

Fact sheet series

from Research



The Law Society

2010

Categories of work undertaken by solicitors

The Law Society conducts research on the solicitors' profession in England and Wales. The categories of work data reflects the number of solicitors undertaking specific categories of 'areas of law' and not the amount of time spent on different types of casework.

Summary as at 1 February 2010

No. of solicitors practising in the area (at 1 Feb '10)	Work categories
Less than 1,000 (6 areas)	Travel and tourism; aviation; libel and defamation; chancery; mediation - family; agricultural law
1,001-5,000 (30 areas)	Common law; energy and natural resources; civil liberties/human rights; mental health; mediation - civil/commercial; European Community law; media/entertainment law; welfare benefits; fraud; charity law; planning law; construction/civil engineering; neighbour disputes; environment law; administrative and public law; insolvency and bankruptcy; professional negligence; financial and investment services; immigration and nationality; computer and IT law; consumer problems; medical negligence; liquor licensing / gambling; insurance; debt and money advice; taxation; education; international law (non-EC); maritime / shipping / admiralty law; transport, road and rail law
5,001-10,000 (7 areas)	Intellectual property; trusts; mergers and acquisitions; corporate finance; banking law; advocacy; children law
10,001-15,000 (6 areas)	Crime - general, motor, juvenile; employment; landlord and tenant - residential; family; personal injury; wills and probate
15,001-21,000 (5 areas)	Conveyancing residential; business affairs; commercial property; litigation - general; litigation - commercial

About this data:

This data is based on that supplied by solicitors when they complete their practising certificate renewal forms. If they do not notify us, during the year, when their work categories change, this will not be reflected in the data.

Further reading

Trends in the solicitors' profession. Annual Statistical Reports. Research Unit. The Law Society. 1987 - 2009
Solicitors' firms 2003. Findings. Strategic Research Unit. The Law Society. 2004

Work categories undertaken by solicitors (practising certificate holders)

As at 1 February 2010

	All solicitors count	Proportion of all sols (115,475)	Male solicitors count	Proportion of male sols (63,313)	Female solicitors count	Proportion of female sols (52,162)
Work category	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Administrative and public law	3,814	3.3	1,711	2.7	2,103	4.0
Advocacy	6,961	6.0	3,812	6.0	3,149	6.0
Agricultural law	912	0.8	627	1.0	285	0.5
Aviation	528	0.4	319	0.5	209	0.4
Banking law	5,410	4.7	3,160	5.0	2,250	4.3
Business affairs	20,696	17.9	14,273	22.5	6,423	12.3
Chancery	840	0.7	612	1.0	228	0.4
Charity law	2,073	1.8	1,305	2.0	768	1.5
Children law	5,695	4.9	1,628	2.6	4,067	7.8
Civil liberties/human rights	1,757	1.5	859	1.3	898	1.7
Commercial property	20,176	17.5	13,055	20.6	7,121	13.6
Common law	1,254	1.1	733	1.1	521	1.0
Computer and IT law	3,890	3.3	2,295	3.6	1,595	3.0
Construction/civil engineering	2,705	2.3	1,688	2.7	1,017	1.9
Consumer problems	2,998	2.6	1,830	2.9	1,168	2.2
Conveyancing residential	17,828	15.4	11,119	17.5	6,709	12.8
Corporate finance	8,327	7.2	5,189	8.2	3,138	6.0
Crime – general, motor, juvenile	10,942	9.5	6,984	11.0	3,958	7.6
Debt and money advice	3,563	3.1	2,219	3.5	1,344	2.6
Education	1,011	0.9	374	0.6	637	1.2
Employment	12,591	10.9	6,837	10.8	5,754	11.0
Energy and natural resources	1,727	1.5	992	1.6	735	1.4
Environment law	2,351	2.0	1,403	2.2	948	1.8
European Community law	2,211	1.9	1,183	1.9	1,028	2.0
Family	13,633	11.8	5,738	9.0	7,895	15.1
Financial and investment services	4,063	3.5	2,366	3.7	1,697	3.2
Fraud	2,844	2.4	1,828	2.9	1,056	2.0
Immigration and nationality	3,579	3.1	2,022	3.2	1,557	3.0
Insolvency and bankruptcy	3,591	3.1	2,270	3.6	1,321	2.5
Insurance	4,094	3.5	2,430	3.8	1,664	3.2
Intellectual property	6,570	5.7	3,863	6.1	2,707	5.2
International law (non-EC)	1,269	1.1	796	1.3	473	0.9
Landlord and Tenant – residential	11,131	9.6	7,046	11.1	4,085	7.8
Libel and defamation	817	0.7	511	0.8	306	0.6
Liquor licensing / gambling	3,196	2.8	2,210	3.5	986	1.9
Litigation – commercial	16,681	14.4	10,684	16.9	5,997	11.5
Litigation – general	21,937	19.0	12,922	20.4	9,015	17.3
Maritime/shipping/admiralty	1,151	1.0	748	1.2	403	0.8
Media/entertainment law	2,440	2.1	1,443	2.3	997	1.9
Mediation – civil/commercial	1,965	1.7	1,236	1.9	729	1.4
Mediation – family	810	0.7	263	0.4	547	1.0
Medical negligence	3,260	2.8	1,685	2.7	1,575	3.0
Mental health	1,654	1.4	728	1.1	926	1.8
Mergers and acquisitions	7,713	6.7	4,928	7.8	2,785	5.3
Neighbour disputes	2,128	1.8	1,243	2.0	885	1.7
Personal injury	13,094	11.3	7,626	12.0	5,468	10.5
Planning law	2,477	2.1	1,387	2.2	1,090	2.1
Professional negligence	3,561	3.1	2,229	3.5	1,332	2.5
Taxation	4,550	3.9	2,429	3.8	2,121	4.1
Transport road and rail	1,089	0.9	659	1.0	430	0.8
Travel and tourism	316	0.3	179	0.3	137	0.2
Trusts	6,187	5.3	3,316	5.2	2,871	5.5
Welfare benefits	1,689	1.5	702	1.1	987	1.9
Wills and probate	13,685	11.8	7,983	12.6	5,702	10.9
Total	301,434		174,217		123,797	
Average work type undertaken		2.6		2.8		2.4