

Key facts about the solicitors' profession in the City of London

The Law Society conducts research on the solicitors' profession in England and Wales. This fact sheet presents key figures on the profession for the City of London as at November 2010.

Key statistics as at November 2010	No	%
Solicitors with practising certificates	20,352	
Male solicitors with practising certificates	11,478	56.4
Female solicitors with practising certificates	8,874	43.6
Solicitors in private practice	17,561	87.2
Solicitors in commerce and industry	2,302	11.4
Solicitors in central and local government	49	0.2
Solicitors in other sectors	230	1.1
Solicitors in sole practices	233	1.2
Solicitors in practices with 2-4 partners	3,149	15.6
Solicitors in practices with 5-10 partners	706	3.5
Solicitors in practices with 11-25 partners	1,427	7.1
Solicitors in practices with more than 26 partners	14,627	72.6
Trainees		
Number of trainees	1,961	
Number of male trainees	833	42.5
Number of female trainees	1,128	57.5
Starting salary (median)	£36,500	
Organisations		
Organisations employing solicitors (head office)	1,024	
Private practices (head office)	423	41.3
Other organisations employing solicitors ¹	601	58.7

¹ Non private practice comprises of organisations employing solicitors by the following type of business: Commerce & Industry; Government (Government Department, Local Government, Court Government funded services, and Crown Prosecution Service); Other (Advice service, Educational establishment, Churches etc.).

CITY OF LONDON HAS THE HIGHEST PROPORTION OF YOUNG SOLICITORS AND LARGE FIRMS

Practising certificate holders

Table 1 shows the ethnicity of all practising certificate holders in the region compared with all the regions in England and Wales, and Chart A illustrates their age distribution. Just below half (47.8%) of solicitors are aged between 26-35 years old which is substantially more than in the profession as a whole where only 35.3% fall into this age range. Solicitors of Chinese origin are present in the City of London in higher proportions than in the profession.

Table 2 provides details of the number of years of post qualification experience of practising certificate holders within the City of London compared to the profession as a whole. It shows that there are proportionately more solicitors with 0-9 years of experience in the City of London than in England and Wales as a whole.

The top three main areas of work for practising certificate holders in this region are business affairs (35.4%), commercial property (7.3%) and wills and probate (6.8%). In comparison with the profession as a whole, commercial property is cited by 6.6% and wills and probate by 7.2% of the profession with business affairs dominating at 21.0%.

Trainees

In 2010 55.8% of trainees are aged 25 and under, with only 0.4% of trainees aged over 41 years, compared with 45.8% and 3.2% respectively for the profession as a whole.

Table 3 shows trainee registrations by ethnicity for the City of London and for the entire profession. It demonstrates that trainees of Chinese origin and White trainees are present in higher proportions in the region in comparison with the profession as a whole.

The overwhelming majority (97.9%) of trainees work in law practices, with 1.6% in commerce and industry and only 0.1% in local and central government.

The vast majority (89.2%) of trainees are based in large firms of more than 26 partners. Only 0.6% of trainees are employed in sole practices, compared with 6.0% for the profession as a whole.

Private practice firms

There are 423 private practice head offices in the region. The distribution of size of firms across the region is shown in table 4. It illustrates that the City of London has almost 10 times the proportion of large firms with more than 26 partners than England and Wales in general.

Further reading

Trends in the solicitors' profession, Annual statistical report 2009. Bill Cole, Nina Fletcher, Tara Chittenden and Joanne Cox. Strategic Research Unit. The Law Society. 2009.

Table 1 Ethnicity of practising certificate holders

	City of London		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	72	0.4	798	0.7
Asian	999	4.9	7,438	6.6
Chinese	292	1.4	924	0.8
African	151	0.7	1,417	1.3
Other Ethnicity	529	2.6	2,117	1.9
White	16,070	79.0	90,337	79.7
Unknown	2,239	11.0	10,341	9.1
Total	20,352	100	113,372	100

Chart A Age Distribution of practising certificate holders

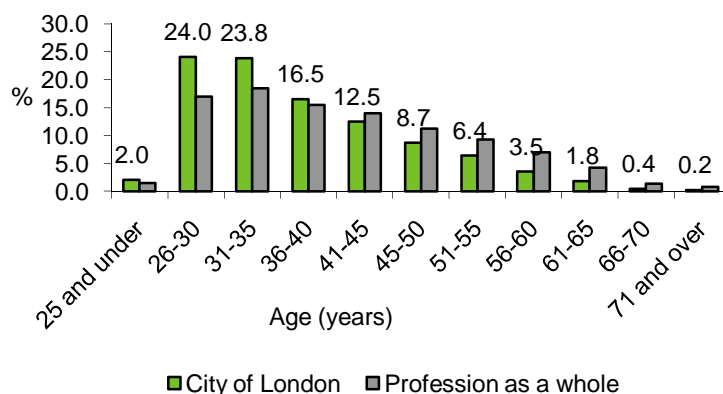


Table 2 Experience of practising certificate holders by years qualified

	City of London		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
0-9	11,479	56.4	49,666	43.8
10-19	5,238	25.7	29,646	26.1
20-29	2,300	11.3	16,146	14.0
30-39	989	4.9	10,136	8.9
40-49	119	0.6	1,734	1.5
50+	14	0.1	291	0.3
Unknown	213	1.0	5,753	5.1
Total	20,352	100	113,372	100

Table 3 Ethnicity of trainees

	City of London		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	7	0.4	45	0.7
Asian	137	7.0	787	11.5
Chinese	77	4.0	152	2.2
African	23	1.2	145	2.1
Other Ethnicity	110	5.6	274	4.0
White	1,474	75.2	4,972	72.4
Unknown	133	6.8	493	7.2
Total	1,961	100	6,868	100

Table 4 Size of firm (head office)

	City of London		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
Sole practice	119	28.1	4,583	45.1
2-4	121	28.6	4,185	41.1
5-10	55	13.0	898	8.8
11-25	48	11.3	310	3.1
26+	80	18.9	196	1.9
Total	423	100	10,172	100

Source: Law Society REGIS database