

Key facts about the solicitors' profession in the North West region

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

Key statistics as at November 2010	No	%
Solicitors with practising certificates	12,636	
Male solicitors with practising certificates	6,679	52.9
Female solicitors with practising certificates	5,957	47.1
Solicitors in private practice	10,393	85.7
Solicitors in commerce and industry	559	4.6
Solicitors in central and local government	1,009	8.3
Solicitors in other sectors	161	1.3
Solicitors in sole practices	880	7.3
Solicitors in practices with 2-4 partners	4,761	39.3
Solicitors in practices with 5-10 partners	1,929	15.9
Solicitors in practices with 11-25 partners	1,192	9.8
Solicitors in practices with more than 26 partners	3,360	27.7
Trainees		
Number of trainees	755	
Number of male trainees	270	35.8
Number of female trainees	485	64.2
Starting salary (median)	£16,970	
Organisations		
Organisations employing solicitors (head office)	2,216	
Private practices (head office)	1,254	56.6
Other organisations employing solicitors ¹	962	43.4

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.).

NORTH WEST HAS THE HIGHEST PROPORTION OF PC HOLDERS WORKING IN PERSONAL INJURY

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. Over one-third (36.0%) of solicitors are aged between 26-35 years old and this is typical of the profession as a whole where 35.3% fall into this age range. The ethnicity profile shows that there are proportionately more White solicitors in the region than in England and Wales in general.

Table 2 provides details of the number of years of post qualification experience of practising certificate holders within the North West region compared to the profession as a whole. It shows that patterns for the North West and England and Wales are very similar.

The top three main areas of work for practising certificate holders in this region are business affairs (16.0%), personal injury (10.4%) and litigation (general) (8.6%). In comparison with the profession as a whole, litigation (general) is cited by 5.8% and personal injury by 4.9% of the profession with business affairs dominating at 21.0%.

Trainees

In 2010 43.7% of trainees are aged 25 and under, with 3.6% 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 North West region and for the entire profession. It demonstrates that there are proportionately fewer BME trainees in the region compared with the profession.

The overwhelming majority (95.4%) of trainees work in law practices, with only 0.7% in commerce and industry and 2.9% in local and central government.

More than one-third (36.6%) of trainees are based in small firms of 2 to 4 partners and 27.8% are located within firms with more than 26 partners. Nine percent of registered trainees are based within sole practices, compared with 6.0% for the profession as a whole.

Private practice firms

There are 1,254 private practice head offices in the region. The distribution of size of firms across the region is shown in table 4. It demonstrates that there are proportionately fewer sole practices in the region than in the profession.

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

	North West		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	29	0.2	798	0.7
Asian	634	5.0	7,438	6.6
Chinese	54	0.4	924	0.8
African	60	0.5	1,417	1.3
Other Ethnicity	142	1.1	2,117	1.9
White	10,788	85.3	90,337	79.7
Unknown	929	7.4	10,341	9.1
Total	12,636	100	113,372	100

Chart A Age distribution of practising certificate holders

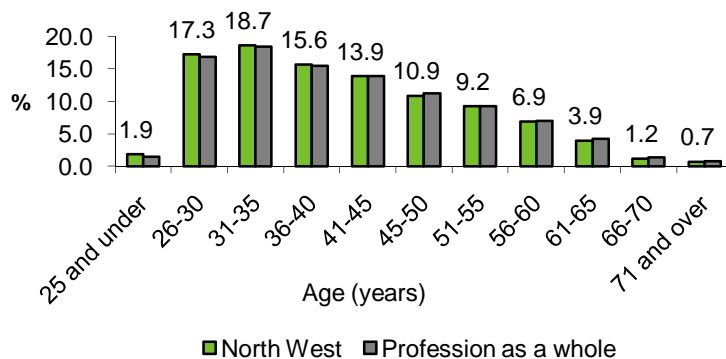


Table 2 Experience of practising certificate holders by years qualified

	North West		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
0-9	5,563	44.0	49,666	43.8
10-19	3,404	27.0	29,646	26.1
20-29	1,770	14.0	16,146	14.0
30-39	1,153	9.1	10,136	8.9
40-49	197	1.6	1,734	1.5
50+	33	0.3	291	0.3
Unknown	516	4.1	5,753	5.1
Total	12,636	100	113,372	100

Table 3 Ethnicity of trainees

	North West		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	3	0.4	45	0.7
Asian	78	10.3	787	11.5
Chinese	4	0.5	152	2.2
African	3	0.4	145	2.1
Other Ethnicity	16	2.1	274	4.0
White	587	77.9	4,972	72.4
Unknown	63	8.4	493	7.2
Total	754	100	6,868	100

Table 4 Size of firms (head office)

	North West		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
Sole practice	473	37.7	4,583	45.1
2-4	601	47.9	4,185	41.1
5-10	133	10.6	898	8.8
11-25	31	2.5	310	3.1
26+	16	1.3	196	1.9
Total	1,254	100	10,172	100

Source: The Law Society REGIS database