

## Key facts about the solicitors' profession in the South East 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 South East region as at November 2010.

Key statistics as at November 2010	No	%
<b>Solicitors with practising certificates</b>	<b>13,075</b>	
Male solicitors with practising certificates	6,702	51.3
Female solicitors with practising certificates	6,373	48.7
Solicitors in private practice	9,283	76.0
Solicitors in commerce and industry	1,596	13.0
Solicitors in central and local government	1,095	9.0
Solicitors in other sectors	248	2.0
Solicitors in sole practices	1,232	10.1
Solicitors in practices with 2-4 partners	5,760	47.1
Solicitors in practices with 5-10 partners	1,688	13.8
Solicitors in practices with 11-25 partners	1,593	13.0
Solicitors in practices with more than 26 partners	1,949	15.9
<b>Trainees</b>		
Number of trainees	<b>513</b>	
Number of male trainees	166	32.4
Number of female trainees	347	67.6
Starting salary (median)	£17,915	
<b>Organisations<sup>1</sup></b>		
Organisations employing solicitors (head office)	<b>2,947</b>	
Private practices (head office)	1,569	
All private practices (head office and branch)	2,043	

<sup>1</sup> 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.).

## SOUTH EAST HAS THE LOWEST PROPORTION OF YOUNGER SOLICITORS

### 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. Under one-third (27.2%) of solicitors are aged between 26-35 years old which is less than in the profession as a whole where 35.3% fall into this age range. Older solicitors are over-represented in this region. The ethnicity profile shows that BME solicitors are represented in slightly lower proportions in this region 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 South East region compared to the profession as a whole. It shows that the proportion of solicitors with 30-39 years of experience is three times that of the profession as a whole (27.2% against 8.9%).

The top three main areas of work for practising certificate holders in this region are business affairs (18.4%), wills and probate (9.2%) and residential conveyancing (6.1%). In comparison with the profession as a whole, residential conveyancing is cited by 4.6% and wills and probate by 7.2% of the profession with business affairs dominating at 21.0%.

### Trainees

In 2010 43.3% of trainees in the South East are aged 25 and under, with 6.0% 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 South East region and for the entire profession. It demonstrates that there are proportionately fewer BME trainees in the region in comparison with the profession as a whole.

The overwhelming majority (87.1%) of trainees work in law practices, with 6.6% in commerce and industry and 5.1% in local and central government.

More than one-third (38.0%) of trainees are based in small firms of 2 to 4 partners and 20.9% 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 1,569 private practice head offices in the region. The distribution of size of firms across the region is shown in table 4. It illustrates that just over half (51.4%) 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**

	South East		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	89	0.7	798	0.7
Asian	648	5.0	7,438	6.6
Chinese	67	0.5	924	0.8
African	126	1.0	1,417	1.3
Other Ethnicity	209	1.6	2,117	1.9
White	10,831	82.9	90,337	79.7
Unknown	1,105	8.4	10,341	9.1
Total	13,075	100	113,372	100

**Chart A Age distribution of practising certificate holders**



**Table 2 Experience of practising certificate holders by years qualified**

	South East		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
0-9	4,679	35.8	49,666	43.8
10-19	3,444	26.3	29,646	26.1
20-29	221	1.7	16,146	14.0
30-39	3,553	27.2	10,136	8.9
40-49	280	2.1	1,734	1.5
50+	44	0.3	291	0.3
Unknown	854	6.5	5,753	5.1
Total	13,075	100	113,372	100

**Table 3 Ethnicity of trainees**

	South East		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
African Caribbean	1	0.2	45	0.7
Asian	47	9.2	787	11.5
Chinese	4	0.8	152	2.2
African	7	1.4	145	2.1
Other Ethnicity	18	3.5	274	4.0
White	405	79.1	4,972	72.4
Unknown	30	5.9	493	7.2
Total	512	100	6,868	100

**Table 4 Size of firms (head office)**

	South East		All regions	
	No	%	No	%
Sole practice	807	51.4	4,583	45.1
2-4	592	37.7	4,185	41.1
5-10	112	7.1	898	8.8
11-25	45	2.9	310	3.1
26+	12	0.8	196	1.9
Unknown	1	0.1	0	0.0
Total	1,569	100	10,172	100

Source: Law Society REGIS database