

Key facts about the solicitors' profession in the rest of London¹

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

Key statistics as at November 2010	No	%
Solicitors with practising certificates	24,905	
Male solicitors with practising certificates	13,022	52.3
Female solicitors with practising certificates	11,883	47.7
Solicitors in private practice	16,403	71.8
Solicitors in commerce and industry	4,482	19.6
Solicitors in central and local government	1,189	5.2
Solicitors in other sectors	787	3.4
Solicitors in sole practices	2,048	9.0
Solicitors in practices with 2-4 partners	11,002	48.1
Solicitors in practices with 5-10 partners	2,009	8.8
Solicitors in practices with 11-25 partners	1,830	8.0
Solicitors in practices with more than 26 partners	5,972	26.1
Trainees		
Number of trainees	1,667	
Number of male trainees	612	36.7
Number of female trainees	1,055	63.3
Starting salary (median)	£22,500	
Organisations		
Organisations employing solicitors (head office)	4,520	
Private practices (head office)	2,393	52.9
Other organisations employing solicitors ²	2,127	47.1

¹ Rest of London includes City of Westminster, Holborn and Greater London.

² 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.).

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 (36.4%) 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. Older solicitors are slightly under-represented in this region. The ethnicity profile shows that all BME groups are presented in this region in higher proportions than in England and Wales as a whole.

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

The top three main areas of work for practising certificate holders in this region are business affairs (23.3%), commercial property (6.4%) and wills and probate (5.8%). 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 38.5% of trainees are aged 25 and under, with 5.0% 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 rest of London and for the entire profession. Nearly one-third (32%) of trainees in the region are from BME groups compared to BME groups composing one-fifth (20%) of trainees across England and Wales.

The overwhelming majority (90.1%) of trainees work in law practices, with 5.5% in commerce and industry and only 1.6% in local and central government.

Under half (45.2%) of trainees are based in large firms of more than 26 partners and 30.5% are located within small firms with 2 to 4 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 2,393 private practice head offices in the rest of London. The distribution of size of firms across the region is shown in table 4. It illustrates that just under one half (49.1%) of firms employing solicitors are sole practices.

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

	Rest of London		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	383	1.5	798	0.7
Asian	2,661	10.7	7,438	6.6
Chinese	349	1.4	924	0.8
African	827	3.3	1,417	1.3
Other Ethnicity	794	3.2	2,117	1.9
White	16,767	67.3	90,337	79.7
Unknown	3,124	12.6	10,341	9.1
Total	24,905	100	113,372	100

Chart A Age Distribution of practising certificate holders

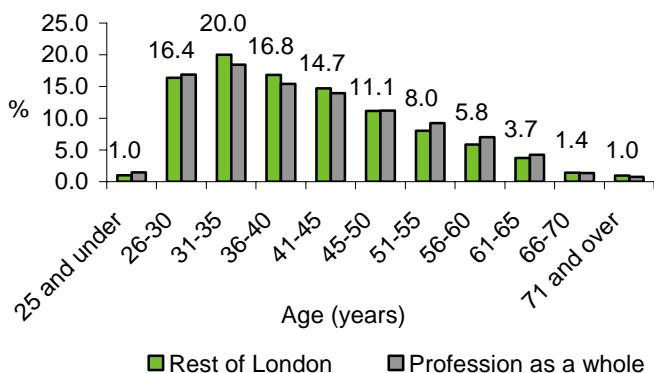


Table 2 Experience of practising certificate holders by years qualified

	Rest of London		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
0-9	11,290	45.3	49,666	43.8
10-19	6,435	25.8	29,646	26.1
20-29	2,948	11.8	16,146	14.0
30-39	1,725	6.9	10,136	8.9
40-49	383	1.5	1,734	1.5
50+	79	0.3	291	0.3
Unknown	2,045	8.2	5,753	5.1
Total	24,905	100	113,372	100

Table 3 Ethnicity of trainees

	Rest of London		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	23	1.4	45	0.7
Asian	266	16.0	787	11.5
Chinese	51	3.1	152	2.2
African	90	5.4	145	2.1
Other Ethnicity	95	5.7	274	4.0
White	1,003	60.2	4,972	72.4
Unknown	139	8.3	493	7.2
Total	1,667	100	6,868	100

Table 4 Size of firms (head office)

	Rest of London		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
Sole practice	1,175	49.1	4,583	45.1
2-4	992	41.5	4,185	41.1
5-10	142	5.9	898	8.8
11-25	52	2.2	310	3.1
26+	32	1.3	196	1.9
Total	2,393	100	10,172	100

Source: Law Society REGIS database