

# Trends in the solicitors' profession

Annual statistical report 2007

Prepared by Bill Cole, Strategic Research Unit



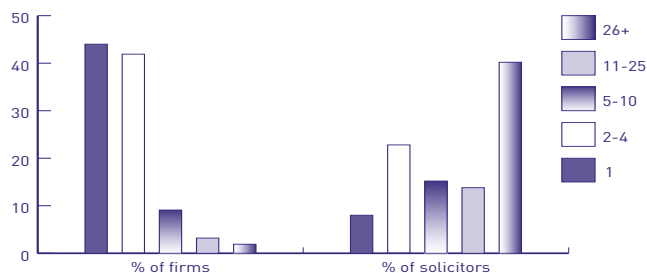
The Law Society

# Key statistics

## Solicitors' profession as at 31 July 2007

Solicitors on the Roll	134,378
Solicitors with practising certificates (pcs)	108,407
Private practice firms	10,114
Women solicitors with pcs	47,070
Women partners	7,420
Solicitors from minority ethnic groups with pcs	10,306
Solicitors working in private practice	82,557
Solicitors employed outside private practice	25,850
New solicitors admitted to the Roll 2005-06	7,223
Trainee solicitors commencing contracts 2005-06	6,012

### Distribution of firms and solicitors 2006-07



Partners	% of firms	% of solicitors
1	44.0	8.0
2-4	41.9	22.7
5-10	9.1	15.2
11-25	3.2	13.8
26 or more	1.9	40.2

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## Introduction

This is the twenty-fourth 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 full list of publications linked to a summary or the full text version can be viewed at [www.research.lawsociety.org.uk](http://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, acceptances and graduates in law; and data from the Higher Educational Statistical Agency [HESA] 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 2007, there were 134,378 solicitors on the Roll, an increase of 2.3% on the year before.
- At the same date, 108,407 solicitors held practising certificates (80.7% of those on the Roll), an increase of 3.7% on the previous year.
- Since 1977, the total number of solicitors holding practising certificates has grown by 230.4% at an average annual rate of 4.1%.
- 82,557, or 76.2%, of solicitors holding practising certificates work in private practice; the remainder work mainly in commerce and industry and the public sector.
- Since 1997, the proportion of practising certificate holders not employed in private practice has increased from 18.5% to 23.8%.

### A descriptive profile

- In 2006–07, solicitors from minority ethnic groups accounted for 10.1% of all solicitors on the Roll, 9.5% of all solicitors with practising certificates, and 9.1% of all solicitors in private practice.
- Women now account for 43.4% of solicitors with practising certificates. Whereas since 1997 the total number of solicitors holding practising certificates has grown by 51.3%, the number of women holding practising certificates more than doubled, having increased by 100.6%.
- 79.0% of men holding practising certificates work within private practice, compared to 72.4% of women.
- In 2007, the average age of a female solicitor in private practice was 36.9 years compared with 44.1 years for men. The average age of a sole practitioner was 51.0 years compared with 46.6 years for partners and 41.1 years for all solicitors in private practice.
- Just over one-third of practising certificate holders in 2007 (36.4%) were employed by organisations based in London. These organisations were responsible for the employment of 50.3% of minority ethnic group practising certificate holders.

### Trends in private practice

- In 2007 there were 15,694 separate organisations employing solicitors of which 14,374 were based in England and Wales.
- In 2007, there were 10,114 solicitors' firms in England and Wales listed on the Society's database, an increase of 1.1% on 2006.
- The vast majority of law firms are relatively small with 85.9% of them having four or fewer partners.
- In 2007 42.6%, of private practice firms were located in London and the south east.
- Just over one-quarter of private practice firms, 27.6%, were located in London in 2007. These firms employed 42.5% of all private practitioners.
- In 2007, the 1.9% of firms with 26 or more partners employed 29.8% of all principals and 40.2% of all solicitors in private practice. Sole practices accounted for 44.0% of firms, yet employed only 8.0% of all private practitioners.
- On average, the largest firms, with 81 or more partners, had 2.1 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 2006 there were 19,863 applicants to study first degree courses in law in England and Wales, of whom 13,499 (68.0%) were accepted.
- Of the 12,858 graduates in the summer of 2006, over half (55.4%) achieved firsts or upper second classifications. More women graduated with firsts and upper seconds than men, 57.6% as opposed to 51.5%.
- In the year ending 31 July 2007, 11,351 students enrolled with the Law Society. Of these students 62.7% were women and 30.7% were drawn from minority ethnic groups.
- Of those who took the LPC examination in 2007, 75.6% passed, a fall on the 2006 pass rate of 78.2%.
- There were 10,325 full time and 2,498 part-time LPC places available in 2006-07. In 2007-08 there will be 10,675 full-time and 3,064 part-time places available.
- There were 6,012 new traineeships registered in the year 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. This is an increase of 4.5% on the level recorded last year.
- Of the new trainees registered, 61.5% were women and 18.4% of trainees with known ethnicity were drawn from minority ethnic groups.



- In the year to 31st July 2007, admissions to the Roll (i.e. newly qualified solicitors and transfers from other legal professions) were 7,223, an increase of 2.1% on admissions the year before.
- Of the new admissions, 59.9% were women, and admissions from minority ethnic groups represented 20.0% of all admissions where ethnicity was known.

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# 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 2007, there were 134,378 solicitors on the Roll, an increase of 2.3% over the previous year. Of these, 74,791 (55.7%) were men and 59,587 (44.3%) were women. Last year 56.4% of solicitors on the Roll were men and 43.6% were women.
- 1.3 Table 1.3 shows that of those solicitors on the Roll at 31 July 2007, 108,407, or 80.7% of them, held a current practising certificate entitling them to act as a solicitor within the definition of the Solicitors Act 1974. The remaining 25,971 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 2007

	No.	%
<b>With practising certificates</b>		
Male	61,337	56.6
Female	47,070	43.4
Sub-total	108,407	100.0
<b>Without practising certificates</b>		
Male	13,454	51.8
Female	12,517	48.2
Sub-total	25,971	100.0
<b>Total solicitors on the Roll</b>		
Male	74,791	55.7
Female	59,587	44.3
Total	134,378	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

## Ethnic groups

- 1.4 Minority ethnic group solicitors make up 10.1% of solicitors on the Roll, of whom around one quarter 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 the ethnic minorities.
- 1.5 Table 1.5 shows that 76.1% of the 13,537 minority ethnic group solicitors on the Roll hold practising certificates. This is a lower participation rate than for all solicitors where the rate was 80.7%. Chinese solicitors, the majority of whom work overseas, have the lowest participation rate of minority ethnic group solicitors. Only 37.6% 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 2007

Ethnic origin	Minority ethnic group solicitors		
	1	2	3
	On the Roll	With practising certificate	Participation rate (2 as a % of 1)
African-Caribbean	868	741	85.4
Asian	6,782	5,829	85.9
Chinese	2,612	983	37.6
African	1,188	1,027	86.4
Other ethnic origin	2,086	1,726	82.7
<b>All minority ethnic group solicitors</b>	<b>13,537</b>	<b>10,306</b>	<b>76.1</b>
White European	102,546	84,572	82.5
Unknown	18,296	13,529	73.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>134,378</b>	<b>108,407</b>	<b>80.7</b>
<b>Minority ethnic group solicitors as a % of all solicitors</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>9.5</b>	
Minority ethnic group solicitors as % of solicitors with known ethnicity	11.7	10.9	

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 2007, there were 108,407 solicitors holding current practising certificates. This was an increase of 3.7% on the number for the previous year. The participation rate, which is the percentage of solicitors on the Roll holding practising certificates, increased for women solicitors, from 77.5% in 2006 to 79.0% in 2007. The participation rate also increased for men, from 81.2% to 82.0%. 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 1977, the total number of practising certificate holders has grown by 230.4% at an average annual rate of 4.1%. Comparable figures for those in private practice are a total growth over the period of 192.4% at an average rate of 3.6%.

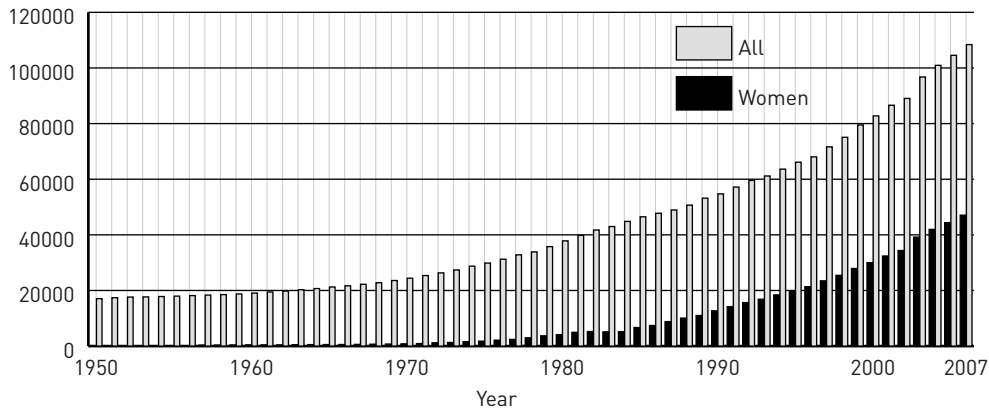
Chart 1 shows the growth in the number of solicitors with practising certificates since 1950, and compares the growth rate for women holders with that of the profession as a whole.

Table 2.2 Solicitors holding practising certificates 1977 to 2007

Year	Practising solicitors	% change	Solicitors in private practice	% change
1977	32,812		28,231	
1987	48,937	49.1	42,036	48.9
1997	71,637	46.4	58,378	38.9
2007	108,407	51.3	82,557	41.4

Source: Law Society’s REGIS database

Chart 1 Growth in the number of solicitors with practising certificates 1950–2007



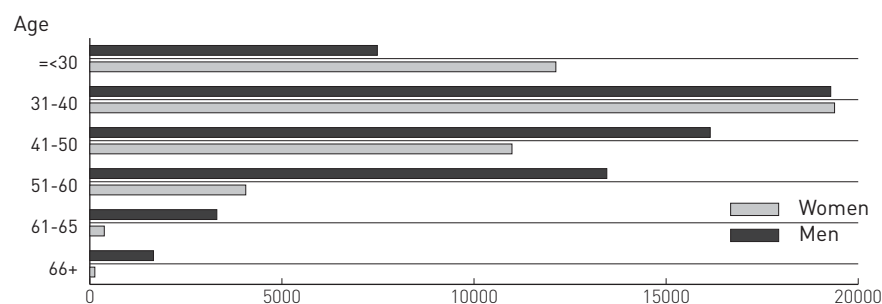
Source: Law Society’s REGIS database

- 2.3 Since 1997, the total number of solicitors with practising certificates has grown by 51.3%. However, over this period the number of women solicitors with practising certificates has increased by 100.6% whilst the number of men increased by only 27.3%. The proportion of solicitors holding practising certificates who are women was 43.4% at 31 July 2007, compared with 32.8% in 1997. 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 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, except for those small number of solicitors aged 71 years and over.
- 2.5 Table 2.4 and Chart 2 also show that there are now more female than male practising certificate holders aged 40 or less, but that the majority of those in the older age groups are men. Just over one-half, 53.8%, of all solicitors with a practising certificate are aged 40 or less. The average age of a female solicitor with a practising certificate is 37.5 years compared with 43.9 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 2007**

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	359	97.6	716	96.2
26-30	7,070	94.1	11,383	92.5
31-35	9,218	88.7	10,673	83.8
36-40	9,224	87.1	8,661	76.0
41-45	8,364	85.3	6,477	71.6
46-50	7,665	85.7	4,483	72.5
51-55	7,178	83.4	2,716	70.2
56-60	6,179	79.6	1,333	65.0
61-65	3,282	69.9	376	55.3
66-70	931	50.0	76	38.8
71 and over	714	25.5	55	31.6
Unknown	453	69.5	121	59.9
All ages known	60,884	82.1	46,949	79.1
% ages known	99.3		99.7	
Total	61,337	82.0	47,070	79.0
Average (Mean) age	43.9		37.5	
Median age	42		35	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

**Chart 2 The age of solicitors with practising certificates — 31 July 2007**

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2.6 Table 2.6 shows the numbers of solicitors holding practising certificates as at 31 July 2007, analysed by employment sector and the number of years they have been qualified as solicitors. Over one-third, 37.5%, of male solicitors with current practising certificates in private practice have been qualified for less than 10 years, and 61.3% have been qualified for less than 20 years. This compares with 87.9% of women solicitors in private practice who have been qualified for less than 20 years. A similar, if less pronounced, 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 2007**

Years since admission	All solicitors		Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Solicitors in private practice</b>						
0-9	40,275	48.8	18,199	37.5	22,076	64.8
10-19	19,442	23.5	11,551	23.8	7,891	23.1
20-29	13,725	16.6	10,371	21.4	3,354	9.8
30-39	7,539	9.1	6,834	14.1	705	2.1
40-49	1,340	1.6	1,290	2.7	50	0.1
50 or more years	236	0.3	222	0.5	14	0.0
All years	82,557	100.0	48,467	100.0	34,090	100.0
<b>Solicitors in employed and other sectors</b>						
0-9	12,901	49.9	5,563	43.2	7,337	56.5
10-19	7,533	29.1	3,606	28.0	3,928	30.3
20-29	3,618	14.0	2,165	16.8	1,452	11.2
30-39	1,565	6.1	1,307	10.2	259	2.0
40-49	197	0.9	192	1.5	5	0.0
50 or more years	36	0.1	36	0.3	0	0.0
All years	25,850	100.0	12,869	100.0	12,981	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: 76.2% as at 31 July 2007. The second largest category of employment is commerce and industry, 9.1%, followed by local government, which employs 3.7% 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 7.0% 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 41.3% of solicitors are women, compared with 50.2% in these other sectors.

**Table 2.7** Practising certificate holders by category of employment as at 31 July 2007

Category of employment	All	% of PC holders	Men	Women	Women as % of total
Private practice	82,557	76.2	48,467	34,090	41.3
Commerce/industry	9,824	9.1	5,259	4,565	46.5
Accountancy practice	112	0.1	44	68	60.7
Nationalised industry	35	0.0	10	25	71.4
Trade union	65	0.1	32	33	50.8
Government department	212	0.2	124	88	41.5
Local government	4,018	3.7	1,552	2,466	61.4
Court	71	0.1	33	38	53.5
Government funded services	233	0.2	91	142	60.9
Crown Prosecution Service	2,380	2.2	1,058	1,322	55.5
Advice service	427	0.4	148	279	65.3
Educational establishment	225	0.2	64	161	71.6
Health service	58	0.1	20	38	65.5
Others <sup>1</sup>	575	0.5	228	347	60.3
Not attached to an organisation	7,615	7.0	4,207	3,408	44.8
All non-private practice	25,850	23.8	12,870	12,980	50.2
Total practising certificate holders	108,407	100.0	61,337	47,070	43.4

\* 0 = less than 0.05%

<sup>1</sup> 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, 79.0% of male solicitors with practising certificates work in private practice compared with only 72.4% of their female counterparts. This is shown in Table 2.8, which also shows the growing importance of the employed sector. In 2007, just under one quarter (23.8%) of practising certificate holders worked outside of private practice, compared to only 18.5% 10 years ago.

**Table 2.8** Distribution of practising certificate holders by category of employment as at 31 July 2007 compared with 1997

Category of employment	1997	Total %	2007	
	Total %		Men %	Women %
Private practice	81.5	76.2	79.0	72.4
Other PC holders	18.5	23.8	21.0	27.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

### Solicitors in private practice

- 2.9 For the 82,557 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 2007. 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 an increase in the proportion of male and female private practitioners who are partners. Table 2.9 shows that, within an overall total of 38.3%, 49.9% of men, compared with only 21.8% of women, were partners as at 31 July 2007.

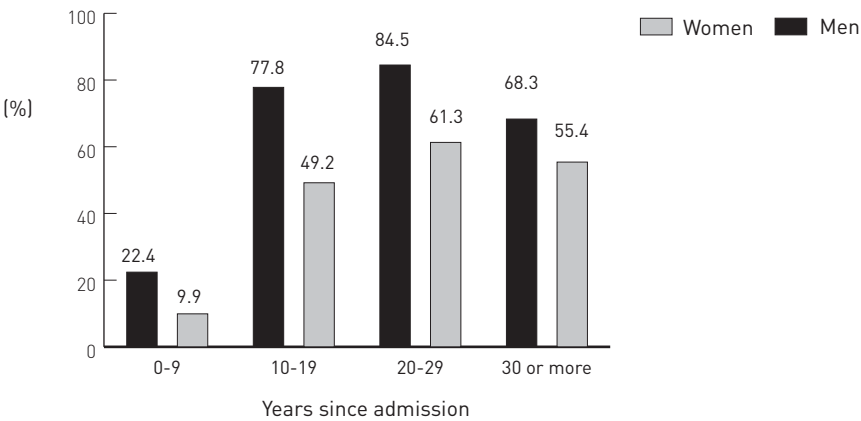
**Table 2.9** Position of solicitors working in private practice and holding a practising certificate as at 31 July 2007

Position in firm	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Partners	24,204	49.9	7,420	21.8	31,624	38.3
Sole practitioners	3,318	6.8	1,128	3.3	4,446	5.4
Associate solicitors	6,211	12.8	6,648	19.5	12,859	15.6
Assistant solicitors	10,972	22.6	16,958	49.7	27,930	33.8
Consultants	2,825	5.8	728	2.1	3,553	4.3
Other private practice	937	1.9	1,208	3.5	2,145	2.6
All positions	48,467	100.0	34,090	100.0	82,557	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, 77.8% of men are partners or sole practitioners compared with only 49.2% of women.

**Chart 3** Percentages of men and women in private practice who were either partners or sole practitioners as at 31 July 2007 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 51.0 years, compared with 46.6 for partners and 41.1 for all solicitors in private practice. Reflecting their younger age profile, 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 2007

Age	All in private practice			Partners			Sole practitioners		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Total	48,467	34,090	82,557	24,204	7,420	31,624	3,318	1,128	4,446
Average age	44.1	36.9	41.1	47.6	43.4	46.6	52.3	47.1	51.0

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 87.5% of practising certificate holders. Using this we estimate that minority ethnic group solicitors accounted for 9.5% of solicitors with practising certificates in 2007, an increase on the 9.1% recorded in 2006. Within this total, 12.4% of women were members of a minority ethnic group compared with only 7.3% of men.

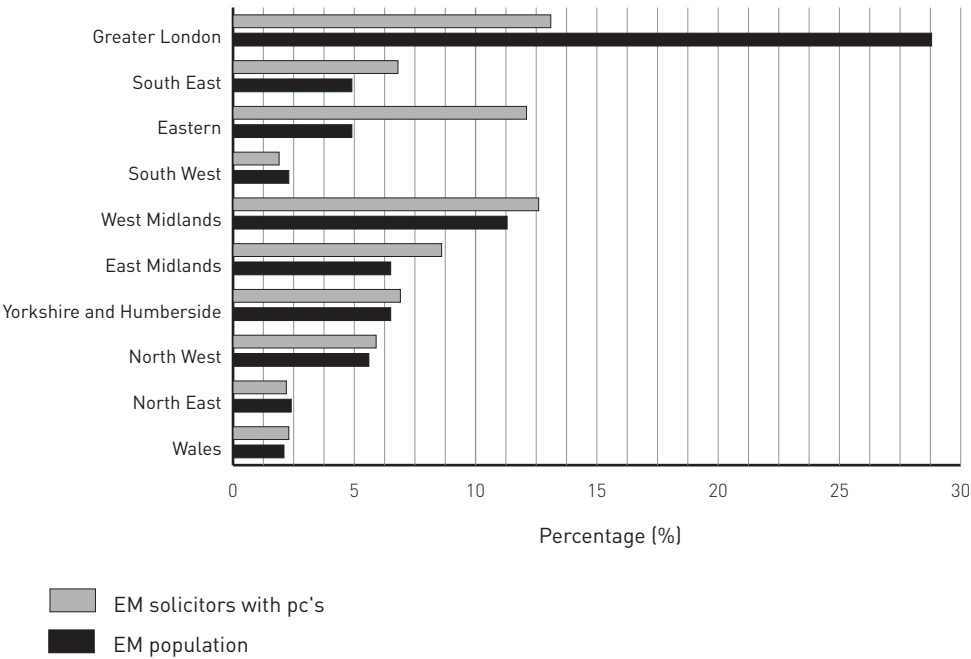
**Table 2.12 Ethnic origin of practising certificate holders as at 31 July 2007**

Ethnic origin	Men	Women	Total	%
White/European	48,651	35,921	84,572	78.0
African-Caribbean	226	515	741	0.7
Asian	2,699	3,130	5,829	5.4
Chinese	375	608	983	0.9
African	435	592	1,027	0.9
Other ethnic origin	754	972	1,726	1.6
All solicitors for whom ethnic origin is known	53,140	41,738	94,878	87.5
All ethnic minority practising certificate holders known to the Law Society	4,489	5,817	10,306	
% of all solicitors with PCs	7.3	12.4	9.5	
Unanswered/refused	8,197	5,332	13,529	12.5
All practising certificate holders	61,337	47,070	108,407	100.0
% of all solicitors with PCs for whom ethnic origin is known	86.6	88.7	87.5	

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



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 (13.1%), the West Midlands (12.6%), and the Eastern (12.1%) Government Office Regions have the highest proportion of minority ethnic group solicitors; the majority of whom are Asian. Overall, 5.9% of minority ethnic group solicitors with practising certificates are resident outside of England and Wales. It can also be seen from Table 2.14 that over a third of solicitors with practising certificates (36.4%) are located in Greater London, a proportion which rises to 50.3% 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 2007

Region	Total no. of PC holders	Ethnic Group (%)							
		Asian	African- Carib.	Chinese	African	Other ethnic minority	Total ethnic minority	White Euro- pean	Unknown
City London <sup>1</sup>	18,004	4.0	0.4	1.0	0.8	2.1	8.3	76.6	15.1
Rest of London	21,506	9.0	1.5	1.2	2.6	2.8	17.1	67.2	15.7
Greater London	39,510	6.7	1.0	1.1	1.8	2.5	13.1	71.5	15.4
South East	11,677	4.0	0.7	0.4	0.5	1.2	6.8	82.9	10.3
Eastern	7,026	7.1	1.0	0.6	1.7	1.7	12.1	75.8	12.1
South West	5,463	1.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.5	1.9	89.4	8.7
West Midlands	7,596	10.0	1.0	0.4	0.3	1.0	12.6	78.4	9.0
East Midlands	4,393	6.7	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.7	8.6	82.7	8.8
Yorkshire & Humberside	7,144	5.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.8	6.9	85.4	7.7
North West	11,357	3.9	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.9	5.9	85.1	9.0
North East	2,949	1.6	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.3	2.2	89.2	8.6
Wales	3,485	1.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.7	2.3	88.6	9.1
Outside England/Wales	4,791	3.2	0.1	6.7	0.3	2.3	12.6	58.7	28.7
Unknown	3,016	1.7	0.6	0.4	0.5	1.5	4.7	85.0	10.3
Total	108,407	5.4	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.6	9.5	78.0	12.5

<sup>1</sup> 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 Table 2.15 analyses the position held by solicitors in private practice by their ethnicity. Table 2.15 shows that 9.1% of solicitors in private practice are from minority ethnic groups. It also shows that whereas 40.0% of white Europeans in private practice are at partnership level, the corresponding proportion from ethnic minority groups is much lower at 25.8%. This partly reflects the fact that solicitors from minority ethnic groups have only recently been entering the profession in numbers. It is interesting to note, though, that 8.4% of minority ethnic group solicitors are sole practitioners, compared with only 5.0% for all white European solicitors in private practice.

**Table 2.15 Status of private practice solicitors by ethnicity**

Ethnic group	All in private practice	Percentage who were:					Total
		Partners	Sole practs.	Associates	Assists.	Other private practice	
African-Caribbean	458	26.4	10.7	13.3	46.5	3.1	100.0
Asian	4,420	26.3	8.8	13.7	47.2	4.0	100.0
Chinese	648	20.1	4.3	30.2	38.0	7.4	100.0
African	708	30.4	11.3	12.3	42.0	4.0	100.0
Other ethnic origin	1,267	24.3	6.2	19.6	45.3	4.6	100.0
All ethnic minority	7,501	25.8	8.4	16.0	45.5	4.3	100.0
White European	65,743	40.0	5.0	15.2	32.7	7.2	100.0
Unknown	9,313	36.7	5.6	17.8	32.7	7.2	100.0
Total	82,557	38.3	5.4	15.6	33.8	6.9	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 2.16 Finally, Table 2.16 analyses the numbers of private practice practitioners by their ethnicity and the size of firm in which they work. This table shows that nearly one half of minority ethnic group solicitors (48.8%) work in firms with 4 or fewer partners, compared with only 28.6% of White Europeans.

**Table 2.16 Ethnicity by size of firm as at 31 July 2007**

Ethnic group	Sole Practice	2-4 Partners	5-10 Partners	11-25 Partners	26-80 Partners	81+ Partners
African-Caribbean	15.7	41.3	14.1	9.6	8.7	10.7
Asian	14.8	37.2	12.5	10.5	10.3	14.8
Chinese	7.4	20.2	9.6	14.4	15.2	33.2
African	18.3	49.3	8.3	4.8	7.6	11.7
Other ethnic origin	10.7	24.4	11.3	11.6	14.0	28.1
All ethnic minority	13.8	35.0	11.7	10.4	11.0	18.1
White European	7.4	21.2	16.0	14.4	17.7	23.3
Unknown	9.2	24.6	13.2	12.1	16.6	24.3
Total	8.2	22.8	15.3	13.8	17.0	22.9

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

### 3. Solicitors' offices and firms

3.1 Information on organisations employing solicitors, especially on private practice firms, is now only available from the Law Society records held on its REGIS database. It should be noted that at present the system cannot differentiate between 'active' and 'inactive' private practice firms, nonetheless, it does record the type of business conducted by all organisations in England and Wales which 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. This data has been substantially revised in 2007 to take into account changes in individual firms' constitution type.

**Table 3.1 Organisations employing solicitors by type of business as at 31 July 2007**

Type of business	Head offices		Branch offices		Total offices	
	England & Wales	Elsewhere	England & Wales	Elsewhere	England & Wales	Elsewhere
<b>Private practice</b>						
Partnerships in England and Wales	8,663	39	2,343	32	11,006	71
Incorporated firms	1,303	3	605	89	1,908	92
Multi-national practices	115	44	34	72	149	116
Locums services	220	0	0	0	220	0
Foreign law practices	7	620	9	133	16	753
Other private practice	26	20	14	2	40	22
<b>Commerce and industry</b>	<b>2,900</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>3,178</b>	<b>618</b>
<b>Government</b>						
Government department	45	11	17	7	62	18
Local government	495	1	28	0	523	1
Court	69	2	91	1	160	3
Government funded services	52	8	45	0	97	8
Crown Prosecution Service	46	0	82	1	128	1
<b>Other</b>						
Advice service	139	0	23	0	162	0
Educational establishment	118	8	8	0	126	8
Other	176	23	33	4	209	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,374</b>	<b>1,320</b>	<b>3,610</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>17,984</b>	<b>1,738</b>
		<b>15,694</b>				<b>19,722</b>

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

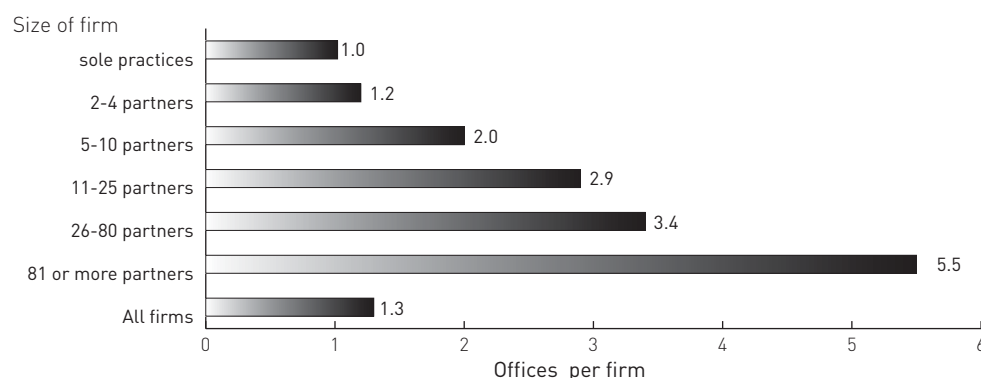
- 3.2 As can be seen from Table 3.1, as at 31 July 2007 there were 15,694 separate organisations employing solicitors, of which 14,374 were based in England and Wales and 1,320 elsewhere (ie Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, Eire and overseas countries). Each firm, company, local authority or other employer may be located in one or several offices. There were 19,722 separate places of work recorded for solicitors, of which 17,984 were in England and Wales and 1,738 elsewhere. These figures represent an increase in the numbers recorded for 2006. It can also be seen from Table 3.3 that in 2007 there were 10,114 private practice firms, located in 13,119 separate offices in England and Wales, registered with the Society. These numbers represent the total number of private practice organisations less the 220 listed as providing locum services only. Over the past year the number of these firms has increased by 1.1%, whilst the total number of offices has increased by 0.8%.
- 3.3 The trend in the numbers of private practice firms and offices over the five years since 2002 is shown in Table 3.3. This shows that over the period the number of firms has increased by 2.4%, whilst the number of offices has decreased by 4.7%. These figures are reflected in the observed 7.0% decrease in the ratio of offices to firms over the period. These changes should, though, be treated with caution (see paragraph 3.1 above).

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

Year	Number of firms	Number of offices	Ratio
2002	9,761	13,657	1.40
2003	9,912	13,805	1.39
2004	10,075	13,902	1.38
2005	9,873	12,847	1.30
2006	10,000	13,010	1.30
2007	10,114	13,119	1.30

- 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 2007 was 1.3. As one would expect, the number of offices per firm increases with the size of firm: from 1.02 for sole practices through to 5.5 for the 81-or-more partner firms.

**Chart 5 Number of offices by size of firm in 2007**



Source: Solicitors Indemnity Fund



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 the standard regions. Over one-quarter of solicitors' firms, 27.6%, were located in London in 2007, and just under one-half of all solicitors' firms (42.6%) 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.

**Table 3.5** Location (standard regions) of population and private practice firms and practitioners in 2007

	Total =	Population <sup>1</sup> 52,994 million	Firms 10,114
Region		%	%
City of London		*	7.4
Rest of London		14.0	20.2
South East		15.3	14.9
South West		9.5	6.8
Wales		5.5	5.1
West Midlands		10.1	8.1
East Midlands		8.1	5.1
Eastern		10.4	10.2
North West including Merseyside		12.9	12.1
Yorkshire and Humberside		9.5	6.9
North East		4.8	3.2
Total		100.0	100.0

\* Less than 0.05%

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Estimated using Office for National Statistics mid-1999 data;

3.6 Table 3.6 analyses the number of firms in 2007 by the Government Office Region of the head office 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 of law practices in England and Wales have four partners or fewer. At the other end of the spectrum only 1.9% 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 185 firms with 26 or more partners, over one half (50.5%) were located in the City of London and 59.3% were located in the Greater London area.

Table 3.6 Number of firms in 2007, analysed by size and regional location of head office<sup>1</sup>

Region	Number of firms					All firms
	Sole Practitioner	2-4 prttrs	5-10 prttrs	11-25 prttrs	26+ prttrs	
City of London	245	241	97	71	95	749
Rest of Greater London	1024	881	101	24	16	2,046
South East	786	547	113	47	16	1,509
Eastern	454	445	87	37	4	1,028
South West	317	255	73	31	11	687
West Midlands	336	369	84	21	6	817
East Midlands	231	204	50	21	8	514
Yorkshire and the Humber	285	300	77	30	11	703
North West including Merseyside	468	579	132	37	11	1,227
North East	116	148	47	6	5	322
Wales	184	267	54	5	2	512
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,446</b>	<b>4,237</b>	<b>916</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>10,114</b>

Source: REGIS data

1. A small number of firms for whom either the size or location is missing have been allocated to a known group.

## 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 has serious implications for 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 82,557 solicitors employed in private practice, as at 31 July 2007, by their grade and the size of their firm measured by the partner count. It shows that the overall growth in numbers over the past year was 2.5%. The table also shows the high degree of solicitor concentration in the largest firms. Firms with 81 or more partners (0.5% of firms) employed 16.1% of principals and just under one quarter (23.7%) of all solicitors. At the other end of the spectrum sole practices, 44.0% of firms, employed 12.3% of all principals and 8.0% of all solicitors.

**Table 4.1** Admitted staff in private practice firms in 2007 by size of firm

	Sole practices	2-4 ptnrs.	5-10 ptnrs.	11-25 ptnrs.	26-80 ptnrs.	81+ ptnrs.	All firms
Partners	0	10,056	5,688	4,936	4,950	5,816	31,624
Sole Practitioners	4,446	0	0	0	0	0	4,446
Associate solicitors	225	1,099	1,003	1,493	2,690	6,349	12,859
Assistant solicitors	1,504	5,919	4,829	4,255	5,328	6,095	27,930
Consultants	333	1,158	706	487	380	452	3,517
Other private practice	138	524	171	203	297	848	2,181
All positions	6,646	18,756	12,575	11,375	13,645	19,560	82,557

Source: Solicitors Indemnity Fund

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 (i.e. partners and sole practitioners). There are a number of features to this table. It shows, for example, that associate solicitors and the 'other private practice solicitors' who mainly perform specialist roles within firms are most likely to be found in the larger firms with 11 or more partners, whilst consultants are found mainly in firms smaller than this. In terms of the staffing ratios these show that the ratio of assistant/associate solicitors to principals increases from 0.39:1 in sole practices through to 2.14:1 in the 81 or more partner firms. In the intervening size bands the ratios are 0.70 assistants/associates per principal in 2-4 partner firms, 0.99 per principal in 5-10 partner firms, 1.16 per principal in 11-25 partner firms and 1.62 in 26-80 partner firms.

**Table 4.2** Number of admitted staff per principal in private practice firms in 2007 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	0.0507	0.1093	0.1710	0.3026	0.5434	1.0916	0.3565
Assistant/principal	0.3382	0.5886	0.8232	0.8621	1.0763	1.0480	0.7743
Consultants/principal	0.0749	0.1152	0.1204	0.0988	0.0768	0.0777	0.0975
Other private practice/principal	0.0310	0.0521	0.0292	0.0411	0.0601	0.1458	0.0605
All per principal	1.4947	1.8652	2.1437	2.3045	2.7566	3.3631	2.2888

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 2007 42.5% of private practitioners were employed in private practice firms located in London.

**Table 4.3** Admitted staff in private practice firms in 2007 by Government region<sup>1</sup>

	Partners	Sole Practitioner	Associate solicitors	Assist. solicitors	Consultants	Other pr. practice	All solicitors
Greater Ldn.	11,993	1,272	8,096	11,234	1,373	1,134	35,102
South East	3,323	785	702	2,674	416	153	8,054
Eastern	2,260	454	255	1,857	231	70	5,127
South West	1,957	320	428	1,518	266	81	4,569
West. Midlands	1,995	333	605	1,452	248	149	4,782
East. Midlands	1,446	234	347	1,304	123	44	3,498
Yorks & Humberside	2,100	280	497	2,014	211	103	5,205
North West	3,544	467	782	3,358	348	255	8,753
North East	940	116	234	737	85	30	2,142
Wales	1,120	184	205	808	146	105	2,568
Abroad	947	0	708	976	70	57	2,757
All regions	31,624	4,446	12,859	27,930	3,517	2,181	82,557

1. A small number of individuals have been allocated pro rata to groups where their location or size of firm data is missing.

## 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 (LPC), 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 2006–07.

## 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 2005 and 2006. 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 19,863 people applied to study law at undergraduate level in 2006, which is 7.1% lower than in the previous year. Within this total, male applications fell slightly faster than female applications, by 7.2% and 7.0% 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 decreased more slowly than applications, by 1.4%, from 13,693 in 2005 to 13,499 in 2006. The pattern in acceptances mirrored applications in that whilst female acceptances decreased by 1.2%, male acceptances fell by 1.7%. Taken overall, 68.0% of applicants were successful in securing a place.

**Table 6.2** Home and overseas applicants and acceptances for university first degree law courses in England and Wales 2005 and 2006

For entry in:	University applicants								
	UK			Overseas			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2005	6,646	10,546	17,192	1,794	2,387	4,181	8,440	12,933	21,373
2006	6,051	9,716	15,767	1,783	2,313	4,096	7,834	12,029	19,863
% change	-9.0	-7.9	-8.3	-0.6	-3.1	-2.0	-7.2	-7.0	-7.1

For entry in:	University acceptances								
	UK			Overseas			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2005	4,432	7,122	11,554	889	1,250	2,139	5,321	8,372	13,693
2006	4,244	6,970	11,214	985	1,300	2,285	5,229	8,270	13,499
% change	-4.2	-2.1	-2.9	10.8	4.0	6.8	-1.7	-1.2	-1.4

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 2006, 61.3% of acceptances were from women, up marginally from the 61.1% recorded in 2005. The proportion of overseas acceptances, 16.9%, was slightly higher than the 15.6% recorded in the previous year.

**Table 6.3** Proportion of law students accepted in 2005 and 2006 who were female or from overseas

Year	Female students		Overseas students	
	No.	%	No.	%
2005	8,372	61.1	2,139	15.6
2006	8,270	61.3	2,285	16.9

Source: UCAS

6.4 Table 6.4 shows the number of minority ethnic group students (excluding overseas students) who gained places on law degree courses for the academic year 2006. In total, minority ethnic group law students accounted for 34.2% of students starting a first degree law course in 2006. This represents an increase on 2005, when the comparable proportion was 32.4%. Within this total, female acceptances were slightly more likely than males to be drawn from ethnic minorities: 35.0% of acceptances as opposed to 33.0%.

**Table 6.4** Minority ethnic students from the UK accepted to first degree law courses at universities and colleges in 2006

Ethnic group		Acceptances of students from UK		
		Male	Female	Total
White	White British	2,596	4,175	6,771
Black	Black Caribbean	63	156	219
	Black African	236	400	636
	Black Other	19	31	50
Asian	Indian	314	590	904
	Pakistani	374	509	883
	Bangladeshi	99	144	243
	Chinese	51	86	137
	Other Asian	55	114	169
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	22	62	84
	White and Black African	17	23	40
	White and Asian	58	88	146
	Other mixed	38	94	132
Other	Other	55	141	196
Unknown	Unknown	247	357	604
All minority ethnic acceptances		1,401	2,438	3,839
All acceptances		4,244	6,970	11,214
% from minority ethnic groups		33.0	35.0	34.2

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 2006 with the position one and five years previously. The table shows that, in 2006, the total number of graduates was 12,858, an increase of 6.9% on the previous year. In the five years since 2001 the total number of graduates has grown by 39.0% from a base of 9,248. The table shows that within this total the number of male law graduates has risen by 31.9% over the past 5 years, whereas the number of female law graduates has risen by 43.4% over the same period.

Table 6.5      Number of students graduating in law from universities in England and Wales 2001, 2005 and 2006<sup>1</sup>

University Graduates in Law			
Year of graduation	Male	Female	Total
2001	3,512	5,736	9,248
2005	4,392	7,692	12,084
2006	4,633	8,225	12,858
% change 2006/2005	5.5	6.9	6.9
% change 2006/2001	31.9	43.4	39.0

<sup>1</sup> 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 is a further substantial (i.e. higher than 4,000) number of law students 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 2006, of the 12,858 law graduates, just over half, 55.4% achieved a first class or upper second class degree. This proportion represents a marginal increase on the figure of 54.4% recorded for 2005. Overall, a higher proportion of women graduated with firsts or upper seconds than men: 57.6% and 51.5% 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 2006

Class of degree	All law graduates					
	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First	262	5.6	421	5.1	683	5.3
Upper second	2,124	45.8	4,316	52.5	6,440	50.1
Lower second	1,813	39.1	2,949	35.8	4,761	37.0
Third/pass	384	8.3	473	5.7	857	6.7
Unclassified	51	1.1	67	0.8	117	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,633</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8,225</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12,858</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Total: first and upper second	2,386		4,737		7,123	
Percentage with first or upper second		51.5		57.6		55.4

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 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 demographic 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. In 2006-07 the ethnicity of 92.7% of students enrolling with the Society was recorded. Table 7.4 shows the fuller breakdown of enrolments by gender and ethnicity. Table 7.5 shows the comparative data for one and five years ago, that is for 2001-02 and 2005-06.
- 7.4 In the year up to 31 July 2007, 11,351 students enrolled with the Law Society, an increase of 10.5% on the previous year. Of these, 7,121 (62.7%), were women. This represents a slight decrease in the proportion of women students recorded in 2005-06 (63.0%), and a return to the proportion for 2001-02. The proportion of women amongst minority ethnic group students was, at 64.9%, 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, 70.3% were women.
- 7.5 Of those students enrolling with the Society last year, 3,482, or 30.7% of the total, were drawn from minority ethnic groups. This can be compared with the 24.1% from minority ethnic groups recorded in 2001-02, and the 29.4% recorded in 2005-06.

**Table 7.4 The ethnic origin and gender of students enrolling with the Law Society in 2006–07**

Ethnic origin	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
African-Caribbean	54	29.7	128	70.3	182
Asian	597	34.9	1,112	65.1	1,709
Chinese	89	31.8	191	68.2	280
African	199	40.0	298	60.0	497
Other ethnic origin	194	34.7	365	65.3	559
All ethnic minority	1,133	35.1	2,094	64.9	3,227
White European	2,740	37.6	4,553	62.4	7,293
Unknown	357	43.0	474	57.0	831
Total	4,230	37.3	7,121	62.7	11,351

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

**Table 7.5 Trends in the ethnic origin of students enrolling with the Law Society<sup>1</sup>**

	2001–2002		2005–06		2006–07	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Ethnic origin</b>						
African-Caribbean	149	1.8	214	2.1	196	1.7
Asian	1,029	12.1	1,559	15.3	1,844	16.2
Chinese	165	1.9	265	2.6	302	2.7
African	333	3.9	472	4.6	536	4.7
Other ethnic origin	372	4.4	476	4.7	603	5.3
All ethnic minority	2,047	24.1	2,985	29.4	3,482	30.7
White European	6,466	75.9	7,174	70.6	7,869	69.3
Total	8,513	100.0	10,159	100.0	11,351	100.0
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	3,179	37.3	3,755	37.0	4,230	37.3
Female	5,334	62.7	6,404	63.0	7,121	62.7
Total	8,513	100.0	10,159	100.0	11,351	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

1. To make the comparison individuals with unknown ethnicity have been allocated pro rata.

## 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).
- 8.2 In 2007, of the 9,850 students who enrolled on the LPC, 7,830, or 79.5%, sat the July examinations. This latter figure is the total number of enrolments less those who were deferred or absent from the examinations. Taken overall, the pass rate in 2007 was 60.1%. Of those actually taking the examination, the pass rate was 75.6%, which represents a decrease on the 2006 figure of 78.2%. Table 8.2 below shows the full set of results. Candidates who pass with distinction now account for over one-fifth (22.2%) of total passes.

**Table 8.2** Legal Practice Course results of summer examinations — July 2007

Results	No. of students	2007 % of those sitting exam	% of all students
Diploma with distinction	2,190	28.0	22.2
Diploma with commendation	2,596	33.2	26.4
Diploma	1,135	14.5	11.5
<b>Total passes</b>	<b>5,921</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>60.1</b>
Referred	1,345	17.2	13.7
Resit	559	7.1	5.7
Failed	5	0.1	0.1
Total failed	1,909	24.4	19.4
Total sitting the examination	7,830	100.0	79.5
Deferred	104		1.1
Absent	31		0.3
Total not sitting the examination	2,020		20.5
<b>Total students enrolled on the LPC</b>	<b>9,850</b>		<b>100.0</b>

Source: Law Society database

**Table 8.3** Places on the Legal Practice Course for 2005-06 , 2006-07 and 2007-08

College of Law/universities	Full-time			Part-time		
	'05-06	'06-07	'07-'08	'05-06	'06-07	'07-'08
Anglia Ruskin University	70	70	70	30	30	30
BPP Law School, Holborn, Ldn.	1,080	1,080	1,080	216	288	288
BPP Law School, Waterloo, Ldn.	-	252	252	-	54	54
BPP Law School, Leeds	360	360	360	72	72	72
BPP Law School, Manchester	180	360	360	72	108	108
Bournemouth University	96	96	96	-	-	-
Cardiff Law School	180	180	180	-	-	-
The College of Law:						
All branches				1,000*	1,280 *	1,000*
Bloomsbury (Store St.), Ldn.	1,260	1,260	1,260	200**	200 **	200**
Moorgate, Ldn.	-	1,000	1,000	-	-	-
Chester	580	580	580	*	*	*
Guildford	700	700	700	*	*	*
York	484	484	484	*	*	*
Birmingham	528	528	528	*	40**	40**
De Montfort University	100	100	100	130	130	130
Inns of Court School of Law	176	176	176	-	-	-
Leeds Metropolitan University	105	105	105	45	45	45
Liverpool John Moores University	40	40	40	72	72	72
London Metropolitan University	110	110	110	54	54	54
Manchester Metropolitan University	168	168	168	48	48	64
Nottingham Law School	648	648	648	90	90	90
Nottingham at Kaplan Law School	-	-	300	-	-	-
Oxford Institute of Legal Practice	353	353	353	-	-	-
Staffordshire University	125	125	125	25	25	25
Swansea University	100	100	100	-	-	-
Thames Valley University	50	50	50	32	-	-
University of Central England	120	120	120	30	30	30
University of Central Lancashire	60	60	60	48	48	48
University of Exeter	120		--	-	-	-
University of Glamorgan	108	108	108	32	32	32
University of Hertfordshire	-	-	-	64	64	64
University of Huddersfield	80	80	80	36	36	36
Northumbria University	160	160	160	50	50	50
University of Plymouth	-	120	120	-	-	-
University of Sheffield	180	180	180	-	-	-
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	-	50	100	-	-	-
University of the West of England	342	342	342	58	58	58
University of Westminster	120	120	120	64	64	64
University of Wolverhampton	60	60	60	30	30	30
Total	8,843	10,325	10, 675	2,256	2,498	3,064

Source: Law Society database

\*Part-time block (day or weekend).

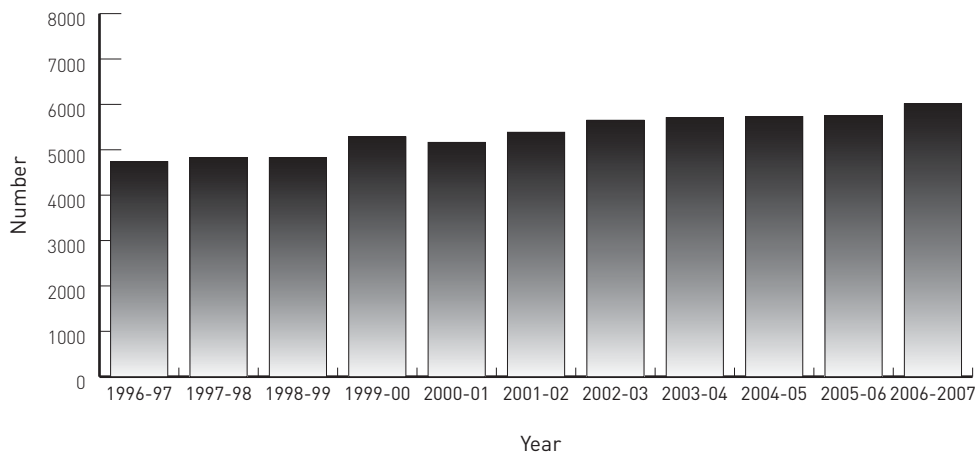
\*\*Part-time evening.

- 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 2007–2008 will be 10,675. This is a slight increase of 3.4% on the number of places which were available in 2006–07.
- 8.4
- In addition, there will also be 3,064 places available on part-time LPC courses in 2007–08.

Traineeships

- 8.5
- In addition to obtaining pre-vocational qualifications, those embarking on a career as a solicitor 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 registrations of traineeships from 1996–97 to the present. In the year that ended 31 July 2007 there were 6,012 new traineeships registered with the Society. This represents an increase (4.5%) on the level recorded last year, when trainee registrations stood at 5,751. Trainee registrations are now running at the highest levels recorded to date.

Chart 6 Annual registration of trainees 1996–97 to 2006–07



Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 8.7
- Table 8.7 shows the data on the total number of trainees registered in 1996–97 and 2006–07 with the total analysed by trainee gender. Overall, the number of traineeships has increased by just over one quarter (26.9%) over the period. Within this total growth, that for women trainees was markedly higher than that for males (47.4% and 3.8% respectively). In fact, for each of the years since 1996–97 for which we have data, the majority of new trainees have been female. In this latest year, 61.5% of trainees registered were women, down very slightly on the proportion recorded last year (61.8%).

**Table 8.7** Number of traineeships registered in 1996–97 and 2006–07 analysed by gender of trainee

Year	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
1996–97	2,230	47.1	2,509	52.9	4,739
2006–07	2,314	38.5	3,698	61.5	6,012
% change 2006–07 over 1996–97		3.8		47.4	26.9

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.8 Ten 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 5,602 trainees, or 93.2% of the 6,012 new traineeships registered. This shows some slight decline in the quality of this data from last year, when the ethnicity of 94.3% of new trainees was known. In 2006–07, minority ethnic group trainees represented 18.4% of trainees of known ethnicity, up from the 17.5% recorded last year. The ethnic grouping most highly represented was 'Asian', which accounted for 55.4% of minority ethnic group trainees. Overall, the proportion of women was slightly higher amongst minority ethnic group trainees than for the group of trainees as a whole. Whereas 61.5% of all trainees were women, this proportion rose to 62.9% amongst those from minority ethnic groups. The 'African-Caribbean' group had the highest proportion of women trainees at 80.6% and the 'African' group the lowest at 55.2%.

**Table 8.8** Trainee registrations by ethnic origin and gender 2006–07

Ethnic origin	Male	Female	Total	trainees with known ethnicity
	No.	No.	No.	%
African-Caribbean	6	25	31	0.6
Asian	211	359	570	10.2
Chinese	27	75	102	1.8
African	47	58	105	1.9
Other ethnic origin	91	130	221	3.9
Total known ethnic minority	382	647	1,029	18.4
Ethnic minority trainees as % of those with known ethnicity	17.8	18.7	18.4	-
White European	1,764	2,809	4,573	81.6

Contd.



**Table 8.8 Continued:**

Ethnic origin	Male	Female	Total	trainees with known ethnicity
	No.	No.	No.	%
Total with known ethnicity	2,146	3,456	5,602	100.0
% of trainees with known ethnicity	92.7	93.5	93.2	
Trainees with unknown ethnicity	168	242	410	
% of trainees with unknown ethnicity	7.3	6.5	6.8	
All trainees	2,314	3,698	6,012	
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 2006–07. Of the 6,012 trainees registered, 1,575 (26.2%) were located in the City of London. A further 1,276, or 21.2%, were located in the rest of London. Taken overall, just under one-half (47.4%) of first-year trainees were located in London in 2006–07. This compares with the 46.9% of London registrations recorded last year. Male trainees were slightly more likely than female trainees to be located in London. Whereas just over one-half (53.0%) 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 South East with 69.6%, and the region with the lowest proportion was the City of London with 53.6%.

**Table 8.9 Trainee placements in 2006–07 analysed by Government Office Region**

Region	Male			Female			Total	
	No.	%	% by region	No.	%	% by region	Total	% by region
City of London	730	46.4	31.6	845	53.6	22.8	1,575	26.2
Rest of London	495	38.8	21.4	781	61.2	21.1	1,276	21.2
South East	154	30.4	6.7	353	69.6	9.5	507	8.4
Eastern	111	31.6	4.8	240	68.4	6.5	351	5.8
South West	74	32.5	3.2	154	67.5	4.2	228	3.8
West Midlands	146	36.6	6.3	252	63.4	6.8	398	6.6
East Midlands	75	32.8	3.2	154	67.2	4.2	229	3.8
Yorkshire and Humberside	153	37.1	6.6	259	62.9	7.0	412	6.9
North West	235	34.5	10.2	447	65.5	12.1	682	11.3
North East	70	41.8	3.0	97	58.2	2.6	167	2.8
Wales	71	38.0	3.1	116	62.0	3.1	187	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,314</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,698</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,012</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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, in Table 8.10, shows overwhelmingly that trainees are placed in private practice firms. Of the traineeships registered in 2006–07, 5,646 (93.9%) were 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, commerce and industry, and other sectors.

**Table 8.10** Trainee placements in 2006–07 analysed by category of employment of training institution

Category of employment	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Private practice	2,203	95.2	3,443	93.1	5,646	93.9
Commerce and industry	51	2.2	86	2.3	137	2.3
Government department	5	0.2	18	0.5	23	0.4
Local government	28	1.2	77	2.1	105	1.7
Court	9	0.4	13	0.4	22	0.4
Crown prosecution service	10	0.4	25	0.7	35	0.6
Advice service	4	0.2	24	0.6	28	0.5
Other	4	0.2	12	0.3	16	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,314</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,698</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,012</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 8.11 Given the importance of private practice firms to 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 5,646 traineeships registered with private practice firms in 2006–07, just under one-third, 33.2%, were located in the small number of very large firms with 81 or more partners. At the other end of the spectrum only 5.7% of trainees were placed for training within sole practices. Male trainees were more likely than female trainees to be placed in the very largest 81 or more partner firms. The proportions here were 37.0% and 30.8% 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 little difference in the proportion of male and female trainees.

**Table 8.11** Trainee placements in 2006–07 analysed by the size of private practice firm in which trainees were located

Size of firm	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sole practice	122	5.5	197	5.7	319	5.7
2–4 partners	343	15.6	649	18.8	992	17.6
5–10 partners	255	11.6	476	13.8	731	12.9
11–25 partners	262	11.9	514	14.9	776	13.7
26–80 partners	405	18.4	546	15.9	951	16.8
81+	816	37.0	1,061	30.8	1,877	33.2
Total	2,203	100.0	3,443	100.0	5,646	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). Since August 2002 further revision has taken place annually (as shown in the table), and also, in August 2003, the 'Council Recommended' salary level was introduced.

**Table 8.12** Starting salaries for trainee solicitors

Effective date	Central London <sup>1</sup>	Outer London	Rest of England and Wales
<b>Council recommended minimum</b>			
From 1/8/93*	£12,150	£10,850	£10,850
From 1/8/2002	£14,600	£13,000	£13,000
From 1/8/2003	£15,300	£13,600	£13,600
From 1/8/2004	£15,900	£14,200	£14,200
From 1/8/2005	£16,450	£14,720	£14,720
From 1/8/2006	£17,110	£15,332	£15,332
From 1/8/2007	£17,660	£15,820	£15,820
<b>Council recommended</b>			
From 1/8/2004	£16,680	£14,870	£14,870
From 1/8/2005	£17,050	£15,180	£15,180
From 1/8/2006	£17,527	£15,605	£15,605
From 1/8/2007	£18,090	£16,100	£16,100

\* Outer London category abolished in 1993

<sup>1</sup> 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 2006–07, average starting salaries were highest in Central London (the City, Holborn and Westminster) at £28,581, and lowest in Wales at £16,012. Taken over all trainees, the average starting salary was £21,518. This represents an increase of 2.8% on the average salary paid last year, which was £20,925. Within this total, rise male trainee salaries increased by 6.8% on average, whilst the increase for female trainees was only 0.2%. This indicates a further widening of an already substantial pay gap.

**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
Central London	29,495	27,824	28,581	6.0	174
Rest of Greater Ldn	22,892	20,395	21,346	12.2	145
South East	19,373	18,090	18,480	7.1	126
Eastern	17,714	16,455	16,853	7.7	114
South West	16,558	16,195	16,313	2.2	111
West Midlands	17,868	17,131	17,401	4.3	118
East Midlands	17,820	16,458	16,904	8.3	115
Yorks and Humberside	19,174	17,108	17,874	12.1	121
North West	18,301	16,749	17,283	9.3	117
North East	17,563	15,953	16,625	10.1	113
Wales	16,609	15,648	16,012	6.1	109
Total	23,128	20,512	21,518	12.8	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 12.8% above the average level for females. The average salary levels for male and female trainees recorded on REGIS being £23,128 and £20,512 respectively. In all of the regions male trainees had higher starting salaries than female trainees.

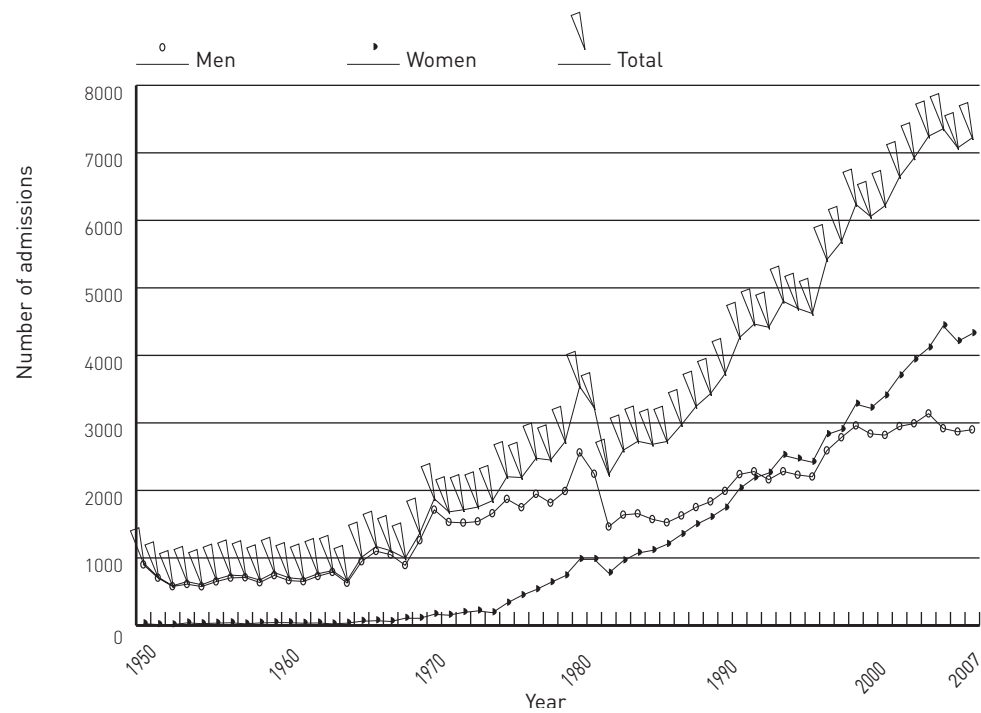
9. Admission to the Roll

- 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 2007 was 7,223. This represents an increase of 2.1% on the 7,075 individuals who were admitted in 2005–06. Chart 7 shows the growth in admissions of men and women separately for the period 1950 to 2007. Over this period, total annual admissions rose by 680.2% at an average annual increase of 3.7% per year. Over the same period, female admissions have grown at an average annual rate of 9.4%, which equates to a doubling of the number of female admissions approximately every seven years. The average growth rate for male admissions, 2.1%, has been less than one-quarter that for women over the period.

Chart 7 Growth in solicitors’ admissions to the Roll 1950–2007



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 1997 and 2007, total admissions grew by 33.3% from a base of 5,417. Over this period, male admissions rose by only 12.0%, whilst female admissions grew much more rapidly, by 52.9%. Women have accounted for the majority of new admissions in each year since 1996–97 and, in 2006–07, 59.9% of those admitted were female.

**Table 9.3 Men and women admitted to the Roll 1996–97 to 2006–07**

	Men		Women		Total	Annual change
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
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
2004–05	2,918	39.7	4,438	60.3	7,356	1.5
2005–06	2,869	40.6	4,206	59.4	7,075	-3.8
2006–07	2,900	40.1	4,323	59.9	7,223	2.1
% change						
2007–1997		12.0		52.9		33.3

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.4 The age distribution of those admitted in 2006–07 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 29.5 years. The average age for males was slightly higher than that for females, the average ages being 30.1 and 29.1 years respectively. Just over three-fifths (60.9%) of new admissions were aged 28 years or less, and over two-thirds were aged 29 or less.

**Table 9.4** The age distribution of solicitors admitted to the Roll in 2006–07

Age	Male		Female		All admissions.		Cumulative
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
23	0	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0	0.0
24	28	1.0	64	1.5	92	1.3	1.3
25	306	10.6	597	13.8	903	12.5	13.8
26	474	16.3	809	18.7	1,283	17.8	31.6
27	473	16.3	776	18.0	1,249	17.3	48.8
28	321	11.1	553	12.8	874	12.1	60.9
29	252	8.7	321	7.4	573	7.9	68.9
30–34	543	18.7	672	15.5	1,215	16.8	85.7
35–39	253	8.7	268	6.2	521	7.2	92.9
40–44	127	4.4	145	3.4	272	3.8	96.7
45–49	65	2.2	82	1.9	147	2.0	98.7
50–54	25	0.9	20	0.5	45	0.6	99.3
55 and over	24	0.8	10	0.2	34	0.5	99.8
Total known	2,891	99.7	4,318	99.9	7,209	99.8	
Unknown	9	0.3	5	0.1	14	0.2	100.0
Grand total	2,900	100.0	4,323	100.0	7,223	100.0	
Average age		30.1		29.1		29.5	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.5 Table 9.5 shows the proportion of men and women who were admitted in the year 2006–07 by each of the different routes. For 9.7% of admissions these data were not recorded. Just under three-quarters of admissions, 71.1%, 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, 73.6% of admissions as against 67.4%, and, within this total, were slightly more likely than men to have qualifying law degrees. In contrast, men were slightly more likely than women to qualify via a transfer in; the relevant proportions here being 22.7% and 16.8% respectively. Men were, in particular, markedly more likely than women to have been barristers or to be transferring in from another jurisdiction, 21.6% as opposed to 14.3%. Taken overall, in 2007, women accounted for 59.9% of admissions to the Roll.

**Table 9.5** The routes to admission to the Roll in 2006–07

Entry routes	Male		Female		All admissions	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Direct entry:</b>						
Law degree	1,333	46.0	2,393	55.4	3,726	51.6
Non-law degree	621	21.4	787	18.2	1,408	19.5
Total direct entry	1,954	67.4	3,180	73.6	5,134	71.1
<b>Entry by transfer:</b>						
Overseas lawyer	519	17.9	506	11.7	1,025	14.2
Barrister	108	3.7	112	2.6	220	3.0
FILEX	31	1.1	109	2.5	140	1.9
Justices' clerk	-	0.0	-	0.0	-	0.0
Total transfers	658	22.7	727	16.8	1,385	19.2
Route unknown	288	9.9	416	9.6	704	9.7
All admissions	2,900	100.0	4,323	100.0	7,223	100.0
%	40.1		59.9		100.0	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database



9.6 Just under one fifth of admissions (19.2%) in 2006–07 were 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 1,385 transfers, over one-quarter, 26.0%, 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 74.0% were transfers in from other jurisdictions. Most notable here were Australian and New Zealand lawyers, who alone accounted for just under one fifth (19.5%) of all transfers in. In addition to these, transfers from the USA and Canada accounted for a further 10.2%, those from Hong Kong 7.6%, and those from other parts of the UK a further 3.4% of all transfers.

**Table 9.6** Analysis of transfers into the profession 2006–07

	Male		Female		All transfers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>From other professions:</b>						
Legal executives	31	4.7	109	15.0	140	10.1
Barristers	108	16.4	112	15.4	220	15.9
Sub-total	139	21.1	221	30.4	360	26.0
<b>From other jurisdictions:</b>						
Hong Kong	39	6.0	66	9.1	106	7.6
Australia/New Zealand	134	20.3	136	18.8	270	19.5
USA/Canada	70	10.7	71	9.8	141	10.2
Scotland/N. Ireland/Isle of Man	18	2.8	29	4.0	48	3.4
Other EU countries	39	6.0	42	5.7	81	5.8
Non-EU countries	7	1.1	6	0.8	13	0.9
Singapore/Malaysia	53	8.1	55	7.6	108	7.8
India/Pakistan/Sri Lanka	81	12.3	41	5.6	121	8.8
South Africa	31	4.7	30	4.2	62	4.4
Nigeria	39	6.0	25	3.4	64	4.6
All other jurisdictions	7	1.1	5	0.6	11	0.8
Sub-total	519	78.9	506	69.6	1,025	74.0
Grand total	658	100.0	727	100.0	1,385	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, 27.9 years, were direct entrants with qualifying law degrees. Those admitted by the CPE route were aged 30.2 years on average. Taken overall, the average age for direct admissions was 28.6 years. Those transferring in were, on average, just under five year older than direct admissions, at 33.5 years. There was little difference between the average ages of men and women qualifying by the same route, though male transfers in from other jurisdictions were almost three years older than their female counterparts.

**Table 9.7 Average age on admission to the Roll by route to admission and gender 2006–07**

Entry routes	Male		Female		All admissions	
	No.	Average age	No.	Average age	No.	Average age
<b>Direct entry:</b>						
Law degree	1,333	28.1	2,393	27.8	3,726	27.9
Non-law degree	621	30.4	787	30.1	1,408	30.2
Total direct entry	1,954	28.8	3,180	28.4	5,134	28.6
<b>Entry by transfer:</b>						
Overseas lawyer	519	34.8	506	32.1	1,025	33.4
Barrister	108	33.6	112	31.1	220	32.3
FILEX	31	36.2	109	36.1	140	36.1
Total transfers	658	34.6	727	32.5	1,385	33.5
Route unknown	288	28.8	416	28.8	704	28.8
All admissions	2,900	100.0	4,323	100.0	7,223	100.0
%	40.1	30.1	59.9	29.1	100.0	29.5

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.8 Table 9.8 shows the numbers and percentages qualifying via each route in 2006–07 contrasted with the position one year and five years ago. In order to make the comparison, the 9.7% of admissions for whom the route was unknown in 2006–07 have been allocated pro rata to the other known categories. The table shows that the proportion of direct admissions has been quite stable, increasing only from 76.8% of all admissions in 2001–02 to 78.7% in 2006–07. Also, within this total, the position of non-law graduates has remained stable. Whereas 21.8% of all admissions in 2001–02 were non-law graduates, this proportion had only declined slightly to 21.6% by 2006–07. Another route which has been relatively stable is transfers in. These have only decreased from 23.2% of all admissions in 2001–02 to 21.2% now.

**Table 9.8** Trends in the main routes to admission to the Roll 2001–02 to 2006–07

Routes to admission	2001–02	2005–06	2006–07
Law degree	3,661	4,202	4,128
Non-law degree	1,446	1,284	1,560
Transfers	1,539	1,589	1,535
Total	6,646	7,075	7,223
Routes to admission	%	%	%
Law degree	55.1	59.4	57.2
Non-law degree	21.8	18.1	21.6
Transfers	23.2	22.5	21.2
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 2001-02, 2005-06 and 2006-07. The table shows that, as a proportion of those admissions for whom the ethnicity was known, minority ethnic group admissions represented one fifth, 20.0%, of the total in 2006-07 compared with 16.4% five years ago. Fluctuations in the intervening years mean that although there is no great consistency it appears that this proportion is increasing over time. Most of the observed increase over the past five years has been fuelled by increases in 'Chinese' and 'Asian' admissions. Chinese admissions have doubled over the past year, but in contrast, African admissions decreased by 5.3%.

**Table 9.9 Trends in minority ethnic group admissions to the Roll 2001-02, 2005-06 and 2006-07**

Ethnicity	2001-02	2005-06	2006-07	% change	
				2006/7 over 2005/6	2006/7 over 2001/2
African-Caribbean	62	46	55	18.7	-11.9
Asian	451	558	612	9.7	35.8
Chinese	88	108	218	102.0	147.9
African	101	125	118	-5.3	17.2
Other	147	193	212	9.9	44.2
<b>Total from ethnic minorities</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>1,215</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>43.2</b>
Number of admissions where ethnicity is known	<b>5,168</b>	<b>5,444</b>	<b>6,082</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>17.7</b>
Ethnic minorities as a % of those with known ethnicity	16.4	18.9	20.0	5.6	21.6
Total admissions	6,646	7,075	7,223	2.1	8.7
% of admissions with known ethnicity	77.8	76.9	84.2	9.4	8.3
Male admissions	2,949	2,869	2,900	1.1	-1.7
Males as % of total	44.4	40.6	40.1	-	-
Female admissions	3,697	4,206	4,323	2.8	16.9
Females as % of total	55.6	59.4	59.9	-	-
<b>Total admissions</b>	<b>6,646</b>	<b>7,075</b>	<b>7,223</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>8.7</b>

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 9.10 In 2006–07 there were 1,215 admissions from minority ethnic groups out of a total of 7,223. Comparable figures for last year were 1,030 admissions out of a total of 7,075. The increase in the representation of minority ethnic groups over the past year is, as we have seen, largely accounted for by the increase in the number of Chinese admissions.
- 9.11 A fuller breakdown of minority ethnic group admissions in 2006–07 is shown in Table 9.11. This table analyses admissions by both gender and ethnicity and shows that last year 61.8% of those admitted from minority ethnic groups were female. This is a higher value than that for admissions as a whole (59.9%). Within minority ethnic groups, the proportion of female admissions was highest amongst African-Caribbeans, 86.8%, and lowest amongst Asians, 58.1%.

**Table 9.11** Minority ethnic group admissions in 2006–07 by gender

Ethnic group	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
African-Caribbean	7	13.2	47	86.8	55
Asian	257	41.9	356	58.1	612
Chinese	81	37.2	137	62.8	218
African	46	39.0	72	61.0	118
Other	73	34.4	139	65.6	212
Total admissions from ethnic minorities	464	38.2	751	61.8	1,215
Number of admissions where ethnicity is known	2,349	38.6	3,734	61.4	6,082
Ethnic minorities as a % of those with known ethnicity	19.8		20.1		20.0
Number of admissions where ethnicity is unknown	551	48.3	589	51.7	1,141
Total admissions	2,900	40.1	4,323	59.9	7,223
% of admissions with known ethnicity	81.0		86.4		84.2

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

# Appendices

## Map 1 Government Office Regions

Standard Statistical Region	County*	Government Office Region
North	Cleveland* Durham Northumberland Tyne and Wear Cumbria	North East
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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## Glossary of terms relating to the solicitors' profession

**Admitted staff** Staff that are solicitors on the roll but may or may not currently hold a practising certificate.

**Associate** See 'Position in firm'.

**Barrister** See 'Professional legal roles'.

**Common Professional Exam (CPE)** See 'Legal qualifications'.

**Equity partner** See 'Position in firm'.

**Establishment Directive** Establishment of Lawyers Directive 98/5/EC.

**Ethnicity** Where used in the Annual Statistical Report this refers to cultural groups of various kinds. The general ethnic classifications used are those that employers and others collecting information for the purpose of Equal Opportunities polices use. These classifications do not refer to the international or national citizenship status of individuals. For further information anti-racist language refer to the British Sociological Association online guidelines at [www.britsoc.co.uk](http://www.britsoc.co.uk).

**European corporate practice** A lawyers' corporate practice incorporated in an EU state other than the UK, which does not practise from an office in England and Wales, and is wholly owned and directed by RELs and/or non-registered European lawyers, with or without solicitors, RFLs and/or English barristers.

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

**Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives (FILEX)** See 'Legal qualifications'.

**Government Office Region** Refer to the map in the Appendix.

**Incorporated practice** See 'Practice type'.

**Justices' clerk** See 'Professional legal roles'.

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

The 'Setting up in practice – updated January 2002' section from the Guide online includes the following. (For more information contact the Professional Ethics department).

**Registered European lawyers (RELs):** An EU lawyer who is an EU national and is not a solicitor, barrister or advocate of any part of the UK, and who wishes to practise on a permanent basis in the UK, must register with one of the UK Bars or Law Societies. This is required by the Establishment of Lawyers Directive 98/5/EC. A REL is an EU lawyer who is registered with the Law Society under the Directive. Once registered, the REL becomes subject to the same rules as solicitors. An information pack on RELs is available from Professional Ethics (0870 606 2577).

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

**Non-registered European lawyer:** A lawyer of a legal profession covered by the Establishment Directive who is based in the EU but outside England and Wales, and is not: a solicitor, a REL or an RFL, or an advocate or barrister of the UK or the Irish Republic. Note that this definition is not the same as that in the Solicitors' Practice Rules 1990.

**Legal executive** See 'Professional legal roles'.

**Legal practice course (LPC)** Refer to chapter 8 for post-graduate education and training.

**Legal qualifications** Refer to chapter 5 for routes to qualifications as a solicitor.

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

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

**Magistrate** See 'Professional legal roles'.

**Multi-national legal practice** A MNP, or a recognised body (see 'Recognised body') with one or more RFL members, shareowners or directors.

**Multi-national partnership (MNP)** An unincorporated partnership whose members consist of one or more RFLs and one or more other lawyers, including at least one solicitor or REL, as permitted by rule 7(6) of the Solicitors' Practice Rules 1990. For further information refer to *The Guide Online* which includes an 'Information pack on MNPs and other Multi-national legal practices'.

**Non-registered European lawyer** See 'Lawyer'.

**Overseas Lawyer** See 'Professional legal roles'.

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

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

**Partner** See 'Position in firm'.

**Permitted partnerships** See 'Practice type'.

## Position in firm

**Principal:** A Principal may either be a partner or sole practitioner.

**Sole practitioner:** A sole practitioner works in a practice as the sole principal.

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

**Equity partner:** An equity partner receives their contractually agreed share of the profits but also has a residual claim on profits from the firm's interests such as property.

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

**Associate:** A term used in some firms to denote solicitors who are not at partnership level but are more senior than an assistant solicitor.

The 'Setting up in practice – updated January 2002' section from *The Guide Online* includes information on 'Supervising and managing your practice' and 'Salaried partners' (for more information contact the Professional Ethics department).

## Practice type

**Private practice:** This term distinguishes the private sector law practice organisations from other sectors which employ in-house solicitors. There are various categories of the private practice business type and these are of separate legal entities, for instance partnerships, incorporated firms, multi-national practices, locums services, foreign law practices, other private practice.

Other type of business categories for organisations employing in-house solicitors include: commerce and industry; government (government department, local government, court, government funded services and crown prosecution service); and other (advice service, educational establishment and other).

For further information on companies visit [www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk)

In *The Guide Online* there is information — in the 'Setting up in practice – updated January 2002' section — on 'Permitted partnerships'; and an 'Information Pack on Incorporated Practice (Limited Liability Partnerships LLPs)'. For more information contact the Professional Ethics department.

**Permitted partnerships:** Types of partnership that are permitted by rule 7(6) of the Solicitors' Practice Rules 1990.

**Incorporated practice:** A practice or part of a practice incorporated as a company. By law and under professional rules, a company can only provide the service of solicitors to the public if it is a 'recognised body' under the Administration of Justice Act 1985 (AJA). Under professional rules, a company can only provide the services of registered European lawyers (RELs) to the public if it is a 'recognised body'. Solicitors and RELs can also practise through a limited liability partnership (LLP), which is another type of body corporate, and which must also be a 'recognised body'. The 'Solicitors' Incorporated Practice Rules 2001 (SIPR)' contain the requirements for recognition, and the application procedure.

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

**Practising certificate holders** In order to act as a solicitor, the Solicitors Act 1974 requires that the solicitor's name appears on the roll and that a current practising certificate is held. For further information on requirements to have a practising certificate contact the Law Society's Professional Ethics department.

**Principal** See 'Position in firm'.

**Private practice** See 'Practice type'.

## Professional legal roles

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

**Legal executive:** Legal executives are qualified lawyers who specialise in a particular area of law and work alongside solicitors or barristers. For further information refer to [http://www.ilex.org.uk/professional\\_issues/default.asp](http://www.ilex.org.uk/professional_issues/default.asp)

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

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

**Overseas Lawyer:** This term refers to a lawyer who works overseas from the jurisdiction that their legal qualifications relate to. For instance, the term refers to a lawyer who has qualified overseas from England and Wales and may be or may not have the requirements to become registered as a 'Registered Foreign Lawyer' (RFL) or 'Registered European Lawyer' (REL) (see 'Lawyer'). The term 'Non-registered European Lawyer' in some cases may describe an overseas lawyer (see 'Lawyer'). For related information refer to the Information pack produced by the Law Society's Professional Ethics department titled 'MNPs and other multi-national practices – revised April 2002' and contained in *The Guide Online* [[www.guide-on-line.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.guide-on-line.lawsociety.org.uk)].

**Qualified Lawyer Transfer Test (QLTT)** Refer to chapter 9 for admissions to the Roll by transfer. Overseas lawyers are required to pass the QLTT to be admitted to the Roll.

**Recognised body** A body corporate recognised by the Law Society under section 9 of the Administration of Justice Act 1985 as suitable to undertake the provision of professional services such as are provided by individuals practising as solicitors or lawyers of other jurisdictions. Contained in *The Guide Online* [[www.guide-on-line.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.guide-on-line.lawsociety.org.uk)] are information packs on recognised bodies – one for companies and one for LLPs.

**Registered European lawyer** See 'Lawyer'. An individual registered with the Law Society under the Establishment Directive. There is an information pack on RELs in *The Guide Online* [[www.guide-on-line.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.guide-on-line.lawsociety.org.uk)]. Note that this definition of a REL is not the same as that in the European Communities (Lawyer's Practice) Regulations 2000.

**Registered foreign lawyer (RFL)** See 'Lawyer'. An individual registered with the Law Society under section 89 of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990.

**Salaried partner** See 'Position in firm'.

**Sole practitioner** See 'Position in firm'.

**Solicitors on the roll** To become a solicitor one must have obtained the required legal qualifications to be admitted to the Roll. There are two distinct routes to admission to the Roll: a direct route, followed by completing the required educational and vocational training (see Chapter 5), and the transfer route, which includes transfers from other legal professions (see Chapter 9).

Under the Solicitors Act 1974, the Law Society is required to maintain records of all qualified solicitors on the roll.

There are reasons why statistics for solicitors on the roll are higher than numbers of solicitors with practising certificates. For instance, included are: solicitors who are 'non-practising' and who choose not to renew their practising certificate; retired solicitors who have chosen not to remove their name from the roll; and solicitors who are employed by organisations where they are not practising as a solicitor eg in an academic role like that of a lecturer.

**Traineeship** In addition to obtaining pre-vocational qualifications, those embarking on a career as a solicitor also have to undergo a period of training, in most cases 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.



- [Annual statistical reports](#)
- [Fact sheets](#)
- [Research publications](#)
- [Archive](#)
- [Links for researchers](#)

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