



The Law Society

Trends in the solicitors' profession

Annual statistical report 2009

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Research Unit

trends
research

Acknowledgements

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The Law Society

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Introduction

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

The Research Unit

This report was produced by the Law Society's 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. Further information on the work of the unit can be obtained from members of the 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 2009, there were 145,381 solicitors on the Roll, an increase of 4.1% on the year before.
- At the same date, 115,475 solicitors held practising certificates (79.4% of those on the Roll), an increase of 2.7% on the previous year.
- Since 1979, the total number of solicitors holding practising certificates has grown by 222.8% at an average annual rate of 4.0%.
- These solicitors were employed in 16,812 separate organisations of which 15,140 were based in England and Wales.
- 85,128, or 73.7%, of solicitors holding practising certificates work in private practice; the remainder work mainly in commerce and industry and the public sector.
- Since 1999, the proportion of practising certificate holders not employed in private practice has increased from 19.5% to 26.3%.

A descriptive profile

- In 2008-09, excluding those for whom the ethnicity is unknown, solicitors from minority ethnic groups accounted for 11.4% of all solicitors on the Roll, 10.6% of all solicitors with practising certificates, and 9.8% of all solicitors in private practice.
- Women now account for 45.2% of solicitors with practising certificates. Whereas since 1999 the total number of solicitors holding practising certificates has grown by 45.2%, the number of women holding practising certificates has nearly doubled, having increased by 86.9%.
- 76.7% of men holding practising certificates work within private practice, compared to only 70.2% of women.
- In 2009 the average age of a male practising certificate holder was 44.2 years compared to only 37.9 years for female practising certificate holders.
- In 2009, the average age of a female solicitor in private practice was 37.2 years compared with 44.4 years for men. The average age of a sole practitioner was 50.9 years compared with 47.1 years for partners and 41.3 years for all solicitors in private practice.
- Over one-third of practising certificate holders in 2009 (37.1%) were employed by organisations based in London. These organisations were responsible for the employment of just under half (49.3%) of minority ethnic group practising certificate holders.

Trends in private practice

- In 2009 there were 85,128 solicitors employed in private practice, an increase of only 2.2% on the number employed the year before.
- In 2009 there were 10,362 solicitors' firms in England and Wales listed on the Society's database, an increase of 0.9% on 2008.
- The vast majority of law firms are relatively small with 85.3% of them having four or fewer partners.
- In 2009 41.9% of private practice firms were located in London and the South East.
- Just over one-quarter of private practice firms, 27.3%, were located in London in 2009. These firms employed 43.9% of all private practitioners.
- In 2009 the 2.0% of firms with 26 or more partners employed 31.3% of all principals and 41.8% of all solicitors in private practice. Sole practices accounted for 40.7% of firms, yet employed only 7.9% of all private practitioners.
- On average, the largest firms, with 81 or more partners, had 2.19 assistant/associate solicitors per partner compared with between 0.7 and 1.62 in the smaller and medium-sized firms.

Trends in post-graduate education

- In 2008 there were 27,384 applicants to study first degree courses in law in England and Wales, of whom 19,020 (69.5%) were accepted.
- Of the 13,803 graduates in the summer of 2008, over half (56.6%) achieved firsts or upper second classifications. More women graduated with firsts and upper seconds than men, 58.0% as opposed to 53.9%.
- In the year ending 31 July 2009, 9,954 students enrolled with the Law Society. Of these students 61.5% were women and 31.6% were drawn from minority ethnic groups.
- Of those who took the LPC examination in 2009, 75.1% passed.
- There were 10,803 full time and 3,152 part-time LPC places available in 2008-09. In 2009-10 there will be 11,370 full-time and 3,112 part-time places available.
- There were 5,809 new traineeships registered in the year 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2009. This is a decrease of 7.8% on the level recorded last year.
- Of the new trainees registered, 61.7% were women and 20.3% of trainees with known ethnicity were drawn from minority ethnic groups.
- In the year to 31 July 2009, admissions to the Roll (i.e. newly qualified solicitors and transfers from other legal professions) were 8,491, an increase of 8.0% on admissions the year before. Recorded admissions in 2009 were higher than in any previous year.

- Of the new admissions, 60.1% were women, and admissions from minority ethnic groups represented 24.2% of all admissions where the ethnicity was known.

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 2009, there were 145,381 solicitors on the Roll, an increase of 4.1% over the previous year. Of these, 78,385 (53.9%) were men and 66,996 (46.1%) were women. Last year 54.8% of solicitors on the Roll were men and 45.2% were women.
- 1.3 Table 1.3 shows that of those solicitors on the Roll at 31 July 2009, 115,475, or 79.4% of them, held a current practising certificate entitling them to act as a solicitor within the definition of the Solicitors Act 1974. The remaining 29,906 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 central 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 2009

	No.	%
With practising certificates		
Male	63,313	54.8
Female	52,162	45.2
Sub-total	115,475	100.0
Without practising certificates		
Male	15,072	50.4
Female	14,834	49.6
Sub-total	29,906	100.0
Total solicitors on the Roll		
Male	78,385	53.9
Female	66,996	46.1
Total	145,381	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Ethnic groups

- 1.4 Solicitors known to be from minority ethnic groups make up 11.4% of all 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 73.4% of the 16,611 minority ethnic group solicitors on the Roll hold practising certificates. This is a lower participation rate than for all solicitors where the rate was as we have seen 79.4%. Chinese solicitors, the majority of whom work overseas, have the lowest participation rate of minority ethnic group solicitors. Only 37.3% of ethnic Chinese solicitors on the Roll hold practising certificates in 2009.

Table 1.5 Minority ethnic group solicitors on the Roll and with practising certificates as at 31 July 2009

Ethnic origin	Minority ethnic group solicitors		
	1 On the Roll	2 With practising certificate	3 Participation rate (2 as a % of 1)
African-Caribbean	947	775	81.8
Asian	8,243	6,859	83.2
Chinese	3,355	1,251	37.3
African	1,519	1,247	82.1
Other ethnic origin	2,546	2,066	81.1
All minority ethnic group solicitors	16,611	12,198	73.4
White European	110,187	89,718	81.4
Unknown	18,583	13,559	73.0
Total	145,381	115,475	79.4
Minority ethnic group solicitors as a % of all solicitors	11.4	10.6	
Minority ethnic group solicitors as % of solicitors with known ethnicity	13.1	12.0	

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 2009, there were 115,475 solicitors holding current practising certificates. This was an increase of only 2.7% on the number for the previous year. The participation rate, which is the percentage of solicitors on the Roll holding practising certificates, showed a small decrease for women solicitors, down to 77.9%. Similarly, the participation rate for men decreased slightly, from 81.7% to 80.8%. 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 1979, the total number of practising certificate holders has grown by 222.8% at an average annual rate of 4.0% so this year’s growth is well below the long run trend. Comparable figures for those in private practice are a total growth over the period of 177.7% at an average rate of 3.5%. This year private practitioner numbers grew by just 1.0% to 85,128, again well below the long run rate of growth.

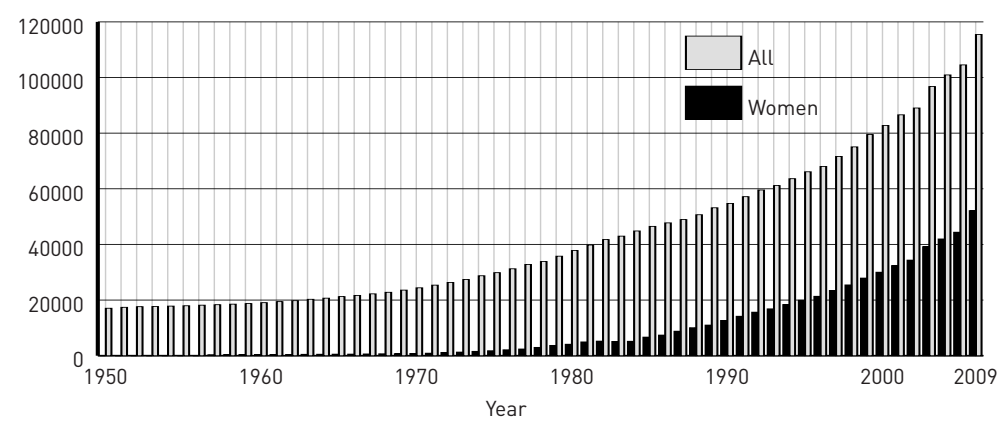
Chart 1 shows the growth in the number of solicitors with practising certificates since 1950, and compares the growth rate for women holders with that for the profession as a whole.

Table 2.2 Solicitors holding practising certificates 1979 to 2009

Year	Practising solicitors	% change	Solicitors in private practice	% change
1979	35,770		30,659	
1989	52,399	46.5	46,343	51.2
1999	79,503	51.7	64,026	38.2
2009	115,475	45.2	85,128	33.0

Source: Law Society’s REGIS database

Chart 1 Growth in the number of solicitors with practising certificates 1950-2009



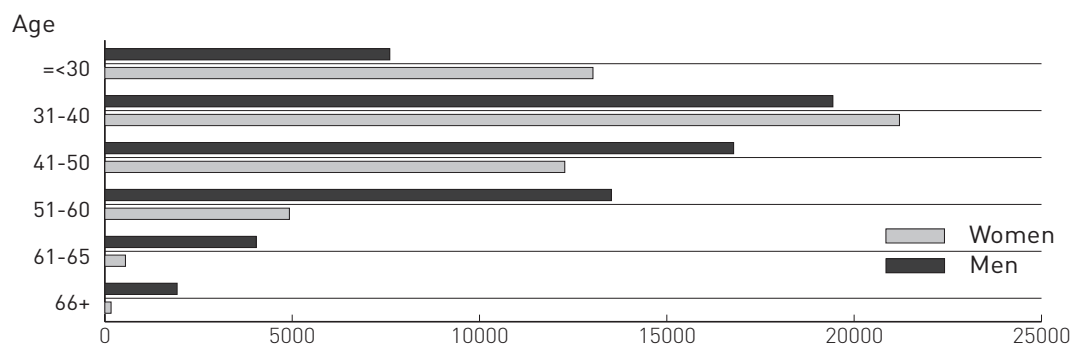
Source: Law Society’s REGIS database

- 2.3 Since 1999, the total number of solicitors with practising certificates has grown by 45.2%. However, over this period the number of women solicitors with practising certificates has increased by 86.9% whilst the number of men increased by only 22.7%. The proportion of female solicitors holding practising certificates was 45.2% at 31 July 2009, compared with 35.1% in 1999. 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 very 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, 52.9%, of all solicitors with a practising certificate are aged 40 or less. The average age of a female solicitor with a practising certificate is 37.9 years compared with 44.2 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 2009

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	327	94.8	722	93.0
26-30	7,232	92.0	12,279	90.1
31-35	9,396	88.2	12,071	83.4
36-40	9,917	85.9	9,093	76.3
41-45	8,974	84.7	7,129	71.0
46-50	7,706	84.1	5,121	71.1
51-55	7,255	83.4	3,264	70.2
56-60	6,184	78.3	1,652	63.6
61-65	4,015	69.0	550	53.3
66-70	1,159	50.8	105	37.6
71 and over	759	25.7	62	30.0
Unknown	389	65.5	114	60.6
All ages known	62,924	80.9	52,048	77.9
% ages known	99.4		99.8	
Total	63,313	80.8	52,162	77.9
Average (Mean) age	44.2		37.9	
Median age	42		35	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Chart 2 The age of solicitors with practising certificates – 31 July 2009

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2.6 Table 2.6 shows the numbers of solicitors holding practising certificates as at 31 July 2009, analysed by employment sector and the number of years they have been qualified as solicitors. Over one-third, 36.6%, of male solicitors with current practising certificates in private practice have been qualified for less than 10 years, and 61.5% have been qualified for less than 20 years. This compares with 87.0% of women solicitors in private practice who have been qualified for less than 20 years. A similar, if less pronounced, gender 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 2009

Years since admission	All solicitors		Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Solicitors in private practice						
0-9	40,936	48.1	17,778	36.6	23,158	63.3
10-19	20,738	24.4	12,078	24.9	8,660	23.7
20-29	13,325	15.7	9,612	19.8	3,713	10.1
30-39	8,362	9.8	7,371	15.2	991	2.7
40-49	1,497	1.8	1,438	3.0	59	0.2
50 or more years	270	0.3	256	0.5	14	0.0
All years	85,128	100.0	48,533	100.0	36,595	100.0
Solicitors in employed and other sectors						
0-9	15,006	49.4	6,319	42.7	8,687	55.8
10-19	9,124	30.1	4,377	29.6	4,748	30.5
20-29	4,063	13.4	2,312	15.6	1,751	11.2
30-39	1,860	6.1	1,495	10.1	365	2.3
40-49	249	0.8	235	1.6	14	0.1
50 or more years	45	0.1	44	0.3	1	0.0
All years	30,347	100.0	14,781	100.0	15,566	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: 73.7% as at 31 July 2009. The second largest category of employment is commerce and industry, 10.0%, followed by local government, which employs 3.8% 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 7.5% 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 only 43.0% of solicitors are women, compared with 51.3% in these other sectors.

Table 2.7 Practising certificate holders by category of employment as at 31 July 2009

Category of employment	All	% of PC holders	Men	Women	Women as % of total
Private practice	85,128	73.7	48,533	36,595	43.0
Commerce/industry	11,594	10.0	5,933	5,661	48.8
Accountancy practice	111	0.1	50	61	55.0
Nationalised industry	3	0.0	2	1	33.3
Trade union	84	0.1	31	53	63.1
Government department	230	0.2	133	97	42.2
Local government	4,372	3.8	1,610	2,762	63.2
Court	58	0.1	30	28	48.3
Government funded services	236	0.2	99	137	58.1
Crown Prosecution Service	2,361	2.0	1,011	1,350	57.2
Advice service	467	0.4	140	327	70.0
Educational establishment	265	0.2	89	176	66.4
Health services	60	0.1	15	45	75.0
Others ¹	1,804	1.6	1,217	587	32.5
Not attached to an organisation	8,702	7.5	4,420	4,282	49.2
All non-private practice	30,347	26.3	14,780	15,567	51.3
Total practising certificate holders	115,475	100.0	63,313	52,162	45.2

* 0 = less than 0.05%

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

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 2.8 Overall, 76.7% of male solicitors with practising certificates work in private practice compared with only 70.2% of their female counterparts. This is shown in Table 2.8, which also shows the growing importance of the employed sector. In 2009, just over one quarter (26.3%) of practising certificate holders worked outside of private practice, compared to only 19.5% 10 years ago.

Table 2.8 Distribution of practising certificate holders by category of employment as at 31 July 2009 compared with 1999

Category of employment	1999	Total	2009	
	Total		Men	Women
	%	%	%	%
Private practice	80.5	73.7	76.7	70.2
Other PC holders	19.5	26.3	23.3	29.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Solicitors in private practice

- 2.9 As at 31 July 2009 there were 85,128 solicitors working in private practice firms. This represents an increase of only 2.2 % on the 83,329 recorded last year. This growth rate is below the long run average growth rate of 3.5% and reflects the rapidly deteriorating trading position of many private practice firms. For the 85,128 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 2009. It shows the number who are partners (or their equivalents), sole practitioners, assistant solicitors, associates, consultants, and 'other private practice'. The category of 'other private practice' refers to solicitors with practising certificates, in private practice, but with positions in the firm other than those stated. For example, this category includes solicitors employed in training and managerial capacities. This year there has been a small drop in the proportion of male private practitioners who are partners and a similar small decrease in the proportion of women private practitioners at partnership level. Table 2.9 shows that, within an overall total of 37.2%, 49.1% of men, compared with only 21.5% of women, were partners as at 31 July 2009.

Table 2.9 Position of solicitors working in private practice and holding a practising certificate as at 31 July 2009

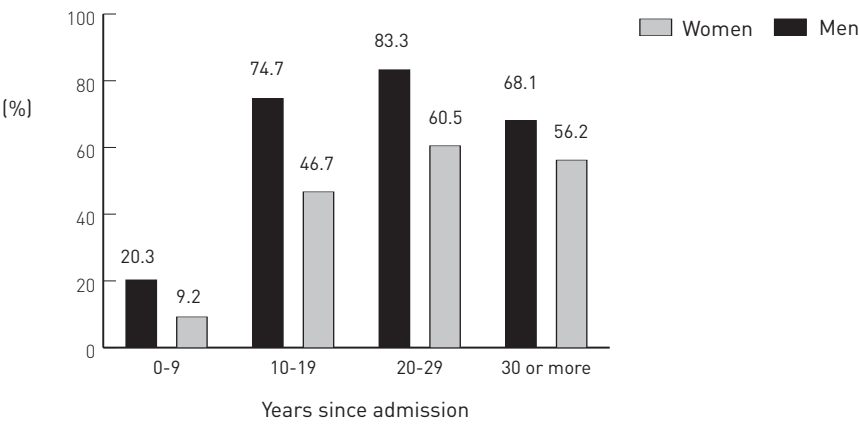
Position in firm	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Partners ¹	23,806	49.1	7,854	21.5	31,660	37.2
Sole practitioners	3,001	6.2	1,162	3.2	4,163	4.9
Associate solicitors	7,209	14.9	8,525	23.3	15,734	18.5
Assistant solicitors	9,970	20.5	16,428	44.9	26,398	31.0
Consultants	3,053	6.3	953	2.6	4,006	4.7
Other private practice	1,494	3.1	1,673	4.6	3,167	3.7
All positions	48,533	100.0	36,595	100.0	85,128	100.0

¹ partners or partner equivalents

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, 74.7% of men are partners or sole practitioners compared with only 46.7% of women.

Chart 3 Percentages of men and women in private practice who were either partners or sole practitioners as at 31 July 2009 by years since admission



Source: Law Society's REGIS database

2.11 In addition to gender differences it is also interesting to compare the age distribution of partners and sole practitioners with those for all solicitors in private practice. Table 2.11 shows that the average age of a sole practitioner is 50.9 years, compared with 47.1 for all partner equivalents and 41.3 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 2009

Age	All in private practice			Partners			Sole practitioners		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Total	48,533	36,595	85,128	23,806	7,854	31,660	3,001	1,162	4,163
Average age	44.4	37.2	41.3	48.1	44.1	47.1	52.4	47.1	50.9

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Ethnic groups

- 2.12 Table 2.12 records the number of solicitors with practising certificates who are known to belong to a minority ethnic group. The provision of information on ethnicity is entirely optional, though at present it is known for 88.3% of practising certificate holders. Using this we estimate that minority ethnic group solicitors accounted for 10.6% of solicitors with practising certificates in 2009, an increase on the 10.0% recorded in 2008. Within this total, 13.3% of women solicitors were members of a minority ethnic group compared with only 8.3% of men.

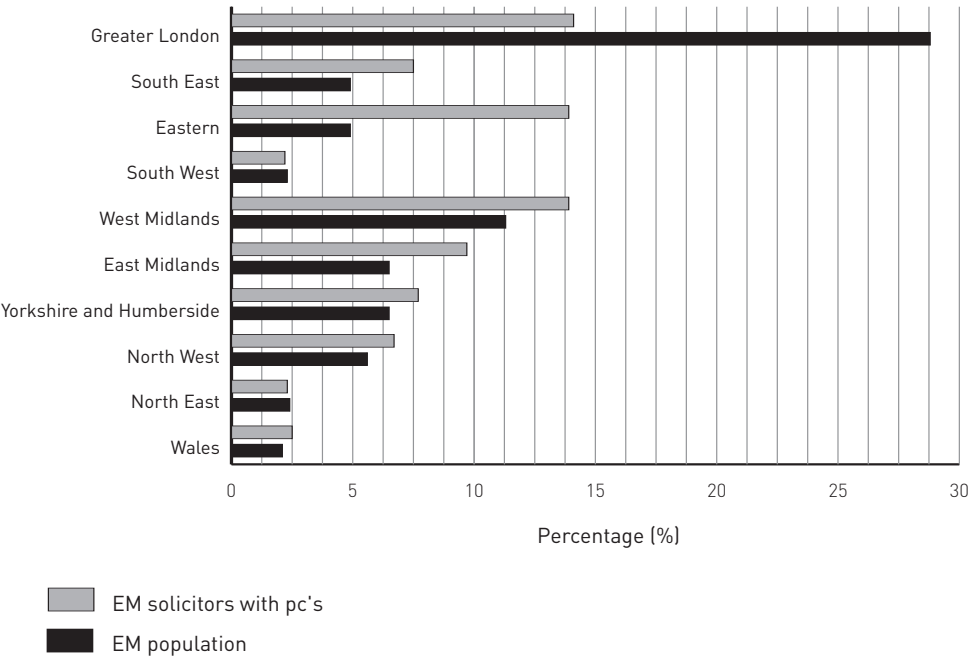
Table 2.12 Ethnic origin of practising certificate holders as at 31 July 2009

Ethnic origin	Men	Women	Total	%
White/European	49,963	39,755	89,718	77.7
African-Caribbean	224	551	775	0.7
Asian	3,141	3,718	6,859	5.9
Chinese	469	782	1,251	1.1
African	542	705	1,247	1.1
Other ethnic origin	875	1,191	2,066	1.8
All solicitors for whom ethnic origin is known	55,214	46,702	101,916	88.3
All ethnic minority practising certificate holders known to the Law Society	5,251	6,947	12,198	
% of all solicitors with PCs	8.3	13.3	10.6	
Unanswered/refused	8,098	5,460	13,558	11.7
All practising certificate holders	63,313	52,162	115,475	100.0
% of all solicitors with PCs for whom ethnic origin is known	87.2	89.5	88.3	

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 in that region 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. Abroad is defined as outside England and Wales and the table shows that 6,192 or 5.4% of all practicing certificate holders live and work in another jurisdiction. Greater London (14.1%), the West Midlands (13.9%), and the Eastern (13.9%) Government Office Regions have the highest proportion of minority ethnic group solicitors; the majority of whom are Asian. Overall, 7.5% 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 (37.1%) are located in Greater London, a proportion which rises to 49.5% 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 2009

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 ¹	19,489	4.4	0.4	1.2	0.8	2.4	9.2	77.4	13.4
Rest of London	23,295	9.4	1.5	1.3	3.0	3.0	18.2	67.0	14.8
Greater London	42,784	7.1	1.0	1.3	2.0	2.7	14.1	71.8	14.2
South East	12,082	4.6	0.6	0.4	0.6	1.3	7.5	82.6	9.9
Eastern	7,255	8.4	1.0	0.6	2.0	1.9	13.9	74.3	11.7
South West	5,579	0.9	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.7	2.2	89.9	7.9
West Midlands	7,776	11.0	1.0	0.4	0.4	1.2	13.9	77.8	8.4
East Midlands	4,463	7.5	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.8	9.7	82.0	8.3
Yorkshire & Humberside	7,512	5.9	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.9	7.7	84.9	7.4
North West	11,989	4.6	0.2	0.4	0.4	1.1	6.7	84.6	8.7
North East	3,023	1.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	2.3	89.6	8.0
Wales	3,667	1.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.8	2.5	88.8	8.7
Outside England/Wales	6,192	4.0	0.2	7.2	0.5	2.9	14.7	60.8	24.5
Unknown	3,153	2.4	0.6	0.7	0.6	1.3	5.5	84.9	9.5
Total	115,475	5.9	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.8	10.6	77.7	11.7

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

* Less than 0.05%.

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 2.15 Table 2.15 analyses the position held by solicitors in private practice by their ethnicity. It shows that 9.8% of solicitors in private practice are drawn from minority ethnic groups. The table also shows that whereas 38.4% of white Europeans in private practice are at partnership level, the corresponding proportion from ethnic minority groups is much lower at 25.9%. 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 8.1% of minority ethnic group solicitors are sole practitioners, compared with only 4.4% 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	451	27.7	10.4	13.1	42.4	6.4	100.0
Asian	4,995	27.3	8.2	16.1	42.3	6.0	100.0
Chinese	646	17.5	4.0	34.8	35.3	8.4	100.0
African	824	27.0	14.6	14.1	38.2	6.2	100.0
Other ethnic origin	1,429	23.5	5.3	23.4	40.8	7.1	100.0
All ethnic minority	8,345	25.9	8.1	18.5	41.1	6.4	100.0
White European	68,044	38.4	4.4	18.4	30.2	8.6	100.0
Unknown	8,739	38.8	5.9	18.8	27.5	9.1	100.0
Total	85,128	37.2	4.9	18.5	31.0	8.4	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 just over one half of minority ethnic group solicitors (50.2%) work in firms with 4 or fewer partners, compared with only 28.1% of white Europeans.

Table 2.16 Ethnicity by size of firm as at 31 July 2009

Ethnic group	Sole Practice	2-4 Partners	5-10 Partners	11-25 Partners	26-80 Partners	81+ Partners
African-Caribbean	17.8	40.1	14.0	8.3	9.0	10.7
Asian	16.6	37.1	11.4	8.1	11.6	15.1
Chinese	8.7	20.0	8.7	9.3	15.2	38.1
African	24.9	44.5	6.4	4.1	7.9	12.2
Other ethnic origin	11.2	23.1	12.4	9.6	16.4	27.2
All ethnic minority	15.9	34.3	11.0	8.1	12.2	18.4
White European	7.5	20.6	15.8	13.3	18.4	24.5
Unknown	10.4	23.8	12.8	11.1	16.7	25.2
Total	8.6	22.3	15.0	12.5	17.6	23.9

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 was substantially revised in 2007 to take into account changes in individual private practice firms' constitution type.

Table 3.1 Organisations employing solicitors by type of business as at 31 July 2009

Type of business	Head offices		Branch offices		Total offices	
	England & Wales	Elsewhere	England & Wales	Elsewhere	England & Wales	Elsewhere
Private practice						
Partnerships in England and Wales	8,105	0	1,836	33	9,941	33
Incorporated firms	2,175	5	952	178	3,127	183
Multi-national practices	74	0	16	29	90	29
Locums services	250	1	0	0	250	1
Foreign law practices	5	881	11	161	16	1,042
Other private practice	3	25	35	5	38	30
Commerce and industry	3,410	718	271	98	3,681	816
Government						
Government department	50	10	26	1	76	11
Local government	469	1	28	0	497	1
Court	67	0	96	0	163	0
Government funded services	46	7	41	1	87	8
Crown Prosecution Service	46	0	77	0	123	0
Advice service	145	2	26	0	171	2
Educational establishment	137	8	7	0	144	8
Other	158	14	44	1	202	15
Total	15,140	1,672	3,466	507	18,606	2,179
	16,812				20,785	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

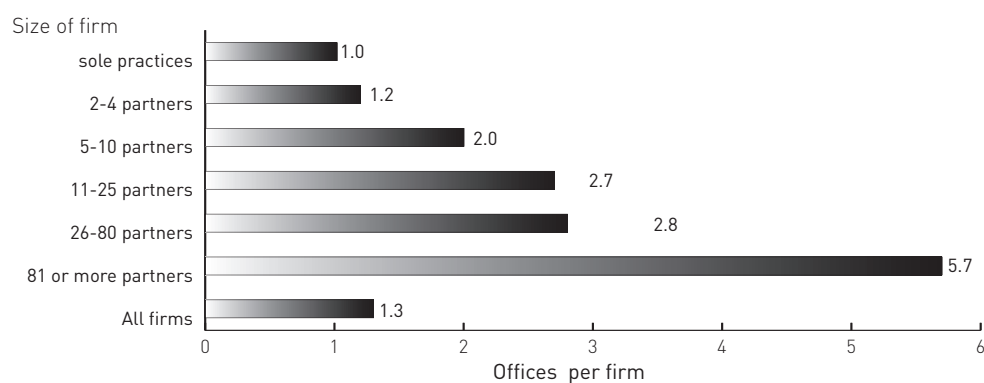
- 3.2 As can be seen from Table 3.1, at 31 July 2009 there were 16,812 separate organisations employing solicitors, of which 15,140 were based in England and Wales and 1,672 elsewhere (i.e. Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, Eire and overseas countries). Each firm, company, local authority or other employer may be located in one or several offices. There were 20,785 separate places of work recorded for solicitors, of which 18,606 were in England and Wales and 2,179 elsewhere. These figures represent a small increase in the numbers recorded for 2008. It can also be seen from Table 3.3 that in 2009 there were 10,362 private practice firms, located in 13,212 separate offices in England and Wales, registered with the Society. These numbers represent the total number of private practice organisations less the 250 listed as providing locum services only. Over the past year the number of these private practice firms has increased by 0.9%, whilst the total number of their offices has decreased marginally by 0.5%.
- 3.3 The trend in the numbers of private practice firms and offices over the five years since 2004 is shown in Table 3.3. This shows that over the period the number of firms has increased by 2.8%, whilst the number of offices has decreased by 5.0%. These figures are reflected in the observed 7.6% 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 2004 - 2009

Year	Number of firms	Number of offices	Ratio
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
2008	10,267	13,272	1.29
2009	10,362	13,212	1.28
% change since 2004	2.8	-5.0	-7.6

- 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 2009 was 1.3. As one would expect, the number of offices per firm increases with the size of firm: from 1.0 for sole practices through to 5.7 for the 81-or-more partner equivalent firms.

Chart 5 Number of offices by size of firm in 2009



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, 27.3%, were located in London in 2009, and approaching one-half of all solicitors' firms (41.9%) are now based in the South East (including London). This value is distorted by the presence in London of a large number of firms serving predominantly commercial clients. Outside of the South East (including London) there is reasonable correspondence between the proportion of law firms and the population they serve in the Eastern region, North West and Wales with some relative underprovision in the North East, Yorkshire and Humberside, South West and the East and West Midlands.

Table 3.5 Location (standard regions) of population and private practice firms and practitioners in 2009

Region	Total=	Population ¹ 52,042 million %	Firms 10,362 %
City of London		*	7.5
Rest of London		13.8	19.8
South East		15.4	14.6
South West		9.5	6.6
Wales		5.6	5.0
West Midlands		10.1	8.0
East Midlands		8.0	5.5
Eastern		10.4	10.2
North West including Merseyside		12.9	12.4
Yorkshire and Humberside		9.5	7.1
North East		4.8	3.2
Total		100.0	100.0

* Less than 0.05%

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

3.6 Table 3.6 analyses the number of private practice firms in 2009 by the Government Office Region of the head office and the size of firm measured by the partner equivalent count. The first thing to notice from this table is that the vast majority of private practices are quite small. Taken overall just over five-sixths (85.3%) of law practices in England and Wales have four partner equivalents or fewer. At the other end of the spectrum only 2.0% of all firms have 26 or more partner equivalents. 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 202 firms with 26 or more partner equivalents, around one half (50.5%) were located in the City of London and 59.4% were located in the Greater London area.

Table 3.6 Number of firms in 2009, analysed by size and regional location of head office¹

Region	Number of firms						All firms
	Sole Practitioner	2-4 prttrs	5-10 prttrs	11-25 prttrs	26-80 prttrs	81+ prttrs	
City of London	221	279	104	72	60	42	778
Rest of Greater London	962	939	106	31	11	7	2,056
South East	718	607	125	46	12	1	1,509
Eastern	444	482	88	42	3	0	1,060
South West	282	283	82	31	11	0	689
West Midlands	310	403	87	21	7	1	829
East Midlands	265	211	59	20	8	1	565
Yorkshire and the Humber	265	351	76	30	10	2	735
North West including Merseyside	424	664	148	38	10	6	1,289
North East	110	162	45	8	7	0	331
Wales	163	291	60	6	2	0	522
Total	4,163	4,671	980	345	142	60	10,362

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 85,128 solicitors employed in private practice, as at 31 July 2009, by their grade and the size of their firm measured by the partner equivalent count. It shows that the overall growth in numbers over the past year was only 2.2%, which is well below the long run average rate of growth of 3.5%. The table also shows the high degree of solicitor concentration in the largest firms. Firms with 81 or more partners (0.6% of firms) employed 17.3% of principals (sole practitioners and partner equivalents) and just over one quarter (25.1%) of all solicitors. At the other end of the size spectrum sole practices, 40.2% of firms, employed 11.6% of all principals and 7.9% of all solicitors.

Table 4.1 Admitted staff in private practice firms in 2009 by size of firm

	Sole practices	2-4 ptnrs.	5-10 ptnrs.	11-25 ptnrs.	26-80 ptnrs.	81+ ptnrs.	All firms
Partners	0	10,004	5,858	4,546	5,032	6,181	31,660
Sole practitioners	4,163	0	0	0	0	0	4,163
Associate solicitors	314	1,203	1,171	1,552	3,029	8,465	15,734
Assistant solicitors	1,705	5,792	4,850	3,849	5,102	5,100	26,398
Consultants	389	1,343	796	538	425	515	4,006
Other private practice	175	585	403	302	592	1110	3,167
All positions	6,745	18,967	13,079	10,787	14,179	21,371	85,128

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. partner equivalents 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 largest firms with 81 or more partners, whilst the majority of consultants are found in smaller firms with ten or fewer partners. In terms of the staffing ratios these show that the ratio of assistant/associate solicitors to principals increases from 0.48:1 in sole practices through to 2.19 in the 81 or more partner firms. In the intervening size bands the ratios are 0.7 assistants/associates per principal in 2-4 partner firms, 1.03 per principal in 5-10 partner firms, 1.19 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 2009 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	0.0754	0.1198	0.1999	0.3415	0.6019	1.3695	0.4392
Assistant/principal	0.4096	0.5767	0.8281	0.8468	1.0138	0.8251	0.7369
Consultants/principal	0.0933	0.1338	0.1359	0.1184	0.0844	0.0833	0.1118
Other private practice/principal	0.0420	0.0582	0.0688	0.0665	0.1176	0.1796	0.0884
All per principal	1.6203	1.8885	2.2327	2.3731	2.8177	3.4575	2.3764

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 firm's head office is located. This table shows that in 2009 43.9% of private practitioners were employed in firms located in Greater London, whilst 2.8% were located abroad. Using the population data from Table 3.8 we can calculate that in London there is one practitioner per 199 head of population, compared to an average density in England and Wales of one practitioner per 623 head of population. Excluding the London GOR this ratio increases to one practitioner per 954 head of population. Overall, this density is lowest in the East Midlands GOR where there is one practitioner per 1,198 head of population.

Table 4.3 Admitted staff in private practice firms in 2009 by Government region¹

	Partners	Sole Practitioner	Associate solicitors	Assist. solicitors	Consultants	Other pr. practice	All solicitors
Greater Ldn.	12,450	1,173	10,332	10,270	1,679	1,472	37,375
South East	3,286	717	795	2,426	463	205	7,892
Eastern	2,168	433	303	1,730	266	115	5,016
South West	1,884	282	461	1,313	257	85	4,282
West. Midlands	2,056	319	740	1,505	289	206	5,116
East. Midlands	1,366	277	409	1,292	124	100	3,568
Yorks & Humberside	1,948	265	608	1,696	218	208	4,943
North West	3,701	420	1,008	3,787	380	431	9,726
North East	934	115	281	764	92	30	2,215
Wales	1,129	162	235	812	170	98	2,606
Abroad	738	0	562	805	67	217	2,389
All regions	31,660	4,163	15,734	26,398	4,006	3,167	85,128

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 2008-09.

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 2007 and 2008. 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 27,384 people applied to study law at undergraduate level in 2008, which is slightly higher (3.2%) than in the previous year. Within this increased total, female applications increased much faster than male applications, by 5.3%, whilst male applications fell by 0.3%. The total number of acceptances (an acceptance is defined as a formal acceptance of a university place offered through the UCAS scheme) made by universities increased more rapidly than applications, by 7.4%, from 17,702 in 2007 to 19,020 in 2008. The pattern in acceptances mirrored applications in that female acceptances increased fastest by 10.1%, compared to only 3.0% for male acceptances. Taken overall, 69.5% of applicants were successful in securing a place in 2008 compared to 66.7% of individuals in 2007.

Table 6.2 Home and overseas applicants and acceptances for university first degree law courses in England and Wales 2007 and 2008

For entry in:	University applicants								
	UK			Overseas			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2007	8,203	13,560	21,763	1,888	2,888	4,776	10,091	16,448	26,539
2008	8,013	14,388	22,401	2,044	2,939	4,983	10,057	17,327	27,384
% change	-2.3	6.1	2.9	8.3	1.8	4.3	-0.3	5.3	3.2

For entry in:	University acceptances								
	UK			Overseas			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2007	5,623	9,365	14,988	1,071	1,643	2,714	6,694	11,008	17,702
2008	5,782	10,396	16,178	1,114	1,728	2,842	6,896	12,124	19,020
% change	2.8	11.0	7.9	4.0	5.2	4.7	3.0	10.1	7.4

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 2008, 63.7% of acceptances were from women candidates, up marginally from the 62.2% recorded in 2007. The proportion of overseas acceptances, 14.9%, was slightly lower than the 15.3% recorded in the previous year.

Table 6.3 Proportion of law students accepted in 2006 and 2007 who were female or from overseas

Year	Female students		Overseas students	
	No.	%	No.	%
2007	11,008	62.2	2,714	15.3
2008	12,124	63.7	2,842	14.9

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 2008. In total, minority ethnic group law students accounted for 32.1% of students starting a first degree law course in 2008. This represents a slight increase on 2007, when the comparable proportion was 31.3%. Within this total, female acceptances were slightly more likely than males to be drawn from ethnic minorities: 32.6% of acceptances as opposed to 31.0 %.

Table 6.4 Minority ethnic students from the UK accepted to first degree law courses at universities and colleges in 2008

Ethnic group		Acceptances of students from UK		
		Male	Female	Total
White	White British	3,570	6,438	10,008
Black	Black Caribbean	83	286	369
	Black African	361	681	1,042
	Black Other	17	50	67
Asian	Indian	341	660	1,001
	Pakistani	464	663	1,127
	Bangladeshi	196	241	387
	Chinese	31	72	103
	Other Asian	82	160	242
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	34	141	175
	White and Black African	24	39	63
	White and Asian	71	100	171
	Other mixed	55	126	181
Other	Other	86	172	258
Unknown	Unknown	417	567	984
All minority ethnic acceptances		1,795	3,391	5,186
All acceptances		5,782	10,396	16,178
% from minority ethnic groups		31.0	32.6	32.1

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 2008 with the position one and five years previously. The table shows that, in 2008, the total number of graduates was 13,803, an increase of just 1.0% on the previous year. In the five years since 2003 the total number of graduates grew by 37.9% from a base of 10,007. The table shows that within this total the number of male law graduates has risen by 37.3% over the past 5 years, whereas the number of female law graduates has risen slightly more quickly by 38.3% over the same period.

Table 6.5 Number of students graduating in law from universities in England and Wales 2003, 2007 and 2008¹

Year of graduation	University Graduates in Law		
	Male	Female	Total
2003	3,664	6,343	10,007
2007	5,036	8,626	13,662
2008	5,031	8,771	13,803
% change 2008/2007	-0.1	1.7	1.0
% change 2008/2003	37.3	38.3	37.9

¹ Figures relate to single honours law degrees and do not include modular or joint honour degrees which may also allow graduates to proceed directly to study the Legal Practice Course (para. 6.6)

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 2008, of the 13,803 law graduates, over half, 56.5% achieved a first class or upper second class degree. This proportion represents a further increase on the figure of 55.4% recorded for 2007. Overall, a higher proportion of women graduated with firsts or upper seconds than men: 58.0% and 54.0% 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 2008

Class of degree	All law graduates					
	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First	313	6.2	551	6.3	864	6.3
Upper second	2,402	47.7	4,536	51.7	6,938	50.3
Lower second	1,835	36.5	3,042	34.7	4,877	35.3
Third/pass	395	7.8	549	6.3	944	6.8
Unclassified	86	1.7	94	1.1	180	1.3
Total	5,031	100.0	8,772	100.0	13,803	100.0
Total: first and upper second	2,715		5,086		7,801	
Percentage with first or upper second	54.0		58.0		56.5	

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 2008-09 the ethnicity of 92.2% 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 2003-04 and 2007-08.
- 7.4 In the year up to 31 July 2009, 9,954 students enrolled with the Law Society, a significant decrease of 13.9% on that recorded the previous year. Of these, 6,126 (61.5%), were women. This represents a decrease on the proportion of women students recorded in 2007-08 (63.7 %), and also on the proportion for 2003-04 (62.8%). The proportion of women amongst minority ethnic group students was, at 63.7%, 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, 73.7% were women.
- 7.5 Of those students enrolling with the Society last year, 3,146, or 31.6% of the total, were drawn from minority ethnic groups. This can be compared with the 30.9% from minority ethnic groups recorded in 2007-08, and the 25% recorded in 2003-04. In order to make this comparison registered students with missing ethnicity data have been allocated pro rata to the known totals.

Table 7.4 The ethnic origin and gender of students enrolling with the Law Society in 2008-09

Ethnic origin	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
African-Caribbean	36	26.3	101	73.7	137
Asian	634	38.2	1,024	61.8	1,658
Chinese	87	34.0	169	66.0	256
African	140	33.9	273	66.1	413
Other ethnic origin	155	35.5	282	64.5	437
All ethnic minority	1,052	36.3	1,849	63.7	2,901
White European	2,416	38.5	3,861	61.5	6,277
Unknown	360	46.4	416	53.6	776
Total	3,828	38.5	6,126	61.5	9,954

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

Table 7.5 Trends in the ethnic origin of students enrolling with the Law Society¹

	2003-2004		2007-08		2008-09	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Ethnic origin						
African-Caribbean	138	1.4	184	1.6	149	1.5
Asian	1,278	13.0	1,878	16.2	1,798	18.1
Chinese	239	2.4	317	2.7	278	2.8
African	397	4.0	488	4.2	448	4.5
Other ethnic origin	406	4.1	708	6.1	474	4.8
All ethnic minority	2,457	25.0	3,574	30.9	3,146	31.6
White European	7,374	75.0	7,984	69.1	6,808	68.4
Total	9,831	100.0	11,558	100.0	9,954	100.0
Gender						
Male	3,654	37.2	4,230	37.3	3,828	38.5
Female	6,177	62.8	7,121	62.7	6,126	61.5
Total	9,831	100.0	11,351	100.0	9,954	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 2009, of the 9,337 students who enrolled on the LPC, 7,759, or 83.1%, sat the summer / autumn 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 2009 was 62.4%. Of those actually taking the examination, the pass rate was 75.1%, which represents a marked decrease on the 2008 figure of 86.5%, although it is very similar to the rate achieved in 2007. This may indicate that there were comparability problems with the 2008 data. Table 8.2 below shows the full set of results. Candidates who pass with distinction now account for 41.8% of total passes.

Table 8.2 Legal Practice Course results of summer examinations – summer / autumn 2009

Results	No. of students	2009 % of those sitting exam	% of all students
Diploma with distinction	2,437	31.4	26.1
Diploma with commendation	2,513	32.4	26.9
Diploma	874	11.3	9.4
Total passes	5,824	75.1	62.4
Referred	1,765	22.7	18.9
Resit	169	2.2	1.8
Failed	1	0.0	0.0
Total failed	1,935	24.9	20.7
Total sitting the examination	7,759	100.0	83.1
Deferred	103		1.1
Absent	3		0.0
Withdrawn	46		
No result	1,423		
Total not sitting the examination	1,578		16.9
Total students enrolled on the LPC	9,337		100.0

Source: Law Society database

Table 8.3 Places on the Legal Practice Course for 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09

College of Law/universities	Full-time			Part-time		
	'07-08	'08-09	'09-10	'07-08	'08-09	'09-10
Anglia Ruskin University	70	70	70	30	30	30
BPP Law School, Holborn, Ldn.	1,080	1,188	1,588	288	288	288
BPP Law School, Waterloo, Ldn.	252	252	265	54	54	54
BPP Law School, Leeds	360	360	454	72	72	72
BPP Law School, Manchester	360	360	378	108	108	108
Bournemouth University	96	96	96	-	-	-
Cardiff Law School	180	180	200	-	-	-
The College of Law:						
All branches			4,750	1,280*	1,380 *	1,368*
Bloomsbury (Store St.), Ldn.	1,260	1,260		200**	288 **	288**
Moorgate, Ldn.	1,000	1,000		-	-	
Chester	580	580		*	**	
Guildford	700	700		*	**	
York	484	484		*	**	
Birmingham	528	528		40*	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	344	48	64	64
Nottingham Law School	648	648		90	90	90
Nottingham at Kaplan Law School	300	300	300	-	-	-
Oxford Institute of Legal Practice	353	353	353	-	-	-
Staffordshire University	125	125	160	25	25	25
Swansea University	100	100	100	-	-	-
Thames Valley University	50	50	50	-	-	-
University of Central England	120	120	120	30	30	30
University of Central Lancashire	60	80	80	48	48	48
University of Glamorgan	108	108	135	32	32	32
University of Hertfordshire	-	-	-	64	64	64
University of Huddersfield	80	80	220	36	36	36
Northumbria University	160	160	150	50	50	50
University of Plymouth	120	120	80	-	-	-
University of Sheffield	180	180	214	-	-	-
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	100	100	100	-	-	-
University of the West of England	342	342	440	58	58	58
University of Westminster	120	120	132	64	64	64
University of Wolverhampton	60	60	60	30	30	30
Total	10,675	10,803	11,370	3,064	3,152	3,112

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 2009-10 will be 11,375. This is an increase of 5.2% on the number of places which were available in 2008-09.

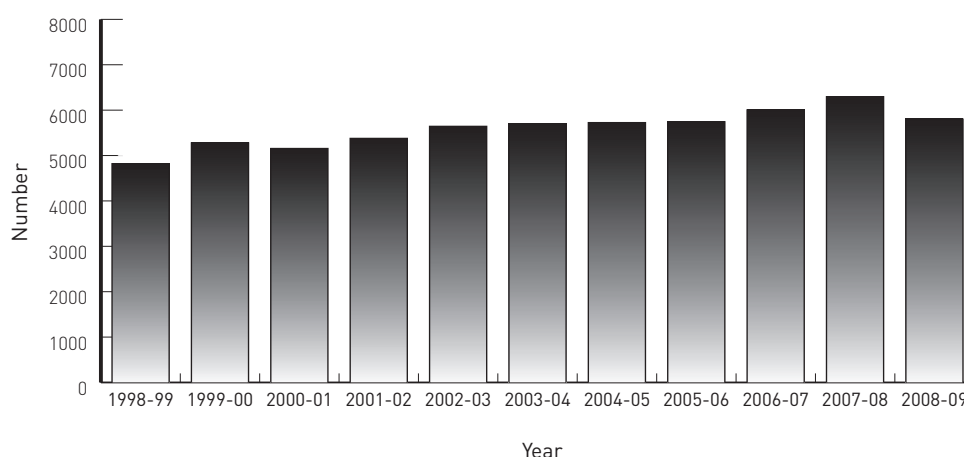
8.4 In addition, there will also be 3,112 places available on part-time LPC courses in 2009-10, a small decrease of 1.3% on those available last year.

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 1998-99 to the present. In the year that ended 31 July 2009 there were 5,809 new traineeships registered with the Society. This represents a decrease (7.8%) on the level recorded last year, when trainee registrations stood at 6,303. The fall is consistent with the impact of the recession on private practice firms who provide the bulk of training contracts.

Chart 6 Annual registration of trainees 1998-99 to 2008-09



Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.7 Table 8.7 shows the data on the total number of trainees registered in 1999-00 and 2009-10 with the total analysed by trainee gender. Overall, the number of traineeships has increased by just over one fifth (20.3%) over the period. Within this total growth, that for women trainees was markedly higher than that for males (31.6% and 5.7% respectively). In fact, for each of the years since 1999-00 the majority of new trainees have been female. In this latest year, 61.7% of trainees registered were women, down slightly on the proportion recorded last year (63.4%).

Table 8.7 Number of traineeships registered in 1998-99 and 2008-09 analysed by gender of trainee

Year	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
1998-99	2,106	46.4	2,721	56.4	4,827
2008-09	2,227	38.3	3,582	61.7	5,809
% change 2008-09 over 1998-99		5.7		31.6	20.3

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 8.8 Since 1997 we have been able to examine 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 5,321 trainees, or 91.6% of the 5,809 new traineeships registered. This shows an increase in the quality of this data from last year, when the ethnicity of only 88.1% of new trainees was known. In 2008-09, minority ethnic group trainees represented 20.3% of trainees of known ethnicity, down slightly from the 20.9% recorded last year. The ethnic grouping most highly represented was 'Asian', which accounted for 56.9% 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 61.7% of all trainees were women, this proportion rose to 63.3% amongst those from minority ethnic groups. The 'African-Caribbean' group had the highest proportion of women trainees at 78.4% and the 'African' group the lowest at 55.0%.

Table 8.8 Trainee registrations by ethnic origin and gender 2008-09

Ethnic origin	Male	Female	Total	Trainees with known ethnicity
	No.	No.	No.	%
African-Caribbean	8	29	37	0.7
Asian	224	391	615	11.6
Chinese	43	80	123	2.3
African	45	55	100	1.9
Other ethnic origin	76	129	205	3.9
Total known ethnic minority	396	684	1,080	20.3
Ethnic minority trainees as % of those with known ethnicity	19.6	20.7	20.3	-
White European	1,622	2,619	4,241	79.7
Total with known ethnicity	2,018	3,303	5,321	100.0
% of trainees with known ethnicity	90.6	92.2	91.6	
Trainees with unknown ethnicity	209	279	488	
% of trainees with unknown ethnicity	9.4	7.8	8.4	
All trainees	2,227	3,582	5,809	
All trainees %	38.3	61.7	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 2008-09. Of the 5,809 trainees registered, 1,669 (28.7%) were located in the City of London. A further 1,273, or 21.9%, were located in the rest of London. Taken overall, just over one-half (50.6%) of first-year trainees were located in London in 2008-09. This is above the 47.8% of London registrations recorded last year and this year is the first year that the majority of registrations were London based. Male trainees were much more likely than female trainees to be located in London. Whereas well over one-half (55.3%) of male trainees were located in London, the corresponding proportion for female trainees was only 47.7%. The region with the highest proportion of female trainees was the North East with 70.2% of registrations, and the region with the lowest proportion was the City of London with 53.6%.

Table 8.9 Trainee placements in 2008-09 analysed by Government Office Region

Region	Male			Female			Total	
	No.	%	% by region	No.	%	% by region	Total	% by region
City of London	775	46.4	34.8	894	53.6	25.0	1,669	28.7
Rest of London	458	36.0	20.6	815	64.0	22.8	1,273	21.9
South East	132	30.7	5.9	298	69.3	8.3	430	7.4
Eastern	108	32.5	4.9	225	67.5	6.3	333	5.7
South West	71	32.4	3.2	149	67.6	4.2	220	3.8
West Midlands	137	39.6	6.2	209	60.4	5.8	347	6.0
East Midlands	66	34.2	3.0	127	65.8	3.6	193	3.3
Yorkshire and Humberside	140	37.4	6.3	235	62.6	6.6	375	6.5
North West	235	35.4	10.6	429	64.6	12.0	664	11.4
North East	45	29.8	2.0	107	70.2	3.0	152	2.6
Wales	59	38.4	2.6	94	61.6	2.6	153	2.6
Total	2,227	38.3	100.0	3,582	61.7	100.0	5,809	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.10 In addition to looking at the regional distribution of traineeships, we are also able to look at the types of organisation in which these male and female trainees are placed. This data, in Table 8.10, shows overwhelmingly that trainees are placed in private practice firms. Of the traineeships registered in 2008-09, 5,432 (93.5%) 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 2008-09 analysed by category of employment of training institution

Category of employment	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Private practice	2,101	94.3	3,331	93.0	5,432	93.5
Commerce and industry	61	2.7	87	2.4	148	2.5
Government department	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Local government	31	1.4	66	1.8	97	1.7
Court	5	0.2	28	0.8	33	0.6
Crown prosecution service	5	0.2	12	0.3	17	0.3
Advice service	12	0.5	32	0.9	44	0.8
Other	12	0.5	26	0.7	38	0.7
Total	2,227	100.0	3,582	100.0	5,809	100.0

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 partner equivalents) is shown in Table 8.11. Of the 5,432 traineeships registered with private practice firms in 2008-09, just over one-third, 34.9%, were located in the small number of very large firms with 81 or more partners. At the other end of the spectrum only 5.3% of trainees were placed for training within sole practices. Male trainees were much more likely than female trainees to be placed in the very largest 81 or more partner firms. The proportions here were 39.6% and 31.9% respectively. If you look at firms with 26 or more partner equivalents, these provide 60.6% of male placements compared to only 52.0% of female ones. 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 25 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 2008-09 analysed by the size of private practice firm in which trainees were located

Size of firm	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sole practice	99	4.7	186	5.6	286	5.3
2-4 partners	316	15.1	568	17.1	885	16.3
5-10 partners	206	9.8	432	13.0	638	11.7
11-25 partners	205	9.8	413	12.4	618	11.4
26-80 partners	443	21.1	667	20.0	1,110	20.4
81+	831	39.6	1,064	31.9	1,895	34.9
Total	2,101	100.0	3,331	100.0	5,432	100.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 8.12 Since August 1987, in order 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. Recent rates set by the Council are shown below in Table 8.12. Since August 2002 the 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 ¹	Outer London	Rest of England and Wales
Council recommended minimum			
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
From 1/8/2008	£18,420	£16,500	£16,500
From 1/8/2009	£19,160	£17,160	£17,160
Council recommended			
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
From 1/8/2008	£18,870	£16,790	£16,790
From 1/8/2009	£19,630	£17,460	£17,460

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

- 8.13 Analyses of trainees' actual starting salaries by gender and region are shown below in Table 8.13. This shows that, in 2008-09, average starting salaries were highest in Central London (the City, Holborn and Westminster) at £34,148, and lowest in Wales at £17,790. Taken over all trainees, the average starting salary was £25,810. This represents a significant increase of 8.1% on the average salary paid last year, which was £23,865. Within this total increase there was almost no variation by gender with male salaries rising by 7.8%, whilst female trainee salaries rose by 8.0%

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	34,691	33,723	34,158	2.9	184
Rest of Greater Ldn	28,412	26,795	27,384	6.0	164
South East	20,755	20,655	20,687	0.5	124
Eastern	18,879	18,908	18,899	-0.2	114
South West	18,697	18,481	18,555	1.2	111
West Midlands	20,512	20,512	20,512	0.0	123
East Midlands	19,801	18,359	18,823	7.9	113
Yorks and Humberside	20,916	19,284	19,898	8.5	120
North West	19,888	19,447	19,608	2.3	118
North East	18,803	18,386	18,504	2.3	111
Wales	17,409	18,035	17,790	-3.5	107
Total	27,056	25,028	25,810	8.1	n/a

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

8.14 Table 8.13 also breaks the data down by trainee gender. As we have seen, on average, male trainees were offered starting salaries which were 8.1% above the average level for females, though some of these may be explained by the different profiles of the firms in which they train. We have seen that male trainees are more likely than women to be placed in the larger firms, which typically pay higher starting salaries. The average salary levels for male and female trainees recorded on REGIS in 2008-09 were £27,056 and £25,028 respectively. Only in the Eastern region and Wales were average female starting salaries higher than those for men.

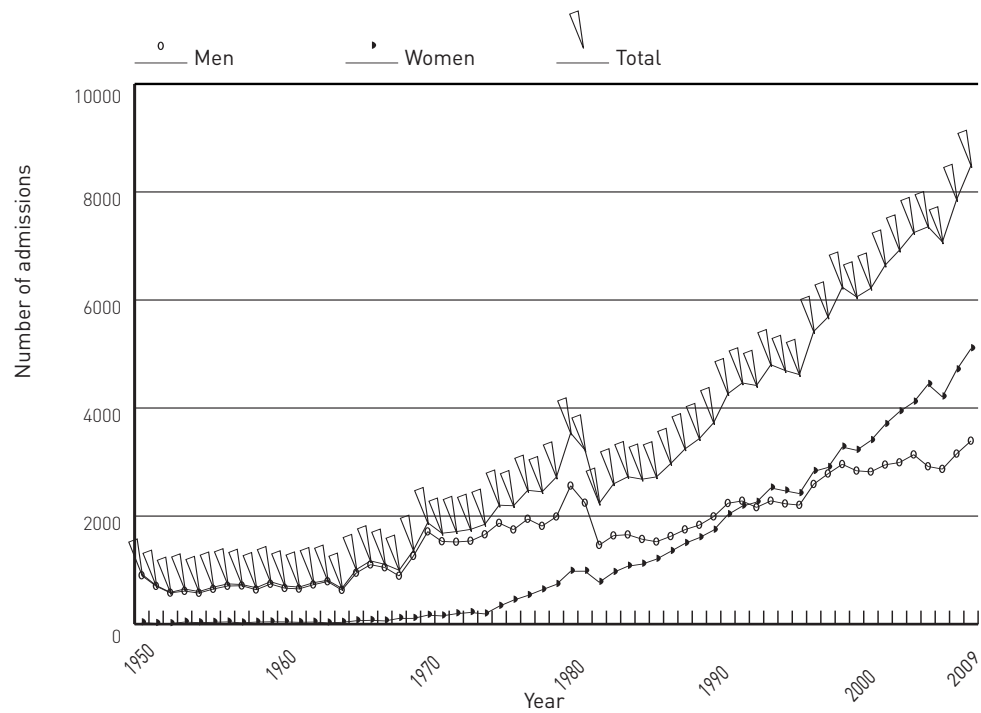
9. Admission to the Roll

- 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 2009 was 8,491. This represents a large increase of 8.0% on the 7,861 individuals who were admitted in 2007-08. Chart 7 shows the growth in admissions of men and women separately for the period 1950 to 2009. Over this period, total annual admissions rose by 817.0% at an average annual increase of 3.8% 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 males, 2.3%, has been less than one-quarter that for women admissions over the period.

Chart 7 Growth in solicitors’ admissions to the Roll 1950-2009



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 1999 and 2009, total admissions grew by 36.1% from a base of 6,237. Over this period, male admissions rose by only 14.6%, whilst female admissions grew almost four times faster, by 55.6%. Women have accounted for the majority of new admissions in each year since 1998-99 and, in 2008-09, 60.1% of those admitted were female.

Table 9.3 Men and women admitted to the Roll 1998-99 to 2008-09

	Men		Women		Total No.	Annual change %
	No.	%	No.	%		
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
2007-08	3,153	40.1	4,708	59.9	7,861	8.8
2008-09	3,392	39.9	5,099	60.1	8,491	8.0
% change 2008-09 over 1998-99		14.6		55.6		36.1

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.4 The age distribution of those admitted in 2008-09 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 29.9 years. The average age for males was slightly higher than that for females, the average ages being 30.7 and 29.4 years respectively. Just under three-fifths (56.1%) of new admissions were aged 28 years or less, and just under two-thirds (64.8%) were aged 29 or less.

Table 9.4 The age distribution of solicitors admitted to the Roll in 2008-09

Age	Male		Female		All admissns.		Cumulative
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
23	3	0.1	2	0.0	5	0.1	0.1
24	27	0.8	72	1.4	99	1.2	1.2
25	277	8.2	622	12.2	899	10.6	11.8
26	451	13.3	861	16.9	1,312	15.5	27.3
27	527	15.5	890	17.5	1,417	16.7	44.0
28	385	11.4	645	12.6	1,030	12.1	56.1
29	328	9.7	410	8.0	738	8.7	64.8
30-34	736	21.7	981	19.2	1,717	20.2	85.0
35-39	314	9.3	313	6.1	627	7.4	92.4
40-44	165	4.9	168	3.3	333	3.9	96.3
45-49	108	3.2	76	1.5	184	2.2	98.5
50-54	42	1.2	38	0.7	80	0.9	99.4
55 and over	26	0.8	19	0.4	45	0.5	99.9
Total known	3,389	99.9	5,097	100.0	8,486	99.9	
Unknown	3	0.1	2	0.0	5	0.1	100.0
Grand total	3,392	100.0	5,099	100.0	8,491	100.0	
Average age		30.7		29.4		29.9	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.5 Table 9.5 shows the proportion of men and women who were admitted in the year 2008-09 by each of the different routes. For 9.9% of admissions these data were not recorded. Just over three-fifths of admissions, 62.3%, were through the direct qualification route and, of these, just under three-quarters (72.7%) were law graduates and the remainder were non-law graduates who had passed the CPE. Women were significantly more likely than men to qualify by this direct route, 66.1% of admissions as against 56.6%, and, within this total, were 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 32.6% and 24.5% respectively. Men were, in particular, markedly more likely than women to have been barristers or to be transferring in from another jurisdiction, 31.6 % as opposed to 22.3%. Taken overall, in 2009, women accounted for 60.1% of admissions to the Roll.

Table 9.5 The routes to admission to the Roll in 2008-09

Entry routes	Male		Female		All admissions	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Direct entry:						
Law degree	1,302	38.4	2,541	49.8	3,843	45.3
Non-law degree	617	18.2	829	16.3	1,446	17.0
Total direct entry	1,919	56.6	3,370	66.1	5,289	62.3
Entry by transfer:						
Overseas lawyer	919	27.1	976	19.1	1,895	22.3
Barrister	152	4.5	164	3.2	316	3.7
FILEX	36	1.1	111	2.2	147	1.7
Total transfers	1,107	32.6	1,251	24.5	2,358	27.8
Route unknown	366	10.8	478	9.4	844	9.9
All admissions	3,392	100.0	5,099	100.0	8,491	100.0
%	39.9		60.1		100.0	

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.6 In 2009 over one quarter of admissions (27.8%) 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 2008-09 transfers, around one-fifth, 19.6%, were from other professions based within England and Wales, individuals who had previously qualified as either barristers or legal executives. The remaining 80.4% were transfers in from other jurisdictions. Most notable here were Australian and New Zealand lawyers, who alone accounted for just over one fifth (21.6%) of all transfers in. In addition to these, transfers from other EU countries accounted for a further 10.3%, those from the Indian subcontinent 10.2%, and those from other parts of the UK a further 5.4% of all transfers.

Table 9.6 Analysis of transfers into the profession 2008-09

	Male		Female		All transfers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
From other professions:						
Legal executives	36	3.3	111	8.9	147	6.2
Barristers	152	13.7	164	13.1	316	13.4
Sub-total	188	17.0	275	22.0	463	19.6
From other jurisdictions:						
Hong Kong	63	5.7	110	8.8	174	7.4
Australia/New Zealand	222	20.1	287	22.9	509	21.6
USA/Canada	129	11.6	89	7.1	218	9.2
Scotland/N. Ireland/Isle of Man	52	4.7	76	6.1	128	5.4
Other EU countries	108	9.8	135	10.8	243	10.3
Non-EU countries	2	0.2	1	0.1	3	0.1
Singapore/Malaysia	90	8.2	120	9.6	211	8.9
India/Pakistan/Sri Lanka	169	15.3	72	5.7	241	10.2
South Africa	2	0.2	9	0.7	11	0.5
Nigeria	37	3.4	42	3.3	79	3.3
All other jurisdictions	43	3.9	35	2.8	78	3.3
Sub-total	919	83.0	976	78.0	1,895	80.4
Grand total	1,107	100.0	1,251	100.0	2,358	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, 27.8 years, were direct entrants with qualifying law degrees. Those admitted by the CPE route were aged 30.4 years on average. Taken overall, the average age for direct admissions was 28.5 years. Those transferring in were, on average, just under five years older than direct admissions, at 33.4 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 2.5 years older on average than their female counterparts.

Table 9.7 Average age on admission to the Roll by route to admission and gender 2008-09

Entry routes	Male		Female		All admissions	
	No.	Average age	No.	Average age	No.	Average age
Direct entry:						
Law degree	1,302	28.1	2,541	27.7	3,843	27.8
Non-law degree	617	30.5	829	30.2	1,446	30.4
Total direct entry	1,919	28.8	3,370	28.3	5,289	28.5
Entry by transfer:						
Overseas lawyer	919	34.6	976	32.1	1,895	33.3
Barrister	152	33.3	164	31.6	316	32.4
FILEX	36	38.6	111	37.4	147	37.7
Total transfers	1,107	34.5	1,251	32.5	2,358	33.5
Route unknown	366	29.0	478	28.4	844	28.7
All admissions	3,392	100.0	5,099	100.0	8,491	100.0
%	39.9	30.7	60.1	29.4	100.0	29.9

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

9.8 Table 9.8 shows the numbers and percentages qualifying via each route in 2008-09 contrasted with the position one year and five years ago. In order to make the comparison, the 9.9% of admissions for whom the route was unknown in 2008-09 have been allocated pro rata to the other known categories. The table shows that the proportion of direct admissions fell slightly this year from 71.4% of all admissions in 2007-08 to 69.2% in 2008-09. Within the total number of direct entrants, the proportion of non-law graduates has remained relatively stable at around one fifth. Whereas 19.5% of all admissions in 2003-04 were non-law graduates, this proportion had only fallen slightly to 18.9% by 2008-09. Following a substantial growth in the proportion of transfers between 2006-07 and 2007-08, transfers increased less markedly from 28.6% of all admissions in 2007-08 to 30.8% in 2008-09.

Table 9.8 Trends in the main routes to admission to the Roll 2003-04 to 2008-09

Routes to admission	2003-04	2007-08	2008-09
Law degree	4,028	4,006	4,267
Non-law degree	1,416	1,606	1,606
Transfers	1,803	2,249	2,618
Total	7,247	7,861	8,491
Routes to admission	%	%	%
Law degree	55.6	51.0	50.3
Non-law degree	19.5	20.4	18.9
Transfers	24.9	28.6	30.8
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 2003-04, 2007-08 and 2008-09. The table shows that, as a proportion of those admissions for whom the ethnicity was known, minority ethnic group admissions represented just under one-quarter, 24.2%, of the total in 2008-09, compared with 17.8% 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' admissions. However, over the past five years Chinese admissions have increased by 504.5% but increased by a more modest 8.6% between 2007-08 and 2008-09. In contrast to this, the small number of African-Caribbean admissions has reduced by almost one-third (29.1%) over a five-year period but increased markedly (41.8%) between 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Table 9.9 Trends in minority ethnic group admissions to the Roll 2003-04, 2007-08 and 2008-09

Ethnicity	2003-04	2007-08	2008-09	% change	
				2008-09 over 2007-08	2008-09 over 2003-04
African-Caribbean	72	36	51	41.8	-29.1
Asian	558	712	860	20.8	54.1
Chinese	76	423	459	8.6	504.5
African	95	153	187	22.3	97.0
Other	162	242	292	20.8	80.4
Total from ethnic minorities	963	1,566	1,850	18.1	92.1
Number of admissions where ethnicity is known	5,417	6,930	7,645	10.3	41.1
Ethnic minorities as a % of those with known ethnicity	17.8	22.6	24.2	7.1	36.1
Total admissions	7,247	7,861	8,491	8.0	17.2
% of admissions with known ethnicity	74.7	88.2	90.0	2.1	20.5
Male admissions	3,137	3,153	3,392	7.6	8.1
Males as % of total	43.3	40.1	39.9	-	-
Female admissions	4,110	4,708	5,099	8.3	24.1
Females as % of total	56.7	59.9	60.1	-	-
Total admissions	7,247	7,861	8,491	8.0	17.2

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

- 9.10 In 2008-09 there were 1,850 admissions from minority ethnic groups out of a total of 8,491. Comparable figures for last year were 1,567 admissions out of a total of 7,861. The increase in the representation of minority ethnic groups over the past year is accounted for by substantial increases in the number of admissions in nearly every group.
- 9.11 A fuller breakdown of minority ethnic group admissions in 2008-09 is shown in Table 9.11. This table analyses admissions by both gender and ethnicity and shows that last year 60.5% of those admitted from minority ethnic groups were female. This is similar to the proportion of female admissions as a whole (60.1%). Within minority ethnic groups, the proportion of female admissions was highest amongst African-Caribbeans, 82.3%, and lowest amongst Asians, 56.8%.

Table 9.11 Minority ethnic group admissions in 2008-09 by gender

Ethnic group	Male		Female		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
African-Caribbean	9	17.7	42	82.3	51
Asian	372	43.2	488	56.8	860
Chinese	162	35.3	297	64.7	459
African	79	42.3	108	57.7	187
Other	109	37.3	183	62.7	292
Total admissions from ethnic minorities	731	39.5	1,119	60.5	1,850
Number of admissions where ethnicity is known	3,014	39.4	4,631	60.6	7,645
Ethnic minorities as a % of those with known ethnicity		24.3		24.2	24.2
Number of admissions where ethnicity is unknown	378	44.6	468	55.4	846
Total admissions	3,392	39.9	5,099	60.1	8,491
% of admissions with known ethnicity	88.9		90.8		90.0

Source: Law Society's REGIS database

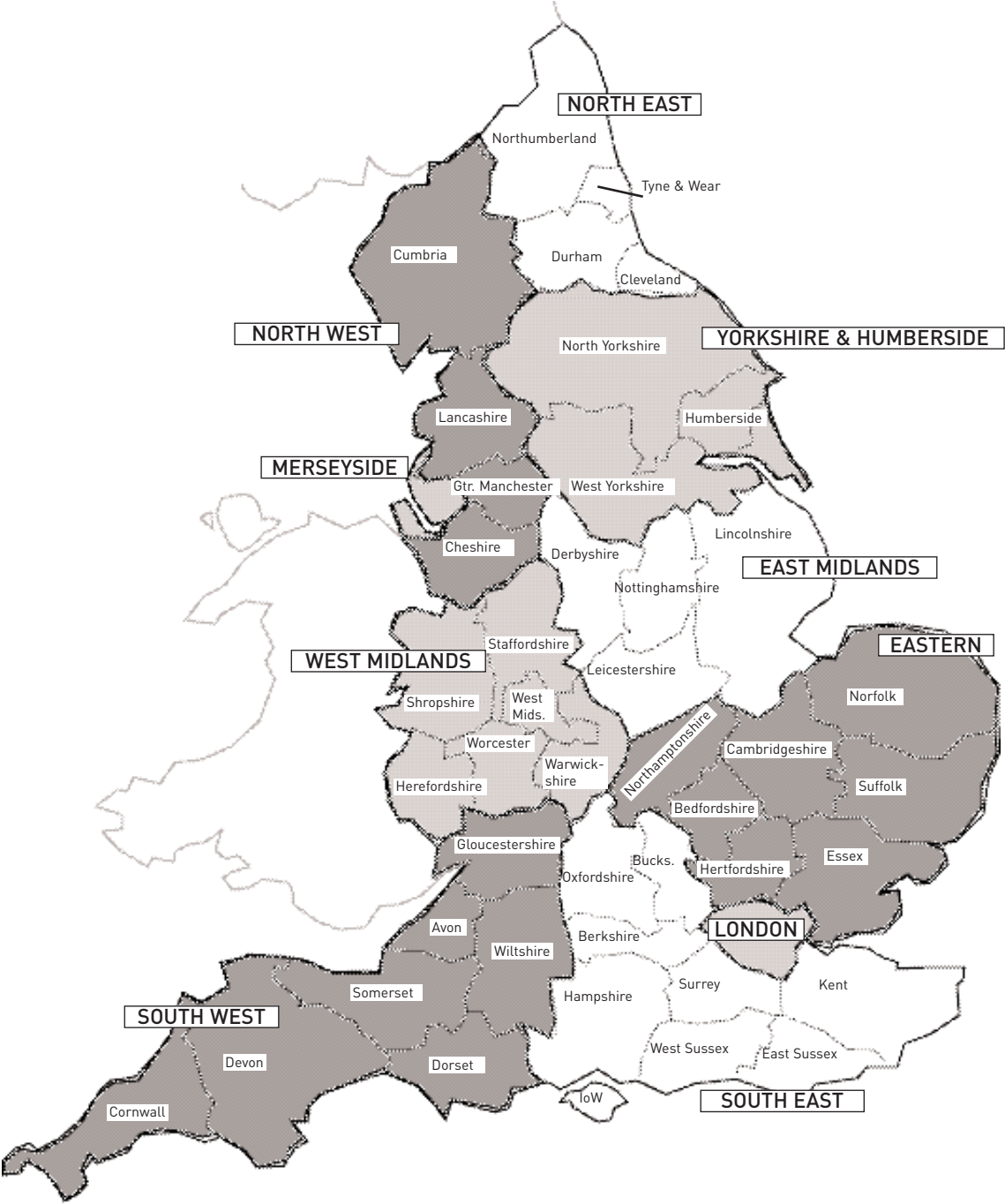
Appendices

Map 1 Government Office Regions

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

* Counties prior to local government reorganisation

** North West region includes Merseyside from 1 August 1998



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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 policies 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.britisoc.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 firms 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

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 specialize 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

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

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].

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] 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]. 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.

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