical Report of the Law Society. It contains the most recent statistics available on the solicitors' branch of the legal profession.

The Strategic Research unit

This report was produced by the Law Society's Strategic Research Unit. The Unit helps the Council of the Law Society to assess the changing nature of the profession, and to respond to those changes in an informed way. In doing so the unit designs, conducts and commissions research studies on a number of issues of relevance to the profession. It has published reports on the public perceptions of solicitors, the work and organisation of the solicitors' profession, entry to the profession, how solicitors manage their practices, research into legal markets, and comparisons with legal professions based in other jurisdictions. A list of publications linked to a summary or the full text version can be viewed at www.research.lawsociety.org.uk. Further information on the work of the unit can be obtained from members of the Strategic Research Unit.

Sources of data

The main source used for this report was:

- The Law Society's REGIS database, which is maintained by the Society at its offices in Redditch. This contains records of all solicitors at all stages in their career, from their initial enrolment as a student through to their admission to the Roll on qualification and thereafter.

The report also draws on the clearing house admission systems (UCAS) used by universities to provide information on applications and acceptances for law degrees in England and Wales; and data from the Higher Educational Statistical Agency for information on the number of law graduates and their achieved grades. Detailed references to all of the sources used are given throughout the report.

Summary

Key facts about the solicitors' profession

This report describes the size and composition of the solicitors' profession and describes trends in the entry of solicitors to the profession.

The size of the profession

- As at 31 July 2004, there were 121,165 solicitors on the Roll, an increase of 4.4% on the year before.
- At the same date, 96,757 solicitors held practising certificates, an increase of 4.3% on the previous year.
- Since 1974, the total number of solicitors holding practising certificates has grown by 236.7% at an average annual rate of 4.1%.
- 75,079, or 77.6%, of solicitors holding practising certificates work in private practice; the remainder work mainly in commerce and industry and the public sector.
- Since 1994, the proportion of practising certificate holders not employed in private practice has increased from 17.9% to 22.4%.
- Just over one-half, 54.5%, of current practising solicitors have been qualified for 10 years or less.
- In the year to 31 July 2004, admissions to the Roll, *ie* newly qualified solicitors and transfers from other legal professions, were 7,247, an increase of 4.7% on admissions in the year before.
- Of these new admissions 56.7% were women, and admissions from minority ethnic groups represented 17.8% of all admissions with known ethnicity.

A descriptive profile

- In 2003–04, solicitors drawn from minority ethnic groups accounted for 9.2% of solicitors on the Roll, 8.3% of solicitors with practising certificates, and 7.9% of solicitors in private practice.
- Women now account for 40.5% of solicitors with practising certificates. Whereas since 1994 the total number of solicitors holding practising certificates has grown by 52.1%, the number of women holding practising certificates more than doubled, having increased by 112.8%.
- 80.8% of men holding practising certificates work within private practice, compared to 72.9% of women.

- Of those solicitors with 10–19 years' experience in private practice, 73.0% of men were partners or sole practitioners compared with only 48.8% of women.
- In 2004, the average age of a female solicitor in private practice was 36.5 years compared with 43.4 years for men. The average age of a sole practitioner was 50.4 years compared with 45.8 years for partners and 40.8 years for all solicitors in private practice.
- Just over one-third of practising certificate holders in 2004 (35.3%) were employed by organisations based in London. These organisations were responsible for the employment of 50.4% of ethnic minority practising certificate holders.

Trends in private practice

- In 2004 there were 15,692 separate organisations employing solicitors of which 13,834 were based in England and Wales.
- In 2004, there were 9,211 solicitors' firms in England and Wales listed in the Society's database, a small increase of 0.1% on 2003.
- The vast majority of law firms are relatively small with 85.0% of them having four or fewer partners.
- In 2004 42.2%, of private practice firms were located in London and the South East.
- Just over one-quarter of private practice firms, 27.1%, were recorded as being located in London in 2004. These firms employed just over two-fifths (41.6%) of all private practitioners.
- In 2004, the 1.5% of firms with 26 or more partners employed over one-third (37.0%) of all solicitors in private practice. Sole practices accounted for 45.3% of firms, and employed 8.5% of all solicitors.
- On average, the very largest firms, with 81 or more partners, had 2.7 assistant/associate solicitors per partner compared with between 0.4 and 1.6 in the smaller and medium-sized firms.

Trends in post-graduate education

- In 2003 there were 20,627 applicants to study first degree courses in law in England and Wales, of whom 12,993 (63.0%) were accepted.
- Of the 10,007 graduates in the summer of 2003, over half (55.7%) achieved firsts or upper second classifications. More women graduated with firsts and upper seconds than men, 57.3% as opposed to 52.8%.

- In the year ending 31 July 2004, 9,831 students enrolled with the Law Society. Of these students 62.8% were women and 23.9% were drawn from the minority ethnic groups.
- In July 2004, 7,912 LPC students were eligible to sit the examination. This represented an increase (7.3%) on the 7,377 who were eligible in 2003. Of those who actually sat the examination in 2004, 84.3% passed, a small increase on the 2003 pass rate of 79.4%.
- There were 7,859 full time and 1,700 part-time LPC places available in 2003–04. In 2004–05 there will be 8,345 full-time and 2,256 part-time places available.
- There were 5,708 new traineeships registered in the year 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004. This is almost unchanged at a 1.0% increase on the level recorded last year.
- Of the new trainees registered, 61.5% were women and 19.1% of trainees with known ethnicity were drawn from minority ethnic groups.

Part I

Qualified solicitors

Chapters 1 and 2 of the report contain details of the numbers of solicitors on the Roll, and of those with practising certificates, analysed by gender, age, ethnicity, experience, employment sector and, where appropriate, position in private practice. Chapter 3 looks at the organisations that employ solicitors and chapter 4 examines the staffing of firms in private practice.

1. Solicitors on the Roll

- 1.1 Under the Solicitors Act 1974, the Law Society is required to maintain records of all qualified solicitors on the Roll. All practising solicitors are obliged to keep the Society informed of their whereabouts and any changes in the circumstances of their employment. The annual renewal of practising certificates produces up-to-date information about all practising solicitors. In addition, the Society now operates a scheme of annual enrolment for all solicitors on the Roll in order to be able to gain up-to-date information about those solicitors who do not hold practising certificates.
- 1.2 As at 31 July 2004, there were 121,165 solicitors on the Roll, an increase of 4.4% over the previous year. Of these, 70,790 (58.4%) were men and 50,375 (41.6%) were women. Last year 59.4% of solicitors on the Roll were men and 40.6% were women.
- 1.3 Table 1.3 shows that of those solicitors on the Roll at 31 July 2004, 96,757, or 79.9% of them, held a current practising certificate entitling them to act as a solicitor within the definition of the Solicitors Act 1974. The remaining 24,408 include solicitors working in jobs in which they are not required to hold a practising certificate, retired solicitors, and those no longer pursuing a career in the legal profession. Some of the employed solicitors without a practising certificate work in local government or commerce and industry and do not provide legal advice to those outside the organisation, or undertake litigation on behalf of their employer.

Table 1.3 Solicitors on the Roll with and without practising certificates by gender as at 31 July 2004

	No.	%
With practising certificates		
Men	57,558	59.5
Women	39,199	40.5
Sub-total	96,757	100.0
Without practising certificates		
Men	13,232	54.2
Women	11,176	45.8
Sub-total	24,408	100.0
Total solicitors on the Roll		
Men	70,790	58.4
Women	50,375	41.6
Total	121,165	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Ethnic groups

- 1.4 Minority ethnic group solicitors make up 9.2% of solicitors on the Roll, of whom 23.7% are resident abroad. In England and Wales the greatest concentration of minority ethnic group solicitors on the Roll is found in the Central and South Middlesex constituency, where over a quarter of solicitors are drawn from ethnic minorities.
- 1.5 Table 1.5 shows that 72.4% of the 11,098 minority ethnic group solicitors on the Roll hold practising certificates. This is a slight increase on last year but still a noticeably lower participation rate than for all solicitors where the rate was as we have seen 79.9%. Chinese solicitors, the majority of whom work overseas, have the lowest minority ethnic participation rate. Less than one-third (32.0%) of ethnic Chinese solicitors on the Roll hold practising certificates.

Table 1.5 Minority ethnic group solicitors on the Roll and with practising certificates as at 31 July 2004

Ethnic origin	Minority ethnic group solicitors		
	1 On the Roll	2 With practising certificate	3 Participation rate [2 as a % of 1]
African-Caribbean	750	625	83.3%
Asian	5,331	4,558	85.5%
Chinese	2,553	818	32.0%
African	868	752	86.6%
Other ethnic origin	1,597	1,278	80.0%
All minority ethnic group solicitors	11,098	8,031	72.4%
White European	94,621	77,546	82.0%
Unknown	15,446	11,180	72.4%
All solicitors	121,165	96,757	79.9%
Minority ethnic group solicitors as a % of all solicitors	9.2%	8.3%	
Minority ethnic group solicitors as a % of solicitors with known ethnicity	10.5%	9.4%	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2. Practising certificate holders

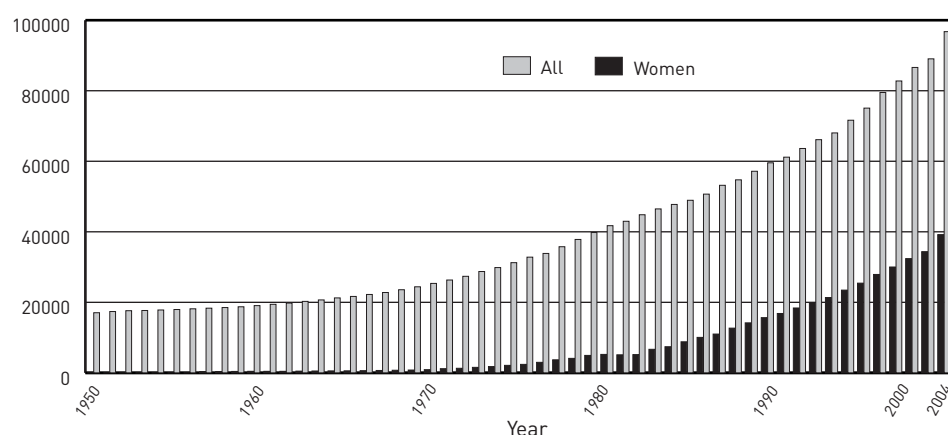
- 2.1 In order to act as a solicitor, the Solicitors Act 1974 requires that the solicitor's name appears on the Roll and that a current practising certificate is held. Practising certificates are issued by the Law Society and are valid from 1 November to 31 October each year.
- 2.2 At 31 July 2004, there were 96,757 solicitors holding current practising certificates. This represents an increase of 4.3% on the number for the previous year. This growth rate is close to the long run rate of growth, and is slightly below growth in the number of solicitors on the Roll. The participation rate, which is the percentage of solicitors on the Roll holding practising certificates, fell slightly from 78.1% to 77.8% for women solicitors, and increased slightly from 81.1% to 81.3% for male solicitors. Table 2.2 below shows how the total number of solicitors with practising certificates has grown over the past three decades, with the comparable figures for solicitors working within private practice. Since 1974, the total number of practising certificate holders has grown by 236.7% at an average annual rate of 4.1%. Comparable figures for those in private practice are a total growth over the period of 203.0% at an average rate of 3.8%. From table 2.2 it can be seen that the fastest growth in practising certificate and private practitioner numbers over this period occurred between 1974 and 1984 (56.0% and 56.1% respectively). Chart 1 shows the growth in the number of solicitors with practising certificates since 1950, and compares the growth rate for women holders with that of the profession as a whole.

Table 2.2 Solicitors holding practising certificates 1974 to 2004

Year	Practising solicitors	% change	Solicitors in private practice	% change
1974	28,741	-	24,776	-
1984	44,837	56.0	38,674	56.1
1994	63,628	41.9	52,213	35.0
2004	96,757	52.1	75,079	43.8

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Chart 1 Growth in the number of solicitors with practising certificates 1950–2004



Source: Law Society's REGIS database

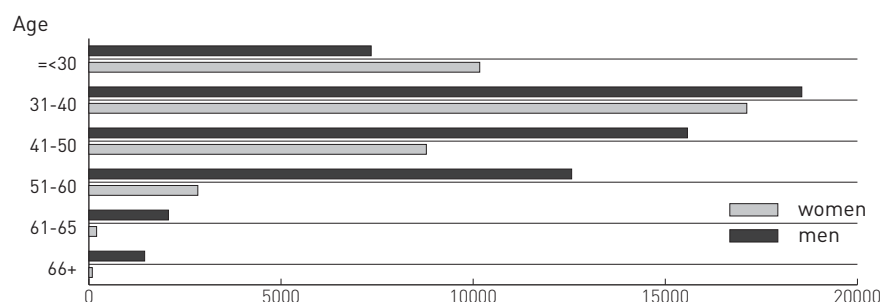
- 2.3 Since 1994, the total number of solicitors with practising certificates has grown by 52.1%; however, over this period the number of women solicitors with practising certificates has increased by 112.8% whilst the number of men increased by only 27.3%. The proportion of solicitors holding practising certificates who are women was 40.5% at 31 July 2004, compared with 28.9% in 1994. For the past ten years, women have accounted for over one-half of new entrants to the profession, so this proportion is set to increase at least for the foreseeable future.
- 2.4 Table 2.4 shows the age distribution of solicitors in five-year groups, and also participation rates by age. The comparison between the participation rates for men and women shows that participation rates are lower among female than male solicitors for all age groups apart from the very youngest aged 25 and under.
- 2.5 Table 2.4 and Chart 2 also show that there are more female than male practising certificate holders aged 40 or less, but that the majority of those in the older age groups are men. Over one-half, 55.0%, of solicitors with a practising certificate are aged 40 or less. The average age of a female solicitor with a practising certificate is 37.0 years compared with 43.3 for men. The median values show that one-half of women solicitors with practising certificates are aged 35 or less, whilst one half of men with practising certificates are aged 42 or less.

Table 2.4 The age distribution of solicitors and participation rates as at 31 July 2004

Age	Number of men with PCs	Part. rate [% on Roll holding PCs]	Number of women with PCs	Part. rate [% on Roll holding PCs]
25 and under	465	94.5	738	95.2
26-30	6,804	93.1	9,384	91.0
31-35	9,487	87.9	9,606	81.6
36-40	8,871	85.7	7,432	72.7
41-45	7,802	85.0	5,251	71.4
46-50	7,611	85.0	3,489	72.7
51-55	7,025	83.1	1,969	69.0
56-60	5,407	78.2	852	65.4
61-65	2,048	65.8	200	51.7
66-70	866	47.1	54	36.5
71 and over	570	22.7	35	28.0
Unknown	602	68.1	189	63.9
All ages known	56,956	81.5	39,010	77.9
% ages known	99.0		100.0	
Total	57,558	81.3	39,199	77.8
Average age	43.3		37.0	
Median age	42		35	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Chart 2 The age of solicitors with practising certificates — 31 July 2004



Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2.6 Table 2.6 shows the numbers of solicitors holding practising certificates as at 31 July 2004, analysed by the number of years they have been qualified as solicitors. Over one-third, 38.2%, of male solicitors with current practising certificates in private practice have been qualified for less than 10 years, and 61.7% have been qualified for less than 20 years. This compares with 89.0% of women solicitors in private practice who have been qualified for less than 20 years. A similar age distribution pattern to that found in private practice was found amongst those solicitors working in the employed and other sectors.

Table 2.6 Experience of solicitors with practising certificates, measured by number of years qualified, as at 31 July 2004

Years since admission	All solicitors		Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Solicitors in private practice						
0–9 years	36,609	48.8	17,770	38.2	18,839	65.9
10–19 years	17,546	23.4	10,929	23.5	6,617	23.1
20–29 years	13,684	18.2	10,993	23.6	2,691	9.4
30–39 years	5,978	8.0	5,584	12.0	394	1.4
40–49 years	1,078	1.4	1,036	2.2	42	0.1
50+ years	184	0.2	177	0.4	7	0.0
All years	75,079	100.0	46,489	100.0	28,590	100.0
Solicitors in employed and other sectors						
0–9 years	13,233	61.0	6,224	56.2	7,010	66.1
10–19 years	5,021	23.2	2,377	21.5	2,644	24.9
20–29 years	2,645	12.2	1,783	16.1	862	8.1
30–39 years	715	3.3	625	5.6	90	0.8
40–49 years	52	0.2	50	0.5	2	0.0
50+ years	11	0.1	11	0.1	0	0.0
All years	21,678	100.0	11,070	100.0	10,608	100.0

* less than 0.05%

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2.7 Table 2.7 provides a detailed breakdown of the employment of solicitors with practising certificates. It shows that the overwhelming majority of solicitors with practising certificates work in private practice: 77.6% as at 31 July 2004. The second largest category of employment is commerce and industry, 7.4%, followed by local government, which employs 3.6% of practising certificate holders. (It should also be pointed out that the number of solicitors working in the employed sector is likely to be greater than these figures suggest. This is because many, as a consequence of their employed status, will not be required to hold a practising certificate.) A further 7.3% are not attached to any organisation: the majority of these are in the youngest age group which suggests that they are predominantly the most recently qualified. The table also shows that women account for a higher proportion of solicitors in the employed and other sectors than in private practice. In private practice 38.1% of solicitors are women, compared with 48.9% in these other sectors.

Table 2.7 Practising certificate holders by category of employment as at 31 July 2004

Category of employment	All	% of PC holders	Men	Women	Women as % of total
Private practice	75,079	77.6	46,489	28,590	38.1
Commerce/industry	7,205	7.4	3,991	3,214	44.6
Accountancy practice	91	0.1	38	53	58.2
Nationalised industry	109	0.1	36	73	67.0
Trade union	47	0.0	23	24	51.1
Government department	175	0.2	93	82	46.9
Local government	3,442	3.6	1,455	1,987	57.7
Court	96	0.1	51	45	46.9
Government funded services	236	0.2	99	137	58.1
Crown Prosecution Service	2,063	2.1	959	1,104	53.5
Advice service	378	0.4	123	255	67.5
Educational establishment	214	0.2	73	141	65.9
Health service	68	0.1	17	51	75.0
Others ¹	447	0.5	170	277	62.0
Not attached to an organisation	7,107	7.3	3,941	3,166	44.5
All non-private practice	21,678	22.4	11,069	10,609	48.9
Total practising certificate holders	96,757	100.0	57,558	39,199	40.5

* less than 0.05%

¹ All other categories, including practising certificate holders in the Armed Forces, churches and other religious bodies and institutes

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 2.8 Overall, 80.8% of male solicitors with practising certificates work in private practice compared to only 72.9% of their female counterparts. This is shown in Table 2.8, which also shows the growing importance of the employed sector. In 2004, just over one-fifth (22.4%) of practising certificate holders worked in the employed sector, compared to 17.9% 10 years ago.

Table 2.8 Distribution of practising certificate holders by category of employment as at 31 July 2004 compared with 1994

Category of employment	1994	Total %	2004	
	Total %		Men %	Women %
Private practice	82.1	77.6	80.8	72.9
Other PC holders	17.9	22.4	19.2	27.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Solicitors in private practice

- 2.9 For the 75,079 solicitors working in private practice, the Law Society records the position or status of the solicitor within the firm. Table 2.9 shows the status of those solicitors holding practising certificates and working in private practice as at 31 July 2004. It shows the number who are partners, sole practitioners, assistant solicitors, associates, consultants, and 'other private practice'. The category of 'other private practice' refers to solicitors with practising certificates, in private practice, but with positions in the firm other than those stated. For example, this category includes solicitors employed in training and managerial capacities. This year there has been a further decrease in the proportion of male and female private practitioners who are partners. Table 2.9 shows that 47.2% of men, compared with only 21.6% of women, were partners as at 31 July 2004.

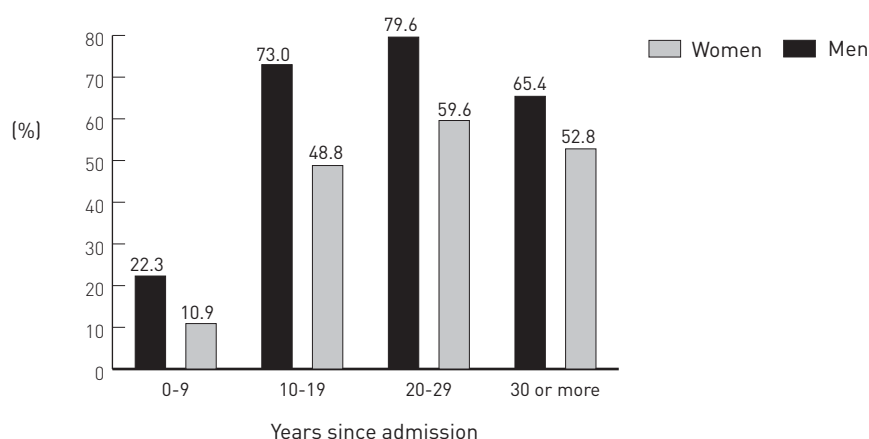
Table 2.9 Position of solicitors working in private practice and holding a practising certificate as at 31 July 2004

Position in firm	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Partners	21,926	47.2	6,165	21.6	28,091	37.4
Sole practitioners	3,213	6.9	963	3.4	4,176	5.6
Associate solicitors	4,441	9.6	4,112	14.4	8,553	11.4
Assistant solicitors	11,763	25.3	15,566	54.4	27,329	36.4
Consultants	2,606	5.6	524	1.8	3,130	4.2
Other private practice	2,540	5.5	1,260	4.4	3,800	5.1
All positions	46,489	100.0	28,590	100.0	75,079	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2.10 Chart 3 below is an examination of status analysed by experience (as measured by the number of full years since qualifying as a solicitor) for both men and women. Chart 3 shows that, even after equalising the levels of experience, higher proportions of men achieve partnership status than women. In all of the experience bands a lower proportion of women than men are partners or sole practitioners. Of solicitors in private practice with 10–19 years' experience, the band within which most partners and sole practitioners fall, 73.0% of men are partners or sole practitioners compared with only 48.8% of women.

Chart 3 Percentages of men and women in private practice who were either partners or sole practitioners as at 31 July 2004 by years since admission



Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2.11 In addition to gender differences it is also interesting to compare the age distribution of partners and sole practitioners with those for all solicitors in private practice. Table 2.11 shows that the average age of a sole practitioner is 50.4 years, compared with 45.8 for partners and 40.8 for all solicitors in private practice. Reflecting the recent growth in their admissions women solicitors, at all levels of private practice, are consistently younger on average than their male counterparts.

Table 2.11 The age distribution of sole practitioners and partners as at 31 July 2004

Age	All in private practice			Partners			Sole practitioners		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Total	46,489	28,590	75,079	21,926	6,165	28,091	3,213	963	4,176
Average age	43.4	36.5	40.8	46.8	42.3	45.8	51.7	46.4	50.4

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Ethnic groups

2.12 Table 2.12 records the number of solicitors with practising certificates who are known to belong to a minority ethnic group. The provision of information on ethnicity is entirely optional, though at present it is known for 88.4% of practising certificate holders. Using this we estimate that solicitors from minority ethnic groups accounted for 8.3% of solicitors with practising certificates in 2004, an increase on the 7.9% recorded in 2003.

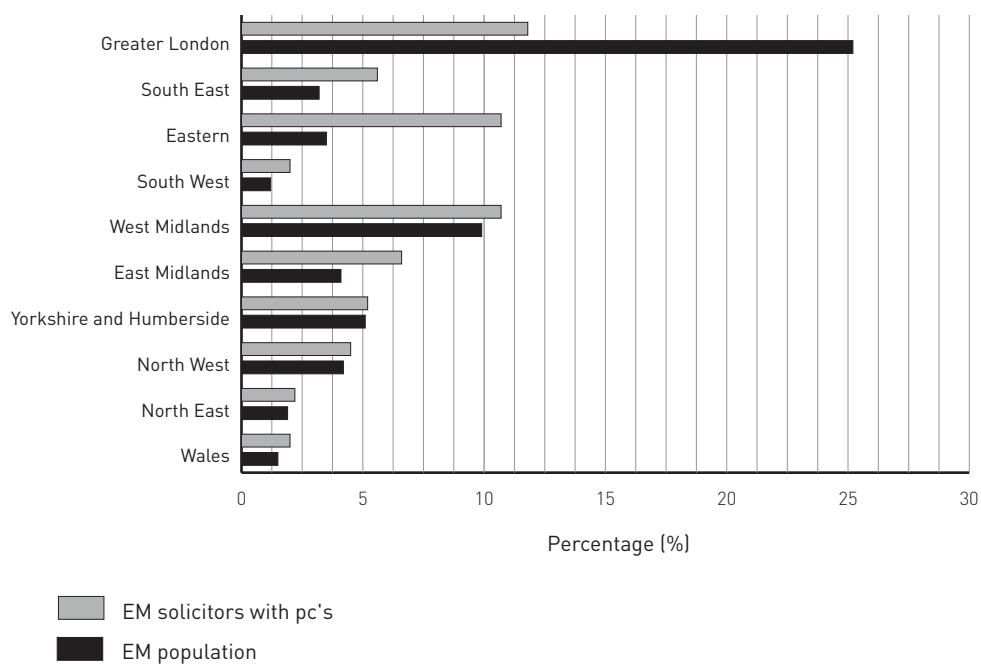
Table 2.12 Ethnic origin of practising certificate holders as at 31 July 2004

Ethnic origin	Men	Women	Total	%
White/European	46,771	30,775	77,546	80.1
African-Caribbean	209	416	625	0.6
Asian	2,218	2,340	4,558	4.7
Chinese	321	497	818	0.8
African	346	406	752	0.8
Other ethnic origin	607	671	1,278	1.3
All solicitors for whom ethnic origin is known	50,472	35,105	85,577	88.4
All practising certificate holders from minority ethnic groups known to the Law Society	3,701	4,330	8,031	
% of all solicitors with PCs	6.4	11.0	8.3	
Unanswered/refused	1,836	431	2,267	2.3
Unknown	5,250	3,663	8,913	9.2
All practising certificate holders	57,558	39,199	96,757	100.0
% of all solicitors with PCs for whom ethnic origin is known	87.7	89.6	88.4	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2.13 Chart 4 shows, for each Government Office Region (see Map 1, Appendix 1), minority ethnic group solicitors as a proportion of total solicitors with practising certificates, compared with the proportion of the total population who are drawn from minority ethnic groups.

Chart 4 Minority ethnic group solicitors as a proportion of total solicitors with practising certificates compared with people from ethnic minorities as a proportion of the total population, 2004



2.14 Table 2.14 shows the proportion of minority ethnic group solicitors with practising certificates in each Government Office Region and abroad. Greater London (11.8%), Eastern (10.7%) and the West Midlands (10.7%) Government Office Regions have the highest proportion of minority ethnic solicitors, the majority of whom are Asian. Overall, 6.1% of solicitors from minority ethnic groups with practising certificates are resident abroad. It can also be seen from Table 2.14 that over a third of solicitors with practising certificates, 35.3%, are located in London, with this proportion rising to 50.4% for minority ethnic group solicitors.

Table 2.14 Proportion of minority ethnic group solicitors with practising certificates in standard regions and abroad as at 31 July 2004

Region	Total no. of PC. holders	Ethnic Group (%)							
		Asian	African- Carib.	Chinese	African	Other minority ethnic group	Total minority ethnic groups	White Euro- pean	Unknown
City London ¹	15,803	3.5	0.3	1.0	0.5	1.7	7.1	78.6	14.3
Rest of London	18,388	8.5	1.6	1.0	2.4	2.4	15.9	69.9	14.2
Greater London	34,191	6.2	1.0	1.0	1.5	2.1	11.8	73.9	14.3
South East	10,608	3.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.9	5.6	84.9	9.4
Eastern	6,393	6.7	0.9	0.5	1.2	1.4	10.7	78.9	10.4
South West	6,709	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.6	2.0	89.3	8.8
West Midlands	6,788	8.4	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.9	10.7	80.9	8.4
East Midlands	4,014	5.1	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.5	6.6	84.7	8.7
Yorkshire & Humberside	6,285	4.0	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.6	5.2	87.2	7.6
North West	10,013	2.9	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.8	4.5	86.8	8.7
North East	2,642	1.5	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.4	2.2	89.3	8.5
Wales	3,187	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.5	2.0	88.8	9.2
Outside of England and Wales	3,817	2.6	0.2	7.5	0.3	2.3	12.8	62.3	24.9
Unknown	2,112	5.2	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.5	9.2	76.6	15.2
Total	96,757	4.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.3	8.3	80.1	11.6

¹ Solicitors have been allocated to one of the Government Office Regions on the basis of the local Law Society constituency in which they work. The boundaries match reasonably well but some degree of approximation is required.

* Less than 0.05%.

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2.15 Finally, table 2.15 analyses the position held by solicitors in private practice by their ethnicity. Table 2.15 shows that, whereas 38.9% of white Europeans in private practice are at partnership level, the corresponding proportion from minority ethnic groups is much lower at 23.0%. This partly reflects the fact that solicitors from the ethnic minorities have only recently been entering the profession in numbers. It is interesting to note though that 8.3% of solicitors from minority ethnic groups are sole practitioners, compared with only 5.3% for all white European solicitors in private practice.

Table 2.15 Status of private practice solicitors by ethnicity as at 31 July 2004

Ethnic group	All in private practice	Percentage who were:					Total
		Partners	Sole practs.	Associates	Assists.	Other private practice	
African-Caribbean	407	24.1	8.8	7.6	56.0	3.4	100.0
Asian	3,503	22.7	9.1	10.4	52.5	5.3	100.0
Chinese	570	17.0	3.3	23.9	48.3	7.5	100.0
African	518	31.7	11.2	8.7	44.8	3.7	100.0
Other ethnic origin	953	22.5	6.1	14.1	50.5	6.8	100.0
All minority ethnic groups	5,952	23.0	8.3	12.0	51.4	5.5	100.0
White European	61,014	38.9	5.3	11.0	35.1	9.6	100.0
Unknown	8,114	36.5	5.8	13.6	35.1	9.1	100.0
Total	75,079	37.4	5.6	11.4	36.4	9.2	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

3. Solicitors' offices and firms

3.1 Information on organisations employing solicitors, and especially on private practice solicitors firms, is now only available from the Law Society records held on its REGIS database. It should be noted that at present the REGIS system cannot differentiate between 'active' and 'inactive' private practice firms but nonetheless it does record the type of business conducted by all organisations in England and Wales that employ solicitors. The main categories of employment are shown in Table 3.1 together with the numbers of head offices and branch offices for each employer in England and Wales and in other jurisdictions.

Table 3.1 Organisations employing solicitors by type of business as at 31 July 2004

Type of business	Head offices		Branch offices		Total offices	
	England & Wales	Elsewhere	England & Wales	Elsewhere	England & Wales	Elsewhere
Private practice						
Partnerships in England and Wales	9,211	97	3,368	111	12,579	208
Incorporated firms*	1	0	11	0	12	1
Multi-national practices	147	91	45	179	192	270
Locums services	26	1	1	0	27	1
Foreign law practices	5	623	8	353	13	976
Other private practice*	711	30	395	36	1,106	66
Commerce and industry	2,520	338	294	59	2,814	397
Government						
Government department	51	19	50	11	101	30
Local government	473	1	33	1	506	2
Court	89	4	107	1	196	5
Government funded services	74	11	48	2	122	13
Crown Prosecution Service	44	0	71	0	115	0
Other						
Advice service	151	0	15	0	166	1
Educational establishment	128	8	6	0	134	8
Other	203	635	43	355	246	14
Total	13,834	1,858	4,495	1,108	18,329	2,966
		15,692				21,295

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

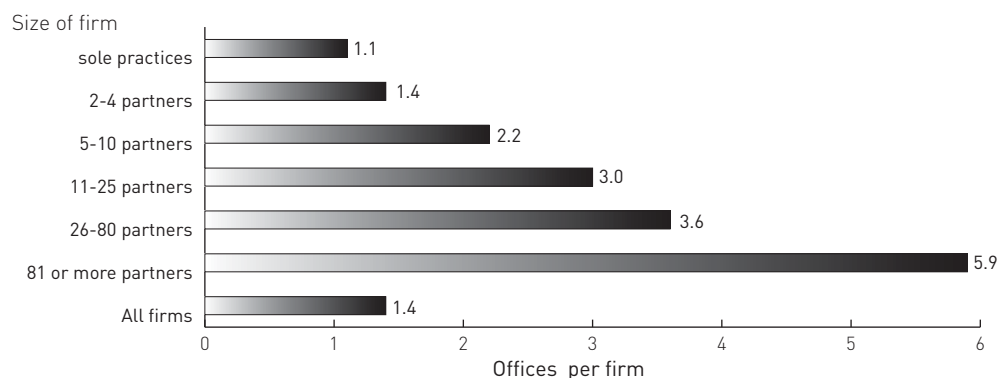
*In this year and last years report, due to a data recoding exercise, nearly all the 'Incorporated firms' are included in the 'Other private practice' category'. Data as at 21 February 2005 indicated that there were 732 firms recorded with business type 'Incorporated Company Limited by Shares'; 57 'Incorporated Unlimited Company'; and 1 'Incorporated Practice'.

- 3.2 As can be seen from Table 3.1 as at 31 July 2004, there were 15,692 separate organisations employing solicitors, of which 13,834 were based in England and Wales and 1,858 elsewhere (ie Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, Eire and overseas countries). Each firm, company, local authority or other employer may be located in one or more offices. Allowing for this there were 21,295 separate places of work recorded for solicitors, of which 18,329 were in England and Wales and 2,966 elsewhere. Compared with 2003 the number recorded for offices in England and Wales represents a 0.9% decrease while the number for all offices represents a marked increase (3.7%). In contrast it can also be seen from this table that in 2004 there were 9,211 private practice partnerships, located in 12,579 separate offices in England and Wales, registered with the Society. Over the past year the number of these firms has risen marginally by 0.1%, whilst the total number of offices has decreased by 1.0%.
- 3.3 The trend in the numbers of private practice firms and offices over the five years since 1998–99 is shown in table 3.3. This shows that over the period the number of firms has decreased by 7.7% and the number of offices has decreased by 9.0%. These figures are reflected in the observed 1.3% decrease in the ratio of offices to firms over the period.

Table 3.3 Trends in the number of private practice firms and offices

Year	Number of firms	Number of offices
1998–99	9,983	13,818
1999–00	9,770	13,561
2000–01	9,251	12,966
2001–02	9,231	12,834
2002–03	9,198	12,708
2003–04	9,211	12,579

- 3.4 The numbers of offices occupied by different sizes of firms are shown in Chart 5. This shows that the average number of offices per firm in 2004 remained unchanged at 1.4. As one would expect, the number of offices per firm increases with the size of firm: from 1.1 for sole practices through to 5.9 for the 81-or-more partner firms.

Chart 5 Number of offices by size of firm in 2004

3.5 Table 3.5 shows the geographical distribution of the population of England and Wales contrasted with that for private practice firms broken down into Government Office Regions. Just over one-quarter of solicitors' firms, 27.1%, were located in London in 2004 and just under one-half of all solicitors' firms (42.2%) are now based in the South East (including London). This value is distorted by the presence in London of a large number of firms serving predominantly commercial clients. Outside of the South East (including London) there is reasonable correspondence between the proportion of law firms and the population they serve, in the Eastern, South West, North West and Wales regions. The areas of greatest deprivation were the East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside and North East regions.

Table 3.5 Location (standard regions) of population and private practice firms and practitioners in 2004

	Total =	Population ¹ 52,994 million	Firms 9,211
Region		%	%
City of London		*	6.7
Rest of London		14.0	20.4
South East		15.3	15.1
South West		10.4	10.2
Wales		5.5	5.2
West Midlands		10.1	7.8
East Midlands		8.1	4.7
Eastern		10.4	10.2
North West including Merseyside		12.9	11.9
Yorkshire and Humberside		9.5	6.6
North East		4.8	3.2
Total		100.0	100.0

* Less than 0.05%

Sources: ¹ Estimated using Office for National Statistics mid-1999 data;

3.6 Table 3.6 analyses the number of firms in 2004 by the Government Office Region in which the head office is located and the size of firm measured by the partner count. The first thing to notice from this table is that the vast majority of private practices are quite small. Taken overall over five-sixths (85.0%) of law practices in England and Wales have four partners or fewer. At the other end of the spectrum only 1.5% of all firms have 26 or more partners. The second point to note is the concentration of firms in London (see para 3.5). This concentration is particularly noticeable when we look at the disposition of the larger firms where it can be seen that of the 142 firms with 26 or more partners 57.5% were located in the London region.

Table 3.6 Number of firms in 2004, analysed by size and regional location of head office

Region	Number of firms						All firms
	Sole Practitioner	2-4 prttrs	5-10 prttrs	11-25 prttrs	26-80 prttrs	81+ prttrs	
City of London	204	186	84	71	52	22	619
Rest of Greater London	974	764	99	34	4	3	1,877
South East	746	473	119	46	9	0	1,393
Eastern	449	371	86	33	3	0	941
South West	357	265	80	31	12	1	745
West Midlands	299	308	81	26	3	1	718
East Midlands	178	185	51	18	4	0	436
Yorkshire and the Humber	242	251	78	28	10	2	610
North West (including Merseyside)	423	490	133	38	10	2	1,096
North East	122	126	39	6	2	0	294
Wales	182	238	54	4	2	0	481
Total	4,176	3,656	904	333	111	31	9,211
%	45.3	39.7	9.8	3.6	1.2	0.3	100.0

Source: REGIS data

4. Staffing

4.1 This chapter relies entirely on data from the Society's REGIS system for private practice staffing information. The data held by the Society excludes information on non-admitted fee earners, as well as information on the number of administrative and support staff employed in private practice. (This is a serious deterioration in the quality of the data given that it was shown that in 2000 there were almost as many non-admitted fee earners as assistant solicitors in private practice, and slightly more administrative and support staff than fee earners). Table 4.1 breaks down the 75,079 solicitors at 31 July 2004 employed in private practice by their grade and the size of their firm measured by the partner count. It shows that within an overall growth in numbers over the past year of 3.5%, the proportion of partners including sole practitioners has fallen again this year from 45.6% to 43.0%. The table also shows the high degree of solicitor concentration in the largest firms. Firms with 81 or more partners, around 0.3% of the total, employed 12.2% of principals and just over one-fifth (21.8%) of all solicitors. At the other end of the spectrum sole practices, 45.3% of firms, employed 12.9% of all principals and only 8.5% of all solicitors.

Table 4.1 Admitted staff in private practice firms in 2004 by size of firm

	Sole practices	2-4 ptnrs.	5-10 ptnrs.	11-25 ptnrs.	26-80 ptnrs.	81+ ptnrs.	All firms
Partners	0	9,144	5,913	5,086	4,005	3,943	28,091
Sole practitioners	4,176	0	0	0	0	0	4,176
Associate solicitors	192	793	748	1,188	1,633	3,999	8,553
Assistant solicitors	1,436	5,100	4,621	4,755	4,914	6,503	27,329
Consultants	297	999	718	484	302	331	3,130
Other private practice	253	675	354	401	534	1,583	3,800
All positions	6,355	16,711	12,353	11,914	11,387	16,359	75,079

4.2 Staffing ratios for admitted staff within solicitors' firms are examined in Table 4.2. The ratios shown are the average numbers of associate, assistant, consultant and 'other' private practitioners per principal. There are a number of features to this table. It shows, for example, that associate solicitors are most likely to be found in the larger firms with 11 or more partners, whilst the other private practice solicitors' who mainly perform specialist roles within firms are found almost exclusively in firms with 26 or more partners. In contrast to this consultants are found mainly in smaller firms. In terms of the staffing ratios these show that the ratio of assistant/associate solicitors to principals increases from 0.4:1 in sole practices through to 2.7:1 in the 81 or more partner firms. In the intervening size bands the corresponding ratios are 0.6 assistants/associates per principal in 2-4 partner firms, 0.9 per principal in 5-10 partner firms, 1.2 per principal in 11-25 partner firms and 1.6 in 26-80 partner firms.

Table 4.2 Number of admitted staff per principal in private practice firms in 2004 by size of firm

	Sole practices	2-4 ptnrs.	5-10 ptnrs.	11-25 ptnrs.	26-80 ptnrs.	81+ ptnrs.	All firms
Principals	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Associates/principals	0.0461	0.0867	0.1265	0.2336	0.4077	1.0142	0.2651
Assistant/principal	0.3439	0.5578	0.7815	0.9349	1.2269	1.6494	0.8470
Consultants/principal	0.0711	0.1092	0.1214	0.0951	0.0754	0.0839	0.0970
Other private practice/principal	0.0607	0.0738	0.0598	0.0789	0.1333	0.4016	0.1178
All per principal	1.5217	1.8275	2.0892	2.3424	2.8433	4.1490	2.3268

4.3 Table 4.3 provides a breakdown of the number of solicitors employed in private practice analysed by grade, and the Government Office Region (GOR) in which the firms' head office is located. This table shows that in 2004 41.6% of private practitioners were employed in firms located in London. Using the population data from Table 3.8 this can be recast as a ratio of one private practitioner in London per 233 head of population, compared to an average density in England and Wales of one practitioner per 702 head of population. Excluding the London GOR this figure increases to one practitioner per 1,036 head of population. Overall, this density is lowest in the North East GOR where there is one practitioner per 1,640 head of population.

Table 4.3 Admitted staff in private practice firms in 2004 by Government region

	Partners	Sole Practitioner	Associate solicitors	Assist. solicitors	Consultants	Other pr. practice	All solicitors
Greater Ldn.	9,908	1,145	4,932	11,881	1,227	2,139	31,232
South East	3,099	742	487	2,501	377	251	7,457
Eastern	2,183	453	195	1,791	184	149	4,955
South West	2,304	368	676	2,013	271	210	5,842
West Midlands	1,942	300	629	1,470	240	233	4,814
East Midlands	1,214	187	273	1,155	119	241	3,188
Yorks & Humberside	2,223	238	469	2,063	171	141	5,306
North West	3,346	428	548	3,121	323	261	8,026
North East	776	123	185	606	87	95	1,873
Wales	1,096	193	158	729	131	80	2,386
All regions	28,091	4,176	8,553	27,329	3,130	3,800	75,079

Part II

The recruitment and training of solicitors

This section of the report provides information on the recruitment and training of solicitors. Chapter 5 provides background information on the routes to admission. Chapter 6 presents statistics on the number of undergraduates and graduates in law from universities in England and Wales. Chapter 7 shows summary statistics related to enrolled students. Chapter 8 examines the numbers embarking on and passing the Legal Practice Course, before moving on to an examination of the personal characteristics and placement of trainees. Chapter 9 gives information on those admitted to the Roll in 2003–04.

5. Routes to admission to the Roll

5.1 There are seven routes to qualification as a solicitor:

- law graduate;
- non-law graduate;
- overseas lawyer (transfer);
- barrister (transfer);
- Scots/Northern Irish lawyers (transfer);
- Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives (FILEX);
- justices' clerk.

5.2 The most frequently used route to qualification as a solicitor is to take a first degree in law and then to spend a year taking the full-time Legal Practice Course (LPC), followed by a two-year traineeship. This route can be completed in six years. Non-law graduates have to undertake a one-year full-time conversion course, the Common Professional Exam (CPE), which is also the legal qualification needed by non-law graduates wishing to train for the Bar. They then proceed to qualification in the same way as a law graduate. This is the second most frequently used route. (Two-year part-time courses are also available for both the LPC and the CPE). Non-graduates enter the profession via transfer after first obtaining a qualification as a Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives (FILEX) and passing the LPC. Members of the Justices' Clerks Association may also enter the profession after passing the LPC, and demonstrating that they have had at least five years' continuous service in the 10 years prior to their application for admission. Other routes involve transfer after qualifying as a barrister, or as a lawyer in another jurisdiction, and meeting the necessary transfer conditions.

6. Undergraduates and graduates in law

- 6.1 This chapter records the numbers of applicants, acceptances and graduations recorded for undergraduate law courses in England and Wales. The statistics for applicants and acceptances to universities have been supplied by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), and statistics on the number and achieved grade of law degree graduates have been supplied by the Higher Educational Statistical Agency (HESA).
- 6.2 Table 6.2 shows the number of applicants and acceptances for undergraduate places at university full-time law degree courses for the academic years 2002 and 2003. The figures relate to individuals: applicants are counted only once irrespective of the number of applications made on the UCAS application form. The table shows that a total of 20,627 people applied to study law at undergraduate level in 2003, which is an increase of 10.9% on the total recorded last year. Within this total female applications rose faster than male applications, by 11.8% and 9.5% respectively. The total number of acceptances (an acceptance is defined as a formal acceptance of a university place offered through the UCAS scheme) made by universities increased slightly less than applications, by 9.7%, from 11,848 to 12,993. The pattern in acceptances reversed that for applications in that male acceptances increased by 10.0%, while female acceptances rose less quickly by 9.4%.

Table 6.2 Home and overseas applicants and acceptances for university first degree law courses in England and Wales 2002 and 2003

For entry in:	University applicants								
	UK			Overseas			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2002	5,936	9,701	15,637	1,311	1,652	2,963	7,247	11,353	18,600
2003	6,472	10,791	17,263	1,462	1,902	3,364	7,934	12,693	20,627
% change	9.0	11.2	10.4	11.5	15.1	13.5	9.5	11.8	10.9

For entry in:	University acceptances								
	UK			Overseas			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2002	3,818	6,454	10,272	684	892	1,576	4,502	7,346	11,848
2003	4,083	6,988	11,071	870	1,052	1,922	4,953	8,040	12,993
% change	6.9	8.3	7.8	27.2	17.9	22.0	10.0	9.4	9.7

Source: UCAS

- 6.3 Table 6.3 shows the number of female and overseas students as a proportion of the total acceptances to university law degree courses. In 2003, 61.9% of acceptances were from women, marginally down from the 62.0% recorded in 2002. The proportion of overseas acceptances, 14.8%, was up from the 13.1% recorded last year.

Table 6.3 Proportion of law students accepted in 2002 and 2003 who were female or from overseas

Year	Female students		Overseas students	
	No.	%	No.	%
2002	7,346	62.0	1,576	13.3
2003	8,040	61.9	1,922	14.8

Source: UCAS

- 6.4 Table 6.4 shows the number of minority ethnic students (excluding overseas students) who gained places on law degree courses for the academic year 2003. In total, minority ethnic law students accounted for 26.5% of students starting a first degree law course in 2003. This represents a slight increase on 2002, when the comparable proportion was 25.5%. Within this total, female acceptances were more likely than males to be drawn from minority ethnic groups: 27.5% of acceptances as opposed to 25.0%.

Table 6.4 Minority ethnic students from the UK accepted to first degree law courses at universities and colleges in 2003

Ethnic group		Acceptances of students from UK		
		Male	Female	Total
White	Of British origin	2,618	4,456	7,074
	Of Irish origin	52	73	125
	Another	129	205	334
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	20	48	68
	White and Black African	12	23	35
	White and Asian	39	73	112
	Another	27	69	96
Asian/Asian British	Of Indian origin	259	541	800
	Of Pakistani origin	243	357	600
	Of Bangladeshi origin	73	94	167
	Another	51	96	147
Black/Black British	Caribbean	41	133	174
	African	169	302	471
	Another	12	37	49
Chinese		33	68	101
All other ethnicities		40	79	119
Unknown		265	334	599
All UK-based minority ethnic group acceptances		1,019	1,920	2,939
All UK-based acceptances		4,083	6,988	11,071
% from minority ethnic groups		25.0	27.5	26.5

Source: UCAS

6.5 Table 6.5 shows recent trends in the number of students graduating in law. It contrasts the number of graduates in 2003 with the position one and five years previously. The table shows that, in 2003, the total number of graduates was 10,007, an increase of 8.7% on the previous year. In the five years since 1998 the total number of graduates has increased by 11.9% from a base of 8,943. The table also shows that within this increased total the number of male law graduates has fallen by 6.4% over the past 5 years, whereas the number of female law graduates has increased greatly by 26.1% over the same period.

Table 6.5 Number of students graduating in law from universities in England and Wales 1998, 2002 and 2003¹

Year of graduation	University Graduates in Law		
	Male	Female	Total
1998	3,914	5,029	8,943
2002	3,487	5,717	9,204
2003	3,664	6,343	10,007
% change 2003/2002	5.1	10.9	8.7
% change 2003/1998	-6.4	26.1	11.9

¹ Figures relate to single honours law degrees and do not include modular or joint honour degrees which may also allow graduates to proceed directly to study the Legal Practice Course (para. 7.6)

Sources of data: 1995 and onwards, Higher Educational Statistical Agency

6.6 The HESA statistics do not represent the total numbers of graduates with a qualifying law degree. These are degrees which have covered the General Council of the Bar and the Law Society's seven foundations of legal knowledge which form the academic stage of legal education, and which allow graduates to proceed directly to study the Legal Practice Course. Many institutions now offer modular or joint honours degrees that have a substantial element of law study: depending on the choice of subjects, such degrees may or may not lead to a qualifying degree. The Law Society's Legal Education Department believes it is possible that there are a further substantial number of law students (*ie* higher than 4000) with qualifying law degrees from joint honours or modular degrees graduate each year. However, a firm estimate of this figure cannot be made without collecting, on an individual and yearly basis, statistics from every institution offering such degrees.

6.7 Table 6.7 shows that, in 2003, of the 10,007 law graduates over half, 55.7%, achieved a first class or upper second class degree. This proportion represents an increase on the figure of 54.8% recorded for 2002. Overall, a higher proportion of women graduated with firsts or upper seconds than men: 57.3% and 52.8% of graduates respectively. There are no figures showing the classes of degree awarded to minority ethnic group law students.

Table 6.7 Class of degrees in law awarded in England and Wales in summer 2003

Class of degree	All law graduates					
	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First	191	5.2	287	4.5	478	4.8
Upper second	1,744	47.6	3,349	52.8	5,093	50.9
Lower second	1,415	38.6	2,333	36.8	3,748	37.5
Third/pass	281	7.7	326	5.1	607	6.1
Unclassified	33	0.9	49	0.8	81	0.8
Total	3,664	100.0	6,343	100.0	10,007	100.0
Total: first and upper second	1,934		3,636		5,571	
Percentage with first or upper second		52.8		57.3		55.7

Source: Higher Educational Statistical Agency

7. Student enrolments with the Law Society

- 7.1 All students who wish to embark on the Legal Practice Course (LPC), or enter into a training contract, must enrol with the Society as student members. The Society then maintains records of these students at each stage of their training. This includes performance on the LPC, the registration of traineeships, and the admission to the Roll of those who have successfully completed their training. Up until 1992, when an annual enrolment process was introduced, a certificate of enrolment was valid for five years. Annual enrolment allows better monitoring of students who maintain an interest in a career as a solicitor.
- 7.2 Primarily this monitoring consists of examining the proportions of women and minority ethnic group students showing an interest in becoming a solicitor. Information on the proportion of enrolled students who were female, or from a minority ethnic group, enables the Society to examine the scope for further recruitment to the profession of members of these groups. Neither the number of students enrolling with the Society each year, nor the total number enrolled, can be used to predict the numbers who will subsequently enter the profession. This is because no consistent relationship has ever been identified between enrolments and subsequent admissions.
- 7.3 Details on the ethnic origin of students, as well as other biographic data, are sought at the time of their enrolment. Students are not obliged to complete the question on their ethnicity, but historically a high proportion of students have been prepared to do so. The ethnicity of 95.8% of students enrolling with the Society in 2003–04 was recorded. Table 7.4 shows the fuller breakdown of enrolments by gender and ethnicity, whilst table 7.5 shows the comparative data for one and ten years ago, that is for 1993–94 and 2002–03.
- 7.4 In the year up to 31 July 2004, 9,831 students enrolled with the Law Society, an increase of 6.9% on the previous year. Of these 6,177, or 62.8%, of the total were women. This represents a very slight increase in the proportion of women students from that recorded in 2002–03 (62.4%) but it is still markedly up on the proportion for 1993–94, when it was 53.5%. The proportion of women amongst minority ethnic students was, at 65.0%, slightly higher than the proportion found amongst all who had enrolled. African-Caribbeans were the ethnic grouping with the highest proportion of women students. For this group of enrolled students, 81.1% were women.
- 7.5 Of those students enrolling with the Society last year, 2,354, or 23.9% of the total, were drawn from minority ethnic groups. This can be compared with the 13.0% from minority ethnic group students recorded in 1993–94, and the 22.1% recorded in 2002–03. When one compares 2003–04 with 1993–94, it can be seen that almost the whole of the increase in minority ethnic numbers is accounted for by increases in the number of Asian students (43.8%) and students of 'other' ethnic origin (27.6%).

Table 7.4 The ethnic origin and gender of students enrolling with the Law Society in 2003–04

Ethnic origin	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
African-Caribbean	25	18.9	107	81.1	132
Asian	423	34.6	801	65.4	1,224
Chinese	67	29.3	162	70.7	229
African	164	43.2	216	56.8	380
Other ethnic origin	145	37.3	244	62.7	389
All minority ethnic groups	824	35.0	1,530	65.0	2,354
White European	2,670	37.8	4,394	62.2	7,064
Unknown	160	38.7	253	61.3	413
Total	3,654	37.2	6,177	62.8	9,831

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Table 7.5 Trends in the ethnic origin of students enrolling with the Law Society

	1993–94		2002–03		2003–04	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Ethnic origin						
African-Caribbean	93	1.2	97	1.1	132	1.3
Asian	624	8.3	1,068	11.6	1,224	12.5
Chinese	154	2.0	213	2.3	229	2.3
African	101	1.3	311	3.4	380	3.9
Other ethnic origin	11	0.1	347	3.8	389	4.0
All minority ethnic groups	983	13.0	2,036	22.1	2,354	23.9
White European	5,978	79.2	6,355	69.1	7,064	71.9
Unknown	590	7.8	804	8.7	413	4.2
Total	7,551	100.0	9,195	100.0	9,831	100.0
Gender						
Male	3,508	46.5	3,453	37.6	3,654	37.2
Female	4,043	53.5	5,742	62.4	6,177	62.8
Total	7,551	100.0	9,195	100.0	9,831	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8. Post-graduate education and training

The Legal Practice Course

- 8.1 The LPC is the next stage towards qualification as a solicitor for graduates with a first degree in law, and for graduates in other disciplines who have completed the one-year full-time conversion course, the Common Professional Exam (CPE). It is also a pre-requisite for those individuals who transfer having been Legal Executives or Justices' Clerks.
- 8.2 In 2004, of the 7,912 students who enrolled on the LPC, 7,426, or 93.9%, sat the July examinations. This latter figure is the total number of enrolments less those who were deferred or absent from the examinations. Compared with 2003, total enrolments increased by 7.3%; this increase was to a lesser degree reflected in the number taking the examination, where numbers rose by 3.1%. Taken overall, the pass rate was 79.1%, a slight increase on the proportion who passed last year (77.6%). Of those actually taking the examination, the pass rate was 84.3%, which represents an increase on the 2003 figure of 79.4%. Table 8.2 below shows the full set of results. Candidates who pass with distinction now account for over one-quarter (26.9%) of total passes.

Table 8.2 Legal Practice Course results of summer examinations — July 2004

Results	No. of students	2004 % of those sitting exam	% of all students
Diploma with distinction	1,682	22.7	21.3
Diploma with commendation	2,799	37.7	35.4
Diploma	1,777	23.9	22.5
Total passes	6,258	84.3	79.1
Referred	989	13.3	12.5
Resit	149	2.0	1.9
Failed	30	0.4	0.4
Total failed	1,168	15.7	14.8
Total sitting the examination	7,426	100.0	93.9
Deferred	231		2.9
Absent	11		0.1
Total not sitting the examination	486		6.1
Total students enrolled on the LPC	7,912		100.0

Source: Law Society database

Table 8.3 Places on the Legal Practice Course for 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05

College of Law/universities	Full-time			Part-time		
	'02–03	'03–04	'04–05	'02–03	'03–04	
Anglia Polytechnic University	70	70	70	30	30	30
BPP London Law School	540	756	936	72	144	198
BPP Leeds Law School	-	-	180	-	-	-
Bournemouth University	96	96	96	-	-	-
Cardiff Law School	160	160	180	-	-	-
The College of Law:						
Store Street	1,248	1,200	1,200	192	192	360
Chester	600	600	600	56	80	160
Guildford	720	720	720	100	140	280
York	696	504	504	40	80	160
Birmingham	336	528	528	60	80	160
De Montfort University	130	100	100	100	130	130
Inns of Court School of Law	100	176	176	-	-	-
Leeds Metropolitan University	105	105	105	45	45	45
Liverpool John Moores University	-	-	40	72	72	72
London Metropolitan University	110	110	110	54	54	54
Manchester Metropolitan University	168	168	168	48	48	48
Nottingham Law School	648	648	648	90	90	90
Oxford Institute of Legal Practice	345	353	353	-	-	-
Staffordshire University	125	125	125	25	25	25
Swansea University	-	-	70	-	-	-
Thames Valley University	50	50	50	32	32	32
University of Central England	120	120	120	30	30	30
University of Central Lancashire	48	60	60	60	48	48
University of Exeter	120	120	120	-	-	-
University of Glamorgan	108	108	108	32	32	32
University of Hertfordshire	-	-	-	50	50	64
University of Huddersfield	80	80	80	36	36	36
University of Northumbria						
at University of Northumbria	160	160	160	50	50	50
Exempting Law Degree	110	110	-	-	-	-
London Metropolitan University and						
South Bank University	-	-	-	60	60	-
University of Sheffield	140	180	216	-	-	-
University of the West of England	342	342	342	58	58	58
University of Westminster	120	120	120	64	64	64
University of Wolverhampton	100	100	60	30	30	30
Total	7,695	7,859	8,345	1,486	1,700	2,256

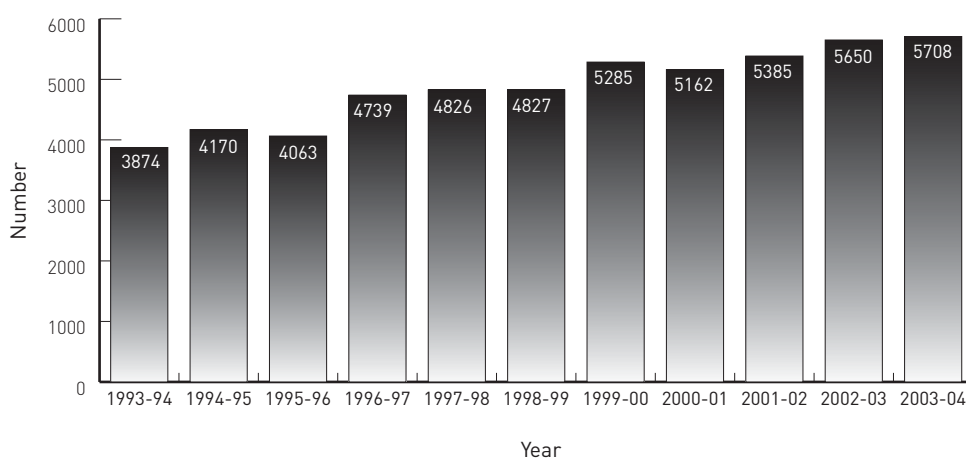
Source: Law Society database

- 8.3 Table 8.3 shows the number of places available at institutions which have been validated to run the LPC. The number of full-time places available in 2004–05 will be 8,345. This is an increase of 6.2% on the number of places that were available in the previous year.
- 8.4 In addition, there will also be 2,256 places available on part-time LPC courses next year — a significant increase (32.7%) on the number of part-time places that were available in 2003–04.

Traineeships

- 8.5 In addition to obtaining pre-vocational qualifications, those embarking on a career as a solicitor who are not transferring in from another profession or jurisdiction also have to undergo a period of training, in most cases for two years, before gaining admission to the Roll. The trainee is assigned to a training establishment, and a training contract is drawn up. Forms covering the registration of trainees are lodged with the Law Society.
- 8.6 Chart 6 below shows the first year registrations of traineeships from 1993–94 to the present. In the year that ended 31 July 2004 there were 5,708 new traineeships registered with the Society. This represents a slight increase (1.0%) on the level recorded last year, when trainee registrations stood at 5,650. Trainee registrations are now running at the highest levels recorded to date having exceeded 5,000 per annum in each of the past 5 years.

Chart 6 Annual registration of trainees 1993–94 to 2003–04



Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 8.7 Table 8.7 shows the data on the number of trainees registered in 1993–94 and 2003–04 with the total analysed by trainee gender. Overall, the number of traineeships has increased by just under a half (47.3%) over the period. Within this total growth, that for women trainees was markedly higher than that for males (70.5% and 21.0% respectively). In fact, for each of the years since 1993–94 for which we have data, the majority of new trainee registrations

have been female. In this latest year, 61.5% of trainees registered were women. This is a slight decrease on the proportion recorded last year, which was the highest yet recorded, when it stood at 62.7%.

Table 8.7 Number of traineeships registered in 1993–94 and 2003–04 analysed by gender of trainee

Year	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
1993–94	1,8157	46.9	2,059	53.1	3,874
2003–04	2,197	38.5	3,511	61.5	5,708
% change 2003–04 over 1993–94		21.0		70.5	47.3

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.8 Seven years ago in 1997 we were able to examine, for the first time, the ethnic origin of new trainees. This year the ethnicity and gender of new trainees is shown in Table 8.8. The trainees' ethnic origin was validly recorded for 5,284 trainees, or 92.6% of the 5,708 new traineeships registered. This shows some slight deterioration in the quality of this data from last year, when the ethnicity of 93.6% of new trainees was known. In 2003–04, minority ethnic trainees represented 19.1% of trainees of known ethnicity, an slight increase on the value (17.9%) recorded last year. The ethnic grouping most highly represented was 'Asian', which accounted for 57.5% of minority ethnic trainees. Overall, the proportion of women was slightly higher amongst minority ethnic trainees than for the group of trainees as a whole. Whereas, as we have seen, 61.5% of trainees overall were women, this proportion rose to 67.5% amongst those from minority ethnic groups. The African-Caribbean group had the highest proportion of women trainees at 81.8%.

Table 8.8 Trainee registrations by ethnic origin and gender 2003–04

Ethnic origin	Male	Female	Total	trainees with known ethnicity
	No.	No.	No.	%
African-Caribbean	8	36	44	0.8
Asian	194	387	581	11.0
Chinese	24	46	70	1.3
African	40	74	114	2.2
Other ethnic origin	62	139	201	3.8
Total known minority ethnic groups	328	682	1010	19.1
Minority ethnic trainees as % of those with known ethnicity	16.2%	20.9%	19.1%	-
White European	1,693	2,581	4,274	80.9

Contd.

Table 8.8 Continued:

Ethnic origin	Male	Female	Total	trainees with known ethnicity
	No.	No.	No.	%
Total with known ethnicity	2,021	3,263	5,284	100.0
% of trainees with known ethnicity	92.0%	92.9%	92.6%	
Trainees with unknown ethnicity	176	248	424	
% of trainees with unknown ethnicity	8.0%	7.1%	7.4%	
All trainees	2,197	3,511	5,708	
All trainees %	38.5%	61.5%	100.0%	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.9 Table 8.9 shows the numbers of new male and female traineeships registered in each Government Office Region (modified to maintain the important division between the City and the Rest of London) in 2003–04. Of the 5,708 trainees registered, 1,620 (28.4%) were located in the City of London. A further 1,061, or 18.6%, were located in the rest of London. Taken overall, just under one-half (47.0%) of first-year trainees were located in London in 2003–04. This is a marginal decrease from the 47.5% of London registrations recorded last year. Male trainees were slightly more likely than female trainees to be located in London. Whereas slightly over one-half (51.9%) of male trainees were located in London, the corresponding proportion for female trainees was only 43.9%. The region with the highest proportion of female trainees was the East Midlands with 71.5%, and the region with the lowest proportion was the City of London with 55.0%.

Table 8.9 Trainee placements in 2003–04 analysed by Government Office Region

Region	Male			Female			Total	
	No.	%	% by region	No.	%	% by region	Total	% by region
City of London	729	45.0	33.2	892	55.0	25.4	1,620	28.4
Rest of London	412	38.8	18.8	649	61.2	18.5	1,061	18.6
South East	122	30.2	5.6	283	69.8	8.1	405	7.1
Eastern	105	30.0	4.8	245	70.0	7.0	350	6.1
South West	111	36.6	5.1	192	63.4	5.5	304	5.3
West Midlands	119	34.0	5.4	232	66.0	6.6	351	6.1
East Midlands	61	28.5	2.8	152	71.5	4.3	213	3.7
Yorkshire and Humberside	175	39.2	8.0	271	60.8	7.7	446	7.8
North West	248	38.7	11.3	392	61.3	11.2	640	11.2
North East	62	41.6	2.8	87	58.4	2.5	148	2.6
Wales	54	31.6	2.4	116	68.4	3.3	169	3.0
Total	2,197	38.5	100.0	3,511	61.5	100.0	5,708	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.10 In addition to looking at the regional distribution of traineeships, we are also able to look at the types of organisation in which these male and female trainees are placed. This data, which is shown in Table 8.10, shows overwhelmingly that trainees are placed in private practice firms. Of the traineeships registered this year, 5,371 (94.1%) were for placements in private practice firms. Male trainees were marginally more likely to be placed in private practice firms, and female trainees were marginally more likely to be placed in local government and the court service.

Table 8.10 Trainee placements in 2003–04 analysed by category of employment of training institution

Category of employment	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Private practice	2,085	94.9	3,286	93.6	5,371	94.1
Commerce and industry	37	1.7	36	1.0	73	1.3
Government department	9	0.4	23	0.7	32	0.6
Local government	27	1.2	67	1.9	94	1.6
Court	14	0.6	43	1.2	57	1.0
Crown prosecution service	9	0.4	26	0.7	35	0.6
Advice service	6	0.3	21	0.6	27	0.5
Other	10	0.5	9	0.3	19	0.3
Total	2,197	100.0	3,511	100.0	5,708	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.11 Given the importance of private practice firms in the training process, it is interesting to look at the characteristics of those firms which provide training placements. Of particular importance is the distribution of trainees by the size of firm in which they were placed. Data on the number of male and female trainees analysed by size of firm (measured by the total number of partners) is shown in Table 8.11. Of the 5,371 traineeships registered with private practice firms in 2003–04, just under one-third, 31.4%, were located in the small number of very large firms with 81 or more partners. At the other end of the spectrum only 5.1% of trainees were placed for training within sole practices. Male trainees were much more likely than female trainees to be placed in the very largest 81 or more partner firms. The proportions here were 35.9% and 28.5% respectively. In contrast to this, female trainees were more likely than male trainees to be placed in the smaller and medium-sized firms with between two and 80 partners although some of the differences here were not substantial. In sole practices there was only a slight difference in the proportion of male and female trainees (5.6% and 4.8% respectively).

Table 8.11 Trainee placements in 2003–04 analysed by the size of private practice firm in which trainees were located

Size of firm	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sole practice	117	5.6	157	4.8	274	5.1
2–4 partners	342	16.4	710	21.6	1,052	19.6
5–10 partners	248	11.9	462	14.1	710	13.2
11–25 partners	287	13.8	517	15.7	804	15.0
26–80 partners	343	16.5	504	15.3	847	15.8
81+	748	35.9	936	28.5	1,684	31.4
Total	2,085	100.0	3,286	100.0	5,371	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.12 Since August 1987, in an attempt to try to ensure that the solicitors' profession is open to all regardless of their background, the Council of the Law Society has recommended minimum starting salaries for trainee solicitors. The rates set by the Council are shown below in Table 8.12. In 1993, after considerable debate, the Council agreed to maintain the principle of minimum salaries. However, the salary rates were frozen at their 1992 levels, and the outer London rate was abolished. From then through to 1999, the recommended salary levels were frozen at their 1993 levels. In February 2000, the recommended minimum was raised to £13,600 in London and £12,000 elsewhere. (Another change made at that time was that now only on special application may firms offer training contracts at salaries below the Council minimum recommendation). A further revision took place in August 2003 when the minimum in Central London was raised to £15,300, and elsewhere to £13,600. In August 2003 the 'Council recommended' salary level was introduced, as shown in table 8.12.

Table 8.12 Starting salaries for trainee solicitors

Effective date	Central London ¹	Outer London	Rest of England and Wales
Council recommended minimum			
From 1/9/87	£6,600	£6,100	£5,200
From 1/8/88	£7,200	£6,900	£6,000
From 1/8/89	£8,500	£8,200	£7,300
From 1/8/90	£9,900	£9,600	£8,700
From 1/8/91	£11,300	£11,000	£10,100
From 1/8/92	£12,150	£11,850	£10,850
From 1/8/93*	£12,150	£10,850	£10,850
From 1/8/2000	£13,600	£12,000	£12,000
From 1/8/2002	£14,600	£13,000	£13,000
From 1/8/2003	£15,300	£13,600	£13,600
Council recommended			
From 1/8/2003	£16,200	£14,450	£14,450

* Outer London category abolished in 1993

¹ Central London is the City of London, Holborn and Westminster.

8.13 Analyses of trainees' actual starting salaries by gender and region are shown below in Table 8.13. This shows that, in 2003–04, average starting salaries were highest in Central London (the City, Holborn and Westminster) at £26,692, and lowest in Wales at £14,767. Taken over all trainees, the average starting salary was £20,013. This represents an increase of 1.3% on the average salary paid last year, which was £19,748. Within this total rise male trainee salaries increased by 0.9% on average, whilst the increase for female trainees was more than this at 1.6%.

Table 8.13 Trainees' starting salaries by Government Office Region and gender

Region	Male average (£)	Female average (£)	All trainees average (£)	% male average salary over female	Average salary as % of minimum	% trainees paid at or below the minimum
Central Ldn	26,923	26,508	26,692	1.6	183	0.1
Rest of Greater Ldn	20,148	19,522	19,760	3.2	152	1.6
South East	16,310	16,218	16,245	0.6	125	1.7
Eastern	16,467	15,626	15,881	5.4	122	2.2
South West	15,518	15,893	15,761	-2.4	121	1.9
West Midlands	16,430	15,632	15,901	5.1	122	3.6
East Midlands	15,422	15,479	15,463	-0.4	119	1.6
Yorks and Humberside	17,234	16,347	16,688	5.4	128	2.5
North West	15,898	15,615	15,723	1.8	121	3.7
North East	15,244	15,236	15,239	0.1	117	3.3
Wales	14,706	14,797	14,767	-0.6	114	3.7
Total	20,835	19,504	20,013	6.8	n/a	n/a

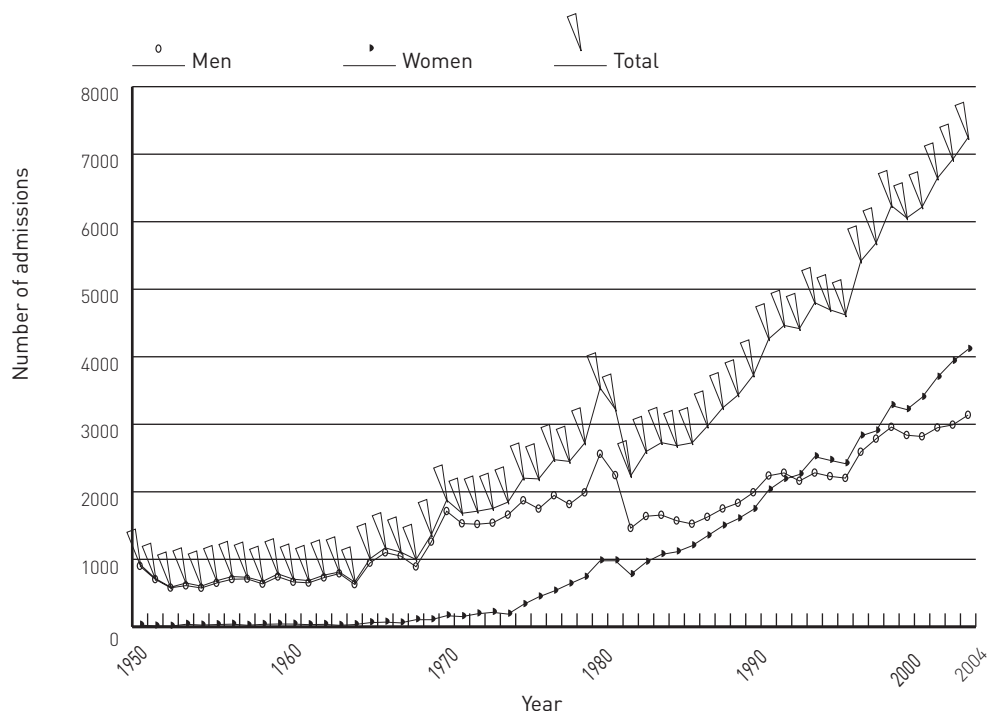
Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.14 Table 8.13 also breaks the data down by trainee gender. On average, male trainees were offered starting salaries which were 6.8% above the average level for females, down from a 7.6% gender gap last year. The average salary levels for male and female trainees being £20,835 and £19,504 respectively. Although, on average, male trainees had much higher starting salaries than female trainees, in three of the regions, female trainee starting salaries were higher than that for males. Female trainee salaries were 2.4% higher than male trainee salaries in the South West; 0.6% higher Wales; and 0.4% higher in the East Midlands region.

9. Admission to the Roll

- 9.1 There are two distinct routes to admission to the Roll: a direct route, followed by completing the required educational and vocational training outlined in Chapter 5, and the transfer route, which includes transfers from other legal professions within England and Wales, such as barristers, legal executives and magistrates and justices' clerks, as well as lawyers who qualified in other jurisdictions. This latter group includes a number of Scottish and Northern Irish lawyers.
- 9.2 The total number of individuals admitted to the Roll in the year that ended 31 July 2004 was 7,247. This represents an increase of 4.7% on the 6,924 individuals who were admitted in 2002–03. Chart 7 shows the growth in admissions of men and women separately for the period 1950 to 2004. Over this period, total annual admissions rose by 782.6% at an average annual increase of 4.0% per year. Over the same period, female admissions have grown at an average annual rate of 10.0%, which equates to a doubling of the number of female admissions approximately every seven years. The average growth rate for male admissions, 2.4%, has been less than one-quarter that for women over the period.

Chart 7 Growth in solicitors' admissions to the Roll 1950–2004



Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.3 Table 9.3 shows the trend over the past 10 years in the number of men and women admitted to the profession. Between 1994 and 2004, total admissions grew by 50.9% from a base of 4,801. Over this period, male admissions rose by 37.5%, whilst female admissions grew much more rapidly, by 63.1%. Women have accounted for the majority of new admissions in each year since 1993–94 and, in 2003–04, 56.7% of those admitted were female. This proportion, which is showing some increase over time, has fallen marginally on that recorded last year and contrasts with the position 10 years ago when, in 1994, 52.5% of new entrants to the profession were women.

Table 9.3 Men and women admitted to the Roll 1993–94 to 2003–04

	Men		Women		Total	Annual change
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1993–94	2,281	47.5	2,520	52.5	4,801	8.7
1994–95	2,229	47.5	2,466	52.5	4,695	-2.2
1995–96	2,203	47.7	2,417	52.3	4,620	-1.6
1996–97	2,590	47.8	2,827	52.2	5,417	17.3
1997–98	2,784	49.0	2,901	51.0	5,685	4.9
1998–99	2,959	47.4	3,278	52.6	6,237	9.7
1999–2000	2,838	46.9	3,218	53.1	6,056	-2.9
2000–01	2,819	45.3	3,399	54.7	6,218	2.7
2001–02	2,949	44.4	3,697	55.6	6,646	6.9
2002–03	2,991	43.2	3,933	56.8	6,924	4.2
2003–04	3,137	43.3	4,110	56.7	7,247	4.7
% change						
2004–1994		37.5		63.1		50.9

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.4 The age distribution of those admitted in 2003–04 is shown in Table 9.4. The table shows there was little substantive difference in the age distribution of male and female admissions. Taken overall, the average age of those admitted was 29.8 years. The average age for males was marginally higher than that for females, the average ages being 30.3 and 29.3 years respectively. Almost one-half of new admissions were aged 27 years or less, and just under two-thirds were aged 29 or less.

Table 9.4 The age distribution of solicitors admitted to the Roll in 2003–04

Age	Male		Female		All admissions.		Cumulative
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
23	1	0.0	1	0.0	2	0.0	0.0
24	36	1.1	66	1.6	102	1.4	1.4
25	410	13.1	624	15.2	1,034	14.3	15.7
26	471	15.0	788	19.2	1,259	17.4	33.1
27	469	15.0	628	15.3	1,097	15.1	48.2
28	300	9.6	416	10.1	716	9.9	58.1
29	207	6.6	306	7.4	513	7.1	65.2
30–34	641	20.4	737	17.9	1,378	19.0	84.2
35–39	332	10.6	266	6.5	598	8.3	92.4
40–44	144	4.6	158	3.8	302	4.2	96.6
45–49	71	2.3	80	1.9	151	2.1	98.7
50–54	33	1.1	24	0.6	57	0.8	99.5
55 and over	18	0.6	9	0.2	27	0.4	99.8
Total known	3,133	99.9	4,103	99.8	7,236	99.8	
Unknown	4	0.1	7	0.2	11	0.2	100.0
Grand total	3,137	100.0	4,110	100.0	7,247	100.0	
Average age		30.3		29.3		29.8	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.5 Table 9.5 shows the proportion of men and women who were admitted in the year 2003–04 by each of the different routes. For 5.5% of admissions these data were not recorded. Just over two-thirds of admissions, 71.0%, were through the direct qualification route and, of these, just under three-quarters were law graduates and the remainder were non-law graduates who had passed the CPE. Women were more likely than men to qualify by this direct route, 75.0% of admissions as against 65.7%, and, within this total, were slightly more likely than men to have qualifying law degrees. In contrast, men were more likely than women to qualify via a transfer in; the relevant proportions here being 28.8% and 19.5% respectively. Men were more likely than women to have been barristers or to be transferring in from another jurisdiction, 27.4% as opposed to 16.5%, but women were slightly more likely than men to have qualified initially as either a legal executive or as a magistrates' or justices' clerk, 2.9% as opposed to 1.4%.

Table 9.5 The routes to admission to the Roll in 2003–04

Entry routes	Male		Female		All admissions	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Direct entry:						
Law degree	1,498	47.8	2,309	56.2	3,807	52.5
Non-law degree	564	18.0	774	18.8	1,338	18.5
Total direct entry	2,062	65.7	3,083	75.0	5,145	71.0
Entry by transfer:						
Overseas lawyer	708	22.6	559	13.6	1,267	17.5
Barrister	152	4.8	120	2.9	272	3.8
FILEX	33	1.1	101	2.5	134	1.8
Justices' clerk	11	0.4	20	0.5	31	0.4
Total transfers	904	28.8	800	19.5	1,704	23.5
Route unknown	171	5.5	227	5.5	398	5.5
All admissions	3,137	100.0	4,110	100.0	7,247	100.0
%	43.3		56.7		100.0	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.6 Just under one-quarter of admissions (23.5%) in 2003–04 were, as we have seen, transfers in from other professions and jurisdictions. Table 9.6 analyses transfers in by whether they were from other professions within England or Wales, or from other jurisdictions, and shows the country of origin of those transferring from other jurisdictions. Of the 1,704 transfers, over one-quarter, 25.6%, were from other professions based within England and Wales, most of whom were individuals who had previously qualified as either barristers or legal executives. The remaining 74.4% were transfers in from other jurisdictions. Most notable here were Australian and New Zealand lawyers, who alone accounted for over one-quarter (28.9%) of all transfers in. In addition to these, transfers from the USA and Canada accounted for a further 10.0%, those from Hong Kong 6.6%, and those from other parts of the UK a further 4.9% of all transfers.

Table 9.6 Analysis of transfers into the profession 2003–04

	Male		Female		All transfers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
From other professions:						
Legal executives	33	3.7	101	12.6	134	7.9
Barristers	152	16.8	120	15.0	272	16.0
Justices' clerks	11	1.2	20	2.5	31	1.8
Sub-total	196	21.7	241	30.1	437	25.6
From other jurisdictions:						
Hong Kong	49	5.5	62	7.8	112	6.6
Australia/New Zealand	278	30.8	214	26.8	492	28.9
USA/Canada	100	11.1	71	8.9	171	10.0
Scotland/N. Ireland/Isle of Man	48	5.3	36	4.5	84	4.9
Eire	20	2.2	12	1.5	32	1.9
Other EU countries	35	3.8	45	5.6	79	4.7
Non-EU countries	22	2.5	11	1.4	33	1.9
Singapore/Malaysia	68	7.5	56	7.0	124	7.3
India/Pakistan/Sri Lanka	47	5.2	22	2.7	69	4.0
Nigeria	36	4.0	22	2.7	58	3.4
All other jurisdictions	5	0.5	8	1.0	13	0.7
Sub-total	708	78.3	559	69.9	1,267	74.4
Grand total	904	100.0	800	100.0	1,704	100.0

Source: Law Society database

9.7 The main factor affecting age on admission is the route taken to qualification. Table 9.7 shows the average age on qualification for men and women for each of the separate routes. These reflect the average times taken to qualify by each route and show that the group with the lowest average age, 28.1 years, were direct entrants with qualifying law degrees. Those admitted by the CPE route were aged 30.3 years on average. Taken over all direct admissions, the average age recorded was 28.6 years. Those transferring in were, on average, around five years older than direct admissions, at 33.2 years. There was little difference between the average ages of men and women qualifying by the same route, though male transfers in from the barristers' profession and other jurisdictions were around two years older than their female counterparts.

Table 9.7 Average age on admission to the Roll by route to admission and gender 2003–04

Entry routes	Male		Female		All admissions	
	No.	Average age	No.	Average age	No.	Average age
Direct entry:						
Law degree	1,498	28.3	2,309	27.9	3,807	28.1
Non-law degree	564	30.3	774	30.3	1,338	30.3
Total direct entry	2,062	28.8	3,083	28.5	5,145	28.6
Entry by transfer:						
Overseas lawyer	708	33.9	559	31.9	1,267	33.0
Barrister	152	32.9	120	30.9	272	32.0
FILEX	33	36.4	101	36.1	134	36.2
Justices' clerk	11	39.0	20	38.7	31	38.8
Total transfers	904	33.9	800	32.4	1,704	33.2
Route unknown	171	29.6	227	29.2	398	29.4
All admissions	3,137	100.0	4,110	100.0	7,247	100.0
%	43.3	30.3	56.7	29.3	100.0	29.8

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.8 Table 9.8 shows the numbers and percentages qualifying via each route in 2003–04 contrasted with the position one year and 10 years ago. In order to make the comparison, the 5.5% of admissions for whom the route was unknown in 2003–04 have been allocated pro rata to the other known categories. The table shows that the proportion of direct admissions has decreased from 83.8% of all admissions in 1993–94 to 75.1% in 2003–04. The proportion of non-law graduates has been remarkably static over the period, moving only from 19.4% in 1993–94 to 19.5% in 2003–04. The decrease in direct admission has been balanced by the increase in transfers in. These have increased from 16.2% of all admissions ten years ago to 24.9% now.

Table 9.8 Trends in the main routes to admission to the Roll 1993–1994, to 2003–04

Routes to admission	1993–94	2002–03	2003–04
Law degree	3,089	3,811	4,028
Non-law degree	932	1,328	1,416
Transfers	780	1,786	1,803
Total	4,801	6,924	7,247
Routes to admission	%	%	%
Law degree	64.3	55.0	55.6
Non-law degree	19.4	19.2	19.5
Transfers	16.2	25.8	24.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

9.9 We are also able to examine trends in the number of admissions drawn from minority ethnic groups. Table 9.9 shows the comparison between 1998–99, 2002–03 and 2003–04. The table shows that, as a proportion of those admissions for whom the ethnicity was known, minority ethnic admissions represented just over one-sixth, 17.8% of the total in 2003–04 compared with 16.6% five years ago. Fluctuations in the intervening years mean that although there is no great consistency it appears that this proportion is increasing slightly over time. Most of the observed increase in numbers over the past five years has been fuelled by increases in ‘Asian’ admissions. Asian and African admissions have increased by almost a half over the past five years. In contrast the number of ethnic Chinese admissions have more than halved over the period. It can also be seen that this data is degrading over time: ethnicity is now known for only 74.7% of admissions, compared with 81.2% in 1998–99.

Table 9.9 Trends in admissions from minority ethnic groups to the Roll 1998–99, 2002–03 and 2003–04

Ethnicity	1998–99	2002–03	2003–04	% change	
				2004 over 2003	2004 over 1999
African-Caribbean	56	67	72	7.5	28.6
Asian	397	506	558	10.3	40.6
Chinese	197	108	76	-29.6	-61.4
African	64	96	95	-1.0	48.5
Other	127	139	162	16.6	27.6
Total from minority ethnic groups	841	917	963	5.1	14.5
Number of admissions where ethnicity is known	5,064	5,311	5,417	2.0	7.0
Minority ethnic groups as a % of those with known ethnicity	16.6	17.3	17.8	3.0	7.1
Total admissions	6,237	6,924	7,247	4.7	16.2
% of admissions with known ethnicity	81.2	76.7	74.7	-2.5	-7.9
Male admissions	2,959	2,991	3,137	4.9	6.0
Males as % of total	47.4	43.2	43.3		
Female admissions	3,278	3,933	4,110	4.5	25.4
Females as % of total	52.6	56.8	56.7		
Total admissions	6,237	6,924	7,247	4.7	16.2

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 9.10 In 2003–04 there were 963 admissions from minority ethnic groups out of a total of 7,247. Comparable figures for last year were 917 admissions out of a total of 6,924. The slight increase in the representation of ethnic minorities over the past year is largely accounted for by the increase in the number of Asian and ‘other ethnic’ admissions. Respectively these rose by 10.3% to 558 and by 16.6% to 162. In contrast to this, Chinese and African admissions fell by 29.6% and 1.0% respectively.
- 9.11 A fuller breakdown of admissions from minority ethnic groups in 2003–04 is shown in Table 9.11. This table analyses admissions by both gender and ethnicity and shows that last year 61.6% of those admitted from the ethnic minorities were female. This is a higher value than that for admissions as a whole (56.7%). Within minority ethnic groups, the proportion of female admissions was highest amongst the ethnic Chinese, 71.0%, and lowest amongst Africans, 54.7%.

Table 9.11 Minority ethnic group admissions in 2003–04 by gender

Ethnic group	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
African-Caribbean	24	33.4	48	66.6	72
Asian	223	40.0	335	60.0	558
Chinese	22	29.0	54	71.0	76
African	43	45.3	52	54.7	95
Other	58	35.8	104	64.2	162
Total admissions from minority ethnic groups	370	38.4	593	61.6	963
Number of admissions where ethnicity is known	2,158	39.8	3,259	60.2	5,417
Minority ethnic groups as a % of those with known ethnicity	17.2		18.2		17.8
Number of admissions where ethnicity is unknown	979	53.5	851	46.5	1,830
Total admissions	3,137	43.3	4,110	56.7	7,247
% of admissions with known ethnicity	68.8		79.3		74.7

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Appendices

Map of Government Office Regions

Standard Statistical Region	County*	Government Office Region
North	Cleveland* Durham Northumberland Tyne and Wear	North East
	Cumbria	
North West	Cheshire Greater Manchester Lancashire Merseyside**	North West
Yorkshire and Humberside	Humberside* North Yorkshire South Yorkshire West Yorkshire	Yorkshire and the Humber
East Midlands	Derbyshire Leicestershire Lincolnshire Northamptonshire Nottinghamshire	East Midlands
West Midlands	Hereford and Worcester* Shropshire Staffordshire Warwickshire West Midlands	West Midlands
South West	Avon* Cornwall Devon Dorset Gloucestershire	South West
East Anglia	Cambridgeshire Norfolk Suffolk	East of England
South East	Bedfordshire Essex Hertfordshire	
	Greater London	London
	Berkshire* Buckinghamshire East Sussex Hampshire Isle of Wight* Kent Oxfordshire Surrey West Sussex	South East

* Counties prior to local government reorganisation

** North West region includes Merseyside from 1 August 1998



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